

NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL

El Common poco común

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

New perspective: from Italy to the RGV

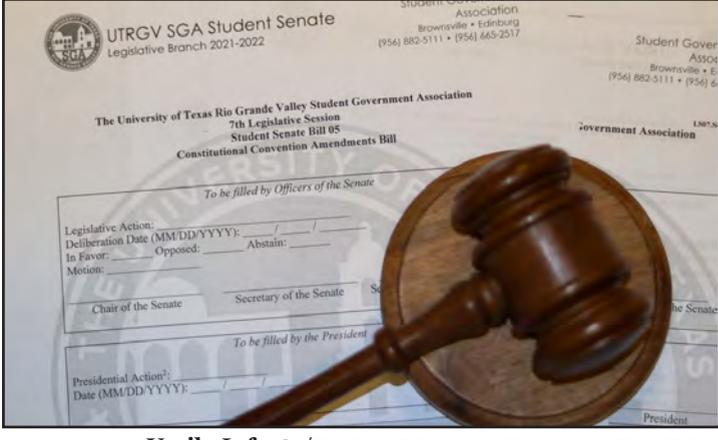
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SPORTS

'I felt him in the building tonight'

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SGA presents two bills and appoints new chief justice



Verilu Infante/THE RIDER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Verilu Infante
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

During its first meeting of the semester, the Student Government Association conducted a reading of Senate Bill 05 Constitutional Convention Amendments Bill, an Acting Interim Bylaw Bill and appointed a new chief justice.

"We've been working on the constitutional convention since the summer," SGA President José Pablo Rojas said during the Zoom meeting. "And this

is basically a reformation of the SGA, to better provide for our student population, current and future."

If the student body votes to amend the constitution, some of the changes that would be made include:

--Undergraduate students must maintain good academic standing as defined by the university for enrollment at the time of application and appointment throughout their SGA term. This change would remove the minimum 2.5 GPA requirement.

--Vice presidents will no longer be required to represent a campus. This change would remove the requirement to be enrolled in at least six credit hours at the location they desire to represent at the time of application or appointment and while holding office.

--Vice presidents will coordinate the actions and efforts of the SGA at the direction of the president for each campus, satellite campus and university facility in the UTRGV domain.

See SGA, Page 3

Campus cases drop

Hidalgo County reports backlogged cases

Natalie Lapsley
THE RIDER

UTRGV reported 52 new COVID-19 cases between Jan. 21 and 27, according to a university official.

Doug Arney, vice president for Administrative Support Services and chair of the Infectious Disease Committee at UTRGV, said among the 52 were 10 students, 40 staff and two faculty members.

The new case figure is 60 fewer than what was reported for the week of Jan. 14 to 20, according to the UTRGV Confirmed Cases Dashboard.

UTRGV updates the number of cases reported for campus individuals weekly through the dashboard. The university COVID-19 Response Team provides the numbers on the website.

Arney said three of the 10 students were quarantined in on-campus isolation housing the week of Jan. 21 to 27.

Social distancing is not currently being enforced on campus and spaces have returned to full capacity, according to UTRGV policies and processes.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the university is encouraging the campus community to get vaccinated and boosted, and to wear face coverings, especially indoors.

To receive a booster shot, members of the university community can request an appointment via the UTRGV Vaccine Portal or call UT Health RGV Student Health locations at 665-2511 for Edinburg and 882-3896 for Brownsville.

For instructions on how to make an appointment at a campus location, visit utrgv.edu/vaccine.

See COVID, Page 3

THE UNCOMMON COMMON

Rapper tells audience: Believe in yourself



Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER

Common responds to questions from political science Professor Natasha McNeely and the audience during the question-and-answer portion of the Distinguished Speaker Series, held Tuesday night in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.

Reprinted from utrgvrider.com

Fatima Gamez Lopez
SPANISH EDITOR

When people find what they are passionate about, they find their purpose in life, Common told a crowd of more than 200 gathered in person and via livestream Tuesday night for the Distinguished Speaker Series lecture.

The actor, activist and rap artist, who shared an Academy Award and Golden Globe in 2015 with John Legend for

Best Original Song, "Glory," is the second guest of the 2021-2022 Distinguished Speaker Series.

Common said he came to UTRGV "to talk about greatness."

"When I was a kid, I wanted to be great," he said during the lecture in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex in Edinburg. "I wanted the world to know I was here."

Common said when he wrote his first rap, he discovered what he loved and something he could be good

at.

"When I wrote my first rap, I found a confidence in myself that I had never expressed in my life at all," he said. "I found something that I felt was a part of something that I wanted to express to the world."

"But the beautiful thing I can speak [about] my path in my journey is even when it's hard, I love it. I wake up in the morning, thinking about music, thinking about creating, thinking about scenes in acting, thinking about 'how can I help the

people.' I wake up in the morning, and it's not always easy."

He spoke about his first album, 1992's "Can I Borrow a Dollar."

"I made a record, my first album, definitely excited," he said. "I released my album, and it came out [and] it wasn't a success."

Common said he was afraid that what he was passionate about might not be for him, but his desire for music and art made him stay.

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THE RIDER

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.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Verilu Infante

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR
Danielle Perez

COPY EDITORS/ONLINE EDITORS

Alejandra Yañez
Arisbeth Rodriguez
Brigitte Ortiz
Natalie Lapsley

EDITORIAL CARTOONIST
Ariael Ortiz

SPORTS REPORTERS
Omar E. Zapata

SPANISH EDITOR
Fatima Gamez Lopez

REPORTERS
Brigitte Ortiz
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PHOTOGRAPHERS
Roxanna Miranda
Citlalli Torres
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Ailed Montague

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STUDENT MEDIA DIRECTOR
Azenett Cornejo

STUDENT MEDIA PROGRAM ADVISER
Jesus Sanchez

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS
Ana Sanchez
Maggie Castillo

CONTACT:
EDINBURG CAMPUS
1201 West University Dr.
ELABS 170
Phone: (956) 665-2541
Fax: (956) 665-7122

BROWNSVILLE CAMPUS
1 West University Blvd.
Student Union 2.16
Phone: (956) 882-5143
Fax: (956) 882-5176
Email: TheRider@utrgv.edu
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



Today Contest Deadline Extended
The deadline to submit an application is 5 p.m. today for the eighth annual **Rafael Munguia Business Plan Competition**, which is hosted by the **UTRGV Center for Innovation and Commercialization**, a division of the **Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship**. The in-person competition is open to UTRGV students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Rio Grande Valley community. For application details, visit the **Rafael Munguia Business Plan competition** page. For information session recordings and slides, click here.

Decorate a Kite
Join the **Campus Activities Board** as members **decorate kites** for **National Kite Flying Day** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the Edinburg Chapel Lawn and at the same time on Tuesday on the Student Union lawn in Brownsville. Supplies are limited and will be first come, first served.

Billiards Tournament
The **Student Union** will host a **billiards tournament** from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the Student Union Game Room on the Edinburg campus. Finalists will be awarded VBucks.

Gospel Fellowship
Christians at RGV will hold a **gospel fellowship** from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in Student Academic Center 1.103 on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday Meet the Vaqueros
Students can **meet the UTRGV Women's Basketball Team** from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus.

Meet the Candidate
Joy Diaz, Democratic hopeful for **Texas governor**, will be the featured speaker at the **Civic Engagement Alliance's "Meet the Candidate Series"** from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in the Student Union Theater on the Edinburg campus. RSVP on V Link.

Bible Reading
Christians at RGV will hold a **Bible reading** from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Library Courtyard on the Edinburg campus.

Wednesday Decorate Trucker Hats
Students can **decorate their own trucker hats** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Student Union's La Sala on the Brownsville campus.

Coffee and Careers
The **Career Center** will answer **students' questions** regarding **resumes, job search and applying for internships** from 2:30 to 3 p.m. The event will be held virtually via Zoom.

FIFA Tournament
The **Student Union** will host a **FIFA World Cup tournament** from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Student Union Game Room. The tournament will be five rounds through April 6. Participants must provide their own controller. Winners of the tournament will receive up to \$100 in VBucks. Sign up on V Link or at the game rooms on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses.

Thursday Be My Fit Valentine
UREC will host a **fitness challenge** from noon to 4 p.m. on UREC basketball court 1. Participants who complete the challenge with a partner will vie to be crowned the fitness duo of the Recreation Center.

Friday WOW Tailgate
Student Activities and Athletics will host a **tailgate** before the women's basketball game against Seattle University from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Vaquero Village. There will be tailgate activities and games for a chance to score UTRGV merch before the game at 7 p.m.

Valentine's at Civil Hall
The **American Society of Civil Engineers** will host a **Valentine's fundraiser** from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Civil Engineering Hall, located at the Academic Service Building entrance in front of the Engineering Building on the Edinburg campus. Students can **take pictures and paint** with their significant other or friends. There will be **backdrops available**, as well as blank canvases. ASCE members will charge for photos that will be emailed to participants before Valentine's Day.

SFAC Meeting
The Student Fee Advisory Committee will meet online to review **Fiscal Year 2023 budget proposals** from 1 to 4:30 p.m. The committee will also meet online on Feb. 18 and 25 and March 4. Contact the Office of the Dean of Students at dos@utrgv.edu or call 665-2260 to RSVP and/or request accommodations.
--Compiled by Diana Alvarez-Tovar

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Jan. 24 and Feb. 1.



Jan. 24 10:16 a.m.: A staff member working in the Financial Services building on the Edinburg campus reported a forged check using the university's account had been presented to Chase Bank. The check was flagged as fraudulent and there was no monetary loss to the university.

3:39 p.m.: A male student at the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus reported a theft of money. The investigation concluded the student admitted to having provided false information to the officer. The

case will be referred to Student Rights and Responsibilities for administrative review.

Jan. 31 4:50 p.m.: A Financial Services staff member on the Edinburg campus reported that five forged checks using the university's account had been presented to Chase Bank. The checks were flagged as fraudulent and there was no monetary loss to the university.

7:04 p.m.: A suspicious vehicle was reported in Lot E-33 on the Edinburg campus. Officers discovered the vehicle occupants were students. The case was referred to Student Rights and Responsibilities

for administrative review.

Feb. 1 2 a.m.: An officer observed a vehicle stopped on top of a curb by the gate entrance of Casa Bella Apartments on the Brownsville campus. The vehicle was occupied by a student and her non-affiliated brother. The investigation concluded the man was under the influence of alcohol. He was issued a criminal trespass warning and arrested on a charge of public intoxication. Once at the Brownsville jail, during the booking process, it was discovered that he was in possession of drug paraphernalia and was issued a citation.
--Compiled by Brigitte Ortiz

COMMON

Continued from Page 1

"It's very important that we know in our purpose, in our journey, that we stay present, because it's ever evolving," he said. "You are going to be tested, no matter what, you will be tested, believe you will be tested."

Common also spoke about how important it is to have faith in ourselves.

"I ordered things from Amazon [and] I have faith they are gonna be delivered," he said. "But why don't I have that faith in myself? If I ask for something and say something, why won't I have that faith in myself?"

Common said it is important when things are going wrong to make sure you are in the right environment and surrounded by great people.

In 2015, he was awarded the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor for his work in "Selma." He also received Daytime and Primetime Emmys for Outstanding Musical Performance in a Daytime Program for "The View" and Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics for "13th."

In 2018, he started Imagine Justice, a nonprofit organization that focuses on criminal justice reform, coalition/community building and mental health and wellness, according to its website.

He and his mother, Mahalia Hines, an educator, also began the Common Ground Foundation, "which empowers and uplifts youth from high potential communities to become future leaders," according to its website.

"I remember I was afraid to say I was an activist for a while," he said. "But then, at a certain point, I said, 'Man, I've been working hard at this, I have to claim this.'"

The rapper, who has been nominated 20 times for a Grammy and won three, said the best day of his life was when he was nominated for multiple Grammys.

"The first time my mother has ever come into an award show, Kanye is there with his mom, John Legend is there with his mom," he said. "They announced two of my awards [and] I didn't get those two."

Common said that while they were naming the awards for which he was nominated, he was preparing his speech, but in the end he did not get any awards.

"That night at the Grammy party... John Legend walking in with, like, four Grammys, [and] all I had was my mama," he said. "And I believed I would get those Grammys, I believed in myself, but it didn't happen."

Common explained the most important thing is the environment in which we surround ourselves.

"My greatest takeaway from that was

that things happen in divine time," he said. "I knew that this would come. And we surely do surround ourselves with other believers, other people who support that belief that we're going in the right direction."

After the lecture, Common was asked for his opinion about people being afraid to express their concerns.

"I'm learning this more and more and I'm working to practice it," he said. "We weren't created in fear. We weren't born in fear. In our truest moments of who we are, we are not fearful people."

Common ended by speaking about the importance of believing in yourself.

"I believe if you find your purpose, and find something you love, if you work on your belief and practice that belief, and if you lead that gift to service, to serve yourself, your family, your community, I believe someday, someone will call you the greatest because we all have that greatness in us," he said.

The next Distinguished Speaker Series guest will be Lana Condor, an actress known from the Netflix movie trilogy "To All the Boys I've Loved Before." The event will be held virtually March 2.

The series is sponsored by the Office of Student Activities. For more information, visit the Distinguished Speaker Series website.

WACKY WEB POLL

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--9%
Speeding ticket

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Brownsville City Commission Talks multicolored underpass lighting

Alejandra Yañez
THE RIDER

The Brownsville City Commission discussed the installation of colored underpass lighting during a work session held before last Tuesday's meeting as part of the city's Quality of Life Pillar. The cities of Harlingen, Weslaco and McAllen already have such lighting at highway intersections.

While the project is still in its infancy in Brownsville, the city has taken note of what others in the Rio Grande Valley have done to install these lights.

The Texas Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the cities of Harlingen, Weslaco and McAllen, estimated the installation of these LED lights alone costs about \$35,000 per intersection.

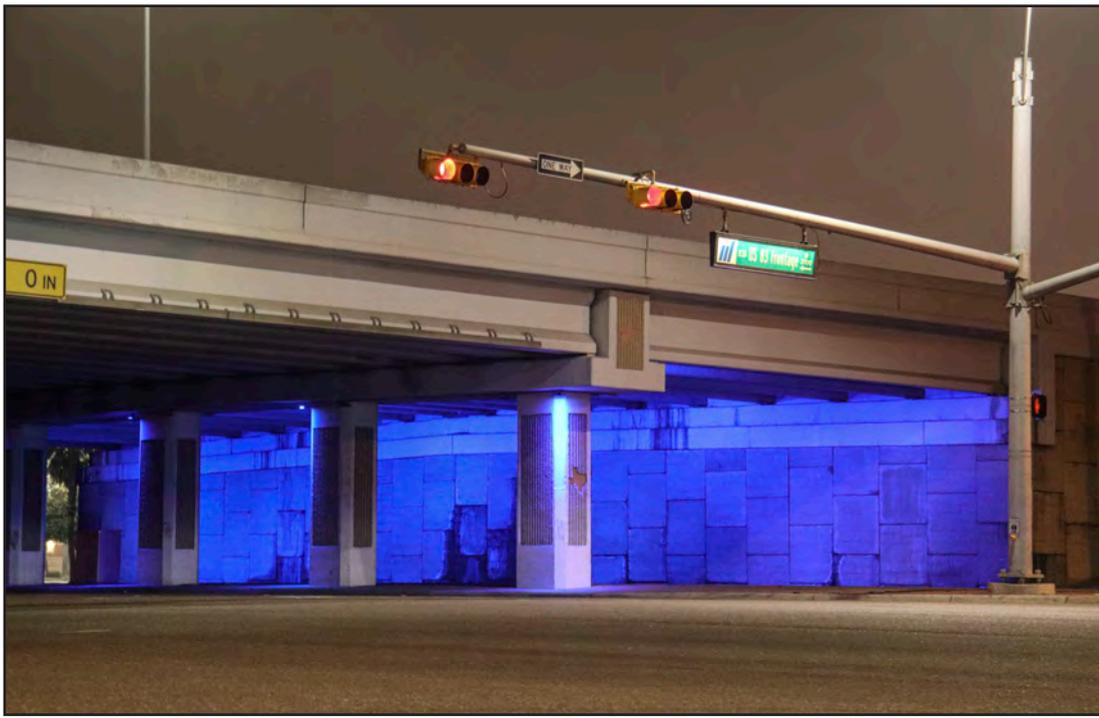
During the work session,

District 3 Commissioner Roy De los Santos requested the maintenance cost of the lights for the other cities as well as the source of funding for the Brownsville project.

Joel Garza, mobility director for the city, said the LED lights have a 10-year life span.

Garza said the multicolored lights will be tailored to change colors depending on the seasons and special events. While other cities in the Valley serve as a good example, the mobility director said moving forward, the city does not want to mimic what others have done and wants to find a way to implement its own flair.

"If we're going to do something like this, which I think would be great ... we need to try to spread it out evenly," Mayor Trey Mendez said. "I think the most trafficked intersection should be considered first and if



Fatima Gamez Lopez/THE RIDER PHOTO

The underpass at the intersection of South Ware and West Frontage roads in McAllen is illuminated by blue LED lights. Last Tuesday, the Brownsville City Commission discussed potentially placing colored lights under the city's most congested intersections. The price of installation is estimated to cost \$35,000 per intersection.

there's a way to even this out throughout districts, I think that would be preferred."

District 2 Commissioner Jessica Tetreau said she would like Boca Chica Boulevard to be prioritized since it is now part of the Space corridor.

Besides Boca Chica Boulevard, the commissioners

also discussed Alton Gloor Boulevard, Sixth Street and FM 802 as priority locations.

Moving forward, the city will further investigate traffic and most culturally rich areas to decide placement options.

"I think it's a wise investment, because it changes the entire ambiance of the

city," Tetreau said. "It makes it a less scary place. It makes it more fun. So, I've been for it and I'm definitely excited that we're at this point."

The next Brownsville City Commission meeting will be held 5 p.m. Feb. 22 at the Brownsville Public Library-Main Branch meeting room.

New hotel funding approved



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

Alejandra Yañez
THE RIDER

Last Tuesday, the Brownsville City Commission voted to approve a funding agreement for a new full-service Hilton Garden Inn near the city's upcoming West Rail Trail project.

Pineapple RE Holdings LP, the operator of the project, proposed a five-story, 150 room, full-service hotel equipped with a restaurant, bar, spa, gym, swimming pool, sundry shop and Wi-Fi, on West Morrison Road.

Brownsville currently levies a 7% local

Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) on the amount paid for a hotel room.

The approved funding agreement will require the city to reimburse Pineapple RE the HOT tax for the next 10 years without exceeding \$4 million, according to agenda documents.

The project, set to begin construction in the latter part of 2022, is estimated to cost \$27 million and create 65 jobs once fully operational.

While the majority of the commission was on board with Pineapple RE's plans, Commissioner at Large "B" Rose Gowen was hesitant to approve the funding agreement due to the hotel's close proximity to the West Rail Trail Project.

As previously reported by The Rider, the West Rail Trail Project aims to construct a 22-foot-wide, dual-purpose concrete hike-and-bike trail from an abandoned railroad alignment in Brownsville.

Gowen's concern with the hotel is that it will cause congestion in the area for bikers and asked that the operator factor in the West Rail Trail when placing the parking lot.

COVID

Continued from Page 1

For information and updates about future pop-up booster events, go to link.utrgv.edu/booster-incentive.

In Hidalgo and Cameron counties, COVID-19 cases continue to increase.

Hidalgo County reported an additional 2,499 cases between Jan. 28 and Feb. 2, according to its website. Last Thursday, the county also reported an additional 23,736 cases, including backlogged cases, raising its total to 156,483.

Carlos Sanchez, Hidalgo County public affairs division director, said once cases are confirmed, it is not possible to distinguish backlogged cases from recent cases.

The Rider called Eduardo Olivarez, chief administrative officer for Hidalgo County's Health and Human Services department. As of press time, Olivarez had not returned the call.

Hidalgo County reported 39 additional deaths between Jan. 28 and Feb. 3, raising its death toll to 3,639.

Cameron County reported an additional 5,137 cases between Jan. 27 and Feb. 2, raising its total to 69,293 cases.

The county reported 17 additional deaths between Jan. 27 and Feb. 2, raising the county's death toll to 2,083.

SGA

Continued from Page 1

--At the time of assuming office, graduate students who have completed an undergraduate degree at UTRGV are eligible under the undergraduate requirements.

--The executive cabinet will consist of the chief of staff, secretary of administration and finance, the secretary of communications and recruitment, and the secretary of graduate affairs.

--Of the four academic senators and four graduate senators, none will need to represent a different location.

--The seven members of the Supreme Court would consist of four associate justices, two faculty/staff associate justices, and one chief justice, which must be filled by a student. The change would remove the requirement of all associate justices to represent either the Brownsville or Edinburg campus.

--The chief justice will initialize and oversee the removal and impeachment process as designated in the bylaws. The creation and dissolution of a student court system will also be at the discretion of the chief justice.

--The First Year Internship Program

director will move from the executive cabinet to its own branch in collaboration with SGA.

Rojas, who is one of 13 authors of the bill, said the next step will be to send the piece of legislation to Internal Affairs for review, then back to the Senate, which will then decide if the student body will vote on the changes to the constitution.

As previously reported by The Rider, if the amendments are approved by two-thirds of those who voted, the revised constitution will take effect in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Rojas was also one of four authors of the Acting Interim Bylaw Bill.

"Mainly, its components is to allow the Student Government Association to appoint members ... into interim positions," he said. "Particularly the presidency, the chair of the senate, and the chief justice to ensure that the Student Government Association continues with any type of procedure that is stipulated in our governing documents."

He further explained that there have been situations in the past where a president has had the need to either resign or has been removed. Rojas added that regardless of the circumstance, there

should be a form of a plan laid out to ensure the progression of the SGA.

The proposed bylaws are as follows:

--In the case of a presidential vacancy, the vice president that was stipulated in the act of succession will assume the presidency and its responsibilities for 30 days or until a senate meeting is called for the election of the president.

--In the case of a chief justice vacancy, the president will appoint an existing associate justice to the role of interim chief justice and its responsibilities for 30 days or until a candidate is presented to the senate floor.

--At the time of their absence in a senatorial event or at a prescribed time stamp designated by their person, the chair of the senate will delegate their senatorial roles and responsibilities to their fellow senate officers. Based on the designation of the chair of the senate, the secretary or the sergeant-at-arms will assume coordination and control of the senatorial process.

The bill will be reviewed by Internal Affairs to vote on, table, or conduct any edits to be relayed to its authors.

In other business, the senate voted to appoint Mariana Estevan, former

sergeant-at-arms, to the chief justice position, which was vacant after now Vice President for Brownsville Samantha Lara was appointed.

Job Martinez, senator for the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, motioned to a direct vote. With five "ayes" and zero "nays," the decision was made to appoint Estevan.

"Thank you so much and thank you to the Student Government Association for enlisting your trust in me," said Estevan after being congratulated by Senate Chair José Raul Ruiz.

She was later sworn in during the second roll call.

After Ruiz opened the floor to comments and announcements, Estevan announced that she and Associate Dean for Student Involvement and SGA Adviser Delma Olivarez have been working on a COVID-19 memorial scheduled from noon to 12:45 p.m. March 1 on the Edinburg, Brownsville and Harlingen campuses.

"It will be a day of remembrance for the UTRGV community," Estevan said.

The next SGA meeting is scheduled at 6 p.m. Tuesday on the Edinburg campus.

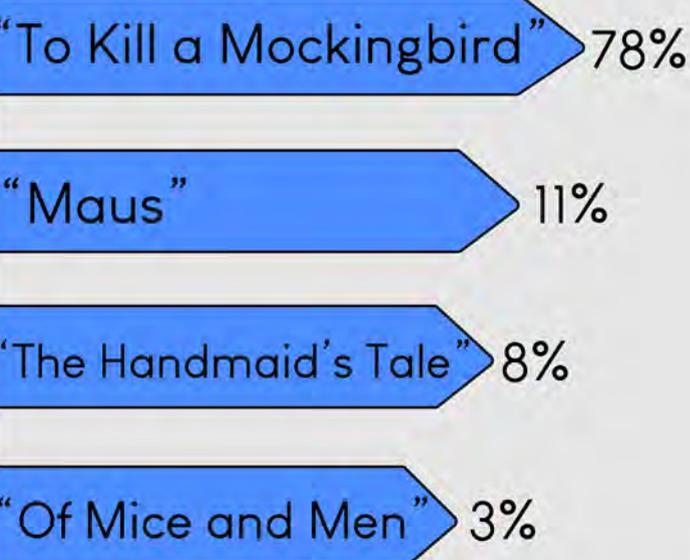
VAQUERO VOICE



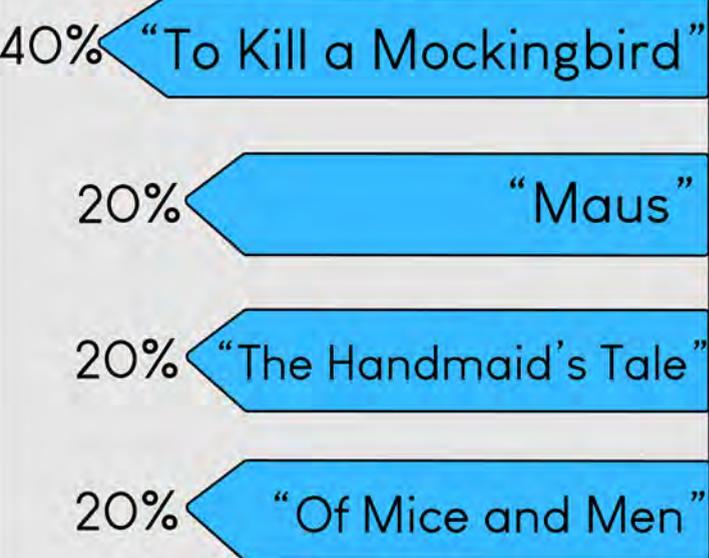
CHALLENGED BOOKS

On Jan. 31, The Rider conducted a poll on social media asking students, "Which book do you believe should not be banned/challenged?" The results are shown below.

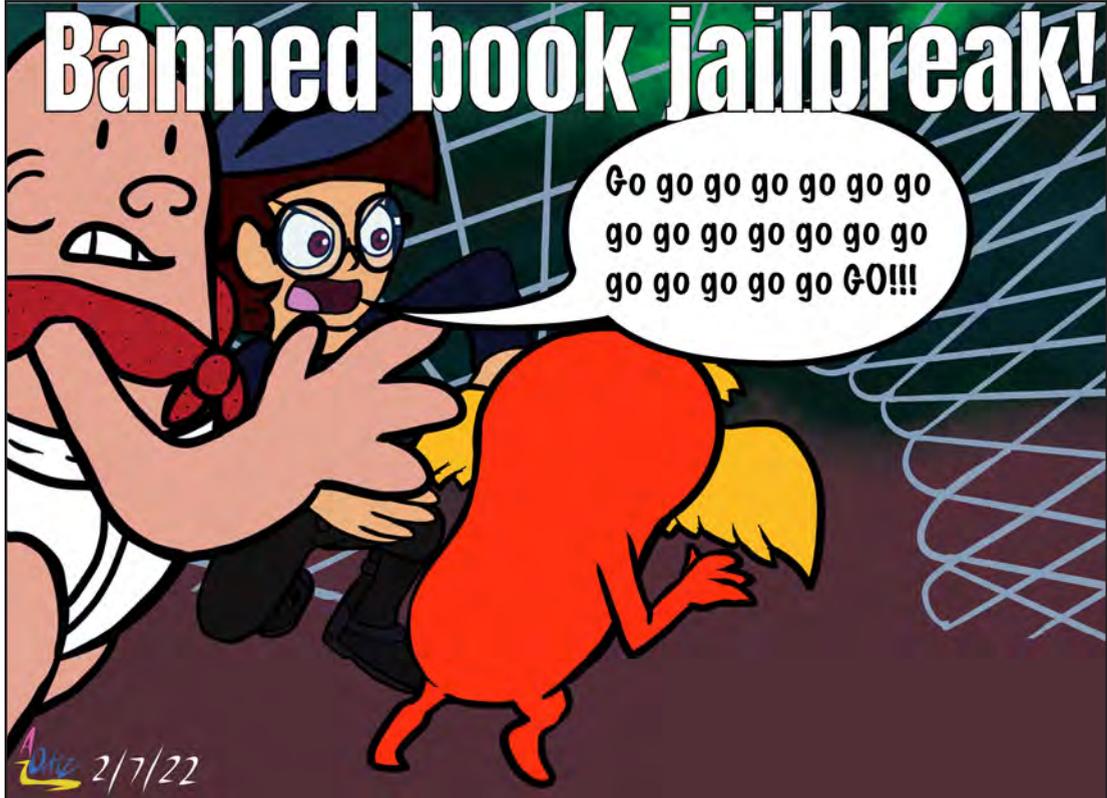
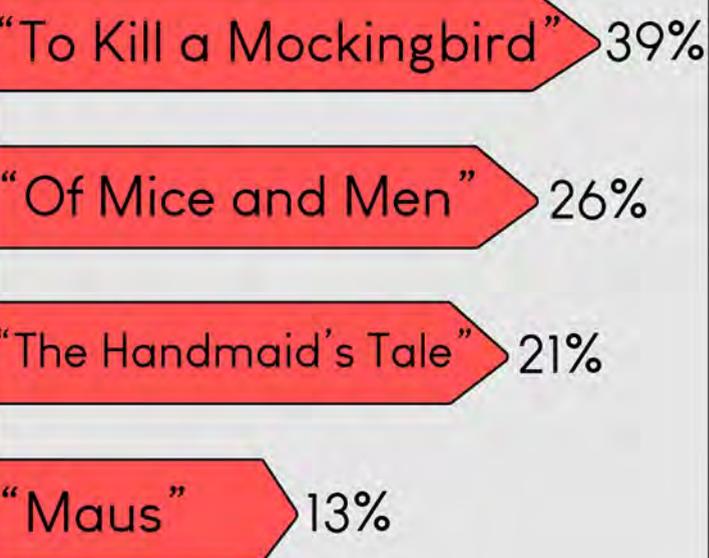
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Why do we ban books?



Arisbeth Rodriguez
THE RIDER

I have been a person who reads my whole life. I love to read books with 30-plus chapters, even if I have to find the time to read because it is what I enjoy.

By now, many news outlets, such as the New York Times and CNN, have reported about the Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel "Maus" (Pantheon, 1986), by Art Spiegelman, being banned Jan. 10 by the McMinn County School Board in Tennessee.

The novel depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father about his experiences as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor, with Jewish people portrayed as mice and Nazis as cats. It was banned due to "inappropriate language" and an illustration of a nude woman.

This is becoming a common theme in schools, in which school boards ban books that cover themes such as the Holocaust, LGBTQ+ people, sexual education and race under the guise of "inappropriateness."

This censorship even occurs in the Lone Star State.

House Bill 3979, an anti-critical race theory bill that was signed into law by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott on June 15, 2021, bans teaching materials

that cause "discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of the individual's race or sex," and prohibits from teaching about pivotal historic moments because it makes people uncomfortable. The bill went into effect Sept. 1, 2021.

U.S. history is not pretty. It is gross, even, to me. However, it is important to learn about how our country came to be so we can refrain from repeating those ugly moments again.

On Oct. 25, 2021, state Rep. Matt Krause (R-Fort Worth) asked the Texas

according to Book Riot.

Krause's list includes "The Handmaid's Tale: The Graphic Novel" (Nan A. Talese, 2019) by Margaret Atwood, "Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe" (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2014) by Benjamin Alire Sáenz and even the graphic novel version of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (Hill and Wang, 2016) by Miles Hyman. Other books are about African American and Latinx history.

I understand parents wanting to keep children innocent. I even understand them not wanting children to read graphic material that may be too mature for their age.

But a good way to prevent your children from learning things you believe they are too young for is to actively take an interest in their lives and

"If you do not want to read something, do not read it. If you want to stop your child from reading something, help them find something for their age group instead. Do not be a *metiche* in other kids' reading habits."

House General Investigating Committee and the Texas Education Agency to review all books in the state's public schools to stop children from seeing "pornography or other inappropriate content."

Krause published a list of 850 titles for school board officials to confirm if they carry them. If they did, he demanded to know where the books were and how much money was spent on them, according to an NPR article.

Nearly two-thirds of the titles mention LGBTQ+ people and about 15% provide sexual education information,

explain things to them.

I see iPad kids all the time watching things that are way more inappropriate than things discussed in the 850 books on Krause's list. You let your child watch "Squid Games" and "Big Mouth" but draw the line at a young adult fiction book that involves a gay couple?

If you do not want to read something, do not read it. If you want to stop your child from reading something, help them find something for their age group instead. Do not be a *metiche* in other kids' reading habits.

Visit us online at utrgvrider.com



El Common poco común

Fatima Gamez Lopez
EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

Cuando las personas encuentran lo que les apasiona, encuentran su propósito en la vida, dijo Common a una multitud de más de 200 personas reunidas en persona y a través de una transmisión en vivo el martes por la noche para la conferencia de la Serie de Oradores Distinguidos (*Distinguished Speaker Series*). El actor, activista y artista de rap, que compartió un Premio de la Academia y un Globo de Oro en el 2015 con John Legend a la Mejor Canción Original, *"Glory"*, es el segundo invitado de la Serie de Oradores Distinguidos 2021-2022.

Common dijo que vino a UTRGV "para hablar sobre la grandeza".

"Cuando era niño, quería ser grandioso", dijo durante la conferencia en el UTRGV *Performing Arts Complex* en Edinburg. "Quería que el mundo supiera que estaba aquí".

Common dijo que cuando escribió su primer rap, descubrió lo que amaba y algo en lo que podía ser bueno.

"Cuando escribí mi primer rap, encontré una confianza en mí mismo que nunca había expresado en mi vida", dijo. "Encontré algo que sentí que era parte de algo que quería expresar al mundo."

"Pero lo hermoso de lo que puedo hablar [sobre] mi camino en mi viaje es que incluso cuando es difícil, me encanta. Me despierto por la mañana, pensando en música, pensando en crear, pensando en escenas

de actuación, pensando en 'cómo puedo ayudar a la gente'. Me despierto en la mañana y no siempre es fácil".

Habló sobre su primer álbum, *"Can I Borrow a Dollar"* en 1992.

"Hice un disco, mi primer álbum, definitivamente emocionado", dijo. "Lancé mi álbum, y salió [y] no fue un éxito".

Common dijo que tenía miedo de que lo que le apasionaba no fuera para él, pero su deseo por la música y el arte hizo que se quedara.

"Es muy importante que sepamos en nuestro propósito, en nuestro viaje, que nos mantenemos presentes, porque está en constante evolución", dijo. "Vas a ser probado, pase lo que pase, serás probado, cree que serás probado".

Common también habló sobre lo importante que es tener fe en nosotros mismos.

"Pedí cosas de Amazon [y] tengo fe, que van a ser entregadas", dijo. "Pero, ¿por qué no tengo esa fe en mí mismo? Si pido algo y digo algo, ¿por qué no voy a tener esa fe en mí mismo?"

Common dijo que cuando las cosas van mal, es importante asegurarse de estar en el entorno adecuado y rodeado de grandes personas.

En el 2015, recibió el NAACP Premio de Imagen como actor de reparto destacado por su trabajo en *"Selma"*. También recibió premios Emmy Diurnos y de Horario Estelar por interpretación musical sobresaliente en un programa diurno por *"The View"* y música y letras originales sobresalientes por *"13th"*.

En el 2018, fundó *Imagine Justice*, una organización sin fines de lucro que se enfoca en la reforma de la justicia penal, la construcción de coaliciones/comunidades y la salud y el bienestar mental, según su sitio web. Él y su madre, Mahalia Hines, educadora, también comenzaron la Fundación *Common Ground*, "que empodera y eleva a los jóvenes de comunidades de alto potencial para que se conviertan en futuros líderes", según su sitio web.

"Recuerdo que tuve miedo de decir que era activista por un tiempo", dijo. "Pero luego, en cierto punto, dije: 'Hombre, he estado trabajando duro en esto, tengo que reclamar esto'".

El rapero, que ha sido nominado 20 veces a un Grammy y ganó tres, dijo que el mejor día de su vida fue cuando estuvo nominado a varios premios Grammy.

"La primera vez que mi madre ha venido a una entrega de premios, Kanye estaba ahí con su madre, John Legend estaba ahí con su madre", dijo. "Anunciaron dos de mis premios [y] no obtuve esos dos".

Common dijo que mientras nombraban los premios a los que estaba nominado, él preparaba su discurso, pero al final no obtuvo ningún premio.

"Esa noche en la fiesta de los Grammy... John Legend entró con, como, cuatro Grammys, [y] todo lo que yo tenía era mi mamá", dijo. "Y creí que obtendría esos Grammys, creí en mí mismo, pero no sucedió".

Common explicó que lo más importante es el entorno en el que nos rodeamos.

"Lo que más me llevé de eso



Diana Alvarez-Tovar/FOTO RIDER

El galardonado actor, artista de rap y activista Common se dirige a la audiencia el martes por la noche durante la Serie de Oradores Distinguidos en el *Performing Arts Complex* en el campus de Edinburg. Common habló sobre tres pilares por los que se guía: propósito, creer en uno mismo y servicio a la comunidad. Common dio inicio a la conmemoración del *Black History Month* en UTRGV.

fue que las cosas suceden en el tiempo divino", dijo. "Sabía que esto vendría. Y seguramente nos rodeamos de otros creyentes, otras personas que apoyan esa creencia de que vamos en la dirección correcta".

Después de la conferencia, se le pidió a Common su opinión sobre el miedo de las personas a expresar sus preocupaciones.

"Estoy aprendiendo esto cada vez más y estoy trabajando para practicarlo", dijo. "No fuimos creados con miedo. No nacemos con miedo. En nuestros momentos más verdaderos de lo que somos, no somos personas temerosas".

Common terminó hablando sobre la importancia de creer en uno mismo.

"Creo que si encuentras tu

propósito y encuentras algo que amas, si trabajas en tu creencia y practicas esa creencia, y si llevas ese don al servicio, para servirte a tí mismo, a tu familia, a tu comunidad, creo que algún día, alguien te llamará el más grande porque todos tenemos esa grandeza en nosotros", dijo.

La próxima invitada de la Serie de Oradores Distinguidos será Lana Condor, una actriz conocida por la trilogía de películas de Netflix *"To All the Boys I Loved"*. El evento se llevará a cabo virtualmente el 2 de marzo.

La serie está patrocinada por la Oficina de Actividades Estudiantiles. Para obtener más información, visite el sitio web de la Serie de Oradores Distinguidos.

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Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

Danielle Perez

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Aries-After a long month of hard work, you are finally getting a break and starting to loosen up. Your social life is calling and you want it back, too. Soon, other issues will start to resolve themselves and you can start living how you always wanted.

Leo-You are ready to finally make the decision you have been waiting for but you fear in the unknown. Look for someone to confide in and discuss your options. However, at the end of the day, the heart wants what it wants. Be free and reach for the stars.

Sagittarius-It has been a while since you have felt energetic and ready to get going again. But this new month is your time to shine. Bond with your siblings or friends who have common goals to brainstorm ideas you have for your future. Now is the time to start saving and making logical choices.

Libra-January was fun, but it was not what you were expecting. Now you are hoping February will get you where you need to be. It is time to get creative and express yourself through a small project or an activity with friends. Stressful times call for mindful measures.

Gemini-Trust your intuition and let it lead its way through. You will be saving yourself from heartache and future stress. After you experience the unexpected changes that the universe has given you, you will finally receive your blessings. Be ready for what is to come.

Aquarius-This new month is offering you a fresh start to find new opportunities and to start over. Take advantage of this time and instead of living in the past, start doing something about your future. Use all that you have learned and implement it.

Cancer-These next few months will make you become more aware of the world around you. Spirit wants to remind you to live in the moment instead of obsessing over the future. Try to find a common ground between yourself and other things going on in your life.

Scorpio-Spend some time at home with your loved ones; they will bring the emotional security that you have been searching for. Let yourself open up and be vulnerable, then recollect yourself. We all need to feel our emotions sometimes to be able to move forward.

Pisces-After feeling many highs and lows, take this month's suggestion to take care of yourself. You have been in the shadows for too long, and it is time to be yourself again. Remember your friends have your back and you are not alone.

Taurus-The moon is encouraging you to start thinking about your long-term goals. It is a perfect time to plan and focus on your career. By the end of the month, you will have many ideas filled with success. Buckle up, because your life is about to take a turn.

Virgo-The start to this new year has been rocky for you, but do not get discouraged. There are many things ahead. Many opportunities and healthy habits are coming along. Continue to be the best version of yourself no matter what, and watch it pay off.

Capricorn-These past weeks, you have been spending money on yourself, and spirit is glad you are finally getting what you want. However, remember to not lay all your eggs in one basket. Balance your money and budget when necessary to prevent yourself from falling short; consider other things that may be coming.

New perspective: from Italy to the RGV



Romeo Di Loreto

Brigitte Ortiz
THE RIDER

A new faculty member who has worked in different universities across the world hopes to make a great impact in the UTRGV School of Art and Design.

Romeo Di Loreto, a new tenure-track assistant professor, was born in Toronto, Canada. He first learned about UTRGV through a job posting.

"I made this courageous maneuver," Di Loreto said. "I noticed the posting of the school and for others. I applied to three of them ... a school in South Carolina [and] another one in Utah. Oddly enough, I don't know how I did it, [but] I was given offers."

He said there is something special about Brownsville--its weather and abundance of nature.

"You have the sea, you have the desert, you have the mountains [in Texas]," Di Loreto said. "And by studying this and researching, I realized it was very interesting for my work. It was actually fundamental for my work because a lot of my work is dealing with a natural element. Then, I started studying the school itself and the territory and the idea of it being a public research university really gave me a huge stimuli to think about it very seriously."

Students have creativity and knowledge ready to explode like a volcano, the art professor said.

Di Loreto earned a bachelor's degree in applied arts from Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario, and a master's in fine arts from Savannah College of Art and Design, a private nonprofit art school in Savannah, Georgia.

Although he earned two degrees, he did not always know what he wanted to do.

"I was offered a kind of training through a five-year military university, which really shocked me to be a criminologist for the Royal [Canadian] Mounted Police," Di Loreto said. "They went through all these Scantron quizzes. So, this was kind of a blessing that I had a real job. Two weeks before I was able to go, I said, 'I can't do it.' I did not go."

He eventually found a

"You don't want to catch the wind, you want to keep on chasing it."

--Romeo Di Loreto
Tenure-track assistant professor

one-year art program where he learned about painting, drawing, ceramics, industrial design, graphic design and photography.

"Photography was easy for me," Di Loreto said. "The first time I picked that up was just easy, but I really had a passion for industrial design."

The professor said some students may not always know what they want to do post-graduation, but he reassures them that it is OK.

"When I ask them what they want to do in life, they say, 'I'm not sure,' I say, 'Great. I was not sure.' I went through [a photography] program and, luckily, did extremely well in that."

He added he is proud to be part of the UTRGV School of Art and Design and wants to see it grow. One of the ideas he has is to strengthen the graduate programs.

"What's going to happen when they graduate?" Di Loreto said. "If they want to teach, they're going to find

themselves reading job applications and they're going to say, 'Three years experience,' and they can have three spares. I also want to do some very unique things."

He said he wants to implement the recycling of classroom materials to avoid throwing chemicals down the drain.

At one point, Di Loreto started his own business.

"I owned a [print] gallery and, actually, it was a custom laboratory where we did both color and black and white," Di Loreto said. "My biggest clients were Vogue and Elle magazines. So, 20 years ago, anything you would have seen in Vogue and Elle black and white, and it was done by me. I was printing it."

Famous photographers he worked for include Josh Sturgis, an American

photographer; Joel Meyerowitz, an American

street, portrait and landscape photographer; Paolo

Pellegrin, a photojournalist from Italy; Gerhard Richter, a German visual artist;

and Nobuyoshi Araki, a Japanese photographer and contemporary artist.

"After a while, I decided that maybe I should think about changing a little bit, and I started teaching part time," he said. "From part time, they immediately offered me a full-time position at one university. It was actually a foreign-abroad program where we catered to 57 American schools, the oldest foreign-abroad program in the arts in Italy."

Di Loreto advises students to "chase the wind and never catch it."

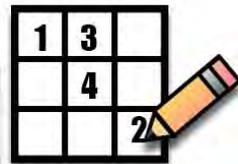
"Go for it," he said. "Make all the mistakes you possibly can and don't be afraid. If you're afraid, it's OK to

See PERSPECTIVE, Page 7

Cartoon-ish Hijinks by Ariael Ortiz



Sudoku



			1			5		
		9	5	6	7			
		7						
	7					6	9	2
	5		2	4		1		
3	4				8			6
6				3	2	9		
						2	8	

Last week's
puzzle
answer key:

9	8	7	5	3	2	1	6	4
1	6	3	4	8	7	9	2	5
4	5	2	1	6	9	7	3	8
7	9	1	6	4	8	3	5	2
5	4	8	7	2	3	6	9	1
2	3	6	9	1	5	4	8	7
8	1	4	2	9	6	5	7	3
3	7	9	8	5	4	2	1	6
6	2	5	3	7	1	8	4	9

Athlete of the Week: Marjorie Souza



Marjorie Souza

Halfway through her first season, UTRGV tennis freshman Marjorie Souza told The Rider her first semester was great, from meeting her new teammates and enjoying campus life to even learning a little bit of Spanish. The chemistry major led the Vaqueras last fall season with five victories in singles and five in doubles. A native of Serra Negra, Brazil, she will be looking to build on that this spring season.

Q: When did you start playing tennis and why?

A: "I was 7 years old, mostly because of my brother. He played and then I watched him. And at the beginning, I didn't like it. My father wanted me to start at 4 [years old], but I didn't like it at all. So then, when my brother started traveling around to play tournaments, and I started to see girls playing and I started liking it and wanted to play."

Q: Who is your favorite athlete and why?

A: "My favorite athlete is [Garbiñe] Muguruza, and I really like her because I think she's really similar to my style, like, aggressive. So, I really like her inside and outside of the court."

Q: What is your favorite thing to eat and why?

A: "I really like rice and beans, because, in Brazil, you eat this every day. And I'm so glad that here, they have beans, because I missed it so bad. And because of that, my favorite part [of campus] is the cafeteria."

Q: Have you been trying new foods since you arrived at UTRGV?

A: "Yes, a lot, because we have two teammates that are Mexican. They prepare food for us, so I'm trying a lot of foods with, like, spices. I used to not eat that much spicy food, but now, I'm liking it. ... Enchiladas are my favorite."

Q: What are some of your hobbies?

A: "I really like listening to music. Music from my country and music from here. And also, I really like to paint."

Q: Who are some of your favorite artists and why?

A: "I really like Coldplay. I love him. I really want to go to a show because I've never been. I like his music because they are really calm. So, I like to listen to this type of music for games to stay calm. ... I also really like Harry Styles. His songs are so good."

Q: What inspires you in life?

A: "My family and, especially, my father. ... I'm always calling him when I have a bad day or when I really need motivation. He is always with me."

Q: Are there any classes that you are taking right now that you really enjoy?

A: "Right now, chemistry and anthropology. I've never had anthropology in my life, so I'm really liking it. And chemistry labs."

Q: What is a random fact about yourself?

A: "I played volleyball [when I was younger]. I was kinda good at volleyball, but tennis was my thing."

--Compiled by Omar E. Zapata

'I felt him in the building tonight'

UTRGV honors Lew Hill at basketball game

Omar E. Zapata

SPORTS REPORTER

Lew Hill, the UTRGV Men's Basketball head coach from 2016-21, who died a year ago, was more than just a coach, as his mantra, 'Peace & Love,' was something he lived by and is carried on by the people who knew him.

"It's a bittersweet moment," his widow, Renee Hill, said about the Lew Hill Tribute Night last Wednesday at the UTRGV Fieldhouse, where the Vaqueros faced Lamar University.

"It feels sad in the sense of, we're having this night and, you know, these conversations, but on the other side of that it feels great to know that he's not forgotten, that he still has a presence," said Hill, who was married to the coach for 21 years.

Lew Hill Tribute Night

The tribute night started with a round of applause for coach Hill while a chair with a No. 3 UTRGV jersey stood alone in the middle of the UTRGV Fieldhouse. Coach Hill wore No. 3 when he played for Wichita State University from 1985-1988.

UTRGV Vice President and Director of Athletics Chasse Conque told The Rider that the tribute night was something they have been planning for a while.

"I loved the round of applause we did at the beginning of the game to celebrate his life and his contributions to not just UTRGV, but to society and to all those that he impacted throughout his life."

At halftime, the Intercollegiate Athletics department screened a tribute video that featured Hill's locker room talks, interviews and footage of his time at UTRGV.

Renee Hill told The Rider she became emotional while watching the tribute video.

"I couldn't, even as strong as I was trying to be and hold it back, I couldn't," she said. "It was amazing. Like I said, just to hear his voice and just to hear those talks again, or hear how he talks about the community, the players, just staff [and] administration."

Hill said she hopes this is only the beginning and that the presence and energy he left will be felt not just in the basketball program but throughout UTRGV and the community.

Driven by the spirit of Lew Hill, the Vaqueros posted their highest scoring game of the season to defeat the Cardinals 93-79, with three players scoring 22 or more points.



Omar E. Zapata/THE RIDER

The Lew Hill tribute jersey has had its own seat this season on the UTRGV bench, which represents where the basketball coach would have sat.

Graduate forward Marek Nelson led the Vaqueros with a career-high 30 points and 10 rebounds for his first double-double. Junior guard Justin Johnson had his second double-double of the season with 24 points and 10 rebounds. Graduate guard Xavier Johnson scored a season-tying high 22 points and seven assists.

"Tonight wasn't really about us, it was about the legacy of coach Hill,"

Nelson said in a post-game interview.

After the game, the UTRGV Men's Basketball Team went to Renee Hill and her children LJ and Elle to

they'll tell you the same."

Renee Hill still has her husband's cell phone and said former players, coaches and friends still text him to this day.

"I don't open them," she said. "I don't read them, but they still text him to this day and that says a lot about him as a human."

Nelson, who played for coach Hill from 2019-21, told The Rider he was full of inspirational gems, some taking longer for his players to fully understand, but the easiest one that comes to mind is 'Peace & Love.'

"Despite everything that's going on, just having peace and love about situations, you know, however difficult times may be, if you approach it with peace and love, you're going to be part of the solution, not the problem," he said. "So, I just kind of remember that and bring that with me throughout, you know, especially off the court, just for things outside of basketball. Just to treat people with peace and with love, man. There's not a lot of that going on in today's world in general."

Renee Hill said her husband was an advocate for always bringing peace and love to whatever he did and to whoever he met. With coach Hill's famous 'Peace & Love' resonating with anyone who had a chance to know him, she said she has another quote that she holds close to her heart.

"He would always say to me, 'I know everybody sees me and I get all the accolades and everything, but you're the real MVP' still means a lot to me," Renee Hill said, holding back tears. "And he would always just say the sacrifices that I make for our family and to make sure that he's good and to make sure that the kids are good and he just really appreciated it."

"Tonight wasn't really about us, it was about the legacy of coach Hill."

--Marek Nelson

Men's Basketball graduate forward

wish them well.

"Yeah, it's just a regular game, man, but obviously there's a little extra meaning behind it, which was great," Nelson said. "You know, I felt him in the building tonight, without a doubt." **'Peace & Love'**

Renee Hill said knowing her husband off the court was where one saw the greater perspective of who he was and what he stood for.

"His fame and notoriety came from him being a coach but to know him off the court ... to describe him in a few words is love, kindness," Renee Hill said. "Just to be in his presence, you just felt uplifted automatically. Always with a smile on his face. Definitely old school, like from the heart. He's just an amazing human. And I'm not just saying that, but ask other people and

PERSPECTIVE

Continued from Page 6

explain, to talk, to resolve. You don't want to catch the wind, you want to keep on chasing it. At one point you are so thrilled that you're doing things that you never expected, because our minds are much stronger, much stronger than we could have imagined."

Hannah Cavazos, a studio art senior, is taking Di Loreto's photography as an art form course.

Cavazos said Di Loreto gives the class a lot of artistic freedom.

"He's totally OK if we fail because it's OK to fail," she said. "It's, like, very free-formed. He's very open to suggestions. If he gives an assignment, like, he wants us to be like, 'Oh, well, I think this would be better.' We have a voice in his class."

Cavazos encourages students to take a course with him, even if they do not know anything about photography.

"Like, the majority of my classes I didn't know anything about it," Cavazos said. "But he's very open and he'll teach you from the very beginning, like, one on one. He's very patient."

Joy Esquiedo, interim director for the School of Art and Design, said Di Loreto's enthusiasm was captivating.

"He seemed really excited," Esquiedo said. "He seemed very student centered. A lot of those responses centered around the needs of our students. I think the background that he brings in, the years of experience that he brings in, is pretty exciting as well."

Assistant Professor DM Witman, a new faculty member on the Edinburg campus, and Di Loreto have already

submitted a proposal to update the terminology and the software that is being used in those classes, according to Esquiedo.

"I believe together, they're really coming up with great ideas of how to update the curriculum," she said. "And then, they talk about wanting to eventually make it, you know, think about offering a BFA in photography in the future, right? ... I would think that's a five-year plan, but it's exciting to see the motivation for that. And, so, both of them coming up with, you know, projects in the area, you know, how they can involve their local communities and their ... assignments and things like that. So, it's really neat to see their creativity, not only in their own work, but also what they plan on doing with the students."



V My Valentine Dance

Don't miss the Student Union's Annual V My Valentine Homecoming Dance. Free food, music, and fun! Open to enrolled UTRGV students. No dress code. Hosted by Student Union.

Edinburg | Ballroom
Monday, Feb. 14
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Brownsville | Gran Sal3n
Thursday, Feb. 17
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Victory Rally @ Homecoming

A three-part celebration of UTRGV Homecoming, including Orange Fest, Victory Trail, and the Burning of the Letters! Join one or all events and show your Vaquero pride.

Wednesday, Feb. 16 | 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Orange Fest

Enjoy music, free food, recreational games, and giveaways. Mtn. Dew will be handing out free drinks and the official Homecoming T-shirt. Don't forget your UTRGV ID card and be sure to wear Orange!

Edinburg | UREC
4:00 pm

Brownsville | Casa Bella
5:00 pm



HONORING OUR LEGACY,
BUILDING OUR FUTURE

FEBRUARY 13-19
UTRGV.EDU/HOMECOMING

Victory Trail | Homecoming Parade

UTRGV students, staff and faculty are invited to participate in this parade to show their UTRGV spirit. Golf carts, wagons, bicycles, and pedestrians are welcome in this parade. Sign up on VLink.

Edinburg | Edinburg EUREC Parking Lot E36/EUREC Softball Field 6:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Brownsville | North Staircase of Sal3n Cassia 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm



Burning of the Letters

Before the game, celebrate Vaquero Pride with the UTRGV Cheer Squad and the Vaquero Pep Band at the annual Burning of the Letters.

Edinburg | EHPE1 Health & Physical Education Complex Fieldhouse Parking Lot E16
6:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Men's Basketball | UTRGV vs. Seattle University

Free admission with your UTRGV ID Card. Students can ride on the Vaquero Express from Brownsville at 5:00 pm to attend game in Edinburg.

Edinburg | EHPE1 Health & Physical Education Complex Fieldhouse 7:00 pm
Brownsville | Watch Party at Casa Bella 7:00 pm



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