MONDAY | OCT. 19, 2026

VOLUME 12 | ISSUE 09

THE RIDER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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Overflow parking closure

MARIAH LYDIA ESCOBAR
THE RIDER

Temporary overflow parking lots on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses have been closed due to recent weather changes and a decrease in parking demand, according to UTRGV Parking Services.

Pablo Aguilar, director of Parking Services, said the university opened two temporary overflow parking lots on the Edinburg campus and one on the Brownsville campus because of high-parking demand at the beginning of the semester.

"We experienced a peak in demand this year," Aguilar said. "We noticed the first two weeks of school [are] usually busy this year. We noticed it was busier."

The lots remained open until recent rainfall prompted Parking Services to close them as a safety precaution.

"We didn't really want students, or anybody for that matter, to risk getting stuck in any of those lots," Aguilar said.

He said he estimated the temporary overflow lots accommodated about 35 to 40 vehicles. However, demand began to decline in the third week of the semester.

Parking Services does not plan to reopen the overflow lots unless demand increases again, according to Aguilar.

He said Parking Services has observed the traffic patterns and the parking lots have more availability, however, he acknowledges it is difficult to find parking during peak time.

"I feel, like, since they closed it down, there's not really enough for, like, everyone to park," said Julissa Ramos, an education freshman.

Ramos said parking has become worse since the beginning of the semester, particularly during peak hours.

See **OVERFLOW**, Page 3



ADRIAN HERNANDEZ /THE RIDER
The overflow sign directs drivers to the location of the parking space next to Lot E22 on the Edinburg campus.

UTRGV ADDS FRIDAYS



ADRIAN HERNANDEZ /THE RIDER
UTRGV students make a line for the Brownsville bus route Tuesday on the Edinburg campus. For the next academic year, Monday and Wednesday classes will be modified to a Monday, Wednesday and Friday schedule with 50-minute classes, according to Jonikka Charlton, senior vice provost for Student Success & Academic Affairs and dean of University College.

New class schedule coming to Fall 2027

JORGE RIOS
THE RIDER

Starting Fall 2027, UTRGV students and faculty may have to get used to adding an extra day to their weekly schedule, a change aimed at increasing course availability to meet the demand of growing enrollment.

According to a July 22 UTRGV internal memorandum, Fridays will now be added to Monday and Wednesday class meeting times, leaving students with a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class meeting time or a Tuesday-Thursday option.

Jonikka Chartlon, senior vice provost for Student Success & Academic Affairs and dean of University College, said currently, students can take classes on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, with some occasionally on Friday.

Charlton said with the new course scheduling grid most daytime Friday-only classes will no longer be offered for undergraduate courses.

She added changes will also affect class duration and start times.

"For this new schedule with Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, [class time] will be reduced because there are three classes that students need to go to now," Charlton said. "So, there'll be 50-minute classes three times a week instead of the 75-minutes twice a week."

She added Tuesdays and Thursdays will still be 75-minute classes twice a week.

Charlton said these changes apply to all UTRGV campuses and primarily affect daytime courses, generally those before 4:30 p.m. Evening classes may keep their current schedule.

Because the schedule changes are directed toward daytime classes, undergraduate students will be the most affected. Graduate and other post baccalaureate programs will still have most classes offered in the evening.

Chartlon said regardless of the category of the courses, they will all have new and earlier start times to "maximize" the number of class times across the week.

"The undergraduate class has grown so much that we're having to use every possible classroom time that we can find to try to offer enough seats for our students," she said. "So, really, the primary reason for this change is we need additional classroom capacity to meet the demand."

The internal memorandum also states UTRGV's current scheduling grid underutilizes Friday classroom space "while overloading it earlier in the week."

CLASSES TO BE CHANGED

Fridays will be added to the current Monday, Wednesday classes. According to a university offical, current Friday-only classes will not be offered anymore for undergrads.

The change will allow the university to provide an estimated 600 additional classroom slots, according to Charlton.

Jenny Saxton-Rodriguez, UTRGV professor of theatre, said the new scheduling changes will definitely lead to mixed reactions from students and faculty.

"I think it's mixed with everybody," Saxton-Rodriguez said. "Everybody has different reasons why it might be good or bad, and a lot of us see both, you know, like I do."

Regarding potential downsides, Saxton-Rodriguez said she does not see a downside other than she wished she had taken more Fridays off when they were available because she works the entire school week regardless.

Despite this, Saxton-Rodriguez said there is a potential downside that can arise for students with busy schedules.

"I ... know students who work," she said. "That's probably where my mind goes when I think about ... a downside."

Saxton-Rodriguez said the change will benefit her as she has had issues with the current scheduling grid.

"When we first switched over, [to the current schedule], we started having problems with people signing up for labs on Thursdays," she said. "People just didn't come on Thursday afternoons because it was the beginning of their weekend."

Saxton-Rodriguez added the new course scheduling grid would allow her to cover more material for her students.

"I've got two classes that would benefit greatly from being three days a week," she said. "You can't have just one lecture per week."

Similarly, communication sophomore Angeline Almazan said she has mixed feelings toward the schedule change.

"I think it'll be ... harder for students ... I know a lot of students have to work while doing school," Almazan said. "I ... work and then ... [do] band, so I know [this] already [interferes] with practices."

However, Almazan also said a more packed schedule may be worth reducing the overcrowding in her classes.

"I think it's [worth it]... if it opens more classes and won't be as [crowded]," she said.

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

RISE & GRIND

University Recreation will host RISE & GRIND at 7:15 a.m. and at the same time Wednesday at the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus. Students can join a morning fitness session.

Farmers Market

The **Environmental Awareness Club** will host a farmers market at 9 a.m. at the Main Building courtyard on the Brownsville campus. Attendees can visit a campus farmers market and explore available items.

Access for Sex-Ed Tabling

Access for Sex-Education will host a tabling event at 11 a.m. and at the same time Wednesday at the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. Students can learn about the organization's sexual health education and outreach efforts.

Sundaes on Mondays

Student Union will host Sundaes on Mondays noon at the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. Students can stop by for an ice cream social.

Monster Cookie Decorating

Student Union will host Monster Cookie Decorating at 1 p.m. at the Student Union East Patio on the Edinburg campus. Students can decorate monster-themed cookies during a seasonal activity.

German Classes

RGV German Club will host German Classes at 5 p.m. in Sabal Hall Room 1.106. on the Brownsville campus. Students can practice German language skills in a group setting.

Fall Runs

Club Running - Vaquero Runners will host Fall Runs at 5:15 p.m. at the Life and Health Science Building on the Brownsville campus. Runners can join a group run with the Vaquero Runners.

Run Club Meeting

Club Running - Vaquero Runners will meet at 5:30 p.m. and at the same time Thursday at the Life and Health Science Building on the Brownsville campus.

Tuesday

Men's Volleyball Fundraiser

Men's Club Volleyball will host a fundraiser at 10 a.m. at the University Library courtyard on the Edinburg campus.

Pre-Dental Society Fundraiser

The **Pre-Dental Society** will host a fundraiser at 10:30 a.m. at the University Library courtyard.

Bystander Boo Bash

Student Rights and Responsibilities will host Vaqueros Step Up: Bystander Boo Bash at 11:30 a.m. and at the same time Thursday at the Student Union Lawn on the Edinburg campus. Students can engage with a Halloween-themed bystander awareness activity.

DRAGON BALL SPARKING ZERO TOURNAMENT

Student Union will host DRAGON BALL SPARKING ZERO TOURNAMENT at noon at the Student Union Game Room on the Edinburg campus. Students can compete in a Dragon Ball: Sparking! ZERO video game tournament.

Sigma Delta Pi Fall Fundraiser

Sigma Delta Pi will host a Hot Cheetos con queso fundraiser at noon at the University Library courtyard on the Edinburg campus.

Wednesday

¡Qué Rico! Aguas & Antojitos

UTeach Student Organization will host ¡Qué Rico! Aguas & Antojitos at 11 a.m. at the Main Building courtyard on the Brownsville campus. Students can support the organization at an aguas frescas and snacks event.

Spooky SpaceX

Texas Rising will host Spooky SpaceX at 11:45 a.m. at Music Science and Learning Center Room 1.105 on the Brownsville campus. Students can attend a Halloween-themed event hosted by Texas Rising.

Wrapping of The Letters

Student Activities will host Wrapping of The Letters at noon at Main Building East Front Lawn on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Thursday at the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus. Students can take part in a campus letter-wrapping activity.

Pumpkin Carry Challenge

University Recreation will host a Pumpkin Carry Challenge at noon at Texas Southmost College Recreation Center Basketball Court 1 in Brownsville. Students can take part in a seasonal pumpkin-carry fitness challenge.

Firm Spotlight

Beta Alpha Psi, Xi Phi Chapter will host Firm Spotlight - Mariela Molina CPA and Associates, PLLC at 12:30 p.m. at Education Complex Room 2.102 on the Edinburg campus. Students can learn about a local accounting firm and its professional work.

Thursday

Author Talk

The **Department of Creative Writing** will host Author Talk - Reyna Grande at 11 a.m. at the Education Complex on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can hear author Reyna Grande discuss her writing and experiences.

Express Circuit 30 GX

University Recreation will host Express Circuit 30 GX at noon at the Texas Southmost College Recreation Center Multipurpose Room 1.202. in Brownsville. Students can join a 30-minute circuit-style group workout.

GOTV: Tabling Event

College Democrats of Brownsville will host GOTV: Tabling Event at 3:30 p.m. at the Main Building courtyard on the Brownsville campus. Students can learn about voter turnout efforts at an informational table.

ACJA IKC Crime Scene Investigation Training

American Criminal Justice Association, Iota Kappa Chi will host ACJA IKC Crime Scene Investigation Training at 4:15 p.m. at Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.105. on the Brownsville campus. Students can learn about crime scene investigation techniques during training.

Costume Contest RSVP

The **Student Union** will host a Costume Contest RSVP at 7 p.m. in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater at the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. Students can take part in a costume contest associated with LET'S GLOW CRAZY.

LET'S GLOW CRAZY DANCE PARTY

The **Student Union** will host LET'S GLOW CRAZY DANCE PARTY at 7 p.m. at Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus. Students can attend a glow-themed dance party.

Friday

Know Yourself, Lead with Purpose

NextGen Leaders and the **Center for Student Involvement** will host Know Yourself, Lead with Purpose at 10 a.m. at Student Academic Center Room 1.102 on the Edinburg campus. Students can explore self-awareness and leadership skills.

--Compiled by Diego Vita

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Oct. 5 and 10

Oct. 5

11:03 a.m.: An officer responded to the University Library on the Edinburg campus regarding an ill student. The student declined emergency medical services and was transported to Student Health Services.

11:38 a.m.: An officer responded to a fire alarm at Portable Building 13 on the Edinburg campus. No smoke or fire was found, and Environmental Health and Safety determined a faulty smoke detector caused the alarm.

1:56 p.m.: An officer responded to the Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building on the Edinburg campus after a student twisted her ankle on the stairs. She declined emergency medical services and was assisted to the student clinic.

3:50 p.m.: Officers investigated possible drug paraphernalia found by a resident assistant in a dorm at The Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus. The matter was forwarded to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Oct. 6

10:27 a.m.: Officers responded to a two-vehicle collision in Lot E9 on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported.

11:01 a.m.: Officers responded to a two-vehicle collision in Lot B1 on the Brownsville campus. No injuries were reported.

11:02 a.m.: An officer responded to a fire alarm at the Clinical Research Building on the Harlingen campus caused by a contractor working nearby. The Harlingen Fire Department found no fire and cleared the building for re-entry.

4:06 p.m.: A student reported losing a FOB key at the Edinburg campus library.

7:46 p.m.: A Brownsville campus student reported missing money when police returned the found property at Sabal Hall. The case is under investigation.

11:46 p.m.: During a traffic stop for a defective brake light off campus in Hidalgo County, an officer found two THC vape pens and confiscated them for testing. The controlled-substance case is under investigation, and the driver received a traffic citation.

Oct. 7

7:54 a.m.: Officers investigated a fire alarm at The Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus. No smoke or fire was found; Environmental Health and Safety identified a dirty smoke detector and cleared the room for re-entry.

9:27 a.m.: Officers investigated a possibly stolen UTRGV laptop at the Computer Center Building on the Edinburg campus after a non-affiliated man said he bought a laptop at a Brownsville garage sale and suspected it belonged to the university.

1:33 p.m.: UTRGV police evacuated students and faculty after a fire alarm at the Life and Health Science Building on the Brownsville campus. Environmental Health and Safety reset the alarm and cleared the building; the Brownsville Fire Department response was canceled.

7:41 p.m.: An Edinburg campus student reported being assaulted by another student during an altercation at The Village Apartments. The student declined to file charges.

Oct. 8

9:26 a.m.: A construction worker was injured on the roof of the Health Affairs Building in Edinburg. He declined ambulance transportation and was taken to the hospital by another employee.

1:07 p.m.: Emergency medical services transported a non-affiliated patient to Knapp Medical Center after the person fell in the parking lot of UT Health RGV Orthopedics and Sports Medicine and experienced chest pain.

3:45 p.m.: Police responded to The Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus after a resident assistant discovered two vape pens in a dormitory. Officers determined no crime had occurred.

4:55 p.m.: A vape pen found in inventoried property at Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus tested positive for THC. The controlled-substance case is under investigation.

6 p.m.: A student reported vehicle damage in Lot E17 on the Edinburg campus, but could not determine when or where it happened. An officer reviewed camera footage and could not locate the incident within the reported time frame.

Oct. 9

2:39 a.m.: Officers responded to Unity Hall after a Campus Shield report of a possibly intoxicated female student sleeping under a bed. The student did not appear intoxicated, and the resident assistant approved her overnight stay.

1:19 p.m.: A female student reported an unknown man had followed her around the Edinburg campus the previous day. Officers found no crime had occurred and provided university and police resources.

1:44 p.m.: Officers responded to a disturbance at the UT Health RGV Cancer and Surgery Center involving a non-affiliated married couple arguing about their son. No crime was found, and both left without further incident.

Oct. 10

6:18 a.m.: Officers investigated fire alarms at the Biomedical Research and Life and Health Sciences buildings on the Brownsville campus. No fire or smoke was found; officials attributed the alarms to water backflow from an off-campus hydrant hookup and reset the fire panels.

12:54 p.m.: Officers investigated a fire alarm at the Research Education Building on the Edinburg campus. No fire or smoke was found, and Environmental Health and Safety approved resetting the alarm panel.

1:39 p.m.: Officers responded to another fire alarm at the Research Education Building on the Edinburg campus. No fire or smoke was found; Environmental Health and Safety addressed the issue and reset the panel.

5:46 p.m.: Emergency medical services transported a non-affiliated woman from Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium in Edinburg to a hospital after she reported feeling lightheaded during the football game.

5:51 p.m.: Officers arrested a male student on a charge of public intoxication at Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium after finding him intoxicated and unable to identify a responsible adult to take him home. He was transported to the Hidalgo County Adult Detention Center.

6:30 p.m.: A fireworks malfunction near the H-E-B tailgate at Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium in Edinburg caused a small roof fire. It was quickly extinguished; the Edinburg Fire Department and Environmental Health and Safety confirmed the fire was out.

6:32 p.m.: Officers extinguished a small accidental trash fire near the northwest tailgate area of Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium.

10 p.m.: An officer responded to a water leak at the Life and Health Science Building on the Brownsville campus. The leak was repaired, with minimal water damage reported.

--Compiled by Diego Vita

A celebration of tradition and spirit

GAEL ESPINOZA
THE RIDER

UTRGV Student Activities are gearing up for this year's homecoming events and a week-and-a-half-long celebration where Vaquero Nation celebrates the university spirit and legacy, according to department staff.

Homecoming events kicked off with Paint your Vaquero Spirit on Oct. 12 on both campuses.

Cristina Rodriguez, assistant director of Student Activities, said the celebration was extended thanks to how many events there are.

"So, it's actually 11 days, a lot of different activities that will be available," Rodriguez said. "And it actually extended because we're introducing our first-ever Burning of the Letters on the Brownsville campus."

The Burning of the Letters event will be at 8 p.m. in Lot B4 on the Brownsville campus and at the same time on Oct. 30 in Lot E16 on the Edinburg campus.

Raul Leal, program coordinator for Student Activities, said the Burning of the Letters for Brownsville will have new custom-built letters for the students to burn on the Brownsville campus.

"It will give both of our campuses an ability to come together to really unite in the spirit of our Vaquero community" Leal said.

The Homecoming Parade will first take place and lead up to the Burning of the Letters.

"When a parade finishes, typically you'll see them at any city parade or that there's typically, like, a little, like a market or a festival or attraction of some sort," Rodriguez said. "... So, that's kind of where we came up with the parade, leaning into burning letters."



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

The Burning of the Letters took place outside the UTRGV Baseball Stadium Feb. 23, 2024 on the Edinburg campus. The event was part of UTRGV's Homecoming celebration.

The celebration will include Vaqueros games, Orange Crush and Boulderween. The last event will be the homecoming football game at Robert & Janet Vackar Stadium in Edinburg. During halftime, the Royals for homecoming will be announced.

Leal said homecoming week matters for UTRGV because it should make students feel they belong on campus.

"So, something like this is super important to the campus because we want our students to feel like they belong to the UTRGV community," he said. "You want to find that sense of belonging with your friend groups, with your organizations, with your departments, and this is a really big way for students to come together, make friends, or strengthen the friendships that they already have by enjoying all the free stuff that's lined up for them."

Cassandra Guerra, an integrated health science senior, said she had a blast going to the homecoming events last year and encouraged other students to do the same.

"I know sometimes college can be a really lonely time, especially if you come from far away," Guerra said. "Making new memories and then meeting people there ... you start making just new friends, new memories. You start getting more familiar, more comfortable with campus, and then you always just look forward to next year like I'm going, make the same memories again. ... It's honestly really fun."

For more information, visit utrgv.edu/homecoming.

OVERFLOW
Continued from Page 1

"Honestly I think it's gotten a little bit worse ... but it's always been bad," she said.

Ramos said she can spend 30 minutes looking for parking when she arrives around noon. So, to avoid the congestion, she tries to arrive between 7:30 or 8 a.m.

She said parking difficulties have not made her late to class, but have affected her daily routine because she has to wake up earlier.

Ramos said she typically parks near the arts center or in Lot E9 and uses campus transportation when necessary.

Allison Lopez, a visual communication design senior, said finding an available parking space can get hectic.

Lopez said it is not worth paying for an expensive parking permit if they cannot find parking.

"I just hope they improve it soon because it's always been an issue," she said. "I mean I'm a senior now, I've been having issues [with parking] ever since I was a freshman."

Aguilar said the busiest parking lots that fill up quickly are parking Lot E9 and E16 on the Edinburg campus and Lot B1 on the Brownsville campus.

He said students should try to use remote lots such as E33, E34 and E35 on the Edinburg campus because it is more convenient to park there during peak times.

"We have about [400-500] spaces that go underutilized in the Edinburg campus, which are remote parking lots," Aguilar said.

He said Parking Services continues to work with the Planning and Construction department to explore possibilities for a possible parking expansion.

Aguilar said he suggests students monitor parking availability before arriving on campus to help them decide where to park.

"Its going to be ... way better for students to take advantage of those open spaces," he said.

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

Environmental club keeps native plants thriving on campus



VALERIA TOKUN HAGA / THE RIDER

Valeria Garza (left), a graduate student in ocean, coastal and earth sciences and Environmental Awarness Club recruitment officer, and Dariana Leal, a civil engineering freshman and member of EAC, participate in weeding at the UTRGV Pollinator Garden on Thursday on the Brownsville Campus.

DANNA AVALOS AVILA
THE RIDER

The Environmental Awareness Club has taken the initiative to maintain the Brownsville Pollinator Cantina, preserving native plant populations for pollinators on campus and promoting biodiversity with their Brownsville Weeding Days.

From 8 to 10 a.m. Thursday, the Environmental Awareness Club worked outdoors to remove weeds from the Pollinator Cantina located between the Life & Health Science Building and the resaca on Brownsville campus.

EAC officers and volunteers removed weeds and other invasive species from the garden to prevent them from competing with native plants.

According to Sofia Martinez, an environmental science senior and president of the EAC, weeding not only helps remove invasive species from competing with native plants, but it helps keep plants in their designated zones for students to be able to identify them easily.

In an interview before the Brownsville Weeding Days, Sofia Martinez said the Pollinator Cantina was made in 2018 to introduce a native habitat on the Brownsville campus.

Professors in the science department established the Pollinator Cantina, according to Valeria Martinez, an ocean, coastal, and earth sciences program graduate student and the Brownsville coordinator of EAC.

"They established this garden to promote native plant populations that can help pollinators, birds and other animals," Valeria Martinez said.

Sofia Martinez added associate professor Alejandro Fierro in the School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences, reached out to the EAC to take care of the Pollinator Cantina because no one was maintaining it at the time.

Shannon Hernandez, a political science junior and recruitment officer for the EAC, explained the importance of maintaining the garden is for native plants to keep thriving in the Pollinator Garden.

"Making sure weeds don't take over the garden, [and] letting pollinator species thrive in the garden," Hernandez said.

Valeria Martinez added because of deforestation and urbanization in the Rio Grande Valley, it's especially important to use native plant species wherever possible.

"The one thing that you should know about is the environment around you. ... In your region, you should know what plants [and animals] are in your area," Sofia Martinez said. "The one thing that we can provide and that the Pollinator [Cantina] can provide is that knowledge of taking care of what's around you and being able to increase biodiversity in your area."

Similarly, according to Sofia Martinez, the Pollinator Cantina has been used for research purposes in the past and has multiple uses, but overall, it is good to have a space for native plants and animals to interact in.

Sofia Martinez said Brownsville Weeding Days event will happen every Thursday when possible, and anyone interested in helping maintain the Pollinator Cantina can volunteer without being a club member.

Demons summoned at the theater



ADRIAN HERANDEZ / THE RIDER PHOTOS

Film senior Anayancy Salinas (from left,) biology sophomore Krystal Perez and psychology freshman Kristiann Diaz react to seeing an empty bedsheet in the shape of a person during the Spooktacular Seance by Anthem and Aria Tuesday at the PlainsCapital Bank Theater in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus.



A ritual spell is performed in front of student volunteers during the Spooktacular Seance by Anthem and Aria Tuesday at the PlainsCapital Bank Theater in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. "I've always been into magic, on the more psychic side of it," Anthem said. "This comes from my family's history [and I've] also been a fan of horror movies and haunted houses all my life."

COLUMN OF THE WEEK

Through the lens



ADRIAN HERNANDEZ
PHOTOGRAPHER

How did I get here? What is my thinking process? What gear do I use? Well, to explain how I became a photographer, let's go back to 1998.

When I was in second grade, my dad was kicked out of our home because of domestic violence, and my mom worked all day to provide for a family of four. Growing up in a violent home taught me to live in survival mode. I learned to stay quiet and observe everything. With my mom away working full time, I quickly became independent and mature for my age.

Through observing, I learned how to read people's emotions, and I just wanted to capture that.

We had a wooden picnic table with benches. I would sit and observe birds, people and bugs.

One day, I begged my mom for a disposable camera, so she got it for me, and I started taking photos. The feeling of capturing moments in real time was cool to me, and I felt safe behind the camera.

We had stacks of National Geographic magazines. I loved looking through the photos of wildlife, cars, people and lightning.

Fast-forward to 2013. Two years after graduating high school, I was very involved in car shows through my membership in a car club. I always took photos with my phone, which at the time was a Samsung Galaxy S III.

My brother gave me my first camera as a Christmas gift, a Nikon D3300. I didn't waste a second and started shooting anything I could with the kit lens. The camera came with an 18-55 mm f/4.5 lens.

I started with candid street photography in downtown McAllen, at car shows and of birds. I had Frankensteined a car battery jumper to an adapter that would connect to a lamp as a light source because I was so fascinated by the outdoor flash portraits created by other local photographers. I kept practicing on my own until people began asking me if I did photography as a business. My first client was a 3-year-old girl celebrating her birthday.

From there, the rest was history. I slowly started perfecting my craft, learned to value my art, time and worth.

I quit jobs that didn't value my work or that treated me as an outsider. I left those jobs to learn video production and eventually pursue a career in a field I wanted to work in.

I saved money and bought lenses, snuck into concerts and had opportunities come to me, for which I am grateful. Everywhere I went, I stepped out of my comfort zone and spoke with a lot of people.

At times, I met people who didn't know me but liked my work on social media and laughed after finding out it was me.

I didn't want the fame others sought; I just loved what I did, and I was able to make a living from it. I struggled a lot more than I was successful. I broke things, but I never gave up.

I always tried to challenge myself to do more and avoid limiting myself to one type of photography.

I learned how to manage a business, operate a drone and get licensed. With 360 cameras, I wanted to learn how to make 3D maps of homes as it was another service I saw that photographers could provide.

So, to those looking into photography or chasing equipment instead of gaining experience, I say this: Get an old camera that you won't be afraid to get dirty. Don't ask for shortcuts; practice and do it because you enjoy it, not because you think it's an easy way to make a dollar. Be inspired, make that your goal and keep going. I'm still learning, and I'll keep doing it because photography is my escape, and I enjoy capturing stories. I hope my work reflects that.

EDITORIAL CARTOON

Level 4



VAQUERO VOICE

Breast Cancer Awarness

--Compiled by Alizzaya Guel



Sara Astorga
engineering technology sophmore

Q: What does Breast Cancer Awareness Month mean to you? Why do you think it's important to raise awareness?

A: "So for me, ... it's a very important month in which we are able to express how important it is, because it's been ages since medicine has been born and yet we have not made a single discovery or advancement in it, and it's like, nobody is able to recognize that this is a big problem. So, the awareness of a whole month to it is creative, it's good. It's very important."

Q: What are you doing this month to support the cause?

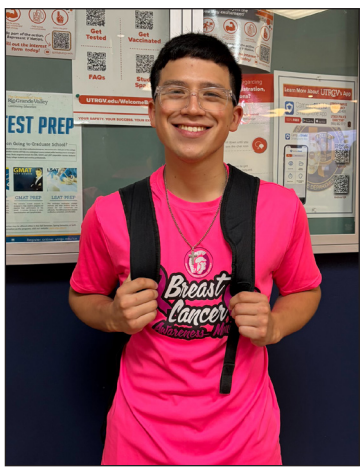
A: "I'm definitely doing some reposts, and I'm actually going to learn by myself, like, do my own research about the subject and everything. How often it comes, how can I help if anything. I'm just a civilian, but anything I can do for them, yeah."

Q: What does Breast Cancer Awareness Month mean to you? Why do you think it's important to raise awareness?

A: "The month itself means to me ... bringing awareness to something that's very important. ... People forget to check or even be just aware and learn more about it. I like that it brings more awareness to it. More people get to learn about it, and for example my grandma, she had it, she overcame it, and she's a survivor, so I think it's really important for people to be aware."

Q: How do you feel about the phrase "On Wednesdays, we wear pink," and how does it relate to the cause?

A: "I feel the phrase is... a good phrase. I think they should change it to "Everyday, we wear pink." Cause it's always good to bring awareness. You never know, you're wearing a pink shirt, somebody asks you why, and then you can let them know. So, I think I like it, but everyday."

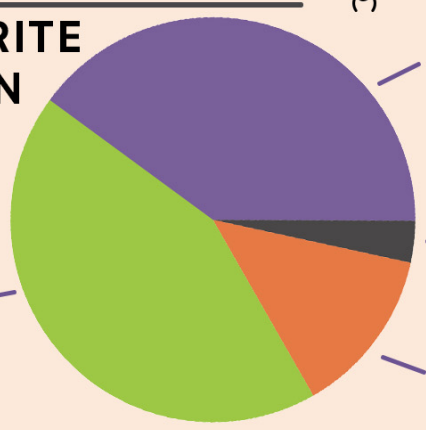


Josh Cruz
civil engineering junior

WACKY WEB POLL

LAST WEEK'S RESULTS:

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CLASSIC HALLOWEEN MONSTER?



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

WHICH HORROR VILLAIN DO YOU THINK YOU COULD SURVIVE?

CHECK OUT THE POLL ON OUR SOCIALS! @UTRGVRIDER

AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

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

Nuevo horario de clases para UTRGV en otoño 2027

JORGE RIOS
THE RIDER

Iniciando el otoño de 2027, los estudiantes y el profesorado de UTRGV tendrán que adaptarse a la adición de un día extra en su horario semanal debido a un cambio que busca incrementar la disponibilidad de cursos para cumplir con la demanda del incremento de ingreso.

Según el memorándum interno de UTRGV del 22 julio, los viernes ahora serán añadidos a las clases con horarios de clase de lunes y miércoles, dejando a los estudiantes con horarios de clase los días lunes, miércoles y viernes o la opción de clases de martes y jueves.

Jonikka Charlton, vicerrectora sénior de Éxito Estudiantil y Asuntos Académicos y decona del Colegio Universitario, dijo que actualmente los estudiantes pueden tomar clases los lunes y miércoles o martes y jueves, teniendo algunas en viernes ocasionalmente.

Charlton dijo que con la nueva programación de cursos la mayoría de las clases que solo se impartían los viernes dejarán de ofrecerse para los estudiantes de licenciatura.

Agregó que se introducirán cambios en la duración de las clases y en sus horarios de inicio.

"Para este nuevo horario, siendo lunes, miércoles y viernes, [los tiempos de clase] serán reducidos porque habrá tres clases que los estudiantes necesitan atender", Charlton dijo. "Así que, habrán clases de 50 minutos tres veces por semana en vez de 75 minutos y dos veces por semana".

Agregó que los martes y jueves mantendrán el horario de 75 minutos y dos veces por semana.

Charlton dijo que estos cambios aplican para todos los campus de UTRGV y que son principalmente para los cursos del día, que generalmente son antes de las 4:30 p.m. Es posible que las clases nocturnas conserven su horario actual.

Debido a que los cambios de horario son enfocados los cursos durante el día, los estudiantes de licenciatura serían los más afectados. En los programas de posgrado y otros programas posteriores a la licenciatura, la mayoría de las clases se seguirán impartiendo en horario nocturno.

Charlton dijo que, independientemente de la categoría de los cursos, todos tendrán horarios de inicio nuevos y más temprano para "maximizar" la cantidad de sesiones de clase a lo largo de la semana.



ADRIAN HERNANDEZ / THE RIDER
Estudiante de último año de química John Mills estudia para su clase de investigación en química el martes en el Edificio de Ciencias, en el segundo piso, en el campus de Edinburg

"El número de estudiantes de licenciatura ha crecido tanto que tenemos que aprovechar todos los horarios y salones disponibles para poder ofrecer suficientes plazas para nuestros estudiantes", Charlton dijo. "Entonces, la razón principal de este cambio es que necesitamos una mayor capacidad en las aulas para atender la demanda".

El memorándum interno también establece que la actual distribución de horarios de UTRGV subutiliza el espacio de las aulas los viernes "mientras que lo sobrecarga durante los primeros días de la semana".

El cambio permitirá a la universidad ofrecer aproximadamente 600 plazas adicionales en las aulas, según Charlton.

Jenny Saxton-Rodriguez, profesora de teatro de UTRGV, señaló que los nuevos cambios en la programación sin duda provocarán reacciones diversas entre los estudiantes y el profesorado.

"Creo que las opiniones están divididas entre todos", Saxton-Rodriguez dijo. "Cada persona tiene sus propias razones por las que algo puede ser bueno o malo, y muchos de nosotros vemos ambos aspectos, ya sabes, como me pasa a mí".

En cuanto a los posibles inconvenientes, Saxton-Rodriguez dijo que no ve ninguno, salvo que le habría gustado tomarse más viernes libres cuando tenía la oportunidad, ya que, de todos modos, trabaja durante toda la semana escolar.

A pesar de esto, Saxton-Rodríguez dijo que un posible inconveniente puede surgir para los estudiantes con agendas sobrecargadas.

"Conozco ... a estudiantes que trabajan", dijo. "Probablemente ahí es hacia dónde se dirige mi pensamiento cuando considero ... un aspecto negativo".

Saxton-Rodriguez dijo que le resultaría beneficioso, ya que ha tenido dificultades con el esquema de horarios actual.

"Cuando hicimos el cambio inicial [al horario actual], empezamos a tener problemas con la inscripción a las sesiones de laboratorio los jueves", dijo. "La gente simplemente no venía los jueves por la tarde porque era el comienzo de su fin de semana".

Saxton-Rodriguez añadió que el nuevo esquema de programación de cursos le permitiría abarcar más contenido para sus estudiantes.

"Tengo dos clases que se beneficiarían enormemente de impartirse tres días a la semana", dijo. "No se puede tener una sola sesión de lectura a la semana".

Similarmente, Angeline Almazan, estudiante de segundo año de comunicaciones, dijo que tiene sentimientos encontrados respecto al cambio de horario.

"Pienso que sera ... mas dificil para los estudiantes. ... Conozco estudiantes que tienen que trabajar mientras estudian", Almazan dijo. "Yo ... trabajo y luego ... [participó en] banda, así que ya se que [esto interfiere] con los ensayos".

Aun así, Almazan también dijo que un horario más cargado podría valer la pena si ayuda a reducir la saturación en sus clases.

"Pienso que [lo vale] ... si permite más clases y que no estén llenas", dijo.

-- Traducido por Hugo Sepúlveda

Celebrando la tradición y el espíritu

GAEL ESPINOZA
THE RIDER

El departamento de Actividades Estudiantiles de UTRGV se prepara para los eventos de Homecoming, una festividad con una duración de una semana y media, la cual la Vaquero Nation conmemora el espíritu y el legado de la universidad.

Las actividades de Homecoming comenzaron el 12 de octubre con el evento "Pinta tu espíritu Vaquero" en ambos campus.

Cristina Rodriguez, directora asistente de Actividades Estudiantes, dijo que la celebración se extendió debido a la gran cantidad de eventos programados.

"En realidad son 11 días con muchas actividades diferentes disponibles", Rodriguez dijo. "La duración se amplío porque estamos incorporando, por primera vez, el evento de la 'Quema de las Letras' en el campus de Brownsville".

El evento de la quema de letras tendrá lugar a las 8 p.m el 29 de octubre en el estacionamiento B4 del campus de Brownsville y a la misma hora el 30 de octubre en el estacionamiento E16 del campus de Edinburg.

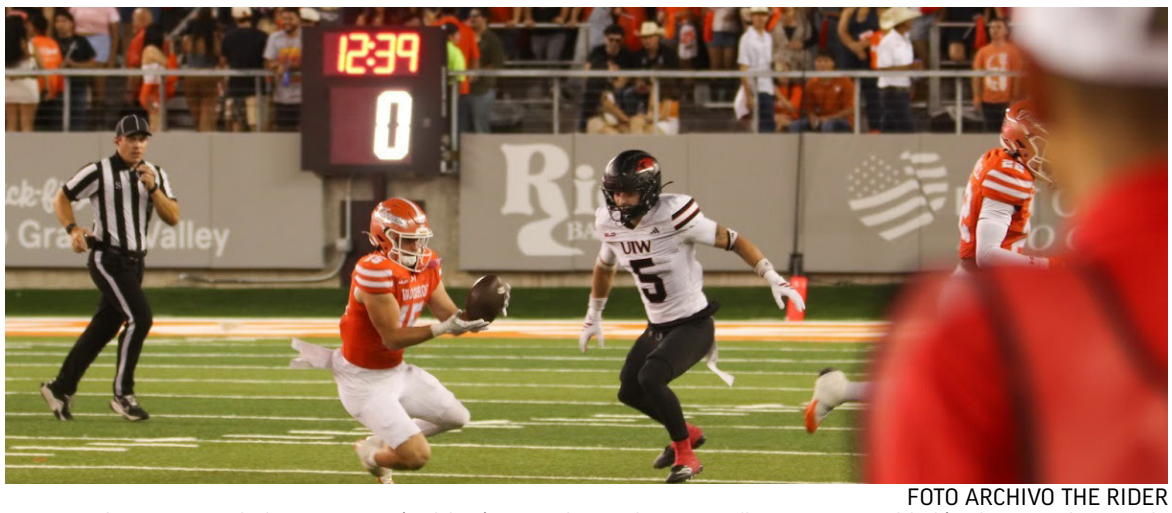


FOTO ARCHIVO THE RIDER
Hunter Luke, receptor de los Vaqueros (redshirt) y estudiante de tercer año, intercepta el balón durante el juego de Homecoming el 25 octubre del 2025 en el estadio de Robert and Janet Vackar en Edinburg.

Raul Leal, coordinador de programas de Actividades Estudiantiles, indicó que, para el campus de Brownsville, se han fabricado nuevas letras que los estudiantes podrán quemar.

"Esto permitirá que ambos campus se reúnan, se unan en el espíritu de nuestra comunidad Vaquera", Leal dijo.

El desfile de Homecoming servirá como víspera para la Quema de Letras.

"Cuando el desfile acaba, como ocurre en cualquier desfile municipal, suele haber un pequeño mercado, un festival o algún tipo de atracción", Rodriguez dijo. "Por eso decidimos organizar un desfile, vinculandolo con la Quema de Letras".

La celebración incluirá el partido de los Vaqueros, los eventos "Orange Crush" y "Boulderween". El evento final será el partido de fútbol americano de Homecoming en el estadio Robert & Janet Vackar en Edinburg.

Durante el medio tiempo, se anunciará la realeza de Homecoming.

Leal dijo que la semana de Homecoming es importante para UTRGV ya que ayuda a que los estudiantes sientan que pertenecen al campus.

"Algo así es sumamente importante para el campus porque queremos que nuestros estudiantes sientan que forman parte de la comunidad de UTRGV", dijo. "Uno busca ese sentido de pertenencia a través de sus grupos de amigos, sus organizaciones o sus departamentos. Este evento es una excelente oportunidad para que los estudiantes se reúnan, hagan nuevas amistades o fortalezcan las que ya tienen, mientras disfrutan de todas las actividades gratuitas que se han preparado para ellos".

Cassandra Guerra, estudiante de último año de ciencias de la salud integradas, dijo que se divirtió muchísimo en los eventos de Homecoming el año pasado y animó a otros estudiantes a participar.

"Sé que a veces la etapa universitaria puede resultar muy solitaria, especialmente si uno viene de lejos", Guerra dijo. "Al crear nuevos recuerdos y conocer gente, empiezas a hacer nuevas amistades y a generar memorias inolvidables. Te vas tanto así que terminas esperando con ilusión el año siguiente para volver a vivir experiencias similares. ... La verdad es que es muy divertido".

Para más información, visita utrgv.edu/homecoming.

--Traducido por Valeria Tokun Haga

REVIEW

Wasn't obsessed with 'Enfrascada'

KAYLA MARTINEZ
THE RIDER

UTRGV Theatre held its free preview of "Enfrascada" on Oct. 7, seeing just about half the Albert L. Jeffers Theaters' seats full. Awaiting the audience was a beautifully dressed stage, complete with a decorated altar for brujería, a central device in the play, and a Chicago-style backdrop that changed with each scene.

"Enfrascada," penned by actress and playwright Tanya Saracho, is a dark comedy featuring an all-women cast of characters navigating the central character Alicia's breakup with her long-term partner. Her method for getting her man back? Visiting three señoras, all practitioners of folk magic who provide advice and guidance for our lost Alicia, who becomes increasingly obsessed — hence the title. The play explored themes of heartbreak, friendship and spirituality.

Set in Chicago, the cast is primarily Mexican American, as reflected in the Latin American folk magic and Spanglish used throughout the play. While the Rio Grande Valley does not house many city natives, the cast's portrayal more than made up for it with their proficient Spanish accents we have come to expect from bilingual diaspora.

A particular standout came in the form of costuming. Set in 2011, the cast wore period-appropriate attire, courtesy of director and costume designer Jenny Saxton-Rodriguez. Each costume represented the characters well, conveying the environment if the stage were to fall short.



KAYLA MARTINEZ/ THE RIDER PHOTOS
Theatre senior Jolyssa Perez performs on stage in "Enfrascada" for the Oct. 7 preview in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre on the Edinburg campus. Also shown (from left) are theatre senior Kiana Saldaña, theatre sophomore Norma Alicia (sitting) and theatre junior Alondra Ramos.

The Albert L. Jeffers Theatre is home to a thrust stage, where the audience surrounds the performance on three sides, drawing viewers into the world of the play.

The Rider had the pleasure of sitting front and center, where the actors were attentive to every section of the audience during their monologues. While a few scenes hugged the back of the stage, something even the closest seat in house had to squint to see, a majority of the play engrossed the audience into the world of the all-women's cast through clever blocking and set design.

The play's primary objective correlative was the jar, with multiple jars placed atop the altar on stage right. Throughout the two-hour play, we watch Alicia collect jars that grow in size, directly correlating with her emotional suppression. Her friends remind her that it is OK to cry, a message she heeds only at the very end. This moment marks the climax of her journey as a vulnerable sister to these friends who initially sent her along the path of brujeria.

Where "Enfrascada" falls short is in convincing the audience of the deep friendship between the women. While the triumph of an all-women's cast is nothing to sneeze at, something between Saracho's writing and the chemistry on stage was lost along the way, delivering an oddly paced emotional journey for Alicia that does not quite land.

What is missing are believable moments where the audience gets to breathe in the friendship between these women in the first place. They are able to converse about the men in their lives, the breakups, the ups-and-downs of their romance, but not much outside of that. What we're left with is a question: Why else do these girls hang out outside of making some jokes for the audience (some awkward, some funny)? Their interactions vary from unconditional support to sudden conflict borne of Alicia's obsession, without giving the audience enough insight into why they became friends in the first place.

The big climax where Alicia finally let out all her emotions pent up inside of her, as noted by a couple of the señoras as necessary, ultimately fell flat as a dramatic and comedic experience. The play earns an overall rating of three out of five stars.

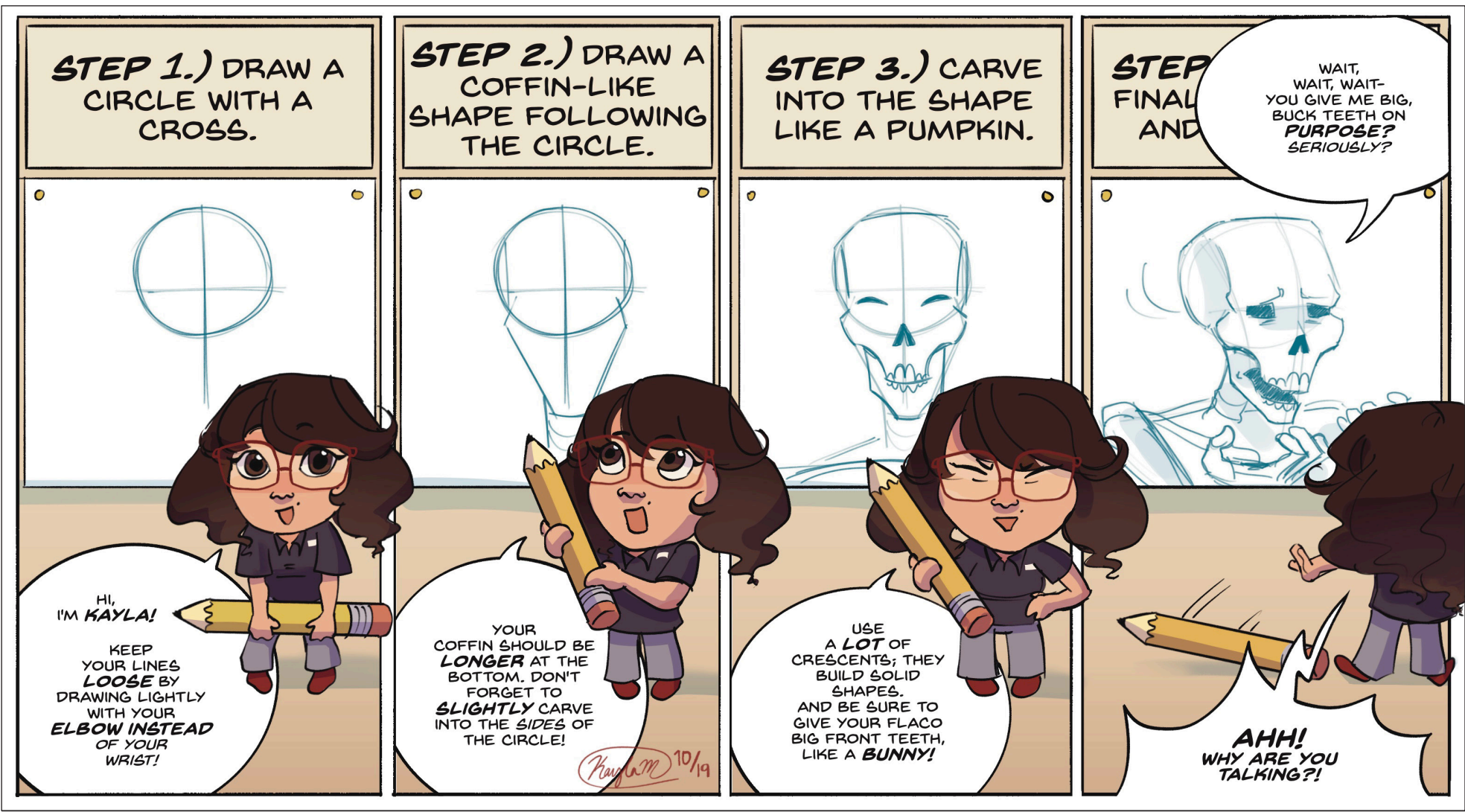


A decorated altar setpiece on the stage of "Enfrascada" during the free preview on Oct. 7 in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre on the Edinburg campus.



Closing scene of the preview of "Enfrascada," featuring theatre junior Alondra Ramos (from left), theatre seniors Jolyssa Perez and Kiana Saldaña, and theatre sophomore Norma Alicia (behind) sharing an embrace Oct. 7 in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre on the Edinburg campus.

Artist Insight: how to draw Flaco



Tipoff coming soon



EMMA ALEGRIA CASTILLO/ THE RIDER PHOTOS

Head coach Brandon Chambers and senior guard Devon Pryor respond to questions in a news conference Wednesday in the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. “The first portion of our season is like culture, we have to be very connected, and I would say we have to learn how to respond,” Chambers said.

TIMOTHY DAVID
THE RIDER

The UTRGV men’s basketball team has been practicing for the upcoming tipoff against Texas A&M-Kingsville Nov. 2 at the UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg.

After two weeks of conditioning in September, the Vaqueros officially began practice that month and recently held their first scrimmage game to simulate the team-building process.

The exhibition match was stepping grounds for the team to learn what does and does not work in individual and team coordination.

Head coach Brandon Chambers said he is focused on building his players’ basketball skills, character and mental fortitude while establishing a team identity built around four words: “connected, resilient, relentless and fearless.”

“I will say, as I had said before the scrimmage to [the players,] … from then on out, don’t tell me, show me,” Chambers said. “You’re gonna define who we are, that team identity should be on display every day. Not some days that you feel good, some days that the sun is out, you gotta be that way every single day.”

Despite the team’s confidence, Chambers said the Vaqueros have room for improvement, including defensively and in transition.

“[The team doesn’t] think about those things, but there’s a reason you win. … This is where we need to get better, we win in the margins … and we have a long way to go,” Chambers said.

Redshirt junior guard Jace Posey said he has an appreciation for his team and trusts that he can rely on his teammates to get through the day.

“We had a scrimmage recently, short notice, so we had to put in a couple plays, but from what I know, I feel pretty confident,” Posey said. “I hope my team trusts me with the ball, and we’ve executed in practice, executed in a scrimmage, so I have full confidence in myself,” he said.

He said although practice can get repetitive, the Vaqueros show up every day trying to improve.

Senior guard Devon Pryor said he has a great sense of resoluteness in his ability to perform in all aspects of the game and understands his role in the team.

“Understanding where I can score the ball, what I can bring to the offensive side, I think my strength is my athleticism and defense,” Pryor said. “… I’ve been able to use that to get on the court, but now I feel like I can show my ability to score the ball as well.”

Teammates are an important factor for Pryor, crediting them for giving a helping hand in allowing him to perform at his best.

“I don’t like to shy away from anything, and over the summer I feel like I’ve been putting in a lot of hard work, especially just being around my team,” he said. “My team allows me to be the player I want to be.”

The Vaqueros will continue preparing for the season opener as they work to strengthen their chemistry, improve execution and establish a team identity on the court.

To access the schedule for the 2026-27 season, visit goutrgv.com.



Senior guard Devon Pryor speaks during an interview Wednesday at the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. “Practices are fun, we compete everyday and coach brings the energy,” Pryor said.



Redshirt junior guard Jace Posey dunks during basketball practice Wednesday at the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. “New teammates to play with, I’m excited to play new arenas, and å,” Posey replied when asked what he was looking forward to for the next season.

Gina Hinojosa
for Texas Governor

As we're entering the final weeks of this election, I wanted y'all, the next generation of Texas leaders, to be able to hear from me directly.

I grew up in Brownsville and went to UT Austin. What I found on campus was Texas itself. Panhandle kids and Houston kids, Valley kids and rural kids, people who had worked their way through school and people who had never worried about money. I learned just how big and complicated this state is, and how much promise it holds. I know you see it too whether you're at Texas A&M or Texas Tech or anything in between.

You are about to inherit Texas, and each of you has some idea of the life you want to build here. Maybe you will start a company, teach in a classroom, work in public service, or do something you haven't quite figured out yet. Whatever your piece of the American Dream looks like, Texas should be the place where you can make it happen.

You are doing your part but Texas is not holding up its end. State government is working for insiders and billionaire donors while public schools are starved, costs keep rising, and ordinary Texans pay the Abbott corruption tax. Follow the money and you find the answer to almost every question about why things here are harder than they should be. I have spent my career fighting that.

College students across Texas have real power in this election. You will help decide what Texas becomes and who it belongs to. Is this a Texas by and for the people, or is this the billionaires' world and we just live here?

I believe Texas belongs to all of us. That's why I'm running for governor: to secure the American Dream
by saving Texas schools and putting money in your pocket.

It's time for a change, and this election, we're going to prove it.

I'll see you at the polls,

Gina Hinojosa

Candidate for Governor
ginafortexas.com

PS. You can find your nearest polling place at IWillVote.com/Texas. Make a plan to vote early, October 19–30. Election Day is November 3.



POL. ADV. PAID BY GINA HINOJOSA CAMPAIGN