

THE RIDER

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2017

UTRGVRIDER.COM

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Be
INVOLVED

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Peter Averack

Student Government Association &
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Advisor of the Year
Grant Benham

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Organization of the Year
Psi Chi
at UTRGV

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Association for Computing
Machinery's Committee on Women
Girl Scout Outreach

Vaquero Pride Award
Lawrence Pabalinas
Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

New Student Organization
of the Year
The Association of Accountants
and Financial Professionals in
Business

2017 Student Leader
Award Ceremony
Recipients

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UTRGV STUDENT MEDIA

is accepting applications for the 2017-2018 Academic Year for the following programs:



The Rider newspaper

Pulse magazine



UTRGV TV

UTRGV Radio



Students must apply via Career Connection

All applicants must be:

- Enrolled at UTRGV during the Fall 2017 semester.
- Have a cumulative grade-point average of 2.5 or higher.

**Deadline to apply is
May 12, 2017.**

For more information, call 882-5143 or 665-7081.

UTRGV

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Congrats, Class of 2017 Grads!



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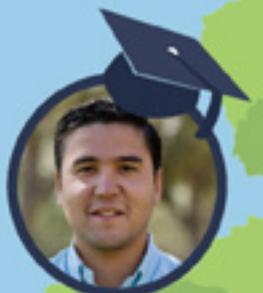
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wishes you

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Faculty salary adjustments in progress

Provost says 74 professors have already received increases

Jesus Sanchez
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As discussions on the state spending plan for the next two years continue in the Texas Legislature, UTRGV is preparing for potential budget cuts as well as faculty salary adjustments for next fall.

Provost Havidán Rodríguez told *The Rider* last Wednesday it was too early to determine the impact state budget cuts will have on UTRGV.

“Even though, you know, we’re approaching May here fairly quickly, we still don’t have a clear idea on what will be the budgetary impacts for UTRGV,” Rodríguez said. “It’s hard to say what those numbers are going to look like and depending what those numbers are going to look like, then the president’s Cabinet--the president, [Finance and Administration Vice President] Rick Anderson, myself and the other VPs--will have to get together and establish, if there’s going to be budget cuts, how we’re going to resolve those.”

The provost said UTRGV officials have been looking into potentially “cost-cutting measures in all units,” such as Academic Affairs and Business Affairs.

Asked if there is a possibility of a reduction in force at UTRGV because of the budgetary shortfall, Anderson replied it would be the university’s last resort.

“I hope the reduction in force is not significant enough to where we’re talking about lots of reductions in force,” he said. “There may be certain programs, or things like that, that the university decides that it can no longer do based on the dollars that are allocated.”

Anderson said if certain programs are cut, a phase-out period will usually occur as well.

Faculty pay raises

Seventy-four faculty members have received salary adjustments this academic year as a result of gender and non-gender equity studies. The increases totaled \$244,363.

“We’ve made some adjustments, both for gender and non-gender equities,” he said. “We’ve completed those studies and have made adjustments to a number of faculty throughout UTRGV.”

Last summer, UTRGV officials received the results of a study conducted by Huron Consulting Group, a global management consulting company in Chicago, on gender equity in faculty base salaries.

On average, the study found that male faculty members make a median

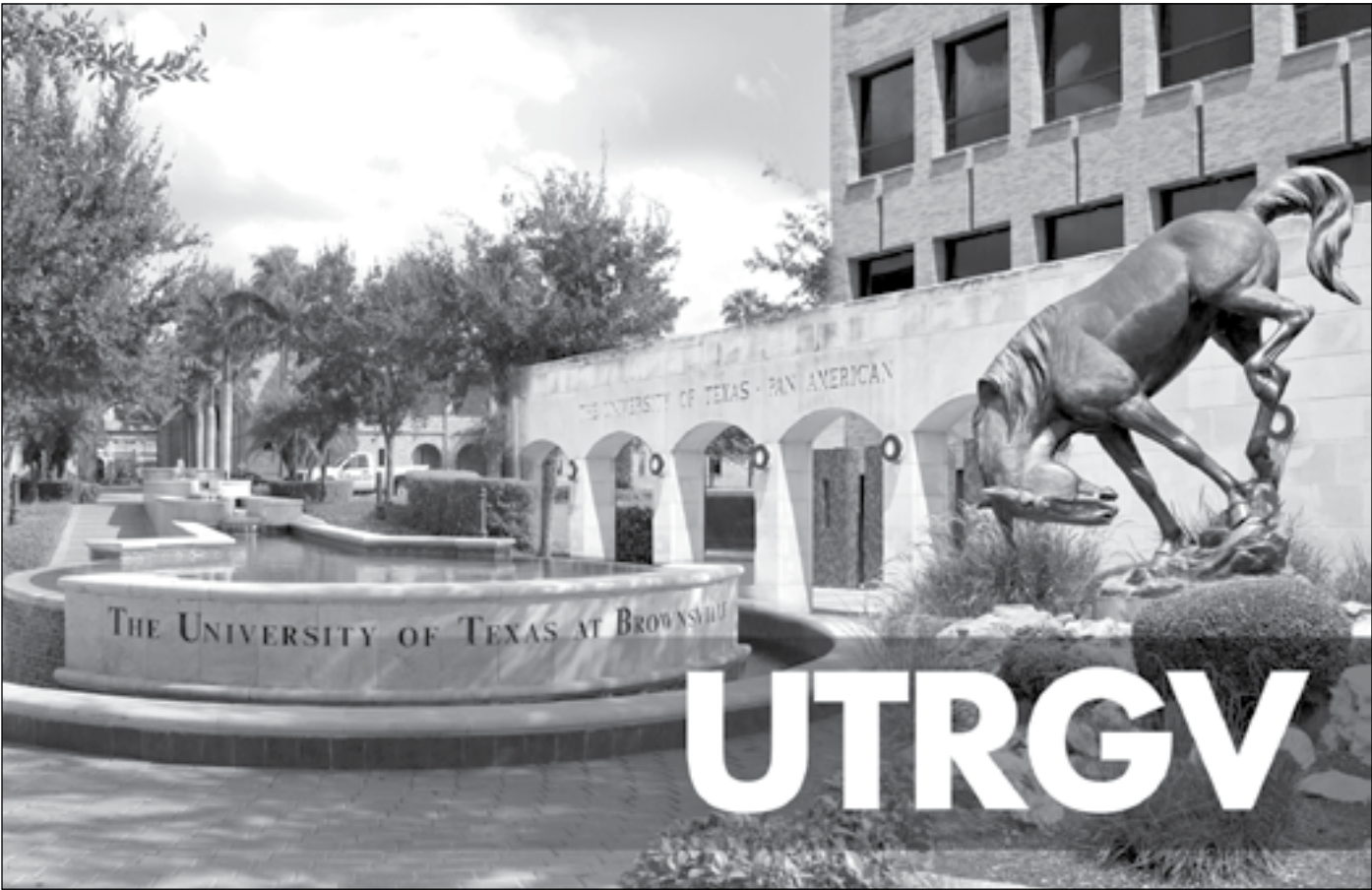


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MARIO GONZALEZ

salary of \$67,464, while females make \$59,253.

The provost said the studies were conducted college by college, the last being the College of Health Affairs. The

than associate or full professors, so that’s an inversion issue,” Rodríguez said. “Then, there’s a compression issue, where you have faculty who have been here for a long time and

“ Through these equity adjustments that we’re making and through the salary inversion and compression studies that we’re doing, we’re trying to look at how to improve and enhance the salaries of our faculty to make them more competitive. ”

Havidán Rodríguez
UTRGV Provost

colleges of Sciences and Liberal Arts were identified as the most in need by Huron.

Salary inversion and compression

The provost said the university is in the process of finalizing a salary inversion and compression.

“With the changes in the labor market, sometimes you’re hiring junior faculty, let’s say assistant professors, whose salaries may be as high or higher

have not received [salary increases], consistently, over time. Then, salaries of associate and full professors tend to look quite similar. And so, we’re trying to see how that looks like. We’re analyzing the data now for all the UTRGV faculty in tenure and tenure-track positions.”

He said UTRGV will, hopefully, complete that study by the end of May or early June. After the study has been completed, university officials will determine what adjustments need to be made and how much funding it will take in order to make them in the fall.

Enrollment

In a March 22 Staff Senate meeting, UTRGV President Guy Bailey said UTRGV can partially offset any reduction to the university budget by increasing its enrollment.

The provost said the school has already begun the recruitment of more students.

“We are doing a massive number of things to increase student recruitment, from going out there and having all the orientations for our students, meeting with advisers and counselors at the local school levels by providing all kinds of information of the different colleges, by reaching out to principals and superintendents and having close collaborations with the schools,” Rodríguez said.

Enrollment for Spring 2017 was 25,860 and 27,560 for Fall 2016.

Rodríguez said UTRGV is looking at an increase in new freshmen for fall enrollment, so far. However, setting an enrollment goal to partially offset budget cuts is difficult to determine right now.

“It’s hard to say because we don’t know what the budget cuts are going to be,” the provost said. “At the end of the day, student enrollment will only be able to offset part of any budget cuts. We’ll have to look at other measures and look at other initiatives.”

Some of those measures include receiving grants for research, according to Rodríguez. The provost said UTRGV will continue to expand its research, which will provide another measure for securing funds.

“One of the things that we’re trying to do as we move forward towards the new academic year is trying to figure out what are the issues that we, as an institution of higher education, need to deal with,” he said. “As you know, our top priority is student success. So, whatever we do is going to be focused along that narrative. ... At the same time, through these equity adjustments that we’re making and through the salary inversion and compression studies that we’re doing, we’re trying to look at how to improve and enhance the salaries of our faculty to make them more competitive.”



What do you want
to see in *The Rider*?

Have a story idea?

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The Rider is the official, award-winning 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

Today

Mariachi Showcase

The **UTRGV School of Music** invites the public to the **Mariachi Aztlán and Friends Cinco de Mayo Concert** for an early celebration for the Mexican holiday at 7:30 p.m. in the Texas Southmost College Arts Center in Brownsville. Tickets (\$15 for adults, \$10 for senior citizens and \$5 for children and UTRGV students, faculty and staff) can be purchased at <http://patron.utrgv.edu> or at the door. For more information, call 665-3881 or email patron@utrgv.edu.

University Choir

The **University Choir** will sing a traditional program of choral music from many styles and periods at 7:30 p.m. in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. Tickets are \$5 and can be purchased at <http://patron.utrgv.edu> or at the door. For more information, call 665-3881 or email patron@utrgv.edu.

Tuesday

Veteran Graduation

The **Student Veterans of America** will host a graduation ceremony for graduating veterans from 9 to 10:45 a.m. in Salón Cassia 2.402 on the Brownsville campus. For more information, email patrick.roberts01@utrgv.edu.

Confessions at the Quad

The **Catholic Campus Ministry** will hold **confession** along with a **Living Rosary** from 10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. at the University Quad on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email jose.a.medina02@utrgv.edu.

Rules of Academia

Mariana Alessandri, an assistant professor in the UTRGV Philosophy Department, will present a lecture on

the rules of academia and whether those who write grammatically correct are smarter than those who don't from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. in Liberal Arts Building North 101 on the Edinburg campus. The event is sponsored by the **Philosophy Club**. For more information, email alfredo.ovalle01@utrgv.edu.

‘El Censo’ presentation

Students in Literatures & Cultural Studies Visiting Associate Professor **Karen Benavente’s** Latin American Lyrical Poetry and Theatre class will present an adaptation of the play, **“El censo,”** by **Emilio Carbadillo** at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday and Saturday in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. Admission is free.

Wednesday

Chips and study tips

Student Rights and Responsibilities will give out chips with study tips from noon to 2 p.m. in the Main Courtyard on the Brownsville campus. For more information, email douglas.stoves@utrgv.edu.

UTRGV Guitar Festival

The ninth **Guitar Festival** continues at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday with the **Cuadro Flamenco** show performed by UTRGV dance students and choreographed by **Fred Darsow**, flamenco singer **Jose Cortes** and guitarist **Jose Tanaka**. Other events scheduled are **Cinco de Mayo Guitar Extravaganza**, featuring guest artists **Rafael Scarfullery**, **Luther Enloe** and **Ben Woods** at 7:30 p.m. Friday; **A Day of Guitar**, which consists of workshops and clinics, at 11 a.m. Saturday; and a **Locals Night**, featuring UTRGV and guitar high school ensembles from across the Rio Grande Valley, at 7:30 p.m. Saturday. All events will take place in the UTRGV

Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. Admission is free. For more information, call 665-3471.

Saturday

VI Recreation Day

The **Health and Kinesiology Club** will host a **Recreation Day** for visually impaired children and their families from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Health and Physical Education II building on the Edinburg campus. For more information, call 665-2115 or email brenda.l.lopez01@utrgv.edu.

Food sales

Hot dog fundraisers

The **Pre-Dental Society at UTRGV** will sell hot dogs from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. today in the Library Courtyard on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email dakota.millero1@utrgv.edu.

The **Association of International Students** will sell hot dogs, chips and drinks from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Quad BBQ area. For more information, email roshni.manwani01@utrgv.edu.

Gummy bears and pickles

Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society for First-Year Students will sell gummy bears with chamoy for \$1 or a container including pickles and chili powder for \$2.50 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. For more information, email gregory.koneri01@utrgv.edu.

Hamburger combo

The **Astronomy Club** will sell \$5 hamburger combos, including chips and drink, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday in the Library BBQ area on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email arianna.leal01@utrgv.edu.

--Compiled by Marie Vallangca

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between April 17 and 21.



April 17

9:38 a.m.: A student reported a fellow student for verbal threats made to him in Heritage Hall on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

11:08 a.m.: A student reported being harassed off campus in April 2016 in Hidalgo. He was referred to the City of Hidalgo.

2:41 p.m.: A student reported receiving inappropriate, unprofessional comments from a staff member driving a university vehicle. The case is under investigation.

7:28 p.m.: A student reported that a fellow student may have recorded her with his cell phone during class. She wanted the incident documented due to an ongoing investigation with Student Rights and Responsibilities.

April 18

7:20 a.m.: A student reported \$25 missing from his wallet after leaving it inside his roommate's room in the Casa Bella student housing complex on the Brownsville campus.

11:50 a.m.: A student reported that

two weeks ago, his vehicle's tire was flat due to a construction nail in Lot B1 on the Brownsville campus. On April 18, he found another nail on the tread of his tire.

1:36 p.m.: A student reported losing his wallet in the Life and Health Sciences Building on the Brownsville campus.

10:23 p.m.: A staff member reported losing his cell phone in the Main Building on the Brownsville campus.

April 19

11:10 a.m.: A student reported that an unknown person was taking photos of her at different locations on the Edinburg campus, then posting them on social media, which concerned her. The case is under investigation.

5:09 p.m.: A staff member reported losing a set of university keys that provide access to paper dispensers on campus and to a university vehicle.

7:35 p.m.: A student was intoxicated in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. The student's brother arrived and took custody of the student. They left campus without incident.

April 20

7:02 a.m.: A student reported that her vehicle's driver side window was shattered while traveling east on Schunior Street in Edinburg. Further investigation revealed that a UTRGV employee was using a grass trimmer on the south side of the ROTC building when the incident occurred. A UTRGV representative instructed the student on where to take her vehicle for repairs.

3:18 p.m.: A student reported that an unknown man and another student were filming her with his phone from a distance in the University Library on the Brownsville campus. She asked if he had recorded her, and replied that he had to for a class project. She asked him to delete the recording and he refused. He left the area before an officer's arrival.

April 21

11:38 a.m.: A student suffered a seizure during class in the Physical Science Building on the Edinburg campus. He was transported to Doctors Hospital at Renaissance by Hidalgo County Emergency Medical Services.

--Compiled by Macarena Martinez

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

Data by the ocean

Karina Aguirre
ONLINE EDITOR

Applications for the first International Conference on Data Intelligence and Security will be available today at ICDIS.org. It is the first conference of its kind in the Rio Grande Valley and offers a new opportunity for students and faculty of UTRGV.

The ICDIS is co-sponsored by UTRGV and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The conference is set for April 8-10 of 2018 in the Hilton Garden Inn on South Padre Island.

“This conference is going to bring a lot of researchers worldwide,” said Hansheng Lei, an associate professor in the Computer Science department. “We have sent invitations to many top universities. This is going to be the first conference organized by the university, so it’s a big event. It’s not only very important for our Computer Science department but also for the university and the region.”

The conference aims to establish UTRGV as a top-tier research university. The ICDIS has national and international names on its organizing committee. They include the University of Texas at Arlington, Ocean University of China and Google Inc.

The conference will focus on data intelligence, security and management. Data intelligence is similar to artificial intelligence or the branch of computer science dealing with the simulation of intelligent behavior in computers, but driven by data. Knowledge is extracted from the data. Data security is the method used to secure the data in a database, internet or any cyberspace. Data management is how it is all organized, stored and retrieved.

“The conference is multidisciplinary



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

Applications for the first International Conference on Data Intelligence and Security will be available today. The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers will sponsor the conference April 8-10, 2018. “The IEEE is literally one of the big authorities in engineering,” said Mahmoud Quweider, a professor and associate chair for the Computer Science department. “When they sponsor a conference, it has weight. It means that the papers that will be presented are top quality.”

in nature,” said Mahmoud Quweider, a professor and associate chair of the Computer Science department. “It doesn’t have to be only computer science. We can use physicists ... mathematicians, computer scientists, engineers, so it’s multidisciplinary in nature. Our goal is to, of course, start collaborations and also to put our name on the map. We want to become one of the attractive places for researchers and collaborators.”

Students are encouraged to take part in this conference. Lei suggests that students working on senior projects

or a graduate school thesis submit papers for this event. Students whose papers are chosen, will have their work published and cited on the IEEE website.

The ICDIS will last three days. Top scientists will present keynote speeches for the attendees and chosen papers will be presented by the authors.

“Once they publish it and it becomes part of the system, other researchers interested in the paper will be able to go to the website and download that paper,” Quweider said. “The citation of a paper is a very good thing. So that’s

the way students can contribute and they can actually put it on their résumé and it will be good for their career [to say] ‘my paper was published on the IEEE.’”

At least 200 people have signed up to attend the conference. Interested students are encouraged to volunteer at the ICDIS.

“Don’t be shy to apply,” Quweider said. “We encourage everyone to apply. Hopefully, it will become an annual event.”

For more information, visit ICDIS.org.

The degrees of education vs. *educado*

Marie Vallangca
THE RIDER

Mariana Alessandri, a UTRGV assistant professor of philosophy, will present a lecture on the difference between being educated and *educado*, titled “Educated but not Educado,” at 12:15 p.m. Tuesday in Liberal Arts Building North 101 on the Edinburg campus.

The definition of education in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is “Having an education: having an education beyond the average.” But to Alessandri, educated, in her own definition, is the word used when referring to people going through formal education.

“I think ‘educated’ is the word that we use when we’re referring to people going through formal education,” Alessandri said.

“It has a whole history in terms of Latin American people that rhymes with civilization, so education and civilization were thought to be the same thing and it means pulling you out of illiteracy and making you literate, therefore, making you a better person,” she said.

On the other hand, Alessandri’s definition of *educado* is something that doesn’t require formal education.

“In Spanish, it means personal values and politeness,” she said. “So, if you’re a polite person, you treat people well, you’re *educado*.”

Parents and grandparents tell their children to better themselves by getting educated, but in Alessandri’s opinion, education doesn’t necessarily mean being a better person.

She explained that a person with no formal education who grew up with respect and personal values is better than a person who acquired a degree in a university with a 4.0 GPA but could have cheated throughout college to get it.

In her presentation, she will talk



LESLEY ROBLES/THE RIDER

Assistant Professor Mariana Alessandri speaks to students about the Mexican-American identity at UTRGV on Nov. 17 in Edinburg.

about the rules of college and how they don’t contribute to being a better person in the future.

There are unspoken rules in school, especially universities, that some professors take seriously. These rules can be as simple as using correct grammar, sending an email and learning to place a comma in the right place.

“There are things that you have to know and that teachers expect you to know, but they don’t always tell you what those are,” she said.

Students tend to think that they’re stupid and bad people because they think their parents and teachers will be disappointed in them when they don’t follow these unspoken rules, sending the wrong message to them.

Learning the rules of grammar

and writing an email professionally doesn’t make a person better but it will definitely help getting a white-collar job.

“So becoming better is a personal thing, it’s not better than an uneducated person,” she said.

Alessandri has had experiences in which professors act offended when students don’t follow the unspoken rules when, in her opinion, it should just be a matter of “Oh, these are some things that you might not know because you’re a first-generation college student.”

“Learning the rules of grammar doesn’t make you a better person, it just makes you a better writer in English, that’s all,” she said.

There’s a preference for people who are professional versus people who

are uneducated. Professionals look a certain way and Alessandri wants students to learn what it means to look professional.

“What I want to impress upon students is that they do have to learn the rules of the game because the world will believe that you’re professional if you address the teacher as ‘Doctor’ rather than ‘Miss,” she said. “... Be strategic: You need to know where the apostrophe goes because the stupid world will think you’re smart if you know where the apostrophe goes and it won’t think you’re smart if you don’t know where it goes.”

Alessandri’s presentation will last about an hour and 15 minutes and will include student engagement. For more information about the lecture, email mariana.alessandri@utrgv.edu.

Campus Q&A

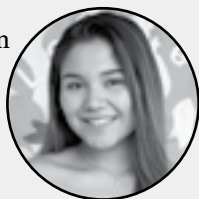
What are your plans after graduation?



"I'm kind of just hoping to see what kind of connections I have. Fusion wants me to be a freelance reporter, but I also have this guy who's going to send out my résumé to a bunch of old publications he worked for, up in Houston. He's gonna send it off to CW39 'cause he used to work there for a couple of years. He's going to send it off to some other independent magazine up there. I'm just trying to find a job."

Gustavo Huerta
Mass communication senior

"After my graduation I plan on studying for the MCAT and, hopefully, get into medical school and if not, become a biomedical researcher scientist, and that's about it."



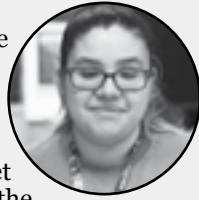
Viviana Uriegas
Biomedical sciences senior



"Estoy pensando muy seriamente en aplicar para una escuela dental la cual va a abrir mis panoramas. Me va a ayudar para yo poder sobresalir económicamente y académicamente. También, quiero emprender un negocio. Quiero que ese mismo negocio me dé para poder seguir estudiando porque sé que va a hacer para mis papás ... mejor si yo tengo una manera económicamente de poder sustentarme".

Gerson Cisneros
Estudiante de último año de ciencias biomédicas

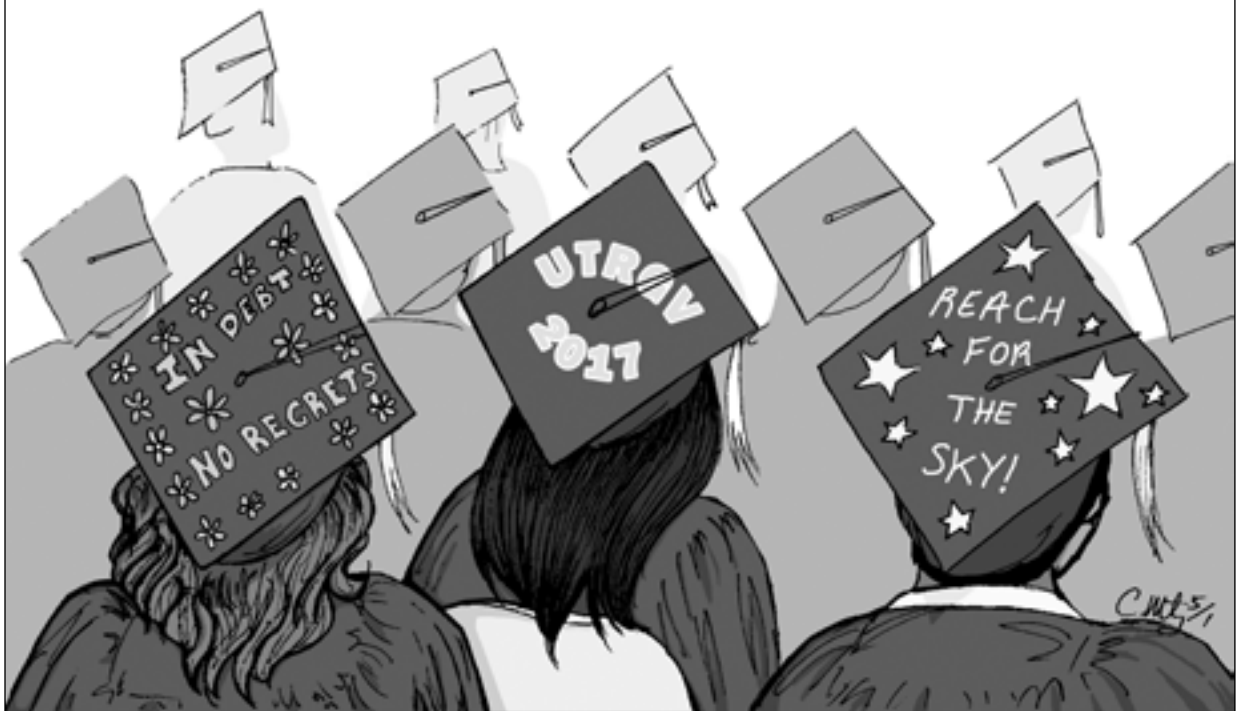
"I'm trying to get work at the radio station, 107.9, as an on-air personality. I really don't know what my end goal is at this moment. It's either I graduate and go to grad school for communication, or I get to go to work over there. One of the things they told me is that it takes up a lot of time, so I'd probably go to work. If not, I'd look around Texas for jobs that deal with sound engineering or radio."



Alexandria Garcia
Theatre/Television/Film senior

--Compiled by Ana Cahuiche and Gabriel Mata

Congratulations, UTRGV Class of 2017!



The stars behind the scenes



Nathaniel Mata
SPORTS EDITOR

Recently, I was thinking about just how many ridiculous "national days" there are. From national pet hair day to national jay-walker day, it's really getting out of hand. (I made those two up, I really hope they're fake).

So I was extremely surprised there wasn't a National Editors Day.

I'm not sure if it's because their hard work is done mostly behind the scenes or maybe the editor just cut the letter because it missed deadline.

Jokes aside, I'd really like to take a second to thank every editor I've ever had. From my infancy as a journalist a few years back at the Pan American, I'd like to thank Susan Gonzalez. She's at *The Denver Post* now; she's small but was always a huge motivation on me even after she left the Valley.

Then it was Andrew Vera and May Ortega. They'll never leave my heart.

It's hard to convey the face of terror I had when I saw that May had left criticism on one of my drafts. I knew it would take more time fixing my mistakes than it did to write the original mess. I had an idea it was for the better, but I didn't know I was learning from one of the best, most dedicated writers I may ever meet.

If you've ever played sports, she was the coach that would get on you about your strike-out during a 3-for-4 day at the plate.

Andrew was no pushover, either. He wasn't afraid to rip my words apart. It's not because they had anything against me. In fact, it was because they saw potential in me way before I saw it in myself.

That year humbled me, it drove me to seek out feedback and ways to improve my style, structure and consistency as a reporter.

Speaking of consistency, I'd like to apologize

to every copy editor who consistently had to deal with small mistakes that were probably the product of my keyboard not being able to keep up with my mind. Sorry, Andy De Llano, I didn't mean to drive you to the magazine (JK)!

Recently, it's been Bryan Ramos and Jesus Sanchez who have kept a close eye on my work as I inch toward what I hope will be a successful and everlasting career. I am thankful for them. Thankful for the laughs I've shared in the newsroom, on the sidelines and while burning the midnight oil working against a deadline. Even P.J. Hernandez, who has only been here for a few solid weeks, has been pretty awesome to work with and learn from.

The minds of writers are always great to be around.

A huge thank you goes to my advisers and mentors who have passed along wisdom that stretches far beyond classrooms. Gigantic credit is due to Greg Selber for believing in my writing, teaching me to tackle every story with an interesting angle and finding a new way to blow my mind with your RGV and general sports knowledge.

I bet he knows Edcouch Elsa's third string quarterback in 1997, seriously.

Greg Luca with *The Monitor* has been the best hands-on instructor I've had and he has nothing to do with the university (besides covering them, of course). His feedback and criticism has been golden in my dwindling time as a student. His high standards and direct communication have shown me how a professional looks and acts like.

What you see in print or online is only a portion of the process. Without editors guiding, directing, cutting and trimming, you'd see a lot less refined work.

Journalism is a field chock-full of unsung heroes and people doing important work, knowing there's very little praise to go around. Even deeper than that is editors and copy editors who make sure every story is polished and that mistakes rarely leave the newsroom.

Thank you for everything--and print on!

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Excuse me, I've got studying to do



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER

Academic Adviser II Ana Martha Barrera gives students tips and techniques on how to study more effectively during the “Big Thinking: Studying Skills” workshop last Wednesday on the Brownsville campus. It was the last in a series of workshops provided by the Academic Advising Center in Sabal Hall 1.106 in Brownsville.

Nubia Reyna

THE RIDER

Last week, the Academic Advising Center presented its last Fitness Workshop Series of the semester on both campuses to give tips to students on how to study effectively.

On Wednesday, more than 65 students attended the Academic Fitness Workshop Series presentation, “Big Thinking: Study Skills,” on the Brownsville campus. The same presentation was made April 24 on the Edinburg campus.

“I hope everybody learns something from the tips I will be showing,”

Academic Adviser II Ana Martha Barrera said. “I am also a student.”

Barrera said the key to become a successful college student is not necessarily studying super hard but being smart about the way students study.

“We all see success different but we all want it,” she said.

Barrera said a lot of times students think that the more time they spend reading the books over and over, the more successful they are going to be, but sometimes it is not about the time students spend studying but how much effort they put into it.

“I know most of you know this but there will never be enough hours in a day to learn what you need if you do not learn to study smart,” she said.

In the presentation, Barrera gave students more than 10 tips on how to study smart for finals.

“The first tip is to make a finals game plan,” she said.

Other tips were start early to study, study more for the toughest classes, form a study group, talk with your professors about any questions, get creative with study aids, take good notes and study them, quiz yourself and eat brain food, among others.

“I work at the Academic Advising Center and we always hear the same thing, ‘I just pulled an all-nighter,’” Barrera said.

She recommends students start studying early instead of staying awake the night before the exam to study.

“Sleeping is a priority,” said Elizabeth Cuevas, an academic adviser on the Brownsville campus. “Your recall is better when your mind is rested.

For more information about workshops, email Cuevas at elizabeth.cuevas@utrgv.edu

Club Spotlight

Name: Medicine, Education and Development for Low Income Families Everywhere (MEDLIFE)

Purpose: MEDLIFE is a volunteer-run, global health organization whose mission is to help families achieve greater freedom from the constraints of poverty and empowering them to live healthier lives. We seek to achieve this goal through partnerships with motivated individuals from impoverished communities, working to improve their access to medicine, education and development. MEDLIFE at UTRGV raises money for global development projects, coordinates weeklong medical volunteer trips, organizes local volunteer opportunities and actively increases awareness of the inequality in global health care.

President: Tanvi Gupta

Vice President: Laiba Asif

Trips Officer: Ella Garza

Fundraising Officer: Brittany Bunag

Membership and Recruitment Officer: Iyla Bagheri

Media and Advertising Officer: Jacquelin Rodriguez

Adviser: Hassan Ahmad, chemistry professor



MICHELLE ESPINOZA/THE RIDER

Members of the Medicine, Education and Development for Low Income Families Everywhere (MEDLIFE) include (front row, from left): Media and Advertising Officer Jacquelin Rodriguez and Membership and Recruitment Officer Iyla Bagheri. Back row: Trips Officer Ella Garza, President Tanvi Gupta, Vice President Laiba Asif and Fundraising Officer Brittany Bunag.

Activities: Weeklong medical volunteer trips to developing nations, health care-related conferences, MEDLIFE scholarships for active members, local volunteer events with organizations such as Infinite Love and Be The Match, on-campus fundraisers, profit-shares with local restaurants and more.

Meetings: 12:15 p.m. every other Thursday in Science Building 2.102

Membership requirements: \$25 annual dues

For more information, email: medlifeutrgv@gmail.com

Facebook: MEDLIFE RGV

Twitter: @medlife_rgv

--Compiled by Michelle Espinoza

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Ring in the graduates

Commencement set for May 12-13

Monika Garza
THE RIDER

Mechanical engineering senior Aaron Millan said although the transition from University of Texas at Brownsville to UTRGV was chaotic for him, his overall experience in the university was “enriching and educational.”

“It was a little chaotic because I came right in the transition that was happening between UTB and [Texas Southmost College] and then I went to the period of us just being UTB and then again UTRGV,” Millan said. “In that sense, it was a lot of confusion around the university. I was the first generation to experience it. So, it was very up in the air to see how my degree is going to look like.

... As an academic

democratic experience, I had excellent teachers.”

This semester, 2,753 students will graduate during one commencement on the Brownsville campus and three in the McAllen Convention Center.

Patrick Gonzales, associate vice president for University Marketing and Communications, said student success is the top priority for the institution.

“This is a special graduation for UTRGV, because we are going to surpass 10,000 mark,” Gonzales said. The inaugural class in Fall 2015, started after the weekend of May 12 and 13, more than 10,000 students. That is just a great testament to UTRGV and the hard work of all faculty, staff and students. Student success is our top priority and to have 10,000 graduates within the first two years of the university existence is such a great accomplishment.”

He stated in an email that 581 students will receive a master’s degree and 24 a doctoral degree.

The Brownsville ceremony for all colleges will start at 6 p.m. May 12 on the Student Union lawn.



At the McAllen Convention Center, the ceremonies will start at 9 a.m. for the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, College of Engineering and Computer Science and the College of Sciences; 1 p.m. for the College of Health Affairs and the College of Education and P-16 Integration; and 5 p.m. for the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Fine Arts.

No guests of honor will attend the ceremonies, he said. “However, UTRGV President Guy Bailey will give remarks at each of the ceremonies.”

Maricruz Lopez, a biology senior, said throughout her years of college she

gained experience and knowledge in her field.

“I can say that it was tough because there were hard times where I had to combine school and work and there were a lot of endless nights where I had to study all night,” Lopez said. “But, on the other hand, it was also fun because I got to meet [new] people. ... I also learned what I want to do after I graduate. I got a lot of experience and knowledge throughout the years of college. I also got help in my overall life, like guidance, whenever I needed help.”

Registrar Sofia Montes said the University Bell will ring in all ceremonies. “One of the things that we are looking forward to this spring [semester] that we didn’t have last spring, is the ringing of the bell in Edinburg,” Montes said. “We are really happy to bring that over to the Edinburg [campus] ... so that students can enjoy it at all ceremonies. Every ceremony has designated bell ringers and so, at the conclusion of every commencement ceremonies, the students will be able to ring the bell signifying the conclusion of the commencement ceremonies.”

Gonzales said eight students will be chosen to ring the University Bell at all ceremonies.

“So, two students who have been selected for their outstanding contribution academically and outside of school, will be chosen to ring the bell at all four ceremonies,” he said. “So, eight different students, two each at each of the four ceremonies will be honored to ring the bell near the end of the ceremony.”

Kristin Croyle, vice president for the new UTRGV class ring established a new tradition for the university.

“I think it’s beautiful,” Croyle said about the class ring that was unveiled March 23. “I think [the ring] is really an exceptional opportunity for our jewelry design students who had an opportunity to work on it. ... They really did some beautiful work. I think it’s also really special that [the ring] has unique features for each college.”

Gonzales said the ceremonies will present past traditions with the addition of new ones.

“It’s been pretty neat how these traditions have developed,” he said. “For example, I think the bell previously was only done at the Brownsville ceremony. Now, we have included it at every ceremony. It’s pretty neat to see how these traditions have developed from the ceremonies that we had previously. This year’s ceremony will have all the past traditions regarding the pomp and circumstance. We are very excited about that. We think students will enjoy it.”

Asked what traditions are going to be part of the ceremonies, Gonzales replied: “Some of the traditions that have developed through the first commencement exercise have been the students playing music before the event and the students playing music for the processional and the recessional. In El Gran Salón, the banners that represent each of the colleges will be brought into the ceremonies and will be carried by students. The national anthem will be sung by a student from the School of Music.”

Millan offered advice for the future generations of the university.

“I would encourage future generations to give themselves a lot of grace during their first couple of years as they are figuring out, especially for students who don’t know exactly what they want to do,” she said. “I would recommend future generations to be aware that grades are very important, but they are not everything. I would encourage any major to get internship experience because that is really what employers are going to be looking for. Talk to your department’s head if there is a problem with your classes because you are not the only one. ... So, make your voice heard at the university. Let them know that you have a problem.”

Croyle said graduating students will have the chance to switch the site of their

commencement.

“Once in awhile, we’ll find that students are attending classes in Brownsville and actually live in Mission and they find it more convenient to attend the McAllen ceremony,” she said. “If a student needs to switch the commencement ceremony, they can do that. They can request it through U Central.”

Tickets will be required for entrance into the ceremonies at the McAllen Convention Center. Five tickets will be given to each student. For the Brownsville ceremony, tickets are not required.

Montes said graduating students should be proud and grateful for their accomplishment.

“The advice I would have for graduates, on a personal note, is to be very proud of their accomplishment and to be very thankful for the people who supported them, whether they are family, friends, faculty, advisors, deans,” she said. “I think that is something that in the busyness of day-to-day life and the chaos that comes with jobs, school and family, we kind of forget sometimes to take a moment and celebrate and be thankful,” she said. “On the more logistic note, I would say be prepared for commencement ceremonies.”

Ana Zapata, a Spanish senior, offered advice for students at the university.

“My advice is to not get discouraged,” Zapata said in Spanish. “In your life, you are going to get discouraged from every little thing and I think it is an essential part of getting older. ... This is how you are going to get experience and be stronger as you reach adulthood and have real problems to face.”

Croyle said she encourages graduating students to attend commencement.

“I know some students don’t feel like it’s that big a deal,” she said. “Some students do really think it’s a really big deal, of course. ... But, it’s a great symbol of the achievement. ... I’ve often found that students who don’t attend, later regret that they didn’t go and celebrate with their friends and kind of experience that important moment in their life. Being a college graduate is still a rare achievement and every student who’s graduating should have the opportunity to celebrate that.”

In the case of inclement weather on the Brownsville campus, the ceremony will be moved to 6 p.m. May 12 in the McAllen Convention Center. Students will be notified 24 to 48 hours prior to a change of location.



Rebeca Ortiz
EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

Profesores y estudiantes del programa de estudios mexicoamericanos hablaron sobre la expansión del programa en el campus de Brownsville, durante la “Noche de M.A.S.” el pasado martes en el Salón Cassia.

El evento que toma lugar todos los años durante los semestres de primavera y otoño, tiene como propósito dar a conocer las clases ofrecidas en Brownsville, así como proveer información sobre su licenciatura, maestría y doctorado.

“El propósito de este evento es promover el programa aquí en el campus de Brownsville para mostrar lo que nuestros estudiantes están haciendo”, dijo Christopher Carmona, coordinador del programa de estudios mexicoamericanos en Brownsville y profesor de creación literaria.

El ensamble de marimba de UTRGV Brownsville, Marimba Reyna del Valle, amenizó el evento con su interpretación de varios temas populares de la música mexicana, tales como “Mi Matamoros querido” y “El sirenito”, compuestas por Rigo Tovar.

Durante el evento, estudiantes de la licenciatura y maestría hablaron sobre sus beneficios, el cuál es el caso de Ernesto Farías, estudiante de tercer año en ciencias políticas y estudios mexicoamericanos, quien dijo gustarle la “Noche de M.A.S.”.

“Me gusta. Que vengan más estudiantes a hablar sobre su perspectiva sobre *Mexican American Studies* y lo experimenten, porque mucha gente no sabe lo que es y lo toman como electivo. ... Pero una vez que ya están dentro de la clase, aprenden realmente sobre la historia de los mexicoamericanos, cultura y así. Cultura que ya saben”, dijo Farías.

A su vez, Carmona, habló sobre el trabajo que se ha hecho en el estado para impulsar la adición de los estudios mexicoamericanos a las escuelas públicas.

“Por el momento nos estamos enfocando más en los cursos de preparatoria, aunque nuestra meta principal es llegar hasta la preprimaria”, dijo él. “La cantidad de estudiantes latinos en escuelas texanas es de 52 por ciento, es más que la mayoría y hay muy poco estudio sobre su propia cultura y sobre quiénes son. “Todas las investigaciones



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER

La profesora de Español y Literatura, Laura Patricia Garza, habla sobre su sección en español del curso de introducción a los estudios mexicoamericanos, durante el evento anual, la “Noche de M.A.S.”, el pasado martes en el Salón Cassia en Brownsville.

demuestran que cuando toman estas clases [los estudiantes], la tasa de graduación sube, sus calificaciones suben. Los estudiantes que van a la universidad, es más probable que se gradúen”, dijo él.

Además de crear planes de estudio para que las preparatorias texanas incorporen los estudios mexicoamericanos en las clases de estudios sociales, inglés y arte, el programa de estudios mexicoamericanos en Brownsville, está trabajando en la creación de proyectos de leyes que lo respalden.

“Tres proyectos de leyes están en la legislación de Texas por el momento, una en el senado y dos en la cámara [de representantes], las cuales van a requerir estudios étnicos para todos los estudiantes en Texas”, dijo Carmona. “California ya lo aprobó. Es una iniciativa nacional para realmente cambiar la manera en que trabaja la educación”.

Farías, que estudió la mayor parte de su vida en México, dijo que había cosas que no entendía sobre la historia de México hasta que empezó a tomar las clases de estudios mexicoamericanos.

“Pero no fue hasta que llegué aquí y tomé esta clase de *Mexican American*

Studies que aprendí al menos lo que es hasta la guerra entre Estados Unidos ... y aparte después de la guerra con Estados Unidos, que fue lo que pasó, así que lo que aprendí después para mí era nuevo”.

Por su parte, la profesora de español y literatura, Laura Patricia Garza, habló sobre la sección en español que está ofreciendo de la clase de introducción a los estudios mexicoamericanos, MAS 2301. Garza dijo que el propósito de ofrecer una clase en español era “para ofrecerle a los estudiantes distintas opciones para poder aprender”.

“Muchos de los estudiantes vienen de México y buscan, a veces, cursos que puedan tomar en español”, Garza dijo.

Garza, quien traduce al español parte del material para la clase, habló sobre la falta de literatura mexicoamericana disponible en español.

“Es difícil encontrar textos en español enfocados a la experiencia mexicoamericana”, dijo ella. “... Cuando empecé a buscar los libros para la clase, me dí cuenta de que en México, también hay un gran desconocimiento sobre lo que son los mexicoamericanos y no hay atención en cuanto conocer más sobre estos personajes.

“Siempre les doy el ejemplo de Diego Luna cuando hizo la película de César Chávez”, Garza dijo. “Le preguntaron por qué había decidido hacer esa película, y él dijo que porque en México nadie sabía quién era César Chávez, cuando en Estados Unidos, [para] los que nos dedicamos a los estudios mexicoamericanos, representa un personaje principal, en cuanto a la fase del movimiento chicano enfocado a los derechos laborales de los trabajadores agrícolas”.

Farías dijo que la carrera de estudios mexicoamericanos no le parece difícil pues conoce y vive la cultura.

“Si eres latino o vienes de descendencia mexicana, pues ya la hiciste, ¿por qué? Porque ya vives en la cultura. Siempre le digo a mis amigos que es un *fun fact class*, ¿por qué? Porque son cosas que [ya] sabías ... ósea lo vives, pero no sabes las razones”.

A los estudiantes interesados en el programa de estudios mexicoamericanos, Farías les dice que, “de entrada, ya vas bien”.

“Ya conoces la cultura”, dijo él.



NUBIA REYNA/THE RIDER

Nombre: Luis Fernando Alcocer Medina
Edad: 39
Clasificación: Estudiante de doctorado en educación, curriculum e instrucción con especialidad en educación superior.
País de origen: Mérida, Yucatán, México
Idiomas: Español, inglés y francés.
¿Por qué decidiste estudiar en E.E.U.U.? “Porque estaba buscando la oportunidad de tener una experiencia internacional como parte de mis estudios de posgrado”.
¿Cuáles son algunas de las

tradiciones en Mérida? “El día de muertos tiene una influencia muy fuerte de la cultura maya y allá se llama, ‘Janal Pixán’. ... La celebración es básicamente igual, pero la comida, los símbolos que se utilizan para representar la visita de las ánimas a los vivos, son diferentes”.

Menciona algunos platillos típicos: “La cochinita pibil. ... Hay unos antojitos que se llaman ‘panuchos’, que son unas tortillas fritas con frijol, pavo asado marinado en achiote, lechuga, tomate, cebolla y aguacate y salsa de chile. Hay otro que se llama ‘Poc-Chuc’. Es un cerdo asado

a las brasas, marinado en naranja, pimienta y se come con frijoles”.
Platillo favorito de aquí: “Brisket”.
¿Cuáles son algunos atractivos turísticos de tu ciudad? “La ciudad fue determinada capital americana de la cultura en el año 2000 y en 2016. El centro es un área 100 por ciento colonial; tiene 476 años. Tiene varios parques, tiene la casa del conquistador, la catedral, que es la más antigua en América, el parque de la madre, la iglesia de la tercera orden, el parque de los Hidalgos, el parque de la iglesia del Carmen”.

Lugar favorito de Brownsville: “*Bike trail*, el *Washington Park*, y cualquier lugar que tenga una resaca”.
¿Qué diferencias y similitudes encuentras entre tu país y E.E.U.U.? “La cultura es muy similar en esta zona. Enfocada a la familia, el desarrollo de los hijos como parte de la esperanza de la familia. Otra similitud es la amabilidad; la gente aquí es muy amable, y en Yucatán la gente se caracteriza por ser muy amable. Diferencias, la estructuración en el trabajo. Aquí en Estados Unidos es un poquito más sistematizado que en México”.

¿Cuáles son algunas ideas erróneas que la gente tiene sobre tu país? “Los estereotipos creo son muy predominantes. Aquí en esta zona no tanto. La gente desconoce que México tiene un sistema de educación y que existe la educación superior.

Que existe también la posibilidad de tener oportunidades en México, y que también es un buen lugar para vivir”.
¿Qué es lo que más extrañas de tu casa? “La familia. En Yucatán somos muy tradicionales. La oportunidad de convivir con mi familia los domingos y poder tener una comida en familia, conviviendo con mi mamá, mis hermanos, primos. Todo eso lo extraño. Otra cosa que extraño, el acceso que tiene Mérida a muchas actividades culturales, como museos, pintura, muestra de arte que son gratuitas, conciertos, teatro, que aquí no hay”.
Anécdota: “Cuando iba a venir para acá [de Mérida] ... yo venía con el tiempo muy justo. ... En el aeropuerto de Dallas se canceló el vuelo a Brownsville, y ni modo, no iba a llegar a la orientación. Entonces tuve que llegar, como prácticamente dicen, *en vivo*, a la orientación. Dormí bien poquitito, porque llegué y me quedé en el aeropuerto esperando el vuelo”.
--Recopilado por Rebeca Ortiz

In their own backyard

UTRGV hosting outdoor Track & Field



SARAH CARVAJAL/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Sophomore Yariel Matute (left) competes against fellow UTRGV sophomore Anthony Magallon; Sean Landez, a member of Texas A&M-Kingsville; and redshirt senior Trevion Williams (right) in the 200-meter dash at the March 3 Valley Classic Collegiate Meet at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex in Edinburg.

Nathaniel Mata

SPORTS EDITOR

For the first time in his eight years with UTPA/UTRGV, Head Coach Xavier Richardson will have the opportunity to lead his team to a conference tournament on its home track.

Just two years after opening the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex, the Western Athletic Conference will converge May 10-13 in Edinburg to compete for the Outdoor Championship. Last year, the men’s team finished fourth with 88 points, while the women’s group finished fifth, with 19.16.

The atmosphere around practice was lighthearted as they prepared for their last tournament of the season.

“It’s mostly excitement from them,” Richardson said. “The opportunity of getting to protect your own house and being able to compete where you’re comfortable has a competitive advantage.”

The veteran head coach is glad to host the meet but he’s taking a unique approach to ensure his team remembers this is a real competition. The Vaqueros will still stay in a hotel during the four-day tournament.

“You don’t want to change things, especially when it’s the most important meet of the season,” Richardson said. “I know what it’s like to have a conference championship at home and wake up in your own bed and not really have that sense of ‘It’s a meet, not a practice.’ We wanted to make sure that we put them in the same competitive mode that we do every other weekend.”

Idatonye Cheetham-West is competing in her first WAC competition. She’ll be competing in multis, which consist of a medley of events, both running and field.

“Coming, here, it’s where I needed to be,” Cheetham-West said. “And not competing last year, it really helped my determination. It changed my whole mindset; I think God really changed my mindset. I guess even though it was really frustrating and I really wanted to travel it really helped me because I came back even stronger. I’m running even faster and being a multi now doing all these events.”

She’ll be counted in for a lot of points, which are crucial toward team success. The sophomore from the northeast Houston suburb of Kingwood is eager to get the tournament underway and hopes to compile points.

“It’s a lot of work, but it’s rewarding,” Cheetham-West said. “The multi I’m with, some of the people on the team I consider them my community and they really keep me motivated and



Junior Cristian Reyna passes the baton to junior File Patiño during the 4x400 meter relay at the Valley Classic Collegiate Meet March 3 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex in Edinburg.

keep me going.”

She has earned the nickname, “Baby Superman,” by her coach due to her raw power that she’s trying to master. She’ll hope to draw from that natural strength, along with the technical advice she’s been given by upperclassmen such as senior Leslie Luna.

Also preparing for conference competition are the hurdlers.

The men’s hurdling group consists of Rodrigo Silva, Dimitris Levantinos and Carlos Serna-Hernandez.

Competitors will likely run in 90- or even 100-degree heat come the meet and Levantinos feels that plays into UTRGV’s favor. In 103 degrees last week, they seemed to have no problem going through their routine drills and practice.

“It will be an advantage because the weather is getting hotter and hotter and hotter,” Levantinos said. “The first year here, I was trying to adjust to the workouts. I’m doing better with my coach, we have more communication. I’m doing better, so I’m confident that I’m going to go again to the finals and I’m going to do better than eighth place.”

The 5-foot-10-inch sophomore from Athens, Greece, said his improvement is owed to his teammates along with his coach.

“It makes me better because I have competitors that push every single day. I tried to push them and they do the same with me,” he said.

His 400-meter hurdle time is down to 55.07, much better than his 56.38 or even 57.39 that he ran last March.

The women’s hurdle group will look to bring another gold medal a year after senior Geneva Anderson won gold at the WAC Outdoor meet last year.

Last season also saw a lot of success from throwers, most of whom graduated. Paul May, a conference winner as a freshman, will hope to defend his title in the discus throw. His gold medal was for a throw of 49.01, just seven centimeters better than former teammate Isaac Samuels.

The Vaqueros will hope that throwers, jumpers, sprinters and distance runners perform at a high level to win their first WAC Championship on home soil. They will try to upend Grand Canyon University, which swept the competition last year.

ATHLETE

OF THE

WEEK



SARAH CARVAJAL/THE RIDER

Name: Christian Williams
Sport: Track & Field
Competes in: Multis (Decathlon)
Classification: Junior
Major: Kinesiology
Age: 21
Hometown: McAllen

Who is your favorite athlete? “I have to say Ashton Eaton [USA Track & Field Olympian] just because I think he is the most gifted athlete in the world.”

Who is your role model? “My family, my dad and my grandpa, because they do the right thing all the time and I look up to them.”

What is the best advice you’ve been given and by whom? “I guess it’s been by my dad. He said, ‘You’re not defined as a man by the time of your race, but by your relationship with God,’ so that really stuck with me.”

When did you join track? “I started running in seventh grade, but it didn’t really take off until high school. I guess when we’re that young, we’re always trying to find what we’re good at, so since I was a little better than the rest of my classmates, it became my thing.”

What’s your favorite place to hang out on campus? “We don’t get to do it often because I’m pretty busy, but my friends and I like to go the union and play some pool just to have fun.”

What are your academic goals? “I want to get into medical school to become a physical therapist.”

How do you feel about being part of this team? “It’s a good opportunity. Coach [Xavier Richardson] really reached out and really gave me a shot.”

What are your personal goals for this season? “I’ve been hurt on and off this season, so it’s been kind of hard. I would like to win conference champion, so I’m a little nervous, but that would really make my season.”

--Compiled by Sarah Carvajal

Have a story idea?

Call us at:

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or

665-2541

Meet Yajaira Lopez

Name: Yajaira Lopez
Major: Dance
Hometown: Mission
What made you pursue that major? “I’ve been dancing my whole life, ever since I was a little girl, but it wasn’t until middle school that I got introduced to drill team, so I’ve been dancing since sixth grade. All throughout middle school and high school, nothing else really caught my attention. It was always just dance, dance and dance, so I figured, why not make a career out of it? When I was in high school, especially junior and senior year, my teachers would say things like, ‘College is coming around, what are you going to study?’ and I would always be like, ‘I don’t know, I don’t know’ and they would tell me, ‘Well, dance is not going to take you anywhere.’ So, I started doing research about different companies, different universities and I saw that they were wrong, that I could do something with dance, so I decided to pursue a career in it.”
How long did it take you to finish your degree plan? “It took me exactly four years.”
Why study in UTRGV? “I’m a very family oriented person, so I chose UTRGV, or back then, UTPA, because it was closer to home and they had a good dance program. It’s still growing, but I figured

why go somewhere else and waste a lot of money when I can get the same education here and be closer to home.”
What would you say was your greatest inspiration to graduate? “Definitely my mom and my dad. They don’t have a college degree, so one of their main things has always been, ‘School comes first, school comes first.’ All throughout college, I wanted to get a job, but they would tell me, ‘No, your job is to get an education, get a diploma and graduate.’ They have always been my biggest motivators to succeed in life and follow my sister’s footsteps. I’m the youngest out of three and both of them received their bachelor’s at UTPA, so they are like, ‘No, you can do it, you can do it! It’s your only job to get that degree.’”
What classes did you enjoy the most? “The classes that I enjoyed the most, I would have to say, were my ballet and my modern dance classes. They were very interesting to me because, as I mentioned, all I had ever known was drill team, which is very different. I never took classes outside, like in a studio or anything, so coming to UTPA, or now UTRGV, was my very first time I ever took classes. I really enjoyed them because now I was able to do everything that I would see people do on YouTube and, like, in big performances, like Broadway

and stuff. So, it was very fun to, like, learn new things and learn ways to actually move my body in the correct form.”
What advice would you give to students who are barely starting? “Do not necessarily focus on how much time you have to do things. One of the things that matters the most is to just finish. I know things come along and there are going to be bumps on the road, but what matters the most is to get your diploma. Don’t ever, ever let anybody tell you what you can or can’t do in your life.”
What are some of your short- and long-term goals? “One of my short-term goals is to, hopefully, become a dance teacher at a public school, mainly because not many schools here in the Valley have dance programs. So, I hope to get that started and make it a bigger thing here with some of the different schools. One of my long-term goals is to, hopefully, get my master’s in fine arts. I know at the moment UTRGV doesn’t offer a master’s for dance. If I have to leave the Valley I will, but maybe in a few years, after I establish my career as an educator, if it so happens that UTRGV does begin to offer a master’s for dance, then I would definitely be going back.”
What do you like to do in your free time? “As I mentioned before, I’m very



COURTESY PHOTO

family oriented. I have two nieces and two nephews. They are so young and because of school, I don’t get to see them as much, but whenever I do get the chance, for example, on the weekends, I’ll go and I’ll spend time with them. Since my nieces are a little bit older, I do take them out to eat or get ice cream. I just like to spend a lot of time with my family because I don’t get to see them as often because of school. So, definitely, spending time with my family.”
What kind of music/artists do you like? “I like all kinds of music. My playlist

extends from classical to Mexican music to rap. It’s just a big variety.”
Would you like to say something for someone special? “I would like to thank my parents for all of their unconditional love and support. Also, my boyfriend and my sisters from my sorority. They have always been by my side throughout the rough times in college, but they never left my side. They never doubted me, they were always there, so this is for all of them.”
--Compiled by Sergio Garcia

Dressing denim



MICHELLE ESPINOZA/THE RIDER

Jaione Rosagaray, biology senior, spins a prize wheel at the Office for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention (OVAVP) table during the Denim Day event last Wednesday in the Main Courtyard on the Brownsville campus. Also shown is biomedical sciences sophomore Mariana Cerda. Denim Day originated in Italy and is now a worldwide event in which

participants wear denim to raise awareness of sexual misconduct. Student Rights and Responsibilities, Friendship of Women Inc., Planned Parenthood and the UTRGV Collegiate Recovery Program were among the other organizations that took part in the event.

Seniors journey through fantasy



MARIO GONZALEZ/THE RIDER PHOTOS

UTRGV art Lecturer Alejandro Macias greets guests and presents art students Joshua Berry, John Guerra and Miriam Casarez on April 17 during “A Journey Through Fantasies,” the first senior art show in the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

Nubia Reyna
THE RIDER

More than 50 people attended the opening reception for the first senior show of the semester, “A Journey through Fantasy,” by students Joshua Berry, John Guerra and Miriam Casarez, held April 24 in the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

“All three seem to be interested in narrative,” Gallery Coordinator Alejandro Macias said.

He said Berry’s drawings and paintings combine the figure and fantastical imagery.

“Although he incorporates and creates fantastical imagery, he uses people he personally knows in his works to create brief glimpses to stories,” Macias said.

In his artist statement, Berry said his work revolves around the human figure and the process of trying to master it through drawing and painting.

“I am inspired by fantastical imagery and the impact it had in my youth,” he said.

After graduating, Berry hopes to continue his education in New York.

“Miriam [showed] drawings that are done [with] colored pencil and ink,” Macias said.

The concept behind Casarez’s artwork deals with the intertwining fate of humans and nature.

“Nature performs a demonstration of itself in human life,” Casarez said.

She said when nature is not satisfied with its circumstances, it creates new

ones, like humans do.

“One might look at a tree and simply see its beauty,” Casarez said. “However, we do not see what is happening underground with the roots. We do not see what is affecting them or what they go through.”

Casarez said what goes inside of us is like the roots of a tree.

“John [Guerra] is influenced by narrative and comics,” Macias said.

He said Guerra has created a central character that is consistently used in his works.

“Similar to comics, we can follow the protagonist on his journey,” said Guerra, who showed a series of paintings and ceramic works.

“The main intent of my work is to bridge the gap between youthful, imaginative worlds and the dark of adult content,” he said.

Guerra’s work is built on childlike freedom of imagination, curiosity and perversion.

“The concept of fighting demons and destroying evil is a metaphor for fighting personal demons of depression, anxiety and a deep-rooted fear of a cruel world,” he said.

Guerra dedicates his work to young adults dealing with life’s struggles and thoughts that are seen as inappropriate for children.

Art senior Carmen Milton said Guerra put a lot of work in this show.

“John has a lot of creativity,” Milton said. “His work ethic is incredible.”

Milton’s work, along with that of seniors Roxxy Rivera and Sam Gray, will be presented in the next senior show, which opens at 6 tonight in the Art Gal-



Jacqueline Vasquez and her mother, Lourdes Lopez, look at “El Valiente,” a medium-density fiberboard relief print by artist John Guerra April 17 in the Art Gallery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

lery at Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus.

“The name of the show happens to be ‘Chaotic Nature of the Mind,’” Milton said.

Her work focuses on the problem of memory distortion, which is childhood memories and how people change the way they remember them.

“It has happened to me that my mom remembers something ... and I don’t remember it that way,” Milton said.

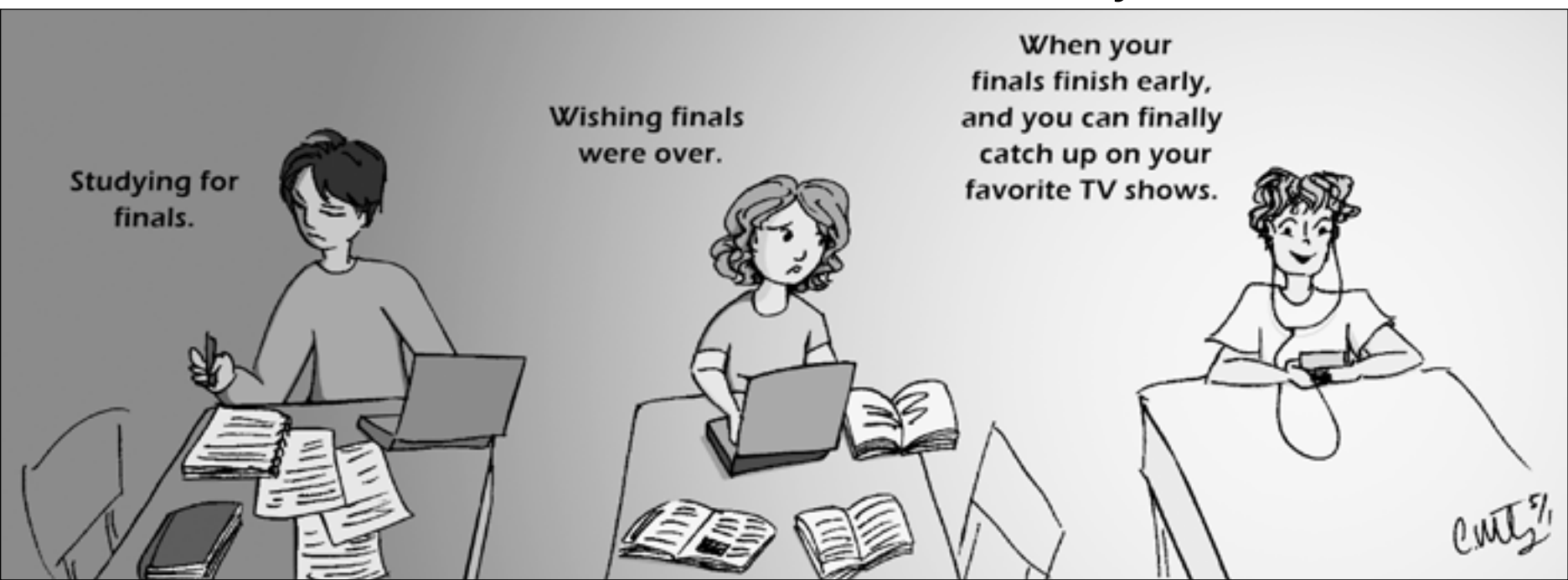
Her art pieces are a combination of paintings and photographs.

“It is very intriguing,” Milton said.

“Introspection,” featuring the work of seniors Jessica Aleman, Billie Alvarez, Anissa Castillo, Carmen Castillo, Priscilla Elizondo, Valerie Escamilla, Kristen Farias, Jeannette Garcia, Mariela Gonzalez, Ruxanda Musunoi, Olga Polanco, Ivan Ramirez, Gloria Reyes, Anita Rodriguez, Javier Tovias, Jade Garcia, Joel Moncivais, Estefania Mongrell, Hannah Pollard, Kimberley Ramirez and Silas Nieto, took place at 6 p.m. Friday in the Visual Arts Gallery at the Edinburg campus.

Trials and Trifles

By Clarissa Martinez



Options after graduation

Macarena Martinez
THE RIDER

Graduation for many seniors is not the end of their academic career. Many choose to continue onto graduate school to pursue a career that requires more skills and potentially earn more money.

Other seniors might see graduation as the end of their academic path and the start of their desired career.

“This is the time for [graduates] to make a plan, make sure they are wrapping up loose ends for every single course,” said Juan Rodriguez-Nieto, director of the Career Center. “Visit the Career Center. ... They need to make sure that they know what they want to do once they get their degree.”

The Career Center provides graduates with assistance that can be tailored to every student, depending on where they are at, Rodriguez-Nieto said.

The Graduate College at UTRGV can also be an option for any graduate seeking more skills.

“Most people should really be planning to go onto graduate school because of the current job environment where it’s required [to have] higher and higher skills to get into good jobs,” said Dave Jackson, dean of the Graduate College.

Although some graduates might want to take a break between undergraduate and graduate studies, it usually creates two problems.

“The first one is life happens. ... You get involved in so many activities, careers, some students go on to start a family,” Jackson said. “What you find is that you continually delay the process, you know, you plan to take one year off or two years. The next thing you know, its five or more years.”

He said the second one is a module of opportunities cost. The quicker students get a graduate degree, the quicker they will find a better job and enhance their earning potential.

Students graduating with an undergraduate degree might find graduate studies difficult because they require a higher level of work.

“Graduate school is completely different from undergrad,” Jackson said. “One of the things that is significantly different is that you find that you have to do a lot more intensive work. Obviously, [it] includes a lot more research. ... You may be required to do a lot more team-based work.”

After deciding to go to graduate school, there are several things students should do.

They should identify which programs in which they are interested and the deadlines for admission, plus all of the requirements, Rodriguez-Nieto said.

There are several requirements to apply to the UTRGV Graduate College and they vary by programs.



ANA CAHUICHE/THE RIDER

Jaime Villanueva, senior coordinator for career education for UTRGV’s Career’s Center, conducts a mock interview with psychology junior Mariana Davila last Wednesday on the Brownville campus.

Jackson said the main requirements are an undergraduate degree, preferably with a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or higher.

“You can be considered with a lower GPA, but then you are not as an attractive candidate and depending on the program, you might not be able to get in because of the demand for that program,” Jackson said.

Depending on the program, test scores will be required. For example, students pursuing a master’s in business administration or accounting are required to take the Graduate Management Admission Test or the Graduate Record Examination

The minimum score for a GMAT is 400. For the GRE, students must earn a minimum score of 146 on the verbal section and 146 in the quantitative. There are several waivers for the test, such as an undergraduate GPA of 3.8 or higher on a 4-point scale, according to the Graduate College website.

Most graduate programs might need students to submit a résumé or curriculum vitae and two to three letters of recommendation. A lot of programs also require a personal statement, Jackson said.

“That’s where you clearly articulate what your goals are and how this grad program is going to help you to achieve those goals, those career objectives,”

he said. “Show how you are an ideal candidate. ... Again, these are the deal breakers. These are the things that can mean a difference between you getting in or you not getting in, especially if you are a weak candidate in terms of your academics, your GPA.”

Other students, such as Eduardo Galarza, a mathematics senior with a teacher’s certification for grades seven through 12, prefer to start their careers right after their undergraduate degree.

“I would like to start working as a teacher as soon as possible,” Galarza said.

He is considering going to graduate school, but in about one or two years, at most.

Jackson said not to pick a career because it looks exciting or it has tremendous earning potential.

“Talk to people in the field,” he said. “Your professors can be helpful, but it probably would be better to talk to practitioners in the field because they will be actually working in the field. They know what it is like.”

Students who have no plans to start a career after graduation or go to graduate school are encouraged to visit the Career Center.

“All of these students are going to realize very soon that they have to do something,” Rodriguez-Nieto said. “If they requested student loans, they

are going to get a letter real soon stating that they have to start paying their loans and they need to have some income in order to pay those loans. We can coach them, we can guide them.”

Vicente Martinez, an accounting senior, said that after graduation, he plans to be more involved in the community as well as look for more jobs related to his field.

“I am going to acquire my CPA, which requires me to complete 150 hours,” Martinez said.

Martinez said he plans to attend graduate school.

“For my career, they are seeking people with a master’s degree,” he said. “So, I talked to my mentors and they told me, ‘If you don’t have a master’s, we are not going to hire you.’”

On the Brownsville campus, the Career Center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Cortez Hall 129. In Edinburg, the center is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday in the Student Services Building.

The Graduate College office is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday in Sabal Hall 1.202 on the Brownsville campus. In Edinburg, the office is open at the same times in Marialice Shary Shivers Building 1.158.

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