

THE RIDER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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ON CAMPUS

AI POLICY IN THE WORKS



Annabelle Solis (right), a psychology freshman, and Bianca Olivares, a rehabilitation services freshman, open ChatGPT on her laptop Tuesday in the third floor of the University Library on the Edinburg campus.

MARIAH ESCOBAR
THE RIDER

Some students voiced their concerns over being flagged for the use of artificial intelligence as the university does not have specific rules about its use unless specified by departments.

UTRGV is currently working on implementing policies regarding AI that will help students and faculty, according to the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology staff.

UTRGV CODE OF CONDUCT

Faculty to report prohibited use of AI because it falls under academic dishonesty.

“Academic Affairs is working on guidelines, processes and things like that that will help faculty and students on the implementation of AI,” said Francisco Garcia, COLTT

director.

There is technology that can help faculty identify the use of AI although it is not 100% accurate in terms of AI detection because no technology is completely accurate, Garcia added.

Paola Solis, an education junior, said she has seen some students be accused unfairly of using AI by faculty that may be using AI checkers, which she added can be unreliable.

See **AI**, Page 3

ON CAMPUS

MARIACHI MARIPOSAS WELCOMES THE HOLIDAYS

SOPHIA CORTEZ
THE RIDER

UTRGV will welcome the all-female Mariachi Mariposas’ Christmas performance from 7 to 8:15 p.m. Friday and from 3 to 4:15 p.m. Saturday in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.

The event, part of the UTRGV Distinguished Artist Series, will showcase both festive Christmas classics and regional culture.

Mariachi Mariposas began in 2012 with a goal of creating music opportunities for women dedicated to preserving mariachi tradition, according to the event’s description.

The College of Fine Arts chose the group in an effort to bring in guest performances who complement student performances while giving something distinctive to the community, according to Juan Carlos Munoz, event manager of the college.

“We try to bring artists that are different from our academic



PHOTO COURTESY MARIACHI MARIPOSAS

Shown above is the all-female Mariachi Mariposas photographed in 2022. The group will perform as part of the Distinguished Artist Series from 7 to 8:15 p.m. Friday and from 3 to 4:15 p.m. Saturday in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.

performances,” Munoz added.

He said the group represents the Rio Grande Valley’s artistic legacy, especially because most performers are UTRGV or legacy institution University of Texas–

Pan American alumni.

“It’s special to have an award-winning, all-female mariachi group on our stage,” Munoz said.

See **MARIACHI**, Page 3

ON CAMPUS

Work-study clash

VENISHA COLÓN
THE RIDER

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is suing the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to end three state funded work-study programs, on the basis that they discriminate against religious students.

The lawsuit was filed on Nov. 12 and is currently ongoing.

In a Nov. 14 news release by the Office of the Attorney General, Paxton stated the Texas College Work-Study Program, the Texas Working Off-Campus: Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills (WORKS) Internship Program and the Texas Innovative Adult Career Education (ACE) Grant Program “unconstitutionally discriminate against religious students.”

According to the eligibility requirements of the Texas College Work-Study Program guidelines, under the Texas Admin Code Title 19, Section 22.130, applicants must not be enrolled in a seminary or other program leading to ordination or licensure to preach for a religious sect or to be a member of a religious order” to be eligible for funds awarded by the program.

Similar requirements exist for WORKS under Texas Education Code, § 56.0855 (b)(4) which states, “To be eligible to enter into an agreement with the coordinating board to participate in the program, an employer must: ... Provide employment to a student employed through the program in nonpartisan and nonsectarian activities.”

A rule exists for the ACE Grant Program which states program funds “may not be used for the purpose of funding ... religious activities such as sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytization.”

In a statement within the

news release, Paxton referred to the laws as “anti-Christian” and said they “must be completely wiped off the books.” He goes on Texas to say in both the news release and the case file the programs violate the First Amendment by barring religious organizations and students receiving religious instruction from access to these state funds.

However, a political science professor at UTRGV argues Paxton’s remarks imply a promotion of a specific religion above others that goes against the Constitution.

In an interview with The Rider, Mark Kaswan, associate professor of political science at UTRGV, explained the Constitution is clear in forbidding states from promoting any one religion.

Kaswan said in regard to the First Amendment, the idea of taxpayer funds going toward religious institutions or the advancement of any religion is something the First Amendment is “explicitly intended to prevent,” and would contribute to a dilution of the separation of church and state.

UTRGV received the most state funding through the Texas College Work-Study Program in Texas in the 2026 Fiscal Year with a total of \$427,998 awarded for both the Texas College Work-Study Program and the Work-Study Student Mentorship, according to a THECB report.

See **WORK-STUDY**, Page 3

ON CAMPUS

UTRGV enforces Texas law on campus facilities

HUGO SEPÚLVEDA
THE RIDER

UTRGV announced that Texas Senate Bill 8, also known as the Texas Women’s Privacy Act, requires public institutions to ensure multiple-occupancy private spaces, including restrooms and changing facilities, are used according to biological sex.

The Nov. 25 email announcement included maps of the Brownsville and Edinburg locations for single-stall and family restrooms across campus.

According to the bill, it is a “regulation of individuals in certain spaces and facilities according to sex.”

“S.B. 8 amends current law relating to the designation and use of certain spaces and facilities according to sex and authorizes a civil penalty and a private civil right of action,” according to the bill’s statement of intent.

The bill states a female is any individual who has, had, will have or would have had a “reproductive system designated to produce, transport, and provide eggs for fertilization.” A male is any individual who naturally has, had, will have or would have had a “reproductive system designed to produce, transport, and utilize sperm for fertilization.”

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From mishap to memory

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Tour finale arrives in McAllen

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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
MONDAY TABLING
Christians at RGV will host a tabling event from 9:45 to 11:45 a.m. on the University Library lawn on the Brownsville campus.
WRITING FOR YOUR SOUL
The **Baptist Student Ministry** will host a writing event from 11 a.m. to noon in the Health Affairs Building West gazebo on the Edinburg campus.
CONQUER FINAL EXAMS: FROM ANXIETY TO ACHIEVEMENT
The **Learning Center** will host a workshop series from 2 to 3 p.m. and from 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday online via Zoom. ID: 819 0401 2324. Attendees can **learn strategies** to **prepare** for final exams.
DELTA ZETA
Delta Zeta will meet from 6 to 10 p.m. in the Bronc Room on the Edinburg campus.
RGV GERMAN CLUB MEETING
The **RGV German Club** will meet from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic

Building Room 1.220 on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can discuss **important topics** about the club.
STUDY HOURS AT LA SALA AND ESTUN
The **Student Union** will host Study Hours from 4 to 7 p.m. in La Sala on the Brownsville campus and from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday in the food court on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can enjoy **free coffee** and **music**.
Tuesday
SAC POPCORN FUNDRAISER
The **Student Accessibility Council** will host a popcorn fundraiser from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the University Library on the Edinburg campus.
POPCORN TALKS
The **Learning Center** will host popcorn talks from noon to 2 p.m. outside The Learning Center on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Wednesday in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 2.118 on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can enjoy

free popcorn and learn about programs and events.
STORIES OF MENTAL HEALTH: AN UNFOLDED POETRY PROJECT
The **Psi Chi Honor society** will host a poetry project from 6 to 8 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.101 on the Edinburg campus. **Free food** will be provided.
RUN CLUB MEETING PRACTICE Club Running-Vaquero Runners will meet 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
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY
Christians at RGV will host a Bible study from noon to 1:45 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.217 on the Brownsville campus. **Free food** will be provided.
ASME IAM3D GENERAL MEETING
The **American Society of Mechanical Engineers** will meet from 5 to 6 p.m. in Engineering Building Room

1.268 on the Edinburg campus.
Thursday
DSAA WEEKLY MEETING
Data Structures and Algorithms Architects will meet from 5 to 6 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Engineering and Academic Building Room 1.206 on the Edinburg campus.
ACJA GENERAL MEETING
The **American Criminal Justice Association (Iotta Kappa Chi)** will meet from 3 to 5 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.105 on the Brownsville campus.
Friday
YSDSA GENERAL MEETING
The **Rio Grande Valley Youth Democratic Society** will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. in Liberal Arts South Room 254 on the Edinburg campus.
MOCK TRIAL PRACTICE
The **Mock Trial Competition Team** will meet from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.102 and 1.103 on the Edinburg campus.
--Compiled by Mariah Escobar



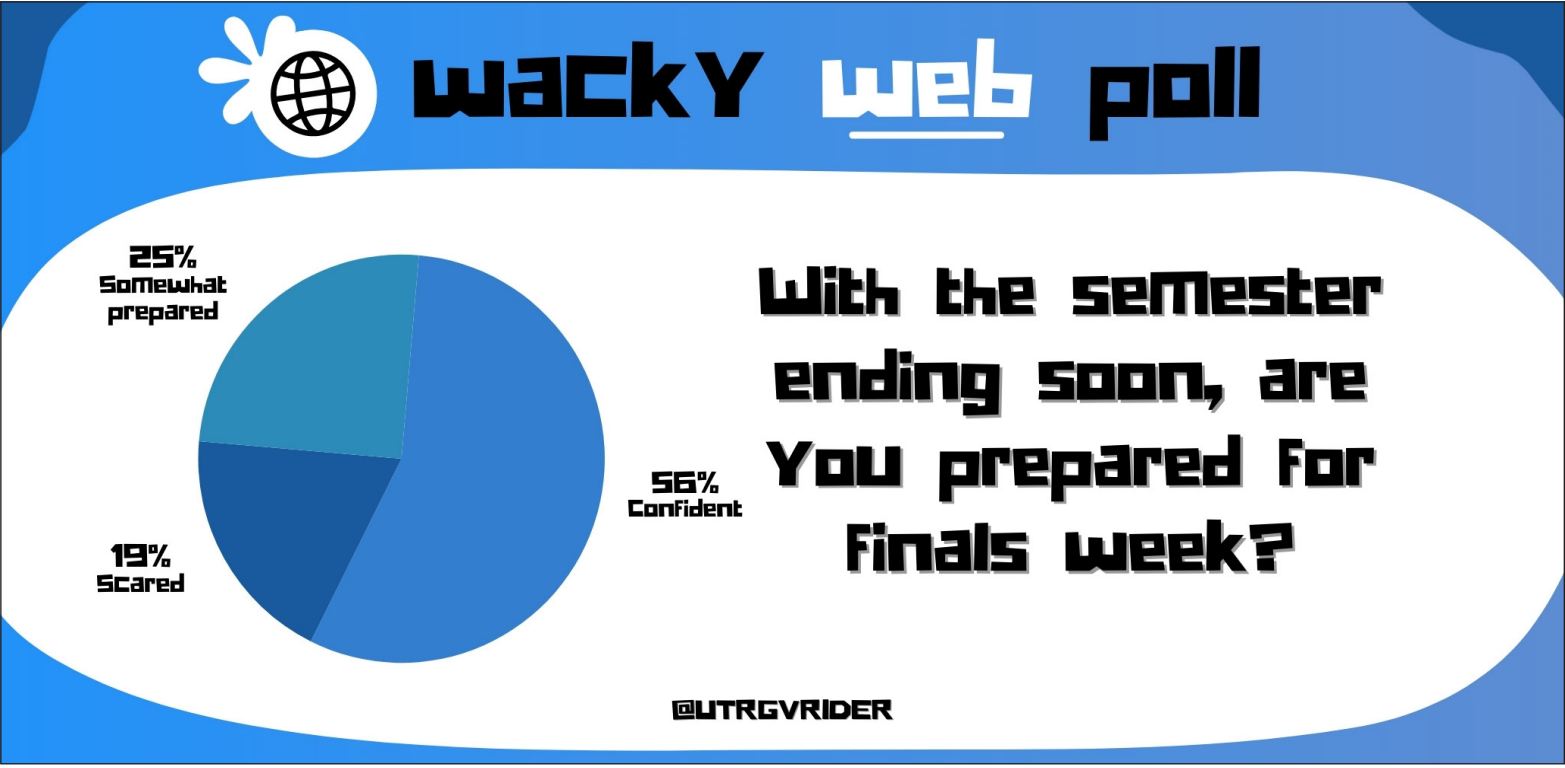
POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Nov. 25 and 30.
Nov. 25
3:08 p.m.: A student reported his vehicle missing from Lot E-37 on the Edinburg campus. Closed-circuit television footage showed it had been towed, and the student later confirmed the repossession was expected due to late payments.
10:26 p.m.: A student reported leaving her tablet charging unattended in a classroom in the Education Complex on the Edinburg campus. When she returned after an exam, the tablet was missing. She did not suspect theft and planned to check with staff to see if it was turned in as found property.
Nov. 26
8:16 a.m.: An employee reported tripping on an unveled brick resulting in

bruising to her left hand and a scraped left knee on the walkway near the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. She declined Emergency Medical Services.
9:45 a.m.: An officer responded to an active fire alarm in the Dining & Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus. No smoke or fire was observed; the alarm was triggered by a pizza oven near a smoke detector. Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management reset the panel.
10:52 p.m.: An officer responded to a report of a man with a prior criminal trespass warning in the Casa Bella apartments on the Brownsville campus. The man fled on foot, but with assistance from the U.S. Border Patrol agent, he was detained. He was arrested on charges of criminal trespass and

evading arrest and transported to the Brownsville Jail Facility.
Nov. 27
12:06 a.m.: An officer and the McAllen Fire Department responded to an employee trapped in an elevator in the UT Health RGV Cancer and Surgery Center in McAllen. The elevator opened on its own. The man reported dizziness but refused Emergency Medical Services.
Nov. 28
6:35 p.m.: A non-affiliated man reported seeing a man, a woman and several children carrying lumber from a fenced UTRGV-owned lot next to Vaquero Plaza on the Brownsville campus. Officers could not locate the individuals. The case is under investigation.
Nov. 29
9:47 a.m.: An officer responded to a water leak in the Health & Physical Education

II Building on the Edinburg campus. He observed a ceiling tile had fallen, revealing a dripping pipe. Facilities staff was notified.
10:16 p.m.: An officer responded to an active fire alarm in Troxel Hall on the Edinburg campus. Smoke was observed in a second-floor room, and the Edinburg Fire Department was dispatched. Burnt candle wax was determined to be the cause, and the building was cleared for re-entry.
Nov. 30
1:12 p.m.: An officer responded to water pooling on the floor inside a storage room in the Dining & Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus. The source was a clogged drain connected to an ice machine. Facilities was notified.
--Compiled by Dayra Gonzalez



Stay tuned for our upcoming stories in Spring 2026.
MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Gifts, smiles and holiday magic

DAYRA GONZALEZ
THE RIDER

UTRGV is helping bring holiday support to families across the Rio Grande Valley through its third annual participation in the Angel Tree initiative. According to a university official, this year the university adopted 75 angels, providing gifts for children whose families may not have the means to celebrate Christmas.

Adopting an Angel, which is in collaboration with Cameron and Hidalgo counties, is part of The Salvation Army’s Angel Tree Program, which serves families facing financial hardship. Parents apply, submit documentation and provide children’s needs and wishlists. Community partners, such as UTRGV, purchase items based on those tags, according to Beverley Gonzales, UTRGV Nonprofit Resource Center program coordinator.

Gonzales said the collaboration began three years ago through a casual conversation with The Salvation Army.

“We knew that they were doing it, like, in Walmart and other large department stores,” she said. “And so, I asked if it would be possible for us to do this at the university, and they were very enthusiastic and said yes.”

The program coordinator added the first year included only her division, Governmental & Community Relations, but “now the whole campus community is involved.”

Gonzales said UTRGV grew from 25 children the first year, to 50 the next,



PHOTO COURTESY BEVERLEY GONZALES

Shown are toys the Division of Governmental & Community Relations collected December 2024 for the Salvation Army’s Adopt an Angel toy drive. “The Angel Tree program is more than just a holiday tradition—it’s an opportunity for us to come together as a campus community and make a real difference in the lives of local children and families,” wrote Beverley Gonzales, program coordinator for the UTRGV Nonprofit Resource Center, in a Dec. 1 email to The Rider.

and now 75 with departments across Brownsville, Edinburg, Weslaco and Harlingen participating.

She said the program is important for families during the holiday season.

“It’s ... helping families being able to bless their children at Christmas and bring a little joy to their home,” Gonzales said.

Major Jan Zuniga, commanding officer for The Salvation Army of McAllen–Hidalgo County, said the Angel Tree

Program supports parents who often struggle meeting basic needs but hope to give their children holiday gifts.

“We hope that, for those who are struggling with choosing whether to have toys for their children, or pay rent, or have food or keep the lights on in their house, that they wouldn’t find themselves going into more debt or having to choose that basic need because of Christmas,” Zuniga said.

She said many requests include

essential items—clothing, bedding, shoes, backpacks and baby-gear items—which parents cannot always afford. Zuniga said UTRGV’s involvement significantly increased volunteer support.

“[The engagement] has been picked up by UTRGV students, which has never happened before,” she said. “That manpower makes us more accessible to be available to help families.”

Estrella Cab Morales, a business analytics sophomore, said she volunteered for gift sorting and distribution after learning about the collaboration.

“I think it’s basically ... trying to give back to the community,” Cab Morales said.

She added students who cannot donate money can still help because “they need more hands.” Cab Morales has volunteered twice and has seen parents arrive to pick up gifts.

“Knowing that these people are ... very happy ... to receive those gifts ... that’s very meaningful,” she said.

Cab Morales encouraged other UTRGV students to participate.

“Even if you can go like only ... for an hour or ... for 20 minutes ... you helping marks a difference with other people,” she said.

All angels have been adopted for this year, Gonzales said. Volunteer positions for students are also available through Engagement Zone.

For additional information, email partnerships@utrgv.edu or call The Salvation Army at 682-1468.



DRAYA RIOS/THE RIDER

Jessica Sanchez, UTRGV associate director of research and innovation for the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology, speaks on her opinion on the use of Artificial Intelligence in student life Tuesday in the Maryalice Shary Shivers Building conference room on the Edinburg campus.

AI
Continued from Page 1

Amaris Gomez, a biology junior, said she was accused of using AI for a research paper during a lab class even though everyone was given the same research paper to base the discussion off of.

“The sentence that I got flagged was something along the lines of, ‘The research was conducted from like this time to this time,’” Gomez said. “... How many other ways can I rephrase that?”

She added the professor spoke to her aside and told her she could tell it was written by AI because of her experience.

Students can find rules about AI on their syllabi as it depends on faculty whether they allow or not the use of AI, according to Garcia.

UTRGV’s Handbook of Operating Procedures’ STU 02-100: Student Conduct and Discipline requires faculty to report prohibited use of AI because it falls under academic dishonesty, giving faculty the choice of direct referral to Students Rights and Responsibilities or

faculty disposition.

“Transparency should be there from faculty, what can be done and what cannot be done in assignments and in other work for classes,” Garcia said.

Lisa Casarez, a communication lecturer, said she does not have specific rules about the use of AI for her classes.

“I know those tools are out there for students, and so I just remind them it is a tool,” Casarez said. “It’s there to help them, not do the work for them.”

Jessica Sanchez, associate director for COLTT, said students need to know how to use AI responsibly, ethically and efficiently because the job market wants people that know how to use it well.

“Policies is one thing, but there also has to be conversations within the classroom,” Sanchez said. “... It’s not about, ‘I caught you.’ It’s about educating and informing and learning.”

Garcia said he recommends to faculty, staff and students to “not let AI make the decision” for them.

MARIACHI
Continued from Page 1

This year’s showcase is the first Christmas-themed concert the ensemble has performed.

Mayra Garcia, director of Mariachi Mariposas, told The Rider the group has spent months preparing a blend of mariachi standard and holiday classics.

“We had to really think about how are we going to prepare the show,” Garcia said. “Are we going to do all Christmas

music, or we’re just going to do all mariachi music?”

She added the audience can expect a unique performance founded in culture and tradition by blending traditional Christmas music into one main concert.

Munoz said the event also aims to strengthen arts participation on campus.

“Students are 100% complimentary admission to this event,” he said.

Admission for the first 300 students is free with a current UTRGV ID or the



VALERIA TOKUN HAGA/THE RIDER

Men’s and women’s restrooms are available in the Interdisciplinary Academic Building on the Brownsville campus.

BILL
Continued from Page 1

The Rider tried to contact the UTRGV Department of Facilities Planning Tuesday for information about the signage changes on single-stall and family restrooms. As of press time Friday, it was not available for comment.

Patrick Gonzales, vice president for University Marketing and Communications, said the campus community will not see any changes to their daily routines since Senate Bill 8 goes only over restrooms and facilities.

“Restrooms and facilities will continue to operate as they always have, and single stalls and family restrooms remain available for anyone who prefers or requires a private facility,” Gonzales said.

He added UTRGV has always had single stalls and private facilities on campus, so what comes with the bill is

that those facilities are clearly marked.

Yaretz Torres, a theatre junior, said she had heard about the bill but did not know what it was about.

“It’s just, like, dangerous in some aspects to have people that aren’t actually the gender for the restroom in there, but I think it’s honestly just very complicated,” Torres said.

Gonzales said he wanted students to know that UTRGV, as a state public university, complies with all state laws, and the university is taking all the steps under law to remain within compliance.

“We are also continuing to support the safety, dignity and privacy of everyone in our campus community,” the vice president said.

In a Thursday email, he said not all signage has been updated in the facilities on campus as marked on the maps, but it is being worked on.

WORK-STUDY
Continued from Page 1

Jennifer Karolina Aguilar Lopez, a finance senior, said in an interview the work-study program at UTRGV has benefitted her both professionally and academically in her time as an assistant in the office of the Dean of the college of Education.

Though she receives federal funding, she believes that students would be negatively impacted if anything were to happen to these programs.

“It’ll be really hard,” Aguilar Lopez

said. “I would see it becoming very hard for a lot of students ‘cause then the other options will be outside. I would say that it would be really hard for a lot of students and maybe it will affect them right in their studies during the semester.”

The Rider reached out to officials of the Division of Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs seeking more information on how many students are employed through state funded work-study programs. As of press time Friday, they were unable to provide comments.

GET Mobile app while tickets to the public have a cost of \$10, according to the UTRGV Calendar.

Garcia encouraged students and Valley residents to attend.

“Invite everyone to come and really experience that because it’s really something very, very beautiful and unique,” Garcia said.

For more information, visit showpass.com.

PHOTO COURTESY MARIACHI MARIPOSAS



COLUMN OF THE WEEK

What Christmas brings



MARIAJOSE GARZA
PHOTOGRAPHER

As the holidays come around, memories from the past begin to

resurface as well. Christmas has always been my favorite holiday. The decorated homes, the rush of holiday shopping, the movies and everything in between. But most of all, I love the memories that are created during Christmas time each year. When I was 5 years old, Christmas decorations looked like toys to me, especially the ornaments that went on the tree. My mom decorated the tree with all kinds of ornaments, but there was one that caught my eye the most. It was a clear sphere with fake snow and the Coca-Cola polar bear inside, holding a mini coke. I always wanted to play with it, but my mom specifically told me not to grab it. But one day, the temptation to grab it took over my 5-year-old self. I walked out of my room and peeked inside my mom’s room to see what she was doing and

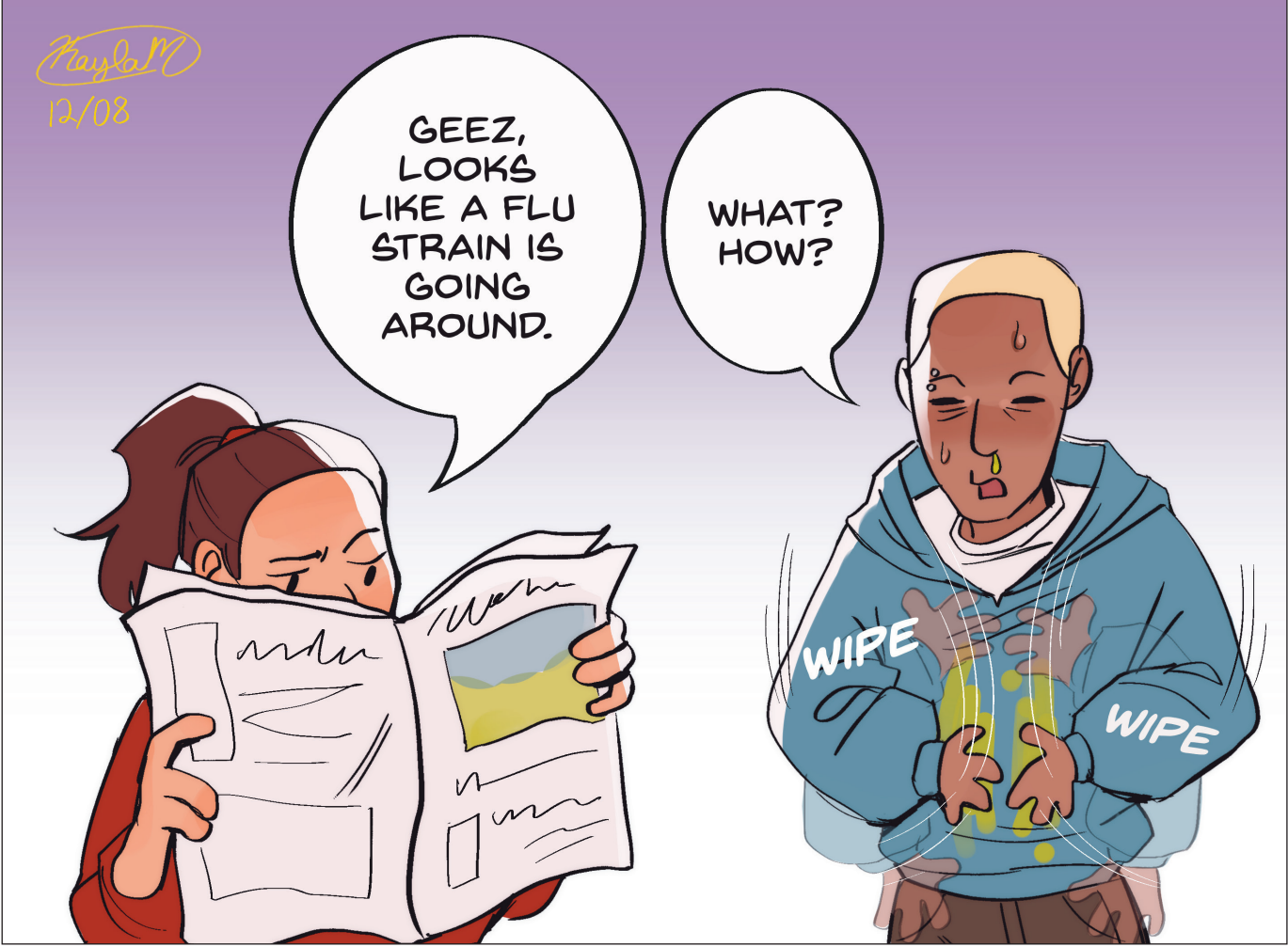
saw her napping. She wasn’t awake to stop me, so I walked over to the tree and tried to take the ornament. But I quickly realized I wasn’t sneaky enough. I heard the tree’s branches rustling and, as I looked up, the tree was coming down at me. I had pulled the ornament too hard, and the silence throughout the house suddenly broke. Luckily, I was able to run away from the tree before it fell on me; nonetheless, I was unable to run away from my mom.

She immediately came out of her room and froze after seeing the tree on the floor with most of the ornaments broken. I honestly don’t remember much after that, but one thing I learned was to stop being an impulsive child. Although this seemed like a mishap at the moment it happened, my family and I now look back and laugh at it. Every Christmas season I remind myself of how much of a blessing it is to keep sharing memories like this with my loved ones. I believe life is captured through moments so, although time seems to pass by fast, the moments we share and laugh about with others is what keeps us grounded. That is part of why I love Christmas so much: It feels like I come together with my family and create memories that I can look back at even after years.

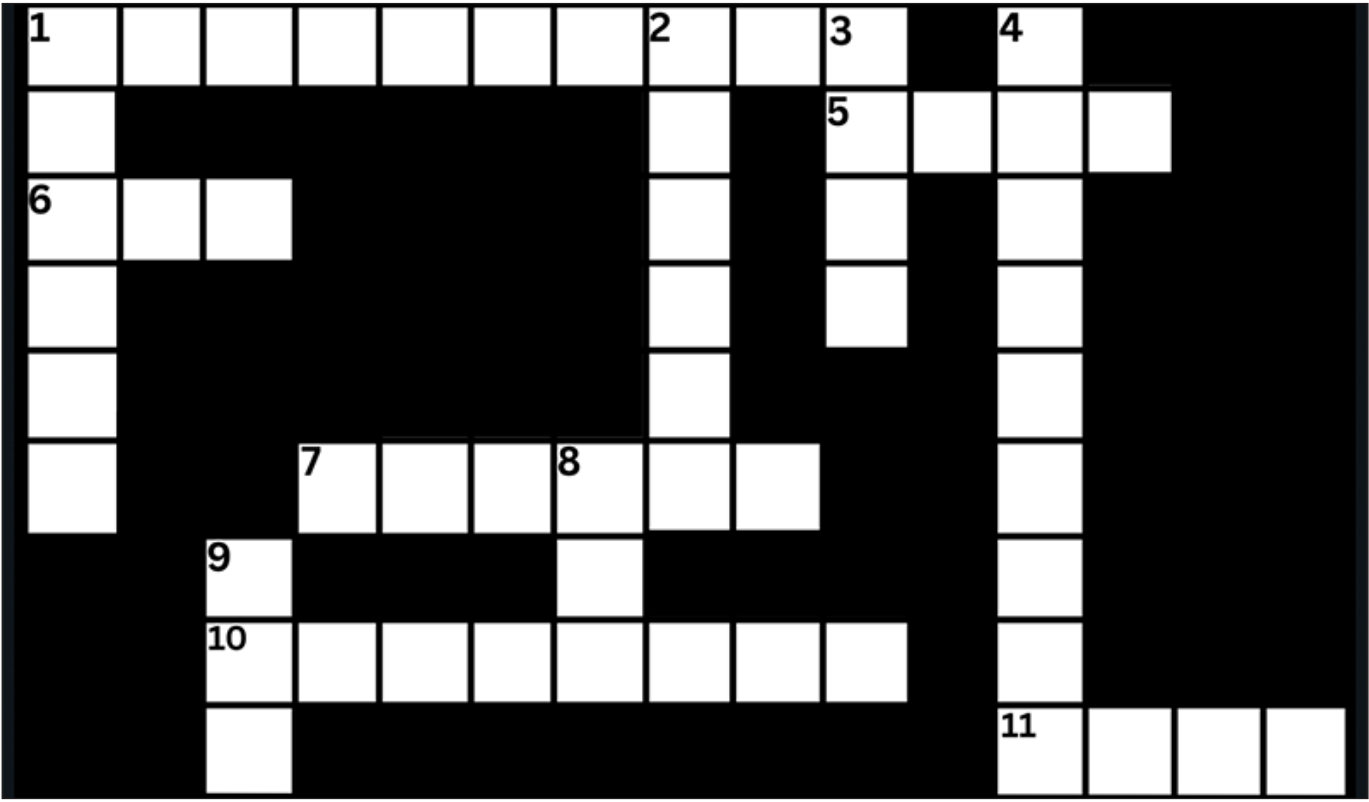
“My family and I now look back and laugh at it.”

EDITORIAL CARTOON

At least wash your hands



CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1. Jolly gift-giver at Christmas
 - 5. Decorated evergreen for Christmas
 - 6. Helper in Santa’s workshop
 - 7. Twinkling holiday illuminations
 - 10. Decorative item for a Christmas tree
 - 11. White precipitation often seen at Christmas

- DOWN**
- 1. Santa’s festive transport
 - 2. Calendar for counting down to Christmas
 - 3. Shining symbol of Christmas
 - 4. Santa’s sleigh pullers
 - 8. Popular glazed meat for holiday dinners
 - 9. Feeling of the holiday season

VAQUERO VOICE

What are finals studying tips and recommendations you have?

--Compiled and photos by Venisha Colón and Mariajose Garza



Michaela Ruiz
electrical engineering senior

“My tips for studying for finals. Start right now. Today. Stop watching this. ... Go study.”



Adriana Esparza
visual communication design sophomore

“I usually listen to music when I study. ... I guess a general recommendation for music for studying, if you’re not really a music person, is, I guess, more calmer, lo-fi music and stuff like that.”



Alan Cruz
accounting senior

“A way students can prepare for finals is to drink coffee and listen to music and just focus and [build] a study guide, so you can excel in your finals. That’s my advice.”

VALLEY SPOTLIGHT

Paola y Lizbeth De León: ‘Empezar desde abajo para arriba’

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
THE RIDER

Impulsadas por el gusto a la repostería, dos hermanas del Valle del Río Grande emprendieron con el negocio de repostería de sus sueños que mezcla talento e innovación. PAU’S Repostería y Pastelería comenzó durante la pandemia del COVID-19 como un negocio en línea donde las personas podían hacer sus pedidos a través de Instagram. En 2023, fue cuando las hermanas De León decidieron emprender oficialmente. Lizbeth De León, hermana mayor y co-propietaria, fue la que inició con la idea de vender

postres e inició con las recetas en casa. Paola De León, hermana menor y co-propietaria, dijo que ella fue la que impulsó a Lizbeth a comenzar. “Yo soy más la hermana que dice, ‘Pues hazlo; no pierdes nada, la verdad,’” Paola De León dijo. “Y de un día al otro le dije, ‘Pues vamos a hacerlo; vamos a empezarlo’”. Al comienzo, dijo que compartió en su Instagram personal la idea de vender brownies y sus seguidores votaron que si querían probarlos. “Ese mismo día fuimos a comprar los ingredientes”, Paola De León dijo. “Los primeros brownies que hicimos, super feos la verdad”. Dijo que su hermana se encargaba de la producción y presentación del producto y ella de la mercadotecnia. Desde que empezaron a emprender durante la pandemia hasta un poco después, tuvieron que tomar una pausa por sus estudios. En el 2023, ellas decidieron retomar PAU’S aún solo con pedidos en línea y entregas. “Mientras que estábamos haciendo esto, yo tenía mi trabajo de tiempo completo”, Lizbeth De León dijo. “Trabajaba toda la semana y luego el fin de semana es cuando hacíamos las

pre-órdenes en nuestra página y entregar”. Paola De León dijo que siempre han tenido sangre de emprendedoras. “Nuestras abuelas tenían sus negocios cuando eran jóvenes”, dijo. “Entonces, siento que en algún punto íbamos a empezar esto”. Las hermanas compartieron que su familia ha sido de gran apoyo a lo largo de su emprendimiento. “La verdad, son nuestro orgullo”, Paola De León dijo. “Siempre nos han enseñado a echarle ganas a todo”. Lizbeth De León dijo que una de las cosas más importantes para crecer la repostería fue el estar activas en redes sociales. “Ahorita las redes sociales son súper importantes”, dijo. “Le dimos mucha importancia porque [antes] no teníamos una tienda”. Después de estar sirviendo a sus clientes en línea, PAU’S Repostería abrió su primera ubicación el 1 de noviembre, ubicada en 4400 N. 23rd St. Suite 153 en McAllen. “En el 2024, estábamos entre queremos abrir algo pero como que no se nos daba la oportunidad [...] por las horas y todo eso porque yo todavía estaba estudiando y luego mi hermana tenía su trabajo”, Paola De León dijo.

“Ya después, 2025, decidimos que ya es tiempo y se nos dio la oportunidad”. La hermana menor agregó que sabía que esto siempre había sido el sueño de Lizbeth. “Ella tenía sus dudas [...] pero yo le decía, si tú sabes que quieres hacerlo, vamos a hacerlo y de un día al otro, literal”, dijo. Lizbeth De León comentó que ha visto crecer el negocio en redes sociales pero también en el número de personas que visitan la tienda local. “Siento como que ahora la diferencia es que antes tenías que ordenar con tiempo y ahora ya puedes ir”, dijo. Personalmente, dijeron que

las dos han crecido en cómo saber manejar el negocio y la comunicación de una con la otra. Para el futuro de PAU’S, las hermanas dijeron que quieren crecer su locación actual. “Nuestra meta es agarrar un lugar más grande, café style”, Lizbeth De León dijo. Con lo aprendido en su camino de emprendimiento, Paola De León ofreció un consejo para quienes desean comenzar un negocio propio. “Nada más empiézalo”, dijo. “Hagan su plan y, si saben que es lo quieren hacer, háganlo y traten de siempre estar enfocados en las diferentes metas que quieran lograr”.



Lizbeth De León, co-propietaria de PAU’S Repostería y Pastelería, prepara una orden para llevar dentro de su tienda, ubicada en 4400 N. 23rd St. Suite 153 en Mercado District en McAllen.



Paola (izquierda) y Lizbeth De León, propietarias de PAU’S Repostería y Pastelería, muestran rollos de canela de su negocio, ubicado en 4400 N. 23rd St. Suite 153 en Mercado District en McAllen.

DIBUJA USANDO LA MENTE

EMMA CASTILLO
THE RIDER

El capítulo en UTRGV de la Sociedad de Honor Psi Chi y Unfolded: Poetry Project invitan a estudiantes a explorar la salud mental por medio de la poesía, pintura y reflexión comunitaria. Historias de Salud Mental: Una Colaboración con Unfolded Poetry Project se llevará a cabo de 6:30 a 8:30 p.m. el martes en el salón 1.101 del Student Academic Center en el campus de Edinburg. El evento combina lecturas de

poesía en vivo con actividades de arte expresivo, invitando a los asistentes a pintar sus emociones mientras escuchan un trabajo original centrado en la salud mental, de acuerdo a la coordinadora de eventos del capítulo. La meta es crear un espacio que ayude a los estudiantes a expresarse a sí mismos, compartir experiencias y desestigmatizar conversaciones alrededor de la salud mental. Andrey Melendez, coordinadora de eventos de Psi Chi, dijo que la idea del evento creció de un taller ella asistió en

la Conferencia de la Asociación Nacional de Psicología Latinx a principios de este otoño. Una sesión le pidió a sus participantes dibujar lo que sentían mientras escuchaban música. “Mientras escuchaba, me encontré liberando mis emociones al papel”, Melendez dijo. “Se sintió tan liberador”. Dijo que la experiencia, combinada con el aprender sobre organizaciones de arte en la comunidad como Craft School Project, la inspiró a crear un espacio en campus donde la expresión y la sanación puedan coexistir.

Unfolded, una organización sin fines de lucro fundada en 2022, liderará la parte de la poesía del programa. De acuerdo a su página web, el grupo se enfoca en amplificar las diversas voces y promover la expresión por medio de la escritura y el habla. La coordinadora del evento dijo que los interesados en la lectura pueden inscribirse el día del evento. Los poemas no necesitan seguir ningún estilo específico, pero sí tienen que acoplarse con el tema de la salud mental, sea por medio de la reflexión personal, experiencias vividas o en recuperación. Luz Martinez, presidenta de Psi Chi, dijo que espera que el evento proporcione a

los estudiantes un sentir de comodidad y pertenencia. “Espero que las personas sientan un sentido de comunidad y seguridad”, Martinez dijo. “No solo personas asistiendo, sino personas que comparten un propósito y comparten un espacio compartido seguro”. Además de poesía, los participantes tendrán acceso a un canvas, pinturas, caballetes, café y conchas, la presidenta del capítulo dijo. Mientras los participantes escuchan las lecturas, los invitados son alentados a pintar sus reacciones, emociones o interpretaciones del trabajo. Melendez añadió que el arte expresivo puede revelar emociones subconscientes que las personas no son capaces de articular con palabras; las imágenes y los colores que las personas usen para pinturas están relacionados con lo que puedan sentir dentro. “Cuando estaba dibujando [en la conferencia], me encontré dibujando una sog en mi cuello”, dijo. “Eso es un síntoma somático de la ansiedad que no me di cuenta que tenía hasta que lo estaba dibujando. Solo salio”. Martinez dijo que planea seguir organizando eventos de arte expresivo en futuros semestres, aunque el liderazgo de Psi Chi cambie.

El evento está abierto a todos los estudiantes, sin importar su área de estudio o experiencia en la poesía. Los participantes pueden quedarse con el arte que creen. “No tienes que estar luchando con algo para venir a pintar y decirnos cómo te sientes”, Martinez dijo. “Es una audiencia de cualquiera y de para quien sea”. Para preguntas o acomodaciones especiales, contacte andrea.melendez01@utrgv.edu. --Traducido por Sofía Cantú Saucedo



Andrey Melendez (izquierda), una estudiante de último año de psicología y coordinadora de eventos de Psi Chi, y Luz Martinez, una estudiante de último año de psicología y presidente de Psi Chi, hablan sobre el evento colaborativo Salud Mental: Una Colaboración con Unfolded Poetry Project en la oficina de The Rider en el campus de Edinburg.



Andrey Melendez, una estudiante de último año de psicología y coordinadora de eventos de Psi Chi, abre una caja llena de caballetes de arte para el evento colaborativo Salud Mental: Una Colaboración con Unfolded Poetry Project de 6:30 a 8:30 p.m. el martes en el salón 1.101 del Student Academic Center en el campus de Edinburg.

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UN POCO DE ROCK

EDUARDO ESCAMILLA
A&E EDITOR

With its electric synergy of melancholic heart and nostalgic synth-pop textures, Mexican rock band Odisseo is set to conclude the five-date U.S. leg of its tour, the touring cycle for its latest album “Tormentas Inesperadas.” The show will take place at 7 p.m. Thursday at Cine El Rey, located at 311 S. 17th St., in McAllen. Odisseo is comprised of members Juan Pablo López on vocals, Manuel Uribe on drums, Daniel León on guitar, Rodolfo Guerrero on keyboards and Édgar Macín on bass. The Rider interviewed López before Odisseo’s inaugural U.S. performance Dec. 1. at the iconic The Roxy Theatre in Los Angeles, a venue where history-making shows have taken place and where the Mexican group officially became part of its hallowed halls.

“It’s very exciting to see all the photos and hear all the stories they tell us,” López said in Spanish. “It makes us a little nervous, but we are ready.” The tour comes after the band experienced delays due to visa issues and had to reprogram its original September dates. López said it is “exciting” to fulfill the band’s decade-long desire to perform for its U.S. audience with the tour’s realization. Odisseo’s signature sound, according to the lead singer, is rooted in a fundamental contradiction, one even reflected

in the popular interpretation of the band’s name, which hints at hatred and desire. “We love to live in that duality, both in professional life and in personal life,” López said. He added the dual nature also defines its music, which often pairs danceable, high-energy rhythms with profoundly sad lyrics. López said the band’s latest album, “Tormentas Inesperadas,” explores the inevitability of life’s problems and the very things that give existence meaning.

“We feel that viewing everything through an overly optimistic lens can strip life of its depth,” he said. López said, metaphorically, the storms are not thought of as a purely tragic event for the band but rather an opportunity for growth. “Sometimes the storms are the water that waters a plant so that a flower may grow later,” the lead singer said. The band has evolved its writing process, moving away from strictly autobiographical accounts because having “a

broken heart for so long is impossible.” Instead, López said the band has learned to be “more like observers” and find inspiration in the experiences of others, using a “very common, very colloquial language ... that everyone can understand,” which is key for listeners to identify with the music. The band’s sonic identity is anchored by the synthesizer, which López called “a key element.” He said the band deliberately cultivates a “vintage sound,”

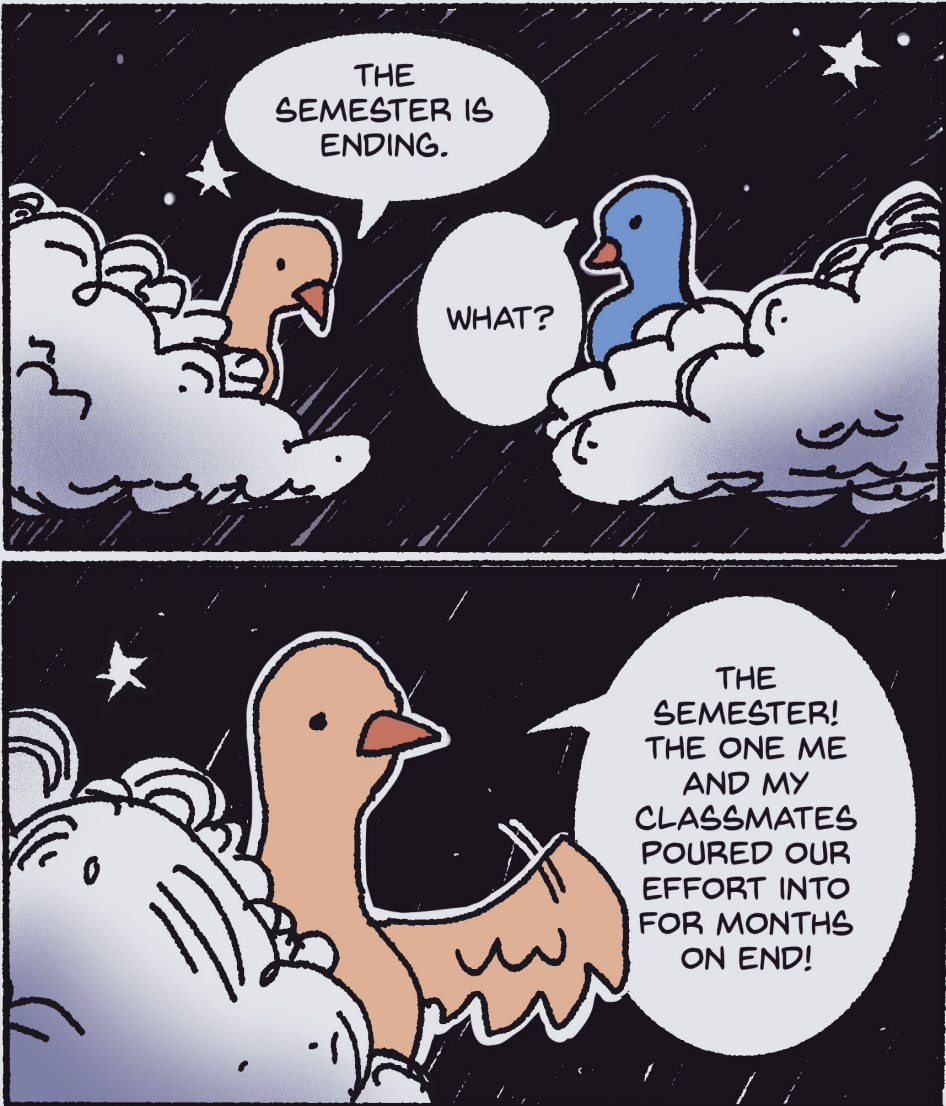
known for a high-energy stage presence, he said. The band is not one “that only plays behind their instrument.” To prepare for its live shows, López offered advice to attendees. “My recommendation for the audience is that they definitely rest before the show because they are going to be part of it,” he said. “They are going to dance; they are going to scream. They are going to sing; they are going to do everything.” To learn more about the band, visit odisseo.mx.



PHOTO COURTESY ODISSEO

Odisseo, a Mexican rock band, will perform at 7 p.m. Thursday in Cine El Rey in McAllen to conclude its U.S. tour. Shown are members Édgar Macín (from left), Daniel León, Manuel Uribe, Rodolfo Guerrero and Juan Pablo López.

utilizing emulators of strings common in the 1970s and '80s to create a blend where they “sound like an old band, like the classics, but with the high fidelity that the future and technology bring.” López said the Cine El Rey show will feature a broad mix of material. While the recent Mexico tour focused heavily on the latest album, the U.S. dates will pull from “all of Odisseo’s discography—old songs, new songs.” The decision is a conscious nod to its patient American fans, according to the lead singer. “We are very conscious of that,” López said. “... Sometimes you go to see your favorite artist and they don’t play that one song you’ve loved for years. We want the people here in the United States to leave super happy.” Odisseo is



Vaqueros showdown vs. No. 2 Texas

ALI HALLOUM
THE RIDER

As women’s basketball wraps up the non-conference portion of the 2025-26 season, UTRGV is anticipating a marquee matchup against one of the top programs in the country.

The University of Texas at Austin Longhorns (9-0) are set to play the Vaqueros at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at Bert Ogden Arena in Edinburg.

UTRGV Women’s Basketball head coach Lane Lord spoke to the media Thursday ahead of the game. Lord said the team can “hopefully compete” against what he calls “the best basketball team in the United States.”

“[The Horns] just beat No. 2, [University of] South Carolina, and No. 3 [University of California, Los Angeles] over the weekend,” he said. “You’re going to see a whole different style of athlete. You’re going to see a whole different style of strength and size that you’ve probably never seen in your life.”

The Vaqueros have faced Texas 11 times in the past, having lost all 11. Their last matchup was a 35-94 rout at the Moody Center in Austin.



Kayla Lorenz (right), sophomore guard, passes the ball to Elizabeth Romen, sophomore guard, during Wednesday's practice in the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

Lord said the team anticipates another great atmosphere at the Bert Ogden Arena, where the program attendance record was set the last time UTRGV hosted the Horns in 2023 (6,591).

“We’re trying to get that to 8,000 this year and just shatter the record and showcase women’s basketball,” he said. “What other better way to do it than play our mothership, the

University of Texas that we’re all a part of.”

Through seven games played, the Vaqueros are 3-4, having lost three straight entering this game including its conference opener Tuesday at Lamar University 67-59.

The primary driver for UTRGV’s recent struggles is on offense. They have remained a solid defensive unit for most

of the year. Lord said the team is still looking for consistent 70-point-a-game offense.

“I think we’re kind of laying our hat on defense right now,” he said. “Offensively, we’ve had stretches. We’ve played really good, but we haven’t been as consistent. We’ve got to get to that 70-point mark.”

Finding consistent offense will be a tall task, as UTRGV will

enter the Texas game without two key players in junior guard Erin Maguire and senior forward Charlotte O’Keefe, with the latter having undergone surgery Friday.

“We’re gonna be out with one of our post players for about four weeks,” Lord said. “And then Erin Maguire, one of our other guards missed the last couple games, and we really need to get her back.”

He said they will rely on their depth to carry them through their injured stretch, with junior guard Jalayah Ingram, who is third in the Southland Conference in scoring and freshman forward Rylie Whitehair, who makes her first start Wednesday.

Vaqueros freshman forward Chazlyn Dettor spoke with The Rider and said, amid this stretch, the team’s mentality is “next man up.”

“As long as we play together and play as a team, I think we’ll be alright,” Dettor said. “[Wednesday’s] game is a great opportunity to showcase what we have as players and just grow and learn as a team.”

Students can claim their tickets through 11:02 p.m. Wednesday by logging into the Student Ticket Portal.

DRAVA RIOS/ THE RIDER

Round up the fall, look ahead

DANIELA CHAPA-REYES
THE RIDER

As the fall semester comes to an end, UTRGV had an eventful season for its sports teams. From an inaugural season to shared Southland Conference champions, the teams made an impact this semester. The spring semester also brings a promising season.

Look ahead: Baseball

The UTRGV Baseball Team is set to start their season Feb. 13 against the University of Kansas at the UTRGV Baseball Stadium.

Head coach Derek Matlock said he is excited about the schedule they have.

“We are really excited about such a great conference,” Matlock said. “We are excited to see if we can go in there, have a big year and get another championship.”

For the pre-season, the team is set to compete against Texas Tech University, the University of Houston and the University of Texas at Austin.

Football

Ending the season 9-3, 5-3 (SLC), the team made history in its first season competing. While being undefeated at home, the Vaqueros were able to close out the season with a three-game winning streak.

Head coach Travis Bush said in a Nov. 23 news conference

the team is a “special group.”

“They exemplify everything we wanted,” Bush said. “Just extremely proud of everything they have done, the way they have battled, the way they come together; they have done things everyone told them they couldn’t [do].”

Volleyball

After having a bumpy start to its pre-season, the volleyball team was able to pick up a 16-game winning streak and a shared SLC championship with Stephen F. Austin State University.

The team then headed to the conference tournament, where they ultimately fell once again to SFA. Junior setter Isabella Costantini and junior middle blocker Julianna Bryant were named SLC Volleyball All-Conference Team to close out the season.

Swimming & Diving

The Vaqueros closed out their fall season with a bang. Freshmen Dia Henderson and Sarah Bull, and sophomore Annaleagh Stahl and Ida Rudelius made a school record of 1:39:18 in the 200-freestyle relay at the Northwest Collegiate Invite hosted by the University of Idaho. Bull set another school record of 5:06:94 for the 500-freestyle. Stahl, Bull, Henderson and freshman Jaydy Jay set a school record



Freshman outside hitter Dimitria Nanou spikes the ball and scores during the game against Southeastern Louisiana University on Oct. 16 inside the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

of 3:57:66 for the 400-medley relay.

Women’s Soccer

The women’s soccer team had a harsh season but were able to conclude its season 3-6-1. Head coach Mark Foster had a medical leave of absence after the pre-season. The Vaqueros ended with a win 1-3 against Lamar University on Oct. 30. Graduate forward Savannah Frisby marked the first

goal for that night.

“Extremely proud of everything they have done.”

--Travis Bush, head coach for UTRGV Football

Men’s Soccer

The men’s soccer team had a tough season as they look forward to entering the Ohio Valley Conference for Fall 2026, according to a UTRGV Athletics News Release. The team faced no wins at home, a total of seven losses, two tied matches and one win. They last faced Stetson University on Oct. 28 with a score of 1-1.



Graduate midfielder Sam Maudsley attempts to pass the ball to sophomore forward Lisa Elowsson as the Northwestern State University Demons approach to counter-attack at the game that took place on Sept. 12 at the Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.



Redshirt senior quarterback Eddie Lee Marburger makes an offensive play in the game against Houston Christian University Oct. 4 at the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium in Edinburg.

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