



UTRGV'S HISTORIC WIN

JOSE RODRIGUEZ/THE RIDER PHOTOS



LAWSUIT COULD AFFECT UTRGV GRANTS

SOFIA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

On Aug. 22, the Department of Justice under President Donald Trump's administration announced it will support the lawsuit against the Developing Hispanic Serving Institution program (DHSI), claiming it is unconstitutional.

The DHSI is established to "provide grants to assist Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students," according to Title V of the Higher Education Act.

Mark Kaswan, a professor of political science at UTRGV, said the program is an "attempt to address a lack of

investment by the state, by the federal government."

"It's also a way of addressing low enrollment rates by people from the Hispanic community," Kaswan said.

The decision of not defending HSI arises from a June 11 lawsuit, *The State of Tennessee and Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. U.S. Department of Education* that claims the program has "discriminatory criteria" and "does not pursue the general welfare."

The program provides approximately \$350 million annually to colleges and universities where at least 25% of undergraduate students identify as Hispanic.

The grants can be used for scientific or lab equipment, construction

or renovation of facilities, faculty, purchase of educational materials, tutoring or counseling programs, funds and administrative management, endowment funds, distance learning, teacher education and student support services.

In Fall 2024, UTRGV had an enrollment profile of 91% Hispanic, making it eligible for HSI funds, according to a UTRGV enrollment profile.

Kaswan said a short-term impact is that "universities like UTRGV could have a significant cut in their funding."

"Funding for scholarships, funding for student aid might disappear," he said. "It could be a significant hit to UTRGV."

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities posted a statement on Aug. 25 to its website.

"Ending HSI program grants supporting institutions would cut off vital resources, not only for HSIs but for other programs that serve a large proportion of first-generation, low-income, and other historically underrepresented college students," said in the statement David Mendez, the HACU Interim Chief Executive Officer.

The statement also mentions that HACU does not advocate for "preferential treatment but rather equitable funding" and there are over 600 Hispanic-Serving Institutions that educate over 5.6 million students and "ensure our nation's future success."

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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.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today

DELTA ZETA GENERAL MEETING
The Delta Zeta will host a **general meeting** from 6 to 10 p.m. in the Bronc Room on the Edinburg campus.

UTRGV: MY HSI Bilingual Integration will host the UTRGV: My HSI Presented by Raquel Perez at noon in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can learn about Perez's journey from **migrant farmworker to higher education.**

BOXING
University Recreation will host a **boxing class** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday
THE FALL CAREER SOCIAL
The Career Center will host **The Fall Career Social** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the UC Circle in front of the Dining Hall on the

Edinburg campus and at the same time Thursday in the Interdisciplinary Academic Building on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can explore tools to **help boost their career, gain on-campus experience and prepare for the future.**

INTERNATIONAL MEET & GREET
The International Student Services will host an **International Meet and Greet Flag Parade** at 11:15 a.m. on the Main Building courtyard on the Brownsville campus and the same time Wednesday at the Performing Arts Complex lawn on the Edinburg campus.

PICNIC WITH THE PRESIDENT
The Office of the President will host **Picnic with the President** from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Wednesday in the University Ballroom

on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can get **free hamburgers and drinks** to celebrate UTRGV's **10th anniversary** with **Guy Bailey.**

Wednesday
ENACTUS
Enactus will host a **general meeting** from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship Room 121 on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can enjoy **free food.**

Thursday
9/11 COMMEMORATIVE EVENT
University Recreation will host a **9/11 commemorative walk** from 7 to 9 a.m. in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus and at the same time at the flagpole near the Student Services Building on the Edinburg campus. The event is **free** and open to everyone.

IMA MEETING

The Association of **Accountants and Financial Professionals in Business** will host a **general meeting** with a **guest speaker** from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Math and General Classrooms Building Room 2.416 on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can enjoy **free food.**

LATE NIGHT
University Recreation will host **Late Nite at the Rec** from 9 p.m. to midnight in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus. **Students** can **explore** everything the University Recreation has to offer.

Friday
IEEE-ESB MEETING
The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers will host a **general meeting** from 4 to 6 p.m. in Engineering Building Room 1.268 on the Edinburg campus.
--Compiled by Mariah Escobar.



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Aug. 25 and 31.

Aug. 25
10:48 p.m.: A mother requested a welfare check on her daughter living in the Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus. After investigation the officer located the student, who then contacted her mother.

Aug. 26
1:21 p.m.: A student was grabbed on her shoulders by an unknown man during a conversation while sitting on a bench at the Student Academic Center building on the Edinburg campus. She said the touch was unwanted and made her feel uncomfortable. The case is under investigation.

5:17 p.m.: An officer responded to a Campus Shield tip of a man making female students uncomfortable during orientation in the Liberal Arts Building North on the Edinburg campus. The man was located and identified as a student. Further investigation revealed he may have been involved in

an earlier incident reported the same day.

Aug. 27
8:53 a.m.: An officer responded to a report of a smell of narcotics at the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus. The area was checked, but the source of the smell was not found.

11:20 a.m.: An officer was dispatched regarding a student experiencing seizures in the Performing Arts Complex A Building on the Edinburg campus. Emergency Medical Services responded, and the student was transported to a hospital for further medical care.

11:29 a.m.: An employee reported nearly being struck by a vehicle while walking in Lot E-19 on the Edinburg campus. The officer contacted the vehicle driver and advised him about the importance of safe driving.

2:23 p.m.: An officer responded regarding a nude man in Lot B-4 on the Brownsville campus. The man who had an active criminal trespass warning, was arrested

and taken to the Brownsville Police Department. The victim declined to file charges.

6:01 p.m.: A student dislocated her shoulder while working out in the Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus. Emergency Medical Services were called out, and the student was transported to a hospital for further medical care.

Aug. 28
12:11 p.m.: A student reported a fanny pack with a wallet and headphones was stolen two weeks ago from the Student Academic Center Building on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

2:10 p.m.: An employee reported backing into a parked vehicle causing minor damage in Lot B-2 on the Brownsville campus. No injuries were reported, and the vehicle's owner was contacted.

Aug. 30
3:50 p.m.: An officer was dispatched regarding a golf cart that struck Gate 3 of the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium. No injuries were

reported.

7:31 p.m.: A woman reported a man threw a beer can, hitting her and her teenage brother at the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium. The man was found intoxicated and arrested for public intoxication and assault by contact and taken to the Edinburg Police Department for booking.

8:10 p.m.: Several employees reported seeing an intoxicated adult man in the tailgating area of the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium. An officer confirmed the man was intoxicated and posed a danger to himself and others. He was arrested and taken to the Edinburg Police Department for booking. During transport, he resisted and was charged with an additional offense.

Aug. 31
9:12 a.m.: A student reported his cooler was stolen after he left it on the ground while going into a friend's apartment in Lot E-38 on the Edinburg campus.
--Complied by Dayra Gonzalez

wacky web poll

Are You excited for UTRGV's inaugural football season?

No 91.1%

Yes 9.9%

Do You feel comfortable reaching out to Your professors when You have questions or concerns?!

scan to answer!

WALKING A STEP AT A TIME

NARDA SERNA
COPY EDITOR

The UTRGV School of Podiatric Medicine improved its building through a two-phase addition and renovation project, completed in August in the Clinical Education Building on the Harlingen campus.

Phase one renovated the first floor and introduced key additions, such as new food services, an expanded student lounge, a student gym and renovated offices.

Phase two renovated the second floor and introduced major developments, such as new microbiology and anatomy labs and a classroom expansion, according to the SOPM website.

Ian Salazar, school administrator for the School of Podiatric Medicine, said the renovations were to improve the student learning experience and well-being.

Phase one of the renovations began in late November 2024 and wrapped up by the end of December.

“The biggest goals were to improve the student experience, especially with the lounge ... to also provide better food options ... and we also had the benefit of getting more office spaces,” Salazar said. “So, we can move our student affairs team down to that first floor ... to be closer to the students.”

He said the only challenge was it had to be done quickly.

“A lot of activity all at once ... but it was a good challenge to have,” Salazar said. “... There wasn’t anything overwhelming or difficult about the project for us.”

Amalia Hinojosa, program coordinator for the School of Podiatric Medicine, said she felt excitement for the renovations.

“The knowledge of expanding and making ... more space available for SOPM was a very positive impact for us,” Hinojosa said.

Phase two of the renovations began in February and wrapped up August.

Salazar said phase two was a much bigger project, and it was a complete redesign of the space.

“The second floor here in our building has historically always been office spaces,” he said. “[The contractors] took office space and completely demolished it down to the floor and built two brand new labs. They also redesigned a classroom to expand it significantly and be able to hold more students and did a huge audiovisual upgrade to it.”

The school administrator said a larger project and heavy construction comes with challenges.

“Scheduling around student exams and courses ... and coordinating a

functioning school with a heavy duty construction environment, it’s been quite a road,” Salazar said.

He said the renovations have had an immediate impact.

“[The students] have to look at X-rays as part of their education and this fancy LED screen has incredible color and clarity,” Salazar said.

Hinojosa said the most noticeable change to the faculty is that every member has a private office.

Simon Barker, a doctoral podiatric medicine student, said it is a better environment to be around.

“It just lets you have more time because you don’t have to travel to go to the gym or drive to go get food,” Baker said. “We can be here studying late at night, and we can eat food from the [market].”

Salazar added the renovation is “pivotal” in creating the next generation of “great podiatrists.”



NARDA SERNA/THE RIDER

Shown is the new anatomy lab in the Clinical Education Building on the Harlingen campus. “The second floor here in our building has historically always been office spaces,” said Ian Salazar, school administrator for the School of Podiatric Medicine. “[The contractors] took office space and completely demolished it down to the floor and built two brand new labs.”

CHECKMATE, GIRL!

UTRGV chess makes its next move toward historic women's championship

DAYRA GONZALEZ
THE RIDER

UTRGV’s award-winning chess program is preparing to compete in the first U.S. Collegiate Women’s Championship, marking a new chapter for women in college chess.

The team will first go through the Texas State Women’s Championship which will take place on Oct. 4 and 5.

Following the state tournament, if qualified, UTRGV will take part in the national championship, organized by the U.S. Chess Federation, that will take place on Nov. 22 and 23. This will allow women from across the country to compete at the college level for the first time.

“Women in chess have been underrepresented for a long time,” said Colt Smith-Muñoz, UTRGV Chess program manager. “Having a national

championship creates a space to show they can compete at the highest level.”

The announcement comes after a remarkable year for the university. The program won the Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess Championship in January, swept the Southwest Collegiate Championship in March and became co-champions of the President’s Cup in April. Those results led to the UTRGV recognition as Chess College of the Year by both the U.S. Chess Federation and the Texas Chess Association in August.

“It’s not enough to just be a good player,” coach Bartek Maciejka said. “You really need to be focused, prepared and give everything you have in a competition. That’s what makes our team so strong and successful.”

This fall, the team will also continue preparations for the Texas Collegiate Superfinals set for Oct. 25 and 26, followed by the Pan-American Championship on Jan. 2, 2026. If successful, UTRGV will return to the President’s Cup next spring.

Apart from official tournaments, the chess program also plans to host a blindfold exhibition match Oct. 14 at the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus during the Carnival of Madness event to showcase the skills of its players.

For Smith-Muñoz and Maciejka, the challenge ahead is to keep UTRGV at the top of collegiate chess while inspiring excellence and also, showing what women can achieve in the sport.

“Our students are extremely dedicated,” Smith-Muñoz said. “That discipline is what keeps us at the top, and now we want to carry the same standard into the women’s championship.”



THE RIDER/FILE PHOTO

Shown are Ana Shamatava (from left), Maili-Jade Ouellet and Maria Malicka on Nov. 8, 2021. The UTRGV Mathematics and Science Academy Chess Team won the 2021 Texas Grade Championships in the classification for 12th-graders, which took place Oct. 30 and 31, 2021, in Houston.

CREATIVE COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER

EMMA CASTILLO
THE RIDER

Gallery, a student-run literary and art magazine, celebrated its 44th volume with a launch party that took place Aug. 29 in the Performing Arts Center lobby on the Edinburg campus.

The event opened with remarks from Britt Haraway, associate professor of Creative Writing and faculty adviser for Gallery magazine.

Haraway emphasized the importance of having a space for students from different disciplines to share their work with one another.

“We want the students to come together,” he said. “They’re all doing interesting art projects.”

After the introduction, students whose work appeared in the magazine were invited to the stage for an open mic session, where they reflected on their creative processes and inspirations.

Editor-in-chief Victoria Montes said this year’s issue was designed to highlight the diversity of student voices across UTRGV rather than follow a single theme, a deviation from previous issues.

“We made an effort to put up posters in the visual arts buildings and give some posters to the professors, so that way they can get their students to submit,” Montes said. “And as a result, we got a huge variety of submissions from majors as diverse as studio arts, ceramics, graphic design and photography.”

For many contributors, the launch marked the first time they saw their work in print, while others were returning artists from past issues.

Anuschka Mai, a history graduate student, said contributing to Gallery was a liberating experience.

“Like so many other people, I wasn’t sure if it was something I could do, but I’m super glad I was able to,” Mai said. “But, being able to really express something that’s a true reflection of what I actually am, is a nice change of pace.”

Esmer Barrera, Rocio Ariel Ayala and Rafael Saenz, among other featured artists, said the launch party was a great place to build connections with peers and find a sense of community among fellow creatives.

“It’s all about community,” Saenz said. “It’s not only helping other people know us and see what we’re creating, but it’s a way of us getting to know each other. I want to follow up with [the other artists] and see what else they make in the future.”

Haraway said he hopes Gallery will continue to grow and reach more students each year.



DRAYA RIOS/THE RIDER

Britt Haraway, Gallery magazine faculty adviser and an assistant professor of creative writing, gives the opening statement at the launch party and introduces works presented by the students. The Creative Writing Department organizes the magazine every year, gathers submissions and works on publishing it.

COLUMN OF THE WEEK

THE SUMMER OF TEAM CONRAD



NARDA SERNA
COPY EDITOR

The first time I read “The Summer I Turned Pretty,” I wanted to be Belly. I wanted two hot brothers (only Conrad, really) fighting for me. Let me state that I was in the seventh grade, 14 years old. For anyone unfamiliar with the

show, let me explain it. Belly spends every summer at a beach house with two lifelong friends who are brothers, Conrad and Jeremiah and, of course, sparks start to fly with both brothers the summer Belly turns “pretty.” Although, she has always had a crush on Conrad.

The show can be cringey and a little silly at times but, I don’t know, maybe my 14-year-old self is the one loving it. I think the reason the show became so popular is due to its soundtrack. Every season is full of bangers. I do not know what kind of budget they have for the music, but whoever is in charge is doing an exceptional job.

Ever since I read the books and, later, from the start of the show, I have always been team Conrad and will always be. Conrad, in the beginning, is guarded, moody and pushes people away because he doesn’t know how to deal with all of his pain and knowing that his mother could die at any

moment due to cancer. But as the seasons go on, we see him slowly open up. He goes to therapy and learns how to communicate and express his feelings.

“... I have always been team Conrad and will always be.”

The reason I hate Jeremiah, and why I don’t feel even the slightest bit sorry for him, is that there is no character development for him. He is manipulative from the beginning. He plays the “nice guy” card to win people over but, deep down, he knows exactly how to twist situations in his favor. He tries to make Belly feel guilty for not choosing him and acts like Conrad

is the bad guy. Honestly, it seems as if Jeremiah doesn’t even see Belly as a person. He treats her as a prize he needs to win, just to prove he can beat Conrad. He only started liking Belly because he saw that Conrad was paying attention to her, and he wanted in too. He cheated on Belly and tried to erase it by asking her to marry him. Yes, marry him.

As for Belly, I don’t exactly love her either. Honestly, I feel pretty indifferent toward her most of the time. She is messy, indecisive and tends to play with both Jeremiah and Conrad’s emotions. At this point, I just want Conrad to be happy and, if that means he wants to be with Belly, so be it.

At the time I’m writing this, there are still two episodes left and, as a book reader, I’m nervous. The author said the ending of the show will be different from the books so, now, I’m curious how they will unfold.

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

HOUSE OF FASHION

MARIAJOSE GARZA
THE RIDER

House of Fashion is a student organization that cultivates creativity and self-expression in the university, according to a club official. Every semester it holds a fashion show on both the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses.

Aside from the fashion show, the club has three photoshoots throughout the semester.

“We have runway meetings on how to walk, we have designer meetings, we have makeup meetings,” said Jeanette Alba, Brownsville director for House of Fashion.

Themes for the fashion shows are chosen by vote. Last semester’s theme was otherworldly creatures.

“This semester, our theme, which I can’t say too much yet, it’s going to be really lively,” Alba said.

The photoshoots have different

themes than the shows. Some past themes have been cosmic beings, angels and sirens.

Alba has been in House of Fashion since her freshman year, originally as a model.

“So, I got a text from an old friend, and one of the models had dropped out so she needed someone,” she said. “She asked me if I could fill her spot and I did. I walked the show and it was my first time doing anything like that.”

Alba said some of the club’s goals this semester are to keep creating a safe space for self-expression, fundraising events and for more students to join.

“For model positions, we have a limit of 40 models,” she said. “Honestly, we are in need of photographers [and] makeup artists.”

For meeting information, visit the House of Fashion Instagram @utrghof.

“Come and join the club [and] see what we’re all about,” Alba said. “You won’t regret it.”



PHOTO COURTESY JEANETTE ALBA

Jeanette Alba, the Brownsville director of House of Fashion, models in a photoshoot Nov. 26 2024 at The Comic Cave in Sunrise Mall in Brownsville.

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VALLEY SPOTLIGHT

Marifer Seguy: 'El trabajo es mi pasión, desde los 16'

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

Marifer Seguy, después de haber estudiado moda en Los Ángeles, California, vuelve al Valle del Río Grande como una empresaria.

Seguy creció en el Valle y estudió en la Universidad de Texas en Brownsville la primera parte de su carrera, después compartió que se dio cuenta que su pasión era la moda.

Atendió al Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising en Los Ángeles, pero regresó con ideas diferentes para negocios.

Seguy dijo que, cuando era pequeña, sus papás siempre la educaron mediante el trabajo.

“Ahí adopté esa manera tan apasionada de trabajar”, dijo. “Se los agradezco demasiado a

mis papás porque me hicieron la persona que soy ahora”.

Su primer negocio lo tuvo a los 16 años en Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México.

Dijo que su pasión es la cocina desde pequeña y por eso decidió abrir un restaurante, Matilda, entre otros negocios.

A pesar de que era una pasión, compartió que Matilda no estaba en sus planes.

“Matilda fue un negocio que salió de la nada, yo estaba buscando otro tipo de negocios”, Seguy dijo.

Pero decidió tomar la oportunidad de cumplir esto.

“Le digo a todos mis conocidos y amigos es de que, sí está aquí, tómalo”, dijo. “Tómalo y ya verás en el camino que pasa, no pierdes nada aceptando ni echándole ganas”.

Seguy dijo que lo que más

los hace diferentes de otros restaurantes es su menú de fusión italiana y mexicana.

“Pensé, ‘Yo no quiero ser igual a nadie más, quiero algo diferente’”, dijo.

También, Seguy compartió que lo que más disfruta de ser empresaria es ver a sus clientes satisfechos y sentirse ocupada.

“Siempre tengo que mantenerme ocupada”, dijo. “Entonces, eso es lo que me encanta. Me encanta ese rush en mi vida”.

Añadió que el mejor consejo que le puede dar a otros es que la educación es importante.

“Es muy importante tener esa logística”, Seguy dijo. “No le tengas miedo a nada. Cuando es para ti, lo principal es aventarte y el dinero va y viene. A veces se gana, a veces se pierde”.



VALERIA TOKUN HAGA/
THE RIDER PHOTOS

Matilda, es un restaurante donde las cocinas mexicana e italiana se mezclan. Está ubicado en 2325 Central Blvd. en Brownsville.



DEMANDA PODRÍA AFECTAR FONDOS FEDERALES DE UTRGV

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

El 22 de agosto, el Departamento de Justicia bajo la administración de Donald Trump anunció que apoyaría la demanda contra el Programa para el Desarrollo de Instituciones al Servicio de los Hispanos (DHSI, por sus siglas en inglés), reclamando que es inconstitucional.

El DHSI fue establecido para “proveer fondos para asistir a Instituciones al Servicio de los Hispanos (HSI, por sus siglas en inglés) para expandir oportunidades educacionales, y mejorar el logro de estudiantes hispanos”, de acuerdo al Título V de la Ley de Educación Superior.

Mark Kaswan, profesor de ciencias políticas de UTRGV, dijo que este programa era un “intento de abordar la falta de inversión por parte del estado y del gobierno federal”.

“También es una forma de abordar el bajo número de la comunidad hispana en universidades”, Kaswan dijo.

La decisión de no defender a HSI surgió de la demanda del 11 de junio del Estado de Tennessee y Students For Fair Admissions, Inc. v. el Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos, la cual reclama que el programa tiene “criterios discriminatorios” y “no persigue el bienestar común”.

El programa HSI proporciona aproximadamente \$350 millones anualmente a instituciones de educación superior donde al menos 25% de los estudiantes de licenciaturas se identifican como hispanos.

Los fondos otorgados pueden ser utilizados para equipo de laboratorio, construcción o renovación de instalaciones, profesores, compra de materiales, programas de tutoría o asesoramiento, fondos y gestión administrativa, educación a distancia, formación de profesores y servicios de apoyo a los estudiantes.

En otoño del 2024, UTRGV tuvo un perfil de inscripción de 91% de hispanos, haciéndolo elegible para recibir ayuda de HSI, de acuerdo a un perfil de inscripción hecho por UTRGV.

Kaswan dijo que un impacto a corto plazo es que “universidades como UTRGV podrían tener un corte significativo de fondos”.

“Financiamiento para becas, hay una probabilidad de que el financiamiento para ayudar a estudiantes pueda desaparecer”, dijo. “Puede ser un golpe significativo para UTRGV”.

La Asociación Hispana de Colegios y Universidades publicó una declaración oficial en su sitio web el 25 de agosto.

“Eliminar los fondos de HSI cortaría recursos vitales, no solo para Instituciones al Servicio de los Hispanos, sino también para otros programas que tienen una mayoría de estudiantes que son primera generación, de bajos ingresos y que son históricamente menos representados”, dijo en la declaración David

“Puede ser un golpe significativo para UTRGV”.

--Mark Kaswan, profesor de ciencias políticas

Mendez, director ejecutivo interino de la Asociación Hispana de Colegios y Universidades (HACU, por sus siglas en inglés).

La declaración también menciona que HACU no aboga por un “trato preferencial, sino más bien una financiación equitativa” y que más de 600 instituciones HSI educan a más de 5.6 millones de estudiantes y “garantizan el futuro éxito de nuestra nación”.



Estudiantes caminan alrededor del campus el martes, primer día de clases, afuera del Main Building en el campus de Brownsville.



KARLA HERNANDEZ/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Se muestra la fuente frente al Main Building del campus de Brownsville.



Estudiantes caminan alrededor del campus el martes, primer día de clases, afuera del Main Building en el campus de Brownsville

SUDOKU

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A UNION OF THE EARTH AND STARS

EDUARDO ESCAMILLA
A&E EDITOR

Artist Mark Chen merges the celestial and the terrestrial, projecting images of distant galaxies and nebulae onto rugged landscapes in his exhibition, "Pilgrimage of Light," transforming earthly geology into a canvas for the cosmos.

The exhibition opens Thursday and will run until Jan. 25, 2026 at the International Museum of Art and Science in McAllen.

Chen is a multimedia artist known for his work that combines photography, science and technology to explore the intersection of art and scientific concepts.

He said his fascination with the stars began with a childhood memory in Taiwan, his home country.

In an interview with The Rider, he shared a story of his mother allowing him to select any book from a bookstore, and he gravitated toward one about space, kindling a lifelong curiosity and passion for astronomy.

However, as an adult, he could not formally study the field because it was not offered in Taiwan.

Now, through his art, Chen researches and creates work that bridges the gap between art and science. He joked that the best part is that his scientific work does not need to be peer-reviewed.

His "Pilgrimage of Light" was born from what he called a "failure" to bring stars into a gallery setting.

"[Stars] are beautiful," Chen said, "but that's not the work of any artist. It's the universe's."

He added he found inspiration from the work of American photographer John Pfahl, who manipulated landscapes in his work.

This is when he discovered his reason to unite the cosmos and Earth by projecting galactic images onto natural landscapes.

The fusion of imagery is philosophically grounded in two concepts: deep time, the geologic term for the age of the Earth; and lookback time, the astronomical term for the light-year distance of celestial objects.



JOSE RODRIGUEZ/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Artist Mark Chen holds up his work "Half Dome and Star Cluster Liller 1" inside the central gallery of the International Museum of Art & Science, located at 1900 W. Nolana Ave. in McAllen.

Chen said he found profound connections when these two timescales align, like how the age of the stalactites in Carlsbad Caverns happen to be the same as the distance from the Andromeda Galaxy in light years.

To preserve the conceptual purity of the project as a physical journey, the artist deterred from using digital manipulation, such as Photoshop, and invented his own projector.

The device as he described is a "reverse camera," which was modified to change the direction of the light and, through slides, projects light from a flash through the lens.

Chen described his invention as a very powerful projector, "not for watching."

"Our eyes don't appreciate it; it's too quick," he said. "But it's perfect for photographing."

The Rider asked the artist if there was a specific trip that felt like a true pilgrimage.

Chen replied his trip to the Bisti Badlands was a uniquely challenging and physical journey. The location had no marked trails, making navigation difficult and requiring him to utilize the app All Trails, keeping his eyes on it at all times.

Surprisingly, he said he found that hiking in the dark was easier since there were no visual landmarks to confuse him.

Chen added he also found inspiration in the darkness, which is partially

why his series is called "Pilgrimage of Light," "bringing light into [the] dark."

"[When I] looked at the stars, sometimes I had this very strange fear, [an] inexplicable kind of fear," he said. "That, I think, is a fear of smallness."

Now, Chen said his art has allowed him to overcome that fear, and he feels "at home" in these remote, dark locations and, when he projects the celestial images onto the landscapes, he experiences a sense of place in the universe.

"This is my definition of identity art," he said.

The opening reception of "Pilgrimage of Light," will take place at 5 p.m. Sept. 18 in the IMAS, located at 1900 W. Nolana Ave. in McAllen.



Shown are some of Mark Chen's works laid out in preparation for display at the International Museum of Art & Science. Chen travels to remote areas in the United States with a projector of his own design to create his projections onto American landscapes.



Marcelo Alejandro Ramirez Garcia-Rojas (left), the International Museum of Art & Science curator, and Joe Lopez, exhibits technician, hang up one of Mark Chen's panoramic photos.

WOMEN'S SOCCER TAKING CHARGE

SPORTS COLUMN

SPORTS SAVED MY LIFE



ALI HALLOUM
THE RIDER

Editor's note: This opinion piece includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out 988 (National Suicide Helpline), 741741 (Crisis Text Line), or 866-488-7386 (Trevor Project).

Sports has always been something that I have watched since I was young because my father introduced me to them, and I was drawn to them. I really liked them. But the reason why I fell in love with them is that sports quite literally saved my life.

My freshman year of high school was not easy for me. It never is on anyone, but I struggled. The new environment, new people and a tougher-than-expected workload took its toll on me.

My grades slipped, I was isolated, and I felt so defeated and alone. It got to the point where I considered taking my own life. Those thoughts kept weighing on me, despite my efforts to fight them. But I made it through.

One thing that got me through this was sports, specifically when the Astros made a run to, and ultimately won, the 2017 World Series. It is a significant title for a number of reasons, not just because of what they did to uplift a city devastated by Hurricane Harvey, but because they gave me hope.

In this regard, I truly understood the beauty of sports and what it can do to uplift. Every win, every postseason round, they gave me a reason to cheer. Something to look forward to.

Mental health and athletics is something that has only recently gained traction. Many athletes have been more open about their struggles with mental health, and I applaud them for destigmatizing it.

Why do I choose to tell this story? Because September is Suicide Awareness Month.

I want anyone who reads this to know that you are not alone. If you are struggling, please reach out to someone for support, whether it's a friend, family member or a helpline. Someone cares.



PHOTOS COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Texans sophomore defender Paisley Mabra fights for the ball against Vaqueros sophomore midfielder Rubi Ortiz during the game versus Tarleton State University Aug. 14 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

DNAIELA CHAPA-REYES THE RIDER

Beginning the season with a bumpy start, the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team is looking to make a comeback with conference starting soon.

The Vaqueros (2-3) won Thursday's game against Texas A&M-San Antonio (0-3) 10-0.

The team had last fallen to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns (3-3) 0-2 on Aug. 28.

Acting head coach Audra Larson said she is happy with how defensively the team has been playing.

"The challenge for this group is going to be to make sure that we can finish the full 90 minutes," Larson said. "For us, I thought we had really good opportunities in that game. We did create chances to score; this team is more than capable of doing that."

She said they are going through growing pains as of now. However, it is a matter of building the relationships with the new and young players.

Redshirt sophomore goalkeeper Emilia Compian marked a total of three saves during the match and said the backline stood out and feels that they are strong.

"I think we can learn about playing with each other just a little bit more and getting the final result in the final third and just finishing those

themselves and their success and things will click in place.

Bailey was named Southland Conference Defensive Player of the Week on Aug. 26 after playing the full 90-minute match against Prairie View A&M University.

"We are very confident that we can definitely bring something to the Southland

"We have something bigger to play for this year,"

--Audra Larson, acting head coach

opportunities," Compian said.

She said she has strong communication with graduate defender Abbie Bailey.

"[The defenders] don't want the ball to get to me and, when it does ... I put myself on the line for them; it's a good dynamic," Compian said.

Compian said the coaches tell the players to keep believing in

Conference so just making sure we stick together and work together as a team, and I think we will go really far this year," Bailey said.

Junior midfielder Linnea Eld racked up three shots on goal against the Ragin' Cajuns but fell short.

"I would say that we are starting to create more and



Graduate midfielder Sam Maudsley plays against Rice University Aug. 17 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.



Junior goalkeeper Emilia Compian plays against Rice University Aug. 17 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

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Welcome WEEK

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PICNIC WITH *the* PRESIDENT



Complimentary hamburgers & drinks will be served.

BROWNSVILLE CAMPUS

PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Sal3n
Tuesday, September 9, 2025

EDINBURG CAMPUS

Ballroom
Wednesday, September 10, 2025



Free Food!

11:30 AM TO 1:30 PM



INTERNATIONAL MEET & GREET



BROWNSVILLE CAMPUS

Begins at BMAIN Courtyard & ends at BSTUN Patio
Tuesday, September 9, 2025

EDINBURG CAMPUS

Begins at EPAC Lawn & ends at Ballroom Lawn
Wednesday, September 10, 2025



11:00 AM

WELCOME WEEK WELCOME WEEK WELCOME WEEK

For more information or accommodations, email SESAEvents@utrgv.edu.

utrgv.edu/welcomeweek