



Taking the steps to happiness

‘Awesome’ motivational speaker spreads positive message to the community

Oscar Castillo
THE RIDER

Neil Pasricha said one day his first wife asked for a divorce and a few days later his best friend committed suicide while battling a mental illness.

“One day I was driving home from work and said, ‘I need to focus on something positive, somehow. Just give me a break from all this death and destruction all around me,’” Pasricha said. “I got home from work and typed ‘how to start a blog,’ into Google and I pressed the ‘I’m feeling lucky’ button, that nobody ever presses, and 10 minutes later I started a tiny website called 1000awesomethings.com.”

His “tiny website” became an award-winning blog, which led to his first book, “The Book of Awesome,” a No. 1 international bestseller. The book “isn’t about one man’s favorite things, but rather a catalog of the universal little pleasures we all share,” according to the author’s website.

The author and motivational speaker addressed more than 200 people Thursday night in the Texas Southmost College Arts Center in Brownsville.

Pasricha is the semester’s first speaker in the UTRGV Distinguished Speaker Series and the first to visit Brownsville.

“We have such a short time to appreciate it and enjoy it all,” he said about life.



OSCAR CASTILLO/THE RIDER

Neil Pasricha, author and motivational speaker, speaks to an audience of about 200 people last Thursday in the Texas Southmost College Arts Center in Brownsville. He spoke about achieving happiness using “The 3 A’s of Awesome.”

Pasricha said living a happy life leads to a longer life, and the way to achieve that is through “The 3 A’s of Awesome,” attitude, awareness and action.

He read numerous studies and TED Talk speeches and reached the conclusion that the attitude aspect of the three A’s can be changed using the “Big 5 Superstudies” which are

- going for a 20-minute walk three times a week;
- writing down what makes you happy in a day;
- doing random acts of kindness for others;
- meditating 20 minutes each day; and
- saying five things you are grateful for once a week.

Awareness is how a 3-year-

old sees the world for the first time. Pasricha said that people should see the world like that in order to experience true happiness.

For the action aspect of the three A’s, he said that instead of focusing on finding motivation to do a task--in his case, learning how to swim--he recommends jumping in and

finding the motivation you need in that task.

During a book signing after the lecture, Pasricha told *The Rider* that he wants people to know that they are already awesome and don’t need him to tell them that.

Carlos Cisneros, a junior

See PASRICHA, Page 10

Committee to allocate student services fee



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

Ena Capucion
NEWS EDITOR

The first meeting of the Student Fees Advisory Committee will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. Feb 12, in Research and Innovation 1.102 on the Edinburg campus. It will serve as an orientation for the new appointed members.

Previously known as the Student Affairs Advisory Committee at the University of Texas Pan American, the SFAC

gathers on an annual basis to provide guidance to UT Rio Grande Valley President Guy Bailey on allocating student service fees.

Every year, a total of nine voting members are selected for the committee--five students and four university representatives--by Student Government Association President Alberto Adame and the Student Fees Advisory Committee Chair Michelle Alvarado. Adame considers

SFAC to be the second most important student committee next to the SGA because a large sum of the student body’s money is in their hands.

“I always look for people that ... care a lot [about] what’s going on at the university and they’re at least involved universitywide or in their college,” Adame said. “[I look for] people that I know that are going to be responsible and committed to the committee.”

On average, the student fees amount to \$12.5 million and the SFAC decides where the funding will go and how much each department will receive. Earlier this year, a notice was sent out to the university for possible budget requests--all of which were due Jan. 22. Alvarado works with the nine members and reviews the total requests, analyzes how much money is available and prioritizes the money accordingly.

“That’s where all the fun part begins,” Alvarado said. “What will the impact be? What do we think the number of students served by this initiative will be? Will they have other places

See FEES, Page 2

Tardy diplomas

Bailey blames delay on paper supplier

Jesus Sanchez
EDITOR IN CHIEF

More than a month after commencement, UTRGV’s first graduates still have not received their diplomas.

“Two weeks passed and I had no transcript and there was no diploma,” said Michelle Rodriguez, who graduated Dec. 19 with a bachelor’s degree in communication.

“So, what I did was I went again and I asked, ‘Hey, is there any way I can get the diploma at least?’ and they said, ‘Well, they should be coming in soon.’”

Rodriguez said she started asking fellow communication graduates if they had received their diplomas.

“None of us had gotten it,” she said. “We hadn’t received any type of email or mail that said your diploma is coming.”

Monica Venegas, who graduated with bachelor’s degrees in psychology and sociology, said the university was taking too long in providing official transcripts.

“I don’t know if it’s something to do with UTRGV, the way, you know, it goes because my friend, she graduated from [Texas Southmost College] a

week before us and she just got [her transcript and diploma] like two weeks ago,” Venegas said last Wednesday. “I think it might be

something with the system.”

In an attempt to find out why the diplomas are late, *The Rider* called the Registrar’s Office last Wednesday and was placed on hold for about 25 minutes. *The Rider* hung up.

UTRGV President Guy Bailey told *The Rider* diplomas are going to be sent within the next few weeks.

“Normally, they’re sent out at the end of January and this is because of the auditing process,” he said in a phone interview Thursday night. “So, remember that graduation is not until the week before Christmas and you have Christmas break and New Year’s, so by the time things

See DIPLOMAS, Page 10

Each session requires five members to be present for voting, including at least one university community member. Once the committee has completed the recommendations, it will be sent to Bailey for approval.

Students take on NASA challenge

Tool prototype to be tested at Johnson Space Center in May

Jacqueline Arias
THE RIDER

Three UTRGV students have made it to the final round in the NASA Micro-g NExT program, a competition where science, technology, engineering and mathematics undergraduates from across the country compete to build spacewalk tools for astronauts.

Varda Ahmed teamed up with her sister Tooba Safeer and friend Christopher Kuri to create a prototype coring device that can be used to pick up samples on the surface of asteroids. The drill they designed will be able to collect the sample and preserve the layers of the asteroid without contamination to see its history.

The tools designed for Micro-g NExT address an authentic, current space exploration problems—asteroid sample collection for NASA’s Asteroid Redirect Mission, in which humans will visit a portion of an asteroid that will be brought into lunar orbit. Upon successful testing, these student-designed tools have the possibility of being used by the astronauts for future training as NASA prepares for the mission, according to a news release from the Johnson Space Center.

Ahmed, a mechanical engineering junior, explained the process to design the prototype, which will be tested in May in the NASA Neutral Buoyancy Lab at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

“Once you have your designs and everything, you can work at a workshop or 3D-print prototype or you can actively build it with your own hands ...,” Ahmed said. “Because what we do for the project



GABRIEL MATA/THE RIDER

Electrical engineering senior Tooba Safeer (from left), mathematics senior Christopher Kuri and mechanical engineering junior Varda Ahmed form the UTRGV Micro-g NExT team, which has designed a prototype spacewalk tool that will be tested by NASA in May at its Neutral Buoyancy Lab.

is that once you build your prototype, you go to NASA NBL (Neutral Buoyancy Lab) and test it there with actual professional divers.”

In the Micro-g NExT program, the students, who are studying science, technology, engineering and math, choose one of five challenges provided by NASA to solve. There are a total of 25 teams with three students in each across the country.

“I think most of the challenges from this year have to do with collecting or taking place on asteroids, you know,

collecting rock samples, obtaining rock samples, keeping them in shape and decontaminated from other environments so that it can be brought back to their space shuttle or us, so that we can study them down here on Earth,” said Safeer, a 20-year-old electrical engineering senior. “So the design challenge we picked has to do with obtaining a layer of, basically, sediments that you might find on an asteroid.”

Mathematics senior Kuri, 20, said the program is a great opportunity for the Rio Grande Valley.

Voter registration deadline today

Campus holds rally to increase participation



GABRIEL MATA/THE RIDER

Finance senior Zulema Gracia (left) and pre-dental biology senior Vania Soler register to vote last Tuesday in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus.

Trisha Maldonado
THE RIDER

Today marks the last day to register to vote for the March 1 primary election, where Texas voters may participate in choosing their party’s nominees for the presidential and local county races through secret ballot.

Early voting in the primary election begins Feb. 16 and ends Feb. 26 statewide. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Edinburg Campus will be an early voting site between these dates from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Additional polling locations and times can be found in each county’s website.

Last Tuesday, the university hosted a Vaqueros Vote Rally in the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus. On Wednesday, the event took place on the Student Union lawn in Brownsville.

During this event, UTRGV students, staff, and faculty registered to vote from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and received free pizza after registering.

Biology and mechanical engineering junior Ezequiel Tijerina said he was already a registered voter before but

thought this event was great.

“The fact that you guys have this event on campus is actually going to persuade more people to actually vote,” Tijerina said. “We just stop by and it doesn’t even take more than five minutes to actually register. I’m also kind of grateful that you guys are giving out free pizza.”

Tijerina also weighed in on the presidential campaign.

“There’s good and bad candidates. To be honest, I feel like maybe Bernie Sanders has a good outcome and also Hillary Clinton,” he said. “Hopefully, the best one wins.”

Cassandra Lopez, a biology freshman, also attended the event.

“Just coming in here and seeing everybody is the reason why I came,” Lopez said. “I think it’s great what they are doing, helping students so they can register.”

Student Union Assistant Director Massiel Muñoz and event host, said the event had a great turnout.

“We have great pizza and great turnout, lots of questions, and everyone

See VOTE, Page 10

Market uncertainty

Plunging oil prices, China’s slowing economy contribute to peso depreciation



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

A person receives his money exchange to dollars last Thursday at a currency exchange center located in downtown Brownsville. People has stopped buying dollars because of its high price.

Felipe Zamorano
THE RIDER

As the U.S. dollar nears the \$19 peso exchange rate, Mexicans wonder what has caused their currency to depreciate and their northern neighbor’s to gain strength.

“The peso is not losing value because of problems in the domestic market in Mexico,” said Eduardo Saucedo, a UTRGV lecturer in international trade and the political economy of Mexico. “In fact, the domestic market in Mexico has been working very well.”

In many oil-producing countries, world prices are beneath production costs due to an oversupply in the international market. Only about five to eight of the world’s top 20 producers are still producing oil cheaper than the world market price, said Terrance Martin, an assistant professor in the Economics and Finance department at UTRGV.

“We love what’s going on with oil because it’s cheaper for us to fill at the pump,” Martin said. “We are less concerned, but for investors and people that work in that industry ... it’s not such a good thing.”

Mexico’s federal budget depends heavily on the revenue generated by the

state-owned oil company, Pemex.

“Oil is about 50 percent of income from exports for Mexico, [and] it’s about 20 to 30 percent of the budget of the government,” said Alejandro Serrano, also an assistant professor in the Economics and Finance department.

The decrease in the price of oil has also been caused in great part by a reduction in the demand for commodities, or raw materials, used in manufacturing and production, Serrano said.

A decline in its economic output in the past year, along with the correction or readjusting of its markets, has led to a decline in China’s demand for commodities.

“China is closed,” Saucedo said. “They’re not consuming as much as before, so demand ... has decreased.”

China’s annual gross domestic product growth is expected to be only about 6 percent, down from 8 to 9 percent in previous years, he said.

“The world is so intertwined, globalization is such a real thing,” Martin said. “What happens in China affects us here. ... We’re not insulated.”

This has led to uncertainty and a lack of trust in the Chinese yuan from investors,

See FINANCE, Page 10

If you could be a professor/student for a day, what would you teach and how would you conduct the class?



Pablo Olvera,
estudiante de
primer año

“Si pudiera ser profesor por un día, yo enseñaría antropología porque creo que es una materia muy interesante para mí. Tal vez no sea un requisito muy común para todos, pero yo creo que estudiar al ser humano, su ecología, su historia y toda su cultura es muy interesante, y es algo que todos deberíamos de saber, no solo para tenerlo en el cerebro, verdad, pero también para saber la naturalidad de lo que es ser un ser humano. Eso me gusta mucho a mí”.



Marisa Palacios Knox,
Literature and Cultural Studies
assistant professor

“I would take courses in film and art history because these have always been passions of mine that I’ve pursued in extracurricular activities, but never had the kind of scholarly depth that I would get in a class.”



Evelyn Perales,
psychology senior

“I would teach a human diversity course so, that way, people would learn to accept other people’s religions and cultures and there wouldn’t be so much hatred, and so people won’t be so judgmental toward others and everybody else would get along. I would definitely use videos from around the world, from around different cultures and religions and how they practice it.”



Itzell Sanchez,
biology freshman

“I would teach psychology because I think that it is a very interesting field. It is a very broad subject and there is a lot to teach from it. I have had about two psychology classes and both professors were very open-minded. They were very cool and all the information they gave was very helpful later on.”

--Compiled by Michelle Espinoza and Lesley Robles



A closer look into metalcore music



Gabriel Mata
THE RIDER

“How can I love when I never let anyone inside, burned one too many times.

In a world so full of hate, how can anyone rise above?

In a world so full of hate, how can I feel anything but lost?”

--“The Concrete Flower” by No Bragging Rights

At first glimpse, what do you think this song sounds like? Believe it or not, this song is originally belted at the top of No

Bragging Rights vocalist Mike Perez’s lungs. Have you ever been so upset that you just needed to scream?

The music that comes from Metalcore bands is the embodiment of that feeling.

While it is a genre that you have to adapt to, it’s some of the most inspiring music that I’ve encountered.

“In the end it’s not about what you have. In the end it’s all about where you wanna go and the roads you take to help you get there”

--“This Is the House that Doubt Built” by A Day to Remember

Bands like A Day to Remember, No Bragging Rights, Of Mice & Men, etc., all have one thing in common: They sing to inspire. This type of music isn’t generally on the radio, which means these bands have few to no restrictions. With such free range, they’re able to speak about what truly matters to them.

There’s a big misconception with metalcore music, nowadays, as the genre is still relatively new (starting in the early 1990s). People have approached me and begged me to turn off my music because

it’s “associated with the devil.” Their view baffles me. Why does screaming in a song link it to evil? In reality, a lot of metalcore bands are Christian bands and sprinkle their faith into their music.

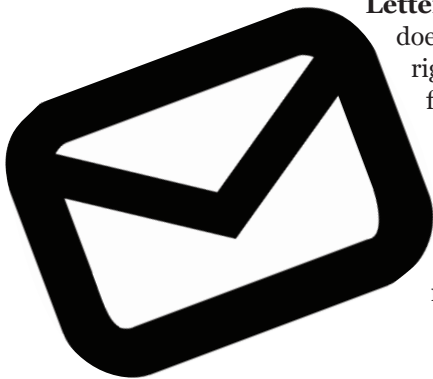
I would hope that artists got so passionate that they just had to scream it to the world. I enjoy the idea that artists I look up to love their art so much that they’d break the norm and present it the way it is in their heads.

“Why does screaming in a song link it to evil? In reality, a lot of metalcore bands are Christian bands and sprinkle their faith into their music.”

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Lock and look out

Three vehicles burglarized on Brownsville campus lot



Andrea Torres
THE RIDER

After seeing the public safety advisory sent out by University Police two weeks ago, Linda Macias, a counseling and guidance graduate student, said she feels unsafe when parking on the Brownsville campus.

“I don’t feel safe because there is a risk of my car being, you know, vandalized or [broken into],” Macias said.

The Jan. 17 advisory stated there were three break-ins on the Brownsville campus. One of the vehicles belonged to the university and two to faculty members. These incidents happened in the late hours of Jan. 16 and 17 in parking Lots A1 and B2.

“Those incidents, actually, causes us to be a little more vigilant and have a little bit more patrols out there and also putting out the word,” said Raul Munguia, UT Rio Grande Valley police chief.

When a faculty member returned to his car about 1:30 a.m. Jan. 16 he discovered the driver’s window was broken. Items were missing and no other nearby vehicle was broken into, according to an offense report summary sent to *The Rider*.

At 12:29 a.m. Jan. 17, an officer on patrol spotted a university vehicle with its left window broken and compartments opened. Ten minutes later, he saw a faculty vehicle that was burglarized.

Because the investigation is still ongoing, no further details were released,



ANDREA TORRES/THE RIDER

Cars sit in Lot B2 on the Brownsville campus where two vehicle break-ins occurred Jan. 16 and 17. University Police advise those who park in campus lots to secure valuables in their vehicle’s trunk and report any suspicious people they see.

Munguia said.

The last break-ins on the Brownsville campus occurred in late October in a Texas Southmost College parking lot, which is frequently used by the UTRGV campus community.

Since these six incidents, University Police has started to work with a new security agency the college hired to monitor its facilities, the chief said.

“The communications between TSC security and our department has increased substantially,” Munguia said. “Also, our patrols are extended over there to the TSC campus. As far as where it is we have leased space [from TSC], our officers are patrolling those particular areas.”

Officers are not the only ones keeping an eye on parking lots. The police department on the Edinburg campus has help

from security cameras on the lots and the footage is reviewed for the cases, the chief said.

“We do monitor them,” he said. “However, those are primarily recording cameras. If something occurs, we can go back and look at it. We don’t have the personnel to sit there and personally watch the cameras all day long.”

Although University Police patrol the Brownsville campus, the department is looking into getting security cameras for the campus.

“Here in Brownsville, there were some cameras installed. We also have cameras on the border fence,” Munguia said. “So, we did have a few cameras [but] nowhere near to the extent that they exist in Edinburg. However, for both campuses, we’re still looking at increases in cameras.”

University Police is also getting involved in the construction of the new buildings on the Brownsville campus.

“We already have a seat at the table, you know, when they are going over the security needs for the new building,” he said. “That’s where we’re going to be looking at the cameras, you know, camera placements within the buildings.”

University Police recommends the campus community keep an eye out for any suspicious activity in the area, to secure valuables in the vehicle trunk, lock all vehicle doors and always be aware of your surroundings.

See BURGLARY, Page 10

Where are they now?

Billiards tables removed from El Comedor due to space restrictions



ANDREA TORRES/THE RIDER

Alexis De Los Reyes, a criminal justice freshman, prepares to strike the cue ball in a game of billiards last Tuesday in the Student Union’s Game Room on the Edinburg campus.

Rick R. Ramirez
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Before the renovation of El Comedor, the Student Union dining area in Brownsville, two billiards tables served as the leading leisure activity for the campus community. Students expecting to see the same two tables this semester were in for a surprise.

Communication senior Sylvia Rendon used to play pool between classes to help pass time and relieve stress. She lost that luxury in Fall 2015 with the closing and remodeling of El Comedor.

“I’ve been playing pool since I was 12 years old,” Rendon said. “I used to play pool here all the time. It was a stress re-

liever. I made a lot of friends and met a lot of people playing pool.”

Edna Zambrano-Martinez is the director of the Student Union on the Edinburg campus and oversees operations at El Comedor.

Zambrano-Martinez said that the pool tables were “in pretty bad shape.”

She said plans to purchase new pool tables “seem very unlikely” due to limited space and the ongoing classes in the Student Union.

“When [UT Brownsville] and [Texas Southmost College] split, my understanding is that UT System paid off the debt on that union building,” Zambrano-Martinez said. “So, students were no

Goodbye, 2015



GABRIEL MATA/THE RIDER

Theater sophomore Jonathan Rodriguez looks forward to a brighter year by shredding “fear.” The UTRGV Counseling Center hosted the Hasta La Vista 2015! in the Student Union last Thursday. Students wrote things they wanted to get rid of for the new year and shredded them or wrote them on a balloon and popped it.

longer paying a fee. So, it became an academic space.”

The game room in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus is equipped with several televisions, game stations and air hockey and pool tables. The Edinburg campus has DIRECTV due to an existing contract from legacy institution UT Pan American.

The Brownsville campus has no cable television service, but Zambrano-Martinez said, “I think they’re working on getting a contract for the whole Brownsville campus now.”

Roberto Cantu, Campus Auxiliary Services executive director at UT Rio Grande Valley assists Zambrano-Martinez with

food service operations at El Comedor.

“Two things that we are working on are getting, TVs and a sound system on the Brownsville campus,” Cantu said.

He said the two pool tables are in a storage room on the Brownsville campus.

“Students are very important to us. We listen to their needs and we will continue to do what we can to serve their needs,” Cantu said.

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UTRGV is now a member of the National Student Exchange (NSE). NSE provides undergraduates at UTRGV "study away" opportunities for either a semester or a full year at any one of over 200 U.S. colleges and universities stretching from Hawaii to Maine (as well as a few in the Caribbean islands).

Studying away at another U.S. institution provides students with chances to experience new places and people, as well as take courses at other universities that support and complement their academic work at UTRGV. It also looks great on a student's professional résumé.

In most instances UTRGV students can study away by paying their regular UTRGV tuition, which allows scholarships, grants, and financial aid packages to remain intact. Additionally, students typically take courses away that fit into their UTRGV degree plans.

For more information, please visit the NSE website at www.nse.org or contact UTRGV's NSE Coordinator, Dr. Christopher Keller, at christopher.keller@utrgv.edu or by phone at (956) 665-3145.

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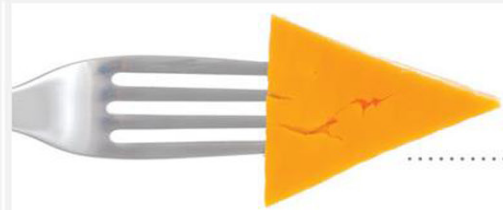
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Los precios bajos del petróleo, economía desacelerada de China contribuyen a la depreciación del peso

Felipe Zamorano
THE RIDER

Mientras el dólar estadounidense supera la tasa de cambio de \$19 pesos, los mexicanos se preguntan qué ha causado que su moneda se deprecie mientras la del vecino del norte se fortalece.

“El peso no está perdiendo calor por problemas en el mercado doméstico de México”, dijo Eduardo Saucedo, un profesor de UTRGV en comercio internacional y política económica de México. “De hecho, el mercado doméstico en México ha estado funcionando muy bien”.

En muchos países productores de petróleo, los precios mundiales están por debajo de los costos de producción debido a un exceso en el mercado internacional. Solo alrededor de cinco a ocho países de los 20 productores más grandes están produciendo petróleo a menor costo que el precio del mercado mundial, dijo Terrance Martin, un profesor en el departamento de Economía y Finanzas en UTRGV.

“Nosotros amamos lo que está sucediendo con el petróleo porque es más barato para nosotros llenar en la bomba”, Martin dijo. “Estamos menos preocupados, pero para inversionistas y personas que trabajan en la industria ... no es algo tan bueno”.

El presupuesto federal de México depende fuertemente en los ingresos generados por la compañía petrolera



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

Diferentes casas de cambio de divisas situadas en la zona centro de la ciudad de Brownsville.

paraestatal Pemex. “El petróleo trae alrededor del 50 por ciento del ingreso de exportaciones para México, [y] cuenta como alrededor del 20 a 30 por ciento del presupuesto del gobierno”, dijo Alejandro Serrano, también un profesor en el departamento de Economía y Finanzas. La baja en el precio del petróleo también ha sido causado en gran parte

por la reducción en la demanda de mercadería, o materia prima, usada en la manufactura y producción, Serrano dijo. Una baja en su producción económica en el pasado año, en conjunto con una corrección o ajuste en sus mercados ha llevado a China a bajar su demanda por mercadería. “China está cerrado”, dijo Saucedo. “No están consumiendo tanto como

antes, así que la demanda ... ha bajado”. Se espera que el crecimiento del producto interno bruto anual de China sea solo alrededor de 6 por ciento, por debajo del 8 o 9 por ciento de los años previos, él dijo. “El mundo está tan entrelazado, la globalización es algo tan real”, dijo Martin. “Lo que pasa en China nos afecta aquí. ... No estamos aislados”. Esto ha llevado a la incertidumbre y una falta de confianza en el yuan chino por parte de inversionistas, quienes ahora buscan monedas más fuertes, como el dólar, para salvaguardar sus inversiones. Junto con un incremento de la tasa de interés de la Reserva Federal de los Estados Unidos el pasado diciembre a un rango entre 0.25 y 0.5 por ciento, la devaluación del yuan ha incrementado el valor del dólar, lo cual en cambio ha depreciado el peso a pesar del desempeño adecuado de la economía de México. “El peso ha estado perdiendo valor porque el dólar ha incrementado en valor, no por que el peso en sí está perdiendo valor”, Saucedo dijo. México tiene poco control sobre el suministro y demanda internacional de petróleo y otras mercaderías. Ahora bien, el país tiene la habilidad de incrementar su producción de bienes manufacturados y enfocarse menos en exportar mercaderías, lo cual puede reducir el

Vea PESO, Página 10

Spin around the globe



MICHELLE ESPINOZA/THE RIDER

Physics sophomore Francisco Llamas spins a UTRGV prize wheel during the Study Abroad Festival held Tuesday in the Main Building’s Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. Students had the chance to win lanyards, key chains, water bottles, travel wallets and UTRGV T-shirts. Also shown is Marivel Mata, administrative coordinator for International Programs and Partnerships.

Bouncing the stress away



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

UTRGV students participate in a match of battle ball soccer last Tuesday during the Battle Ball event at the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

CLUB SPOTLIGHT



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Members of the Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society-Edinburg include (front row, from left) Megan Gonzalez, Vanessa Mara, Ana Reyes and Liliana Vasquez. Back row: Gabriel Gonzalez, Gregory Koneri, Nathan Treviño and Brent Estabillo.

Name: Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society
Purpose: Founded in 1924, Alpha Lambda Delta is an honor society for students in their first year at an institution of higher education. It recognizes students who have succeeded in maintaining a 3.5 grade-point average or higher and are in the top 20 percent of their class in their first semester at UTRGV. Alpha Lambda Delta’s mission is to “encourage superior academic achievement ... to promote intelligent living and a continued high standard of learning, and to assist students in recognizing and developing meaningful goals for their unique roles in society.”
President: Ana Reyes
Vice President: Rodolfo Singleterry
Treasurer: Gregory Koneri
Webmaster: Megan Gonzalez
Historian: Vanessa Mora
Social & Outreach Chair: Nathan Treviño
Community Service Chair: Gabriel Gonzalez
Junior Adviser: Brent Estabillo
Senior Adviser: Laura Salinas
Advisers: Ahmet Aksoy, assistant director of Mentoring and Transition Services, and Kristopher Nava, program coordinator for Leadership and Mentoring
Activities: At UTRGV, the honor society participates in university sponsored

activities and provides community service opportunities for members. Guest speakers at general meetings provide insight on different topics of expertise or programs they represent. Most important, Alpha Lambda Delta aims to provide and foster an environment of support and family for its members.
Awards: 2015 Order of the Torch Recipient, National Alpha Lambda Delta; 2015 Delta Silver Award, National Alpha Lambda Delta; Ujval Pathak, member, Stemler Study Abroad Recipient, National Alpha Lambda Delta
Meetings: 12:15 to 1 p.m. Thursdays in EDU 1.102
Membership requirements: Students must have a 3.5 GPA or higher and be in the top 20 percent of their class during their first term or their first year of study at an institution of higher education. They must be enrolled as a full-time student pursuing a bachelor’s degree at an accredited institution with an active Alpha Lambda Delta chapter on campus.
For more information, email: Ana Reyes at ana.v.reyes01@utrgv.edu
National ALD website: <http://www.nationalald.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aldutrgv>
Instagram: ald_utrgv
Twitter: @ALD_UTRGV
--Compiled by Lesley Robles

Taking the plunge

Swim Club looks to build a strong group



GABRIEL MATA/THE RIDER

Swimmers train during practice at the HPE 1 Building. The Swim Club practices three days a week under the instruction of officers in the club.

Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR

Senior Oscar Ramos wrote the word “commitment” on the whiteboard during the first swim meeting of the year. Ramos first spoke of a strong first semester for the newly created club, with many new friendships being created. But after officers and members new or old introduced themselves he made it clear that improvement would take effort.

The president of the Swim Club at UTRGV knows that “commitment” is something that members trying to get better need to keep in mind to stay afloat.

“You have to train a lot every day, if you really want to see a change,” Ramos said. “If you want to lose weight, you know the process. If you want to get better grades, you know the process. If you want to get better at swimming, you already know the process.”

The process is made easier with flexible time and members that serve as instructors to fellow swimmers in the club. Practice is held indoors at the HPE 1 building outside of the UTRGV Fieldhouse. The club meets on dry land every three weeks to ensure things are running smoothly but most of their time together is in the water.

The mix of experienced swimmers and those looking to improve their skill is something that makes the club unique.

Ramos, Secretary Jasmine Cirlos and

Vice President Edar Arzamendi lead practices that take place three times a week. Swimmers are encouraged to attend as much practice as possible, as well as swim on their own. Members pay \$25 in dues, with additional items, such as shirts and swim caps being offered to members who pay up to \$45.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, they practice from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. On Saturdays, they convene from noon to 2 p.m. There are also open swim times for all students in HPE hosted by UREC.

Arzamendi says the club’s focus is bringing attention to a sport that does not get a lot of it.

“A major goal for Swim Club is to bring attention to a sport seldom practiced on the regular,” the senior said. “We love swimming and we want people to know how to swim and feel confident to do it competitively. We welcome all levels and we truly are a family so it will embody the lifestyle of being in a college organization.”

The education major hopes that one day swimming will be incorporated into the Athletics department. The Western Athletic Conference currently has seven swim teams, but only three are full-time members of the conference.

“I want the club to become something that is part of Athletics,” the 21-year-old senior said. “There is a lot of talent that comes straight out of the high schools but there is no team.”

Cirlos, a McAllen resident, swam in high school and has instructed younger children before. However, she says coaching peers is a different experience altogether.

“It’s a lot easier I would say,” said the 20-year-old kinesiology major. “With little kids I don’t get to give them the hardest sets. It’s more like teaching the basics, and here it’s coaching. Usually they already have an idea.”

The club’s secretary went on to say the group is a mixed bag of experienced and intermediate swimmers.

“It’s really half and half,” Cirlos said. “A few of them swam in high school and they already know. The rest of them know how to swim, they get the idea, but they want to focus on technique and work on skills. That’s where me and Edar and Oscar come in.”

The club’s motto is “we’re here to serve you” and the instructors seem to be taking a strong interest in making everyone better at the art of swimming.

The Swim Club at UTRGV also looks to host competition later in the spring so the fruits of their labor can be put on full display.

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utrgvrider.com

Athlete of the Week



JACQUELINE ARIAS/THE RIDER

Name: Reegan Greenwood

Classification: Senior

Major: Criminal justice

Sport: Tennis

Age: 21

Hometown: Ryde, Isle of Wight, England

Who is your favorite athlete? “Maria Sharapova.” Sharapova is Russian professional tennis player.

Who is your role model? “My grandfather. He was always very sick. He was really brave and never really showed anything.”

What is the best advice you’ve been given and by whom? “Probably my parents. They’re always telling me, on [a] daily basis, just try my hardest. I mean I just got a text from my dad right now just to keep trying.”

Where’s your favorite hangout spot on campus? Why? “Probably the [Student] Union Starbucks, probably. Go to the shop, buy some candies.”

When did you begin playing tennis and why did you start? “I started when I was 5, but then I stopped because my sister didn’t want to play with me and I didn’t want to play by myself. And then for my seventh birthday, my aunt bought me some tennis lessons so I did them with my cousin.”

Did you compete in high school and did you get any awards? “Back home in Europe, generally, actually, we don’t have high school sports. It’s usually not as big as here. So it was more of club leagues and stuff. Yeah, where I live, like the island I live on, the council, they have a gifted and talented program, so I was on that.”

What are your academic goals? “Well, I graduate in May, so pass these classes with good grades.”

What is your favorite movie? “I think I’m like a classic girl. I like ‘The Notebook’ and stuff like that. But then I like comedy films.”

Where’s your dream vacation? “I went to the Caribbean before and it was amazing, so I want to go back there someday.”

How do you feel about being part of the first UTRGV Women’s Tennis Team? “It’s good. It’s exciting. I think we’re going to have a good season, so we’re setting the standard pretty high.”

--Compiled by Jacqueline Arias

Home Games

Basketball and Tennis

Thursday, Feb. 4

**Men's Basketball
vs. Utah Valley
University**

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Saturday, Feb. 6

**Men's Basketball
vs. Grand Canyon
University**

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Sunday, Feb. 7

**Men's Tennis
vs. Lamar University**

12 p.m.

Orville I. Cox Tennis Center

THE RIDER		Monday, February 1, 2016
<div>PASRICHA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 at Veterans Memorial High School in Brownsville, said he recently lost an all-state choir competition and felt he needed positivity in his life. “Recently, I, myself have been having some struggle being happy because I had a defeat in a competition and my parents were like, ‘You know what? There’s this guy, he is a very accomplished guy. We’ve read his books before, we think you’d really like him,’” Carlos said. “They said it would be a good opportunity, and I came over here and I didn’t feel like, ‘Oh, I’ve</div>	<div>already heard the same things before, positivity and everything.’ His tips and his process for being happy really did show me a light at the end of the tunnel and thinking, ‘You know, there is more to life than some little things that don’t really matter as much. There’s more things to be happy about, to be thankful for.” Provost Havidán Rodríguez was among the audience members who heard Pasricha’s message of positivity. He said he hopes to have more events like this that spread a positive message throughout the campus and the community. “We selected him due to his positive</div>	<div>message,” Cindy Mata, director of Student Activities, said about Pasricha. “‘The 3 A’s of Awesome,’ TED Talk really spoke to us. Like, it really resonated with our committee.” The Distinguished Speaker Series is a signature program that was carried over to UTRGV from legacy institution UT Pan American. Mata said the purpose of the series is to bring outstanding speakers with diverse backgrounds to the Rio Grande Valley. “I hope students enjoy it, enjoy the speakers, and that they come out and join us for the speeches and lectures,” she said. “This is done for them. ... We</div>
<div>DIPLOMAS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 are printed, they’re normally sent out at the end of January. This year, we had a delay in getting the printing paper. The supplier has been tardy in getting that to us, so we’re running about a week or so behind.” Rodriguez said not having her</div>	<div>transcript or diploma has made it difficult for her to find a job. “We never heard anything about when [the transcripts or diplomas] were actually going to come in,” she said. “I lost out on two jobs already only because I didn’t have transcripts and I didn’t have my diploma. That’s a really big issue for all of us right now because employers are asking for copies of each and we can’t</div>	<div>provide them right now. “So, it’s kind of holding us back from actually going out and finding jobs, which is what the university, this new institution, promotes all the time. I just feel like they forgot about us, even though we’re the first class that they graduated. I think they owe us an explanation or something, not just to leave us hanging here.”</div>

BURGLARY
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

“The message here: If anyone sees anything that doesn’t look right to them, that looks suspicious, just be safe and call us,” Munguia said.

Macias said the university should have more patrols.

“I see one car, security, roaming the area but maybe having more patrols on campus will make me feel very safe,” she said.

To report suspicious activity on the campuses, call University Police at 882-8232 in Brownsville and Harlingen and 665-7151 in Edinburg.

VOTE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

seems interested and excited about the elections, so that’s wonderful,” Muñoz said, “If they have a question, we tell them about the process.” Muñoz said there was also a handful of faculty and staff that registered.

“We are also going to UNIV classes and encouraging students to register.” Muñoz said she spoke to two UNIV classes and

PESO
CONTINUACION DE PAGINA 5

efecto que la baja en los precios tendría sobre el peso.

El Banco de México, el banco central del país, podría hacer dos cosas para ayudar al peso a ganar terreno, Serrano dijo. Puede incrementar el suministro de dólares al continuar subastando sus reservas de dólares o podría alzar la tasa de interés para incrementar el valor del peso.

Mientras los Estados Unidos puede celebrar su buen desempeño económico que se refleja en un dólar fuerte y México puede beneficiarse de un incremento en exportaciones debido a un peso más

registered 20 additional student voters.

For more information on requirements for registering to vote, visit the Texas Secretary of State website at www.sos.state.tx.us.

For Hidalgo County, visit www.co.hidalgo.tx.us or call the Voter Registration Office at 318-2570. For Cameron County, visit www.co.cameron.tx.us or call the Cameron County Department of Elections & Voters Registration at 544-0809.

barato, aquellos que viven en la frontera entre ambos países podrían llegar a sentir los efectos adversos.

“En términos de ventas, no se cuanta gente [mexicana] hará sus compras en los Estados Unidos. El dólar está más caro en estos momentos”, Serrano dijo. “Verás menos compras en el área”.

Los viajeros diarios y otras personas que cruzan la frontera seguido están siendo afectados por el dólar caro y el peso barato, incluyendo Juan de Dios Flores, un estudiante de finanzas de último año de UTRGV que a menudo cruza la frontera a Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México.

“Debido a que mis ingresos son en

FINANCE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

who now seek stronger currencies, such as the dollar, to safeguard their investments.

Along with an increase in the U.S. Federal Reserve’s interest rate last December to a range between 0.25 and 0.5 percent, the devaluation of the yuan has increased the value of the dollar, which in turn has had a depreciative effect on the peso, despite Mexico’s adequate economic performance.

“The peso has been losing value because the dollar is increasing in value, not because the peso, per se, is losing its value,” Saucedo said.

Mexico has little control over the international supply and demand for oil and other commodities. However, the country has the ability to increase its output of manufactured goods and focus less on exporting commodities, which could reduce the effect the plunge in prices would have on the peso.

Banco de Mexico, the country’s central bank, could do two things to help the peso gain ground, Serrano said. It could increase the supply of dollars by continuing to auction its dollar reserves or it could increase the interest rate in order to increase the value of the peso.

While the U.S. can celebrate its good economic performance reflected on a

dólares, cuando cruzo la frontera y voy a gastar en pesos, de hecho me está beneficiando”, Flores dijo. “Las cosas son mucho más baratas para mi”.

Ahora bien, no todos los efectos son positivos.

Lety Vázques, una cajera en la Casa de Cambio Anahuac, ubicada en la esquina de May Street e International Boulevard en Brownsville, ha visto una baja en el flujo de compradores en el área del centro.

“Desde que subió [el dólar], nuestro negocio ha bajado mucho”, Vázques dijo. “La gente está absteniéndose de intercambiar dinero porque está muy alto”.

strong dollar and Mexico can profit from an increase in exports due to a cheaper peso, those who live on the border between these two countries might end up feeling the adverse effects.

“In terms of retail, I don’t know how many [Mexican] people are going to do their shopping in the U.S. The dollar is more expensive right now,” Serrano said. “You will see less shopping in the area.”

Commuters and other people who cross the border often are being affected by the expensive dollar and cheap peso, including UTRGV student Juan de Dios Flores, a senior finance major who often crosses the border into Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

“Since my income comes in dollars, whenever I cross the border and go spend it in pesos, it’s actually benefitting me,” Flores said. “Things are way cheaper for me.”

However, the effects are not all positive.

Lety Vazques, a cashier at the currency exchange center Casa de Cambio Anahuac, located at the corner of May Street and International Boulevard in Brownsville, has seen a decrease in the flow of shoppers in the downtown area.

“Since [the dollar] is up, our business has decreased a lot,” Vazques said. “People are refraining from exchanging money because it’s really high.”

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Bringing variety to his art

‘Transition’ exhibit spans creator’s work

Monica Gudiño
THE RIDER

Jimmy Peña, a Corpus Christi artist, changed directions in his career by switching from drawings to kinetic sculptures.

Last Tuesday, more than three dozen people saw that change during the opening reception of the exhibit, “Transition” in the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

“It helps me illustrate the different stages of work that I’ve done and how I’ve got a variety of media that I work with,” Peña said of the exhibit, which contains drawings, paintings, photographs and his first two kinetic sculptures.

A kinetic sculpture is one that moves and is set in motion by an internal mechanism or external help, such as light or air.

“I didn’t want it to be a monotonous show; I wanted to have a variety of things,” Peña said. “So, this is the perfect opportunity.”

Peña’s main kinetic sculpture, “Satellite,” consists of a geometric female figure orbiting an inverted pyramid.

“It’s like the mother shape, you know, that shape determines the shape of the figure. So, it’s like somehow its origins,” he said.

Peña said in a previous interview with *The Rider* that he made the transition because he gets more energized when creating kinetic pieces.

“You have the kinetic work, the sculpture that moves, which is really awesome to see because you don’t really see too much of that,” said Alejandro Macias, a lecturer in the UTRGV Visual Arts Department.

Macias wanted to expose students to the work of an artist in the middle of a transition from 2-D figurative art to kinetic work.

“The detail in the pieces are very exquisite and you can tell that they really know their craft very well,” said Vivian Zapata, an art education senior.

The gallery’s hours are 1 to 5:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday.

Admission is \$1 and student semester passes are \$3. The exhibit continues through Feb. 19. For more information, call Macias at 882-7025.



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Vivian Zapata, an art education senior, looks at a hanging sculpture by Jimmy Peña last Tuesday in the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

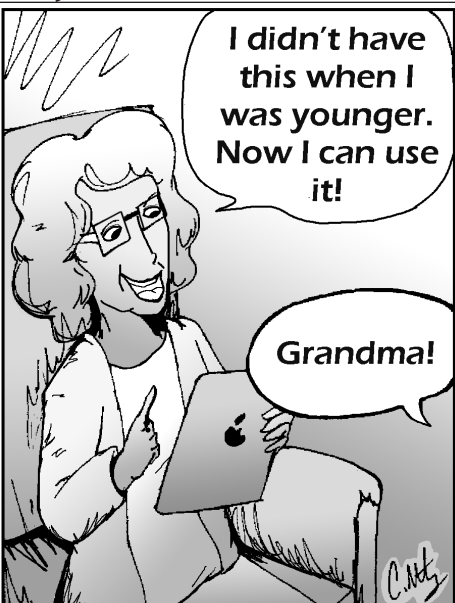


UTRGV students attend “Transition,” a kinetic sculpture and painting exhibit by Corpus Christi artist Jimmy Peña last Tuesday at the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

Have a story idea?
Call us at 882-5143
or 665-2541

VALLEY TOONS

By Clarissa Martinez





February 6, 2016 America's Got Talent Auditions from 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Got talent? Sign up at RGVproud.com to enter.

February 7: Super Bowl Sunday Patio Party!
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