UTRGVRIDER.COM

## County revisits arena proposal in hopes of student voters

The arena was first introduced in 2021 in **Cameron County** 

> **PETE MENDOZA COPY EDITOR**

The multi-use arena made its return into the 2025 Cameron County

ballot for the third time since 2022.

In 2021, the arena was first introduced into the ballot and was voted against with a difference of 75 voters.

During the May 2022 election, 49% voted for the arena and 51% voted against it.

Eddie Treviño Jr., Cameron County judge, Cameron County multi-use arena election results in May 2022

51% voted against

49% voted for

Rebeca Salinas/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

said the arena, which is listed as Proposition A, is important because purposes.

"It provides a venue to be able to host events from concerts to graduations to sporting events," Treviño said. "It also helps become a tourist attraction for those events that we're able to host here in Cameron County.'

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He said the multi-use arena is part of a master plan for the county.

"We're trying to plan it so that we can take advantage of its location and also its proximity to this master plan

See ARENA, Page 2

ON CAMPUS

# SUMMER GROWTH



Sofia Cantú Sauceda/THE RIDER PHOTOS

UTRGV students work on an assignment during a nursing class April 14 in Sabal Hall on the Brownsville campus.

## Summer enrollment sees a 3-year increase

13,278 students registered for Summer I as of April 15

> **DANIEL AGUILAR** THE RIDER

As of April 15, UTRGV data from the Division of Strategic Enrollment & Student Affairs shows 13,278 students registered for Summer I courses, about a 4% increase in enrollment compared to Summer I 2024 and about 6% from Summer I 2023.

Doctoral students make up the most significant percentage increase, with about a 32% jump from Summer I 2024 and about 31% from Summer I 2023. The School of Podiatric Medicine also had growth, seeing enrollment go from 27 students to 83 in two years.

Undergraduates make up the largest share of summer with 10,154 undergraduates enrolled for Summer I 2025.

Adrian Calderon, a music technology sophomore, said he is taking summer courses to stay on track with his

"I feel like summer's a good time to get ahead," Calderon said. "I also need the prerequisites to qualify for future classes."

Although he was unaware of specific financial aid options for summer, he said limited funds could be an obstacle.

"If financial aid doesn't transfer into the summer,

See **SUMMER**, Page 2

**ON CAMPUS:** 



Jaqueline Pinales, a biology freshman, studies April 14 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.

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## UTRGV powers up AI expansion

Purchase of supercomputers lays growndwork for Al expansion

> **ETHAN MALDONADO** THE RIDER

With the purchase of two new Lambda Station supercomputers and a growing number of research labs, UTRGV is laying the groundwork for an expansion into artificial intelligence.

Under the ExpandAI Program, which broaden aims to participation in research, education and workforce development, university awarded a \$2.8 million grant from the National

Foundation. according to the UTRGV Newsroom in a March 21 news release.

Constantine Tarawneh, a professor of mechanical engineering, said it is essential for staying competitive in science and engineering education.

'We just two Lambda Station supercomputers, Tarawneh said. "Each one costs \$30,000. Without the grant, we would not have been able to get those.'

He is also the principal investigator and director of the National Science Foundation Crest Center and the Artificial Intelligence Research in Innovation for Smart

See AI, Page 6

## Celebrate the B3 **Scholar Ceremony**

**DANIEL AGUILAR** 

think Some may obtaining education in Spanish in the United States, an English-dominant country, is not possible.

José Dávila-Montes, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and professor of Spanish translation interpreting, said it was "just a dream" 10 years ago and hopes to see students "one day complete entire degrees in [Spanish] if they choose."

To promote these efforts, the UTRGV Department of Bilingual Integration honored excellence during the annual B3 Ceremony Wednesday in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus.

"This ceremony is a celebration of our students' bilingualism and how they've used that as a strength to connect with their communities, families and culture," said Joy Esquierdo, vice provost

See **CEREMONY**, Page 6

### **ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT:**

First-year students show research, creative works

UTRGV celebrates the planet

## on campus

## **OPINION:**

TIPA: My experience at the press convention

## **SPORTS:**

A look into next season for women's soccer

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## 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.

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## **MNOUNCEMENTS**

#### Today BAA Meeting

The **Brownsville Accounting Association** will meet from 5 to 6 p.m. in Sabal Hall Room 2.106 on the Brownsville campus.

Tuesday Safety and Reporting Campus

The Office for Advocacy & Violence Prevention will host an online session from 10 a.m. to noon via Zoom. Attendees can learn the reporting process and learn to whom and how to report. Registration is required to obtain the meeting link.

**Express Yourself** 

The School of Rehabilitation Services and Counseling will host an event from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can create a doll that contains a message of hope.

#### **World of Cultures**

The Center for Student Involvement will host an event from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can join a celebration of cultures, enjoy snacks and great company.

Wednesday Coffee with Your City Commis-

sioner

Linda Macias, Brownsville commissioner District 2, will present on her role as a city official during Coffee with Your City p.m. in Main Building Room 2.402 on the Brownsville campus. The event is hosted by **Vaquero Vote**.

Rhythm Night

The **Student Union** and **Rhythm Room** instructors will host a dance lesson from 6 to 8 p.m. in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus.

Thursday **Talk Spicy to Me** 

The Intersectional Feminist Student Organization will host a fundraiser from 11:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. in the Main Building courtyard on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can purchase aguas frescas, hot cheetos with

cheese.

Vaquero Leadership Ceremony

The Center for Student Involvement will host the Vaquero Leadership Ceremony from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus. The event honors exceptional student leaders for their contributions to the university community. Free food will be provided.

Friday **Boxing** 

University Recreation will host a **boxing class** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 1 on the Edinburg campus.

--Complied by Sophia Cortez



## **POLICE REPORTS**

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between April 14 and 18.

April 14

**1:36 p.m.:** An officer responded to a minor two-vehicle traffic collision in Lot E-9 on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported.

**4:47 p.m.:** A student reported he shared his phone number with a woman who is not affiliated with the university and feels uneasy due to her strange behavior. He was ad-

vised to contact the campus police department if she attempts to reach out to him. Additionally, he was provided with information about university resources for support.

April 16 11:21 a.n

11:21 a.m.: Officers responded to a student feeling ill in the Mathematics & General Classrooms Building on the Edinburg campus. Emergency Medical Services transported the student to a hospital.

**3:26 p.m.:** An officer met with a student who reported

on April 12 she was harassed by Mexican border officials while crossing the border to Matamoros. The student also mentioned that while traveling through Mexico, she was stopped by an unknown group of individuals who took her identification card and searched her vehicle. The student stated that she wanted the incidents documented since her personal information was compromised.

**3:58 p.m.:** An officer met with an employee who stated

a student was possibly mismanaging funds related to a student organization. After further investigation, the elements of a crime were not met.

April 18

**7:13 p.m.:** An officer discovered an unsecured double-decker bus in Lot B-4 on the Brownsville campus. The officer found a set of keys and a UTRGV fuel card inside the bus. The officer collected these items for safekeeping. --Complied by Narda Serna

### ARENA,

## Continued from Page 1

development, which is hoping to have retail and commercial establishments nearby, including hotels and, therefore, being able to bring in conferences and, or conventions that right now we don't have the facilities to do," Treviño said.

The arena, costing approximately \$170-250 million, will be paid for using Hotel Occupancy Tax, which is when hotel owners, operators or managers must collect state HOT from their guests who rent a room or space in a hotel, according to the Texas Comptroller website.

Treviño said the constant complaints that Cameron County receives comes from UTRGV moving its graduation ceremony to Edinburg.

"[Having an arena to host graduation] was something that many of the people here in Cameron County, especially the students at UTRGV, indicated they were very much in support of," he said. "So, we thought that this would be another, hopefully, a good final opportunity to get the support."

UTRGV President Guy Bailey, stated in a letter sent to Treviño Feb. 10, that the arena would receive support from the university.

"I understand the arena project is still being considered by Cameron County and I want you to know the completion of such a venue is not only a critical step forward for Cameron County but would be welcomed and strongly supported by UTRGV," Bailey stated in the letter.

Treviño encourages students to vote during the election period.

Computer engineering junior Jorge Garza said the proposal for the arena will help to build the community.

"I think it's a great idea because honestly, it'll bring more people over here and more economic growth, and overall it'll have a better effect than a negative effect," Jorge Garza said.

Remi Garza, Cameron County election administrator, said the arena being in the ballot will increase overall turnout for the election.

If passed, the arena will take three to five years for completion, according to Treviño.

The proposition will be known as Proposition A during this year's early voting, which started last week and runs through Tuesday. Election day is Saturday.

--Hugo A. Sepúlveda contributed to this report.

### SUMMER,

## Continued from Page 1 could pose a problem for a lot

could pose a problem for a lot of students, especially if they're not working," Calderon said.

Some students are deciding to not enroll in summer for personal or financial reasons, such as kinesiology freshman Agustin Gutierrez. "I don't want to rush through all my

classes just to graduate fast," Gutierrez said. "I also coach track and field in the summer, so I'm usually busy with that."

Jonathan Ochoa, a mechanical engineering sophomore, said he will take summer classes to graduate earlier.

Ochoa added the structure of summer courses can be more intense because of the condensed schedule but finds humanities classes more manageable.

"T'm not really taking hard courses, more like humanities," he said. "They're usually not too difficult because it's fast material I can keep up with."

Roman Silva, assistant director of Financial Aid Advising, Customer Service and Communications, said the department is actively working to provide support to students seeking financial assistance for summer courses.

"Students are always encouraged to reach out to us to ensure they are prepared for this upcoming semester, and that they have all the information they need to make the most of their summer," Silva said.

He added that institutional financial aid varies based on individual eligibility and enrollment status.

"All financial aid offers for the summer have already been sent via email, and students are encouraged to look for those communications, including text messages," Silva said. "We always tell students to reach out to us if they have any questions. They're always welcome to visit our office or send us an email."

The assistant director added the help the department is willing to provide to support students.

"We utilize other communication channels, such as social media, and encourage students to connect with us directly to discuss their individual situations," Silva said. "We're always eager and anxious to assist when it comes to financial aid questions."

For more information about financial aid resources, visit utrgv.edu/finaid.



Jose Rodriguez/THE RIDER

Gregory Selber consults students on the finer details of their final assignment for Reporting I Tuesday in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.

## **VOTING IN MUNICIPAL ELECTION IS UNDER WAY**

Brownsville Municipal, other jurisdictions' elections to be held Saturday

#### **HUGO A. SEPÚLVEDA** THE RIDER

County Cameron the Brownsville Municipal Elections other jurisdictions' elections Saturday, with early voting ending Tuesday.

Remi Garza, Cameron administrator, said there will be 11 jurisdictions holding elections.

"Primarily, we're electing mayors and city council individuals, and there are some school-board elections for trustees," Garza said.

He said the Brownsville Municipal election will have three seats on the ballot: At-Large B, District 3 and District 4 commissioner positions.

Nurith Galonsky Pizaña, Roy De los Santos, Alejandro Garcia and Jason Moody are running for commissioner At-Large B; Yvonne Barraza, Gustavo de Leon and Denise Chavez for commissioner District 3; and Daisy Zamora, Rodriguez, Tijerina and Pedro Cardenas for commissioner District 4.

Garza said the turnout during the May election is usually about 10% of the overall registered voters.

"There's always a smaller percentage that participates," he said. "... In May, the City of Brownsville election, last time, it was close to 7%, when the city had some position in the ballot back in '24."

Over 234,000 individuals are eligible to vote in Cameron County. An average turnout is expected, according to the elections administrator.

"We haven't seen quite the level of activity as we approached Election Day but, you know, I would think that we would fall within that 6 to 10% of the overall registered individuals," Garza said.

He added he believes this election is extremely important for County residents because they are running to represent residents in city councils and school boards.

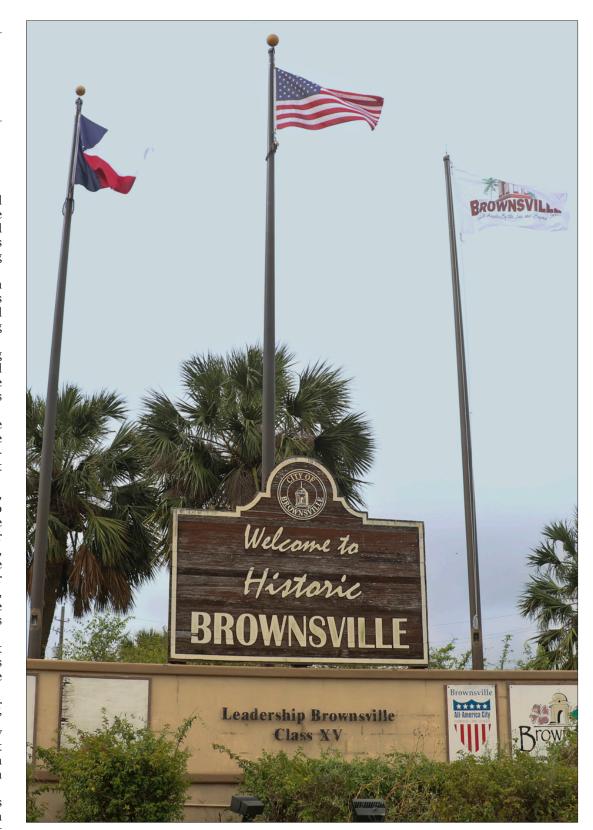
"They are making policies with respect to how the government is run locally, how our tax dollars are allocated," Garza said.

Galonsky Pizaña, former Brownsville commissioner District 1, said she decided to run for this position because she wants to continue serving the community, despite losing her last bid for reelection in

"So, this position opened up, which would allow me to represent the entire city, and I decided to throw my name in

the hat in January," she said. Galonsky Pizaña said the city's most pressing issue is its infrastructure.

"We need to continue fixing our streets, fixing stormwater



Isabelle Mascorro/THE RIDER

The Brownsville municipal election is May 3 for three city officers: Commissioners At-Large B, District 3 and District 4. Each position is a four-year term.

drainage, improving our parks and just, you know, keep up with everything," she said. "Our city is growing so fast.

It's hard to keep up with the growth, so I am running so that we can try to get ahead [of] the

She said she plans to work with UTRGV and the Memorandum of Understanding, created March 18, since she used to represent the areas where UTRGV and Texas Southmost College are located District commissioner.

"To hear that the university has entered into an agreement

the city to bring more classes, more services to Brownsville is great, and I fully support that and would love to assist in that," Galonsky Pizaña said.

She encourages students to vote in the local elections since they most influence the community, yet very few participate.

De los Santos, current

The Brownsville municipal election wil have three seats on the ballot: At-Large B, District 3 and District 4 commissioner positions.

> District 3 commissioner, is running for commissioner At-Large B and said he has been an insider for the last four years in his current office.

"Sometimes commissioners aren't listened

to as closely as At-Large commissioners, important that the people have a voice that is strong, and

I believe I can be a stronger voice for them as an At-Large commissioner," he

De los Santos said his platform has been consistent since the first time he ran as District 3 commissioner.

"The focus has always been on the basics as far as the city's concerned, infrastructure and preparedness one of my top priorities," he said. 'Special communities also high-up on my

priority list."

De los Santos said ensuring economic development is a priority because it is a missed opportunity that Brownsville

is not capitalizing on. "There's a lot [of] cases for

variances from builders who are wanting to build a certain way that may not be consistent with code," he said. "... In all my years doing that, one of the things I hear consistently is that Brownsville is the hardest city in the Rio Grande Valley to work with when it comes to building permits."

De los Santos added, if other cities can work with the community to bring in new business and new industries, "there's no reason Brownsville can't be doing that.'

He said it is in his plans work with UTRGV and the Memorandum of Understanding since it is to make sure Brownsville receives the attention it

'Anything that's going to be good for students of Brownsville, which will mean less time on buses more time in the classroom, and more opportunities to complete your four-year degree in completely, Brownsville that's gonna be a win for our community," De los Santos

Moody said he decided to run for commissioner At-Large B because he has a passion for service with 20 years of experience as a public servant and wants to introduce, if elected, a comprehensive plan, "keep BTX moving forward.'

"This is gonna be a 20-year strategy to guide our city's growth and development," Moody said. "Right now, we do not have a comprehensive prioritizes that the departments from police, fire, transportation, [human resources], maintenance, and all the different departments that we have."

He said investing in city employees to have competitive salaries, raises and stipends can help to make sure to retain local talent and boost morale.

The candidate said his platform is also quality life projects and supporting small business.

"Supporting our small businesses is the heart of our economy, we need to make sure they're thriving, not just struggling," Moody said.

He said there would be programs not only for new businesses but also for existing businesses.

"We're seeing a lot businesses that have been here for 20-25 years that are closing because they may not have the assistance," Moody

He said he plans to work with UTRGV and the Memorandum of Understanding to make sure students have all the resources and opportunities while attending the university and ensure they succeed.

Moody added his goal is to strive for positive change and growth in Brownsville.

wanna push excellence, innovation and community engagement," he

The Rider tried to contact Garcia for comment about his candidacy. As of press time Friday, he was not available.



# My TIPA recap



**CARLOS CASTAÑEDA COPY EDITOR** 

I hope you read last week's issue as, for those unfamiliar with TIPA, it brings some background. For those who didn't, the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association is the oldest state collegiate press association in the nation and is one of the largest and most-respected collegiate groups in the country, according to its website.

This year, it took place April 9 to 12 in San Mar-

every year, the UTRGV Student Media department invited its student assistants to represent the university at TIPA's annual convention. At it, we got to participate in live contests, going head to head against students from across Texas in 30 categories featuring real-world scenarios.

I participated in the Spanish News Writing and the Copy Editing contests.

six-hour bus ride, we arrived at our destination.

April 9: After an almost-

Our Program Coordina-

who took advantage of it) the chance to get the rest we needed for the next

April 10: At 8:30 a.m., the convention's tipoff took place, with awkward icebreakers and interesting conversations with new people. Then, after I took a short coffee break, we competitors in the

Now, I know I can have a career in journalism if this accountant-thing does not work out.

tor Jesus Sanchez had told us we were going to eat at Hangry Joe's Hot Chicken & Wings because they would donate 20% of its sales to TIPA. I would describe it as a more expensive and spicy Chick-Fil-A. Overall, it was a 7/10; I wish I had ordered something else instead of a regular hot chicken sandwich.

Going back to the hotel for a free evening was great. It gave us (those

news event were taken to the Texas State University Police Department, where the officers simulated an event for us to write a story about: a man angry about a parking ticket ran over a student and shot the department's building. I didn't know then I would win first place in my contest. Afterward, I attended a couple of conferences.

April 11: At 9:30 a.m., the copy editing competition started. The test was weirdly formatted, so I would love to have received some feedback. At noon, our former Stu-Media Director Azenett Cornejo was introduced into the Hall of Fame; it was great seeing her work recognized. At 4:30 p.m., Rebeca Salinas (editor-in-chief) and I received a newspaper critique from Donna Pazdera, adviser of El Espejo at Texas A&M-San Antonio. After that, I went to the outlets and bought shoes. Also, binge watching High School Musical 1 and 2 with my peers was the best way to end the day.

April 12: The awards ceremony was super long, but it was worth it considering we won the Director's Cup: more podium places in the live contests. We left immediately for Buc-ee's and continued to drive home.

Overall, it was a great experience and, now, I know I can have a career in journalism if this accountant-thing does not work out.

#### **VAQUERO VOICE**

If you could hop on a plane right now, where would you go and why?

Compiled and photos by Daniela Chapa-Reyes and Daniela Martinez Salazar



**Javier Arias** computer science sophomore

"I would like to [go to] Italy 'cause I like the food. I would like to know what is over there and the culture.'



**Diego Sanchez** cyber security sophomore

"I would probably go to Barcelona to watch a soccer game. That's my favorite team."



**Emma Perez**  $integrated\ health\ science\ sophomore$ 

"I want to go to Hawaii. I just think it's really beautiful and relaxing, and I need that right now.

AIR MAIL PAR AVION



The Rider encourages letters but does not guarantee publication. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar and content. Letters for The Rider may be sent to therider@utrgv.edu. All letters must be typed and no longer than 400 words. Letters must include the name, classification and phone number of the letter's author or the letter cannot be published. Opinions expressed in The Rider are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rider or UTRGV administrators.

## Arts & Entertainment | 5

ON CAMPUS

# THE ART OF RESEARCH

NovaRhet allows first-year students to present research, creative works

EDUARDO ESCAMILLA THE RIDER

UTRGV hosted the NovaRhet first-year writing symposium, a showcase for students to present research and creative works and engage in interdisciplinary dialogue on April 21 in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

The event featured a diverse range of topics, highlighting both academic inquiry and interactive research which ran concurrently in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus. The symposium was also held on April 24 on both campuses.

NovaRhet emphasized the development of critical thinking and communication skills

Marcela Hebbard, a lecturer in the Department of Writing and Language Studies,

underscored the symposium's purpose.

"[It] is a combination of what they do in class, and they

what they do in class, and they come and share it, because research ... is to be shared and to be highlighted outside the classroom," Hebbard said.

Student presentations spanned various fields of study.

Karris Rozalez, an integrated health science

freshman, presented research on service learning with her group, describing it as "experience with community service and also what we took away with that, and how we could apply that to our own lives."

Rozalez's work involved collaborating with the Palm Valley Animal Society to promote pet adoption, bringing along Max, a dog from the shelter, for students to pet and interact with.

Bryana Guerra, a theatre education freshman, said her group explored theater revisionism.

"We did research on theater revisionism in modern theater, and we learned, honestly, a lot about how theater can really change a production and the good and the bad and the ugly that comes with theater revisionism," Guerra said.

She added that when "done correctly," it "can honestly make younger audiences really engage with the production."

In addition to the symposium highlighting a broad spectrum of academic research, it also included a film festival showcasing students' digital presentations.

Guerra's group created a film to creatively connect with their audience who were mostly college students in a humorous way.

"So, we added a lot of our own taste into it ... like memes



Right: NovaRhet first-year writing symposium showcases students' research and creative works on April 21 in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Eduardo Escamila/THE RIDER

Below: Integrated health science freshman Kaitlynn Ocanas presents her child sex trafficking investigation for National Undergraduate Research Week Thursday in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Daniela Martinez Salazar/THE



and like awkward pauses, kind of making it more engaging to our audience," Guerra said.

The symposium's organization involves a collaborative effort.

"We are a committee of six ... but, all the other instructors, they bring their students," Hebbard said.

She also added the importance of students' understanding of the research process and the contribution of library resources.

"The librarians help students," Hebbard said "... It's a combination of different units, but our job is ... to make sure that all the pieces are there."

She said this is the fifth year of the NovaRhet symposium and faculty members assess the students' projects.

"We started in 2019," Hebbard said. "... The first year, in 2020, we received about 90 proposals. ... This year, 560 students submitted a proposal."

She emphasized the value of research skills across disciplines.

"We try to ensure that the students understand that what we do in our own disciplines," Hubbard said. "... They cannot separate writing and reading from research. They're integral elements of research, any research, in any discipline."

She shared the committee's aspirations for the future.

"Our committee has a lot of dreams," Hebbard said. "... We would like to grow these ... at the [University of Texas] system level ... and maybe have a cross institutional collaboration where their students also present."

She added their main goal is to seed the proper tools necessary for students at a freshman level to grow into their skills in academic research and see that there is an art to it.

"Academic research is messy, it's complex, but it's beautiful," Hebbard said.

April 21 Sudoku answer key:

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

## **ACROSS**

4. A written test or assignment5. A practical study tool for memorization8. What students don't get enough of during finals9. A popular energy

drink brand, has a
Formula 1 team

#### **DOWN**

- Popular study location on campus
   A common feeling
- during finals week
- 3. Chemical found in 9 Across that helps to stay awake
- 6. Bubble sheet used for multiple-choice tests
- 7. Studying a subject intensively especially for an imminent exam

# Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

EDUARDO ESCAMILLA THE RIDER

Aries (March 21 - April 19): Your energy is high this week, fueling your creativity and desire to take the lead. Taurus (April 20 - May 20): With the sun in your sign, you're focused on personal goals.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20): This week encourages introspection and a focus on behind-the-scenes activities.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22): Your social life is likely to be more vibrant this week, with chances to engage in group activities and connect with friends.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22): With Mars now in your sign, you'll feel a surge of drive and assertiveness in pursuing your ambitions

assertiveness in pursuing your ambitions.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22):
A desire to learn, explore new ideas and broaden your per-

spectives is strong this week.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): Your focus shifts towards deeper connections, intimacy and shared resources this week.

**Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21):** Partnerships and close relationships take center stage this week, with Venus in Pisces fostering a sense of harmony and romance.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Your attention is likely drawn to your daily routines, work environment and overall health this work

health this week. **Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19):** This week offers a chance for creative expression and enjoyment

**Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18):** Your focus turns inward toward your home, family and sense of security.

**Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20):** Communication, learning new things and connecting with your local community are highlighted this week.

## ΑI,

## Continued from Page 1

Environments project.

One of the supercomputers is already fueling research in Multiple Autonomous Robot Systems (MARS) in the Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building on the Edinburg campus, where students are running algorithms that would otherwise take much longer to process, according to the professor.

"The priority will be for the people in the grant, but anybody else can use it," Tarawneh said. "So, whatever capacity we're building is here to stay."

He emphasized the long-term impact of the supercomputers.

"Even when the grant finishes, that capacity is going to be here for other students," Tarawneh said.

He added as doctoral students complete their research, incoming master's and undergraduate students can step into those roles as the expansion is not just about technology, it is about readiness.

"Pretty much AI has been in everything anyway," he said. "You can't really do research in STEM without AI being a part of it."

He cited examples from the university's own work, including sensors that collect terabytes of data from railcars.

"It's very hard to have a simple algorithm look at trends," Tarawneh explained. "AI is the next stage of the evolution of this research."

Yumiko Balotro, a computer science senior, said she has not taken AIspecific courses but has witnessed the growing interest and expertise on campus.

"There's a lot of people who are heavily involved in AI here," Balotro said. "And they tend to give lectures or talks so, even if it's not in coursework, it's present."

She said she believes the expansion will help put UTRGV on the map.

"We're a smaller institution people might overlook, but I think we have a lot of talent," Balotro said. "Resources achieved through this kind of grant give us a competitive edge."

Computer science senior Diana Diaz said, as Al continues to grow, it will be a great tool to "use when we need to understand something in a different way."

"Al has helped students in understanding topics they have trouble with," Diaz said. "A student might want a different approach to explain a topic and Al can help them explain and process it in various ways."

Tarawneh said the leap into AI is also about positioning UTRGV among nationally recognized research institutions.

"How do you attract faculty if students don't have the capability?" he said. "How do you attract faculty if you don't have the facilities?"

Tarawneh said he believes it's a timely shift.

"Students want to do what's hot," he said, comparing the current AI boom to earlier waves in nanotech and unmanned aerial vehicles. "If you don't keep pace with the trends, eventually you're not going to be able to recruit the students. If you don't offer AI, they'll go to Georgia Tech, MIT, UT Austin or A&M."



Amara Cazares/THE RIDER PHOTO

Qi Lu (left), assistant professor of computer science, and Constantine Tarawneh, professor of mechanical engineering, hold drone and robot projects used in research to gather and test data for the AI Research and Innovation for Smart Environments project April 21 in the Multiple Autonomous Robot Systems research lab at the Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building on the Edinburg campus.



The Multiple Autonomous Robot Systems research lab has testing areas for drones and robots used for computer science research with ARISE.



Jose Rodriguez/THE RIDER PHOTOS

B3 scholars raise their badges during the annual B3 Scholar Ceremony Wednesday at the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus.



Shown is the UTRGV Office of Bilingual Integration during the annual B3 Scholar Ceremony Wednesday in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus.

#### CEREMONY,

### Continued from Page 1

for the Office for Bilingual Integration. "It's about seeing their language not as a barrier but as a bridge."

Esquierdo said the program helps students feel seen and heard on campus and empowers them to succeed both academically and personally.

"I think one of the biggest things we have seen from our students is their sense of belonging," she said. "They feel more connected to their classes and degrees."

The vice provost added the program ties culture in with studies, which can bring positive effects to the community.

"Students having the opportunity to take classes in Spanish, brings in their culture," Esquierdo said. "I think that, in itself, is amazing for our students and community because they have a way to intellectualize on personal experiences."

Dávila-Montes said the ceremony shows how far UTRGV has come as a bilingual institution.

"Now, we have a bilingual university where students can study their disciplines in their language of choice," he said. The dean emphasized the cultural benefits of bilingual education and how it gives students a broader worldview and prepares them to become more competitive professionals.

"For our region, this isn't just important—it's essential," Dávila-Montes said. "Language and culture go hand in hand, and our students deserve to learn in a way that reflects who they are."

Yuritzy Charles Alejos, a philosophy senior, was a recipient of the B3 scholar seal and described the recognition as a powerful, personal moment.

"It feels shocking—in a good way," Charles Alejos said. "I never thought I'd be recognized for something like my culture, growing up between two worlds. But, it feels amazing to reconnect with my roots."

She credited the B3 program for helping her grow both academically and professionally as it gave her a deeper understanding of her heritage and a stronger foundation for her future.

"Take it, no matter your level," Charles Alejos said, encouraging students to embrace bilingual education. "It will enrich your life in the long run."



Spanish senior Vasthy Borjas holds up her B3 badge during the annual B3 Scholar Ceremony Wednesday in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus.

## CELEBRATING OUR PLANET



1: Omar Elizondo (left) and Elizabeth Goldberg, UTeach master teachers and faculty for the UTRGV School of Integrative Biological & Chemical Sciences, talk to students during Earth Fest Wednesday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus.

2: Representatives from the Museum of South Texas History set up a booth for Earth Fest to talk about internships it offers Wednesday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus. The event was hosted by the School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences; and the Office for Sustainability.

3: Emma Lee Garcia, a content writer for the Office of Sustainability, hands out pizza to Earth Fest attendees Wednesday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus. The event was hosted by the School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences; and the Office for Sustainability.

4: Shown is Parker, an Australian mixedbreed looking for a new owner. The Palm Valley Animal Society brought dogs to the UTRGV Earth Fest to spread awareness of dogs they currently have up for adoption Wednesday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus.

Amara Cazares/THE RIDER PHOTOS







## "La Cala del Triunfo" (The Reining of the Triumph)

By: Anamarcela Guerra



Making mistakes can be a challenging experience we face daily; however, this is what makes us human. Throughout my life, I have made so many mistakes that I have regretted them, which made me doubt myself. I once practiced Charreria, which is a sport and discipline arising from equestrian activities and livestock traditions commonly practiced in Mexico that I failed at in a competition, and as a result, this situation caused me to feel I was not capable of succeeding in any other sport. However, this experience made me learn a lesson that helped me grow, and this reflects who I am today.

Horses have been part of my life since the day I came into this world, but little did I know my love for horses have caused a setback that changed my life at an incredibly young age. My father owned horses and practiced Charreria. As I grew up, I also started to have a passion for this sport and started to learn at the age of five. Over the years, I improved at dominating the horse; therefore, my dad decided to send me to a competition to Mexico City at the age of ten. I was extremely excited as I was going to be the youngest competitor to participate. When we arrived a few days before to practice, I saw how professional the other competitors were, and it made me feel like I did not have the skill to compete. I had to use another horse that was not mine because we could not transport my horse on time for the competition. As the day of the competition arrived, my family and other people expected too much from me, so I got very frightened to lose their confidence in me. Eventually, it was my turn to compete and do what is known as la cala de caballo, and on the third exercise called los medios, I failed to do it properly.

The purpose of the exercise was to move front and backwards on both the left and right side on the same spot and not get out of a rectangle, but I had no control of my horse, and I got out of the given space. I felt so disappointed in myself, so I started crying and feeling ridiculed when people saw my act. Little did I know that experience helped me learn a big lesson that makes me who I am today.

The lessons that we learn in our lives always come from experiences that create a big impact on us. After I failed at my competition at the age of ten, I knew I could not keep failing at something I loved to do. I was the third generation of my family that practiced this sport so I could not disappoint anyone. I decided to improve my equestrian skills and began to practice more than I did before. The pandemic came a year later, so that gave me an advantage to practice every week. I went to a ranch outside of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, where I always had my horses. I set a goal for myself to complete los medios without making a single mistake 3 times in a row. It was not as easy as I thought it would be, but after a month of constantly practicing. I finally achieved what I proposed to do. However, that was not enough. I then tried to improve the other exercises called la Punta, Los medios lados, and La Ceja.

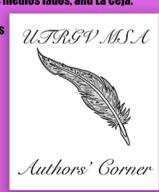
It was challenging not to make a single mistake while performing four exercises in one try. I was not planning to give up, so I kept going three days a week for two months. Finally, one day I was able to complete La Cala without making a mistake. In 2021, people started to go out again. I was part of a group of girls called escaramuzas, which consists of a team riding horses in choreographed synchronized maneuvers to music made only for women.

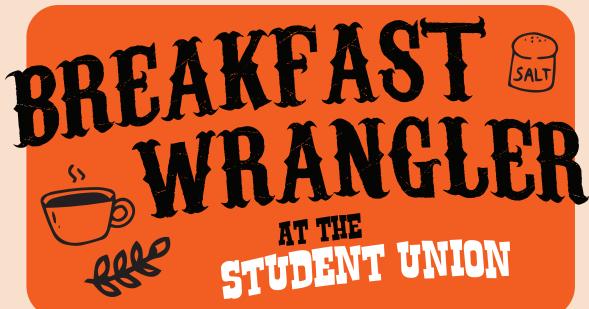
There was a local event of Charreria called Charreada at which I had the opportunity to perform my act as well. I was extremely nervous, but I believed in myself and knew that my hard work was going to pay off. As my name was announced, I performed my act and did the best act of my life.

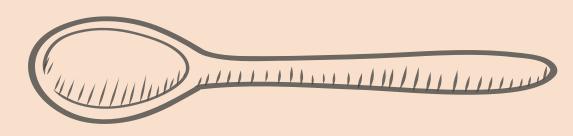
After that, I performed the choreography of the escaramuza and did better than what I expected.

After my accomplishment, I realized there are times in life when we make the biggest mistakes that make us doubt who we are, but when we work hard and dedicate ourselves to improving, we overcome our mistakes.

In conclusion, one of the biggest mistakes that I made in a sport that I am very enthusiastic about made me work harder and become a greater performer. Every downfall has an positive outcome if we work hard to achieve it. If I had stopped and given up on my passion, I would not have achieved the accomplishment that made me outshine during the summer of 2021. Without this mistake I made, I would not have become the person that I am acknowledged for today.

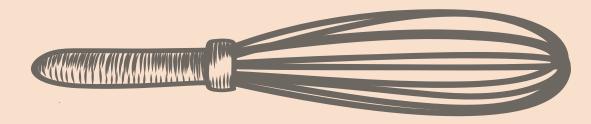








CHAPEL LAMIN







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**WOMEN'S SOCCER** 

## WOMEN'S SOCCER SLC **SCHEDULE UNVEILED**

**DANIELA CHAPA-REYES** 

THE RIDER

The UTRGV Women's Soccer Team is preparing for 2025-2026, as its second Southland Conference season schedule was announced on April 15.

The team will face Northwestern State University in the SLC home opener on Sept. 18. As of press time Friday, the rest of the regular season schedule is pending to be released.

"We have been growing and the challenges to keep that momentum and keep moving in a positive direction," head coach Mark Foster said. "Our dream long term is to win a championship here ... but, if we are going to do that in between where we are now and win the championship, we have to work hard.'

The team faced its first year in the conference last year. Foster said, though everything was new to them, they were excited.

"Everything was new to us ... very different than the [Western Athletic Conference]," he said. "I wouldn't say one was better than the other, but I would say it was very different. I think the girls competed really well. We probably should have won a few more

Last year, the Vaqueros fell short to Northwestern State. Foster said the game was a reflection of a lot of the

"We played really well in that game, but we just came up a little bit short, he said. "I think our group was a little bit young, a little bit nervous and not ready and not used to competing at the top end of a league and big moments like that. We played well and, like I said, we weren't able to finish our opportunities in the critical moments.

The head coach said he hopes having home-field advantage and support will make a difference this time around, having faced them away last season.

Freshman right wing Jordan Matthews said she is excited to show off what she learned last season.

"My main goal is to just do better

than I did this year," Matthews said. "I learned a lot this year and that's just to keep putting goals in the back of the net and to improve myself to help

She said her goal is to learn how to be a better leader on the team and be someone that people can look up to.

Sophomore left back Rosie Train said the team knows more of what to expect for the SLC this year.

"We have a lot more experience this year going into the conference, so I think that experience and the drive to now win and probably get into the tournament again," Train said. "... It's a lot more exciting to our girls.'

She said the team is going to change massively this year, which can help them build on last season.

"Keep building the team culture and everything in a good way-I think that's going to be our main drive," the left back said.

Train added the team dynamic is very positive and thinks it will drive the team to success. Matthews said the team is always positive and in a good

"I think that affects us on the field as well because everyone is in a great mood and I feel like, when we are all in a good mood, we play better," Matthews said.

Train said the team morale all starts in the locker room.

"Everytime before practice, before games, the team morale is in the locker room," she said. "We've got music blasting; we are all hugging each other. ... I think that helps a lot.

Matthews said the team atmosphere helped her calm her nerves during the

"Being a freshman, I was really nervous but I think having a positive dynamic with the team helped a lot just playing my best on the field," she said. --Pete Mendoza contributed to this



**Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER PHOTOS** 

Sophomore defender Bianca Buttler (left) chases after freshman forward Krystin Moore as she dribbles the ball during practice Tuesday at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.



Sophomore defender Bianca Buttler dribbles the ball during practice Tuesday at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

## Vaqueros and the transfer portal

UTRGV navigates the new reality of college athletics

> **ALI HALLOUM** THE RIDER

UTRGV's athletic programs have been no stranger to the bevy of changes to the inner workings of college athletics in recent years, from revenue sharing to name, image and likeness and the transfer portal.

With the transfer window closing this week for several fall sports programs, UTRGV's head coaches are continuing to navigate the reality of having to fill in portions of their rosters every season.

Introduced in October 2018,

the transfer portal allows student athletes to transfer to another program after a complete season. It, alongside the NCAA's decisions to allow student athletes to profit off their own NIL, as well as allowing athletic programs to share revenue with student athletes, has transformed the landscape of collegiate sports.

Molly Castner, deputy director of Athletics, has worked in college athletics for 15 years and at UTRGV for the past six. She said "this is definitely not the same old Athletics department."

"The things that [student athletes] are going through are different," Castner said. "So, we need to keep up with that. Athletics needs to keep up with that. The NCAA needs to keep up with that."

According to the deputy director, UTRGV Athletics "trying to figure out"

where they fit in the national landscape of NIL, revenue sharing and the portal in relation to other schools across the country and in its own conference.

looking at "It's competition in the Southland [Conference] and trying to figure out where we fit in with that," she said.

UTRGV does not have a NIL collective, a third-party organization not affiliated with the university that helps facilitate NIL deals between student athletes and businesses.

Men's basketball head coach Kahil Fennell told The Rider the portal has "completely changed the dynamic for college athletics," describing this new dynamic as "the Wild

"It's hectic for everybody," Fennell said. "Some people have some better resources. ... But, as far as dealing with the landscape, everybody's in the same boat. So, we have to win it just like anyone else."

The transfer portal men's basketball closed April 22, and Fennell confirmed guards KT Raimey and RJ UTRGV Nance departed through the portal.

The team has made additions to backfill these losses. Forward Dane Christensen transferred from Gillette College, a junior college in Wyoming. Entering his sophomore year as a Vaquero, Fennell called him a "winner" and "a tough kid."

"As a player, he can shoot it and he can handle it a little bit," the head coach said. "He's big, 6 [feet], 8 [inches], and he's tough and physical. So, I'm excited about what he brings to the table."

UTRGV Volleyball head coach Todd Lowery said

the difference in scouting scouting established players for portal transfers is that, while programs have to send scouts to watch them in person, video already exists of established college players.

"We're all part of a videosharing network," Lowery said. "So, basically, we can see every single match [of] any Division I athlete that we

Castner said while rosters continually change due to the transfer portal, UTRGV's coaches have, to this point, done a good job of managing these changes.

"Now, you're looking at new rosters maybe every year or a big chunk of your roster being new every year," she said. "We got to get used to adapting to new students every year and our coaches are doing a phenomenal job with that.

## EN EL CENTRO MUSICAL

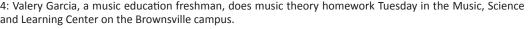




- 1: Alejandro Garcia, a music composition freshman, sings during a vocal methods class Wednesday in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.
- 2: Vincent Fierro, a piano education freshman, practices "Fantasia No. 3 in D Minor" by Wolfgang Mozart for juries April 21 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.
- 3: Salomon Green, a piano education senior, practices a "Sonata in F Major" by Beethoven for juries April 21 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.







5: Claudia Quintana, a music education freshman, practices movement I of "Sonata for Oboe and Piano" by Paul Hindemith for juries April 21 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.

6: Gael Gonzales (from left), Eric Robledopena and Jacob Leal, music education sophomores, stay attentive in a music theory lecture Tuesday in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.





## UN FUTURO FLUIDO

UTRGV celebra la ceremonia de Becarios B3

> DANIEL AGUILAR THE RIDER

Algunos creen que obtener una educación superior en español en los Estados Unidos, un país en el que domina el inglés, no es posible.

José Dávila-Montes, decano de la Facultad de Artes Liberales y profesor de traducción e interpretación de español, dijo que era "solo un sueño" hace 10 años y espera ver a los estudiantes "algún día completar títulos completos en español si así lo decidor"

Para fomentar estos esfuerzos, el departamento de integración bilingüe de UTRGV honró la excelencia durante la ceremonia anual de becarios B3 el miércoles en el PlainsCapital Bank Theater del campus de Edinburg.

"Esta ceremonia es una celebración del bilingüismo de nuestros estudiantes y de cómo lo han utilizado como una fuerza para conectarse con sus comunidades, familias y cultura", dijo Joy Esquierdo, vicerrectora de la Oficina de Integración Bilingüe. "Se trata de ver su idioma no como una barrera, sino como un puente".

Esquierdo dijo que el programa ayuda a los estudiantes a sentirse vistos y escuchados en el campus y los empodera a tener éxito académicamente y personalmente.

"Creo que una de las cosas más importantes que hemos visto en nuestros estudiantes es su sentido de pertenencia", dijo. "Se sienten más conectados con sus clases y títulos".

La vicerrectora añadió que el programa crea lazos entre la cultura y los estudios, lo que puede traer efectos positivos a la comunidad. "El hecho de que los estudiantes tengan la oportunidad de tomar clases en español, aporta a su cultura", dijo Esquierdo. "Creo que eso en sí mismo es sorprendente para nuestros estudiantes y la comunidad porque tienen una manera de intelectualizar sus experiencias personales".

Dávila-Montes dijo que la ceremonia muestra lo lejos que UTRGV ha llegado como una institución bilingüe.

"Ahora tenemos una universidad bilingüe donde los estudiantes pueden estudiar sus disciplinas en el idioma que elijan", dijo.

El decano enfatizó los beneficios culturales de la educación bilingüe y cómo brinda a los estudiantes una visión del mundo más amplia y los prepara para convertirse en profesionales más competitivos.

"Para nuestra región, esto no sólo es importante-es esencial", dijo Dávila-Montes. "El idioma y la cultura van de la mano y nuestros estudiantes merecen aprender de una manera que refleje quiénes son".

Yuritzy Charles Alejos, una estudiante de último año de filosofía, recibió el sello académico B3 y describió el reconocimiento como un momento personal y poderoso.

"Es impactante, en un buen sentido", dijo Charles Alejos. "Nunca pensé que sería reconocida por algo como mi cultura, por haber crecido entre dos mundos. Pero se siente asombroso volver a conectarme con mis raíces".

Le dio crédito al programa B3 por ayudarla a crecer tanto académicamente como profesionalmente, ya que le ofreció una comprensión más profunda de su herencia y una base más sólida para su futuro.

"Acéptalo, sin importar tu nivel", dijo Charles Alejos, alentando a los estudiantes a aprovechar una educación bilingüe. "Enriquecerá tu vida a largo plazo".



Jose Rodriguez/FOTOS RIDER

José Dávila-Montes, decano de la facultad de Artes Liberales y profesor de traducción e interpretación de español, da la bienvenida a los becarios B3 durante la ceremonia anual de integración bilingüe el miércoles en el PlainsCapital Bank Theater del campus de Edinburg.



Se muestra la Oficina de Integración Bilingüe de UTRGV durante la ceremonia anual de becarios B3 el miércoles en el PlainsCapital Bank Theater del campus de Edinburg.

## UTRGV impulsa la expansión de IA

Compra de supercomputadoras prepara expansión de IA

> ETHAN MALDONADO THE RIDER

Con la compra de dos nuevas supercomputadoras de Lambda Station y un número creciente de laboratorios de investigaciones, UTRGV está preparándose para una expansión hacia la inteligencia artificial.

Bajo el programa ExpandAI, el cual busca ampliar la participación en la investigación de IA, educación y desarrollo de trabajos, la universidad fue premiada con una beca de 2.8 millones de dólares de la Fundación Nacional de la Ciencia, según el UTRGV Newsroom en un comunicado de prensa del 21 de marzo.

Constantine Tarawneh, un profesor de ingeniería mecánica, dijo que es esencial para permanecer competitivo en la educación de ciencia e ingeniería.

"Acabamos de comprar dos supercomputadoras de Lambda Station", dijo Tarawneh. "Cada una cuesta \$30,000. Sin la beca, no las habríamos podido conseguir".

También es el investigador principal y director del Centro CREST de la Fundación Nacional de la Ciencia y del proyecto de Investigación en Inteligencia Artificial para la Innovación en Entornos Inteligentes.

supercomputadoras ya está impulsando la investigación en Sistemas de Robots Autónomos Múltiples (MARS, por sus siglas en inglés) en el Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building en el campus

de Edinburg, donde los estudiantes están ejecutando algoritmos que, de otro modo, tardarían mucho más en procesarse, según el profesor.

"La prioridad será para las personas que están dentro de la beca, pero cualquier otra persona puede usarla", dijo Tarawneh. "Así que, cualquier capacidad que estemos construyendo, llegó para quedarse".

Él enfatizó el impacto a largo plazo de las supercomputadoras. "Incluso cuando termine la beca, esa capacidad seguirá aquí para otros estudiantes", dijo Tarawneh.

Añadió que, mientras los estudiantes de doctorado completen su investigación, los estudiantes de maestría y licenciatura que ingresan podrán asumir esos roles, ya que la expansión no se

"Realmente no se puede hacer investigación en [ciencias, tecnología, ingeniería y matemáticas] sin que la IA forme parte de ello".

-- Profesor Constantine Tarawneh

trata solo de tecnología, sino también de preparación.

"La inteligencia artificial prácticamente ya está en todo", dijo Tarawneh. "Realmente no se puede hacer investigación en [ciencias, tecnología, ingeniería y matemáticas] sin que la IA forme parte de ello".

Citó ejemplos del propio trabajo de la universidad, incluyendo sensores que recopilan terabytes de datos de vagones de ferrocarril

de vagones de ferrocarril. "Es muy difícil que un algoritmo simple identifique tendencias", explicó Tarawneh. "La IA es la siguiente etapa en la evolución de esta investigación".

Yumiko Balotro, una estudiante de último año de ciencias de la computación, dijo que no ha tomado cursos específicos de IA, pero ha sido testigo del creciente interés y

experiencia en el campus.

"Hay muchas personas muy involucradas en la IA aquí", dijo Balotro. "Y suelen dar conferencias o charlas, así que, aunque no esté en los cursos, está presente".

Dijo que cree que esta expansión ayudará a poner a UTRGV en el mapa.

"Somos una institución más pequeña que la gente podría pasar por alto, pero creo que tenemos mucho talento", dijo Balotro. "Los recursos obtenidos a través de este tipo de beca nos dan una ventaja competitiva".

Diana Diaz, una estudiante de último año de ciencias de la computación, dijo que, a medida que la IA continúa creciendo, será una gran herramienta para "usar cuando necesitemos entender algo de una manera diferente".

"La IA ha ayudado a los estudiantes a comprender temas con los que tienen dificultades", dijo Diaz. "Un estudiante podría querer un enfoque distinto para explicar un tema, y la IA puede ayudarle a explicarlo y procesarlo de diversas maneras".

Tarawneh dijo que el salto hacia la IA también se trata de posicionar a UTRGV entre las instituciones de investigación reconocidas a nivel nacional.

"¿Cómo vas a atraer a profesores si los estudiantes no tienen la capacidad?", dijo. "¿Cómo vas a atraer a profesores si no tienes las instalaciones?"

Tarawneh dijo que cree que este cambio llega en el momento justo.

"Los estudiantes quieren hacer lo que está de moda", dijo, comparando la IA actual con olas anteriores como la nanotecnología y los vehículos aéreos no tripulados. "Si no sigues el ritmo de las tendencias, eventualmente no vas a poder reclutar a los estudiantes. Si no ofreces IA, ellos se irán a Georgia Tech, MIT, UT Austin o A&M".

--Traducido por Daniel Aguilar

April 28, 2025 THE RIDER







