

CONNECTING CULTURES



Student volunteers set down their flags around the Student Union during the International Meet & Greet Flag Parade Tuesday on the Brownsville campus.



Student volunteers line up to begin the International Meet & Greet Flag Parade Tuesday outside the Main Building on the Brownsville campus. The UTRGV Drill Team and Marching Band led the way.



The UTRGV Marching Band and Drill Team prepare for the International Meet & Greet Flag Parade Tuesday outside the Main Building on the Brownsville campus.

MARIAJOSE GARZA/THE RIDER PHOTOS

MYKEL DEL ANGEL/THE RIDER PHOTOS

'MORE OF A PERSON TO US'

University community lunches with the president

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

President Guy Bailey and other university officials served complementary burgers and drinks to students, faculty and staff for Picnic with the President.

The picnic took place Tuesday in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus and Wednesday in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

The event had an approximate attendance of 1,900 in Edinburg and 1,100 in Brownsville, according to Patrick Gonzales, vice president of University Marketing and Communications.

The annual UTRGV event occurs at the start of every fall semester where the university community can meet and talk to Bailey and his leadership team.

Gonzales said Bailey started Picnic with the President back when he was the chancellor of the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2007.

"He's really proud of the fact that he brought it to UTRGV," he said.

Before the picnic starts, International Student Services holds an International Meet and Greet where volunteer students and staff parade through campus with flags representing their countries, led by UTRGV's Marching Band and Drill Team.

Gonzales said Chartwells, the university food provider, is the one

who prepares the food.

"Grill the burgers, set up all the toppings, the buns, bake the cookies and they provide the chips," he said. "Really, the executive team that serves, that's really the easy part."

Among the dining services and administrative team serving the UTRGV community were Chasse Conque, senior vice president and director of Athletics, and Maggie Hinojosa, executive vice president for Strategic Initiatives and Student Affairs and deputy to the President.

Alize Alame, a biology sophomore, said she likes the event because it helps her "get out there" and believes it is good to have the president for events.

"It's a good thing because not a lot of people know what he really looks like," Alame said.

The Office of the President website also mentions it is important to organize more student events that are aimed to better the educational experience and a sense of belonging to the UTRGV community.

Hazzel Gomez, a communication studies junior, said she likes the event's openness.

"I prefer the events to be more encouraging for students to go to," Gomez said.

She said Bailey shaking everybody's hands leaves an impact on the students.

"We get to see him face-to-face, and he's more of a person to us than he is the president," Gomez said.



UTRGV President Guy Bailey speaks to students during Picnic with the President Wednesday in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.



Patrick Gonzales (left), vice president for University Marketing and Communications, and President Guy Bailey prepare to serve students lunch during Picnic with the President Wednesday in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

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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

GET INVOLVED FAIR
The **Center For Student Involvement** will host the **Fall 2025 Get Involved Fair** from noon to 2 p.m. in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Wednesday in the Main Building Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can meet **student organizations, get involved on campus** and **get free food.**

KICK OFF TO THE FINAL PAGE
The **Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority** will host their first recruitment event from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Student Union Palmetto Room on the Edinburg campus. **Free food** will be provided.

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

RGV GERMAN CLUB
The **RGV German Club**

will host a **club meeting** from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 1.204 on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can **discuss important topics about the club** and everyone is welcome to join.

Tuesday
ROOTED IN WELLNESS
The **Center for Student Involvement** will host **Rooted in Wellness** from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in the Bronc Room on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Thursday in Main Building Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can learn **healthy ways to care for themselves** in a cozy environment. **Free food** will be provided.

RUN CLUB MEETING PRACTICE
The **Vaquero Runners** will host **club running** from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and at the same time Thursday outside the Life and Health Science Building on the Brownsville

campus. Attendees can **enjoy a 20 minute run.**

Wednesday
BIBLE STUDY
The **Christians at RGV** will host a Bible study from noon to 1:45 p.m. in Life and Health Science Building Room 1.602 on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can **eat lunch** and **read** a chapter of the book of **Romans.**

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.

INTRO INTO CLIMBING
The **University of Recreation** will host **Intro to Climbing** from 6 to 8 p.m. at the University Recreation climbing wall on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can acquire **fundamental climbing skills.**

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PANEL
The **Student Health and**

Wellness will host a **Mental Health Awareness panel** presentation from noon to 1 p.m. in the Medical Education Building on the Edinburg campus. Students, faculty and staff can listen to the panel discuss **wellness, self-care strategies** and **available resources.**

Thursday
PSYCHOLOGY CLUB
The **Psychology Club** will host a **general meeting** with a **guest speaker** from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.112 on the Edinburg campus. **Free food** will be provided.

Friday
VIP IDEA LAB
The **Bilingual Integration** will host a **VIP Idea Lab Workshop for HSI Week/Hispanic Heritage Month** from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 1.219 on the Brownsville campus.
--Compiled by Mariah Escobar.



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 1 and 7.

Sept. 1
1:14 p.m.: A man reported items left at the tailgating area were taken without his consent while he left to watch the game in the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium. The case is under investigation.

4:52 p.m.: An employee said a UTRGV flag and pole attached to their vehicle were stolen during the football game at the Robert & Janet Vackar Stadium. The case is under investigation.

Sept. 2
9:52 a.m.: A student reported his bicycle was stolen Aug. 31 from the Casa Bella bicycle rack on the Brownsville campus. Camera footage revealed a person of interest. The case is under investigation.

10:44 a.m.: A student reported hitting a vehicle while backing out of a parking space in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. Damage was minor and no injuries were reported.

11:02 a.m.: An officer responded to a verbal dispute over a parking spot in Lot E-9 on the Edinburg campus. A student said she was saving the spot for another student while a man tried to park there. No crime occurred.

2 p.m.: A student reported seeing a man at the Student Union on the Edinburg campus who had been involved in a hit-and-run off campus earlier that morning. The student said the man left before police arrived. An Edinburg officer responded and continued the investigation.

Sept. 3
7:41 p.m.: An employee reported a box containing 65 pairs of gloves was stolen from the Vaquero Performance Center on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

Sept. 4
7:06 a.m.: An employee reported while using a weed trimmer, a projectile struck a UTRGV bus window and broke it in Lot E-3 on the Edinburg campus.

4:11 p.m.: A student reported being inappropriately touched by a man at a The Stomp on Lot E-8 on the Edinburg campus. The contact was unwanted, and the case is under investigation.

6:39 p.m.: An officer responded to a student who may have had a negative reaction to medication combined with alcohol in The Village apartments on the Edinburg campus. Emergency Medical Services transported the student to a hospital for further evaluation.

Sept. 5
12:19 p.m.: A student reported her scooter was stolen from the bike rack on the southwest side of the Dining Hall on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

Sept. 6
4:28 a.m.: An officer observed an adult man leaving with a bicycle through the security cameras in Casa Bella on the Brownsville campus. Due to previous bicycle thefts in the area, the officer approached him; the man dropped the bicycle and

ran but was quickly detained. He was charged with evading detention and theft and taken to Brownsville Police Department for booking.

9:22 p.m.: An officer responded to a report of a marijuana odor in a Casa Bella apartment on the Brownsville campus. Resident assistants checked the apartment; the resident was absent, but her boyfriend was present. No marijuana, odor or residue was found. The boyfriend was informed he could not remain in the apartment without the resident and left without incident.

Sept. 7
10:21 a.m.: An officer responded to a traffic collision in Lot E-35 on the Edinburg campus. A student reported hitting a concrete car stop while attempting to park, causing minor damage to both his vehicle and the car stop.

5:42 p.m.: An officer responded to a two-vehicle collision where one person reported an injury in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus.

--Compiled by Dayra Gonzalez

wacky web poll

Do You Feel Comfortable reaching out to Your professors ?

No
23.1%

Yes
76.9%

How would You react to a break up? Would You break down or stay strong and keep living life?

scan to answer!

'MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS'

SOPHIA CORTEZ
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Counseling Center offers free and confidential mental health services ranging from individual sessions to workshops, all of which ensure confidentiality and a secure location to discuss, reflect and seek help.

Case manager for the Counseling Center Diana Landero explained "the services are only available for UTRGV enrolled students, meaning that they have to be taking classes currently or have been continuously enrolled."

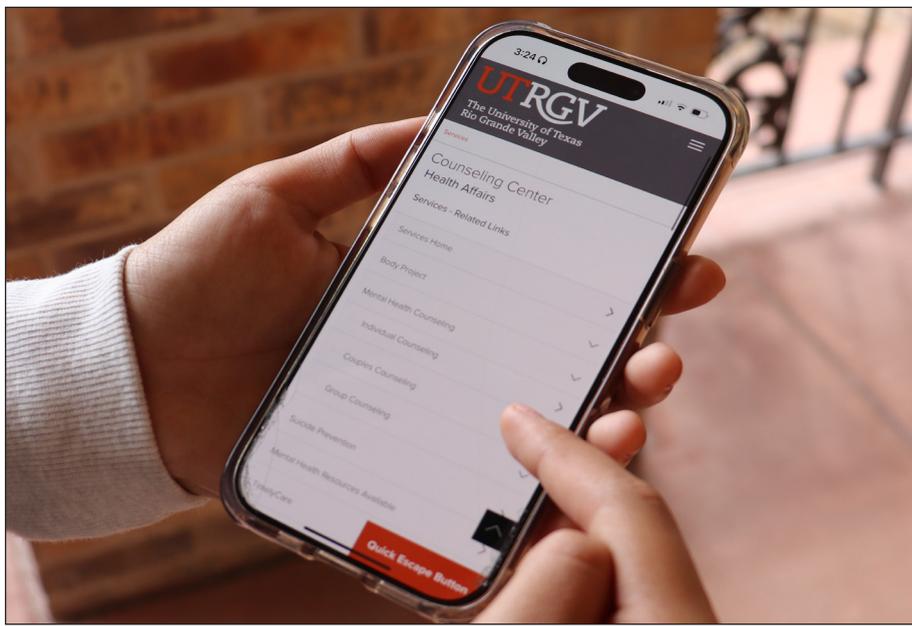
Landero said her role also includes connecting with students' needs and additional resources on campus and in the community.

"If the counselor does not have rapidly available information, they refer them to me and I help to follow up with the student, and everything is individual," she said.

The Counseling Center offers services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Student Union Room 2.10 on the Brownsville campus and in University Center Room 109 on the Edinburg campus.

According to the case manager, services are usually busy, and do not offer same-day appointments and, for these situations, they offer alternatives in times of distress.

"We have another option called



MARIAJOSE GARZA/THE RIDER

The Counseling Center offers services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Student Union Room 2.10 on the Brownsville campus and in University Center Room 109 on the Edinburg campus.

Timely Care and this is a platform, specifically for college students, and this is online therapy that the students can access for free," Landero said.

Christopher Albert, director for the Counseling Center, detailed the on-demand therapy available for students.

"It's also a peer-community option where students can communicate with other students across the nation in regards to wellness and mental health

matters; this also includes online content they can access," Albert said.

Students can also access Vaquero Crisis Lines available 24/7, a phone line to help students during an emotional crisis.

Leah Ellis, clinical therapist for the Counseling Center, told The Rider about what a typical therapy session looks like.

"We always start with a screening

session," Ellis said. "Those are about 20 to 30 minutes long. In that session, we do things like we explain confidentiality, so it's about the privacy of the student."

She said students are asked what their environment at the moment looks like, how are they sleeping, if they work, what the environment is like, and primarily ask them why they have decided to attend a counseling session.

Ellis said during individual sessions, which take 45 minutes, students can learn the resources available and what they can do to follow up with their mental health journey, such as group sessions, individual sessions or workshops.

"It's been studied groups can be just as an effective a form of treatment as the individual," she said. "It just depends on what the issue is. We want to match the student with what best meets their needs."

The clinical therapist encouraged students to continue with their counseling journey.

"[Students] didn't come for a while because they were nervous," Ellis said. "I mean, I would just say, students usually feel so much better after they actually come because they see that it's pretty comfortable."

For more information, visit the Counseling Center social media @utrgvcounselingcenter or its website.

PAINTING THE 956 ORANGE

MARIAH ESCOBAR
THE RIDER

The Spirit Program is ready to continue expanding and spreading Vaquero Spirit throughout the Rio Grande Valley while also making history this season, according to its coaches.

Isela Gomez, head coach of the Spirit Program, and Rudy Mata, program coordinator and cheer coach, spoke about what to expect this year.

"The Spirit Program overall encompasses four teams: the cheer team, the dance team, the drill team and the mascot team," Mata said. "We are pretty much everywhere."

The Rider asked Gomez what her goals for Spirit are.

"We're already doing it," she replied. "I mean we had goals before, but we're already doing it. Our goals were to get to football season and all three, four of our teams, because we include the mascot team, for all four teams to be part of this historic year, this season even just the first game."



MARIAJOSE GARZA/THE RIDER

Shown is the UTRGV Star Line Team.

The program is focusing on football more this year as it is the first season in university history.

"It is brand new for us," Mata said. "It is an entirely different game-day experience than what we've done before, so our main focus was to really hone in on that and start the traditions and get that going for the future."

During the first football game Aug. 30 against Sul Ross State University, the Drill Team debuted as the Vaqueros

Star Line.

"With the drill team, this is their first time performing, like, on the field," Mata said. "... They're not technically new but being on the field is new for them."

Gomez said another goal is to "keep growing," going from 26 to 30 members in a year and planning to recruit five more.

"We obviously want the drill team to be really big on the field," Mata said.

"The cheer team grew from 23 last year. Now, I have 33, and we're also working on that for the dance team."

Both Gomez and Mata said they are excited to compete in the NCAA College Nationals in April.

"That competition is a big deal, and that's something that I know that they have been wanting for years and, you know, once we got our feet wet last year with that competition, I think ... they're already in the headspace of, 'Let's do it. Let's go big or go home,'" Gomez said.

She added the team would not be where it is without Mata, the coaching staff and students.

"We're very lucky, and we're very fortunate," Gomez said.

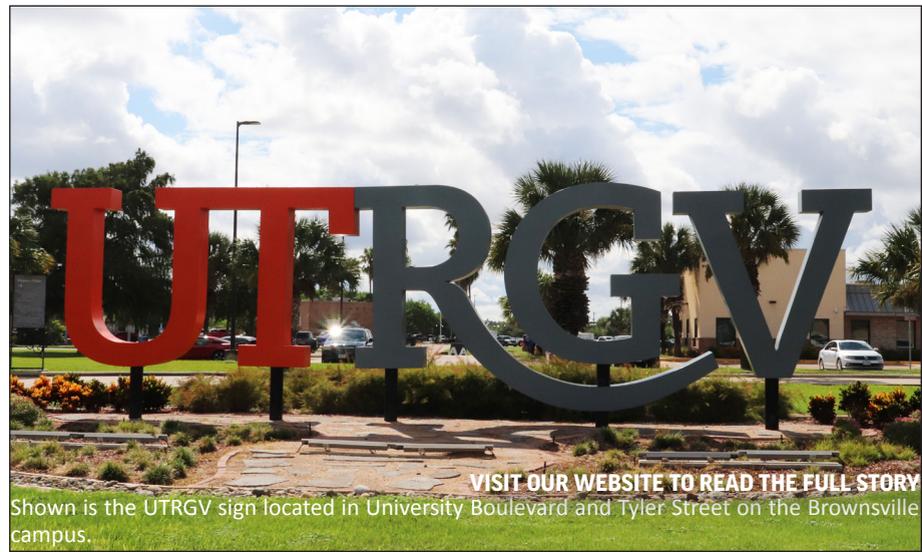
For those interested in joining the Spirit Program, teams are formed in April or May. To be eligible to try out, full-time enrollment, a 2.225 GPA or higher, and good academic standing are required.

For more information, visit the Spirit Program website.



MARIAJOSE GARZA/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Market Square was the original Brownsville City Hall. It is located at 1150 Market Square St. It is now an event hall and research center.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO READ THE FULL STORY

Shown is the UTRGV sign located in University Boulevard and Tyler Street on the Brownsville campus.

COLUMN OF THE WEEK

'I AM READY'

My experience as a college student



CARLOS CASTAÑEDA
COPY EDITOR

I finally became a senior, even though I have been one for some time by credit hours. I just realized that I just began my last year at UTRGV as I am set to graduate in Spring 2026.

closeness to home.

I started at UTRGV in Summer I 2021, in which I just took two courses while on dual enrollment. However, I officially started college in Fall 2022, unsure of what I wanted my major to be. During orientation, the adviser there told me to just choose anything and do the general core while I make the choice. I did that and began my college experience as an international business major.

During my first semester, I greatly enjoyed my intro to accounting classes; however, I did not want to become just an accountant, like my parents. So, I chose to change my major to finance.

The general education core, the business cores, all went great. I started working for Student Media as a section editor for Pulse magazine in Fall 2023. As an international student, my employment options were limited to on-campus ones.

As I began to take advanced finance courses, I realized it was not what I thought it was. So, I caved in and decided to change my major to accounting. However, I realized I only needed two more classes to finish the major; instead, I declared a double major.

At the same time, I switched programs and began as a copy editor for The Rider newspaper in Fall 2024. This semester, I applied to enter the accounting

fast-track program, which would have allowed me to take graduate-level courses as an undergrad. It was disappointing to find out double majors are not eligible.

Throughout my college experience, I have found new friends, I have represented UTRGV at a couple of competitions, I have worked on campus, and I completed an internship, among other things I cannot think of to list at the moment.

My point is, one's university experience is not

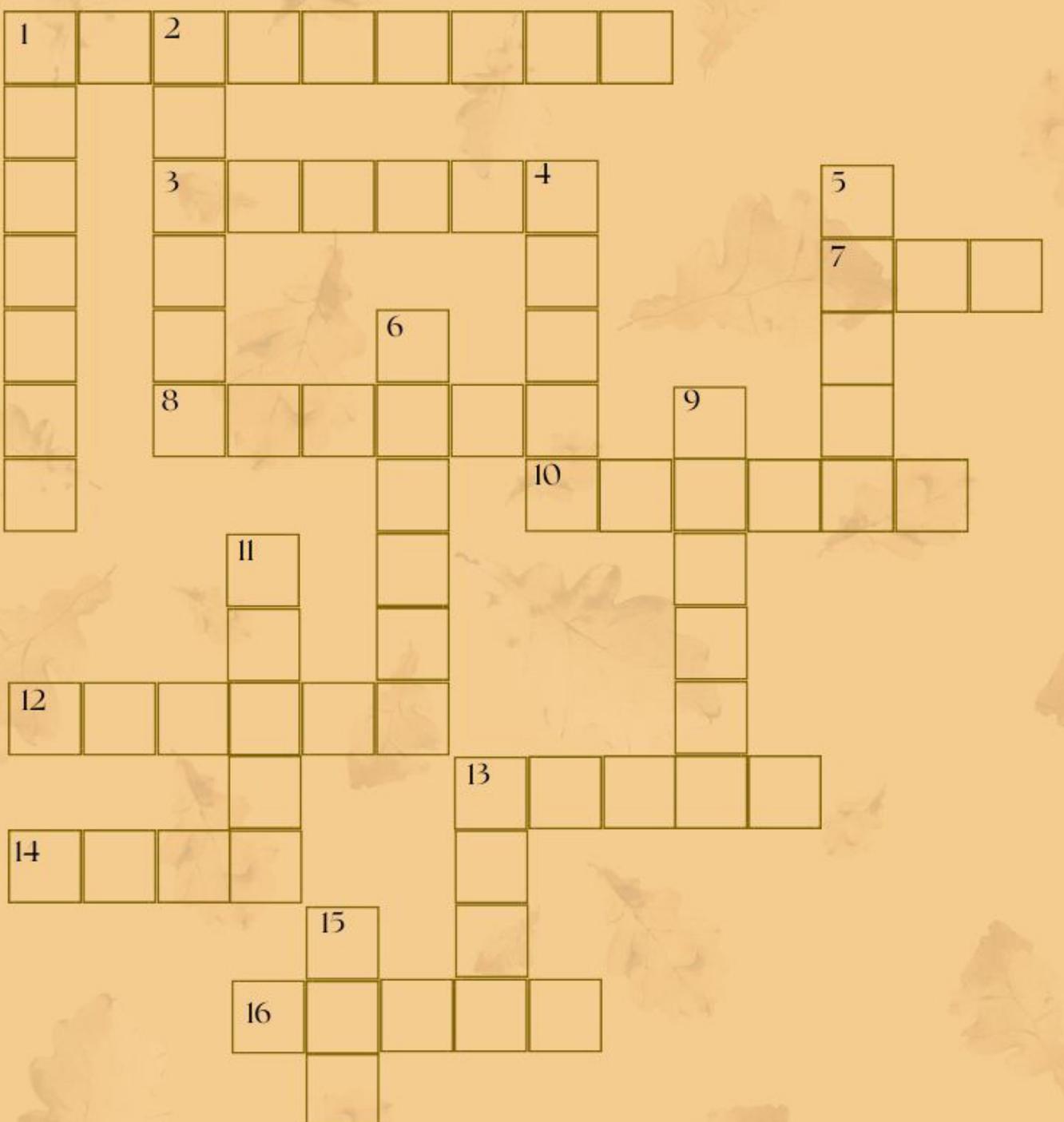
"I am ready to see what God has planned for me for my last year as a college student."

perfect and may definitely not be what was originally planned. However, I have come to appreciate how mine has been shaped, even if I am suffering taking 18 credit hours this semester.

I am ready to see what God has planned for me for my last year as a college student.

CROSSWORD

A SPOOKY HOLIDAY



ACROSS

- 1-Spooky Holiday
- 3-Season of change
- 7-Thanksgiving dessert
- 8-Fall vegetable
- 10-Thanksgiving traditional meal
- 12-Halloween vibe
- 13-Fall beverage
- 14-Fall shower
- 16-Footwear for wet leaves

DOWN

- 1-Time to gather crops
- 2-They change color
- 4-Longer during fall
- 5-Fruit picked in orchards
- 6-Who gathers for holidays
- 9-Pumpkin color
- 11-Earthy tone (color)
- 13-Outerwear for chilly days
- 15-Misty weather

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OR SCAN THE QR CODE

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
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ES MOMENTO DE CELEBRAR

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

Hoy comienza el Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana, una celebración donde la cultura e historia de los hispanos y latinos es compartida, según el Museo Nacional del Americano Latino.

La Oficina de Integración Bilingüe de UTRGV está organizando múltiples eventos en el campus del 8 de septiembre al 15 de octubre. La universidad es una Institución al Servicio de los Hispanos (HSI, por sus siglas en inglés).

Joy Esquiedo, vicerrectora de la Oficina de Integración Bilingüe, dijo que es importante celebrar el mes de la herencia hispana en el Valle del Río Grande y en Texas.

“Recopilamos un calendario para septiembre y octubre para la celebración”, Esquiedo dijo. “Tenemos específicamente una serie lingüística y seminarios de diferentes temas de la herencia hispana [...] de lo especial que es vivir aquí y del Valle de Río Grande”.

Dijo que también es importante que las futuras generaciones y los estudiantes de UTRGV se vean a sí mismos como líderes.

“Espero que vayan a los eventos [...] que participen, compartan sus opiniones, experiencias y su historia”, Esquiedo dijo.

Para futuras ediciones de esta celebración, la vicerrectora dijo que espera que los estudiantes compartan más sobre lo que les gustaría ver y que

MES DE LA HERENCIA HISPANA

ACTIVIDADES DE SEPTIEMBRE

16	<p>Gabriela Baeza Ventura, Arte Público Press, [EHABW 1.406, BSABH 2.112A, Zoom, 12:30 to 1:45p.m.]</p>	23	<p>Puro 956: Jerga en el Valle del Río Grande, por la Junta de Estudiantes de Lingüística Cruzada [EHABW 1.406 & Zoom, 12:30 to 1:45p.m.]</p>
19	<p>Ballet Folklórico: Leyendas [UTRGV Performing Arts Complex 7:30 to 9p.m.]</p>	25	<p>Exposición FRONTEXTOS de Octavio Quintanilla Presentación y recepción [Performing Arts Complex, 6p.m.]</p>
20	<p>VIP Idea Lab en español: Del campus a la comunidad: Diseñando la participación activa [BINAB 1.219, 10:30a.m. to 1:p.m.]</p>	29	<p>Recepción de la Exposición de Dulce Pérez patrocinado por 66 HSI: Una institución de la Escuela de Arte y Diseño que otorga títulos académicos con [Clark Art Gallery, Edinburg 6 to 8p.m.]</p>
20	<p>Partido de Fútbol Americano del Mes de la Herencia Hispana vs. Texas Wesleyan [Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium, 7p.m.]</p>		

las organizaciones estudiantiles de UTRGV se unan a estos eventos para “conectar a nuestra comunidad de UTRGV con la comunidad del RGV”.

“Invitamos a nuestras familias a unirse y hacer el evento y celebración más grande junto con la comunidad”, Esquiedo dijo. “[...] Sería un mensaje muy poderoso para nuestra comunidad de lo solidario que es el Valle con nuestros estudiantes”.

La Asociación Histórica de

Brownsville llevará a cabo una exhibición llamada unidos del 16 de septiembre al 18 de octubre en el Museo Histórico de Brownsville: Centro de Educación Mary Yturria, ubicado en 641 E. Madison St.

La exhibición está estructurada por Jesus Trevino, artista local del Valle, y Juan Velez, oficial de preservación histórica de la Ciudad de Brownsville.

El acceso a la exhibición está incluido con la entrada general al museo. Adultos pagan \$6, personas de

la tercera edad \$4 y estudiantes \$2.

Algunos de los artistas del Sur de Texas destacados en la exhibición son Alejandro Macias, Cande Aguilar, Gina Gwen Palacios, Omar Gonzalez, Jesus de la Rosa, Angela Scardigno, Josie Castillo, Carlos Limas entre otros.

Para mas información, visite la página de la Asociación Histórica de Brownsville.

--Carlos Castañeda contribuyó a esta historia.

VALLEY SPOTLIGHT

RAQUEL PÉREZ: DEL CAMPO A UTRGV



PHOTO CONTESÍA JOY ESQUIERDO

Raquel Pérez presenta UTRGV: Mi HSI el 8 de septiembre en el University Ballroom del campus de Edinburg. Pérez compartió su experiencia como trabajadora migrante y su carrera educativa en la universidad.

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

El mayor desafío de Raquel Pérez era ella misma cuando, en la preparatoria, dudaba si podría llegar a la universidad mientras trataba de encajar en el sistema educativo.

“[En la preparatoria], mi consejero migrante me empujó y me motivó”, Pérez dijo. “Pero nunca pensé que fuera algo alcanzable”.

Ahora, ella es asistente especial del rector y vicepresidenta ejecutiva de Asuntos Académicos en UTRGV.

En el evento de apertura del mes de la herencia hispana el 8 de septiembre, UTRGV: My HSI, organizado por la Oficina de Integración Bilingüe, Pérez contó su experiencia como trabajadora migrante.

Siendo la más pequeña de cuatro hermanas y la única nacida en Estados Unidos, Pérez creció hablando español en su casa pero, desde una corta edad, tuvo que aprender inglés.

“Me iba a Michigan donde no había casi nada de latinos, de hispanos”, dijo. “Y me acoplé a hablar el inglés, a entender la dinámica de cómo era esa cultura”.

Pérez dijo que siempre se sintió trabajadora en el campo porque su mamá, estando embarazada de ella, seguía trabajando.

Creció trabajando hasta el 2019 cuando se graduó de UTRGV con una licenciatura en estudios interdisciplinarios con una especialidad en educación bilingüe.

Durante su presentación compartió que etiquetas como first-gen, latina/O, low income and minority eran vistas como un déficit.

“Así que todos estos labels pueden ser cambiados a una perspectiva diferente porque esto es parte de nuestra historia y no nuestra limitación”, Pérez dijo.

Añadió que fue maestra del cuarto grado por cinco años. Su propia historia la ayudó a entender por lo que sus estudiantes estaban pasando y el ser latina le permitió ser mejor maestra en el sistema educativo del Valle del Río Grande.

“Use estas etiquetas para ayudarles a redefinir su identidad”, Pérez dijo.

También compartió que se siente “muy bonito” el volver a UTRGV después de graduarse.

“Me da mucho orgullo saber que vine aquí y ahora puedo estar ayudando a los estudiantes y puedo seguir poniendo mi granito de arena porque no me veo saliéndome del Valle”, Pérez dijo.

Les aconsejó a los estudiantes de UTRGV de “enfocarse en sus estudios”, pero recalcó que no hay que olvidar “lo bonito de la vida”.

¿Tienes una historia que contar?
Cuéntanos que te gustaría ver en **THE RIDER**

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INSIDE THE AUDITION ROOM

EDUARDO ESCAMILLA
A&E EDITOR

For an actor, the audition room can be a high-stakes environment, a brief moment to prove themselves. For the director casting the production, it is a careful search for not just talent, but finding the qualities that can bring a show to life.

Auditions for the upcoming UTRGV production of "The Rocky Horror Show" took place on Sept. 4 in the Marian F. Monta, PhD Studio in the Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.

The Rider had the opportunity to interview Richard Edmonson, director and theatre lecturer, to learn what it takes to stand out as an actor.

Edmonson said beyond the baseline skills of singing and dancing, he wants performers who are "unafraid to ... emote to an audience."

For the production in specific, he said he was looking for actors to be "big in their emotions," and possess a certain kind of "rocker voice," which is distinct from many other musicals.

When it comes to selecting audition material, Edmonson offers a universal piece of advice, "choose something that shows off your voice."

He added that actors generally have a limited amount of time, often just a 32-bar cut, to make an impression.

Edmonson said the goal is to select an excerpt that allows a performer to showcase their range and vocal power within that small window.

The moment a director knows they have found the perfect person for a role is often a combination of factors, according to the director.

Edmondson said it is about more than just a powerful voice or perfect dance move.

The ideal candidate must first fit the character description laid out in the script, from personality to physical traits.

He said what seals the deal is a performer's ability to "be big enough to an audience,"

to project the character with enough personality to captivate everyone watching.

On the other end, for an actor, the mental preparation for an audition varies from person to person.

Laura Gutierrez, an English junior, said when she is in front of the casting directors auditioning, she loses herself in the character, allowing everything else around her to slowly fade away.

Gutierrez said one piece of advice for any actor interested in auditioning for the first time is to be bold.

"I think for this industry," she said. "You have to want it more than anyone else."

The Rider observed junior Valentina Capistran's theater audition. As she walked into the audition room, she approached the accompanist and handed over her sheet music.

Capistran then proceeded to introduce herself to the casting directors, took a step back and with a small breath started her monologue, an excerpt from "Container of Sharks!" by Don Zolidis.

Her monologue, which itself was somewhat about an audition, depicted the range of emotions someone can feel when being judged on their performance.

After Capistran stepped out of the room, The Rider asked her to describe the feeling of auditioning in one word.

"Fast," she replied. "A lot faster than you think."

Capistran added that technical issues with the accompanist not having the right tempo for her song added to her nerves, but in the end she felt it went fine.

Once the final curtain falls on the audition process, a marathon session that can see more than 50 hopefuls in a single night of three, the real work of casting begins.

"The Rocky Horror Show" will take place at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 23 through 25, at 2 p.m. on Oct 26 and at 10 p.m. on Oct 31 in the UTRGV Albert L. Jeffers Theatre on the Edinburg campus. For tickets, visit showpass.com.



MYKEL DEL ANGEL/THE RIDER PHOTOS
Gabriella N. Ibanez (from left), theatre design senior and production stage manager; Richard Edmonson, a theatre lecturer; and Shayna Isaacs, music director and assistant professor of voice, taking notes during call-back auditions Sept. 8 in the Marian F. Monta, PhD Studio in the Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.



Aaron Guerrero (from right), a theatre junior; Kiana Saldaña, a theatre senior; and Mia Lopez, a multidisciplinary studies senior; prepare and study for their call back auditions for "The Rocky Horror Show" Sept. 8 in the Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.



Mia Lopez, a multidisciplinary studies senior, performs a monologue from "The Rocky Horror Show" for her audition Sept. 8 in the Marian F. Monta, PhD Studio in the Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.

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BALLIN' UP A NEW SEASON



JOSE RODRIGUEZ/THE RIDER PHOTOS

UTRGV Women's Basketball head coach Lane Lord speaks about the upcoming basketball season Thursday in the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

DANIELA CHAPA-REYES
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Women's Basketball Team is soon set to start off its season playing against St. Mary's University at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 3 in the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

Senior forward Charlotte O'Keefe said the team is looking forward to being able to go out and play new teams.

"We have been here since June, so [we] are getting antsy and ready to go and play some new people," O'Keefe said.

The team has welcomed eight new players this season, five of them freshmen.

Head coach Lane Lord said the six returners have done a great job at integrating the newcomers onto the team.

"We had eight weeks of summer that we got to practice

and now we are going for an eight-hour week for the next two weeks, then we get to go our full 20-hour weeks," Lord said in an interview Thursday. "Our chemistry is getting really good right now ... we have some great leadership from the upperclassmen and we have some really talented new players and eligible players."

Sophomore guard Gianna Angiolet said it is exciting to have new faces on the team.

"They fit in super well and they have great personalities on and off the court," Angiolet said. "They bring a lot of energy so it's great to have them."

The Vaqueros are set to compete against teams such as Texas State University, the University of Houston and Texas Christian University before their conference season starts.

After its first conference game against Lamar University,



Senior forward Charlotte O'Keefe attacks the net during a five-on-five drill with the women's basketball team during practice Thursday in the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

the team is set to take on the University of Texas at Austin, a 2024-2025 Final Four team, on Dec. 10 at the Bert Ogden Arena in Edinburg.

"We're very excited about

"They bring a lot of energy so it's great to have them."

--Gianna Angiolet,
sophomore guard

them coming to the Valley, which is very hard to do since they're a Final Four school," Lord said. "I think we have a chance to show the Valley our talent and play with the top five teams in the country."

He said he believes the school spirit is at an all-time high after the beginning of

UTRGV Football and believes in big crowds for the basketball season.

"I think football has really brought our campus together," Lane said. "We're expecting huge crowds this year for the Houston game at home here in our arena and, then, of course, the Texas game at home and then our conference games."

Angiolet said playing the schools mentioned would be a great challenge for the team.

"We have nothing to lose going into those games," she said.

Last season, the team went 16-16 and 11-9, with a total of 1,945 points made through the season.

Angiolet said the goal is to win the Southland Conference.

"The goal is to win as many games as we can, win the Southland [Conference] and get to the post season," she said.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK:

LINNEA ELD



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Linnea Eld is a marketing junior from Kungsbacka, Sweden, and a midfielder for the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team. In the 2025 season, Eld has a total of 1 goal and 2 assists, with a total 444 minutes played.

Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: "My game day meal is always or [has] always been oatmeal."

Q: Who or what got you started in soccer?

A: "My family has a huge interest. My siblings ... played soccer before me, so it was obvious that I was gonna go into that fast."

Q: Who has been your biggest inspiration or role model?

A: "My dad."

Q: Who is your favorite soccer player?

A: "Kevin De Bruyne."

Q: Do you prefer to give assists or score goals?

A: "I would say assist, actually."

Q: What kind of music do you listen to?

A: "Currently, Justin Bieber."

Q: Which shows or movies do you like to watch?

A: "I am gonna start watching the British baking show, [The Great British Bake Off]."

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: "I love trying out new coffee shops."

Q: What is your biggest motivation?

A: "Keep on going for my childhood dream because this was a dream of mine when I was younger, and that was probably my biggest motivation to keep on going."

Q: What do you like most about UTRGV?

A: "I would say the culture and my team and the temperature. I would say, compared to Sweden, [it] is a lot hotter here than compared to home."

Q: What are your biggest goals?

A: "I wanna get a ring."

--Compiled by Hugo Sepúlveda

ONE COACH, TWO TEAMS

Golf programs begin the year under one direction

ALI HALLOUM
THE RIDER

The Vaqueros' golf program, composed of men's and women's teams, is entering a vital juncture as both begin the year under the direction of Houston Moore.

Moore, who was previously the head coach of the men's team, took over both programs under the title of director of Golf on April 29 following the departure of women's golf head coach Bryan Novoa, according to an Athletics department news release.

Moore will serve as the associate head coach of both programs while a national search for a women's golf head coach is underway.

He said that having associate head coaches under him helps a lot in overseeing both teams.

"These associate head coaches are taking it by the horns," Moore said. "[They are] monitoring their stats and what these players are deficient in to get them prepared for the event."

Both teams are currently on the road and playing in their season-opening tournaments, which started Sunday. Men's golf is in Waynesville,

North Carolina, for the JT Poston Invitational, while women's golf is in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, for the Lady Clerico tournament.

Moore is with the men's team for the North Carolina tournament and will travel with the women's team for the next.

"That's what I love to do," he said. "I love taking these guys and gals on the road and seeing how we shake up against the rest. So, now we have double the opportunities to do that. That's what I'm most excited about."

Junior golfer Natalia Rodriguez said she is "super excited" to participate in the first tournament.

"It's gonna be a really tight competition," Rodriguez said. "But I think we have a chance to win."

She also said the team's preparations for tournaments have changed under Moore, with an emphasis on short game and putting drills.

"One day we're on the course, and the next we're working on short game," Rodriguez said. "And then, we also work on specifics for each player."

Moore said, this year, the goal, not just for UTRGV golf



PHOTOS COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Junior Natalia Rodriguez prepares to start the 2025-26 season for the UTRGV Women's Golf Team.

but for the women's program, is to "get the most out of these girls on a competitive basis."

"I think there's some talent here," the director said. "I think they didn't play their best golf last year, and we hope to get the best golf out of them, out of each individual person."

Having been coach of the men's team for four years prior to his promotion, Moore said he is also excited to see how his first recruiting class grows in the tournament, specifically, McAllen Memorial High School alum



Junior Emilio Gil Leyva returns for the UTRGV Men's Golf 2025-26 season.

junior Esteban Gonzalez.

"He's been trending in the right direction each year, so far," he said. "He seems like he'll be trending just at the right time for this first event."



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THIS WEEK
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STAY READY, STAY SAFE

ETHAN MALDONADO
THE RIDER

With peak hurricane season underway and recent flooding in parts of Texas, Hidalgo County officials are encouraging residents and students to prepare before severe weather strikes.

Ricardo Saldaña, Hidalgo County Emergency Management coordinator, said the county launched Hidalgo County Ready this year to provide preparedness training directly to residents.

The project includes monthly pop-up events across the Rio Grande Valley where staff demonstrate how to build emergency kits and share safety information.

“The intent of the program is to go out into the community and teach people how to prepare themselves, their families and even their pets,” Saldaña said. “Preparedness brings peace of mind.”

He said families should prepare in advance by safeguarding important documents, keeping medications ready and setting aside cash.

Saldaña added that residents should fuel their vehicles, stock food and water, and take safety precautions with items such as generators, grills and loose yard equipment.

He said the county is also working with its own employees, such as those in the Clerk’s Office, to strengthen preparedness across departments.

“Our employees are members of this community, too,” Saldaña said. “If they know how to take care of themselves and their families, they can also help the community.”

At UTRGV, Pablo Mendez, Emergency Management coordinator, said the university’s emergency systems

are designed to reach the campus community quickly. Students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled in the notification system, which uses texts, emails and newsletters.

“UTRGV is like a small city,” Mendez said. “We have housing, transportation, classrooms and labs that are running 24/7. Our communication has to match that.”

He said students should check their contact information in the university records to avoid missing alerts.

The university also maintains the Ready UTRGV webpage, which provides weather updates, preparedness tips and resources for the campus community.

Mendez said his office monitors both the National Weather Service and private weather systems to track storms early, including those forming in the Atlantic and near the Yucatán Peninsula.

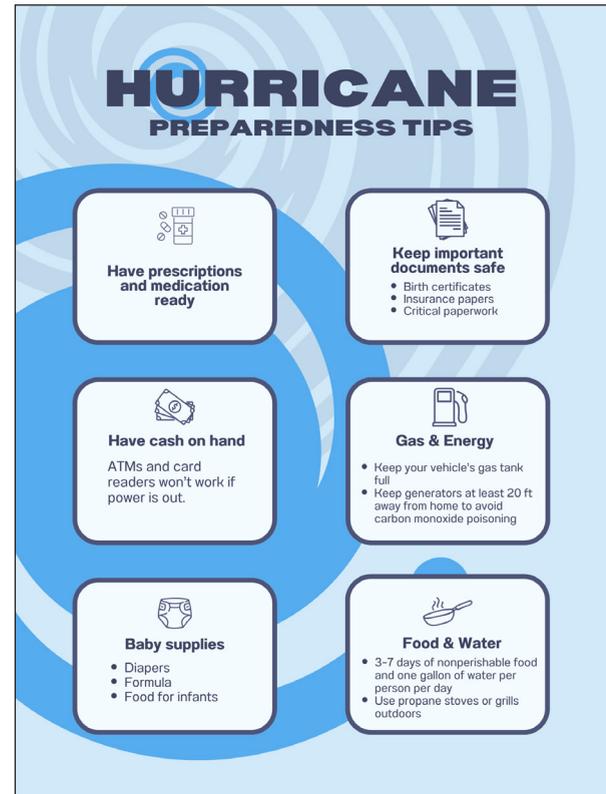
“Once we see something might develop, our Incident Management Team meets and we start sending daily situational awareness updates,” he said.

Mendez said his office works closely with Hidalgo County Emergency Management to align campus planning with countywide response.

“What the county does affects our students directly, especially since so many live off campus,” he said.

Mendez encouraged students to use the resources available to them and to take small actions now before a storm arrives.

“Preparedness is everyone’s responsibility,” Mendez said. “We can’t stop the storms, but we can be ready for them.”



VENISHA COLON/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

The next pop-up event will take place from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Sept. 25 at 107 N. Sunflower Road in Edinburg.

For more information, visit the Hidalgo County website, or Ready UTRGV.

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