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EDUCATING LEADERS OF FAITH & CHARACTER

Mendez Named Exemplary College Leader

During his time at the University of St. Thomas, 2009 graduate Thomas Méndez took on numerous leadership roles on campus. He was a member of the Residence Life Staff, vice president of the Student Government Association, president of the Student Organization of Latinos and founding member of the Center for International Studies MicroCredit Program. And that's just a small sample of his campus leadership and service.



Méndez's résumé at UST also includes membership in both the Spanish and International Studies national honor societies, various leadership awards and other scholarships, including the Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship to Buenos Aires, Argentina, a year-long academic trip he is preparing to take in January.

And for all his efforts, Méndez can now add another leadership award to his list of noteworthy achievements. He was recently honored by the [North American Educational Initiatives Foundation \(NAEIF\)](#) and given the Robert H. Jackson Leadership Award, which recognizes exemplary college leaders who show an inspiring example of virtue and social conscience through service in education.

"I was very blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of some amazing organizations during my time at UST," Méndez said. "They not only taught me personal and professional skills, but they opened up doors of opportunity for me then and continue to do so even as an alumnus.

"NAEIF is such a great organization, and I am honored and humbled to have received this award. I will do my best to live up to the example of service lived by Dr. Robert Jackson and previous recipients of this award."

Ted Wills, president of NAEIF, said he had been following Méndez's achievements for about a year and was very impressed with everything he was doing within the University community and beyond.

"Our foundation aims to challenge university leaders to discover authentic human dignity and solidarity of people in a multicultural context," Wills said. "So it was very appropriate that Thomas would receive this award based on his accomplishments."

Méndez, an international studies major, said he has plans to work toward a master's degree in applied economics while in Argentina. Given his interest in international development and foreign policy, he hopes to continue his leadership beyond UST and make a difference in the community and world around him.

"I would like to foster collaborations between public and private institutions to affect positive change through development and educational projects," Méndez said. "My courses at UST, especially in international studies, instilled a passion in me to better understand the world and the role the U.S. plays in it. The influence of the late Dr. Gustavo Wensjoe and so many other amazing professors I had at UST will always be reflected in the work I do. Wherever God takes me, I only hope I can create some positive change."

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