

# THE RIDER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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## SPORTS



UTRGV forward Kyle Edwards is known for his stellar performances on the soccer field. **Page 6**

## ESPAÑOL



La Conferencia del Estado del RGV tomó lugar el 20 de septiembre en el campus de Edinburg. **Página 5**

## ON CAMPUS



This week's Ask the Expert question is how to avoid the college blues. **Page 3**

## OPINION

### Vaquero Voice:

*"Si no sabes si estás registrado para votar es tan simple como venir, checar si estás registrado para votar."* **Page 4**

# 22 in the 956

Emmitt Smith speaks to UTRGV students, community

Reprinted from [utrgvrider.com](#)

**Klaudia Cedillo**  
THE RIDER

Businessman, entrepreneur and NFL's all-time leading rusher, Emmitt Smith began the 16th season of the Distinguished Speaker Series last Thursday in the Performing Arts Complex, speaking on his rise to the top and life lessons he learned along the way.

"We're all enclotted in our own talent and we all have the opportunity to achieve our level of greatness," Smith told hundreds of people who attended his lecture on the Edinburg campus. "Now, oftentimes, I'm ... asked, 'How did you manage to get to this place? This place where I'm at today?' I am actually 50 years old, so it's a process. It took a journey to get here and the journey was not easy, I'll tell you."

Smith said when he was 7 years old, he saw the "excitement" and "energy" of the room as his family was watching football and told his father, "One day, I'm gonna play football, and I'm gonna play for the Dallas Cowboys."

"The Dallas Cowboys were my favorite football team and they still are to this day," he said. "And then I turned to him and I said that and he looked at me with this look on his face and I didn't know if my

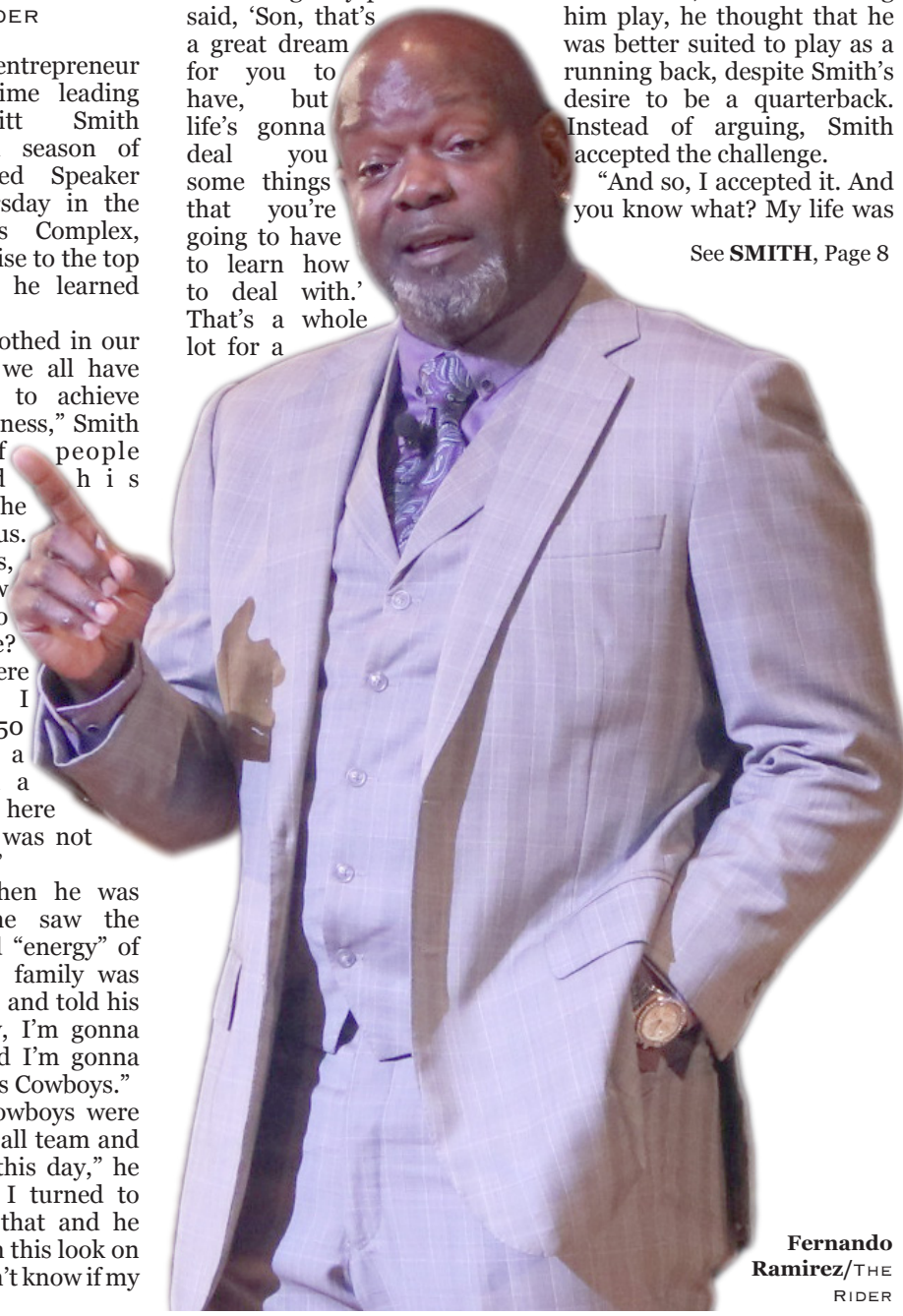
dad wanted to laugh or if he wanted to cry because he said something very profound. He said, 'Son, that's a great dream for you to have, but life's gonna deal you some things that you're going to have to learn how to deal with.' That's a whole lot for a

7-year-old kid to take in."

When he was 9, Smith's coach said, after watching him play, he thought that he was better suited to play as a running back, despite Smith's desire to be a quarterback. Instead of arguing, Smith accepted the challenge.

"And so, I accepted it. And you know what? My life was

See **SMITH**, Page 8



**Fernando Ramirez**/THE RIDER

## Program prepares students for service

**Hania Rocio**  
THE RIDER

Founded in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the U.S. Peace Corps has helped impact the fights against AIDS and hunger, defended the environment and assisted underprivileged communities to gain access to technology.

The Peace Corps exists to promote world peace and friendship by completing three goals: To provide trained men and women to people who need their assistance, to promote a better understanding of Americans to the world and to promote

**For more information, visit [peacecorps.gov](#)**

a better understanding of the world to Americans, according to [peacecorps.gov](#).

"In this area ... there's not a lot of return volunteers, not a lot of people have heard exactly ... what is Peace Corps," said Fedra Hinojosa, anthropology senior and Peace Corps campus ambassador. "Students who want to apply, they should be open to the world. ... To get to know people, other cultures, try other foods, see other environments, being in other kinds of climate."

UTRGV offers a Peace Corps **See SERVICE**, Page 8

# Live bands, give aways at College Radio Day



**Eduardo Galindo**/THE RIDER

UTRGV Radio Station Manager Hannah Lopez plays during the National Voter Registration Day event last Tuesday at the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. The station will host College Radio Day from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus.

**Brigitte Ortiz**  
THE RIDER

UTRGV Radio and the Student Union will host College Radio Day, an event celebrated nationally to spread awareness for local college stations to be recognized within the campus for students.

The event will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus.

Mabel Cortina-Matos, Student Union event manager, said she wants students to be aware and familiar with UTRGV Radio.

"All students are here, fundamentally, to grow their academic knowledge and experience in their

field," Cortina-Matos said. "And these students that work at UTRGV Radio want to be in mass comm. This is specifically what they want to do and so, how more amazing of an opportunity can you get than to mix radio and supporting your fellow Vaqueros."

She encourages students to attend this event to support college radio.

"It's going to be an amazing event, and there's going to be music and giveaways and battle of the bands, so what more could you possibly want," Cortina-Matos said.

Hannah Lopez, UTRGV Radio station manager, said the purpose of this event is

to remind students that their campus does have a radio station.

"They should attend because we're going to be having, like it says on the flyer, a battle of the bands," Lopez said. "It's going to be four bands that are going to perform and we're going to choose who did the best. There's also going to be a lot of giveaways, some free shirts from the union and UTRGV Radio."

She said there will be free Whataburger vouchers, VBucks, tickets for Maddie's Pumpkin Patch and Toluca Ranch Haunted House, Monte de los Muertos at the Donna Corn Maze and student

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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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# MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Today Game Release FIFA 20

Students can play FIFA 20 for free starting at 12:15 p.m. in the Game Room on the Edinburg campus and at 12:30 p.m. in the Game Room on the Brownsville campus.

## Harry Potter Trivia Night

A Harry Potter Trivia Night will take place at 4 p.m. in the Student Union food court on the Edinburg campus. Free food will be provided. For more information, email studentunion@utrgv.edu or call 665-7898.

## Vaquero Ice Cream Bar

Free ice cream with several toppings to choose from will be served from 12:15 to 2 p.m. in the Student Union veranda on the Brownsville campus. For more information, email studentunion@utrgv.edu or call 665-7898.

## Tuesday

### Cultural Movie Series

Leadership and Mentoring will show the movie "The Miseducation of Cameron Post" from 12:20 to 2 p.m. in Music, Science & Learning Center 1.105 on the Brownsville campus and from 7 to 9 p.m. at the PlainsCapital Bank Theater in the Student Union on the Edinburg

campus. For more information, email culturalcouncil@utrgv.edu or call 882-5937.

## Community Service Fair

Students can meet with nonprofit organizations and obtain information on volunteering opportunities. The Community Service Fair will take place from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Main Courtyard on the Brownsville campus and from noon to 1 p.m. on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus.

## Wednesday

### Fall Career Expo

Students can talk to local and national employers about internships, careers and full-time positions from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email careercenter@utrgv.edu.

## Giant Board Games Fest

The Student Union will have giant board games for students to play with for free at 3 p.m. in La Sala on the Brownsville campus. For more information, email studentunion@utrgv.edu or call 665-7898.

## Billiards Tournament

A billiards tournament will take place

at 12:30 p.m. in the Game Room on the Edinburg campus. Students can play for free and have a chance to earn VBucks. For more information, email studentunion@utrgv.edu or call 665-7898.

## Thursday

### Mean Girls Day

Students can celebrate Mean Girls Day with pink lemonade, cupcakes and DIY Mean Girls pins. The event will take place at 12:15 p.m. in La Sala on the Brownsville campus. For more information, email studentunion@utrgv.edu or call 665-7898.

## Friday

### Men's Soccer

The UTRGV Men's Soccer Team will face off against Utah Valley University at 7 p.m. in the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus. For more information, call 665-3747.

## 'The Curious Incident' Play

UTRGV Productions will present the play, "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime," at 7:30 p.m. and at the same time Saturday in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre in Edinburg. The play will also be performed at 2 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 665-3581.

--Compiled by Brigitte Ortiz

# POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 16 and 23.



## Sept. 16

**12:52 p.m.:** A student tried to make a payment with a counterfeit \$100 bill at the Student Services Building on the Edinburg campus.

The bill was confiscated and sent to the U.S. Secret Service.

**2:48 p.m.:** A student was involved in a traffic collision earlier that day on the 2000 block of University Boulevard near the Brownsville campus. She and the other driver exchanged personal information.

**6:43 p.m.:** A student reported losing his wallet on Sept. 13 near the shuttle stop at the Main Building on the Brownsville campus.

**8:59 p.m.:** While conducting a routine traffic stop on International Boulevard and Jackson Street near the Brownsville campus, an officer discovered the driver's vehicle was displaying the wrong license plate. The driver possessed the new license plates issued to her vehicle. The officer confiscated the wrong license plates and issued the driver written warnings.

## Sept. 17

**8:36 a.m.:** A staff member reported her ex-husband took her university-issued laptop without her knowledge at her residence in Brownsville. She filed a police report with the Brownsville Police Department. Her ex-husband has been arrested on charges of theft, but the laptop has not been recovered. It is unknown if the computer contained security sensitive information.

**12:39 p.m.:** A faculty member received a scam phone call from a man claiming to be a federal law enforcement officer demanding money at the UT Health RGV/Knapp Family Health Center in Mercedes.

**3:12 p.m.:** Several pieces of computer equipment were reported missing since the last university inventory process at the Child Development Center on the Edinburg campus.

## Sept. 18

**11:34 a.m.:** While conducting a

driver's license check during a routine traffic stop on a student at Unity Hall Drive on the Edinburg campus, an officer discovered five traffic warrants for unpaid fines totaling \$950. After the warrants were confirmed, the student was arrested without incident, and her vehicle was released to a family member. The student was issued written warnings for traffic violations and jailed in the Edinburg City Jail.

## Sept. 19

**12:20 a.m.:** A note, food and a teddy bear were placed on a student's bed in her room without her knowledge at the Casa Bella Apartments on the Brownsville campus. It was determined the student's mother left the items in her room at an unknown time. It is not known how the mother entered the room. The lead resident assistant explained to the student to speak to her mother about the apartment complex's rules and regulations.

**12:16 p.m.:** A student reported her parked, unattended vehicle was struck on Sept. 17 in Lot E-25 on the Edinburg campus. The vehicle sustained damage to the driver's side door.

**2:04 p.m.:** Two non-affiliated women were involved in a minor, two-vehicle collision in Lot E-5 on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported.

**2:10 p.m.:** A faculty member reported personal issues with other faculty members in his college at the Education Complex on the Edinburg campus. At this time, the conduct has not reached the level of a criminal offense, and Human Resources is aware of the situation.

**3:47 p.m.:** Two apartments sustained severe damage at the Casa Bella Apartments on the Brownsville campus. The apartments housed a former female staff member, and the damage was caused by a pet.

## Sept. 20

**9:55 a.m.:** A 15-month-old child arrived with suspicious bruising at the daycare center on the Edinburg campus. Child Protective Services and the Edinburg Police Department were notified.

**11:53 a.m.:** A student received harassing text messages from an

unknown number off campus. She filed a police report with the Brownsville Police Department as well.

**12:22 p.m.:** A staff member received several online reports from professors concerning the mental state of a current student at the University Center on the Edinburg campus. Officers contacted the student and determined she was OK.

## Sept. 21

**10:06 a.m.:** A student lost her Social Security card somewhere on the Edinburg campus.

**10:43 a.m.:** A staff member at the Casa Bella Apartments in Brownsville reported receiving a suspicious phone call from an unknown man. During the call, he voiced his discontent about a recent announcement made by UTRGV. A UTRGV Police dispatcher also received a similar call from the same man. No threats were made.

## Sept. 23

**2 a.m.:** A burglary alarm was activated at the UT Health RGV Surgical Specialty in Harlingen. The Harlingen Police Department responded to the alarm as well. The area was checked and everything was OK.

**5:30 a.m.:** Three men jumped the U.S. border fence in the area of Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. UTRGV officers and U.S. Border Patrol were dispatched to the location. USBP apprehended two non-affiliated men from Mexico who hid in the brush area adjacent to Lot B-1. The third man fled back toward Mexico.

**UPDATE:** In a case of burglary of a staff member's vehicle reported at 2:27 a.m. Sept. 11 in lot E-7 on the Edinburg campus, University Police identified a suspect. She is a non-affiliated female and a family member of the staff member who reported the burglary. Detectives obtained a warrant for burglary of vehicle and entered it into the law enforcement database. The Alton Police Department informed UTRGV Police that it detained the suspect in their city. A UTRGV police officer responded and took the woman into custody without incident. She was later jailed in the Edinburg City Jail, awaiting court arraignment.

--Compiled by Klaudia Cedillo

Ask the Expert: Second in a series

# Turns out they burn out

**Alejandra Yañez**

THE RIDER

You asked and they answered. This week's Ask the Expert questions come from students Laura Puentes, an interdisciplinary language studies senior; Larissa Angeles, a biology junior; and Leonardo Sosa, a computer science senior. They asked how to avoid the college blues.

Puentes and Angeles both said they have considered dropping out at some point during their college careers due to stress and the overwhelming responsibilities of both work and school.

Asked why she decided to stay, Puentes replied that she set her goal and knew she needed to reach it.

"I feel like there should be more help tutoring-wise," Angeles said, "because a lot of kids think, 'I can't do it, or it's too hard.'"

She also said many students have a hard time transitioning from high school to college.

"A lot of them get depressed; I was there," she said. "What really helped me was talking to a teacher," Angeles said. She said her teacher inspired her to stay in school and advised her that if she dropped out, she'd probably never come back.

Angeles suggests that UTRGV experts look into "more help for the students and probably somebody that meets with you weekly or monthly." She emphasized her belief that this should



Eduardo Galindo/THE RIDER ILLUSTRATION

be a requirement so that students are made aware of the resources available to them.

Sosa asked, "What resources are out there for the students to take advantage of?"

"I mean, when we first started we didn't know we had a lab here for computer science," Sosa said. "We could've used their help and gotten assignments done easier, but we didn't know."

Asked what kind of advice would have helped avoid her desire to drop out, Puentes replied, "I think that before you get into the program you want, it is a little difficult because not

all the advisers are on the same page. And then if you go to any specialization they're like, 'Oh, well, there's nobody here to talk to you because you're not in the program.' So, you're kind of lost."

Puentes said her biggest question for UTRGV experts is "What are they doing to make a difference?"

**Our UTRGV experts**

Maria Alejandra Mazariegos, a clinical therapist for the Counseling Center, said that when students are stressed out, they tend to stop sleeping, socializing and eating.

"The advice is to do the opposite when you are feeling stressed out

or overwhelmed," Mazariegos said. "That's exactly the time to implement some extra TLC or as we like to call it, self-care."

Self-care can look like any kind of activity where the benefit is for your own mental well-being. Meditation is all the rage right now and it is an excellent tool to destress, Mazariegos said.

"Going to the gym and sweating it out is the best antidote to stress," she said. Thirty minutes of vigorous high-intensity workouts four to five times a week can combat stress.

Mazariegos said that if the do-it-yourself strategy doesn't work, that's when the Counseling Center recommends therapy.

Asked what advice she would give to a student who is frustrated with the advising system, Mazariegos replied, "Here at Counseling we would approach it by trying to promote the student to feel confident enough and be assertive enough to make sure their needs are heard and met."

Leticia Jaramillo, associate director of the Academic Advising Center, said her advice for students who are feeling overwhelmed is to seek out resources.

"We just started this differentiated advising, where we ask those types of questions, and then depending on how they answer those kinds of questions, then we refer them to those resources that we have available on campus," Jaramillo said in an interview with

See ASK, Page 8

# The State of the Rio Grande Valley Conference

**Hania Rocio**

THE RIDER

The State of the Rio Grande Valley Conference was held Sept. 20 on the Edinburg campus and focused on the census, voting and job opportunities.

The conference began with encouraging words from Moises "Moe" Vela Jr., a lawyer who is a founding partner, president and CEO of the Vela Group LLC, a corporate, business and organizational development consulting firm, according to its website.

"I think it's just amazing to see the students of the Rio Grande Valley putting on conferences like this," Vela said. "It's so important to inform, empower and inspire the students here at the university to get involved and to lead."

The floor then opened to the "Our Voice: Regional Research, U.S. Census 2020 and Beyond," a panel discussion that informed students about the importance of completing the 2020 census and how it can impact the community.

"It's very important to complete the census as fully as they can because, with accurate numbers, that means more funding for the Valley," said Natasha Altema-McNeely, an assistant professor of political science and panelist. "The census is very important. ... Fundamentally, it's a tool to get the population count, including citizens and noncitizens. ... Having an

accurate count, again, will only bring positive outcomes for the Valley."

Other panelists included U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Specialist Albert Morales and Ericka Reyna, assistant chief of staff for the Hidalgo County Judge's office.

Next, "The Road to 2020: Legislative Updates and Voting" was discussed among state legislators. State Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) and state Reps. Terry Canales (D-Edinburg), Eddie Lucio III (D-Brownsville) and Armando "Mando" Martinez (D-Weslaco) answered several questions about the border wall, immigration and their opinion about the upcoming elections.

"Yes, we do have some challenges here in the border area," Hinojosa said. "Human trafficking is a big issue, and, yes, we do have some problems with drug smuggling, and, yes, we do have issues with all the cartels. In my opinion ... we will not have a change ... until we've changed our leadership."

Next, Lucio shared his thoughts on the importance of next year's election.

"I truly believe that this upcoming election is the most important in our country's history. ... It is a very scary time. ... South Texas has had the worst voter percentage turnout compared to any other area in the state for as long as I can remember."

The last panel, titled "Career Impact: Expanding your Horizons," brought



Mariana Gomez/THE RIDER

State Reps. Eddie Lucio III (D-Brownsville) and Armando "Mando" Martinez (D-Weslaco) encourage students and the community to vote in upcoming elections during the State of the Rio Grande Valley Conference held Sept. 20 in the Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

guest speakers in diverse professions: Cassandra Aleman, a deputy organizing director at the Texas Democratic Party; Rogelio Chanes, assistant athletic director for development at UTRGV; Gilbert Garza Reyes, manager of Teach for America; and Rick Garza, a staff attorney for the Texas Civil Rights Project. The guests spoke about their jobs, how to properly apply to one and the importance of self-

care when dealing with stress.

Cindy Mata-Vasquez, director of Student Activities and an organizer of the event, shared her thoughts on the conference.

"I think this is a big initiative," Mata-Vasquez said. "We definitely want to see how we can grow and increase our presence not only here at the university but also make our presence count in our region, in the Rio Grande Valley."

Alyssa Guajardo, chair of the State of the Rio Grande Valley Conference and an exercise science senior, said, "I think it's really nice hosting the conference because you learn so much from it and it's really beneficial. I feel like in the future you are going to need skills like these. ... Like, you learn a lot of good skills from it. I am very happy with everything that the speakers said and I am hoping that students really learned from it."

# VAQUERO VOICE



## INCREASE VOTER REGISTRATION



"I feel like increasing voter registration is extremely important, and I think the best way to do it is to have events such as the one they are having today on National Voter Registration Day, where we get together a couple of different organizations such as Student Activities and Civic Engagement Alliance, and just engage students to come and vote, well, to register to vote, inform them about when it is when they can vote once they are registered."

**Jacob Ramirez**  
Psychology junior

"Si no sabes si estás registrado para votar es tan simple como venir, checar si estás registrado para votar. Si no estás registrado para votar, literalmente son cinco minutos. Es una aplicación super corta que te pregunta cosas básicas. Nada más necesitas tu número de seguro social o tu licencia de manejo y después de eso realmente es nada más hablar con tus amigos, decirles lo importante que es registrarte para votar porque nosotros diciendo quienes son los que queremos que nos representen hace realmente un cambio enorme en como nuestro país es manejado".



**Alexandra Smith**  
Estudiante de tercer año en ciencias políticas



"Honestly, I really don't know because, I mean, even for me to get to it, my mom had to get me into it. So, I guess, maybe add an incentive. That would probably make a lot more people go into it. Maybe, a bracelet or something like that, you know what I mean? Something small. That could probably help increase it. ... Maybe advertise it a lot more, like in the newspaper, like in The Rider. That'd probably work a lot, too. A lot of people read that. I read that, so that would probably help."

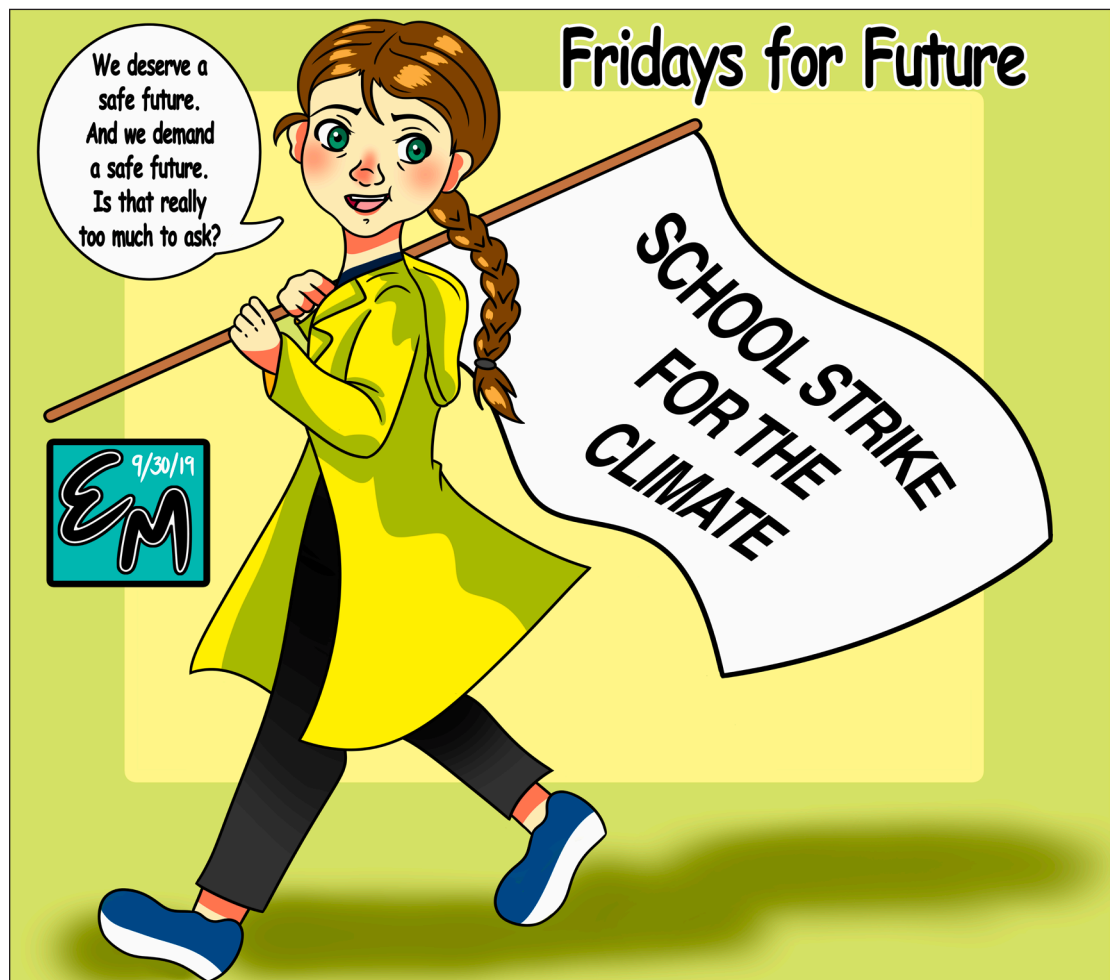
**Carlos Lopez III**  
Mechanical engineering sophomore

"Here in school, I guess just make it more accessible. Maybe starting with the freshmen coming in. Make it more accessible to where more freshmen, not necessarily [just] freshmen, but more students hang out. So maybe like Student Union, when we're registering for classes. I know, recently, right now in some of my courses there's been some representatives going into class and asking if we're voting registered. I like that, maybe continue to do that. Maybe not necessarily out and about, especially in, like, time reference, but inside classrooms, staying in areas where there's more people hanging out and the time frame is not as limited."



**Keila Rodriguez**  
English junior

--Compiled by Robert Benavidez Jr. and Aaliyah Garza



# Plant-based trends



**Fernando Ramirez**  
THE RIDER

When people think of vegan and vegetarian options, the first thing that comes to mind is awful tasting food or a salad with a side of plain, white tofu. Leaving meat and other dairy products behind can be a hard transition and can become overwhelming to people.

With the rise of a more health-conscious generation, more people have become open to meat alternatives. Companies such as Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat have been able to mimic meat using plant-based proteins. Vegan and vegetarian food has developed to become more appealing and has become a trend.

This has become more evident over the last year with many fast-food restaurants expanding their menus to include vegan and

vegetarian friendly options. Carl's Jr. started with the Beyond Burger, followed by Burger King's Impossible WHOPPER. Eventually, KFC and Subway announced their plans to expand their menus with plant-based options. With these new additions, more people are encouraged to try more plant-based foods and discover that it can be just as delicious.

The same is evident with the rise in sales for non-dairy

milks such as almond and oat milk. With the large demand in plant-based milks, cow milk has significantly decreased in sales. Plant-based milk rose 61% between 2012 and 2017, while dairy milk fell 15%, according to Mintel.com. The dairy corporation began legal action against plant-based milks to refrain from calling their products "milk," due

to the nut's lack of lactation. Although no action was taken, plant-based milks continue to grow as more people become open to the idea of trying them.

My experience has been good overall, and I have been supported by my friends and family. Although, it was hard to quit eating the foods I used to love, I learned to cook new foods and get out of my comfort zone. My friends and family are always open to eat what I eat

and are always surprised

at how good plant-based food can be. My parents have been encouraged to eat healthier and be more conscious of what they eat.

Although, it can be argued that these new plant-based options in fast food are not completely vegan or vegetarian because they are cooked on the same grill as their meat counterparts, they still encourage people to try it and it's a big step for the plant-based trend. More people are now trying these options for health reasons and realizing how good they can be. Vegan and vegetarian food are no longer associated with plain tofu, but now with new things such as

vegan tacos and sandwiches.

**"My experience has been good overall, and I have been supported by my friends and family."**

## Submit a Letter to the Editor

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](mailto:therider@utrgv.edu). All letters must be typed and no longer than 400 words. Letters must include the name, classification and phone number of 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.

## Have a story idea?

Let us know at  
**882-5143** or **665-2541**

## La Conferencia del Estado del Valle del Río Grande

**Hania Rocío**

THE RIDER

La Conferencia del Estado del Valle del Río Grande tomó lugar el 20 de septiembre en el campus de Edinburg y se enfocó en el censo, la votación y las oportunidades laborales.

La conferencia comenzó con palabras alentadoras de Moisés "Moe" Vela Jr., un abogado que es socio fundador, presidente y CEO de Vela Group LLC, una empresa consultora de desarrollo corporativo, empresarial y organizacional, según su sitio web.

"Creo que es increíble ver a los estudiantes del Valle del Río Grande organizando conferencias como esta", dijo Vela. "Es muy importante informar, capacitar e inspirar a los estudiantes aquí en la universidad para que se involucren y lideren".

Después, el piso se abrió a "Nuestra Voz: Investigación Regional, Censo de Estados Unidos 2020 y más allá", un panel de discusión que informó a los estudiantes sobre la importancia de completar el censo de 2020 y cómo puede afectar a la comunidad.

"Es muy importante completar el censo lo más que puedan porque, con cifras precisas, eso significa más fondos para el Valle", dijo Natasha Altama-McNeely, profesora de ciencias políticas y panelista. "El censo es muy importante. ... Fundamentalmente, es una herramienta para obtener el recuento de la población, incluidos ciudadanos y no



Mariana Gomez/THE RIDER

Senador estatal Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) (de izquierda) y representantes estatales Terry Canales (D-Edinburg), Eddie Lucio III (D-Brownsville) y Armando "Mando" Martínez (D -Weslaco) discuten temas políticos y la importancia de votar el 20 de septiembre durante la Conferencia del Estado del Valle del Río Grande en el Ballroom.

ciudadanos. ... Tener un conteo preciso, nuevamente, solo traerá resultados positivos para el Valle".

Otros panelistas incluyeron Albert Morales, especialista de la Asociación de la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos, y Ericka Reyna, subdirectora de personal de la oficina del juez del condado de Hidalgo.

Luego, "El camino hacia 2020: actualizaciones legislativas y votación" fue discutido entre los legisladores estatales. El senador estatal Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) y los representantes estatales Terry

Canales (D-Edinburg), Eddie Lucio III (D-Brownsville) y Armando "Mando" Martínez (D-Weslaco) respondieron varias preguntas sobre el muro fronterizo, inmigración y su opinión sobre las próximas elecciones.

"Sí, tenemos algunos desafíos aquí en el área fronteriza", dijo Hinojosa. "La trata de personas es un gran problema y, sí, tenemos algunos problemas con el contrabando de drogas, y sí, tenemos problemas con todos los carteles. En mi opinión ... no tendremos un cambio ... hasta que hayamos cambiado

nuestro liderazgo".

Luego, Lucio compartió sus pensamientos sobre la importancia de las elecciones del próximo año.

"Realmente creo que esta próxima elección es la más importante en la historia de nuestro país", Lucio dijo. "Es un momento muy aterrador. ... El sur de Texas ha tenido el peor porcentaje de participación electoral en comparación con cualquier otra área del estado desde que tengo memoria".

El último panel, titulado "Impacto profesional: expandiendo sus horizontes",

trajo oradores invitados en diversas profesiones: Kassandra Alemán, subdirectora organizadora del Partido Demócrata de Texas; Rogelio Chanes, director atlético asistente de desarrollo en UTRGV; Gilbert Garza Reyes, gerente de Teach for America; y Rick Garza, abogado del personal del Proyecto de Derechos Civiles de Texas. Los oradores hablaron sobre sus trabajos, cómo aplicar adecuadamente a uno y la importancia del autocuidado cuando se trata del estrés.

Cindy Mata-Vásquez, directora de Actividades Estudiantiles y organizadora del evento, compartió sus pensamientos sobre la conferencia.

"Creo que esta es una gran iniciativa", dijo Mata-Vásquez. "Definitivamente queremos ver cómo podemos crecer y aumentar nuestra presencia no solo aquí en la universidad, sino también hacer que nuestra presencia cuente en nuestra región, en el Valle del Río Grande".

Alyssa Guajardo, presidenta de la Conferencia del Estado del Valle del Río Grande y estudiante de ciencias del ejercicio, dijo, "Creo que es realmente agradable organizar la conferencia porque aprendes mucho de ella y es realmente beneficioso. Siento que en el futuro vas a necesitar habilidades como estas. ... Como, aprendes muchas buenas habilidades de esto. Estoy muy contenta con todo lo que dijeron los oradores y espero que los estudiantes realmente hayan aprendido de ello".

--Traducido por Mariana Gómez

## Programa de UTRGV prepara a estudiantes para trabajo de servicio internacional

**Hania Rocío**

THE RIDER

Fundado en 1961 por el presidente John F. Kennedy, el Cuerpo de Paz de los Estados Unidos ha ayudado a impactar las luchas contra el SIDA y el hambre, defiende el medio ambiente y ayuda a las comunidades desfavorecidas a obtener acceso a la tecnología.

El Cuerpo de Paz existe para promover la paz y la amistad en el mundo al completar tres objetivos: proporcionar a hombres y mujeres capacitados a las personas que necesitan su asistencia, promover una mejor comprensión de los estadounidenses para el mundo y promover una mejor comprensión del mundo para los estadounidenses, de acuerdo con peacecorps.gov.

"En esta área ... no hay muchos voluntarios que regresen, no mucha gente ha escuchado exactamente ... qué es el Cuerpo de Paz", dijo Fedra Hinojosa, estudiante de último año de antropología y embajadora del Cuerpo de Paz. "Los estudiantes que desean postularse deben estar abiertos al mundo ... para conocer gente, otras culturas, probar otros alimentos, ver otros ambientes, estar en otros tipos de clima".

UTRGV ofrece un programa de preparación del Cuerpo de Paz que prepara a los estudiantes para el trabajo de servicio internacional. Para inscribirse en el programa, necesita capacitación y experiencia en un sector laboral específico, tres cursos y 50 horas de experiencia asociada. Los sectores incluyen educación, salud, medio ambiente, agricultura, desarrollo juvenil y desarrollo económico comunitario.

"Es una combinación de trabajo y experiencia en el curso", dijo el decano de Honors College, Mark Andersen. "Así que, cuando los estudiantes han completado el Programa de Preparación del Cuerpo de Paz, obtienen una posición preferencial con el Cuerpo de Paz. Ya sea que los estudiantes sirvan en el Cuerpo de Paz o no, desarrollan un par de habilidades que son bastante deseables en el mercado laboral".

También se requieren habilidades en idiomas extranjeros que varían según el lugar de servicio. Los requisitos de competencia intercultural se pueden cumplir tomando varios cursos como política internacional, comunicación intercultural, ecología del cambio global, entre otros.

"Buscamos estudiantes que tengan mucha experiencia y que obviamente esté relacionada con alguno de nuestros sectores", dijo Joshua Castro, reclutador del Cuerpo de Paz para San Antonio y el sur de Texas. "Queremos que tengan experiencia trabajando con niños, eso realmente ayuda con todos nuestros sectores. Dos habilidades realmente valiosas para las personas que aplican para el Cuerpo de Paz son si hablan español o francés. En particular, si tienes algún tipo de habilidad en español, eso te hará más competitivo. ... El español y el francés son los dos grandes que buscamos".

Dado que el programa del Cuerpo de Paz es altamente selectivo, este programa de preparación requiere tres actividades específicas que mejorarán la candidatura. Se alienta a los estudiantes a que revisen su currículum por personal y participen en un taller o practiquen habilidades



FOTO CORTESÍA

Un voluntario del Cuerpo de Paz transplanta árboles al lado de su homólogo en Senegal.

de entrevista en el Centro de Carreras UTRGV. Finalmente, desarrolle al menos una experiencia de liderazgo significativa y se prepare para dar más detalles al respecto. Esto puede incluir organizar un evento o ser un líder de trabajo voluntario.

"Mis superiores me dijeron que si no hubieran estado en el Cuerpo de Paz, probablemente no tendrían un trabajo con la Fundación Nacional de Ciencias, que es muy importante, o la NASA", dijo Gabriela Villegas, estudiante de ciencias ambientales y embajadora del Cuerpo de Paz del campus de UTRGV. "Tienes la oportunidad de hacer algo grandioso por los demás. Al final del día, regresas como una persona diferente, porque pudiste ver

cosas que, normalmente, las personas en sus lugares apartados o en su zona de confort no pueden ver. ... Serías capaz de entender más cómo funciona el mundo".

Joshua Castro, un reclutador del Cuerpo de Paz, estará presente en UTRGV Career Expo el miércoles de 10 a.m. a 2 p.m. en Plains Capital Bank El Gran Salón en el campus de Brownsville. En el campus de Edinburg, el evento se llevará a cabo el viernes de 10 a.m. a 3 p.m. en el Fieldhouse.

Para obtener más información, envíe un correo electrónico a honors@utrgv.edu o visite www.utrgv.edu/peacecorpsprep.

--Traducido por Mariana Gómez

# 'Falling forward and never back'



Fernando Ramirez/THE RIDER

Senior forward Kyle Edwards grew up in Barraouallie, St. Vincent, a small island in the Caribbean, where he fell in love with soccer as a child. Although he faced many difficulties, he pushed his dream to become a soccer player with the help of his mom.

## Juanita Maldonado

SPORTS REPORTER

Years ago, there was a young child who could not afford soccer cleats. He played barefoot and would make a ball from anything he could find. That young child, who once had nothing to play soccer with, is now playing Division I soccer.

At the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, forward Kyle Edwards is known for his stellar performances on the soccer field, but before he achieved success, he had to go through trials and tribulations back in his home country.

Edwards calls Barrouallie, St. Vincent, home. It was the place that saw him grow up, but it was also the

place where Edwards faced the most difficulties.

"No cleats, not a proper soccer field, no bus fare to go to practice, that kind of stuff, but I was a determined kid," Edwards said. "And my mother made a lot of sacrifices for me, so that was very difficult for her and for me as well."

"We just played bare feet. We played on the road. We played anywhere we would find any little space. We would make two goals ourselves and we would just play. We would make balls from anything, fruit. Any sort of thing, we would just make balls from and play, just because we love the game."

The determination that he had to become successful outweighed the difficulties he was facing in life. Nothing seemed to stop Edwards.

"I mean, it was difficult, but the dream is always alive," he said. "All you have to do is just keep pushing, keep working hard and with the right family and the right people around you, everything's going to be great."

Edwards' love for soccer began when he was a little kid. His oldest brother always encouraged him to watch the game and to play it. His love for the sport grew throughout the years and it eventually became his passion and an everyday thing.

"I mean, I think in the Caribbean, by the time you start walking, someone is going to give a ball to you," Edwards said.

His persistence and determination led to an opportunity to play soccer at UTRGV.

"I never liked school. I was never a studious person," Edwards said. "I can do my work, but I was never a studious person. I just wanted to play pro soccer. When they told me that I had to go to school I was like, 'No,' I just wanted to play pro by the time I got out of high school so that was it. They said, 'If you want to go pro this is the right direction to go and you'll have a background or something to fall forward on' because I never go back."

"I talked to [Head Coach] Paul [Leese] and he sounded like a very interesting guy and his system and everything," Edwards said. "I like to try new things. I'm very spontaneous, so that's why I came here."

In 2018, Edwards joined the Vaqueros and began making an impact right away. By the end of the season, he was named to the All-WAC First

Team, WAC All-Tournament Team and All-Far West Region First Team. Edwards led the team in goals scored during the season and was second in the WAC for most goals scored. He finished the season as the leader in points and goals scored during WAC play. His biggest accomplishment was being nominated for the MAC Hermann Trophy Watch List, which is presented annually to the best male player of the year.

Edwards' success transferred to the summer, when he played with the Brazos Valley Cavalry FC Soccer Club, which is an affiliate of the Houston Dynamo and member of the United Soccer League (USL).

At Cavalry FC, he lived the opportunity of a lifetime. Edwards was able to practice with the Houston Dynamo. While practicing with the Dynamo he experienced a moment that he will never forget.

One day the Mexico National Soccer Team was in town for a friendly match. While in town, the Dynamo practiced against Mexico. For Edwards it was more than just a practice.

"That was awesome," he said. "I even got to score a goal on [goalie Guillermo] Ochoa. That feeling was one of the best feelings ever."

But the opportunities for Edwards did not stop there. In August, he was called to play with the St. Vincent and the Grenadines National Team for a friendly match against Trinidad and Tobago.

"It's always a pleasure and it's always a great feeling to be back home, to play with the boys," he said. "You know just being around the home fans, the energy is always high. They're happy to see me play. They wanted to see how much I've grown, how much I've improved, and I showed them that and they were impressed. We actually won the game against Trinidad and Tobago 1-0."

To kick off the 2019 season, Edwards has been named to the Top Drawer Soccer Preseason Best XI Third Team, WAC Preseason Player of the Year and Preseason All-WAC selection. As the season continues, his expectations keep growing.

"To improve, keep growing and keep working hard," he said. "Just do better than I did last year. I mean, last year was fun, but I just thought I could've done so much more for the team. But this year I am trying my best to do that. I don't want to have any regrets."

# Tennis team gets a 'fresh set of eyes'



Angel De La Cruz/THE RIDER

New UTRGV Men's Tennis Team Assistant Coach Mitch Hallum gets ready to hit the ball during practice last Wednesday at the Orville Cox Tennis Center in Edinburg.

## Angel De La Cruz

SPORTS REPORTER

Newly hired Men's Tennis Team Assistant Coach Mitch Hallum said he wants to make some noise in the Western Athletic Conference.

UTRGV welcomed Hallum Sept. 19.

He graduated from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in 2016, where he earned the All-Conference honors in doubles with the men's tennis team, according to goutrgv.com.

Hallum, who has been an assistant director at Mac 360 Tennis Academy and counselor at the Texas A&M University Tennis Camp, believes he can bring a "fresh set of eyes" to the team.

"Now there's two coaches that can move from court to court," Hallum said. "It allows us to be a little more creative in practice. ... It brings a new level of intensity, some energy and a fresh look at what's going on with the team, which in tennis is big very technically driven."

Hallum said he has individual goals for UTRGV.

"Personally, I like to help some of the guys get those All-Conference honors and improve on the record as a team from last year, and, hopefully, make some noise here in the WAC," he said.

Sophomore Georgije Babic said Hallum has brought new motivation to the UTRGV Men's Tennis Team.

"Having a secondary coach helps the team because one coach doesn't have to take care of everyone," Babic said. "We can spread out and do more specific things, which is obviously valuable for the team going forward."

Head Coach Dann Nelson said Hallum has made a huge impact on the program.

"It's really nice to be able to split the work up and delegate some duties and really get to work more with our team," Nelson said. "Get to do more now than what we have in the past. So, I'm really excited about having Coach

Mitch here."

Next, the tennis team will compete at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Regionals beginning Oct. 25 in Waco.



Mitch Hallum

## Exhibit honors family of artists



Amanda Vela/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Jennifer Siegler, daughter of artists Maxine McClendon and Edward Edson Nichols, and her husband, Grant Siegler, were recognized Sept. 19 at the opening reception of “DreamScapes” in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex lobby on the Edinburg campus. The exhibit showcases the uniqueness of the Rio Grande Valley and will be on display through Feb. 7, 2020.

### Omar E. Zapata

THE RIDER

“DreamScapes,” an art exhibit by the Nichols family celebrating the landscapes and traditions of the Rio Grande Valley, opened Sept. 19 at the Performing Arts Complex lobby on the Edinburg campus.

It is a talented family of artists. Edward Edson Nichols was a professor of art at legacy institution University of Texas-Pan American for 33 years before retiring from teaching in 1999; his wife, Maxine McClendon, an internationally renowned artist; and their son, Christopher, a UTPA alumnus.

“We called their exhibit ‘DreamScapes’ because it represents the different landscapes of the Rio Grande Valley, seen through the eyes of artists that loved the area,” said Dahlia Guerra, associate vice president for Public Art and Projects.

“The impact he made on the local artists, on students was just incredible,” Guerra said referring to Professor Nichols.

Special guests in attendance were the Nichols’ daughter, Jennifer Siegler, and her

husband, Grant Siegler.

“The art department here was the family I grew up with, but to be able to get an exhibit, especially with all three of them, I think would have just meant the most to them,” Jennifer Siegler said.

Losing her brother Christopher a couple of months ago and both of her parents in early 2016, Siegler knows they would be quite touched and honored by it.

“It looks amazing,” she said. “It’s weird to have the opportunity, especially for my mom’s work, which is the big multipaneled pieces.”

Siegler explained why her mother had such large scales for her pieces. She said they were meant for big corporate boardrooms and finding a good space to fully show what they’re supposed to look like is hard to find.

“A lot of my mom’s work is based off of an aerial view of her interpretation of looking out a window from an airplane,” Siegler said. “She put that on canvas and painted it. My father did a lot of landscape stuff as well.”

Even though the whole exhibit is by the Nichols family, she said this is just a

tiny bit of the amount of art she has, about 1% of all the art she has from the family.

“The thing with living with this caliber of art and seeing it every day, yes, you kind of get numb to it but there are times where it kind of catches you and even though you’ve been walking past it and seeing it all your life, it will cause you to stop at one moment one day and you’ll see something new about it and have a whole new level of appreciation.”

Sandra Samara Barba, a vocal music education senior, said she felt the feeling of home that Siegler might feel every day from the paintings as well.

“I think it’s cozy because all the pieces have this, like, cushiony, like, soft texture and it just makes me feel like they’re trying to put out that message of home and comfort,” Barba said.

One message that Siegler wants to give all UTRGV students is, “Never accept limitation and never give up.”

“DreamScapes” will be on display at the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex lobby through Feb. 7, 2020. Admission is free.



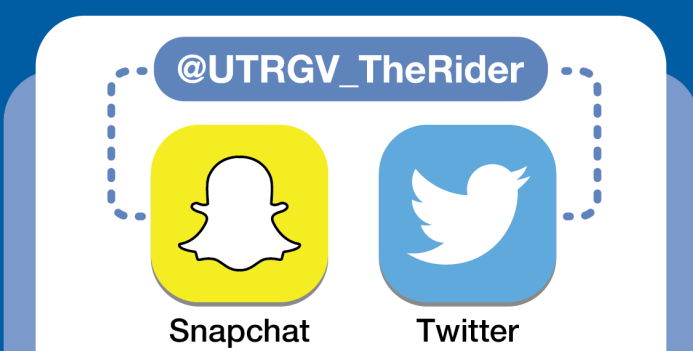
The opening reception for the honorary exhibit “DreamScapes” was held Sept. 19 in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex lobby on the Edinburg campus. UTRGV students, faculty and staff had the chance to learn more about the artists who recognized the unique traditions and terrains of the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico.

## The Doodler

By Elizabeth Mendoza



## FOLLOW US!



## Athletics offers specialty items and student discounts at concession stands

### Klaudia Cedillo

THE RIDER

From fajita nachos to Chick-fil-A sandwiches, individuals attending UTRGV volleyball, basketball and baseball home games will now have a wider selection of refreshments to choose and enjoy from the concession stands.

Along with the recently added expansion to the menu, current UTRGV students will now receive 50% off regular items and 25% off specialty items by displaying their student ID.

“As part of our initiative to improve fan engagement and expand fan experience, we identified a few things that we could do better and concession is one of those,” said James Martinez, senior associate athletic director for business operations.

Martinez said he looked at “common” concession items the stands lacked and obtained them by connecting with Sodexo, a partner of the university.

He said by working with Sodexo, they have managed to improve the concession stands by getting better prices, better quality and more convenience.

The Athletics’ concession stands now offer Chick-fil-A sandwiches, Pizza Hut pepperoni or cheese pizzas and fajita nachos as specialty items.

Jonah Goldberg, associate athletic director for communications, said because they have to order the specialty items from Sodexo to be delivered before every game, there is a limited number for sale.

Martinez said some fans have already



Amanda Vela/THE RIDER

UTRGV students will receive up to 50% off concession stand items during home volleyball, basketball and baseball games after presenting their student ID. Concession stands open one hour prior to the start of each game.

come back with recommendations, such as adding *pico de gallo* to the fajita nachos, sauces for the Chick-fil-A sandwiches and adding a supreme pizza option from Pizza Hut.

“There’s been some other specific, what I call, more [Rio Grande Valley] centric requests,” he said. “So, you have corn-in-a-cup kind of stuff we’re looking at doing. ... It’s just a matter of making sure [we’re] making [a] quantity that doesn’t go to waste, and so far, we’ve been very fortunate with everything.”

Since rolling out these changes, the

specialty items have sold out at every event so far, as fans start to find out about the new items, Martinez said.

“What helps also is we give a discount to students [and] again, that goes back to the fan experience,” he said. “So, students really make the fan experience awesome. The more students that go to an event, the more fun we have.”

Martinez said they’re looking at ways to verify students who display their ID card are current UTRGV students, but at the moment are “taking it on the honor system.”

He believes the student discount is

something the concession stands will do permanently.

“Our drinks have improved as well,” Goldberg said. “It used to be, we only had bottled drinks available, and now we have added fountain. We have eight different varieties of drinks available at the fountain now. What that does is guarantee that all the drinks are going to be cold, and you don’t have to worry about that, and you don’t have all this single-use plastic floating around either. So, we think that it’s better for everybody involved.”

Although trading the previously available bottle to a 20-ounce cup, the price for drinks will remain at \$3, Martinez said. The concession stands offer Coke, Diet Coke, Powerade, Dr Pepper and Sprite as fountain drinks and bottled water, so far.

He said the No. 1 item contributing to the average revenue of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per game was drink sales.

“We expect sales to go up this year because we have more variety and I think, so far, the numbers show that we’re trending upward, but we’ve really been doing this for about a week now, so it’s early,” Martinez said. “But, so far, the response has been positive.”

He said he is working on having hamburgers cooked on-site and french fries available at every baseball home game.

“We think it’s important to give students the best possible experience,” Goldberg said. “We certainly want to have students coming out to our games and in return we want to give them a great experience. It’s a big thing for us.”

### SMITH

Continued from Page 1

forever changed.”

When he was 11, his coach at the time invited Smith to have dinner with his family in his home, where he discovered his coach owned a construction company.

“After that conversation, he shared with me this lesson, ‘You have great talent and your talent can take you a long

way, but you gotta get your education, because someday, that talent is only gonna go so far,’” Smith said.

In high school, he said after speaking with the press for the first time, his coach spoke to him about how he didn’t mention his teammates in the interview, using a lot of “I” instead of “We.” He said his coach told him every chance Smith got, he was going to share the spotlight with his teammates.

After college, he recalled the day he

was drafted to the Dallas Cowboys and the nerves he felt while his mother’s excitement caused her to invite everyone over to their home.

“At the time, I stop and reflect, all the way back to that kid who was 7 years old who was watching the Dallas Cowboys play, laying on the floor watching the Dallas Cowboys play, talking to his father saying one of these days, I’m gonna play for the Cowboys,” he said.

Before Smith retired in Jacksonville, Florida, he said he knew he wanted to go into real estate, recalling his first memories with his coach when he was 11.

At the end of the evening, he answered seven questions in front of the crowd, naming his mentors, his failures, his advice and how he felt becoming a three-time Super Bowl champion.

“I felt like Tony the Tiger,” Smith said. “Grrrrrreeeat!”

### SERVICE

Continued from Page 1

Prep Program that will prepare students for international service work. To enroll in the program, you need training and experience in a specific work sector, three courses and 50 hours of associated experience. The sectors include education, health, environment, agriculture, youth development and community economic development.

“It’s a combination of course work and experience,” Honors College Dean Mark Andersen said. “So, when students have completed the Peace Corps

Prep Program, then they get a preferential placement with the Peace Corps. Whether students serve on the Peace Corps or not, they develop a couple of competencies that are pretty desirable on the job market.”

Foreign language skills are also required varying on the place of service. The intercultural competence requirements can be fulfilled by taking various courses like international politics, intercultural communication, global change ecology, among others.

“We look for students who have a lot of experience that’s obviously related to one of our

sectors,” said Joshua Castro, Peace Corps recruiter for San Antonio and Southern Texas. “We want them to have experience working with kids, that really helps with all of our sectors. Two really valuable skills for people who apply to the Peace Corps are if they speak Spanish or French. In particular, if you have any type of Spanish skills, that’s gonna make you more competitive. ... Spanish and French are two big ones we look for.”

Since the Peace Corps program is highly selective, this prep program requires three specific activities that will enhance candidacy. Students are encouraged to have their

résumé reviewed by personnel and participate in a workshop or practice interview skills at the UTRGV Career Center. Finally, develop at least one meaningful leadership experience and be prepared to elaborate about it. This can include organizing an event or be a leader of volunteer work.

“My seniors told me that if they hadn’t done the Peace Corps, they probably wouldn’t have a job with the National Science Foundation, which is very important, or NASA,” said Gabriela Villegas, environmental science senior and UTRGV Peace Corps campus ambassador. “You get to do something great for

others. At the end of the day, you come back as a changed person, because you were able to see things that, normally people in their secluded spots, or in their comfort zone can’t see. ... You would be able to understand more, how the world works.”

Joshua Castro, a Peace Corps recruiter, will be present at the UTRGV Career Expo from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday at the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus. On the Edinburg campus, the event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday at the Fieldhouse.

For more information, email [honors@utrgv.edu](mailto:honors@utrgv.edu) or visit [www.utrgv.edu/peacecorpsprep/](http://www.utrgv.edu/peacecorpsprep/).

### RADIO

Continued from Page 1

organizations will be present to give information and fundraise for their organization.

The four local bands that will perform are TV Flesh, The Honeyflowers, Monodysey and Noralee.

Lopez hopes that College Radio Day lets students know that there is a UTRGV station for them. She said

the station has 20 student DJs who contribute to the program.

Natalie L. Zarate, UTRGV Radio assistant station manager, said this is the first year this event will be held to this extent.

“We’re moving in a way to where we want to have more engagement with students and the community,” Zarate said.

For more information and to listen to the station, visit [utrgvradio.com](http://utrgvradio.com).

### ASK

Continued from Page 3

The Rider.

Resources include the Counseling Center, Writing Center, Learning Center, etc., depending on the students’ concern. Counselors speak with the students and get to know them better before referring them to a specific resource, Jaramillo said.

With a freshman retention rate of 76.5% and 69% rate of two-year students as of Fall 2018, UTRGV’s dropout rate is lower than the 30% national rate of college freshmen who drop out after their first year.

For the 2018-2019 academic year, 70% of Americans will study at a four-year college, but less than two-thirds will graduate with a degree, according to [CollegeAtlas.org](http://CollegeAtlas.org).

Asked what advice she has for students who want to drop out, Jaramillo replied for students to at least try to attend part time.

“We can even talk to them about working on campus, where they can work as a peer adviser, work-study, part time and come to school at the same time,” she said. “So, the work schedule can be more flexible and they can work around their student schedule

to give them that opportunity to continue school.”

Her advice for students in search of a peer mentoring program on campus is to contact the Engaging Peers in College (E.P.I.C.) Mentoring Program at UTRGV, where first-year students receive advice from upperclassmen.

Advisers monitor students’ course loads, check GPA’s, programs and make sure that students apply for graduation.

Advisers try to understand the type of course loads students’ are taking on so that they can properly extend their services, Jaramillo said.

“What we suggest to students is to get study buddies,” she said, to make them feel more confident about their decisions. Her final piece of advice for students who are feeling alone in their college journey is to make connections with people in their major and on campus.