



**Sports:**  
WAC indoor  
championships  
approaching



## Police to meet with prosecutors in slap case

**Jesus Sanchez**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



University Police will meet with prosecutors from the Edinburg Municipal Court this week to discuss the case in which a UTRGV professor allegedly slapped a student last month, officials say.

“We’ve interviewed various students about [the case],” UTRGV Police Chief Raul Munguia said. “... From our end, it still looks like it’s a class C misdemeanor. We will be briefing it with the prosecutors over at the municipal court just to get another opinion.”

On Jan. 21, a student on the Edinburg campus reported that her philosophy class was having a discussion about right and wrong and while the discussion was taking place, the professor slapped her on her left cheek. She was shocked because the slap was unexpected.

As of press time Thursday, the chief said no charges had been filed and the case is still under investigation.

See CASE, Page 2

# Groundbreaking discovery

Gravitational waves confirmed, will help map universe

**Oscar Castillo**  
THE RIDER

Scientists announced Thursday that gravitational waves do exist, calling it a “fundamental science discovery.”

“Ladies and gentlemen, we—have detected—gravitational waves. We did it,” David Reitze, LIGO Laboratory executive director, told a roaring crowd during a news conference that was live streamed in the Student Union’s Gran Salón in Brownsville.

The UTRGV Center for Gravitational Wave Astronomy (CGWA), a member of LIGO, streamed the conference from the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., where Reitze announced the existence of gravitational waves, which were observed Sept. 14 by the two Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatories (LIGO).

During the presentation, Reitze compared the discovery to Galileo’s work, which started the era of modern observational astronomy.

“I think we are doing something equally important today,” he said. “I think we are opening a window on the universe, a window of gravitational wave astronomy.”

Joey Shapiro Key, director of education and outreach for



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

Joey Shapiro Key, director of education and outreach for the Center for Gravitational Wave Astronomy and an assistant research professor of physics, is interviewed Thursday by the news media after scientists announced the discovery of gravitational waves.

CGWA, said gravitational waves are a fundamental science discovery that have never been directly detected before.

In 1916, Albert Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves. A hundred years later, LIGO observed a

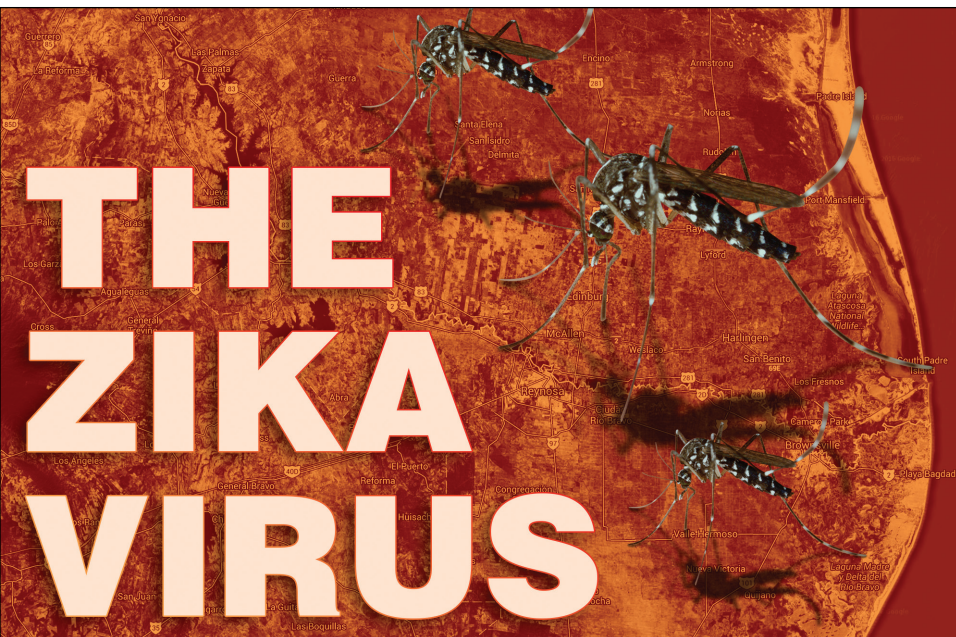
cataclysmic event involving the collision and merger of two black holes producing a gravitational-wave signal, GW150914, which took place in a galaxy more than one billion light years from Earth, according to information provided at the

news conference.

Gabriela González, LIGO Scientific Collaboration spokeswoman, said they have been analyzing data from detectors in Livingston, La., and Hanford, Wash. LIGO

See CGWA, Page 10

## 11 cases in Texas



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

**Monica Gudiño**  
THE RIDER

The Zika virus is not new, nor is it a life-threatening disease, but it’s catching the attention of the Western Hemisphere because it’s linked to a birth defect.

“That is not a virus that we have experienced here in North and South America and so that may be one reason why we are seeing so many people susceptible to it because there is not any natural immunity to it,” Chris Van Deusen, press officer for the Texas Department of State Health Services, said about the virus.

The Zika virus, originally from Africa,

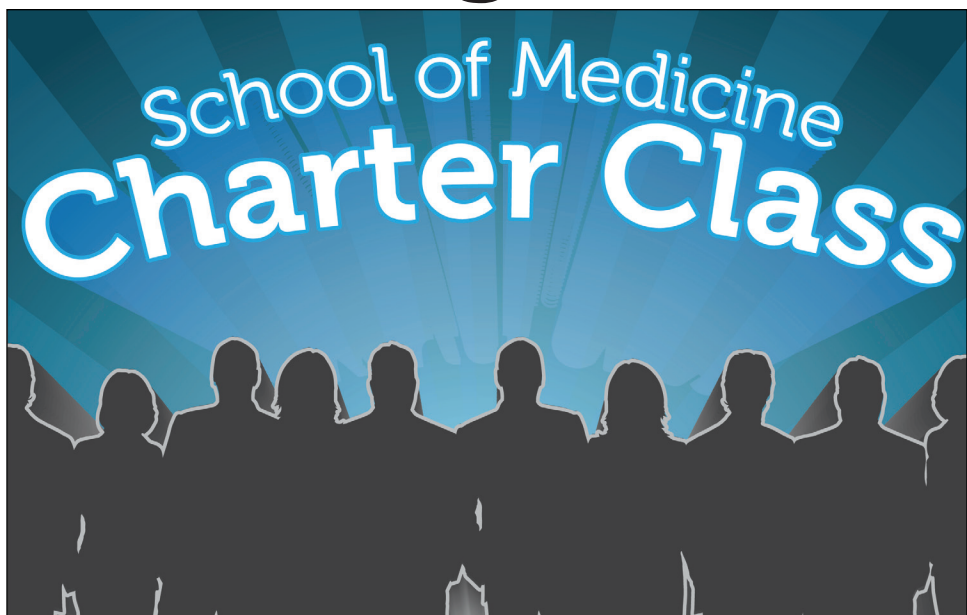
is an arbovirus that is transmitted by mosquitoes. The virus’ most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain and conjunctivitis (red eyes).

“But the illness itself is fairly mild. ... In fact, most people who are infected won’t have any symptoms at all,” Van Deusen said by telephone from Austin. “[It] very rarely requires hospitalization, rarely causes death, but usually passes in a week or so. In fact, we have seen the body can clear the virus, that is, eliminate the virus from the bloodstream in about seven days.”

As of last Thursday, there have been

See ZIKA, Page 10

## Receiving ‘the call’



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

**Andrea Torres**  
THE RIDER

During the winter break, UT Brownsville graduate Ramiro Tovar and his family celebrated his acceptance into the charter class of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine.

Tovar, who graduated from UTB in Spring 2015 with a bachelor’s degree in biomedical sciences, said he received a call from the dean of the medical school, Francisco Fernandez.

“He said, like, ‘Hey, do you have time?’ and I said, ‘Yes, of course, what is going on?’ and he said, ‘Hey, you know, if you want, you’re welcomed to attend.’ Verbatim I said, ‘You’re not kidding,

right?’ and he said, ‘Well, I’m not kidding, I’m not that evil.’”

Tovar waited for his family to return home to tell them about his acceptance and they were all very excited.

“I still don’t believe it,” he said.

The Texas Medical and Dental Application Service prematched Tovar with the School of Medicine, which opens July 25 with a charter class of 50 students.

The school has received the names of the students in its preliminary charter class, officials say. The students are from across the country.

“The reason we haven’t publicized it is because the students still can change,” said Betty Monfort, School of Medicine

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THE RIDER

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

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Free flu shots

UTRGV Health Services will administer free flu shots for students from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at its clinics, located in Cortez Hall 237 on the Brownsville campus and at 613 N. Sugar Rd. on the Edinburg campus. For more information, call Office Assistant Beverly Estrada at 882-3896.

Peace of mind yoga sessions

Learn how to manage stress levels and do various types of yoga exercises from 6 to 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday on the Brownsville Student Union lawn. The event is sponsored by the Student Government Association. For more information, call 882-5937.

Game Room tournaments

An Air Hockey Tournament will take place from 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday in the Student Union Game Room on the Edinburg campus. VBucks will be awarded to top-place finishers. For more information, call 665-7989.

Pan Dulce with the President

Students are invited to join UTRGV President Guy Bailey for a light breakfast and coffee from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday in the Alumni Center, 2402 U.S. Business Hwy. 281 in Edinburg. For more information, call 665-2500.

Window Painting Contest

All student organizations in good standing are invited to participate in the Window Painting Contest this week in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call 665-7989.

Family Picnic

There will be a family picnic from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday on the Edinburg Fieldhouse everyone is welcome to join. For more information, call 665-3183.

Health and Wellness Series

A presentation, titled “Anatomy of Sex,” will take place from noon to 1 p.m. Feb. 24 in Cortez Hall 118 on the Brownsville campus. The session is part

of the Health and Wellness Series sponsored by the Counseling Center. For more information, call 882-3897.

Nuts 4 Nutrition

The Infant and Family Nutrition Agency will host the sixth annual Nuts 4 Nutrition 1 Mile Fun-Run/Walk and 5K Race March 5 at the Brownsville Sports Park. Race fees are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children, \$10 for adult group participants and \$8 for child group participants. To register, visit the agency’s office at 1225 Boca Chica Blvd. in Brownsville, visit Rx Running at 3001 Pablo Kisel Blvd., Suite L, or visit ifnargv.org/n4n-registration. For additional information, call 541-9250 or email ifnargv@gmail.com.

UTRGV Theatre Alumni reunion

The UTRGV Theatre Department will host a reunion of theatre alumni March 6 in Edinburg. Former students, faculty and fans are invited to a full day of reunion activities, starting with a reunion lunch, attendance at the 7:30 p.m. performance of “The Miracle Worker” and culminating with after-play parties. For more information, email Elva Galvan, UTRGV theatre manager, at elva.galvan@utrgv.edu.

Entrepreneurship summer program

The University of Texas System is accepting applications from students in all 14 institutions for the Student Entrepreneurship Fellowship, a five-week summer program from May 31 to July 1 at the IC2 Institute in Austin. The fellowship offers 20 two-person student teams the opportunity to learn from nationally recognized faculty, instructors and facilitators, and will utilize evidence-based entrepreneurship methodologies to test their business concepts. The deadline to apply for the tuition-free training program is March 14. Early admission is Feb. 29. Students may apply at www.ic2.utexas.edu/sef. For more information, email IC2

Program Manager Aprille Raabe at SEF@lc2.utexas.edu or call Ken Ma in the University Affiliates Department at (512)499-4778.

Looking for volunteers

The Cameron County Children’s Advocacy Center is seeking volunteers for its San Benito and Brownsville locations. The center is a nonprofit organization that advocates for and serves child victims of abuse. For more information, call Elsa Garcia, volunteer coordinator/community educator, at 361-3313.

Graduation application deadlines

Students who plan to graduate in Fall 2016 must submit their application by May 1. For more information, contact the Graduate College at 665-3661 or email gradcollege@utrgv.edu.

--Compiled by Monica Gudiño

Meetings

Social-confidence group

The UTRGV Counseling Center hosts a social-confidence group, “Reveal Yourself,” from 3 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays in Cortez Hall 118 on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call 882-3897.

G.A.L.S.

A group therapy session for females by females, titled “Growing and Loving Ourselves” (G.A.L.S.), takes place from noon to 1 p.m. each Monday in Cortez Hall 220 on the Brownsville campus. For more information, call the UTRGV Counseling Center at 882-3897.

LGBTQ Group

The LGBTQ Group meets at 4 p.m. each Tuesday in University Center 306A on the Edinburg campus. Meetings are facilitated by experienced counselors and discussion is driven by concerns and needs of the group. For more information, call the UTRGV Counseling Center at 665-2574.

--Compiled by Monica Gudiño



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Feb. 3 and 7.



February 3

**2:16 a.m.:** A Casa Bella resident assistant reported two unregistered guests in an apartment in the student housing complex. One guest was issued a citation for a minor in possession of alcohol and a criminal trespass warning after the RA discovered three cans and three bottles of beer in the room. The other guest was issued a criminal trespass warning and both were escorted off campus without further incident.

February 4

**8:06 a.m.:** A university staff member reported that the south side entry door of the engineering building in Edinburg was severely damaged. An officer arrived, photographs of the damage were taken and a work order was placed.

**9:45 a.m.:** Two vehicles collided in Lot C on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported. Damage to the vehicles was minor.

**10:44 a.m.:** Financial Services staff reported that the university had hired a vendor to do logo wrapping on university-owned vehicles. After the university paid 50 percent of the cost in advance, the vendor did not complete all of the work. The vehicles were returned but the university did not like the work and is seeking a full refund.

**10:15 p.m.:** An elderly woman broke her hip after falling from the last step on the south side of the Academic Performing

Arts Center. She was transported to Rio Grande Regional Hospital in McAllen.

**10:33 p.m.:** University Police responded to a report of a woman screaming in Lot G on the Edinburg campus. Two students were found arguing about their relationship. The woman reported that the man picked her up twice and carried her on his shoulder. She said she was not injured and did not believe he intended to harm her. She did not want further contact with him. The case was referred to the dean of students.

February 5

**10:15 a.m.:** A faculty member reported receiving an alarming email from an individual in New York. The email did not contain any threats directed at the faculty member. It is possible that the faculty member received the email in error, as the name of the intended recipient and the faculty member are similar, but not the same. This report was taken for documentation purposes.

February 6

**2:05 a.m.:** A security officer patrolling Lot B2 on the Brownsville campus observed a shattered front passenger window on a gray Chevrolet Trax. The operator of the vehicle, who is a staff member, reported that the vehicle had been rented by the university and nothing was missing from it.

**2:23 a.m.:** A student reported that while she was walking by Schunior Street

and Lot O, two males in a vehicle yelled at her to get in. She did not look back at the vehicle or the males because she was frightened and ran away. She ran to the Intramural Soccer Field and cried for 15 to 20 minutes before contacting her roommate to pick her up. Surveillance video was reviewed and no vehicle was seen bothering her, nor did she appear to be in distress. The incident was referred to the Office of the Dean of Students.

February 7

**3:56 a.m.:** University Police checking on a vehicle parked in Lot K2 on the Edinburg campus found a student sleeping in the back passenger seat. The officer saw a glass pipe with marijuana in the pipe bowl, and the student said there was marijuana in the vehicle. The officer searched the vehicle and found a plastic bag with marijuana and rolling papers. The student was arrested on a charge of possession of marijuana, a class B misdemeanor.

**8:06 p.m.:** University Police responded to a report of a student having symptoms of a heart attack in the Casa Bella student housing complex on the Brownsville campus. An emergency medical services technician said the electrocardiogram was normal, but the student was still transported to Valley Baptist Medical Center for further evaluation.

--Compiled by Andrea Torres

CASE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“The victim, at this point, doesn’t want to file charges,” Munguia said. “However, we’re going to go to the municipal court to speak to the prosecutors to show them the case, show them what we have ... just to make sure that we’re not misreading it.”

Last Wednesday, *The Rider* filed an open records request, asking for a copy of the offense report of the case. The request was submitted to UTRGV Chief Legal Officer Karen Adams.

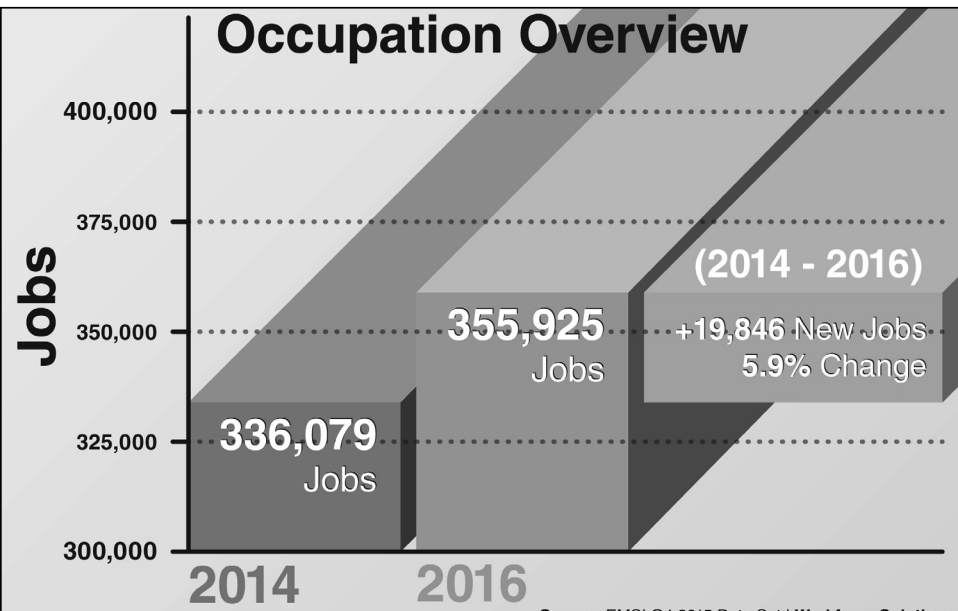
A governmental body must “promptly” produce public information in response to the request. “Promptly” means that a governmental body may take a reasonable amount of time to produce

the information, which varies depending on the facts in each case, according to the Texas Attorney General’s website.

Visit us at  
utrgvrider.com

# Left behind

Report: Strong economic growth in McAllen metro area has not benefited low-income earners



**Felipe Zamorano**  
THE RIDER

The income gap between the top 5 percent and bottom 20 percent in Hidalgo County has increased despite good economic performance and steady job growth.

A recent report by the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit public policy organization, ranked the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as having the fifth highest income inequality ratio in the nation. In its 95/20 ratio, which takes into account the households earning more than 95 percent and those earning more than only 20 percent of all other households, the metro area was given a 10.7 ratio in 2014, 0.9 higher than 2007, and 0.2 higher than 2013.

In an email providing facts about his report, Alan Berube, lead author, senior fellow and deputy director of the

Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program, highlighted that income inequality usually reflects the economic structure of a city or metropolitan area. The income workers earn is a product of the types of industries and jobs a place has, Berube said.

According to a report provided by Workforce Solutions, a Texas Workforce Commission workforce development board, the education, health, government, trade and transportation industries employ around 68 percent of the workforce. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau's data shows that only around 15.9 percent of people 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree, a requirement for most high-skilled jobs.

"What we have here is a large number of people with less than a college education," said Salvador Contreras, an assistant professor in the Economics and

See INEQUALITY, Page 11

# Filing season

Free tax return assistance at UTRGV campuses



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER

Rosalva Vela, an accounting junior (right), calls HealthCare.gov for assistance, while Nora Caballero, a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance clerk, assists her with her tax return.

**Oscar Castillo**  
THE RIDER

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley students, faculty, staff and the community earning less than \$62,000 a year can receive free tax return assistance on both the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses.

"There are legal obligations to filing an income tax return and it's different for different people," said Keren Arista, United Way of Southern Cameron County's financial stability coordinator. "There is something called a requirement to file that young people need to become familiar with. So, especially if they start working. There's something called the filing threshold. If you earn over a certain amount, you are required to file a tax return."

The threshold for filing is --\$10,300 as a single person under age 65;

--\$13,250 as head of household under age 65; and --\$20,600 as married jointly (both spouses) under age 65.

For the complete list, visit [www.irs.gov/publications/p554/cho1.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p554/cho1.html).

This year, individuals who do not have health insurance will be penalized \$695 per adult and \$347.50 per child under age 18 or 2.5 percent of the household income, whichever is higher.

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act to "make health care more affordable, accessible and of a higher quality, for families, seniors, businesses and taxpayers alike," according to the HealthCare.gov website. Those who can afford health insurance but do not buy it must pay a fee called the individual shared responsibility payment.

Shelby Venson-Smith, a press officer for the Center for Medicare and

See INCOME, Page 11

# Candidates share opinions on panel

**Ena Capucion**  
NEWS EDITOR

With the nation facing various conflicts regarding the controversial topics of abortion, Islamophobia, police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement, District 15 congressional candidates addressed these issues.

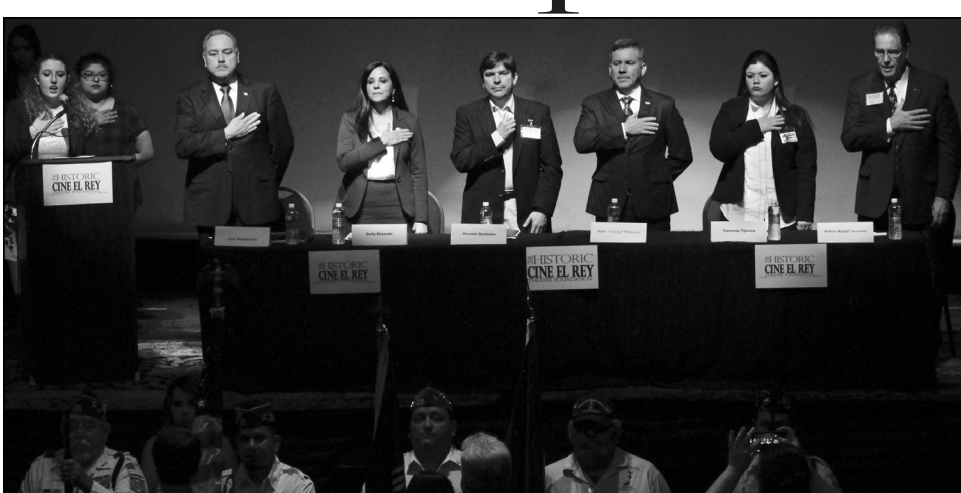
The Progressive Young Democrats (PYD) of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley hosted a congressional forum last Tuesday at the historic Cine El Rey in downtown McAllen.

The well-attended forum featured six candidates: Democrats Juan "Sonny" Palacios Jr., Vicente Gonzalez, Dolly Elizondo, Rance "Randy" Sweeten and Joel Quintanilla; and Vanessa Tijerina of the Green Party.

English senior Esteban Torres, a PYD representative, attended the forum with an open mind and is looking to support a congressman who appeals to the interests of what he believes is best for the community and America. The Brownsville native is experiencing his first semester on the Edinburg campus and dove straight into being more politically active.

"I saw a lot of things that are wrong," Torres said. "I see people who the system does nothing for. I believe that a government that doesn't help its people is worthless. What I want to make sure happens is that politicians who are interested in helping others, [rather than] help themselves, get elected."

The candidates were asked several questions regarding their actions and opinions on topics such as the Zika virus, Black Lives Matter, discrimination, access to birth control and the minimum wage. The six had similar viewpoints regarding these issues, considering the majority of them are from the Democratic Party. However, the way they presented



ENA CAPUCION/THE RIDER

Progressive Young Democrats Co-Presidents Mimosa Thomas (from left) and Cathryn Torres, Democrats Joel Quintanilla, Dolly Elizondo, Vicente Gonzalez, Juan "Sonny" Palacios Jr., Vanessa Tijerina of the Green Party and Democrat Rance "Randy" Sweeten stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

themselves to the audience is what helped sway the vote.

PYD Co-President Mimosa Thomas first brought up the Hyde Amendment, which was put into effect on Aug. 4, 1977, and eliminated federal Medicaid funding for abortion. The question was, if elected into Congress, would they fight to repeal the act or would they keep it in motion. All seven candidates agreed to repeal the act.

"No one--no man, no government, is ever going to tell my daughters what they can and cannot do with their bodies, period," Palacios said. "I will fight to repeal the Hyde Amendment ... and when I researched about it ... [I decided] that's going to be my Goliath. That's going to be my fight. We need federal funds to provide these services to women."

Another question Thomas asked regarded the recent spikes of incidents of police brutality and the Black Lives Matter movement. Again, all six

candidates agreed that more levels of accountability should be held for those in law enforcement as well as supporting the movement, with the exception of Quintanilla, who said he was not familiar with the movement.

"I do support the movement and I believe all lives matter," Gonzalez said. "It doesn't matter what color you are. ... I believe we need to implement policies where good cops are able to report bad cops without any retaliation or repercussions. I also believe it should be mandatory for them to have cameras on their body. ... I can't believe that in 2016 we're still talking about people of color dying in the hands of police departments across the country."

Thomas mentioned the Zika virus and how it has become a public health crisis in South and Central America and is slowly moving up through Mexico and into the U.S. In some areas in Latin America, officials have requested women

refrain from getting pregnant until 2018. The candidates were put on the spot regarding their actions. All six candidates agreed to do more research on the virus; however Tijerina, a nurse and scientist, has done her part.

"We need to educate the public," she said. "It seems that this is all we can do at this point. The research that I've done regarding this virus ... this virus has actually been around for a very, very long time. ... It was something going on with the government trying to eradicate mosquitoes. The whole point was to decrease mosquito population. Something went wrong--there was a glitch. Something happened with what I'm reading, so most importantly, other than just educating, we need to find out how this thing got started, which means we need to start funding science like crazy."

UTRGV student Martina Basquez attended the forum to educate herself on the candidates. She first became politically active last year when she volunteered with the Wendy Davis campaign for governor and the Minority Affairs Council. Since then, Basquez likes to stay in tune with how certain things will affect her and is looking for a candidate without a hidden agenda.

"I can be cliché and I can say [I'm looking] for honesty, ambition and passion, but you want someone who executes his or her policies," the chemistry major said. "His or her job is to cater to the people. If there is an agenda or if he or she is looking through the lines of opportunity, then I wouldn't want that person representing me. I want someone who knows what they're doing, who can do it fluidly and organically. It's all really simple--you don't have to saturate everything that you do and say. I want

See CONGRESS, Page 8

# Campus Q & A

How do you feel about the women athletes being referred to as Vaqueros? Do you consider this gender discrimination?



**Sergio G. Barrera,**  
estudiante de posgrado en estudios Mexico-Americano

“Creo que es discriminación de género en el sentido de que no se le reconoce las experiencias de las mujeres. Tenemos una concepción de que el Vaquero es solamente masculino pero también habían vaqueras, y eso es el chiste. El chiste es de que no se conoce mucho la historia y no se conoce la historia del Valle en especial, y no se sabe que hay métodos de también incorporar a las mujeres. ... Entonces uno de los ejemplos es los hechos de que cuando tratamos de agrupar a ambos géneros usamos el ‘todos’ o el ‘Vaqueros’ para también incluir a todas las mujeres. Pero en eso creo yo que borramos las experiencias únicas de las mujeres, y eso es discriminación”.



**Andrea Martinez,**  
communication senior

“Well, I don’t consider it as a gender, gender discrimination, I just consider it, like, it has to be equal to both sides, like both sexes, like have the Vaqueras and the Vaqueros. Well, being an international student and being, like, a Mexican, I believe that we have to have also like you know, like, over there we have niños and niñas, to have over here Vaqueros and Vaqueras.”



**Victor Rios,**  
psychology sophomore

“In a way, yes, because they are girls, so they should be called, I guess, the female version of that, but at the same time it’s just the name of the school in general. So, if they’re referring to the team as a whole, then it’s Vaqueros. But, if they’re referring to the girls, then they should have that type of name.”



**Mónica Alvarez,**  
graduate student in Mexican American studies

“Yes, I do. As a woman I feel that is it offensive and discriminating against females, and not just in athletes but the whole student body population.”

--Compiled by Michelle Espinoza and Lesley Robles



**Trisha Maldonado**  
THE RIDER

“You have a tumor,” my mom said as I lay on the emergency hospital bed. I felt my heart drop down to my stomach and saw my life nearing its end.

It was early August and I was about to start my senior year of high school. I was diagnosed with a benign tumor in my right ovary, which means it was not cancerous.

A few days before I was checked into the emergency room, I was feeling sad, overwhelmed, hopeless, had random crying spells and suicidal thoughts. I felt as if my presence on this planet was useless and I was just a grain of sand in the galaxy. I wanted to die.

It wasn’t until after I was diagnosed with the tumor that my doctor told me I had symptoms of maternal depression. The tumor I was diagnosed with was actually a twin of mine that slowly developed throughout the years in my

# ‘Filipenses 4:13’

right ovary. The doctor said it was rare to see cases like this.

I had a fetus in fetu. My body naturally thought I was pregnant and reacted as if I were. I would even throw up several times a day for no reason. My mother would get after me, thinking I was actually pregnant, but I knew for a fact I was not.

My mother realized something was wrong when I almost fainted. I felt dizzy and everything around me appeared bright and blurry. I was pale and started to sweat like a pig. I was immediately rushed to the emergency room.

“Are you high? Or on any drugs?” the nurse asked me. “Because you’re eyes are dilated.”

Of course I was not. I was then checked into a room and scheduled to receive a CT scan.

I was given an injection before the CT scan and, as a side effect, my neck started to swell and I struggled to breathe. All the nurses came inside the room and gave me another injection that would reduce the inflammation. I didn’t know what to think other than, “I don’t want to live anymore. I hope this is my last day here.”

It was after my CT scan that I got diagnosed with a tumor the size of a potato.

“We might not be able to keep your ovary, but I will try my best,” my doctor said.

A C-section surgery had to be done early the next day to remove it. I was unable to sleep that night.

After the surgery, my doctor showed

me photos of the tumor. I couldn’t believe it had a small form of what could’ve been a hand. It was disgusting to know that I had that in my body all these years even though it could’ve been my twin.

I was told that my tumor was going to be used for research because of its rarity. At that point, I didn’t care what they did with it or me. My depressive and suicidal thoughts remained.

I had a needle in my left arm for 48 hours.

“If you feel pain, just press this button to release the codeine. Only press it once or twice an hour,” the nurse said.

I pressed the button 14 times before I completely knocked out. I slept from noon to 10 a.m. the following morning.

After being at the hospital for a week, I was able to go back home, but missed an entire semester of high school. I was, of course, flooded with many visits, bouquets of flowers, and “get well soon” balloons from family and friends.

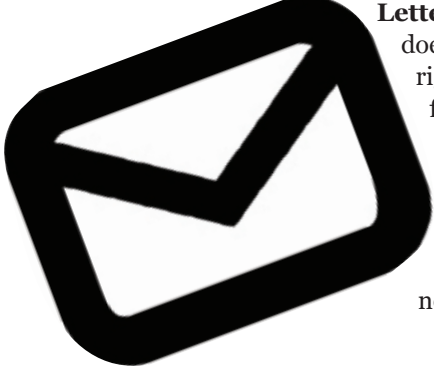
My depressive symptoms disappeared after several days, but I had to put a lot of effort into it. I still have minor pregnancy-looking stretch marks around my stomach region and the scar from the surgery. To this day, I can remember every minute of this event in my life.

The whole experience made me realize several things about life: depression exists, I am one of kind and people are only present when you are nearly dying. I hadn’t seen my dad and several family members in years and they actually came to visit me.

At the time, I somehow felt I had been saved by God because there were several times when I wanted to end my life but did not accomplish it. Two years later, I got a tattoo that reads “*Filipenses 4:13*” on the lower right side of my stomach as a reminder of the Philippians verse in the Bible, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Sometimes I fall back into sadness, but I look at myself in the mirror and think back to this event. I know I am strong and can overcome anything.

# Submit a Letter to the Editor



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# Fat Tuesday with a Latin flavor

## Bringing the New Orleans tradition to UTRGV

**Rick R. Ramirez**  
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

“Sambeando,” a Latin jazz tune, filled the Student Union’s El Comedor last Tuesday in Brownsville as part of the Mardi Gras celebration, sponsored by the Student Union and Student Government Association.

“We do a lot of Latin pieces because the kids love it and the community loves it,” Bands Director Albert Lo said.

More than a hundred students gathered around activity tables outside El Comedor. Attendees were treated to free doughnuts decorated with festive Mardi Gras colors, plus a photo booth and live music.

Isaac Garcia, a senior engineering major and office aide for the Student Union, operated a table full of feathers and paint for students to decorate masks.

“We teamed up with SGA to bring this event to Brownsville,” Garcia said. “SGA brought the photo booth inside El Comedor and we got the UTRGV Jazz Ensemble to perform.”

Members of the SGA handed out gold-beaded necklaces and purple-frosted Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

“The SGA did partner up with the Student Union to provide the same kind of fun for both campuses,” said Judith Mireles, chief of staff for the Student Government Association. “The students are responding really well to the event. We sent out emails, posted fliers and spread the word through social media.”

Mardi Gras, also known as Fat Tuesday, came to North America from Paris, where it had been celebrated since the Middle Ages, according to neworleansonline.com. Mardi Gras was created as a period of celebration that would serve as a prelude to the season of Lent.

Student Union Director Edna Zambrano said she was excited to bring the Mardi Gras event to the Brownsville



MICHELLE ESPINOZA/THE RIDER

Jorge De Los Reyes (left), a mechanical engineering sophomore, plays the tenor sax alongside other members of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Jazz Ensemble last Tuesday during the Mardi Gras celebration held on the Brownsville campus.

campus.

“This is technically the first big event we’ve had in El Comedor since it was closed last semester,” Zambrano said.

She addressed the importance of having UTRGV students from the music department perform live at events around campus.

“The Student Union has always worked closely with the music department,” she said. “Our hope is to work together when

one of us is having an event.”

Inside El Comedor, the UTRGV Jazz Ensemble performed while students posed for pictures at the photo booth. Priscilla Hinojosa, owner of Photo Booth of South Texas II, started handing out props and vibrant costumes to students as they posed for the photographer.

“The university asked us to come out for Fat Tuesday, so we’re here having fun with the students, and having fun with

them,” Hinojosa said. “The jazz band is really nice. It makes me want to go to New Orleans.”

For a little under an hour, the UTRGV Jazz Ensemble, under Lo’s direction, performed several songs, including “Samba Facil” and “Elvin’s Mambo.”

“We are part of the music program and these kids are all enrolled as a class. So, this is part of their music education,” he said. “We have a lot of talent here at UTRGV.”

## Lunar Year celebration



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER

Engineering sophomores Lazaro Lopez (left) and Francisco Lamas try to get as many gummy bears as possible on their napkins using chopsticks. The activity was part of the Lunar New Year Celebration last Wednesday in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus.

## Smile for me, love



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Lindsey Christiansen and Thomas Mery commemorate their pre-Valentine’s festivities Thursday during the Valentine’s Masquerade Ball in the Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. The event featured a photo booth, marriage and divorce booth, free food, DJ, dance competitions and a dating show.




## Community observes Ash Wednesday



ANDREA TORRES/THE RIDER

Karla Rodriguez, campus ministry coordinator for the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville, explains the “Catholic Study Bible” and “Confessions” mobile applications to biomedicine seniors Jorge Esquivel (left) and Carlos Flores after the Ash Wednesday Mass Celebration in the Student Union’s Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus.

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# Dejados atrás

Reporte: Fuerte crecimiento económico en el área metropolitana de McAllen no ha beneficiado a los de bajos ingresos

**Felipe Zamorano**  
THE RIDER

La brecha de ingresos entre el 5 por ciento superior y el 20 por ciento inferior en el condado de Hidalgo ha incrementado a pesar del buen desempeño económico y un crecimiento estable de empleos.

Un reporte reciente de la Institución Brookings, una organización de política pública sin fines de lucro, ha clasificado al Área Estadística Metropolitana de McAllen-Edinburg-Mission con la quinta proporción de inequidad de más alta en la nación. En su proporción 95/20, que toma en cuenta a los hogares obteniendo más que el 95 por ciento y aquellos obteniendo solamente más que el 20 por ciento de los otros hogares, el área metropolitana fue dada una proporción de 10.7 en el 2014, 0.9 más alta que en el 2007 y 0.2 más alta que en el 2013.

En un correo electrónico proporcionando datos sobre su reporte, Alan Berube, autor principal, alto miembro y subdirector del Programa de Política Metropolitana Brookings, destacó que la inequidad de ingresos generalmente refleja la estructura económica de una ciudad o un área metropolitana. El ingreso obtenido por los trabajadores es producto de los tipos de industrias y trabajos que el lugar tiene, dijo Berube.

De acuerdo a un reporte proporcionado por Workforce Solutions, una mesa de desarrollo de la fuerza laboral de la

Comisión de Fuerza Laboral de Texas (TWC por sus siglas en inglés), las industrias de educación, salud, gobierno, comercio y transporte emplean alrededor del 68 por ciento de la fuerza laboral. Adicionalmente, datos de la Oficina del Censo de Estado Unidos muestra que sólo alrededor del 15.9 por ciento de las personas mayores de 25 años tienen una licenciatura, un requerimiento para la mayoría de los trabajos de alta cualificación.

“Lo que tenemos aquí es un gran número de personas con menos que una educación universitaria”, dijo Salvador Contreras, un profesor en el departamento de Economía y Finanzas en UTRGV. “[Tenemos] a un gran número de personas solo con educación de preparatoria”.

Niveles más bajos de educación podrían combinar otros factores que ayudarían a explicar por qué este nivel de inequidad existe, dijo Contreras.

El reporte de la Institución Brookings demuestra que el percentil 20 tuvo un ingreso promedio de \$12,760 en el 2014, una disminución de 9 por ciento desde el 2007, el año antes de la Gran Recesión. Aquellos que obtuvieron más que el percentil 95, por otra parte, obtuvieron un ingreso promedio de \$136,570 en el 2014, una disminución de 1 por ciento desde el 2007.

“Claramente hay un fuerte indicador que la inequidad puede, quizás, ser un problema en el área”, dijo Contreras.

“El ingreso de los 20 inferiores bajó a



GABRIEL MATA/THE RIDER

Las oficinas en Edinburg de Workforce Solutions, una organización que responde a las necesidad de empleadores y trabajadores, ubicada en 2719 W. University Dr. A pesar del crecimiento en empleo y buen desarrollo económico, la disparidad de ingresos en la región sigue incrementando según datos del Instituto Brookings.

lo largo del 2013, [y] también el de los 5 superiores. Lo hizo más inequitativo ... ambos están siendo dañados aquí”.

Curiosamente, de acuerdo al Metro Monitor de la Institución Brookings, el cual mide y analiza tendencias económicas regionales, el área ha visto un incremento de 18.8 por ciento en su producto metropolitano bruto, o su producción económica, haciéndola la octava en la nación, y un incremento en empleo de 10.2 por ciento, haciéndola la número 20 en la nación. El salario promedio, sin embargo, ha crecido sólo 1.1 por ciento sobre el mismo periodo, haciendo al área la número 71 en la nación.

“Este crecimiento económico ha beneficiado al 20 inferior [muy poco]”, dijo Contreras. “Los más pobres no se han beneficiados, han sido dejados fuera de este incremento [en crecimiento]”.

Sin embargo, no todas son malas noticias.

## MEDICINE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

senior assistant dean for admissions. “Up until the first day of orientation, [June 27], they can still switch schools, so the class is just preliminary until then.”

After medical schools listed their top applicants and students listed their top institutions, the Texas Medical and Dental Application Service matched the schools with the students on Feb. 1.

The preliminary figures show the charter class is almost an equal number of men and women, she said.

“We’re very happy that at least 32 percent of them are from the Rio Grande Valley,” Monfort said.

As of now, there are only five non-Texas residents in the charter class, one from each of the following states: Arizona, Illinois, Maine, Florida and California, she said.

“I think if anyone goes to other schools it will probably be the out-of-staters, because if they get an offer from one of their state’s schools, they usually tend to jump ship,” she said. “But we have a very, very, lucrative wait list for out-of-staters. We have no problem in replacing them, if they go.”

Under Section 13 of the 2014 Texas General Appropriations Act, a school of medicine cannot have more than 10 percent out-of-state students in a class.

The undergraduate degrees from those accepted range from a bachelor’s of science in microbiology, biology and chemistry to a master’s degree in dance studies.

On Jan. 16, *The Texas Tribune* published an article in which some lawmakers warn that the state “does not adequately fund the residency programs needed to keep medical students here.”

Fernandez said the most common reason they are not staying in Texas “is that there aren’t enough training spots for residency in the particular area that they want to be ... whether it’s vascular surgery, orthopedics or some other area.”

After graduating from medical school, students can continue their training at a graduate medical education program, which includes residency experience.

“Los datos posiblemente indican que el crecimiento económico en el área está beneficiando a aquellos que están en el medio de la distribución de ingresos”, dijo Contreras. “Si ambos, el 20 inferior está perdiendo, y el 5 superior está perdiendo, el dinero tiene que ser redistribuido a otro lado, al menos como parte del ingreso”.

La inequidad de ingresos no es la misma en todos lados, dijo Berube, pero hay algunas acciones generales que los gobiernos locales pueden tomar. Alinear el desarrollo de la fuerza laboral y educación superior para asegurarse que la gente esté preparada para los trabajos, considerar salarios dignos y mínimos en ciudades fuertes e impulsar el suministro de hogares a través de métodos incluyendo desarrollo orientado en el tránsito, zonificación inclusiva y exenciones de impuestos sobre las propiedades multifamiliares podrán reducir el impacto de la inequidad.

Fernandez said there are local residency programs that may help UTRGV keep its students here.

“The Valley Baptist and the McAllen Medical Center Hospital residency training programs were expanded. DHR, Doctor’s Hospital at Renaissance, created four new residency programs,” he said. “Before even the medical school program was approved, the Valley was attempting to, with the assistance of the University of Texas Health Sciences Center-San Antonio and the University of Texas System, they were planning for the potential exodus, if you will, of medical school graduates by creating residencies here, which would facilitate their staying in the Valley to finalize their training to a graduate education program.”

As previously reported by *The Rider*, for those in the charter class who have health insurance, tuition will be set at \$18,298 for Texas residents and \$31,398.32 for non-residents.

If a student does not have insurance, they must purchase it for \$2,181 from the university, regardless of their residency classification. The total cost per year, with insurance, is \$20,479 for Texas residents and \$33,579 for non-Texas residents.

Those who were accepted will be receiving the charter class scholarship, which reduces tuition by \$13,068 for Texas residents and by \$23,548 for non-Texas residents.

“The remaining tuition and fees should be paid by the first day of classes,” Monfort said. “I’m sure that we have our own financial aid person dedicated to the students here at the med school. She will be in contact with them, starting in the next couple of weeks, to work out in case they are having difficulty with that first payment.”

Classes will be held in the 15,000-square-foot Smart Hospital complex, which is under construction on the Edinburg campus.

See MEDICINE, Page 10

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# CLUB SPOTLIGHT



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Members of the Pre-Dental Society include Nick Richards (from left), Dakota Miller, Gianncarlo Cruz, Katie de Leon, Daisy Salinas and Javier Vassell.

**Name:** Pre-Dental Society at UTRGV  
**Purpose:** The Pre-Dental Society at UTRGV aims to help students interested in the dental field by promoting community involvement, dental-related educational events and the opportunity to visit select dental schools in Texas.  
**President:** Gianncarlo Cruz  
**Vice President:** Dakota Miller  
**Treasurer:** Nicolas Richards  
**Historian:** Katie de Leon  
**Public Relations:** Javier Vassell  
**Event Coordinator:** Daisy Salinas  
**Adviser:** Biology Professor Scott Gunn  
**Activities:** Volunteers at dental

conferences, panels and lectures; performs community service, including city-sponsored parades and trash cleanups; and fundraises for its end-of-year trip to the San Antonio and Houston dental schools.

**Meetings:** 12:15 to 1 p.m. every second and fourth Thursday of the month in SCNE 2.106.

**Membership requirements:** \$30 annual dues

**For more information, email:** predentalsociety.utrgv@gmail.com

--Compiled by Lesley Robles

## CONGRESS

Continued from Page 3

somebody who can read a problem and find a solution.”

The forum successfully ended without any conflict and the candidates stepped down from the stage to converse with the audience.

PYD Co-President Cathryn Torres spoke on behalf of the club and was glad the community was engaging in politics. “On average, congresspeople in

District 15 hold office for about 19 years,” the biology pre-med major said. “This is definitely a big race, [considering] the way they act on national legislation will affect the Rio Grande Valley for years to come. ... People need to understand that the president of the United States is merely a team captain--without a supportive Congress, legislation will not work in favor of our wishes. We will continue to encourage people that their voice most definitely counts and how much politics affects our daily lives.”

# Taking the right steps

UTRGV distance runners approaching conference meet



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Savanna Antley (from left), Teresa Sova and Jennifer Zapata train last Wednesday. The distance runners will compete in the indoor Track & Field championship in Nampa, Idaho.

**Nathaniel Mata**  
SPORTS EDITOR

In the spring, Track & Field is split into an indoor and outdoor season. The divide allows colleges around the country with harsh weather to first compete indoors.

Both seasons are accompanied with their own conference and national championships.

For UTRGV, the work put in during three meets in January and one this month will be put to the test Feb. 25, when the men's and women's track teams travel to Nampa, Idaho. They will convene with their Western Athletic Conference counterparts during the WAC indoor championships.

For distance runners, who also competed in cross-country in the fall, indoor is essentially their second of three seasons.

The team has competed in Corpus Christi, Houston and College Station this indoor season.

Assistant Track & Field Coach Rob Hansen, who coaches mid- and long-distance runners, says all three seasons build on top of each other, allowing improvement.

"We start at the beginning of summer with our base training, we move into cross-country season," Hansen said. "Cross-country is a springboard to indoors and indoors is a launchpad to being successful at the outdoor championships. Our emphasis is building on ourselves throughout the entire year."

Hansen says the meets against larger schools help UTRGV challenge and push themselves competitively.

"It gives them a perspective that it's not just UTRGV versus Corpus Christi or UTSA and some of these other small schools," said Hansen, the former distance runner at University of Wisconsin-Parkside. "Now we get to race against teams like Texas A&M and Texas and we get to feel like we're on that same level because we are. That's who we're competing against, that's who we're recruiting against, that's who we want to beat. That's our ultimate goal, to beat these big conference schools."

On the men's side of competition, senior Jose Juan Wells has given UTRGV more of the results they have grown used to since he transferred to the program in 2014.

For the senior, the number of times

he'll run collegiately is quickly dwindling. Wells reflected on the end of his career as a college runner.

"The feeling is just like 'Wow, I'm here. I'm running my last few meets. I'm never going to do this again,'" the runner from Cottonwood, Ariz., said. "I might as well enjoy as much as I can. One of the best memories I'll have is coming here and meeting the individuals that I came across on the time. How I was able to influence them with some of my philosophies with running and training."

Wells isn't completely against looking at the times of his WAC opposition before the meet. He doesn't want to go blindly against competition.

"I'd rather see it coming, and try to analyze and do my best when I'm actually there," Wells said.

On the women's side, their strong spot has often been sophomore Teresa Sova. Standing at 5-foot-1-inch, Sova hails from nearby Mercedes and has run her best career times this year.

"I do have nerves coming into the meet, but I try to make it seem like it's another meet and I just got to concentrate on my time and my race to make sure that I get points," she said.

Coach Hansen referred to Sova's improvement as "exponential" compared to 12 months ago. Sova, on the other hand, points toward guidance from her coaches.

"I think my progression has something to do with the summer," the education major said. "I trained a lot in the summer and made sure to do whatever my coach told me to do. I think with that it helped me progress into this year, helping me [set personal records] and hit times I couldn't hit before."

Sova finished 33rd in the conference cross-country meet as a freshman and a season later finished ninth as a sophomore.

In January, she was named WAC Track & Field athlete of the week after posting her career best time of 18:12.21 in the 5,000 meter run. Her time in the first-place finish also set a meet record in College Station for the Aggie Team Invitational.

She takes a different approach than Wells regarding scouting opponents' times before the conference meet.

"I don't really like to think or look at the other people's times because it makes me get nervous and I feel like it's a barrier," the Mercedes High School alum said. "I just got to do what I have to do, hit the times. I just go in there and focus on my race."

Sova, Wells, the entire distance running team as well as sprinters and field athletes will travel to the campus of Boise State Feb. 25 to compete in the WAC indoor championship.



Isaac Arevalo (from left), Martin Perez, Mark Trejo and Rick Montero turn a corner during practice at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex. The runners will compete in the WAC indoor championship Feb. 25-27 in Idaho.

## Athlete of the Week



COURTESY PHOTO

**Name:** Yehonatan Kaufman  
**Classification:** Freshman  
**Sport:** Tennis

**Age:** 19  
**Hometown:** Ramat HaSharon, Israel  
**Who is your favorite athlete?** "Novak Djokovic." He is a Bulgarian tennis player ranked No. 1 by the Association of Tennis Professionals.

**Who is your role model?** My father.  
**What is the best advice you've been given and by whom?** "My father, he told [me] to be competitive in every match that I'm playing, no matter what, to keep fighting on the courts."

**Favorite place to hang out on campus?** "With my friends in their apartments, next to the dorms."

**When did you begin playing tennis and why did you start?** "Seven. My brother, he started to play tennis, and a few days after we started talking about it in our house, and he told me it's fun and 'come with me to play.'"

**What are your academic goals?** "3.5 GPA. I want to be like really good."

**What is your favorite movie?** "Never Back Down," a 2008 martial arts movie.

**Where's your dream vacation?** "Australia, because I have three teammates from Australia and they told me it was a great place to be there. So, it can be a great opportunity to be there."

**How do you feel about being part of the first UTRGV Men's Tennis Team?** "As soon as I came here everyone supported me. Juan [Cruz Soria] and Koby [Jansen] helped me to be here, and I think it's a good opportunity because we're a good team and everyone is fighting in the court and no one gives up any point and we support each other."

--Compiled by Jesus Esparza

## Home Games

### Basketball and Soccer

Thursday, Feb. 18

**Men's Basketball  
vs. Seattle University**

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Saturday, Feb. 20

**Men's Basketball  
vs. CSU Bakersfield**

7 p.m.

UTRGV Fieldhouse

Sunday, Feb. 21

**Women's Soccer  
vs. St. Mary's University**

4 p.m.

Soccer and Track & Field

MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER GRAPHICS



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CGWA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

uses these two laser interferometers to analyze the physical properties of light and space to detect gravitational waves.

An interferometer consists “of two ‘arms’ at right angles to each other, along which a laser beam is shone and reflected by mirrors at each end. When a gravitational wave passes by, the stretching and squashing of space causes the arms of the interferometer alternately to lengthen and shrink, one getting longer while the other gets shorter and then vice-versa,” according to LIGO documents.

In other words, the two arms detect movement between each other. That movement is called gravitational-wave strain. The strain is expected to be the

width of a proton.

“The total power output of the gravitational waves during the brief collision was 50 times greater than all of the power put out by all of all stars in the universe put together,”said Kip Thorne, LIGO co-founder. “Because it was so brief, the total energy was not that big. It was only like taking three suns, annihilating them and putting them in gravitational waves. Well, that’s kind of a lot.”

Thorne predicts that over the next decade or two, four gravitational wave windows to the universe will open. The four windows would be measured in intervals of milliseconds, minutes to hours, years to decades and billions of years.

The LIGO Scientific Collaboration is composed of more than 1,000 scientists,

ZIKA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

11 reported cases of the Zika virus in Texas. Nine are travelers who were infected abroad and were diagnosed after they returned, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services website. One case involves a Dallas County resident who was infected via sexual contact with someone who acquired the Zika virus while traveling abroad.

Seven cases were reported in Harris County and two each in Bexar and Dallas counties.

Concern about the virus is due to a large increase in cases of microcephaly, a birth defect that gives newborns an abnormally small head, a condition associated with incomplete brain

development, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“We don’t know right now exactly what’s going on, as what’s the mechanism. Why do mothers who have been infected with Zika seem to have children with microcephaly [at] a higher rate than normal,” Van Deusen said. “It’s not all pregnant women, it’s not all children of course, but some and a higher rate.”

The virus is transmitted similarly to the Dengue virus, Van Deusen said.

He expects the virus to follow the same pattern as Dengue, which is a “large epidemic across the border in Tamaulipas ... [and] some locally transmitted cases in South Texas but those are fairly limited and at a time.”

Even though it’s still winter and mosquitoes are less active at this time, the City of Brownsville’s vector

of whom 30 are from the university, Key said.

“We work ... across the board, really,” she said. “We help with mitigating noise in the detectors. We are also astrophysicists; we do data analysis, parameter estimation we call it. So, we’re involved in, really, every piece of this discovery and going forward with the LIGO Observatories.”

The UTRGV CGWA was founded in 2003 with grants from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation.

Juliet V. García, who served as president of UTRGV legacy institution UT Brownsville and attended the news conference, said this was a huge accomplishment.

“It affirms that we have been in the right scientific arena, on the cutting

edge of that very frontier and it worked,” García said. “That is, they identified gravitational waves, proving Einstein’s theory and it was students and professors from here that helped do that, so it’s a huge accomplishment.”

Key said the design for the detector of advanced LIGO is on track for 2018.

“So, by then, we’ll have our even more sensitive detector and we’re going to be detecting pairs of black holes like these. It could be every day,” Key said. “So, I mean, all of a sudden we’re going to have a new map of the whole universe, of where are black holes. What are their masses? What are they like? How do they form? How do they get there? So, it’s really a big piece of our exploration of our universe.”

MEDICINE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

“I really do think that reason is that the mission of the school is extraordinarily attracting to many of the students that came,” Fernandez said. “It’s clear that many of the students that came are

attuned to what UTRGV was all about and what we wanted to accomplish. They wanted to be part of something new because they knew they were going to be the class that started it all. As one student said, “Ten years from now, I will be able to see my fingerprints on how this evolved over time because I will have

been a part of it.”

Tovar hopes to specialize in internal medicine after graduating from the medical school.

“They always say that once you go to medical school, all your plans change,” he said. “You fall in love with something that you never considered. Right now,

I’m just sticking to doing my residency here in the Valley. I think it’d be really exciting.”

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# Sending a message

Art department showcases work



“Make America Hate Again” by Alejandro Macias

**Ena Capucion**  
NEWS EDITOR

The first faculty art exhibition of the semester will be open Tuesday and continue through March 10 at the Visual Arts Gallery on the Edinburg campus.

The exhibit will present about 20 pieces from the School of Art with various themes and uses of media.

One person featuring his work at the exhibit is UTRGV Lecturer Alejandro Macias. His painting of Donald Trump sends a political message. Macias

figuratively uses a combination of line, color as well as shape for the piece, which is called “Make America Hate Again.” Macias accentuates one of Trump’s more interesting features, which in this case is his mouth.

“Me being Hispanic, I completely disagree with a lot of the things he’s saying,” Macias said. “I think he’s actually just saying these absurd things just to kind of steer the spotlight from ... the other [candidates]. At the same time, it’s kind of comical but a lot of people tend to take it seriously, and so that is what makes me afraid. ... So many people take what he says so seriously. And because he has such a big spotlight, he tends to influence whether we like it or not.”

Other faculty to be featured in the exhibit are Susan Fitzsimmons, Alexander Comminos, Carlos De Souza, Marcus Farris, Donna Sweigart, Douglas Clark, Elizabeth McCormack-Whittemore, Erika Balogh, Donald Lyles, Lorenzo Pace, Elena Macias, Marilyn Carren, Paul Valadez, Philip Field, Reynaldo Santiago, Richard Phillips, Robert Axtell, Robert Bradley and Robert Gilbert.

Gallery hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Admission is free for Patron of the Arts members. General admission is \$1 and student semester passes are \$3. For more information, call 665-2175.

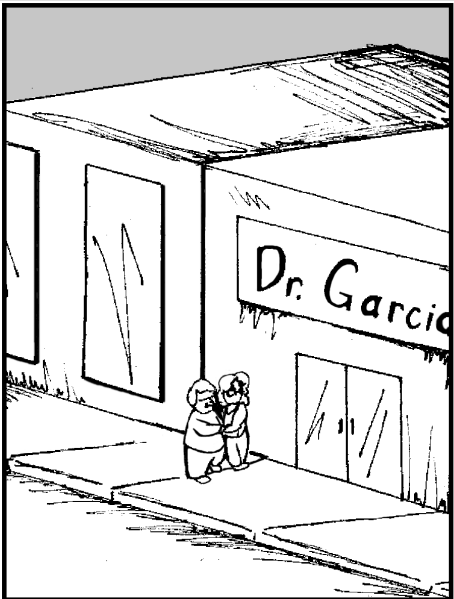
# Healthy hearts



MICHELLE ESPINOZA/THE RIDER

Communication senior Andrew Benton leads the 2016 Heart Walk held last Wednesday on the Brownsville campus. About 100 employees and students participated in the walk sponsored by the University of Texas System. A Heart Walk also took place on the Edinburg campus.

# VALLEY TOONS



By Clarissa Martinez

# INEQUALITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Finance department at UTRGV. “[We have] a large number of people with just a high school education.”

Lower levels of education could compound other factors that may help explain why this level of inequality exists, Contreras said.

The Brookings Institution report shows that the 20th percentile had an average income of \$12,760 in 2014, a 9 percent decrease from 2007, the year before the Great Recession. Those earning more than the 95th percentile, on the other hand, had an average income of \$136,

570 in 2014, a decrease of 1 percent from 2007.

“There’s clearly a strong indicator that inequality may, perhaps, be a problem in the area,” Contreras said. “The lowest 20’s income fell over 2013, [and] so did the top 5. It made it more unequal ... both are being hurt here.”

Oddly enough, according to the Brookings Institution’s Metro Monitor, which measures and analyzes regional economic trends, the area has seen a five-year increase of 18.8 percent in its gross metro product, or economic output, making it eighth in the nation, and a 10.2 percent increase in employment, making it 20th in the nation. The average wage,

however, has only grown 1.1 percent over the same period, making the area 71st in the nation.

“This economic growth has benefited the bottom 20 [very little],” Contreras said. “The poorest have not benefited, they’ve been left out from this increase [in growth].”

However, it is not all bad news. “The data likely indicates that economic growth in the area is benefiting those who are in the middle of the income distribution,” Contreras said. “If both the bottom 20 are losing, the top 5 are losing, the money has to be redistributed somewhere else, at least as a share of income.”

Income inequality is not the same everywhere, Berube said, but there are some general actions a local government can take. Aligning workforce development and higher education to ensure that people are prepared for the jobs, considering local living and minimum wages in strong cities and boosting the supply of affordable housing through methods including transit-oriented development, inclusionary zoning and multifamily property tax exemptions could lessen the impacts of inequality.

# INCOME

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Medicaid Services, wrote in an email to *The Rider* that “coverage provided via a student health plan is considered to meet minimum essential coverage for an individual, thus they would not be subject to a penalty.”

Seth Colwell, a lecturer in the Accounting department who teaches the income tax course, ACCT 3323, said the penalty would vary, depending on the individual’s income and filing situation.

Individuals can claim the exemption for unaffordable coverage if the cost is more than 8.05 percent of their household income. Use Form 8965 to report a coverage exemption granted by the Health Insurance Marketplace,

also called the “Exchange,” or to claim a coverage exemption on your tax return.

To find out if you qualify, visit [www.HealthCare.gov/tax-tool](http://www.HealthCare.gov/tax-tool).

As part of United Way, myfreetaxes.com is a free software the campus community can use to prepare their tax returns. Locations near U Central will be available on both campuses. In addition, United Way will teach the campus community how to file an income tax return free of charge as part of its Learn to File event, which will run until March 4.

“It’s very important that students understand that the tax return has to be done early, so that when they go online for the FAFSA application, they can use the IRS Retrieval Tool and that would automatically pull their tax data from the

IRS Database,” Arista said.

Arista recommends students file their income tax return five to 10 days before filing for financial aid.

“We really want them to file a tax return as early in February as possible, so that they’ll meet the early filing deadline for FAFSA in March,” she said.

When visiting the tax assistance site, bring the following:

- valid photo identification;
- original Social Security cards for all household members;
- a copy of last year’s tax return if available;
- Health Insurance Forms 1095 or know your coverage dates for all household members;
- income documents such as Forms W-2, W-2G and 1099 from all employers

and other sources (Social Security, unemployment, pension, etc.);  
--bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit of refund;  
--Form 1098-T for students with post-secondary tuition expenses or grant income; and  
--Identity Theft prevention PIN, if assigned by the IRS.

Couples filing as married jointly must be present to sign the required forms.

Tax return assistance is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The deadline to file is April 18.

For more information on student health plans, visit [utrgv.myahpcare.com](http://utrgv.myahpcare.com) or UTRGV Student Health Services at 613 N. Sugar Rd. in Edinburg or Cortez Hall 237 in Brownsville.



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### FEBRUARY

### ATHLETICS

THURSDAY **UTRGV Field House**  
(Edinburg)  
**18** 7 P.M.-9 P.M.

**MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
**UTRGV vs. SEATTLE U**  
Official UTRGV Vaquero Basketball Watch Party at *Buffalo Wild Wings* located at 2100 FM 802, Brownsville, TX.  
**FACULTY & STAFF APPRECIATION NIGHT** **CHALLENGE OF THE DEANS**  
Free Admission for UTRGV Faculty & Staff with the university's I.D.

SATURDAY **UTRGV Field House**  
(Edinburg)  
**20** 7 P.M.-9 P.M.

**MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
**UTRGV vs. CSU BAKERSFIELD**

### FEBRUARY

### CAMPUS EVENTS

SUNDAY **Student Union**  
(Edinburg)  
**14** 4 P.M.-10 P.M.  
**El Comedor & Student Union Lawn**  
(Brownsville)  
10 P.M.-12 A.M.

**MIDNIGHT PROWL**  
Decorate the campus and show your Vaquero spirit.

MONDAY **Chapel Lawn**  
(Edinburg)  
**15** 11:30 A.M.-1 P.M.  
**Main Courtyard**  
(Brownsville)  
11:30 A.M.-1 P.M.  
**Student Union Theater**  
(Brownsville)  
7 P.M.-8:30 P.M.

**TIP OFF PARTY**  
**FREE FOOD** sponsored by the Student Union

**CPB PRESENTS:**  
**JON RAYMOND FISHER**  
Come and enjoy the musical and comedic stylings of Jon Raymond Fisher (Comedian, Musician, Writer and Middle Name User)

TUESDAY **Student Union Lawn**  
(Brownsville)  
**16** 11 A.M.-2 P.M.  
**Main Courtyard**  
(Brownsville)  
7 P.M.-8:30 P.M.

**UTRGV VAQUERO OLYMPICS**

**CPB PRESENTS:**  
**JON RAYMOND FISHER**

WEDNESDAY **UREC**  
(Edinburg)  
**17** 6 P.M.-9 P.M.

**UTRGV VAQUERO OLYMPICS**

THURSDAY **Student Union Lawn**  
(Brownsville)  
**18** 11 A.M.-2 P.M.

**TIE DYE T-SHIRTS BY CPB**  
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FRIDAY **Troxel Lawn & UTRGV Fieldhouse**  
**19** **Parking-Lot F**  
(Edinburg)  
5 P.M.-9 P.M.

**UTRGV... FIRE UP!**  
5 P.M.-7 P.M.  
Follow the Pep Band in a Walking Parade through the Edinburg campus from Troxel Lawn to Lot F1.  
7 P.M.-9 P.M.  
Performances by the UTRGV Pep Band, Cheer & Dance and the **LIGHTING OF THE LETTERS.**

SATURDAY **Palmetto-Student Union**  
(Edinburg)  
**20** 11 A.M.-12 P.M.  
**Troxel Lawn & UTRGV Fieldhouse**  
**Parking-Lot F**  
(Edinburg)  
5 P.M.-7 P.M.  
**UTRGV Fieldhouse**  
**Parking-Lot F**  
(Edinburg)  
5 P.M.-7 P.M.

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