



Leah Aiken

2nd Year

PhD Student

Shreveport, Louisiana

Ever since I was a freshman in college, I've dreamed of earning a PhD. After getting my first "big kid" job, I realized I wanted to continue gaining industry experience but still pursue my educational goals. The HRD program at UT Tyler has afforded me the opportunity to grow in my field of interest and gain additional insights that assist me in my current job. All the while, I've built lifelong professional friends and contacts.

Education

- Bachelor of Science, Psychology, Louisiana State University-Shreveport
- Master of Arts, Industrial Organizational Psychology, Louisiana Tech University

Current Position

I am a human resource professional at a large utility company. I am responsible for several service territories within the southwestern operating region; in addition, I have the privilege of serving on a company-wide culture team.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

Initially I chose UT Tyler due to the hybrid format of the HRD program and the university's proximity to my hometown in Louisiana. However, I continue to choose UT Tyler because of the ongoing development I've received through rigorous coursework and a faculty who cares about my success.

Fun Facts:

As a Louisiana native, I love cooking, baking, and sharing recipes. My specialties include crawfish etouffee and breakfast pastries (usually not served together).

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at laiken@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/leah-aiken-308362103](https://www.linkedin.com/in/leah-aiken-308362103).





Amy Baskin

PhD Candidate
Tyler, Texas

I am a 33-year professional who decided that instead of retiring I would get a PhD. At bit crazy for sure, but it has turned out to be a stimulating learning experience that I would not trade and will provide a bridge to a career shift for the remainder of my career. I have worked in HRD and leadership in both for profit and non-profit organizations in a variety of fields to include healthcare, banking, logistics, higher education, and the arts. I hope to take these experiences into a consulting career building on my HRD background.

Education

- Bachelor of Arts, Psychology and Business, University of Richmond
- Master of Education, Human Resources Development, Vanderbilt University
- PhD Candidate, Human Resources Development, The University of Texas at Tyler

Current Position

Young Audiences Arts for Learning of Northeast Texas; Executive Director. Responsible for developing arts programs for schools; fundraising; leading 18-member Board of Directors and 3 member staff; maintaining strong relationships with schools and community organizations.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

I chose this program because it was in my field and in my backyard! I also wanted the opportunity to become fully immersed in the HRD field after several years away from direct HRD work.

I hope the degree will facilitate being either an internal or external consultant and the opportunity to teach.

Fun Facts:

I have lived in 2 counties and 10 states throughout my life.

For Mother's Day I got a Bottle Tree, which I can see from my desk.

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at abaskin2@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/amy-baskin-7116b53](https://www.linkedin.com/in/amy-baskin-7116b53).





Suleman Braimah

1st Year

PhD Student

Dallas, Texas

A PhD degree has always been a dream of mine, I always thought I'd be the first in my family to earn a terminal degree, but my older brother beat me to it four years ago. I feel UT Tyler was curated just for me. Wondering why? Here goes: outstanding program, time tested and trusted faculty, award winning scholars and most importantly HRD faculty who want to see you genuinely succeed so much so that they will support and help you achieve your dream goal. I am honored to be a part of this program.

Education

- Bachelor of Science, Accounting, University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
- Master of Business Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria
- Master of Professional Studies, Human Resources & Employment Relations, Penn State

Current Position

I am currently an Assistant Vice President, Private Client Banker with a large financial institution in Dallas, Texas. I am also a Logistics Specialist Second Class, In the United State Navy Reserve support Navy Reserve Fleet Logistics Center, Bahrain with its Headquarters in Central Command Area of operations.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

UT Tyler is my choice for many reasons, first it is a wonderful program. Second of all, it is affordable and pocket friendly. Finally, this program teaches you lifelong skills and knowledge that will shape you to becoming a triple threat (consultant, teacher and industry expert) plus the faculty are simple awesome people.

Fun Facts:

I was born in Lagos, Nigeria, although I live in Texas, New Jersey is my home state. I love to cook, bake and grill. I make the best Nigerian Jollof rice, Fried rice, Egusi (melon) soup and porridge beans.

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at sbraimah@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/3828.





**Sanket Ramchandra
Patole**

1st Year
PhD Student
Houston, Texas

Achieving a PhD is my dream even before I did my Masters as I always knew that I would strive to be an expert in my area of interest. UT Tyler's PhD in HRD is a unique program which needs rigor and perseverance and it's motivating me to bring the best in me in terms of balancing my professional ambitions and personal interests.

Education

- Bachelor of Engineering, University of Mumbai
- Master of Science Business Analytics, The University of Texas at Dallas
- Master of Management Studies, Human Resources, University of Mumbai

Current Position

I am an HR Analytics professional presently working as a Senior Consultant at a leading healthcare institution in the country. I enjoy working with HR systems and play with the data to find out answers to various business questions.

Why Chose UT Tyler?

UT Tyler PhD HRD program was the best program in Texas which allowed me to work full-time and still engage in a rigorous doctoral education. It is a good balance between in-person lectures and virtual learning supported by a strong HRD department in the Soule's business school.

Fun Fact

I am an ardent fan of Indian classical music and I've attended hundreds of concerts. I find it to be meditative

As a kid, toys always amazed me, and I still spend a lot of time in the toys section at any super-market.

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at spatole@patriots.uttyler.edu.





Ryan Riojas

2nd Year

PhD Student

Houston, Texas

I am very proud to be a student in the Human Resources Development PhD program at UT Tyler. I considered pursuing a PhD for many years and I am grateful to have the opportunity to now be on this journey. Although the program is demanding, the faculty supports you every step of the way if you are committed and dedicated.

During my free time, I enjoy boating on the lake, soaking in the sun at the beach, or just spending time with my family and friends. My wife, son, 4 chihuahuas, and I reside in Houston, Texas and I am a lifelong Texan.

Education

- Bachelor of Arts, Organizational Communications, St. Edward's University
- Master of Arts, Organizational Development, University of the Incarnate Word

Current Position

Director of Organizational Development at a large facilities services organization. I oversee all programming for identification of high potential talent, talent reviews, succession planning, and culture & inclusion.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

I chose the HRD PhD program at UT Tyler because of the overall program. As an organizational development professional, I want to take the researching skills I am learning into my professional role, demonstrating how to make strategic decisions based on data.

Fun Fact

When I was 18, I moved to Australia for a year and had the best time learning about myself and this great world we live in.

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at rriojas3@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/ryanriojas](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ryanriojas).





Alma Robles

1st Year

PhD Student
Houston, Texas

This PhD program is extremely important to me because I have witnessed first-hand why Human Resource Development is crucial in any work setting. My goal is to contribute to that body of knowledge and practice by conducting research, publishing, teaching, and working with organizations to understand the benefits of being mindful of its employees, developing them as needed, and motivating them to do well not only for the organization, but also for self-fulfillment.

Education

- Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, University of Houston-Downtown
- Master of Business Administration, University of Houston-Downtown

Current Position

Organizational Development in the Legal industry, I am constantly researching, developing, and implementing ways to cause the firm to run more effectively and efficiently through new strategies and processes such as technologies, employee development, and management techniques.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

While discovering my passion for developing leadership and employees in the workplace, I came across UT-Tyler's PhD program in HR Development in the Soules College of Business. From that moment on, it was my mission to be a part of such a perfect, unique blend of coursework. I feel that this program being in the college of business will compliment my MBA and increase my knowledge in HRD from a business perspective.

Fun Facts:

Obsessions: iced coffee and keyboards (must be mechanical with blue/green switches). These two go great together!

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at arobles6@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/almacrobles/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/almacrobles/).





Radie Said

1st Year

PhD Student

Houston, Texas

I am very proud to be a student in the Human Resources Development PhD program at UT Tyler. I am a lifelong learner who is looking for the next thing to learn. The PhD program in HRD is the next step in my career and life as I intend to use the education I receive to develop practical training and development programs and address the performance needs, issues, and problems in my current and future workplace.

Although this journey will not be easy, I am motivated and committed to completing the program to take my skills and apply them in the real world.

Along on this journey with me are my spouse, parents, and three siblings.

Education

- Bachelor of Science, Biological Sciences, Pre-Health, The University of Houston-Clear Lake
- Master of Business Administration, Healthcare Management, The University of Texas at Tyler

Current Position

My role as Senior Business Manager includes ensuring successful operations at the workplace to provide services to the underserved population of Harris County, TX. This entails staffing, training, staff development, finances, internal and external relations, and process improvement.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

I chose UT Tyler for many reasons including, the executive format, which allowed me to continue to work, the supportive faculty, the distinguished reputation of the university, and the ability to complete the coursework in two years.

Fun Fact

I am bilingual, I have a collection of shot glasses from over 55 Countries and States, I've gone bungee jumping, and I have traveled to 11 countries.

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

My email is rsaid@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/radie-said](https://www.linkedin.com/in/radie-said).





Maryn Taylor

2nd Year

PhD Student

Dallas, Texas

I can distinctly remember being a little girl and asking a teacher, “What comes after elementary school?” She patiently guided me through the roadmap of high school, college, grad school, and finally, doctoral programs. In that moment, I knew that one day I wanted to get a doctorate.

Along on this journey with me are my spouse and our three children – one of whom started undergrad the same week I started this doctoral program.

Education

- Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, The University of Texas at Austin
- Bachelor of Arts, Music, The University of Texas at Austin
- Master of Business Administration, Strategic Leadership, Amberton University
- Master of Science, Human Resource Development, The University of Texas at Tyler

Current Position

Senior Director of People & Culture, Tri Delta Fraternity. My role includes responsibility for all human resource management and development functions. My prior professional experience includes about twenty years working in HR, primarily in financial services and healthcare technology. I’m also a graduate teaching assistant for the HRD MS at UT Tyler and the media editor for Human Resource Development Review.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

I knew that I wanted the academic rigor and research focus of a PhD, and I wanted to work with faculty with diverse research interests who were at the top of the field of HRD. UT Tyler’s cohort-style program also gives me the opportunity to network with faculty and classmates in person while allowing me the flexibility to continue to work.

Fun Fact

I love the history and artistry of diamond cutting and grading.

Thinking about joining us? I’m happy to answer your questions.

My email is mtaylor28@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/maryntaylor](https://www.linkedin.com/in/maryntaylor).





Shanese Williams

1st Year

PhD Student

Dallas, Texas

I am a first year PhD student and Higher Education professional. I have a passion for helping college students grow within themselves as leaders and increasing diversity initiatives throughout my organization. I knew I wanted to get a PhD since I was in high school after I saw my amazing principal wear her graduation regalia. At the time, I didn't know the hard work and dedication it took to pursue a terminal degree but over the years I saw the literary giants I look up to make a difference and change within their research fields and I knew I wanted to be a change agent too. Now that I am here, I am so excited to be on this journey and look forward to the future!

Education

- Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice with a minor in Information Technology, Stephen F. Austin State University
- Master of Science in Human Resource Development, The University of Texas at Tyler

Current Position

I am a Residence Coordinator at The University of Texas at Tyler. In this role, I build community, develop students, and foster positive, diverse, and collaborative relationships among residential students through programming, inclusive living spaces and mentorship.

Why I Chose UT Tyler?

I chose the HRD program at UT Tyler because of its research opportunities and learning outcomes. I also chose this program for its accomplished faculty in the HRD field, its hybrid format, and work flexibility.

Fun Facts:

For fun, I enjoy reading books about women, gender studies, and feminist theories.

I love documentaries and, in another lifetime, would have been a historian.

Thinking about joining us? I'm happy to answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me at swilliams74@patriots.uttyler.edu or connect with me on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/shanese-williams/>.

