

THE RIDER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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OFFICERS SHARE WHAT A USUAL DAY ON DUTY LOOKS LIKE

SOPHIA CORTEZ
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Police Department, with about 6,065 officers distributed across university campuses, works 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, including holidays, to keep students, faculty and staff safe.

Marco Huerta, a UTRGV police officer for six years and a former Brownsville Police Department officer for 27 years, who has worked at the Brownsville, Edinburg and Harlingen campuses, told The Rider about the purpose of the police department and what it represents for the university.

“We provide safety for the campus community ... of course, safety is the No. 1 priority for the university, making sure

our faculty, staff and students are safe at all times,” Huerta said.

He said the police department ensures all police officers have unique skills and personal attributes such as strength, empathy, patience and decision making, as they work together as a team who notify each other of any significant calls that concern the impact on the campus community.

The officers’ patrol ranges from walking to driving a car or riding a bicycle, allowing them to have visibility into the campus community.



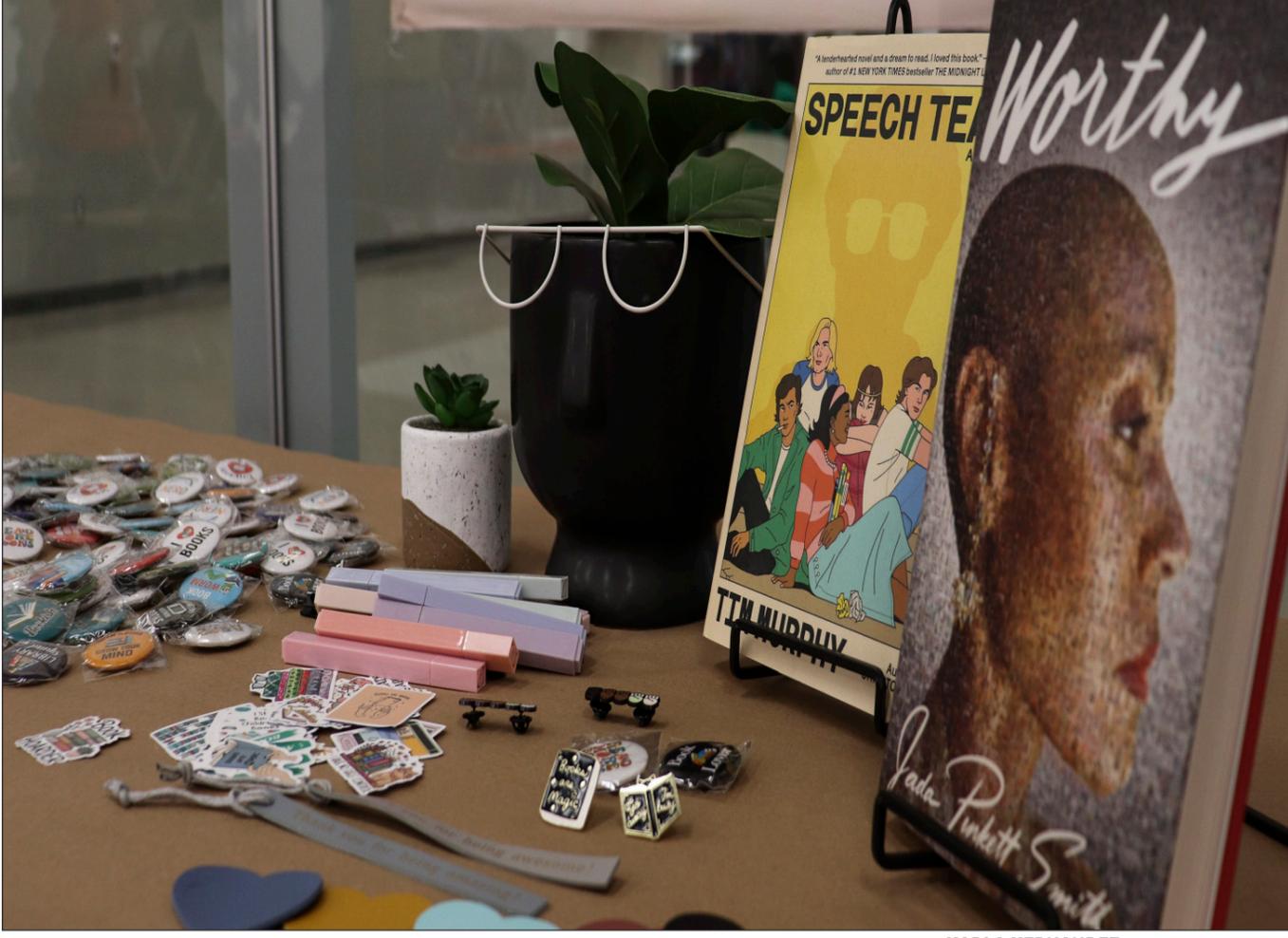
KARLA HERNANDEZ /THE RIDER

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Shown is a police car outside the University Police building on the Brownsville campus. “[If something] doesn’t look right, give us a call, and we’ll look into it,” said Marco Huerta, a university police officer. “Whether it’s nothing or it’s something, we’ll look into it.”

IN BETWEEN PAGES

SGA ELECTIONS ARE ON THE HORIZON



KARLA HERNANDEZ /THE RIDER PHOTOS

The Bookshelves & Bookworms event took place March 11 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus. Shown are some of the items given to attendees.



CARLOS CASTAÑEDA /THE RIDER

Student Government Association candidates meet for their mandatory candidate meeting March 4 in the Student Union Sage Room on the Edinburg campus.

CARLOS CASTAÑEDA
COPY EDITOR

Student Government Association Elections organized a mandatory candidate meeting where students seeking to run for office attended with the purpose of discussing the election guidelines for the 2026-2027 period.

If a candidate did not attend, it could result in the name being excluded from the ballot. The meetings took place March 3 in the Main Building on the Brownsville campus, March 4 in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus and March 7 online.

“Students that are running for office, I really commend them for wanting to be student leaders of our university,” said Ray Ruiz, an SGA adviser.

SGA candidate campaigns begin today.

During the March 4 meeting, Ruiz spoke about SGA’s function and duties at UTRGV and explained to candidates what is allowed and what is not during the campaign period.

Among these responsibilities, candidates cannot impede the flow of pedestrian traffic nor be less than 25 feet away from polling places or any computer lab. Furthermore, they must provide the elections committee a detailed list of all people working in the campaign.

Candidates must also submit all of their campaign material for the committee’s approval and submit at least one poster, which cannot contain UTRGV or SGA paraphernalia.

By April 12, candidates must present the committee a campaign expense report, which cannot exceed \$500.

Miranda Barajas, a political science junior who is running for senator for the College of Liberal Arts, said she decided to run after listening to some concerns from her peers.

See **SGA**, Page 2



Claudia De La Garza, a computer science junior, reads a book during Bookshelves & Bookworms March 11 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.



Victoria Bernal (left), an integrated health science freshman, and Yanira Cavazos, an integrated health science sophomore, participate in the bingo activity during the Bookshelves & Bookworms event March 11 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville 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

Monday Tabling

The Christians at RGV will host a tabling event from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

IMA General Meeting

The Association of Accountants and Financial Professionals in Business will meet from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Liberal Arts Building North Room 117 on the Edinburg campus.

EAC General Meeting

The Environmental Awareness Club will meet from 3:15 to 5 p.m. in Liberal Arts Building North Room 111 on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday

SGA Meet the Candidates Fair

The Student Government Association will host a Meet the Candidates fair from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Main building courtyard on the Brownsville campus.

Access for Sex-Ed Weekly Tabling

Access for Sex-Education will host a tabling event from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus.

campus.

ACJA General Meeting

The American Criminal Justice Association Sigma Kappa Chi will meet from 1:45 to 3:15 p.m. in Liberal Arts Building North Room 109 on the Edinburg campus.

BAA Meeting

The Brownsville Accounting Association will meet from 5 to 6 p.m. in Life and Health Science Building Room 1.316 on the Brownsville campus.

Beta Alpha Psi-Xi Phi Chapter General Meeting

The Beta Alpha Psi-Xi Phi Chapter will meet from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Health Affairs Building East Room 1.114 on the Edinburg campus.

Women's History Month

The Center for Student Involvement will host a Women's History Month event from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.

HOF Pop Up Shop

The House of Fashion will host a pop-up shop from 3 to 6 p.m. on the Student Union east patio on the Edinburg campus.

PSA Discussion

The Political Science Association will have a discussion from 5 to 6 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.112 on the Edinburg campus.

Wednesday

Bible Study

The Christians at RGV will host a Bible study from noon to 1:45 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 1.221 on the Brownsville campus.

UnionCon 2026

The Student Union, Center for Student Involvement, and Housing and Residence Life will host Union Con 2026 from noon to 5 p.m. in the Commons on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Thursday in La Sala on the Brownsville campus.

Game Development Night

The Valle Game Devs will host a game development night from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Engineering and Academic Building Room 1.206 on the Edinburg campus.

Thursday

ASL Club Meeting

The American Sign Language Club will meet from

noon to 1:30 p.m. in Health Affairs Building East Room 1.14 on the Edinburg campus.

Knotted Together General Meeting

Knotted Together will meet from 5 to 6 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.102 on the Edinburg campus.

RGV German Club Meeting

The RGV German Club will meet from 2 to 3:15 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 2.204 on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can discuss important topics about the club.

Friday

Bible Study

The Baptist Student Ministry Brownsville will host a Bible study from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. on Student Union Room 1.28 lawn on the Brownsville campus.

Cesar Chavez Day of Service

The Freshman Leadership Academy will host Cesar Chavez Day of Service from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Student Union Room 1.28 on the Brownsville campus.

--Compiled by Mariah Escobar



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between March 3 and 10.

March 3

1:19 p.m.: An officer was dispatched regarding a minor traffic collision involving a UTRGV Volt and a passenger car in Lot E-16 on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported.

6:39 p.m.: An officer was dispatched regarding an employee who accidentally struck the building while attempting to park her vehicle in the Student Academic Center on the Edinburg campus. Minor injuries were reported. Two individuals involved were transported to the nearest hospital for further medical evaluation.

March 4

3:09 p.m.: An officer

responded to a traffic collision involving a university golf cart and an employee's personal vehicle in Lot B-6 on the Brownsville campus. The vehicle was unattended at the time of the accident, and the golf cart operator did not claim any injuries.

March 6

10:44 a.m.: An officer was dispatched regarding a student feeling ill in the Academic Services Building on the Edinburg campus. Emergency Medical Services arrived and transported the student to a hospital for further treatment.

March 9

11:24 a.m.: A student reported her headphones were stolen from her backpack. The student was able to locate her device by using its GPS at an off-campus location. The case is under

investigation.

1:22 p.m.: A student reported her unsecured scooter was stolen at a bike rack in front of the Dining and Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

1:34 p.m.: An officer responded regarding a verbal argument between a student and a professor in the Main Building on the Brownsville campus. After further investigation, it was determined no crime occurred. The case will be forwarded to Student Rights and Responsibility for further review.

8 p.m.: Officers responded regarding markings found outside of the women's restroom in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

March 10

2:15 p.m.: An employee reported an intoxicated man inside the Texas Southmost College Science, Engineering and Technology restroom Brownsville campus. Officers contacted the non-affiliated man. The man was placed under arrest, charged with a public intoxication class C misdemeanor and transported to the Brownsville Police Department city jail for booking procedures. He was also issued a criminal trespass warning for all UTRGV properties.

5:40 p.m.: An employee reported receiving harassing emails from a former employee, whom he found concerning. The case is under investigation.

--Compiled by Narda Serna

**SUBMIT A STORY IDEA TO
THERIDER@UTRGV.EDU**

SGA

Continued from Page 1

"I think I have the drive to be able to hear those concerns and, then, have solutions for them," Barajas said. "And I think with SGA, it was the clear option for me to choose."

She encouraged students to give the SGA a shot and to participate in their student government's elections.

Delma Olivarez, associate dean for the Center for Student Involvement at UTRGV, encouraged candidates to conduct their campaigns to increase voter turnout numbers.

"Last year was the highest ... it was like 9.3%," Olivarez said. "... We need help increasing voter turnout; we need young, Latino voters to even vote in their campus elections, you know. It's important. It directly impacts y'all ... because you have people that, you know, are representing your specific college or ... the campus you go to."

According to Ruiz, all UTRGV students are eligible to participate in the elections, except School

of Medicine students, School of Podiatric Medicine students and high school students enrolled at UTRGV through dual enrollment.

"[For] students that are voting, I would really encourage all of the entire UTRGV student body that is eligible to vote to vote because who they elect is really important because they serve the collective means of the student body," he said.

The "Meet the Candidates" event will take place at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Main Building courtyard on the Brownsville campus and noon Thursday in the Student Union east patio on the Edinburg campus.

The Executive Candidate Forum will take place at noon April 2 in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus.

The SGA elections will take place from April 6 to 9. Students will receive an electronic ballot through their university email. However, they can also vote in the polling places during election days from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Student Union on both campuses.

The Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) advises the university president on the allocation of the student services fee in accordance with Texas Education Code Sec. 54.5043.

SFAC will begin review of Fiscal Year 2027 budget proposals.

UPCOMING MEETINGS 2026

Subject to change.

Date	Time
Friday, March 13	1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Friday, March 27	1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Friday, April 10	1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

All meetings will be in EUCTR 323

For more information, visit:



Please contact the Office of the Dean of Students at dos@utrgv.edu or (956) 665-2260 to RSVP and/or request accommodations.

A CAREER IN THE FORECAST

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
SPANISH EDITOR

UTRGV students will have the opportunity to gain career advice and industry insight from an expert during an upcoming COMMversation event from 12:30 to 2 p.m. March 31 at the PlainsCapital Bank Theater in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus, hosted by the university's communication department.

The event will feature Tim Smith, chief meteorologist at KRGV Channel 5 News, who will share career advice, discuss his background in meteorology and participate in a Q&A with students.

Alyssa Cerroni, a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication at UTRGV, said the goal of COMMversation is to learn about communication.

"We want to bring students across disciplines to learn about careers ... and learn from people who have worked in the field," Cerroni said.

She added she hopes students also develop an interest in taking communication courses.

Cerroni said the department chose Smith as a speaker because of his influence and long career in communication.

"The most obvious choice was Mr. Tim Smith," she said. "We also know that he's a beloved member of our community."

Smith has more than 40 years of experience in the field. He began his



PHOTO COURTESY WESLACO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Tim Smith, chief meteorologist at KRGV Channel 5 News, speaks during the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a brand new Sam's Club Sept. 4, 2025, in Weslaco.

career at KRGV in 1981 as a weekend weather reporter and was promoted to weekday reporting in the spring of 1983.

He said he accepted the invitation to speak at the event because he feels a connection to the campus community and wants to motivate students.

"I love UTRGV, I didn't go to school there, but I feel like I did because I've spent so much time on campus [at events]," Smith said. "... And to motivate

students and take that opportunity, I'll be happy to be there and do that."

Cerroni said it is important for students to attend because "they can learn beyond the theory we teach in class."

"They get to learn from somebody who is using applied behaviors every day at work," she said. "They get to pass along practical skills and knowledge that they have."

When asked about becoming one of

the Rio Grande Valley's most recognized news figures, he replied, "[It] makes me feel like I've done my job over the years."

"My job is to ... predict the weather day to day, but ... also keep people safe during storms by giving them good information that can be used to prepare their home and family," Smith said.

He added he appreciates the recognition, and it leaves a good feeling that the community has listened.

Cerroni said it is best for students to learn from people doing the jobs and careers of interest at events like COMMversation.

"They can provide practical, realistic information that [students] can use once they graduate from college," she said.

During the event, Smith hopes students leave with the message that "anything is possible."

"I never dreamt that the things that would happen in my life have happened," he said. "I was not a scientist ... I was a broadcaster, which I still am, but the science side of it kind of took over, and I never dreamt of that."

Smith added he wants to give students a first-hand look into what the industry is like.

"I think I'd give them a realistic look at the industry, having been in it for so long," he said. "I can help them see the upside, and I can talk about the downside."

GAS PRICE RISE IN THE VALLEY

ETHAN MALDONADO
THE RIDER

Gas prices around the Rio Grande Valley have climbed in recent weeks following the outbreak of conflict involving Iran, with local averages rising more than 40 cents in just one week.

According to AAA Texas' fuel prices website, the average price of gasoline in the Valley, regular unleaded, averaged \$3.38 per gallon as of March 12, up from \$2.98 per gallon March 5.

Daniel Armbruster, spokesperson for AAA Texas, said the region has seen a rapid increase compared with recent months.

"In the last week, that is a difference of 41 cents," Armbruster said. "When you compare it to a month ago, it's about 70 cents higher."

The Texas statewide average reached \$3.25 per gallon, while the national average climbed to \$3.58 per gallon, according to AAA Texas.

Armbruster said the increase is closely tied to rising crude oil prices following tensions in the Middle East.

"Crude oil is the main ingredient in gasoline," he said. "Usually, what you see is when crude oil prices increase, it affects retail gasoline prices."

Armbruster said West Texas Intermediate crude oil was trading around \$85 per barrel and had recently reached about \$95 per barrel as of March 11, compared with around \$60 per barrel roughly a month ago.

WTI is a price benchmark for light

and sweet oil in the United States, according to the Library of Congress website.

He said instability in the global oil market is largely driven by developments involving Iran, a major player in the global crude market.

"If there's any blockage or disruption there, it sends a ripple effect through the entire global market for crude oil," Armbruster said.

Maroula Khraiche, a UTRGV associate professor of economics, said the situation reflects basic supply-and-demand dynamics.

"They are the supply side," Khraiche said. "When there's less of something, the price is going to go up."

She said the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow shipping route connecting the Persian Gulf to global markets, plays a key role in the global oil supply.

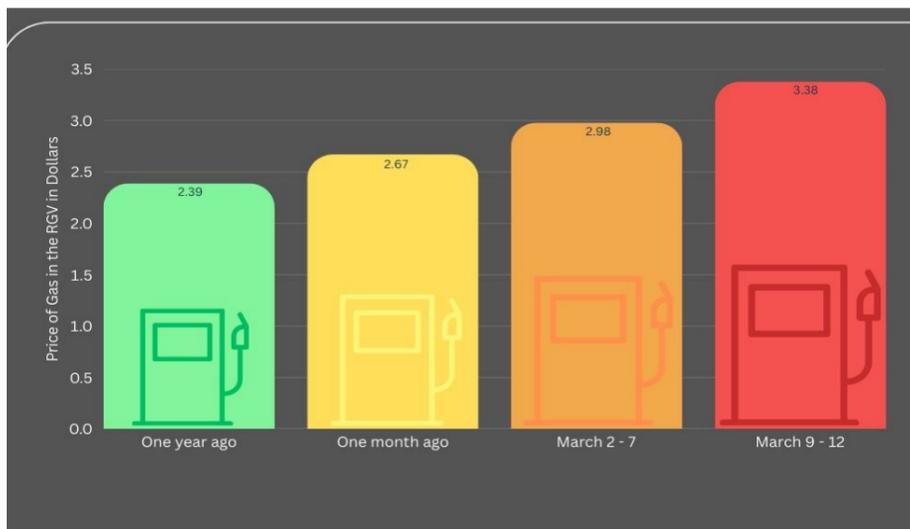
"A good chunk of ships go through the Strait of Hormuz," Khraiche said, adding that disruptions to shipping routes can limit global oil supply. "When supply decreases, and demand stays the same, people compete for what is left, and prices go up."

She said the current situation has drawn comparisons to earlier global energy crises.

"This reminds us of the 1970s oil crises," Khraiche said.

She added higher energy prices could also affect the broader economy.

"The most alarming issue about this for the United States economy is that we



MARIAJOSE GARZA /THE RIDER GRAPHIC

Source: AAA Texas

were struggling with inflation," Khraiche said. "Now, we're going to see oil prices going up, and that might compromise future inflation numbers."

Miguel Medina, an integrated health science junior, said he has noticed gas prices rising while filling up his car in recent weeks.

"I remember when gas used to be like \$2 or \$2.50," Medina said. "Then, I saw it go to \$3.11, then \$3.19, and recently it was like \$3.39."

He said the higher prices have affected his spending, noting he usually fills up once or twice a week, and, recently paid

about \$30 for gas instead of the \$20 he was used to paying.

Due to the higher costs, Medina said he now tries to drive less unless he needs to go to work or run essential errands.

Armbruster added drivers can take steps to improve fuel efficiency, including maintaining properly inflated tires, avoiding aggressive driving and removing unnecessary weight from their vehicles.

He said the future direction of gas prices will depend largely on how global oil markets react to ongoing developments.

**CHECK OUT OUR SOCIAL MEDIA
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POLICE *Continued from Page 1*

Officer Huerta said students can receive information by following them on social media, such as Instagram, where they post updates about upcoming events they will be participating in.

"Downloading the Campus Shield app, we have posters [of the app] throughout campuses, [students] could go up

and scan the QR code and download the app, it's completely free," he said. "It provides a lot of safety features on there that will be available to you if you need our police services."

Isaac De la Garza, a K-9 officer for the Edinburg campus, who has been working at UTRGV since 2014, said he initially applied as a cadet.

When asked what De la Garza enjoys doing in his free time,

he replied, "When I'm off, just spending time with my family, I also like watching NASCAR, football, basketball and pretty much anything."

The K-9 officer said his everyday shift consists of going for a walk on campus, while on duty, he interacts with students, faculty and staff to make sure everything is in order. He added his favorite part of his job is the community around

him, and that he and his canines are available for any emergencies if needed.

Working at UTRGV for 17 years, Samuel Hernandez, a lieutenant for the Brownsville campus overseeing the patrol division, shared with The Rider what a usual day on duty looks like.

"I start my day off by checking reports ... I have four sergeants who

I closely supervise, and then they have officers," Hernandez said. "I'm the one tasked to make their schedule. I also make sure that our officers are following policies, procedures and I'm more of a resource to them."

He said he also oversees the K-9 division, ensuring the canines receive their weekly training and are healthy and ready to perform.

Starting as a part-timer

at only 18 years old at the legacy institution University of Texas at Brownsville, Hernandez said his favorite part of his job is working in a university setting where everyone is one big family and building relationships and becoming friends.

COLUMN OF THE WEEK

WHAT A YEAR TO BE A SPORTS FAN



HUGO A. SEPÚLVEDA
REPORTER

Baseball was never part of my life, but I enjoy supporting the Mexican Baseball National Team and other Latin American countries.

I enjoyed watching Mexico's start in the World Baseball Classic with an 8-2 score against Great Britain and 16-0 against Brazil, forcing the mercy rule by the sixth inning.

Although they lost against the U.S. national team 3-5, it was a great game to watch with my family.

With the U.S. having a full team of MLB All-Stars, the MVP and two Cy Young's on the bullpen, the Mexican team managed to put some numbers on the scoreboard.

My expectations for the Mexican team are high since their previous participation at the 2023 WBC, where they were

eliminated by Japan 6-5 in the semifinals.

For the other part, the FIFA World Cup is set to begin 80 days from today. Soccer has been part of my entire life, and I always love watching this competition.

"... and anything can happen, especially in sports."

I think the competition is special since it is not a league cup or the Champions League cup that takes place every year. It happens every four years, with the best players around the world representing their home country with passion.

Aside from soccer and baseball, basketball has also been a fascination to watch this year.

I will say that I believe the competitiveness in the NBA has risen because all teams have done surprising things throughout the season.

One big example is having the Detroit Pistons as the leaders of the Eastern Conference and the San Antonio Spurs in second place in the Western Conference.

In my opinion, these two teams are my favorite contenders to reach the finals this season. Those who know the game know the good times the two teams had back in the day.

The Spurs having a great defender such as Victor Wembanyama reminds me of

Tim Duncan. While the Pistons, putting determination and character into the game, remind me of the "Bad Boys" Pistons.

Lastly, my other interests are set on Formula 1, with the return of Sergio "Checo" Pérez, former Redbull Racing driver, and Valtteri Bottas, former Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS driver.

These two veterans are the new drivers of the new Cadillac team.

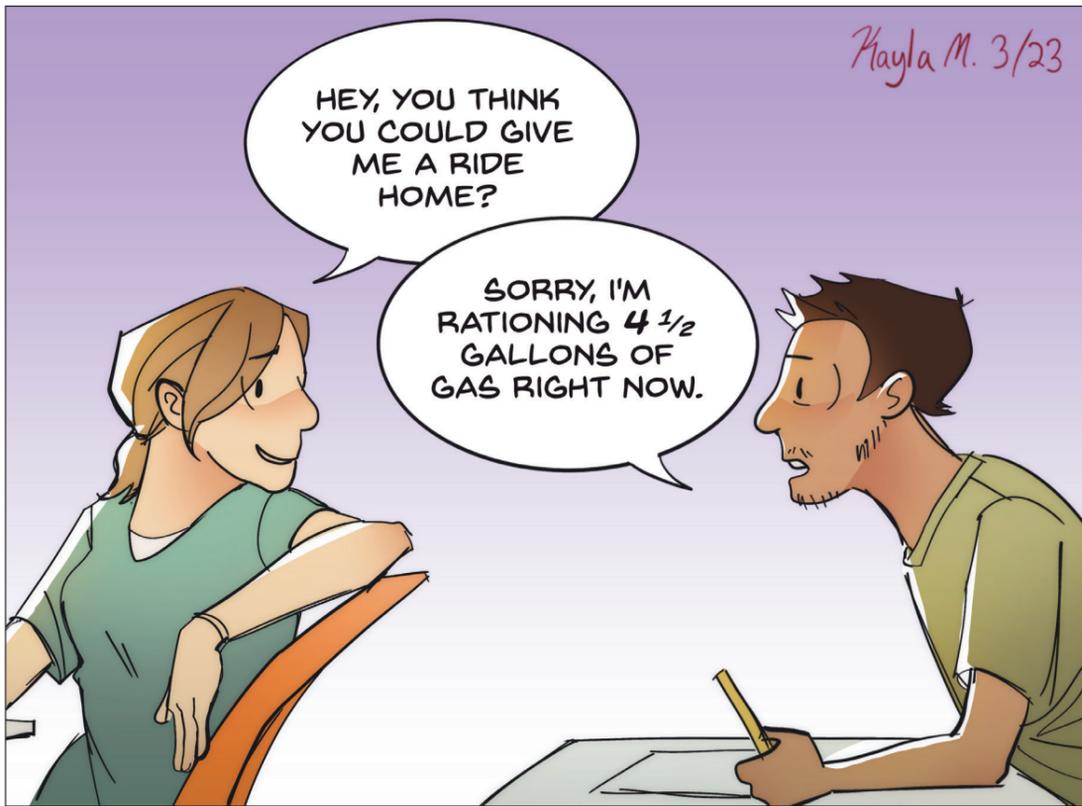
My expectations are high on them because of their experiences and the support they can bring to a new team.

Obviously, a new team and car are not expected to win races, but it's a long year, and anything can happen, especially in sports.

But what else can I say? What a year to be a sports fan.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

UNDERSTOOD, BRO



VAQUERO VOICE

WHAT IS THE HARDEST THING YOU HAD TO FACE THIS SEMESTER?

--Compiled and photos by Jocelyn Garcia Serna and Alizzaya Guel

Juan Rivera
computer science junior
"Finding enough time to do everything in a day."



Leah Hinojosa
electrical engineering sophomore
"This semester, calculus 2 has been a struggle for me. Some of the concepts are a little hard for me to understand, and are taking a bit longer than it normally does for me to really understand what you do."

Leila Lieu
manufacturing engineering sophomore
"I would say [calculus] 2 and also all of my other classes. ... I am taking, like, five classes, so it's a lot of work to put in. But yeah, I would say that, just taking a lot of classes at the same time is also a lot more challenging."



Marco Park
criminal justice freshman
"Is probably parking, trying to find parking, getting out of bed, you know. I live five minutes away from here, and even though, like, I come here pretty early, I still can't find parking."



WACKY WEB POLL

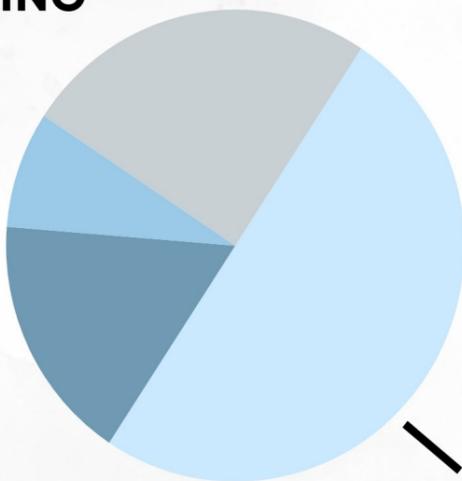
LAST WEEK'S RESULTS:
WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING OVER SPRING BREAK?

8% Party

17% Beach

25% Traveling

50% Staying home



KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE POLL ON OUR SOCIALS!
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LAS ELECCIONES DE SGA ESTÁN A LA VISTA

CARLOS CASTAÑEDA
COPY EDITOR

Elecciones para la Asociación del Gobierno Estudiantil (SGA, por sus siglas en inglés) organizó una reunión de candidatos obligatoria donde los estudiantes buscando una candidatura asistieron con el propósito de discutir



una guía para las elecciones para el periodo 2026-2027.

Si un candidato o candidata no asistió, podría resultar en que su nombre sea excluido de la boleta. Las reuniones tuvieron lugar el 3 de marzo en el Main Building del campus de Brownsville, el 4 de marzo en el Student Union del campus de Edinburg y el 6 de marzo en línea.

“Los estudiantes que se están postulando a un cargo, realmente los felicito por querer ser los líderes estudiantiles de nuestra universidad”, dijo Ray Ruiz, un asesor de SGA.

Las campañas para candidatos de SGA comienzan hoy.

Durante la reunión del 4 de marzo, Ruiz habló de la función de SGA en UTRGV y explicó a los candidatos que es lo que está permitido y no permitido durante este tiempo de campaña.

Entre estas responsabilidades, los candidatos no pueden impedir el tráfico peatonal ni estar a menos de 25 pies de los lugares de votación o cualquier laboratorio de computación. Además, deben proveer al comité de elecciones una lista detallada de cualquier persona trabajando en la campaña.

Los candidatos también deben de presentar todo su material de campaña para revisión del comité y entregar al menos un póster, que no puede contener bienes parafernales de UTRGV o el logo de SGA.

Para el 12 de abril, los candidatos deberán presentar al comité un reporte de gastos de campaña, el cual no puede exceder de \$500.

Miranda Barajas, una estudiante de tercer año de ciencias políticas que busca ser senadora por la Facultad de Artes Liberales, dijo que se animó a postularse después de escuchar inquietudes de



Candidatos para la Asociación del Gobierno Estudiantil (SGA, por sus siglas en inglés) se juntaron para su reunión de candidatos el 4 de marzo en el Salón Sage del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.

varios compañeros.

“Creo que tengo el impulso para poder escuchar esas inquietudes y, después, tener soluciones para ellos”, Barajas dijo. “Y creo que con SGA, fue la decisión más clara que pude tomar”.

Animó a los estudiantes a que al menos le den una oportunidad a SGA y participen en las elecciones de su gobierno estudiantil.

Delma Olivarez, decana asociada de Participación Estudiantil de UTRGV, alentó a los candidatos a que lleven a cabo campañas para poder aumentar los números de participación de votantes.

“El año pasado fue la más alta [...] fue como el 9.3%”, Olivarez dijo. “[...] Necesitamos su ayuda para aumentar la participación; necesitamos votantes jóvenes, latinos que voten en sus elecciones estudiantiles. Es importante. Los afecta directamente porque tienen a personas que representan tu facultad en específico o el campus al que asisten”.

De acuerdo a Ruiz, todos los estudiantes de UTRGV son elegibles para participar en las elecciones excepto estudiantes de la Escuela de Medicina,

estudiantes de la Escuela de Medicina Podiátrica y estudiantes de preparatoria que estén inscritos en UTRGV como matrícula doble.

“Para los estudiantes votando, quiero animar a todo el cuerpo estudiantil de UTRGV que es elegible para votar a que voten porque, a quien elijan, es muy importante porque servirán al bien colectivo del cuerpo estudiantil”, dijo.

El evento de “Conoce a los Candidatos” se llevará a cabo a las 12:30 p.m. el martes en el patio del Main Building en el campus de Brownsville y al mediodía el jueves en el patio este del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.

El foro de candidatos ejecutivos tomará lugar al mediodía el 2 de abril en el PlainsCapital Bank Theater del campus de Edinburg.

Las elecciones de SGA se llevarán a cabo del 6 al 9 de abril. Los estudiantes recibirán una boleta electrónica a través de su correo institucional. Sin embargo, también podrán votar en lugar de votación los días de la elección de 11 a.m. a 2 p.m. en los Student Union de ambos campus.



Matteo Garza (izquierda), un estudiante de segundo año de ciencias políticas que busca ser senador general por Edinburg, y Roy Martinez, un estudiante de segundo año de historia que busca ser senador general por Edinburg, toman notas durante la reunión de candidatos para la Asociación del Gobierno Estudiantil (SGA, por sus siglas en inglés) el 4 de marzo en el Salón Sage del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.

VALLEY SPOTLIGHT

Uplift Coffee: Sabor local y casero

SOFÍA CANTÚ SAUCEDA
SPANISH EDITOR

Lo que comenzó como una pequeña idea desde la cocina de su casa se ha convertido, dos años después, en un negocio de café a domicilio que sigue ganando clientes en el Valle del Río Grande.

Makayla Schaelchlin, una estudiante de último año de ciencias de la salud integrada en UTRGV, también es dueña de un emprendimiento llamado Uplift Coffee.

“Yo empecé trabajando en una cafetería dentro del Valley Regional Medical Center, después de la preparatoria”, Schaelchlin dijo.

Compartió que trabajó ahí por dos años y practicaba haciendo el café.

“Comencé lentamente siendo más avanzada”, Schaelchlin dijo. “[...] En ese momento, mi trabajo no había sido bueno en cuanto a la administración. Entonces, mi mamá me impulsó a empezar este negocio”.

En marzo del 2024, Uplift tomó más popularidad y decidió hacerlo su trabajo de medio tiempo junto con continuar su carrera universitaria.

Uplift es un negocio de café y matcha hecho en casa con el enfoque en entregarlos a domicilio a los clientes en



MARIAJOSE GARZA/THE RIDER

Makayla Schaelchlin, dueña de Uplift Coffee, entrega una orden de café a David Schaelchlin, un policía de la Universidad, el 10 de marzo afuera del departamento de policía de la universidad en el campus de Brownsville. Uplift vende café y matcha hechos en casa y los entrega a los residentes de Brownsville, de acuerdo a la dueña.

el área de Brownsville.

“Hago entregas desde Southmost hasta, a veces, en Olmito, y en el área de la universidad”, Schaelchlin dijo. “Otra cosa que nos diferencia es el uso de half-and-half. Le da una sensación diferente, más suave, pero aún tiene el sabor del café. Es el equilibrio perfecto”.

Agregó que, mientras estaba creciendo, nunca pensó en tener su propio negocio.

“Siempre había querido hacer algo en el ámbito policial”, Schaelchlin dijo. “Cuando comencé la universidad, pensé en ser enfermera, pero ahora cambié mi concentración a ciencias forenses”.

Dijo que uno de los mayores retos

como emprendedora es poder balancear su carrera y operar el negocio.

“Ha sido algo difícil para mí [...] he tenido más pedidos de lo usual”, dijo. “Estoy tomando seis clases. Ese es el principal desafío para mí: encontrar tiempo para hacer los pedidos”.

Schaelchlin agregó que, a pesar de ese desafío, “cada día es mejor” y dijo que se sentía feliz de poder ver crecer su negocio en el Valle.

“Siento que el Valle está creciendo”, dijo. “[...] Saber que estoy aportando a la comunidad me hace muy feliz”.

Schaelchlin compartió que, ahora que Uplift ha estado teniendo mejores resultados, ha pensado en abrir una ubicación permanente.

“Estoy buscando en lugares como Price Road y Laredo Road, algo separado de lugares similares, pero en una ubicación donde las personas vayan”, dijo.

Para otros estudiantes que desean seguir un camino similar, Schaelchlin aconsejó que siempre sigan luchando.

“Va a ser difícil al principio, pero prioriza tus estudios porque eso es lo principal”, dijo.

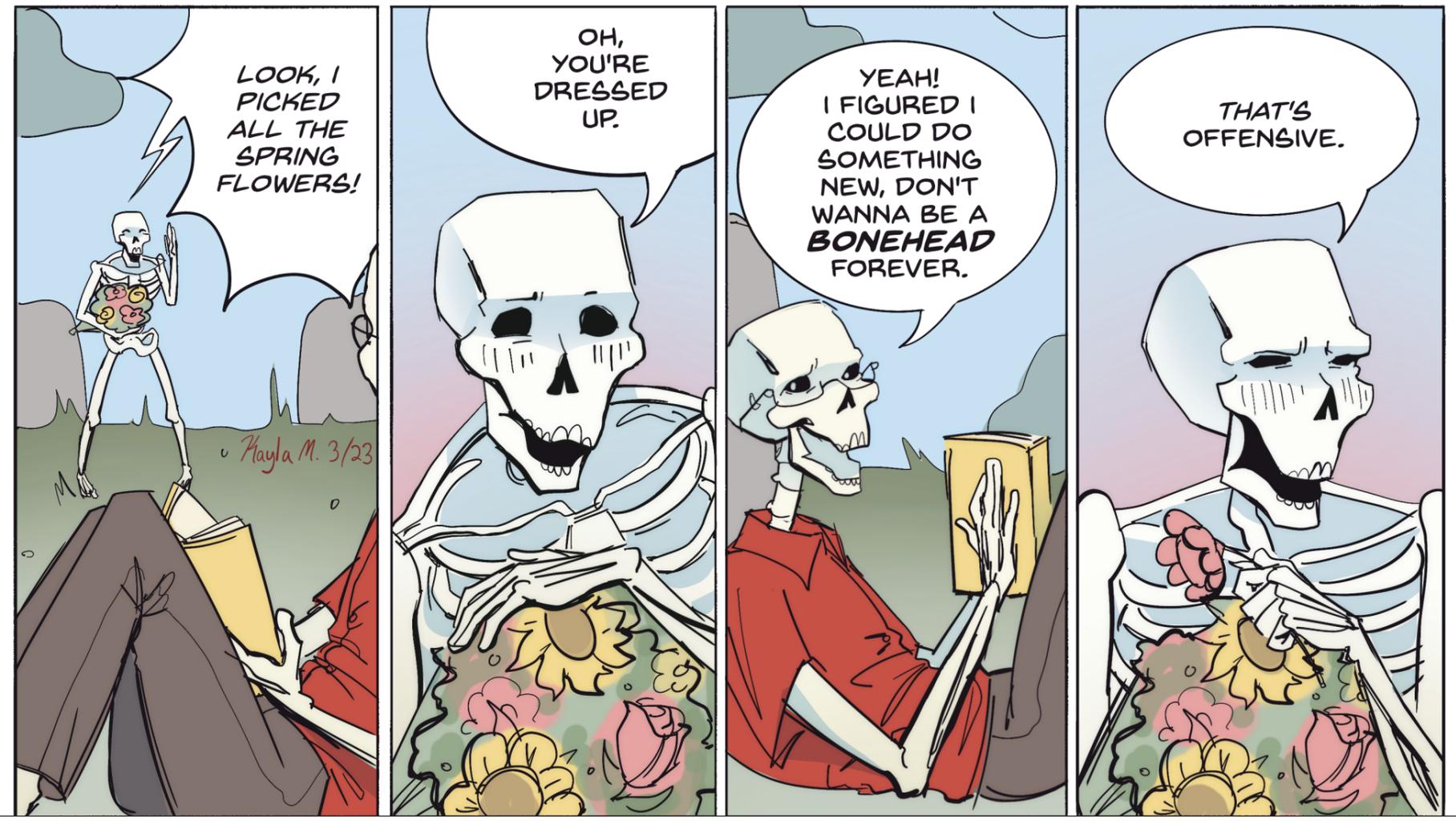
Schaelchlin anima a otros a confiar en su educación “porque los negocios, si quieres que funcionen, los conseguirás. Pero creo que siempre tendrás educación y siempre podrás confiar en ella”.

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CADAVER CONVERSATIONS #8



'GRADATIONS' EXHIBITION OPENS AT UTRGV

VALERIA TOKUN HAGA
THE RIDER

“Gradations” is an interactive art exhibition created by Jose Angel Lozano that invites viewers to reflect on the relationship between visual and material value through participatory artwork.

The exhibition, which opened March 2 on the first floor of the University Library on the Edinburg campus, will remain on display through Wednesday.

A reception was held March 11, allowing students and community members to experience the artwork and interact with the artist.

Lozano, a UTRGV studio art graduate student, said his artistic journey began in high school and deepened during his time at Texas Southmost College.

“It wasn’t really too serious until I got to college,” he said.

After completing his associate degree, Lozano transferred to UTRGV to pursue his bachelor’s degree.

“I continued my education there and learned from professors who kept the tradition of academic painting,” he said.

While his early work focused on academic painting, Lozano said his

experiences working at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art encouraged him to explore different approaches.

“So behind this exhibition, the title is ‘Gradations,’ and it presents some of my most recent conceptual and interactive works,” he said. “They examine the relationship between visual value and material value.”

The exhibition features works created with materials such as oil paint, acrylic, ink and graphite, often applied to unconventional surfaces rather than traditional canvas.

“Some of these projects create moments where viewers become participants rather than just observers,” Lozano said. “They invite self-expression, humor and reflection.”

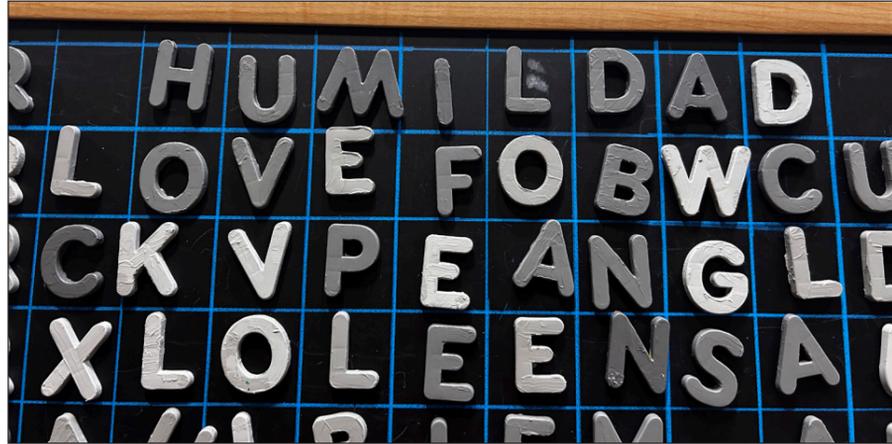
He said one of the most meaningful works in the exhibition is “Words of Value,” an interactive installation in which attendees can create words using magnetic letters arranged at different visual values.

“It’s a way for me to learn about the community through the words they create,” Lozano said, explaining the piece allows participants to reflect on the ideas and values that matter the most to them.

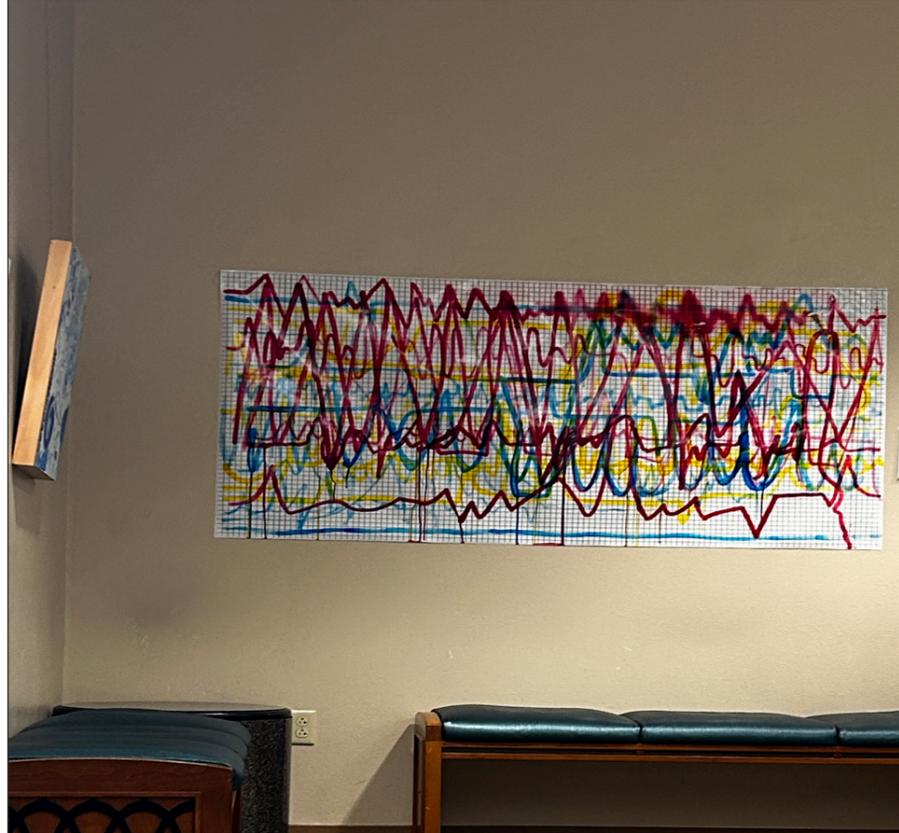


VALERIA TOKUN HAGA /THE RIDER PHOTOS

Jose Angel Lozano is a UTRGV studio art graduate student. A reception for his exhibition “Gradations” was held March 11 on the first floor of the University Library on the Edinburg campus.



“Words of Value” by Jose Angel Lozano, a UTRGV studio art graduate student, is an interactive installation in which attendees can create words using magnetic letters. It is located on the first floor of the University Library on the Edinburg campus and will remain on display through Wednesday.



A part of the exhibition presents a multiple of the artwork of Jose Angel Lozano, a UTRGV studio art graduate student, in the first floor of the University Library on the Edinburg campus, which will remain on display through Wednesday.

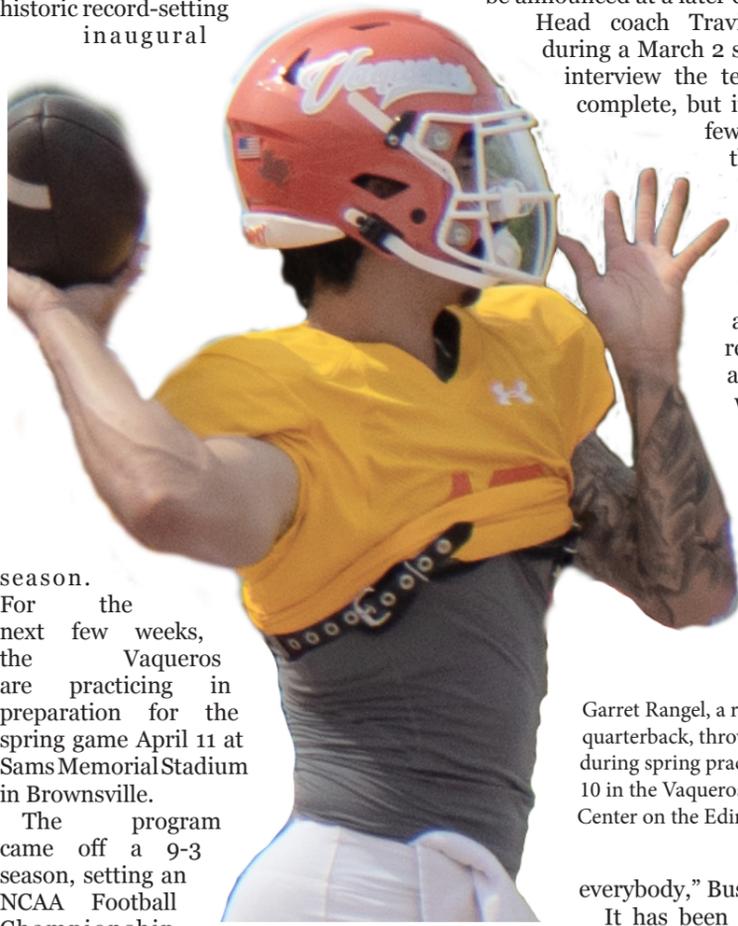


“Color Wheel” by Jose Angel Lozano, a UTRGV studio art graduate student, is an oil painting that uses rare pigments of the “Old Masters,” an artwork by Lozano. It is located on the first floor of the University Library on the Edinburg campus and will remain on display through Wednesday.

A SPRING TO REBUILD

Gael Espinoza
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Football Team is back with spring ball after a historic record-setting inaugural



season. For the next few weeks, the Vaqueros are practicing in preparation for the spring game April 11 at Sams Memorial Stadium in Brownsville. The program came off a 9-3 season, setting an NCAA Football Championship Subdivision record for the most wins for a first-year program. The cherry on top is that they ended the season undefeated at home, 7-0.

The spring practices will lead up to the Orange vs. White Spring Game in Brownsville, giving residents a chance to see the Vaqueros in action. The time will be announced at a later date.

Head coach Travis Bush said during a March 2 spring practice interview the team is mostly complete, but it may fill in a few spots before the season starts.

“Being able to really go, you know, all out and really expand and start working on the packages and ... see how much we can put in this spring and really get a look at

Garret Rangel, a redshirt junior quarterback, throws the football during spring practice March 10 in the Vaqueros Performance Center on the Edinburg campus.

everybody,” Bush said.

It has been a busy spring for the football program; its offense has been doing a lot of rework ever since players such as Eddie Lee Marburger, former quarterback, and Tony Diaz, former wide receiver, left the team.

“The majority of our offensive production last year, we’ve got to replace,” he said.

The head coach and the offensive staff recruited Garrett Rangel, a redshirt junior quarterback. He spent from 2022 to 2024 at Oklahoma State University and 2025 at Virginia Tech before coming to the Rio Grande Valley in 2026 and joining the Vaqueros.

“Garrett coming in, ran the exact same system at Oklahoma State, so a lot of familiar terminology, familiarity with coach Aych, [co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach,] as well,” Bush said.

The Vaqueros also welcomed Cameron Herrera, the new assistant director of football operations and recruiting coordinator. He was a player personnel and recruiting operations assistant at the University of Texas at Austin for the last three seasons.

With the release of the 2026 schedule, the Vaqueros will play their first home game against the University of Texas Permian Basin, an NCAA Division II school, Aug. 29 at the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium in Edinburg.



DIEGO VITA / THE RIDER PHOTOS

Kyran Lee, a redshirt freshman wide receiver, trains during spring football practice March 10 in the Vaqueros Performance Center on the Edinburg campus.



UTRGV football players practice during spring training March 10 in the Vaqueros Performance Center on the Edinburg campus. The home opener will take place Aug. 29 against the University of Texas Permian Basin.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK KOREE COTTON



DIEGO VITA / THE RIDER

Koree Cotton is a junior guard for the UTRGV Men’s Basketball Team.

Koree Cotton, a junior guard for the UTRGV Men’s Basketball Team, led the Vaqueros with 20 points in the semifinal game of the Southland Conference Basketball Championship against McNeese State University March 10 in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Q: How are you feeling today on a scale from one to 10?

A: “I’d say about a nine or 9.5 right now because we’re about to have practice. Once practice starts, I’ll probably be at a 10.”

Q: How has your first season at UTRGV been so far?

A: “It’s been great. I’ve met a lot of new people, and everyone around the program has been great—the coaches, teammates and staff. The whole athletic department has been very supportive.”

Q: What does it mean to you to earn First Team All-Conference and All-Defensive Team honors?

A: “It means a lot. It shows the hard work we put in as a team every day. I wouldn’t have gotten those honors without my teammates and coaches.”

Q: What was going through your mind during your 21-point game against Northwestern State University?

A: “I was just in the flow. The ball kept finding me in good positions, and I was able to score. Coach drew up some great plays, and hitting that big shot at the end felt amazing.”

Q: Who has had the biggest influence on your basketball journey?

A: “Of course, God. Also, my father and my high school coaches. When my mom passed away, they helped keep me on the right path and made sure I stayed focused.”

Q: What do you like most about your teammates and the team culture at UTRGV?

A: “The energy and good vibes. Everyone is passionate about basketball, and we all want to win. I feel like I’m having one of the best times of my life here.”

Q: What is a fun fact about you that most people do not know?

A: “I can cook. I’m a really good cook, so if anyone wants a meal, they can tap in with me.”

--Compiled by Diego Vita

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EMMA ALEGRIA CASTILLO
THE RIDER

Enthusiasts of fandom culture will have a place to unite as the first-ever Union Con makes its appearance on campus, readying up a full afternoon of activities.

The event, organized by the Student Union, the Center for Student Involvement, and Housing and Residence Life, will take place from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday in the Commons on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Thursday in La Sala on the Brownsville campus, offering tournaments, panels, creative workshops and a cosplay contest.

Christopher Stubbs, assistant director of Student Union programs, said the event is designed to introduce students to experiences they might not otherwise try during college.

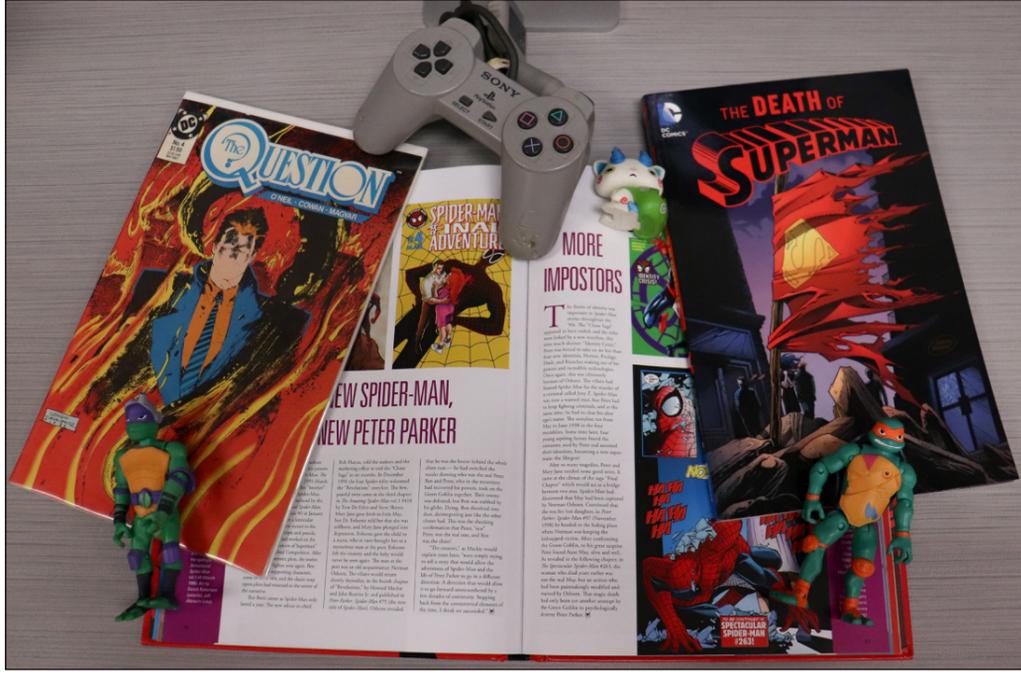
“We saw on campus that there’s a growing nerd culture,” Stubbs said. “So, we’re really excited to highlight our fan groups on campus and give everybody the opportunity to enjoy a large-scale event on our campus for the first time. I hope they engage with people who aren’t in their immediate friend groups and discover the arts and culture we have on campus.”

The convention will feature a variety of activities, including video game tournaments, Magic: The Gathering tournaments, live panels, a 360-degree camera experience, Super Soaker tie-dye and a Vaqueros Clubs fundraising hall.

Student organizations will also play a large role in the event, according to Stubbs. During the event, clubs will be fundraising with snacks available for purchase in the Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Among them is the Gutter Syndicate, a new comic art club at UTRGV that focuses on collaborative comic creation. The club plans to host both a panel and an interactive workshop during the event.

Club president Chloe Vela said the group started after



SAMANTHA CANTU / THE RIDER

Union Con, a Comic Con-inspired event offering tournaments, panels, creative workshops and a cosplay contest, will take place from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday in the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Thursday in Student Union La Sala on the Brownsville campus.

she and co-founder Sophia Zamora-Wiley realized there was little space on campus dedicated to comics as an art form.

“We felt like comics weren’t taken seriously at UTRGV,” Vela said. “So, this was our way of kind of picking up the reins and keeping comics alive here.”

During Union Con, the club will host a creative workshop inspired by a drawing exercise called an “exquisite corpse,” where multiple participants contribute to different parts of a character without seeing the others’ drawings.

“We’re going to have giant boards where people can draw the head, torso and legs of a character,” she said.

“Then we’ll put them together randomly so everyone walking by can participate.”

The club’s panel will explore the influence of underground and alternative comics, including how cartoonists have shaped ideas and storytelling in broader media, a subject many people are not aware of, according to the club’s president.

Zamora-Wiley, vice president of the club, said the goal of its presence is to introduce students to a medium they may not have explored before.

“There’s going to be a lot of people there that may not have much experience with comics,” she said. “Hopefully, this opens their eyes, and they realize there’s something exciting there.”

Next to Gutter Syndicate, the new live-action roleplay club known as Knights Guild will make its debut at the event.

In addition to creative workshops and panels, Union Con will also feature a cosplay contest, with registration opening today through V Link.

Participants will need to check in at the convention, and spots will be limited.

Stubbs said he hopes Union Con becomes a memorable part of the university experience.

“I hope it’s something that sticks with them as part of their time at UTRGV,” he said. “And if it goes well, we’d love to expand it and make it an annual thing.”

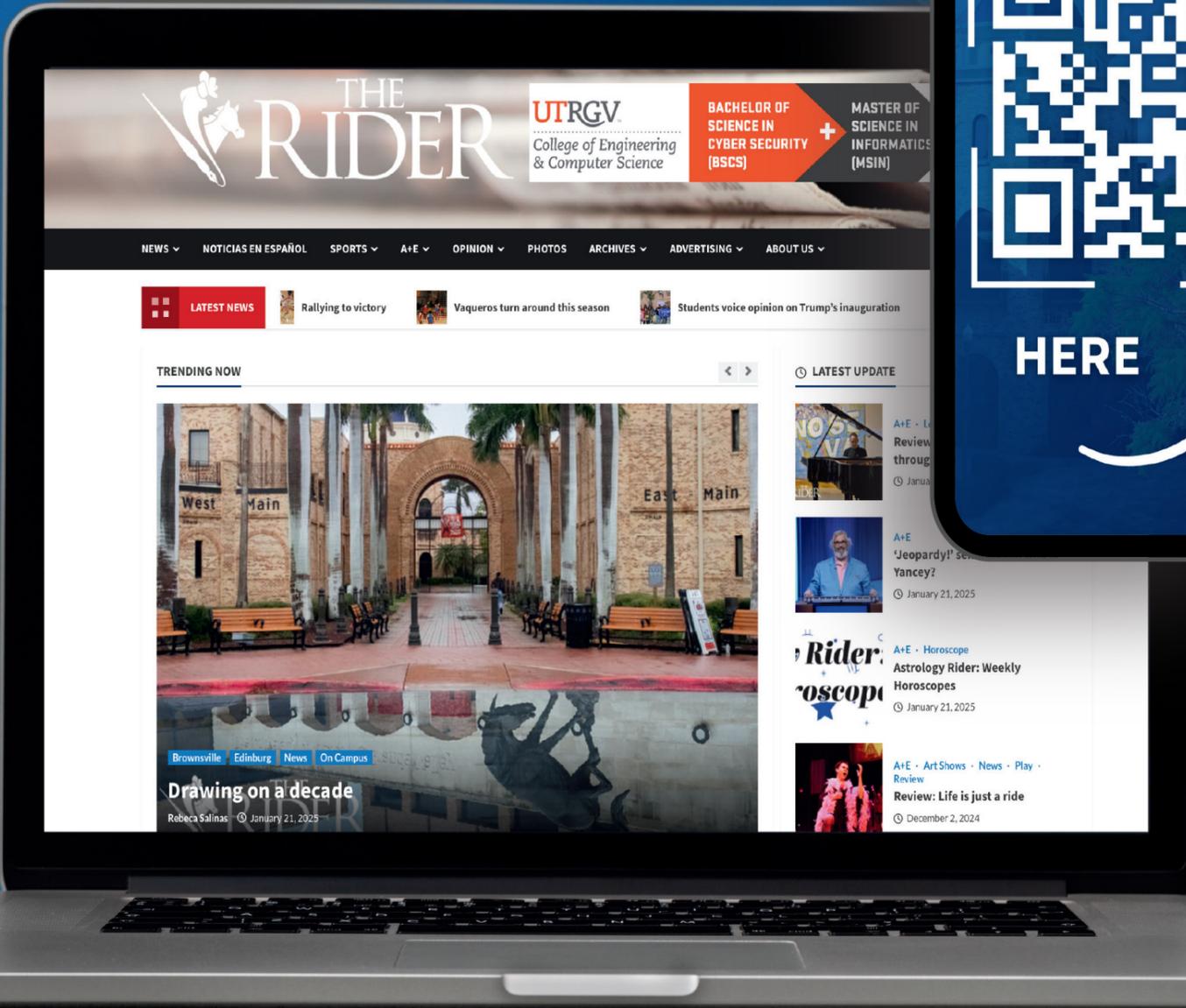
Students attending the event in Edinburg will check in at a Student Union tent and students in Brownsville will check in at La Sala. Attendees can receive a convention badge, adding to the real “con” experience. A student ID is required.

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