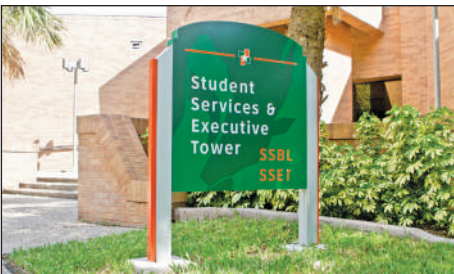


UTRGV students' financial aid struggles

Loans and refund checks disbursed later than usual



Jacqueline Arias/THE RIDER

Students can find the financial aid, payments and collections and the registrar's offices at the Student Services and Executive Tower on the Edinburg campus of UTRGV.

Jacqueline Arias
THE RIDER

Some UTRGV students reported problems through social media about not receiving their financial aid in time to pay for tuition this fall. However, university officials say they were on schedule according to the school's disbursement plan.

The struggles began in late August when tuition for the university was due on the 25th, but some students mentioned that they were not able to pay for tuition on time because their financial aid awards and loans had not gone through.

Sarah Rees, of Los Fresnos, said she completed every step to receive her loans by Aug. 26, but she had yet to receive her refund check when she was interviewed on Sept. 2.

"I was promised my disbursement by Aug. 26," Rees said. "It is now Sept. 2 and I have yet to receive any of the awards, aka loans that I will have to eventually pay back, that were offered and accepted. Plus, I am now receiving emails stating that if I do not make a payment by Sept. 8, I will be dropped from all courses."

See FINANCIAL, Page 2

Legacy school keeps UTRGV strong

UTPA's graduate school ranked 10th in nation



Andrea Torres/THE RIDER

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Graduate College office is located in Sabal Hall 1.202 on the Brownsville campus. On the Edinburg campus, the office is located in MASS 1.158.

Rick R. Ramirez
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

The Washington Monthly has ranked the University of Texas Pan American as a Top 10 Master's University in the nation.

On Aug. 24, the legacy school moved from the No.19 spot to the No. 10 spot. The Washington Monthly is a bimonthly magazine based in the nation's capital. The magazine features a yearly edition of the top-ranked universities in the nation. Having a legacy school placed in the Top 10 list is considered an achievement by faculty, staff and students.

"I know that students want to attend See GRADUATE, Page 2

Celebrating Hispanic heritage

Documentary filmmaker Valadez to visit UTRGV campuses



Jesus Sanchez/THE RIDER

Freshman Cindy Espino (left) tosses a ball at the 16 de Septiembre can toss game last Wednesday in the Student Union's El Gran Salón. Also shown is Julio Diaz, a music education sophomore.

Jesus Sanchez
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Mexican American Studies Program, Office of Student Involvement and the University Library will host a discussion and film screening with filmmaker John Valadez about his documentary "The Head of Joaquín Murrieta."

Admission is free and the public is invited to attend. The event will take place at 6 p.m. Wednesday in the Student

Union Theater in Edinburg and at noon Thursday in the Student Union's Gran Salón.

Valadez is an award-winning producer and director of documentaries, including "The Longoria Affair." He produced the PBS series "Visiones: Latino Arts and Culture" and the PBS special "Beyond Brown." "The Head of Joaquín Murrieta" focuses on the legendary Mexican outlaw.

For the next three weeks, several UTRGV departments will host events that will commemorate and educate

students about the Latino culture as part of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Last Wednesday, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley kicked off its observance of Hispanic Heritage Month with the 16 de Septiembre celebration in the Student Union's Gran Salón in Brownsville and the Quad in Edinburg.

The national observance began in 1968 when Congress passed a resolution authorizing then-President Lyndon B.

See HISPANIC, Page 2

Rain or shine, Vaqueros celebrate

Brownsville campus hosts The Stomp after rescheduling due to flooding

Monica Gudiño
THE RIDER

Around 450 students ate hot dogs and chips while enjoying live music by the band Red Velvet during The Stomp last Tuesday in the Student Union's Gran Salón.

"What we want them to get to know is that student life is here, is part of UTRGV and that there is going to be a lot of fun things happening not only with our office but collaborations with different departments," said Cindy Mata-Vasquez, director of Student Activities for the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Students competed in inflatable obstacle courses and other outdoor games on the Student Union lawn. Upstairs in the Gran Salón they lined up for pizza, hot dogs, chips and lemonade.

Among the student organizations that participated was S.O.U.L. (Student Organization for Unique Learners).

"You can see how much the campus life is growing with the new merge, everybody wants to be involved and it's a lot of fun," said special education junior and S.O.U.L. President Susanna Perales. "I hope [the students] get to see what our campus has to offer. Not just with student organizations but also all the resources that they have available for us like health services, graduate programs, something



Mario Gonzalez/THE RIDER

A student climbs an inflatable rock wall in the obstacle course during The Stomp.

more for them to look forward to."

Thirty-nine student organizations, campus departments and local businesses handed out treats, T-shirts, pencils and notepads.

"We want them to know what is available to them, what services they want to get to know in the community and then, of course, our local businesses,

what they can take from them," Mata-Vasquez said.

The nonprofit organization La Posada Providencia, an emergency homeless shelter that helps indigent immigrants and asylum seekers in the Rio Grande Valley, recruited volunteers.

"We are always looking for volunteers and I know students are always looking to volunteer, so we just thought it was going to be a good way to get our name out in the community more," said Adriana Garcia, volunteer coordinator for the shelter.

Guards Bernesha Peters and Idil Türk and forward Hildur Björg Kjartansdóttir, of the UTRGV Women's Basketball Team, took selfies with students who came up to greet them in the Gran Salón. The athletes and their head coach Larry Tidwell shared team photos and the season schedule at a table in the ballroom.

"I think it's very welcoming," Peters said. "It's very fun, you have a lot of activities, a lot of stands where you get to learn new things and meet new people. They have amazing food. ... The music is great as well."

The Stomp, which was postponed on Aug. 31 due to flooding, wrapped up an hour earlier than planned due to heavy rain.

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

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Sor Juana Festival

The Sor Juana Festival, which celebrates Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s legacy of intellect, arts and music, takes place from 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus. The event is part of UTRGV’s observance of Hispanic Heritage Month. For more information, call the Student Union at 665-7989.

Child advocate training

The Young Center for Immigrant Children’s Rights will conduct training Saturday and Sunday for volunteers to serve as child advocates for unaccompanied immigrant children in immigration detention. The training will take place at 402 S. F St., Suite 2B, in Harlingen. For more information, call the center at 230-1850 or email

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

Name: Alpha Psi Lambda National Inc. coed fraternity
Purpose: Promote continued personal and collective growth of our membership, success and unity through education, leadership, cultural awareness and community service.
President: Georgina Ramos
Internal Vice President: Mariel Gamboa
External Vice President: Kaila Contreras
Secretary: Mirzelen Martinez
Treasurer: Xiomara Hernandez
Associate Member Educator: Malleny Guajardo
Recruitment Chair: Vanessa Soto
Adviser: Noel Rodriguez
Activities: Boo at the Zoo, Make a Difference Day of Service, volleyball night, bowling night, chicken plate fundraiser, volunteering at the Tip of Texas Family Outreach.
Meetings: 6 p.m. Thursdays.
Membership requirements: Must

GRADUATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a university that will give back to them, that will make them stronger applicants in the workforce, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley provides all that,” said Sylvia Saenz, director of Graduate Studies.

Future Vaqueros can expect to see more options after completing their undergraduate program.

“We are looking into more graduate programs within the next few years,” Saenz said. “And we are looking [to add] more connection within the community

FINANCIAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Many students also reported not receiving their refund check by the time the fall semester began to help with other expenses at the university, such as textbooks and supplies.

Cody Bryant, a science sophomore with a similar problem, said he requested additional aid through loans to pay for the rest of his tuition and supplies, but the loans didn’t come in on time to pay by the deadline and he faced a difficult financial situation with his family.

“On the 24th I called and I stayed on hold for about 45 minutes until I was able to talk to someone, and they told me that they were gonna take up to three weeks to process the loan,” Bryant said.

HISPANIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Johnson to proclaim the week, including Sept. 15 and 16, as Hispanic Heritage Week.

Daniela Venegas, student program adviser for the Office of Student Involvement, organized the event and told *The Rider* she was pleased with the outcome of the 16 de Septiembre celebration.

“We want to bring these educational events for students,” Venegas said last Wednesday. “I know we’re really close to

hkesslertheyoungcenter.org.

Recovery Walkathon

The UTRGV Counseling Center and the Collegiate Recovery Program will sponsor the Recovery Walkathon at 11 a.m. Sept. 29 on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. Registration is free and will take place at 10 a.m. The first 25 students to sign up for the walkathon will receive a \$5 gift card. For more information, call Jorge A. Muñoz, counseling specialist, at 882-3896.

Career Week Fall 2015

The UTRGV Career Center will sponsor Career Week Fall 2015 today through Friday in a series of expositions from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), Procter & Gamble, Workforce Solutions,



PHOTO COURTESY ALPHA PSI LAMBDA

Members of the Alpha Psi Lambda National Inc. coed fraternity include (front row from left) Recruitment Chair Vanessa Soto and Secretary Mirzelen Martinez. Back row: External Vice President Kaila Contreras, Phil Coronado, President Georgina Ramos, Jose Carrillo, Treasurer Xiomara Hernandez, Associate Member Educator Malleny Guajardo, Internal Vice President Mariel Gamboa, Zulema Collazo.

have a cumulative grade-point average of 2.5, be at least 18 years old, be enrolled in at least six credit hours, not be a first semester freshman or belong to any other social fraternity or sorority.

through service learning.”

UTRGV officials agreed that the amount of exposure provided by the magazine’s article could prove to be positive for both the community and the university.

“This type of awareness of the university and what we can do and offer is always great. It’s good news,” Saenz said.

Currently, UTRGV offers 56 master’s programs and four doctoral programs.

Graduate student Hector Zamarripa believes the ranking of UTPA’s graduate school will help validate his collegiate career.

“I used my last day until the payment deadline to discuss with my mom how we were going to pull together over \$1,500. I had worked in the summer and saved \$900 for books, transportation and food. I had to use all of that for my student bill along with \$600 from my mother’s credit card.”

Martin Baylor, UTRGV’s executive vice president for Finance and Administration, clarified some of the troubles students were facing with financial aid.

“The plan all along was everyone was kind of looking at them being late because they are later then they would have been at the legacy institutions, but they weren’t late according to what the plan was for how we were going to have to disburse things for UTRGV,” Baylor said. “Based on the idea that we were having to switch the student system over when

the border and not a lot of people have the ability to go to Mexico, so [we decided to] bring the event here to campus.”

16 de Septiembre, hosted by the Office of Student Involvement, celebrated Mexico’s Independence Day and offered students the opportunity to learn more about Mexico’s culture.

Students also enjoyed a can toss game and Loteria, as well as a performance by Mariachi Zacatecas. Tamales and lemonade were served to students who attended the celebration.

Kinesiology freshman Rosanna Villarreal, who attended the event

PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Office of the Comptroller Currency to learn about internship and full-time opportunities. For a schedule of events, visit the center’s Facebook page at facebook.com/utrgvcareercenter or call the center at 665-2243 in Edinburg and at 882-5627 in Brownsville.

HR for Small Business

The UTRGV Small Business Development Center will conduct a free conference on employment processes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday at the Greater Mission Chamber of Commerce, located at 202 W. Tom Landry St. in Mission. Pre-registration is required. To sign up for the workshop, call the chamber at 585-2727.

--Compiled by Mario Gonzalez

For more information, email: Guajardo at malleny.guajardo01@utrgv.edu or Soto at vanessa.soto02@utrgv.edu.

--Compiled by Lesley Robles

“To have that sort of validation is amazing,” Zamarripa said. “We already knew that it was a great program. [The ranking] makes my degree worth that much more, especially if I decide to leave the Valley.”

Zamarripa is an AP history teacher in the Brownsville Independent School District. Although he considered continuing his education after receiving his bachelor’s degree in December 2007, Zamarripa said he had a change of heart. He is pursuing a Master of Arts in history at UTRGV.

we were in the midst of this summer, in August actually, switching the financial systems over, and the idea of switching banks and getting things to work, where you would’ve gotten the refund check; it was a UTRGV refund check and not anyone else’s refund check.”

Baylor also clarified that this process wasn’t a delay, but it was part of the layout for the UTRGV disbursement process.

“I think what we were maybe experiencing a little bit of today is the fact that some of those awards have taken longer through the entire process,” he said. “Because once they actually clear financial aid, our offices now have processes in place since we did our initial disbursement two weeks ago. They’re going normal at this point.”

in Brownsville, said she enjoyed the celebration and even won a UTRGV T-shirt.

“It was pretty fun,” Villarreal said. “I love the festivities and getting to meet new people and just being part of the community and the UTRGV experience.”

Villarreal said her favorite part of the celebration was the free food and games.

For more information about Hispanic Heritage Month festivities, call the Office of Student Involvement at 665-2660 in Edinburg and 882-5111 in Brownsville.

Student calls for gender-neutral restrooms

Andrea Torres
THE RIDER

While Student Government Association President Alberto Adame spoke last Tuesday about the difficulties UTRGV community faced going through its transition, math education junior Juan Villela was thinking about the problems his friend faced during her transition.

At the end of Adame’s address, Villela asked when the university will have gender-neutral restrooms.

In an interview after the address, he said his friend was not allowed to enter a women’s restroom on the UT Brownsville campus.

“She’s been taking hormones for years,” Villela said. “She’s been thinking about doing removal of her genitals. I think it’s really unfair she had to use the boys’ restroom. It was really uncomfortable for her. It was really unsafe for her to go to the boys’ restroom. I think [UTRGV] should begin implementing gender-neutral bathrooms, mostly because UT Dallas is already doing it.”

Adame said the situation should be addressed by speaking about it to university administrators.

“Showcasing that there’s a need will provide better services to all students here,” he said. “I think that if we start working on that we can come up with something that can be really great and realistic for students.”

More than 70 students attended the State of the Student Body address, which took place in Brownsville’s Gran Salón.

Among the topics Adame spoke about was the representation of UTRGV in the University of Texas System Student



MICHELLE ESPINOZA/THE RIDER

UTRGV Student Government Association President Alberto Adame (left) responds to math education junior Juan Villela’s question about gender-neutral restrooms during the State of the Student Body address last Tuesday in the Student Union’s Gran Salón in Brownsville. After the address, students were served pizza and punch.

Advisory Council (UTSSAC).

The council consists of two representatives from each UT System institution and was created to address issues of student concern, according to its website.

Kathryn Brough, a public relations and marketing junior, and Adame represented UTRGV at the first UTSSAC meeting of the year Sept. 11-12 in Austin. Brough is also the council’s administrative assistant and is a former UTSSAC representative for UT Pan American.

“We provide advice to the UT System chancellor, William McRaven, and to the board of regents on the matters pertaining to the systemwide student

body,” Adame said. “During the weekend, we had the opportunity to hear about concerns around the universities. Really hearing about what other students had to say, about the universities, I found that UTRGV, UTB and UTPA are really great places to be as compared to concerns to those at other universities.”

Adame also spoke about the problems students faced in the transition to UTRGV, such as registration blocks, not enough classes at their respective campuses and financial aid delays.

“We recognized the concerns students had during the transition and are still having,” he said in an interview after the address. “I think they gained information

and reassurance that ... we’re here for them and represent them very well.”

Gabriela Castorena, an exercise science sophomore, said she liked the address and found it informative.

“I actually thought it was very interesting,” Castorena said. “There was a lot of information. I didn’t even know about this organization, so I just thought it was very useful for me.”

For issues or concerns, students may visit the SGA office in Brownsville, located in Student Union 1.28 and in Edinburg, located in University Center Room 218. Students may also email Adame at sgapresident@utrgv.edu.

‘Bidi Bidi Bom Bom’ to the polls Student organization hosts dance party



Ena Capucion
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

The Texas Freedom Network at UTRGV will host its second annual Selena Dance Party from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. Tuesday in Brownsville and McAllen to celebrate National Voter Registration Day and to encourage the community to register to vote.

TFN is a nonpartisan political organization that advocates three pillars of liberties: civil liberties, education and religious freedom. The group has previously hosted other events such as the Equality Ball last semester on the Edinburg campus.

Mimosa Thomas, TFN’s campus organizer, helped organize last year’s dance party. Numerous people attended, registered as voters and left with registration cards--which TFN uses to remind people to vote on Election Day.

However, with the implementation of new voter ID laws, Texas now requires

residents to present a government form of identification in order to vote. More than half a million registered voters do not have the ID required by Texas, according to an article on CNN. Last Wednesday, an appeals court ruled that a good portion of the Texas voter ID laws violates the Civil Rights Act that protects Hispanics and African Americans from discrimination.

“There have been a lot of restrictive policies that have limited voting rights in Texas recently, specifically the voter ID laws,” Thomas said. “And so one way that we try to combat that is just trying to get as many people to the polls as possible. ... We don’t care which way you vote, we just want to get you to the polls [and] get you to engage.”

The Selena Dance Party will take place at Studio 69, located at W. 1260 Price Rd., in Brownsville. It will feature Alysha B Cavalli and host Beatrix Lestrangle. Admission is free for those 18 and older. In McAllen, the dance party will feature Leah Morgan at Yerberia Cultura, located at 613 S. 17th St. Admission is \$5 for those between 18 and 20 years old. The event will include door prizes, a Selena look-alike contest and Selena’s top hits.

Memorial service set for professor

Astrid Gonzalez
THE RIDER



During his tenure at the University of Texas Pan American, William Broz had a significant impact on the faculty, students and alumni who worked with him. Broz, who served as an English education professor for eight years at UTPA, died on May 9. A memorial service will be held at 5 p.m. Thursday in Jeffers Theatre in the Arts and Humanities building on the UTRGV Edinburg campus. Faculty, students, alumni and the community are invited to attend.

Broz was born in 1949 and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1972. In 1996, he earned his doctorate in English education from the University of Iowa and taught as a college professor at Western Illinois University, then at the University of Northern Iowa. In Fall 2007, he joined the University of Texas Pan American (now UTRGV), where he taught such courses as “Children’s and Adolescent Literature” and “Teaching Secondary School Literature.”

In 2011, Broz was awarded the New Faculty Mentoring Award from the UTPA Office of Faculty Affairs in recognition of his work. He also received English Journal’s 2002 Edwin M. Hopkins Award for the most outstanding article by a college professor. He co-edited the book, “Teaching Writing Teachers” (Heinemann, 2002).

Philip Zwerling, an associate professor who teaches creative writing at UTRGV, formed a bond and friendship with Broz over discussions of different forms of literature.

“He wasn’t just about teaching,” Zwerling said. “He was available for his students even after graduating. The thing I think worked so well for him was the fact that he was just a very understanding person.”

Myra Infante-Sheridan, a former lecturer at UTPA and now a graduate assistant at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, was part of Broz’s “Teaching Secondary Literature” course. Infante-Sheridan said she learned a lot from the English education professor and aims to implement the teaching methods he used when she was a student in her own teaching.

“He absolutely changed my life, I think he is the epitome of what a teacher is and should be,” she said. “The thing with Dr. Broz is that he loved teaching. His face would light up whenever he was talking about students, whenever he was talking about teaching,”

Amy Cummins, an associate professor of Literatures and Cultural Studies, shares the same perspective.

“There are numerous ways he impacted me from the very beginning,” Cummins said. “We worked together. He was also my mentor. Every time a question or issue comes up, I wish I could talk to Bill about this because Bill would know the answer to this. He was just very wise, caring and was taken too soon, but still had a great influence.”

Monica Sifuentes, a Weslaco High School teacher, was also a student in Broz’s “Teaching Secondary School Literature” class.

“In all honesty, he was a genuine person, and I mean that wholeheartedly,” Sifuentes said. “He understood what the teaching profession involved. ... It involved people, truly caring for the individual, showing compassion and having their best interest in mind.”

Yemin Sanchez, a contemporary studies lecturer in the English Department, worked under Broz as he assisted her in a similar career path.

“I think he established a positive communication with everyone, which allowed individuals to feel important in every way,” Sanchez said. “To me that’s a gift, because not everyone has the ability to do that. I wish I could thank him for the things that he taught me.”

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Get off your ignorant soapbox

Humanitarian effort or just the right thing to do?

Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR



To refer to Syria as a war-torn country is a bit of an understatement.

Rushing to aid the country was not exactly a priority for many world leaders when the conflict first came to their attention. However,

now that the crisis has boiled over to the point where many Syrians are dying in an attempt to flee this hostile environment, it's time we open our eyes to the situation.

Dissecting the catalyst of the war is not that simple, and a plausible solution to the refugee problem is even more difficult.

Despite the complexity of the situation, leave it to Twitter users to think they have it all figured out, and with dogmatic advice to boot! I saw a post that read:

"It's so sad to see those able bodied adult men running away from Syria & becoming refugees, fight for your people against I.S. you p-----."

I suppose it is that simple now. Forget the quarter of a million lives lost. Forget the fact that structures from schools to centuries old historic sites have been ruined. Forget the fact that some families actually want to stick together and not leave wives as widows or children without parents.

I guess after being spoiled by a country that hasn't seen a major war on its own soil since the American Civil War, it is easy to talk so violently. Maybe if the person who made the statement was put in that situation, he would fight. Fantastic, a noble fight aiming to defend the homeland, right? Don't mind the fact that it is almost a suicide mission and you may never see your family again.

The image of a bloody defense of the homeland just gets some people so riled up. Sometimes, I feel like people thousands of miles away from a conflict find the concept of war so romantic. Maybe someone will tell them that in real life, the choice between fighting or fleeing a crumbling country can be a life-altering, even deadly, decision.

Since civil war broke out in Syria, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that 9 million Syrians have been displaced from their homes. Two-thirds of the displaced citizens are still within Syria, displaced internally. While structures and residences alike are being destroyed, an additional 3 million individuals have fled to neighboring countries. Some Syrians are even going further northwest to European Union member nations.

Their migration has been met with varying results. Some nations, such as Germany, have been accepting refugees with open arms for months. On Sept. 14 the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. reported Germany had accepted 50,000 displaced Syrians within only a week. The same CBC report estimates a total of 800,000 have immigrated to Germany.

Many countries in Europe are split on the issue, divided between whether they should take in refugees or if they have the resources to provide for the displaced. Meanwhile, countries in the Middle East and other distant countries, like our own, deliberate and decide if it's feasible to let Syrians into their borders.

This is a tough decision to be put in the hands of a country's leader. If a small country with few resources chose not to accept refugees, it's hard to hold it against them. We can only hope that powerful nations can lend a helping hand to improve the millions of lives that have been threatened and turned upside down.

We, however, are not world leaders. We are just people living in one of the safest countries in the world. It is ludicrous for us to get on a soapbox and tell others not to try to live better lives, especially if we are completely removed from the source and the only information we get is fed to us through the news. Not only will you sound heartless, but you'll also sound pretty damn stupid.



Campus Q & A

Who is your favorite presidential candidate and why?

--Compiled by Michelle Espinoza and Lesley Robles



Alexander Pimentel
Dietetics junior

"My favorite presidential candidate would have to be Bernie Sanders because he is very supportive of young people and the goals that they want to achieve. I think that he is willing to pass legislation that is going to support young people today."



Emily Ramos
Nursing freshman

"Hillary Clinton, because I believe she should become president because women need to think of themselves as superior than men. Hillary Clinton wants school to be affordable for all college students so that they won't have to pay for it or take loans out."



Samuel Molina
Engineering technology junior

"Bernie Sanders. I definitely want to vote for him if he's actually running for president because of his ideas. He's socialistic but at the same time, like, democratic. But, he has been always about sex equality, like for gays, for homosexuals and straight people. He has always tried to help them so they can get marriage and all this stuff."



Clarissa Torres
Nursing freshman

"I don't want Trump to win because he is stupid. With regards to Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, they both have their good points. I am good with whoever wins between the two."

Letter to the Editor:

Athletics chasing the almighty dollar?

Two recent events by the Athletics Department have prompted this letter.

The first concerns the decision to sell alcohol at athletic events. This is the first time in 45 years teaching at this institution that alcohol is being sold at athletic events. The subheading in *The Rider* article of Sept. 7 was "Aimed at enhancing fan experience." My immediate reaction upon hearing this decision was, "What message is athletics sending to the student body and, especially, younger people?" Does drinking alcohol enhance their viewing experience? Alcohol is a depressant on the central nervous system, dulling one's senses and in no way enhances perception. When watching any performance I personally want to be in control of my faculties to enjoy it to the utmost.

Is the consumption of alcohol a problem in our society? Yes. Alcohol is a gateway drug that causes many problems in America such as death on highways, broken homes, etc., and leads

to the consumption of other drugs. Next March, during Spring Break, "binge drinking" by college students will be in the news. Could the approval by Athletics to foster alcohol consumption in any way contribute to this problem? If the answer is yes to even one student, then it is one too many. Or, when an accident occurs after leaving a UTRGV-sponsored athletic event, who will be held liable?

In the article, one student, a psychology major stated "... if you see a sport live and drink, that's pretty cool." That is the message that is being sent. I thought all experiences at the university should be positive, about educating students and making correct choices.

In the same article it stated "... it did generate additional revenue." And therein lies my hypothesis that Athletics is chasing the almighty dollar at the expense of providing a positive image and message to young people. Image does matter!

The second event involves the decision

to charge faculty and staff admission to athletic events. Again, in 45 years this has never occurred--why now? As a new university, now should be the time among programs to build bridges among students, faculty, staff and programs--not burn them. There are perks that a university could afford faculty and staff to compensate for the lack of pay raises

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Running the RGV

Young, Valley-heavy cross-country team begins season

Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR

The Vaquero cross-country's rosters of 21 student-athletes stands apart from many other programs at UTRGV. The men's team consists of only 11 runners, while the women's team has 10. Having fewer members than sports teams like basketball, soccer or baseball is not unusual, but looking through the hometowns of all the players might come as a surprise.

Only three runners, all on the men's team, hail from outside the Rio Grande Valley. The remaining 18 members of the teams ran for Valley high schools. Looking closer, the most common city to produce runners is Edinburg, with four men and one woman who formerly ran in the E.C.I.S.D.

Head Coach Xavier Richardson explained the advantages of recruiting members from the Valley.

"I wouldn't just say it's easier to recruit from the Valley," said Richardson, who took over cross-country in Spring 2012. "On the other side of that coin, sometimes you have individuals that don't want to be close to home or want to go elsewhere. Sometimes, we have just as good of a shot as any other school in the state or out of the state with some of the athletes and some we do have the advantage."

The coach did acknowledge a helpful hand coming from a few local high school coaches who alert their athletes of the pipeline to UTRGV that is available if they choose to remain in the area for collegiate competition.

"I think we do have a good relationship with some of the coaches in the area, and they certainly assist us when it comes to letting the next generations know that we are an opportunity for them," said Richardson, who began as an assistant with UT Pan American in 2009. "On the same, we have others that kind of push them out the door and say, 'You can do this or go other places.'"

The team is doing its part to spread awareness about the program at UTRGV to those who might be unsure about the benefits of staying in the area.

"We're doing more of what we can to get out and about and be present," said Richardson, who also leads the track and



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Sophomore Alexandria Muñoz (left) and freshman Alexis Gonzalez run Sept. 4 in the RGV Duals on the Monte Cristo Golf Course.

field team. "We're working on getting more athletes onto campus and hosting meets and things that they can see with what we have here, or facilities and so on, so that's really on their mind when they are deciding where to go."

Another unique aspect of the two cross-country rosters is the abundance of underclassmen. There are 10 freshmen in total, including one redshirt; nine sophomores and only one upperclassman per team. Senior Jose Juan Wells, from Cottonwood, Arizona, is the elder statesman on the men's team. Women's runner Savanna Antley, a former Sharyland distance runner, has been with the program the longest.

The 2015-16 season is already in full swing with two meets already under the team's belt. The first event was held Sept. 4 at Monte Cristo Golf Course in Edinburg, where the Vaqueros ran against Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Wells was the top time on the team and fourth overall with a 16:03 finish in the 5K race. Ricardo Moreno was the only other Vaquero to finish in the top 10 with a time of 16:28.

Jennifer Zapata led the women's team

with a time of 19:06, Thalia Polanco finished a second later at 19:09 and Teresa Sova came in at 19:12. These finishes were good enough for third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

The next meet took place in Houston at the Rice Invitational with competition from around the state present.

The top men's finish was Ricardo Moreno, in 60th place, with a time of 20:21.42 in the 5.5K race. Vaquero men finished 10th, ahead of Texas A&M International University-Laredo, Texas Southern University and Prairie View A&M University.

Sova's time of 17:13.40 and Zapata's time of 17:18.60 in the 4K race were good for 13th and 17th places. The women's team earned a sixth-place finish overall, just a few points behind regionally ranked Lamar University.

The Islander Splash in Corpus Christi is the next time Coach Richardson will lead the team into competition. Friday's meet serves as the third of the season. Including the Corpus meet, the team has four remaining events until the conference race Oct. 31 in Orem, Utah.

Athlete of the Week



PHOTO COURTESY KARA LARA

Name: Carlos Acevedo

Classification: Junior

Major: Rehabilitation science

Sport: Men's soccer

Position: Forward

Hometown: Brownsville

Who is your favorite athlete? "Lionel Messi." Messi is a forward for *Futbol Club Barcelona*.

Who is your role model? "My mother. She's the mere image of the woman that I look for, well, that I have. I'm a married man. She's the mere image of what a true woman should be."

What is the best advice you've ever been given and by whom? "It was from both my wife and my mother. It's never give up on my dreams."

What do you like to do for fun? "Spend time with family [and] cook out."

When did you begin playing soccer and why did you start playing?

"I started when I was 3 years old and I started playing because it runs in my family. My family is huge on soccer and I just carried on the sport."

Did you play in high school and did you get any awards? "Yes. I played in Homer Hanna High School and I was selected as the most valuable player and first team all-state."

What are your goals for the season? "Individually is to play consistently at a good, high level and collectively is to go to the conference tournament and possibly win that and have immediate success for home games and road games."

What is your favorite movie? "The Hangover."

Is there a song that gets your head in the game? "Yes. 'Viva la Vida' by Coldplay. It's relaxing."

What are your plans for the Fall 2015 semester? "Continue my studies, bump up my GPA and improve for the next season."

How do feel about being part of the first UTRGV Men's Soccer Team?

"I feel honored. I feel very proud to be a part of this historic team. I'm happy to share the field with my teammates."

--Compiled by Astrid Gonzalez

LETTER

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and low salaries. For example, free admission to athletic events, as is done by other programs such as theater plays, would be a positive gesture. If athletic events were filled to capacity, I could envision charging admission to faculty and staff, to generate revenue. But no venue in my recent memory has been filled to capacity, thus no money is being lost.

In addition, I have spoken to several faculty and staff and upon learning they will be charged admission, all indicated they would not attend nor go out of their way to help athletes with scheduling or other problems. Thus, in the final analysis, the athlete is the loser in terms of fewer spectators and faculty help.

My hypothesis is that Athletics is chasing the almighty dollar at the expense of setting an example for young people regarding alcohol consumption and reaching out to faculty and staff in a familial manner.

Does Athletics charge admission to administrators and its personnel, who are staff, and if not, why not?

Familiar face joins the bench

UTRGV hires UTB volleyball standout

Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR



The newest member of the UTRGV volleyball coaching staff is a familiar face to Head Coach Todd Lowery. Graduate Assistant Danica Markovic, who has worked with Lowery since

2010, was a four-year member of the team he coached at the University of Texas Brownsville.

In her time on the team, Markovic became the all-time program leader in kills, aces, attacks and sets played. She also led the team to two National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics national championships, in 2011 and 2013, earning the tournament MVP both times. She was named NAIA National Player of the Year in the second championship season.

Two years removed from their last championship, Markovic and Lowery are seemingly reunited in their new digs. In reality, there was never a break between the player and coach's relationship, just a change in roles.

Markovic is no longer able to play under Lowery. In 2014, in Brownsville, she moved into an assistant role, helping coach the UTB team when not occupied with competing as a cross-country

runner and attending classes. In her first year transitioning into a coaching role she helped Lowery's team to a 34-5 season and reached another NAIA championship match.

While still a graduate student, studying early childhood education, Markovic is no longer a cross-country runner this year and will have more time in the gym with the team.

"[Last year] she helped us out when she could," Lowery said. "This year she's a lot more involved in the planning of practice and the watching of films, those kind of things. So we have her for a few more hours than a year ago."

Lowery emphasized the benefits of Markovic's experience and familiarity with his own style of work.

"The good thing about having her on our staff is she knows what I expect in the gym," Lowery said. "She can convey that to the kids, how we expect to do things. Someone that's really been through it and been through it recently and knows what it takes to get to that next level. She has that mentality and she can help the girls develop that kind of mentality."

Markovic, a native of Subotica, Serbia, is working toward a master's in education and will not travel with the team. However, she believes she will still be able to contribute a great deal.

"It's stressful, but they say once you do something you love, you don't ever have to work," she said. "To me, it is a great challenge but, for me, I take it in a positive

way. Everything that is a challenge for me I try to be the best at it. It is not easy but it is definitely manageable."

Markovic points to her time coaching at UTB last year as a key to being able to jump into the fray as an assistant for UTRGV.

"It was nice to be on the sideline with Coach Lowery," the four-time NAIA all-American said. "We developed this relationship over the course of four years so we can succeed on the court. With the new program, it's a lot of challenge and people expect from you, but since it's the first year of the program, it's gonna take some time to get to where we wanna be."

Choosing a favorite part of the new position wasn't easy for Markovic.

"Anything about volleyball is my favorite I would say," she said. "I guess tactical stuff. I like that. When we worked on technique over the course of my career, I learned proper technique. So, if I see something that the girls are not doing right or they don't have the proper footwork, I would like to correct that because I think that's one of my strongest abilities in volleyball."

Markovic and Lowery will continue to try to improve the team and lead it in the inaugural season of UTRGV.

The conference season begins at 2 p.m. Saturday in Las Cruces, New Mexico, as the Vaqueros take on the New Mexico State University Aggies, the defending conference champions.

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WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS / 12:15 - 1:15pm / MAGC 2.406

HACU Info Session / 12:30 - 1:30pm / Business Administration Bldg. 110



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