

UTRGV's first commencement

Key individuals in school's formation to be honored

Jacqueline Arias
THE RIDER

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley will host its first commencement on Dec. 19, with one ceremony on the Brownsville campus and two at the State Farm Arena in Hidalgo.

A total of 2,063 students will graduate: 1,506 will receive a bachelor's degree, 547 a master's and 10 a doctoral degree, according to Patrick Gonzales, assistant vice president for University Marketing and Communication.

The graduation planning committee began organizing the commencement ceremony since the beginning of the fall semester. New symbolic artifacts will be presented by the young university, along with special guests who pioneered the formation of UTRGV.

Havidán Rodríguez, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs, explained the significance of the new traditions of the graduation mace, or staff, and the medallion of the president of UTRGV, Guy Bailey.

"We should have a new and beautiful mace representing the RGV and the coming together of two institutions," Rodríguez said. "We will also have a brand-

new and beautiful medallion that the president will use. These two new artifacts were designed with a brand-new institution in mind and were designed and developed primarily by UTRGV students. Commencement will have elements from both legacy institutions."

Kristin Croyle, vice president for Student Success, said the mace and medallion were designed by students and faculty last year for the new institution.

"One of the traditions that I like personally [is] that the university has a mace," Croyle said. "It's a beautiful ceremonial object that typically someone from the faculty carries in at the beginning of the ceremony. We couldn't use the old maces because they typically have the university seal on them and they have special meaning. For the new mace, the design will have a special meaning for the institution."

UTRGV will have guests of honor instead of a keynote speaker at each ceremony. The guests will be officials that began and advocated for the new institution, such as chancellor of the UT System at the time of the formation of the university, Francisco Cigarroa, state Senators Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) and Eddie Lucio

Jr. (D-Brownsville).

"We're going to honor some officials, some UT System officials and a couple of elected officials who played a significant role in the formation of UTRGV," Gonzales said. "So, we wanted to use this first ceremony to honor those folks instead of having a keynote speaker."

The Brownsville ceremony for all colleges will take place at 9 a.m. on the Student Union lawn. At the State Farm Arena, the ceremony for the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Sciences will begin at 2 p.m., followed by the College of Business and Entrepreneurship, the College of Education and P-16 Integration, the College of Fine Arts and the College of Health Affairs at 6 p.m.

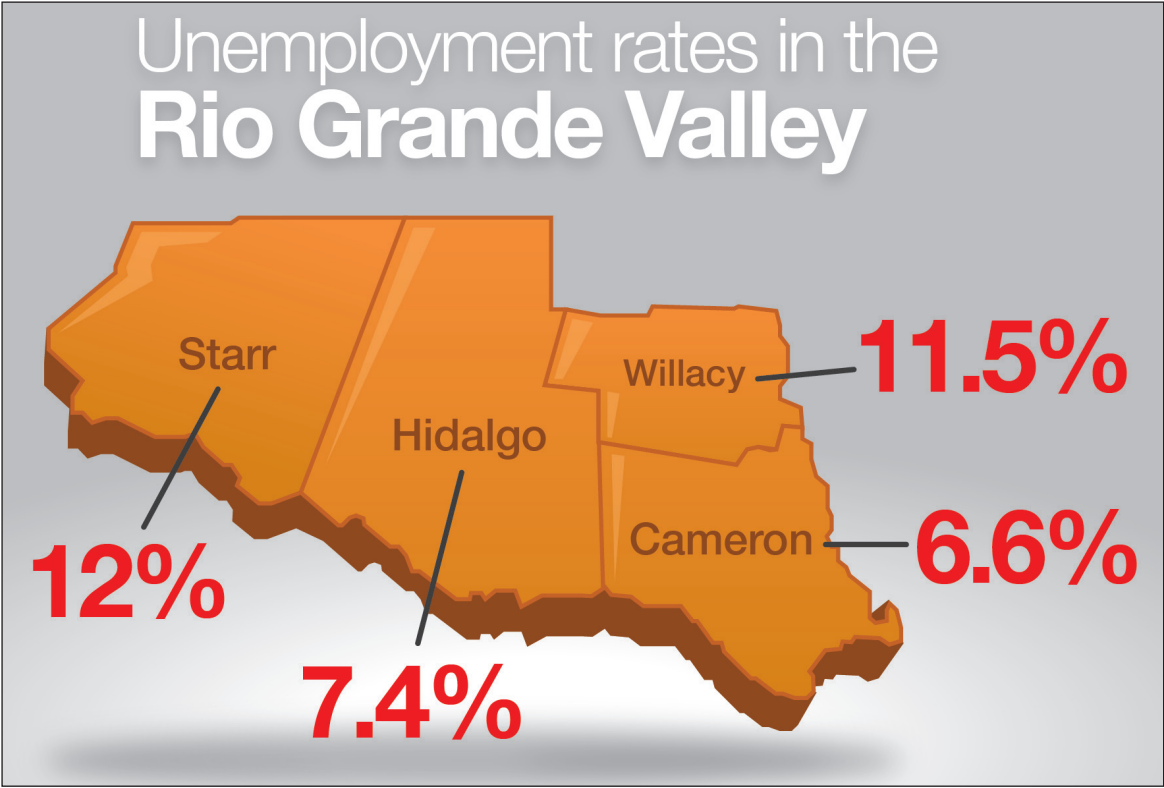


Jacqueline Arias/The Rider

The university cap, gown, tassel and other graduation-related merchandise are available at the Edinburg and Brownsville campus bookstores. UTRGV will host its first commencement in three ceremonies Dec. 19.

US jobless rate near record low

Cameron County at 6.6% and Hidalgo County 7.4%



Mario Gonzalez/The Rider Graphic

Oscar Castillo
THE RIDER

The nationwide unemployment rate hit 5 percent in November, the lowest it has been since 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. In Texas, the rate was 4.4 percent, nearly reaching the all-time low of 4 percent in December 2000.

Nearly 8 million people are unemployed in the U.S., including 35,276 in the Rio Grande Valley. Officials attribute the decrease in the unemployment rate to the boom in the manufacturing industry.

From January to October of this year, the number of unemployed individuals dropped from 8,979,000 to 7,908,000, of which 1.6 million are Hispanic.

In Cameron County, 10,743 individuals were unemployed as of September, which is a 1.1 percent decrease from the

same time last year. In Hidalgo County, 24,533 people were unemployed in the same month, which is a 0.6 percent drop from the same period last year. In Starr County, the number of unemployed rose from 3,019 to 3,102. In Willacy County, 799 people were unemployed compared with 782 in the previous year.

Gilberto Salinas, vice president for the Brownsville Economic Development Council, said there are many factors that contribute to the low unemployment rate in Cameron County during this time of the year.

"A lot of retailers are hiring additional people for their stores, you know, for the rush, for the shop, what have you," Salinas said. "Then the other one is the economy has, slowly but surely, started to bounce back here for the last two to three years."

He said other contributing factors on a national scale are an increase in U.S. Consumer Confidence Index and a growth in the manufacturing industry.

"I think in Brownsville, right now, we're at 6-point something, and that is the lowest it's been in recent history," Salinas said.

Letty Reyes, director of Business Development and Public Affairs for the Edinburg Economic Development Corp., said the unemployment rate for Edinburg in October was 4.9 percent.

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Correction

Due to an editing error in the article, "Bringing light to the matter," published Nov. 30, in *The Rider*, the deadline to respond to the survey for the Campus Safety Project was left out. The deadline is Dec. 16.

Cosmetics for a cause



Michelle Espinoza/The Rider

Felipe Gonzalez, assistant retail manager of MAC in Brownsville, applies bronzer onto the face of sophomore nursing major Pauline Joy Sanes. MAC representatives were on the Brownsville campus to raise awareness of World AIDS Day. Proceeds from the sale of the company's VIVA GLAM products go toward the MAC AIDS Fund, which serves people affected by HIV and AIDS.

The Rider is the official student newspaper of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The newspaper is widely distributed on campus and off campus in Brownsville and Edinburg, Texas. Views presented are those of the writers and do not reflect those of the paper or university.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Brownie Day

Decorate a **free brownie** between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesday on the Student Union lawn. For more information, call **Student Involvement** at 882-5111.

Christmas tree lighting

A **tree lighting ceremony** will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Casa Bella Clubhouse on the Brownsville campus. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call **Housing and Residence Life** at 882-7191.

Blind Tennis Workshop

The **Department of Health and Human Performance** will host a **blind tennis workshop** from 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesday in the Health and Physical Education II Building gym on the Edinburg campus. Attendees will experience what it's like to play tennis by relying on hearing rather than sight. For more information, contact **Zasha Romero**, associate professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance, at 665-2881 or at zasha.

romero@utrgv.edu.

Social Work Open House

The **Department of Social Work** will host an open house for undergraduate students interested in taking social work courses next spring. The event will take place from 5 to 6 p.m. Thursday in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. City Commissioner **Rose Gowen** will conduct a presentation. Refreshments will be served.

Erosion response plan forum

Cameron County will host the second **public forum** on its erosion response plan from 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 15 in the Cameron County Commissioners' Courtroom, located at 1100 E. Monroe St. The project team will suggest details of the plan, including setback guidelines where coastal construction should occur, public beach access improvements and dune/beach management practices. The public may present opinions, suggestions and concerns. The plan is scheduled to be completed by March 31 and the next

public workshop will be held in early February. For more information, contact **Lillian Johnson**, project manager for Peter A. Ravella Consulting LLC, at (512) 968-6816 or at lillijay14@gmail.com.

Health care town halls for the deaf

UTRGV will continue to conduct **town hall meetings** with deaf and hard of hearing residents throughout the Valley to find out what health care services they would like to see offered in the community. The meetings will take place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and will be hosted in the following locations: Dec. 17 in Speer Memorial Library Community Room, 801 E. 12th St. in Mission; Jan. 7, Port Isabel Community Center, 213 Yturria Street in Port Isabel; Jan. 12, UTRGV Salón Cassia in Brownsville; and Jan. 19 in the Raymondville Rural Technical Center, 700 FM 3168.

--Compiled by *Monica Gudiño and Andrea Torres*

A growing need

UTRGV's Food Pantry branches out to Brownsville

Andy De Llano

THE RIDER

College students who are living on their own for the first time often struggle to maintain part-time jobs while also attending classes. Many of them make just enough money to pay their rent and utilities bills and often don't have enough leftover to buy groceries.

With rising tuition fees and the cost of living, the number of students living with food insecurity, which is defined as limited access to affordable and nutritious food, has also risen among UTRGV students.

To combat this problem, colleges across the United States began opening campus food banks. These food banks, or food pantries, supply students enrolled at select universities with canned foods, fresh produce and snacks that are high in protein such as granola bars or peanut butter crackers.

According to the College and University Food Bank Alliance, at least 240 universities have opened a student food pantry on their campus. In Fall 2014, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, then UT Pan American, opened its own student food pantry.

"Before the merger there was a lot of food insecurities," said Jennifer Cerda, the Food Pantry coordinator. "So, they decided to start this program where students could come in once a week and be able to get about 30 or 40 pounds of

food every semester."

It wasn't until recently that a second branch of the non profit organization was able to expand to the Brownsville campus. They held its grand opening on Nov. 24.

"We see a lot of need, as well, in Brownsville since the H-E-B is about a couple of miles away," Cerda said. "A lot of students live in the dorms or near campus so a lot of them don't have vehicles to be able to go to the grocery store. So, this is a great way for them to still stay in school and be able to get their food all at the same time and in the same vicinity."

Program Coordinator for Student Involvement, Yaribel Caraveo, felt that the Student Food Pantry opening in Brownsville would be a positive contribution to the school.

"I really think it's a great idea. I feel a lot of students don't see that there are a lot of their fellow classmates who are hungry," Caraveo said. "I think it's a way to, I guess, remove the stigma of wanting to ask for help."

There are only two food pantry attendants, students hired under work-study, working to help run the food pantry. Bianca Partida, the Edinburg attendant, has been with the pantry since summer vacation and will be leaving when she graduates.

"[It's] really sad because I've already fell in love with the job," Partida said.

then you have those people that tell you that they're ready for work and then don't show up, basically, and end up making you look bad."

Villarreal says her agency primarily looks for candidates who are hardworking and reliable.

Henry Castillo, regional director for Cameron Workforce Solutions, said a problem employers encounter is individuals who do not possess soft skills.

"Hard skills are specific training that you learn to do in a particular job," Castillo said. "Soft skills are the skills that employers need in addition to those hard skills. Those are things like following instructions, working as a team, you know, time management, critical thinking skills, things that you typically don't take a class for but are still important."

WFS Cameron is the local employment provider for the Texas Workforce Solutions System, which is part of the Texas Workforce Commission. The organization provides services for people in need of work and information for schools and companies. It offers a 20-hour workshop on soft skills twice a month. The program runs from 8 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday at 851 Old Alice Rd. in Brownsville. Interested individuals must



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

Food donations are welcomed at the UTRGV Student Food Pantry, which is located in Cortez Hall 239 on the Brownsville campus and in University Center 114 on the Edinburg campus.

"I love it, I fell in love with the students. This is a job I'm going to miss."

The food pantry attendant for Brownsville, Ivan Prado, began working Nov. 24, the opening day.

"With the two staff that we have, it's difficult to feed the number of students that we see each and every day," said the Michael Banegas, associate dean for Student Support.

Both attendants and Coordinator

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call the office in advance at 546-3141.

Juan Andres Rodriguez, director of the UTRGV Career Center, said that in a survey during commencement last spring, at least 60 percent of students already had a job and within a year, after graduation, 82 percent either found a job or continued their education.

The Career Center has served more than 7,000 students during the fall semester for on and off campus jobs. In the UTRGV Career Connection website there are 60 available jobs for students on campus and 193 jobs off campus.

UTRGV will continue legacy institution's UT Brownsville's Student Employment Initiative program, which began in 2005 as part of UTB's retention and timely graduation strategy. The program is designed to employ students on campus. SEI applicants must be enrolled for at least 15 credit hours each semester and maintain a minimum grade-point average of 3.0.

For more information on university employment, access the Career Connection application at my.utrgv.edu or call Career Center at 882-5627 in Brownsville or 665-2243 in Edinburg.

Taking a byte out of old computers

Andrea Torres
THE RIDER

During the entire semester in Visual Communication class, communication senior Karina Capistran has struggled with malfunctioning computers in the Life and Health Sciences Building computer lab on the Brownsville campus.

“Suddenly, they turn off and we’re taking this class,” Capistran said. “If you don’t get the hang of what the professor is doing or if you’re not typing the coding you’re supposed to type for the Dreamweaver [software], you’re lost. ... That creates a problem to where you can even fail the class because ... the computer shut down suddenly. Now you’re, like, behind.”

In an interview with *The Rider* last Tuesday, Isai Ramirez, UTRGV associate information officer for business relationships in the Information Technology department, said there is a plan to update the 442 diskless computers in the Brownsville labs.

“The plan is really to switch over the Brownsville computer labs that are diskless back to a disk technology,” Ramirez said. “That will, hopefully, alleviate

some of [the] issues that we’ve been having.”

The IT Academic and Student Services Department will start the project this month, starting with about 226 machines.

“We are targeting to start that project in December because that is when we’ll least interrupt users,” Ramirez said. “We are targeting the remainder [to be] completed by the end of the [spring] semester, approximately in May.”

The targeted computer labs are located in Main Building, LHSB and the library. IT is in the process of determining which equipment will be updated, he said. The hardware that is anticipated to be purchased will be either Dell or HP.

“Part of the project is to use hardware that [we] already own,” Ramirez said. “That is what we’re planning to use first so that we leverage the computer disks that we already have on hand that we can use. Therefore, that will minimize the cost. Now, the issue is that some disks that we have on hand may not be large enough to have all of the software that is needed in order for some of our faculty and students to use.”

At this time, they have estimated spending \$18,353 for



ANDREA TORRES/THE RIDER

Psychology sophomore Nancy Banda and international business sophomore Margaret Gil work on a College Algebra exam in computer lab classroom 1.504 in the Main Building.

the software licenses that will help IT manage the hardware. The project is currently in an assessment phase to determine which computers need hard drives and additional software. A budget of \$30,000 is estimated for these purchases.

“So, if we run into an issue of we’re not able to sit all of the software on some of the disks that are smaller in size, then we will need to go out and purchase some more disks,” Ramirez said.

Political Science Assistant

Professor Michelle Keck has had some problems this semester with classroom computers freezing when she is lecturing to her students. She’s also had issues when the software needed to take quizzes,

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Keeping an eye on the resacas

UTRGV graduate student receives state recognition for research



JESUS SANCHEZ/THE RIDER

Buford Lessley, a University of Texas Rio Grande Valley multidisciplinary sciences graduate student, holds the Best Graduate Student Presentation certificate he received at last month’s conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration-Texas Chapter at Trinity University in San Antonio.

Jesus Sanchez
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Since September, Buford Lessley, a UTRGV multidisciplinary sciences graduate student, has monitored the restoration of three resacas in Brownsville and developed an index that will show the health of the ecosystem.

“We’re looking at the restored and unrestored resacas in Brownsville,” Lessley said. “We’re working in conjunction with [the Brownsville Public Utilities Board]. ... We’re looking at various structural and functional indicators that will be used to create a multimetric index for the resaca ecosystem health.”

Lessley’s research received Best Graduate Student Presentation honors at a conference of the Society for

Ecological Restoration-Texas Chapter, held Nov. 13-15 at Trinity University in San Antonio.

In his Powerpoint presentation, Lessley discussed what resacas were and how it was a localized term as well as what he was monitoring and the index he created. A resaca is a combination of former distributaries of the Rio Grande and oxbow lakes.

“The index will include all of the data we’re gathering, such as the decomposition rates,” Lessley said. “Our fish community index, our riparian index and several other indexes. ... We’re going to merge those together, add weights to them ... to show what’s important for resaca health. That way, [BPUB], private citizens, interest groups that are interested in the restoration of

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Bonding the community to health

UTRGV and Texas A&M program graduates first class of *promotores*



PHOTO COURTESY PAUL CHOUY

Members of the first graduating class of health care promoters are shown with UTRGV and Texas A&M University officials after they received their certificates of completion during a ceremony Nov. 17. They are (seated, from left) Pilar Alvarado, Ludivina Hernandez, Alma Cecilia Granados, Giovana Anahi Rangel and Manuela Guadalupe Tello. Back row: John Ronnau, UTRGV senior associate dean for Interprofessional Education; Eron Manusov, founding chair of the UTRGV School of Medicine’s Family and Community Medicine department and assistant dean of Education and Clerkships; Linda Nelson, UTRGV School of Medicine senior director of Clinical Operations; Jesus Enrique Delgado, health care promoter graduate; Ernestina Constante, community health worker for the Texas A&M University Health Science Center; Paula Saldaña, *promotora* and trainer; Francisco Javier Escalon, health care promoter graduate; Francisco Fernandez, founding dean of the UTRGV School of Medicine; and Juan Moreno, pastor of La Iglesia de los Hechos.

Oscar Castillo
THE RIDER

At age 42, Guadalupe Tello believed she could not go back to school. Then, she heard about a health promoter program.

“I thought, ‘That’s it, I can’t study anymore,’” Tello said in Spanish. “So, when I was introduced to this program I thought, ‘I can do it. I can try it. This is a challenge for my life.’”

She was part of the first class of health promoters, also known as *promotores*, in the Indian Hills community in Hidalgo County. The program is a result of the partnership between the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and the Texas A&M University School of Public Health.

The first class, which consisted of seven students, graduated on Nov. 17 during a ceremony at La Iglesia de los Hechos in Indian Hills. Each graduate received a certificate of completion that

authorizes them to apply for state certification.

After submitting their applications, students will receive their certificates by mail within four weeks.

Tello said she was introduced to the program when Hidalgo County hosted health clinics in her church. Once she receives her certification, she plans to help and inform the people of her community by participating in the same health clinics.

“A community health worker, or *promotora*, is a liaison between the community and the health care system,” said Paula Saldaña, a health promoter instructor for the Center for Community Health Development in the School of Rural Public Health at the Texas A&M University Health Science Center.

A community health worker can also be considered part of the healthcare team, just like nurses and doctors, Saldaña

said.

“A lot of the community health workers have dealt with issues the community is dealing with currently, and they’ve been able to go over obstacles and challenges,” she said.

Eron Manusov, chair of the School of Medicine’s Family and Community Medicine department, said health promoters are the link between health care and the community.

“[Health promoters] have been very successful all over the world to get health care into the communities,” Manusov said. “If I tell you to do something, you may not listen to me, but if a *promotora*, which happens to be your aunt or somebody in the community tells you, you’re more likely going to listen. So, they’re the bond to the community.”

Saldaña said that in Texas the average health promoter earns

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What's up with 'Teen Titans Go!'

Lesley Robles
THE RIDER



The producers insist that it's a kid's show but, honestly, what are they teaching these kids, How to Be an Idiot 101? "Teen Titan's Go!" is a remake of the American animated 2003 television series, "Teen Titans," based on the DC Comics fictional superhero team of the same name. The remake debuted on April 23, 2013, and it amazes me that they have reached more than 100 episodes.

"Teen Titans Go!" was not created to continue from where its predecessor left off in the series. Instead, it has taken a different route, showing the Teen Titans in their everyday lives. Despite being labeled as comedy and action, the latter is hardly ever portrayed, and the level of comedy is vexatious. Some people may like the show, but others, like me, would agree that it's uncreative and provides more of a disservice to its viewers. I prefer my siblings watch "Steven Universe," "Star vs. the Forces of Evil" or "Gravity Falls," which I think are far better cartoon options than "Teen Titans Go!"

Putting my nostalgia for "Teen Titans" aside and taking the new "Teen Titans Go!" for what it is still makes me cringe when I watch it. The characters' lines are full of elongated pointless jokes. It seems as though the producers, Michael Jelenic and Aaron Horvath, had a ball dumbing down the show.

"Somebody wrote that their view on the show was that it was stupid, but funny. To me that is right where we are going for," Jelenic said in an interview at WonderCon 2013.

Yet dumbing down the content of the show negatively affects the kids watching it. The reality is that kids are easily influenced. The type of shows they watch while growing up, among other things, can have a significant impact on the way they view the world around them. Imagine a future with kids speaking like Robin, who is portrayed as an arrogant control freak that is often rude to his teammates, or Starfire, the alien princess who is an innocent airhead incapable of properly speaking English. We would have kids shouting obnoxiously all the time, being rude and even bullying each other in school like Robin did to Beast Boy in Episode 7 of Season 3.

"Oh, you think that's funny, nerd? Try laughing at this! Crank kick! Crank kick! Crank kick!" Robin said in the episode, "Hey You, Don't Neglect Me in Your Memory."

In this episode Robin "crank kicks" all over Beast Boy's face until the principal gives them detention. This episode references the 1985 film "The Breakfast Club" by engraving the idea of "labels" on children's minds, such as the jock (Cyborg), nerd (Beast Boy), basket case (Raven), and the homecoming queen (Starfire). Having a show enforce labels can harm children's self-esteem as they grow up by pressuring them to belong to a certain group.

"Shut it, nerd. School isn't about what you feel on the inside," Robin continued. "It's about dressing up the outside, so everyone knows who you are by looks alone."

Kids from age 4 and up imitate what they see and hear. They're like little sponges soaking up all the information around them. Frankly, I don't like to see my 6-year-old brother watching this show and mimicking what these characters are doing. I'm not saying that all cartoons have to be educational, like PBS Kids, but I would appreciate the producers showing something more valuable and noteworthy. Amid bad cartoons like "Teen Titans Go!" are good cartoons, like "Steven Universe," that provide more meaning to their episodes by allowing the viewers to reflect on the lessons learned by the central character. I just hope that TV networks keep creating more shows like "Steven Universe," where the creator's passion reaches the audience.



Campus Q & A

What are you most excited about this holiday season?

--Compiled by Michelle Espinoza and Lesley Robles



Eduardo Ramirez
Mathematics senior

"I'm most excited about spending time with family, friends and loved ones and just talk to them and just let them know they're important to me."



Vania Soler
Pre-dental biology senior

"The perfect answer would be the time to spend with the family; however, as a college student I think that the reality is having more time to sleep, no school and great food."



Luis Cardenas
Manufacturing engineering sophomore

"I'm most excited for eating turkey, that's the fun part. It's going to be cold, so I am going to be watching TV and eating all day."



Evelyn Rodriguez
Biomedical sciences sophomore

"I'm excited about spending time with my family, like, getting closer with God. Getting time to finally have free time from school a little bit. Have a little rest and really just like plan out stuff for my future."

Letter to the Editor

Shut the doors on refugees

I believe that the U.S. should turn away refugees. Andrea [Montemayor] is completely ignorant to this issue ["Professor: States can't turn away refugees," Nov. 30]. First off, you can't properly vet these people. They can easily lie. Some of these Syrians could be terrorists, and some of these terrorists are extremely smart and they know exactly what they're doing.

Second, who's there to call to make sure they're not terrorists? The Middle East is a complete train wreck. You can't call any special place or city because no such place exists, and some people can easily forge their passports, which is what some of these terrorists did in the Paris attacks.

Think about it this way: Let's just say, for example, the U.S. was your house. Would you let strangers into your house without knowing who they are? I wouldn't. Look, I care about human life as much as the next guy, but this country cannot afford any more problems. We just have too many at this point.

I completely agree with most of the

Republican governors on this issue. They're spot on and I'm glad even some governors and congressional members who are Democrats agree on this issue. I understand that governors don't have the power to turn away Syrian refugees, but as the White House becomes more and more isolated on this issue, President Obama will most likely lose his power to veto the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act of 2015 (SAFE) bill.

This country has had a rich history of immigration. Yes, I get it, but hundreds of years ago the people that were coming in didn't have or make bombs to terrorize innocent people. Things are much different now. The most important thing this country can provide to its people is safety and assurance that they'll be safe.

If we ignore these issues, bad things are going to happen. We have to have good leadership and be strong, which our president is not. The worst thing he could've ever said was that ISIS was contained hours before the Paris attacks. I was there watching CNN during

Obama's interview and hours later, I was witnessing the horrible Paris attacks.

Zachary I. Saenz
Political science freshman

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Higher sense of awareness

Gender Comm class hosts expo on sexual assault

Monica Gudiño
THE RIDER

Psychology junior Brisa Gonzalez said there is a stigma when it comes to male sexual assault victims because people often think they can defend themselves.

“But, you know, sexual assault can happen with someone that you are comfortable with and then just out of nowhere,” Gonzalez said. “Men need to be recognized as victims of sexual assault.”

She was among the speakers in a free speech alley that was part of the Gender Comm Expo, which took place last Wednesday on the Brownsville campus.

Gonzalez said 17.7 million American women and 3 percent of men have been victims of attempted or completed rape.

The free speech alley consisted of students giving statistics, facts and opinions about sexual assault and was followed by a panel discussion.

“The event, it’s basically to just spread awareness about sexual assault and the statistics here in the Valley, and how students can get help not only on campus ... and how they can get help off campus,” said Rebeca Rodriguez, a communication junior in John Cook’s Gender Communication class, which coordinated the event.

The panel consisted of UTRGV Police Chief Raul Munguia, UTRGV Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention Director Cynthia Jones, Valley Baptist Medical Center Forensic Nurse Examiner Laura Dominguez, UTRGV Office of Institutional Equity Director and Title IX Coordinator Alicia Morley, and Cameron County Assistant District Attorney Omar Saenz.

“The aftermath of being a victim of sexual assault can be incredibly traumatic,” Jones said. “One of our goals is to move people to what I like to call the survivor stage. We want them to identify as survivors of sexual assault.”



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER

UTRGV Police Chief Raul Munguia (from left), Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention Director Cynthia Jones, Valley Baptist Medical Center Forensic Nurse Examiner Laura Dominguez and UTRGV Office of Institutional Equity Office Director Alicia Morley listen as Cameron County Assistant District Attorney Omar Saenz answers a question asked by the panel during a panel discussion on sexual assault awareness and prevention.

Staff at the office of Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention accompany victims to the hospital, police station and the Student Rights and Responsibilities office.

“Having somebody else there who is purely there for the victim can be very empowering,” Jones said. “Our goal is to get them better.”

Dominguez said a victim of a sexual assault should seek medical attention as soon as possible. Victims are recommended to gather medical evidence within 96 hours of the assault.

“Studies say maybe 120 hours, but the sooner the better,” she said.

Many people in the Valley are not legal residents of the United States. Panel moderators Ann Jacobo and Esai Torres, both communication majors, asked about the rights of victims who are not legal residents.

“They have every right. ... In fact, we have laws in place that add further protection,” Saenz said. “[The] reason is that if you think about it, especially here in the Rio Grande Valley, there are a number of people who are not citizens.”

He said one of the main resources for people who are not citizens and are victims of sexual assault is a U Visa, in which the victim cooperates with the

prosecution toward solving the case. The victims can then be granted citizenship status based on their cooperation.

If the victim doesn’t want to go to the police department, they can go to Student Health Services or Student Rights and Responsibilities.

“It’s very important to have these types of events to spread awareness ... so that they know that they are not alone and just bring awareness to support them and give them information that there is help out there if needed,” said Corinna Reyna, a special education senior who works with the office of Clinical Affairs in the UTRGV School of Medicine.

Expanding the legacy

UTPA magazine, radio station receive national recognition

Clarissa Martinez
THE RIDER

The Panorama magazine and Bronc Radio, from University of Texas Rio Grande Valley legacy institution UT Pan American, received awards and recognition from the Associated Collegiate Press and College Broadcasters Inc., respectively.

Members of the Panorama staff earned three individual awards and the magazine won the 2015 ACP Magazine Pacemaker award at the ACP/CMA National College Media Convention, held Oct. 28 to Nov. 1 in Austin.

Karen Villarreal, co-editor-in-chief, won honorable mention in Brochure/Rate Card; Ana Duncan, designer, won fourth place in Yearbook/Magazine Page/Spread; and Omar Garcia Jr. won first place in Environmental Photo.

Villarreal, a UTRGV graphic design senior, designed an advertising rate card.

“As a graphic designer, that’s exactly the kind of recognition you want to hear, that your design is successful,” Villarreal said in a phone interview with *The Rider* last Thursday.

As part of the Panorama’s award-winning last issue, Villarreal is proud to be able to bring recognition to the Rio Grande Valley.

“A lot of people, I think, look down on the area,” she said. “So whenever we’re able to do something really good, better than everyone else in the country, it’s kind of like, ‘Look, we do have talent down here.’”

The Bronc Radio staff was a final four finalist in the 2015 CBI National Student Production Awards. Its “Kidnapped in Mexico” story was recognized in the Best

Audio Special Broadcast category.

Patty Hinojosa and Jessica Ortiz, who co-produced the public service announcement “Domestic Violence,” were named finalists in the Best Public Service Announcement category.

Hinojosa, a mass communication senior, did not expect to be a finalist for the award.

“I just got really shocked because I never expected it to win. ... We just tried to do our best job in putting something together about domestic violence, which I don’t believe received enough awareness,” Hinojosa said.

Frederick Mann, communication lecturer and UTRGV Radio faculty adviser, is proud of the radio staff who was recognized as well as the hard work Ortiz and Hinojosa put into their public service announcement.

“I think it’s incredible,” Mann said. “I know a lot of work went into these projects from both girls. Top four in the country, that’s great.”

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COURTESY PHOTO

Patty Hinojosa and Jessica Ortiz were recognized as finalists in the Best Public Service Announcement category in the 2015 CBI National Student Production Awards. Hinojosa and Ortiz co-produced the Bronc Radio PSA titled “Domestic Violence.”



COURTESY PHOTO

The Panorama magazine of UTRGV legacy institution, the University of Texas Pan American, was recognized at the Associated Collegiate Press/College Media Advisers National College Media Convention. The staff earned three individual awards and the magazine won the 2015 ACP Magazine Pacemaker award. Shown are (front row, from left) Adrian Castillo, Pulse Magazine photo editor and former Panorama photo editor; Matthew Sustaita, former Panorama design editor; and Miguel Angel Medina, Pulse Magazine photographer. Back row: Diana Mitsu Klos, ACP executive director; Betzaida Rivera, Pulse Magazine editor-in-chief; and Andy De Llano, Pulse Magazine copy editor.

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• E A T •

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Rockin' by the hardwood

Pep Band adds to Fieldhouse experience

Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR

Horns blare, tubas blast, there's even a full drum set that can be found many nights. As unique as they are loud and unapologetic, the UTRGV Pep Band brings entertainment that helps promote an authentic college sports experience in the RGV. From the "Star-Spangled Banner" to "Hotline Bling" why use speakers when the in-house band has music in the Fieldhouse covered? During conference volleyball and the entire basketball season, count on the band to be there to rock the venue.

Many universities have large marching bands that will support intercollegiate athletic teams with their play. The Pep Band operates under the exact same concept. Albeit smaller than a marching band, the effect is still felt.

The drums roll when the Vaqueros hit a free throw. The sad trombone plays when the opponents embarrass themselves. There's even someone on roster duty to taunt the entire visiting bench the whole game. Now the band even dresses the part, with the entire congregation decked out in gray UTRGV basketball jerseys.

Saul Torres, director of the Pep Band and a UTRGV music professor, embodies the spirit wholeheartedly. Since the UTRGV merger, Torres had a custom-made basketball jersey, the same as the team with the name "Doc Torres" on the back. The number on the jersey is 06, which he says symbolizes the sixth man they hope to be.

"I know that us present here just adds that extra fire to the whole experience," Torres said.

When the band is not in attendance, the band director since Fall 2012 hears complaints from the crowd the next time they see him.

"We try to get ideas from wherever we can, trying to bring a different feel. We didn't have the kind of spirit we have right now," Torres said. "I want to be a part of developing, especially with the new university, an environment where we're proud."

Pride runs deep with the leader of the drums. Randy Ochoa has spent three years in Pep Band. His ideas regarding the goal of the band centered on



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Pep Band Director Saul Torres leads the group at a women's basketball game inside the UTRGV Fieldhouse.

enhancing the experience of Vaquero fans at games.

"[We hope to bring] just a fun experience, have people enjoy the game more," Ochoa said. "They can actually interact, feel like they're helping the team by cheering them on."

Fans sitting in any part of the Fieldhouse can hear the band loud and clear, playing a mix of typical arena pep tunes as well as modern hits. The modern hits range from Drake's hottest single to some throwback tunes like Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance."

The drummer, who said his favorite song to play is Miley Cyrus' "Wrecking Ball," knows that playing pop songs helps the crowd get involved.

"For this, it's really effective because

everyone knows the music and they can sing along," said Ochoa, a 20-year-old music education major. "The basketball players know it too, so they can get into the music also."

The music program at UTRGV has three bands that perform independent of each other. The wind ensemble, symphonic band and the pep band.

Requirements for the band are not particularly strict. A basic knowledge of reading and playing is necessary. A majority of students join after being a part of their band in high school. There's a mix of music and non-music majors, the latter undergo auditions to prove their skill level.

The band is almost 60 members

strong. Growth is more common than shrinking, with numbers increasing annually.

"I'm thankful that the organization that funds us supplied us with instruments. I got all these instruments and we already outgrew that," Torres added, "We make it work. The more the merrier."

The Pep Band can be found whenever the home team is on Sam Williams Court at the Fieldhouse. The band can even be found in Las Vegas when the Vaqueros participate in the Western Athletic Conference Tournament.

While the Vaqueros can't take the entire home crowd with them to that tournament, it's a nice bonus to have a bit of home follow you.

Home Games

Friday, Dec. 11

Men's Basketball
vs. University of Tennessee
at Martin

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Thursday, Dec. 17

Women's Basketball
vs. University of the Incarnate Word

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Wednesday, Dec. 30

Women's Basketball
vs. Evangel University

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Saturday, Jan. 2

Men's Basketball
vs. Our Lady of the Lake University

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Thursday, Jan. 7

Women's Basketball
vs. Grand Canyon University

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Saturday, Jan. 9

Women's Basketball
vs. Utah Valley University

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Thursday, Jan. 14

Men's Basketball
vs. Chicago State University

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Saturday, Jan. 16

Men's Basketball
vs. University of Missouri-Kansas City

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Basketball

MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

PANTRY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Cerda, work part time with the school. Yet in their line of work they often go above and beyond what they've been paid to do.

"I work Jennifer to death. She's part-time, she works 19 hours. She was telling me last week she worked like 35 hours and still goes to school," Banegas said. "She's that type of individual [Jennifer] that I know that after the 19 hours are

completed that she still continues to work for our students and that's compassion at heart and I appreciate that."

Because many students weren't aware of the food pantries' services, not many visited them in past semesters. However, rehabilitation services senior Partida has noticed an increase in students at the pantry since she began working there.

"We had about maybe 15 maybe 20 at most using it throughout summer. This fall semester it's grown to about 40 students a

day," the 22-year-old said.

Partida was one of many students who had no idea UTRGV was offering free food to its students back in 2014. She now advertises the resource whenever she can.

"Before I started working here I had not heard of [the food pantry]," Partida said. "I feel like also [Jennifer Cerda] has done a great job advertising it. Before I think that's what the

See PANTRY, Page 11

Hoop milestones reached

Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR

The 1,000-point barrier was reached by both Shawnte' Goff and Shaquille Hines last week in Vaquero road games.

Hines, a senior forward on the men's basketball team, scored 22 points against the University of Houston to reach the feat. He only needed nine points going into the game but surpassed that.

The native of Chicago becomes the 24th player in program history to reach at least 1,000 points.

Only 24 hours later it was Goff's turn to reach the milestone

herself. The junior point guard's layup in the fourth quarter against Texas A&M University Corpus Christi was good for her 1,001 point. She is only the seventh player in program history to reach a thousand points. Only a junior, Goff will have the remainder of this season and next to continue to add onto her scoring total.

COMPUTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

via the use of clickers, freezes and does not record the results.

“Generally, I have not had any major problems. ... I think that as long as the updates occur in a time where professors aren’t getting disrupted during the class, then I’m all for it,” Keck said.

Capistran said the update will be good for the Brownsville campus because it will help students feel prepared with the equipment they need in order to succeed.

“To me, we need to get new equipment, not only the software but we need to get at least new computers,” the communication major said. “I think the computers that we have might not be updated and upgraded. We need better equipment, better materials for the students, to be able survive school. I mean, you come to school, expecting all of your equipment to be ready to go. Then what do you get? You get crappy computers. My opinion toward this is that I think it’s good. It’s better.”

RESACAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the resacas can use those indexes. They can go out and gather baseline data and they can take that data, look at what we’ve created, plug their numbers into it and it gives them an overall health of the resaca.”

He has been collecting data on fish and water quality since August 2014, before the start of the monitoring process.

“Our data is limited,” Lessley said about the difference between the restored and unrestored resacas. “December will be the fourth month that we pull data. Right now, we do see somewhat of a difference in depth, obviously, because [BPUB] is doing a dredging project. We see a difference in the relationship between depth and water clarity.”

The [BPUB] Resaca Restoration Project began March 22, 2013, at Cemetery Resaca, located along the Old City Cemetery in Brownsville.

“The Resaca Restoration Project is a very big undertaking,” said Ryan

See RESACAS, Page 11

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Seniors present their final works

Monica Gudiño
THE RIDER

“Never Again,” UTRGV’s first senior art exhibit, opened Nov. 30 at the Art Gallery in Rusteberg Hall with ceramics, paintings and sculptures by Edna Escobedo, Abigail Gonzalez and Chantal Lugo.

“‘Never Again’ was a show where the beginning meets the end because three graduating seniors are now approaching the onset of their professional careers,” Escobedo said.

“Uribe-121,” a stoneware clay with reduction glaze sculpture, is one of Gonzalez’s works.

“From my personal work, I want them to enjoy the forms, just feel what the piece is trying to convey through form even if it’s something from a feeling or an emotion,” she said.

Lugo said all of the pieces seem to go together perfectly even though each artist has her own personal style.

“We have a lot of talent in this school and I love showcasing their talent and, obviously, their hard work. It obviously pays off in the end,” said Alejandro Macias, a lecturer in the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Visual Arts Department. “To see this kind of presentation, this kind of work up on the walls, it’s just fantastic. I love showing it to not just art students or art enthusiasts but a general population.”

“Never Again” closed last Friday.

Other exhibits

The Bachelor of Fine Arts Studio Art exhibit began last Wednesday in the Visual Arts Building in Edinburg and continues through Dec. 17. At 6 tonight, the second senior art exhibit, “Virtuosos,”



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

Art senior Annette Sosa and art junior Blanca Soberanes discuss “Uribe- 121”(stoneware clay with reduction glaze) by Abigail Gonzalez last Tuesday at the “Never Again” senior art show in the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

will showcase artists Melissa Nicole, Juan Pecina and Bianca Camarillo.

“He’s been doing some figurative, also very energetic abstract, work as well,” Macias said about Pecina. “It’s kind of a mix in between, but it has a lot of paint.”

He explained that Nicole does large and small abstract paintings, while Camarillo does sculpture and ceramics.

“I like to focus on not the gory but like the odd side of art, the stuff that people would think is scary weird, you know, I like to make that beautiful,” Camarillo

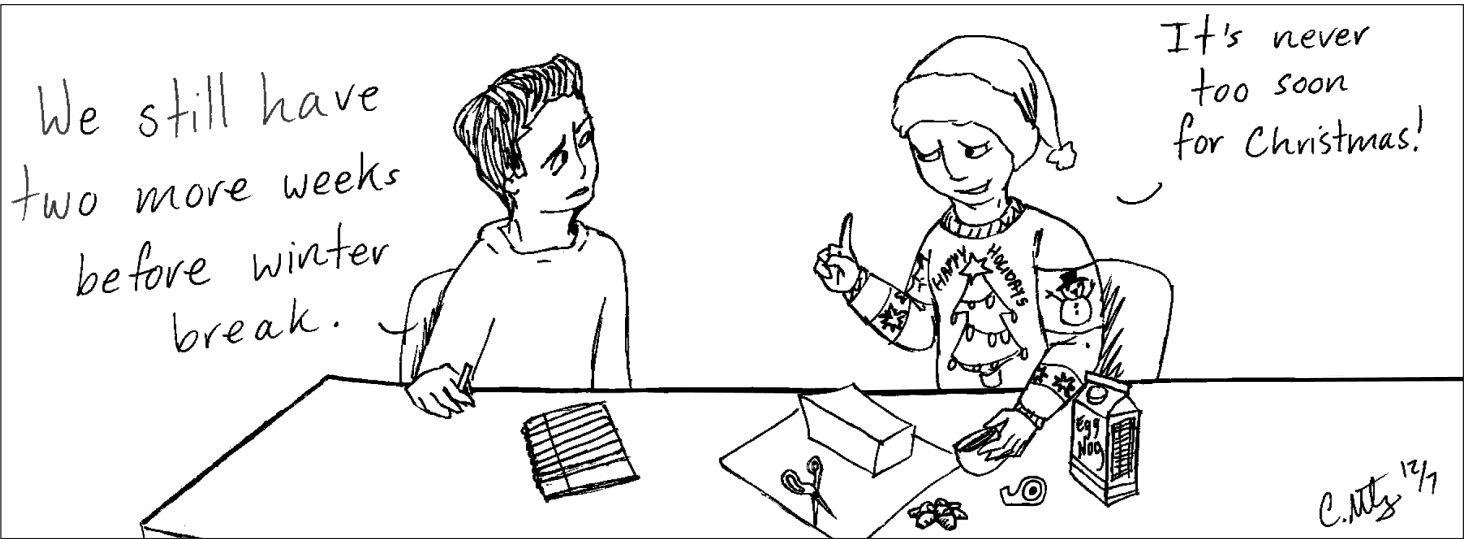
said.

Camarillo said the exhibit’s title, “Virtuosos,” was a group effort, explaining that they were looking for a title with a powerful meaning.

“We are the masters of what we do right now,” she said. “Since we are seniors, we are supposed to have a good concept of what we do. I believe mine is the masters of ceramics and Juan is the master of gothic religious paintings and Melissa is the master of abstraction and surrealist paintings.”

The gallery’s hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday, 10a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday and noon-4 p.m. Friday.

Admission is free for Patron of the Arts members. General admission is \$1 and student semester passes are \$3. The exhibit continues through Friday. For more information, call Macias at 882-7025.



RESACAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Greenfeld, BPUB senior communications and public relations coordinator. He said specialized boats called dredgers act “like a vacuum to suction out debris, sediment, trash, things of that nature.”

The dredger has cutters used to help break up the debris and sediment. The dredger then pumps material, sending it through floating pipes until it winds up at the dewatering system.

After material has been sent through the pipes, the dewatering system separates large trash and debris as well as sand from the water. Specially designed sediment removal equipment is being used to separate the dredged sediment particles from the slurry in

order to produce dry sediment material and a clear, clean effluent that can be discharged back into the resacas, Greenfeld said.

In his research, Lessley monitors decomposition rates, chlorophyll concentrations, basic water quality and fish sampling from two pools of each resaca. The resacas in Lessley’s research are the Fort Brown, De La Palma and Town systems.

Lessley said he expects to graduate in December 2016 and plans to get a job for a state agency, such as Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Alejandro Fierro, UTRGV multidisciplinary sciences assistant professor, also attended the conference in San Antonio and is the adviser for students in the program.

He said the important part of Lessley’s research was presenting a monitoring and assessment project, not a restoration one.

“In the large majority in the restoration efforts worldwide ... not just aquatic systems and resacas but also terrestrial systems like grasslands, deserts, tropical forests, any kind of ecosystems ... lack completely the monitoring and assessment part,” Fierro said. “There’s a lot of money invested worldwide to restore this or that but there is little information in terms of data to say, ‘OK, this is going well, it’s progressing as expected or it’s a waste of money and a waste of time and waste of energy.’ ... It’s important to be able to assess if the system is actually recovering or not.”

PROMOTORES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

between \$8 and \$15 an hour, depending on the city and company they work for.

To be a health promoter in Texas, one has to be a Texas resident, at least 18 years of age and complete a 160-hour course through a credentialed teaching program.

“That is why we partnered with TAMU because they are the only teaching credentialed center,” Manusov said. “With this program, we’re building a credentialed teaching program down here so that we don’t have to go anywhere else to do our training.”

The program is funded by the United Health Foundation and is part of the UTRGV School of Medicine’s South Texas Interprofessional Team Collaborative for Health (STITCH), which includes collaborators from multiple locations across the nation. Hospitals, nonprofit groups and other educational institutions are also teaming up with the program in order to provide care for communities.

In addition to certifying individuals to be health promoters, STITCH will offer a service for already certified promoters to continue their education, specializing in mental health. The third part would allow individuals to achieve college credit through the program.

The course fee is \$600 for community health worker and \$1,000 for community health worker instructor. Fees vary for continuing education courses.

Classes are conducted online or in person based on demand. For more information, visit nchwtc.tamhsc.edu.

PANTRY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

food pantry was lacking: a lot of like advertisement.”

Along with advertising the resource for students who need it, Cerda emphasizes the need for donations to keep the food pantry running.

“Most of our food that we give out to our students is based on donations. Ten percent does come out from our budget,” the communication studies major said. “The rest of it is from donations from students, faculty, community outreach

type of donations. All of it goes back to our students. ... It’s to benefit them to make sure they stay in school instead of figuring out where they’re going to get their next meal.”

Jennifer Cerda urges students to utilize their Facebook page, UTRGV Student Food Pantry, which has been set up so that students can keep tabs on events or volunteer to donate. Individuals who would like to make a cash donation can do so at their UTRGV page.

“We also have the yellow bins located at different departments,” the 24-year-old said. “We always have one bin here

at the university center located by the vending machine so that in case anyone wants to drop by when we’re not open they can just drop them in the yellow bin.”

The food pantry is located in University Center 114 on the Edinburg campus. The pantry on the Brownsville campus is located in Cortez Hall 239. Both locations are open from 2 to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and 1 to 4 p.m. Fridays. The pantry will close Dec. 15 for the holidays.

The pantry is available to all students enrolled at UTRGV. To contact the food

pantry for more information or to donate, call at 665-3663 or email foodpantry@utrgv.edu.

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