

Recycling in one of three campuses



Amanda Vela/THE RIDER

Recycling bins are placed across the Edinburg campus for plastic, paper and cans.

Maleny Ortega and Omar Zapata
THE RIDER

Although UTRGV has recycling bins on both campuses, the Edinburg campus has a recycling program while the Brownsville campus is looking into starting one. Oscar Villarreal, director of Campus Facilities Operations in Edinburg, said there is a recycling program on campus. Plastic, cardboard, aluminum, oil, antifreeze and metals are the materials that are collected to be recycled. "The grounds and the custodial [staff] are the ones running most of the recycling

program," Villarreal said. The recyclables placed in bins that are found across campus are picked by the custodians and place them into large containers located behind the Facilities is located. Whenever those containers are full, Facilities call the City of Edinburg and City of McAllen to pick them up.

Recycle, reduce and reuse: First in a series

"They don't charge us for it because what they do is they provide this for us free of charge," said Carlos Chavez, assistant director of Campus

Facilities Operations. "All I need to do is ... call them and let them know when it's full." The city then pick up the containers and then return them empty. Villarreal said despite the campus growing in the last 10 years, the recycling program has been able to eliminate equivalently the same volume of about 15 trash dumpsters that would have been placed on campus. "Dollarwise, we're saving somewhere between \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year because we're recycling," he said. If departments on the

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Roxanna Miranda/THE RIDER

Reminder: UTRGV is tobacco free

Victor G. Ramirez
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Students, such as electrical engineering freshman Miguel Gonzalez, said it is good that cigarettes, vapes and e-cigarettes are banned on the UTRGV campuses because they can affect people's health.

"I don't vape because I never really found it, like, to be compelling to me and growing up around my family they were, I guess, they pushed this moral value, like, to not smoke," Gonzalez said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recorded more than 1,200 lung injury cases associated with

See **TOBACCO**, Page 8

UTRGV submits Compliance Certification Report

Brigitte Ortiz
THE RIDER

UTRGV has submitted its Compliance Certification Report to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the first step in the reaffirmation process. SACSCOC is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states, according to its website. UTRGV is accredited by SACSCOC to award bachelor's, master's and

doctorate degrees, according to its website. Christine Shupala, associate vice president for Institutional Accreditation, said there are 13 different sections the report focuses on. "For example, there's a section on faculty, there's a section on facilities, there's a section on student support services, so we have to address all of the standards in each section and tell them what we do to make sure that

See **REPORT**, Page 8



Klaudia Cedillo/THE RIDER

Exercise science junior Alexis Martinez (left) and senior Dana Day plant jalapeño pepper plants in the Exercise Science Club's designated bed at the Community Garden Planting event kickoff on the Edinburg campus.

A gardening we grow

Klaudia Cedillo
THE RIDER

Student organizations, departments and students gathered Oct. 3 to learn, grow and garden at the Community Garden Planting event for the fall season kickoff on the Edinburg campus. Roberto Cantu, UTRGV executive director of Auxiliary Business Services and program coordinator, said different organizations from the Edinburg campus attended the event to adopt a bed at the community garden and different departments did as well. "We've got other people on campus that have gone home and converted their entire backyard," Cantu said. "[They have] taken out St. Augustine grass, added compost from the City

of McAllen, and they've got beautiful gardens that produce a lot of vegetables for them." After representatives of each student organization filled out forms for the adoption of a bed, Agricultural Specialist Cruz Salinas conducted a presentation on the rules of the garden, as well as planting basics. "It's a crash course on home gardening," Cantu said. "We want individuals from the different student organizations to be able to learn how to raise their own vegetables and be able to share that information [with] other individuals." Students, staff and faculty at the event planted a variety of jalapeños, tomatoes, cabbage and celery, which

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THE RIDER

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MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Today UTRGV Groove

The Student Union, as part of UTRGV Madness, will host a **tie-dye party** for students. T-shirts and supplies will be provided with a valid student ID. The event will take place at 12:15 p.m. in the East Patio on the Edinburg campus and the Student Union veranda on the Brownsville campus.

Tuesday

UNO Tournament

An **UNO tournament** will take place at 12:30 p.m. in the Game Room on the Brownsville campus. Students will have the opportunity to win **VBucks**. For more information, email studentunion@utrgv.edu or call 665-7898.

Magic Day with CAB

The **Campus Activities Board** will host a **DIY headband** event from 12:15 to 2:45 p.m. in the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus and El Comedor on the Brownsville campus. All materials will be provided.

For more information, email cab@utrgv.edu.

Meet & Greet

There will be a **Pizza Social** for English and Spanish majors, minors and faculty from noon to 2 p.m. in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. Students can enjoy pizza and receive information on classes for Spring 2020.

Wednesday

Herd Birthday Bash

The Herd will celebrate its second birthday with **live music, free cupcakes, a photo booth and minute-to-win-it games**. The event will take place from noon to 2 p.m. on the Library lawn on the Brownsville campus and from 4 to 6 p.m. on the Quad on the Edinburg campus.

Coffee & Careers

Students can enjoy a **free cup of coffee or tea**, some pastries and have a **career conversation** from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Interdisciplinary Academic Building 1.116 on the Brownsville campus and from 4 to 5 p.m. Thursday

in the Executive Tower 2.101 on the Edinburg campus. The Career Center is hosting the event.

Thursday

Vaqueros on the Mic

Students can **sing** and have a chance to win **VBucks** from noon to 2 p.m. in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus and from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email cab@utrgv.edu.

Friday

UTRGV Madness

UTRGV Madness, a night of music, contests and food, will take place from 9 to 10:30 p.m. in the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. The event will also include the premiere of the **UTRGV men's and women's basketball teams** and a student organization dance-off. Students can attend the **Block Party** at 7 p.m. outside the Fieldhouse and upload their photos to Twitter and Facebook with the hashtag **#UTRGVMadness** to see themselves on the video board. Admission is free. --Compiled by Brigitte Ortiz

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 30 and Oct. 5.



Sept. 30

10:53 a.m.: Two students were stuck in the elevator in the Student Academic Center on the Edinburg campus.

The elevator's power had to be shut off, and the students exited through the top of the elevator car. No injuries were reported.

4:07 p.m.: A man was seen headed north toward University Boulevard on the Brownsville campus. U.S. Border Patrol arrived and took custody of the man. He had crossed from Mexico illegally.

6:34 p.m.: A custodian reported a broken window on a parked shuttle bus at a compound off campus. Upon further investigation, it was discovered the window had been previously reported by the shuttle driver on Sept. 27. The window broke along the bus route on the expressway from Edinburg to Brownsville.

6:51 p.m.: A student was involved in a verbal disturbance with her non-affiliated ex-boyfriend near the Edinburg campus. He had waited for her after class by her vehicle at an off-campus location.

Oct. 1

12:39 a.m.: A fire alarm sounded in the Engineering building on the Edinburg campus. The fire panel indicated a dust detector on the second floor in Area C. The fire department later cleared the building for re-entry.

9:01 a.m.: An unattended iPad and wireless keyboard were stolen from the University Library on the Edinburg campus. The items belonged to a local school district.

1:42 p.m.: A staff member was concerned about a fellow co-worker who failed to report for work in Edinburg. He was later contacted at his residence off campus in Edinburg and he was OK.

3:54 p.m.: A faculty member's university-issued webcam was moved around her office without her consent at the Health & Physical Education II building on the Edinburg campus.

9:38 p.m.: An intoxicated student was found at the Health Affairs Building West on the Edinburg campus. He said he had consumed alcoholic beverages before class, and he showed signs of intoxication. The student was released to a family member at the scene.

10:40 p.m.: A student's computer was hacked after she received a phone call from someone claiming to be an Apple employee at Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus.

Oct. 2

7:32 a.m.: Three men ran north on Levee Road from the U.S. border fence by the Student Union on the Brownsville campus. After conducting a search of the surrounding area, the men were located and detained by U.S. Border Patrol. They were all from Mexico.

9:03 a.m.: An unknown man briefly touched a student's lower back without her consent at the University Library on the Edinburg campus. She felt the touch to be offensive and provocative.

3 p.m.: A student lost her ring at the Health & Physical Education II building on the Edinburg campus.

3:08 p.m.: A student reported having personal issues with another student on the Edinburg campus. The incident has not risen to the level of criminal

offense.

6:48 p.m.: A student's estranged husband made an unannounced visit to discuss their divorce at Casa Bella Apartments on the Brownsville campus. No threats were made; however, she does not want him visiting her.

Oct. 3

8:30 a.m.: A student reported injuring his knee playing racquetball on Sept. 12 at the Health & Physical Education II building on the Edinburg campus. He declined medical attention but wanted to document the injury.

10:34 a.m.: Fifty gallons of gasoline were stolen out of an above-ground gas tank in the compound area of Facilities Services on the Edinburg campus.

1:24 p.m.: A staff member became ill and fainted at the Academic Support Facility on the Edinburg campus. She later regained consciousness for a short time and was transported to Rio Grande 24 Hour Emergency Care for further evaluation.

Oct. 5

5:48 p.m.: Three men were seen crossing the U.S. border fence behind the Interdisciplinary Academic Building in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. The men were located and detained by U.S. Border Patrol. All three subjects were from Mexico.

8:06 p.m.: A student waved down a UTRGV officer in regard to a suspicious man seen in the area on the Edinburg campus. The officer found the man near the Liberal Arts Building North, and a check on his name revealed the man was a registered sex offender. He was issued a criminal trespass warning and escorted off the campus without incident.

--Compiled by Klaudia Cedillo

GARDENING

Continued from Page 1

were provided by Tropical Star, a plant nursery in Hidalgo, in their respective beds.

"We were hoping to get some kale and some other winter vegetables but the producer didn't have them available," Cantu said. "[Tropical Star has] been very steady and dedicated supporters of the community garden. It's through ... partnerships that we have here in the community [that help] us provide this type of programming for our students."

He said one of the overarching rules is no one using any type of chemicals

in the garden, since a USDA-certified organic research garden is adjacent to the community garden on campus.

"That's a really tough designation to attain and we want to make sure that we're not in any way, shape or form, negatively impacting our neighbors," Cantu said.

He said all plants not utilized during the kickoff event will be planted at the research garden.

Cantu said the plot is the student's responsibility for both the fall and spring semesters.

He said during the spring semester, they plant watermelons, cantaloupes, and other similar produce; however, not much is done at the community

garden during the summer.

"We feel that it's something that's really important, growing your own vegetables and incorporating them into a healthy diet," Cantu said. "We believe that the community garden is just one small component in helping improve the health of the Rio Grande Valley."

Cassandra Vasquez, a biology junior, and Valerie Tobias, a biomedical science sophomore, attended the event for fun, despite not being part of a student organization.

"We're really excited," Vasquez said. "I've actually been wanting to grow some plants at my house, but I don't have space, and Valerie also. So, this is our outlet for our creative juices."

When you need help with FAFSA

Alejandra Yañez
THE RIDER

The 2020-2021 FAFSA is available at fafsa.gov and UTRGV students want advice on how to make this stressful financial aid application process easier.

This week's Ask the Expert questions come from Andrea Bustos, a biomedical sciences senior who says filling out her Free Application for Federal Student Aid is an overwhelming experience.

Asked if she faced any obstacles during the FAFSA process, Bustos told *The Rider* that she did not receive financial aid her first year at UTRGV due to an input error on her application. As a result of the error, she had to pay her tuition out-of-pocket.

Bustos said the most difficult part of the process is "the script, like following the instructions and, like, it can lead you to somewhere else."

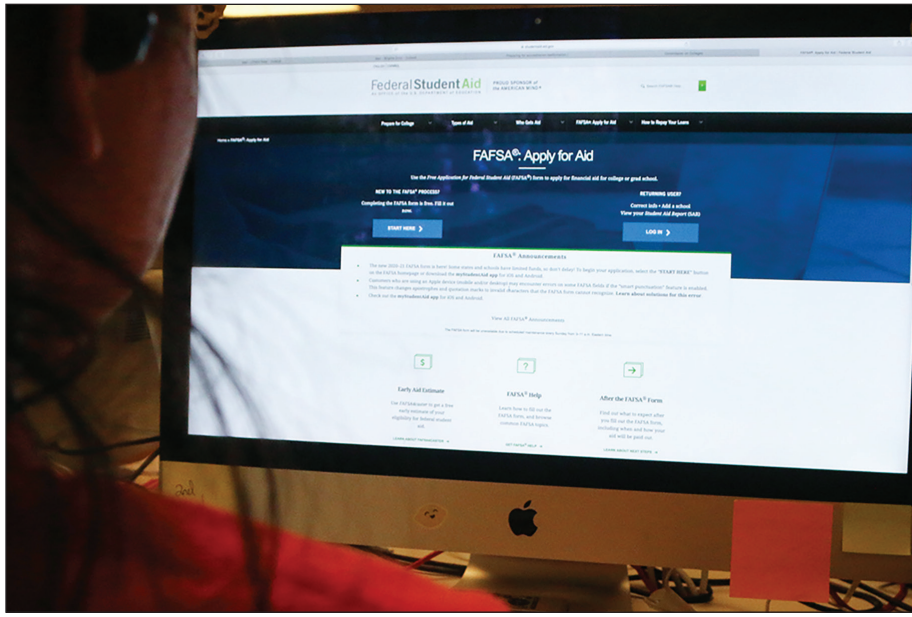
She suggests the U.S. Education Department make its application more user-friendly.

"It's a really good program overall," Bustos said. "They help you, and everything, but I just think that the website and the instructions need to become more simplified."

She said she went through the process alone.

"It was overwhelming," Bustos said. "I remember in high school, we had a class where your parents would come with you and everything, but my parents couldn't go because they were working and it was really difficult because I had to teach them and teach myself. And the instructions were just not that clear and I wish that if I had the time, or my parents had the time, to go together, I think it probably would've been easier."

She said that although she has older brothers and sisters, "they're somewhere else, so calling them over the phone is kind of difficult, like, 'OK,



Robert Benavidez Jr./THE RIDER

UTRGV's priority deadline for the FAFSA is Jan. 15. Students may visit the U Central computer lab on both campuses for assistance in completing the application for federal financial aid.

go there, go there.' I had to do it all on my own."

Bustos said that even her friends whose parents were able to help throughout the application process still faced difficulties.

Asked what questions she has for FAFSA officials, Bustos responded, "So, you know the little bars ... it leads you somewhere else to, like, answer the question. I think that it could be more specific instead of it being broad. That would be something I would change."

Our UTRGV Expert

Senior Financial Aid Coordinator Stefani Ocon offered some advice for students struggling with their FAFSA.

For the most part, the financial aid

application has become easier due to the Education Department's attempt to reword the questions, according to Ocon.

"There are some new features that they added in to the application for this year," she said. "So, now you can do it, like, on your phone or on a tablet."

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool has also made it easier for users by eliminating the hassle of having to upload documents. With this feature, the information is automatically directed to FAFSA.

Ocon said the most common misconception about financial aid is that students think they don't qualify.

"Just because they may not qualify for the same aid as their friend doesn't

mean that they don't qualify for any type of financial aid," she said.

Other types of aid include federal grants, state grants, institutional grants and scholarships. In the 2018-19 school year, UTRGV awarded \$247 million in financial aid., according to Ocon.

"The earlier you apply, the better chance you have of receiving any type of institutional aid, state aid or federal aid, aside from your normal Federal Pell Grants" Ocon said. "It just gives you more time to complete anything else that you might need to do."

For example, if extra documents are requested, a student can turn them in within a week or two from submitting the application, instead of waiting until the summer.

To ensure that students apply properly, Ocon recommends "the U Central computer lab that's on both campuses, Brownsville and Edinburg."

"We have lab assistants there that help you fill out the FAFSA application," Ocon said.

The 2020-2021 FAFSA period opened Oct. 1. Last weekend, the UTRGV Financial Aid Office hosted Super Saturday to help applicants complete their FAFSA.

UTRGV's priority deadline for applications is Jan. 15, 2020.

Ocon said the most common mistakes on the application include people not indicating whether they are male or female, which leads to students being asked to verify their identity. Another common mistake students make is skipping the question of whether they have a high school diploma or GED. Consequently, that has to be verified.

"I'd highly recommend for students to keep their information current," Ocon said, in an effort to make it easier for FAFSA to get in contact with students about the status of their application.

Ask the Expert: Third in a series

American Sign Language offered in workshop series



Aaliyah Garza/THE RIDER

University Recreation Member Service and Reservations Coordinator Sabrina Martinez, UREC Office Assistant Nora Galvan, Career Center Adviser Carina Alcantara, and Student Rights and Responsibilities Judicial Affairs Officer Catherine Vela attend the Lunch and Learn American Sign Language Basics for Faculty and Staff workshop taught by UTRGV Interpreter Maria Cabanillas.

Hania Rocio
THE RIDER

In observance of Accessibility Awareness Month, UTRGV staff has come together to host "Lunch and Learn," a series of workshops that will teach basic sign language to participants.

Six different types of classes will be offered throughout October, November and December. Classes will provide basic signs to help enhance participants' ability to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing community at UTRGV. "The goal is basically

just to teach basic sign language," said Maria Cabanillas, a sign language interpreter at Student Accessibility Services. "Just for [UTRGV staff and students] to learn how to communicate with their deaf students, deaf faculty, deaf staff." Cabanillas said she

believes sessions have not been previously provided for faculty and staff.

"We only had [it] for students and they had to register for the class," she said. "The deaf community struggles with not having access everywhere, like, if they don't have interpreters

in places where they need to. Sometimes they request interpreters and they are not provided with the service."

The class has a limit of 15 students per session. All of the participants in the first class were staff; however, students can also attend by registering online prior to the date of the event.

"You never know when a student who may be deaf comes to the office, and I would want to be able to talk to them at least about the basic information if we are not able to reach out to an interpreter at that point in time," said Catherine Vela, a Judicial Affairs officer at UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities and a participant in the workshop. "Student Accessibility is a great office here for students and, unfortunately, they may not be aware that that's a resource for them. In addition to accommodations, they do provide interpreters ... but, I think having trainings like these will get more ... students, faculty, and staff to

be aware."

UTRGV also offers help to students who are currently taking American Sign Language classes. Tutors are provided at The Learning Center for students who want to enhance their knowledge.

Coryann Thornock, a communication sciences and disorders junior, works as an ASL tutor on both Brownsville and Edinburg campuses.

"I guess people don't think that deaf people can be capable when they are just like everyone else," Thornock said. "The only thing they can't do is hear. It's just so fun communicating with someone who is deaf. ... It's really interesting to have that perspective."

Students interested in learning the basics of sign language can still register for the "Lunch and Learn" series of workshops scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. Oct. 23, Nov. 6 and 20, and Dec. 4 and 11 in Health Affairs Building West 1.274.

VAQUERO VOICE



FINANCIAL AID



“Truthfully, financial aid is the only reason I’m able to go to school, and without it I wouldn’t be here. To me it’s an immense value, and I think anyone who can take advantage of it, should. As far as filling it out, it’s really a lot easier than you might think. Most of the information, probably, your parents are going to have it, and whatever they don’t have is probably on record somewhere. ... Patience is really the big thing, ’cause it does take time, but if you just sit through it, you’ll get it done in no time.”

Diego Garduño
Mass communication junior

“*Financiamiento me ha ayudado a muchas cosas. Me ha ayudado a comprar mis libros, comprar mi mochila, lo que necesito para la escuela y para mis estudios. Yo recomiendo que bajen la aplicación de FAFSA en el teléfono. Sale lo que has terminado y lo que no has terminado y te ayuda a terminar tu FAFSA más rápido que en la computadora y es mejor en teléfono.*”



Alondra Torres
Estudiante de primer año en administración de negocios

“Financial aid has helped me understand the difficulties that are going on in the [Rio Grande] Valley. For me, personally, it’s been able to help me with paying off my classes for the semester. But, definitely, I know that there’s a necessity, or lack thereof, of financial aid and people should be applying for some if they’re serious about a four-year plan. For sure, definitely go contact the [Main] Tower [in Brownsville] and, also be aware of scholarships, opportunities and other things that are available, especially if you’re interested in going for a serious career path.”



Christopher Rivera
Business freshman

“Without financial aid, I wouldn’t be able to attend college. It’s basically paying my whole tuition, so yeah, I’m really grateful for that. My advice is to fill it out as soon as it is out, like, the application so you can get the most amount of money you can. I do it in a quiet room so I can concentrate and make sure everything put in the application was accurate.”



Nadia Valdez
Nursing freshman

--Compiled by Robert Benavidez Jr. and Aaliyah Garza



Vaping Crisis

La Lechuza



Klaudia Cedillo
THE RIDER

My first and only encounter with *La Lechuza* was when I was about 10 years old, playing in my front yard at night running barefoot, when suddenly a harsh, piercing scream resonated through the night. Concerned, I looked for the source. Then I saw it. A huge, white owl ruffling its feathers, revealing an enormous wingspan, as it sat perched on a tree branch. I stared at its eerie, white appearance which seemed to glow against the night until my mother came running out. “Get inside! *Es La Lechuza!*”

Growing up in a Hispanic household, I remember the countless warnings my family had given me of the Mexican terror, *La Lechuza*, the owl-witch who roamed around the night looking for her dinner. I’ve heard several people describe it as a witch who transforms into a massive owl over 7 feet tall

sometimes, wearing the face of a haggard old woman. Others say it’s the resentful soul of a woman looking for revenge for her child who died at the hands of a drunk driver. Either way, *La Lechuza* is known by many in Texas and Mexico.

In line with the legend, it is known as a creature of the night, often appearing outside homes and bars looking for her next victim.

According to backpackerverse.com, if you’re

slayed *Lechuza* from northern Mexico exists, according to mexicounexplained.com. The photo portrays a huge white barn owl with a “15-foot wingspan.” However, some believe the photo is fake or Photoshopped.

By praying, tying seven knots on a piece of string or rope or just blasting the bird with a gun, you can protect yourself from the owl-witch’s clutches.

Although at the time, I believed my mother that the monster known as *La Lechuza* was real and I had almost met my demise that night, but thinking back, it may have just been a barn owl much larger than me. According to allaboutbirds.org, barn owls are strictly nocturnal most of the time and the North American race is considered the largest of its species, possibly explaining the several stories of meetings with *La Lechuza*, including my own.

Is this Mexican folktale real or is the legend of *La Lechuza* simply a way to keep kids and drunk spouses off the streets and in their homes safe?

“A huge, white owl ruffling its feathers, revealing an enormous wingspan, as it sat perched on a tree branch.”

in your home, the creature will imitate the sounds of a crying baby or whistle to lure you in to be her next meal. Just hearing the cries of *La Lechuza* is an omen someone in your family is about to die.

The site even claims the beast would swoop down on unsuspecting travelers on isolated roads.

Only one photo of an allegedly

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. 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.

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Stay Updated

Un jardín en crecimiento

Comienza la plantación communitaria

Klaudia Cedillo
THE RIDER

Organizaciones estudiantiles, departamentos y estudiantes se reunieron el 3 de octubre para aprender y cultivar un huerto en el evento Community Garden Planting, para el inicio de la temporada de otoño en el campus de Edinburg.

Roberto Cantú, director ejecutivo de Servicios Comerciales Auxiliares de UTRGV y coordinador del programa, dijo que diferentes organizaciones del campus de Edinburg asistieron al evento para adoptar una cama en el jardín comunitario y también lo hicieron diferentes departamentos.

“Tenemos otras personas en el campus que se han ido a casa y han convertido todo su patio trasero”, dijo Cantú. “[Han] sacado la hierba de San Agustín, agregado compostaje de la ciudad de McAllen, y tienen hermosos jardines que producen muchas verduras para ellos”.

Después de que los representantes de cada organización estudiantil llenaron formularios para la adopción de una cama, el Especialista Agrícola, Cruz Salinas, realizó una presentación sobre las reglas del jardín, así como sobre los conceptos básicos de plantación.

“Es un curso intensivo sobre jardinería doméstica”,



Klaudia Cedillo/THE RIDER

El Especialista en Agricultura, Cruz Salinas, explica cuanto espacio necesitan ciertas plantas para crecer adecuadamente a la estudiante de segundo año en ciencias biomédicas Valerie Tobias (izquierda) y la estudiante de tercer año en biología Cassandra Vázquez en el evento Community Garden Planting en el campus de Edinburg.

dijo Cantú. “Queremos que las personas de las diferentes organizaciones estudiantiles puedan aprender a criar sus propios vegetales y compartir esa información [con] otras personas”.

Los estudiantes, el personal y el profesorado del evento plantaron una variedad de jalapeños, tomates, repollo y apio, que fueron proporcionados por Tropical Star, un vivero de

plantas en Hidalgo, en sus respectivas camas.

“Esperábamos obtener repollo rizado y otras verduras de invierno, pero el productor no las tenía disponibles”, dijo Cantú. “[Tropical Star] ha sido partidario constante y dedicado del jardín comunitario. Es a través de ... asociaciones que tenemos aquí en la comunidad [que nos ayudan] a proporcionar este tipo de programas para

nuestros estudiantes”.

El dijo que una de las reglas generales es que nadie use ningún tipo de productos químicos en el jardín, ya que un jardín de investigación orgánica certificado por el USDA está adyacente al jardín comunitario en el campus.

“Esa es una designación realmente difícil de lograr y queremos asegurarnos que no estemos impactando negativamente a nuestros

vecinos de ninguna manera o forma”, dijo Cantú.

El también comentó que todas las plantas no utilizadas durante el evento inicial serán plantadas en el jardín de investigación.

Cantú dijo que la trama es responsabilidad del estudiante tanto en el semestre de otoño como en el de primavera.

El explicó que durante el semestre de primavera, plantan sandías, melones y otros productos similares; sin embargo, no se hace mucho en el jardín comunitario durante el verano.

“Creemos que es algo realmente importante, cultivar sus propios vegetales e incorporarlos a una dieta saludable”, dijo Cantú. “Creemos que el jardín comunitario es solo un pequeño componente para ayudar a mejorar la salud del Valle del Río Grande”.

Cassandra Vázquez, estudiante de tercer año en biología, y Valerie Tobias, estudiante de segundo año en ciencias biomédicas, asistieron al evento por diversión, a pesar de no ser parte de una organización estudiantil.

“Estamos muy emocionados”, dijo Vázquez. “En realidad, he querido cultivar algunas plantas en mi casa, pero no tengo espacio, y Valerie también. Así que, esta es nuestra salida para nuestros jugos creativos”.

La despensa de alimentos de UTRGV proporcionará bolsas reutilizables



Robert Benavidez Jr./THE RIDER

La voluntaria de la despensa de alimentos para estudiantes de UTRGV, Sasha Garza, llena una bolsa reutilizable el jueves en Student Food Pantry en Brownsville.

Maleny Ortega
THE RIDER

La despensa de alimentos para estudiantes de UTRGV ya no proporcionará bolsas de plástico con el fin de reducir el desperdicio de plástico.

En una publicación de Facebook del 10 de septiembre, Student Food Pantry (por su nombre en inglés) anunció que proporcionará bolsas reutilizables a los nuevos solicitantes en lugar de bolsas de plástico. El cambio se implementó en ambos campus.

Cristina Vega, coordinadora del programa Student Food Pantry, dijo que decidieron dejar de proporcionar

bolsas de plástico debido al daño al medio ambiente y que las bolsas reutilizables son más resistentes.

“Si tuviéramos que entregar los artículos en bolsas de plástico, no siempre son resistentes, y por lo tanto, tenemos miedo de que sus alimentos puedan rasgar las bolsas”, dijo Vega. “Y además, solo estamos tratando de ... promover la despensa de alimentos, y las bolsas reutilizables que les damos a los estudiantes tienen nuestro nombre y las bolsas de supermercado no, y esa es otra razón que nos gusta usar las bolsas”.

Las bolsas reutilizables se entregan a los nuevos solicitantes y se les pide que las traigan cada vez que visitan la

despensa de alimentos. Los estudiantes previamente registrados ya han recibido sus bolsas reutilizables.

En comparación con las bolsas de plástico, las bolsas reutilizables son más duraderas, según Vega.

“En una ocasión tuvimos a alguien cuya bolsa se rompió, y esto fue antes de que pusiéramos en marcha el plan para las bolsas reutilizables, por lo que tuvimos que, como, doblar y triplicar las bolsas que cargaban sus artículos”, dijo ella. “Y pues una bolsa ya es suficiente para causar daño al medio ambiente, pero luego se agregan dos capas, tres capas. ... Por eso decidimos acabar con ellas”.

Vega cree que es importante eliminar los desechos plásticos porque los programas de reciclaje en UTRGV, en Edinburg e incluso McAllen, son limitados y no hay muchos lugares que reciclen bolsas de plástico.

“No todos los plásticos pueden reciclarse, y por lo tanto, si podemos reducir su uso de una manera sencilla, creo que eso agrega algo”, dijo ella.

La despensa acepta todo tipo de donaciones de alimentos, según Vega. Tienen un congelador y un refrigerador para artículos perecederos como leche o huevos, así como cajas amarillas en sus oficinas y alrededor del campus para artículos en caja o enlatados.

Ella dijo que además de proporcionar comida a los estudiantes, la despensa tiene el programa Hands Up una vez al mes.

“Es donde un representante del Banco de Alimentos [RGV] se acerca y responde las preguntas que los estudiantes puedan tener sobre [para] cupones de alimentos”, dijo la coordinadora. “Y, entonces, los

representantes responderán esas preguntas a los estudiantes”.

Vega agregó que el eslogan del programa Hands Up es “Es una mano arriba, no una mano abajo”.

“Realmente queremos llevar a casa ese punto porque sentimos que muchos estudiantes se avergüenzan de venir a buscar comida, a pesar de que pueden necesitar desesperadamente comida”, dijo ella. “Solo queremos recordarle a la gente que es solidaridad, no caridad”.

La estudiante de tercer año en ciencias políticas, Blanca González dijo que el cambio a bolsas reutilizables es una buena idea.

González dijo que la forma en que reduce el desperdicio de plástico es que su familia usa bolsas reutilizables cuando hace compras. Ella dijo que el servicio que brinda la despensa de alimentos es algo bueno y sugiere que usen cajas de plástico para que los estudiantes las reutilicen.

Krista Lara, estudiante de segundo año en enfermería, no ha estado en la despensa de alimentos para estudiantes, pero cree que las bolsas reutilizables son un plan inteligente.

“Creo que es bastante inteligente teniendo en cuenta que nosotros, mucha gente, simplemente tiramos su basura o plástico y termina en la calle, y es realmente inseguro para el medio ambiente y para los animales”, dijo Lara.

Ella reduce su desperdicio de plástico usando bolsas reutilizables cuando hace compras y usa popotes de metal o goma.

“Ojalá, cosas como esta sigan sucediendo donde se hace lo mejor para el medio ambiente y de esa manera se mantenga todo limpio y bien”, dijo Lara.

'Genius in motion'

A Leonardo da Vinci exhibit



Fernando Ramirez/THE RIDER PHOTOS

The Office of Public Art has opened an exhibit titled "Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion" inside the Engineering building on the Edinburg campus. The exhibit displays replicas of machines that were invented by da Vinci and built by scientists and craftsmen from Florence, Italy.



Admission is free to the exhibit "Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion." It will remain on display until Dec. 20.

Hania Rocio
THE RIDER

"Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion" is a new interactive exhibit at UTRGV that features replicas of the famous Renaissance inventor and artist.

The Office of Public Art has brought to UTRGV machines that were built by a group of scientists and craftsmen in Florence, Italy. They did a deep analysis of da Vinci's work and were able to bring to life fully operational machines.

"The exhibit is a celebration for, you know, the paintings, sculptures, the music, architecture and engineering," said Kimberly Castillo, a senior international business major and office assistant at the Office of Public Art. "Genius in Motion" represents an exhibit of full-scale machines that ... basically, it shows a combination of engineering, math and science. It's very astonishing, you know, the hands-on experience that people have with the machines. ... Since I am a student and I do have class in

the Engineering building, I really get to see how people interact with them and how students enjoy them."

The machines were separated into different categories depending on the element the machine focused on. Air,

and they created these inventions, what we call these machines, using the same materials of the 1500s," said Dahlia Guerra, assistant vice president of Public Art at UTRGV. "We know that da Vinci is known

in history."

This exhibit has been on display across the United States, including Michigan, Nebraska, Montana and Alabama. This is the first time the Office of Public Art has brought the display since the creation of UTRGV. Students at the Engineering building take their time to appreciate the exhibit as they walk to their classroom, study, buy lunch or just chat with fellow classmates.

"I think it's really great to see, like, all types of artists," said Daniela Treviño, a sophomore political science major. "And it's just very interesting ... the artwork is pretty cool. ... You guys should come and check it out because it's really interesting if you look through [the machines]. ... It's really cool just to see this type of artwork."

"Leonardo da Vinci: Machines in Motion" will be on display until Dec. 20 in the Engineering building on the Edinburg campus. Admission is free.

For more information, call the UTRGV Office of Public Art at 665-2353.

"Genius in Motion" represents an exhibit of full-scale machines that ... basically, it shows a combination of engineering, math and science. It's very astonishing, you know, the hands-on experience that people have with the machines."

Kimberly Castillo
An international business senior

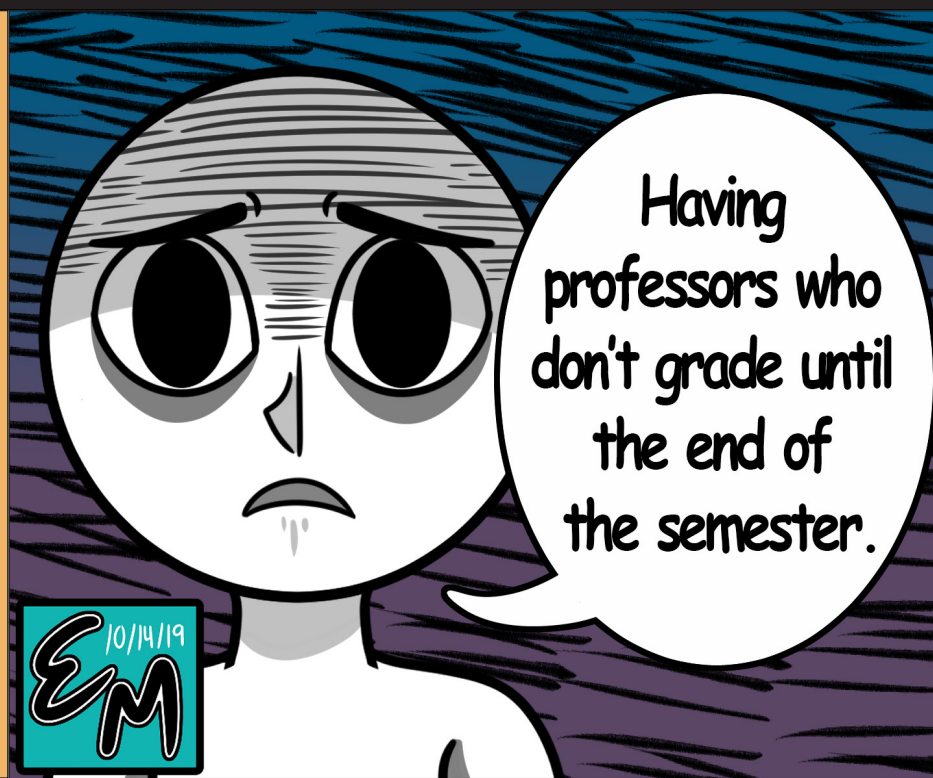
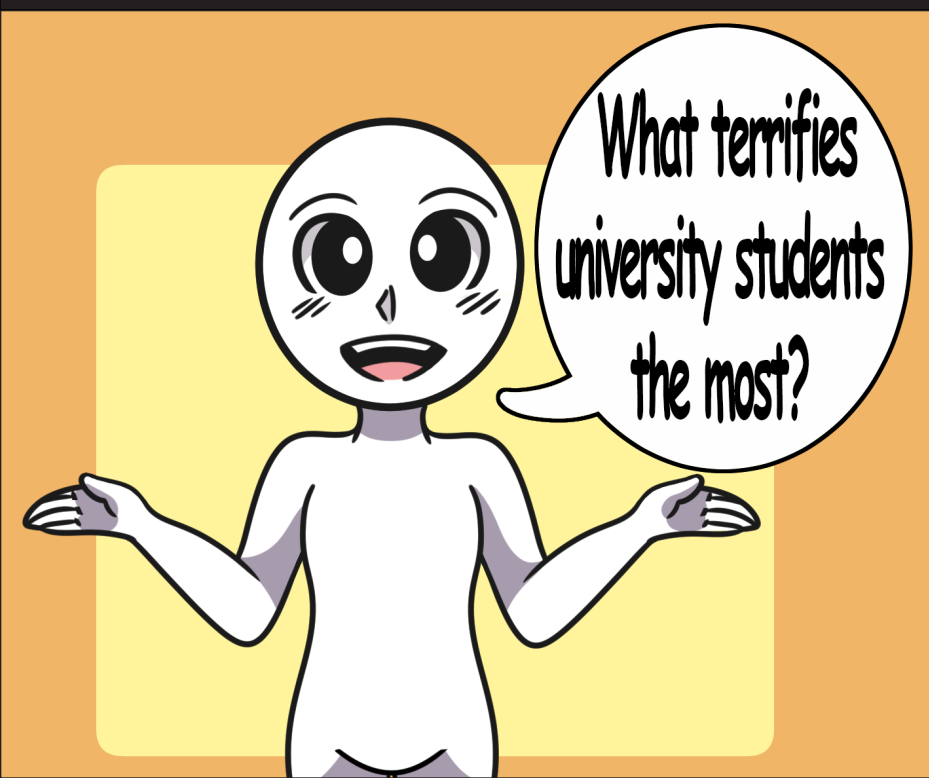
water, earth and fire, these elements had a great influence on da Vinci while sketching his inventions.

"The reason this exhibit is so important is that present-day scientists went back to his sketches

for his incredible artwork, for his incredible paintings. ... He represents the high Renaissance ... He goes beyond being an artist to a scientist and his inventions go way beyond anybody could imagine at that time

The Doodler

By Elizabeth Mendoza



Adjusting to the new season

Women's basketball begins practice

Juanita Maldonado
SPORTS REPORTER

Last year, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Women's Basketball Team dominated the season while getting used to a new head coach, but this season another adjustment has to be made.

The program is starting from scratch. Only three players are returning, which are senior forward Megan Johnson, redshirt junior guard Amara Graham and junior guard Valeria Tapia.

"The talent that we had come in is very good, but we have some 18-year-olds, like six of them," Head Coach Lane Lord said. "Then we have some 23-year-olds that transferred in, so we're trying to mold all of them together."

UTRGV welcomes 14 players to the program. The team is heavily comprised of seven freshmen: forward Sydney Cajero and guards Tiffany McGarity, Mia Paz, Payton Hicks, Mallory Gibson, Halie Jones and Sara Bershers.

"I think we did a really good job about recruiting players

from winning programs," Lord said. "We have some state champions that are in our freshman class."

The rest of the players are transfers. The list kicks off with redshirt sophomore center Burcu Soysal, who comes from the University of Massachusetts. Three juniors enter the program: forward Iva Belosevic, from Lamar Community College and guards Trelynn Tyler, from Tyler Junior College, and

Lord said. "We have Jordan Augustus, grad transfer that played at St. John's in the Big East. I think if we can mold in the young ones with the experienced players it's going to be fun to watch."

Last season, UTRGV reached great heights. The team entered the Western Athletic Conference Tournament as the No. 2 seed.

At the WAC Tournament, UTRGV defeated Seattle University 56-54 and advanced to the semifinals, where they defeated California State University, Bakersfield 69-58. The team then advanced to the WAC Tournament finals and fell 76-73 in double overtime to New Mexico State University.

The season continued when UTRGV was asked to be part of the 10th annual Women's Basketball Invitational, where they faced the University of North Texas and fell 56-42.

The first game of the season will take place at noon Nov. 7 in the UTRGV Fieldhouse against Texas Southern University.

"The talent that we had come in is very good, but we have some 18-year-olds, like six of them. Then we have some 23-year-olds that transferred in, so we're trying to mold all of them together."

Lane Lord
Head coach

Ashlei Lopez, from Morehead State University. Rounding the list of newcomers are redshirt junior guard Zhane Templeton, of Gonzaga University, and graduate forwards Desirea Buerge, from Missouri Southern State University, and Jordan Augustus of Virginia Commonwealth University.

"Zhane Templeton played at Gonzaga, went to two NCAA tournaments there,"



Amanda Vela/THE RIDER

Freshman guard Sara Bershers (from left), graduate student forward Desirea Buerge and freshman forward Sydney Cajero warm up by shooting hoops before practice on Oct. 1 in the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

There is no color like orange



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

UTRGV Men's Basketball Team guard Jordan Jackson goes for a slam dunk during Madness 2018, an event that took place during last year's Spirit Week.

Angel De La Cruz
SPORTS REPORTER

The Athletics Department will host UTRGV Madness at 9 p.m. Friday in the Fieldhouse.

The event serves as an introduction to both the men's and women's basketball teams, along with the annual UTRGV Madness Dance Off.

"We're very excited to have our biggest event of the year in the Fieldhouse coming up so soon already," said Senior Athletic Marketing and Promotion Coordinator Sarah Hernandez. "All the students are always invited and we're always excited to present our basketball teams."

Every year, different UTRGV departments come together to make this event possible.

"[The] student organization dance-off is our tradition for Madness," Hernandez said. "It's different than what happens in other universities. What we do is call out all the student orgs at UTRGV and they can sign up to participate in a dance-off. They get two minutes to dance during Madness, and then we just decide the winner."

Categories include Best Choreography, Best Music Mix, People's Choice, Most Creative Attire and Best Rookie Organization.

UTRGV Athletics Director Chasse Conque will attend his first-ever Madness event as part of the panel of judges.

Giveaways include

personalized jerseys (UTRGV Athletics); two pairs of AirPods, which will be raffled at the event (UTRGV Auxiliary Services); prize to the winner of the Student Org Dance Off (Top Golf); Taco Palenque for a year; and a gift basket from Raising Cane's.

"I think this event is one of the most special events we have here on campus," said Women's Basketball Head Coach Lane Lord. "We have our student body doing all kinds of dance routines, talent shows. ... Combine that with the student athletes, we all get to come to one place and do all this together. It's a special day for all of us."

Lord encourages students to attend the event and support the UTRGV athletes.

"We really need our students to support our athletics, and our athletes wanna support our students, so what a great way to put us all together," he said. "It's all about developing that culture of one family. Rally the [Rio Grande] Valley together, and if we're all on the same page, and we're all together, great things can happen for not just the students, but also the student athletes."

Junior guard Javon Levi believes Madness provides an opportunity to get to know fellow students.

"I believe it's good for the school as a whole," Levi said. "Introducing the basketball team to the students and

helping us get familiar with the students as well, so we gotta work hand in hand because we need them just as much as they need us."

Redshirt junior guard Amara Graham agreed.

"I think it's important for students and athletes to come together to support and, just, really get us ready for the season," Graham said. "I know ... Madness is a big night for us. It really gets us excited and ready to go out there and step on hardwood."

Student Activities, Campus Activities Board, Student Union and The Herd will also join the celebration.

The Herd will mark its second anniversary hosting the event with a birthday bash at 7 p.m. Wednesday on the Quad in Edinburg and the Library lawn in Brownsville.

Spirit Week will lead into Madness with a series of events at the Student Union.

"It's a combination of basketball and student orgs, ... a celebration of spirit," Hernandez said. "It's important because athletes play for our students. Every time they're out there wearing a UTRGV T-shirt, or their uniforms or their jerseys, they're representing our students. That's why we throw this big celebration for our students, so they can get to know our athletes and they can see how they're being represented out there in the nation."

RECYCLING*Continued from Page 1*

Edinburg campus need recycling bins, they can call Facilities.

"They can call me directly," Chavez said. "I'm the one directly in charge of it. I'm the one who gets those bins. I'm the one who organizes, who's going to pick them up, where they're going to go and so on and so forth."

The Rider took an unofficial count of recycling bins on both campuses and found 112 in Edinburg and 61 in Brownsville.

Chief Sustainability Officer Marianella Q. Franklin said recycling is expensive and should be a last resort.

"The first thing we need to be doing is reducing the amount of waste we produce," she said. "Encouraging our students, staff and faculty on campus to really consider reducing the amount of waste that's produced is before you even consider recycling."

She emphasized the importance of students and faculty pushing to get policies put in place for the university to be more eco-friendly.

"I tell everyone if you're really passionate about recycling, put recycling bins in

your offices and classrooms, create a recycling team," Franklin said. "There are buildings on this campus where there are recycling teams and I can share one of them is the IT² building."

She said all the departments in that building have a recycling team member and set up a recycling station in their lounge. At the end of the week, they determine who is going to take the recyclables to their respective city recycling center.

Abraham Hernandez, director of Campus Facilities Operations for Brownsville and Harlingen, said there is no recycling on either of these campuses.

"They stopped many years ago," Hernandez said. "I believe it was with the City of Brownsville and they would have a container here on campus and ... I think they would only take paper and cardboard. That was quite a while ago."

The director said they met with a recycling company for a possible recycling program to be implemented on the Brownsville campus, but it would depend on the cost.

"We've already met with a recycling company," Hernandez said. "We are

putting a cost together to implement a recycling program. They've already visited with us on campus to look at possible placement of recycling containers, so all I'm waiting to get from them is a cost so I can see how we can fund this initiative."

Depending on numbers and funding, he hopes to have the program started in January.

With that program, recyclable items would include paper, cardboard, newspapers, magazines, books, boxes, cartons, plastic, jugs, metal, aluminum cans and tin cans. Non-recyclable items would be glass, organic waste, Styrofoam and electronic accessories.

Hernandez said the contractors for the possible program understand there will be non-recyclable items placed in the bins and they would sort out the non-recyclables from the bins.

"What they told me is they actually go through all the recycled items that we submit and they'll throw out the items that are not recyclable," he said. "So, it doesn't necessarily mean we'll lose the batch if you got items in there that shouldn't be in there. Now, of course, we don't want to make a habit of

that. We do want to place only recyclable items in there."

If the program were to be initiated, recycling bins would be placed in strategic locations throughout campus and be picked up by the custodial department. He said his custodial department could color code trash bags.

"Maybe a blue bag may be recycled and a regular black bag or white bag may be trash, so that when they go around picking up all the trash cans, they know what bags need to go to which dumpster," Hernandez said. "Now, depending on the location we select, the dumpster for recyclables can be picked up anywhere from one to six times a week, depending on how much trash we generate."

Asked about additional plans for an eco-friendlier campus, he replied the program was a start and from there they can look at other items.

"It's been a long time coming, so we're hoping we can initiate this and get it going," Hernandez said. "I have a lot of support from my [Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning & Operations] Marta Salinas-Hovar, so I think once we have the numbers presented, I think we're going to try and figure out a way to

get it going."

Victoria Lopez, a pre-nursing junior, said she recycles plastic bottles and bags, cans, cardboard and boxes.

Lopez said she does not recycle on campus because it is her first semester at UTRGV and has not looked for bins around school but said the university could advertise recycling more at events or posters across campus and even in bathrooms.

"That would be helpful," she said.

Suzanne El-Haj, an officer in the Environmental Awareness Club, said the organization has been working for 10 years to get a green fund at UTRGV.

"That is something that is in all UT institutions, except UTRGV," El-Haj said. "We're the only UT school that does not have a green fund or a green fee."

The green fund essentially is funding for sustainable initiatives on campus. This would help fund training for individuals to sort out recyclables and pay individuals to pick up bins and take them to recycling centers.

"I think we're a large institution," El-Haj said. "We can have an impact on the [Rio Grande] Valley and I think people will follow our footsteps."

TOBACCO*Continued from Page 1*

e-cigarettes or vaping in 49 states, and 26 deaths have been confirmed as of Oct. 8, according to its website.

Of the reported cases, about 70% are male and 80% are under 35 years old, 15% are under 18 years old and 21% are 18 to 20 years old, according to the CDC's website.

"#UTRGV has been proud to be Tobacco-Free since 2015, which includes bans on vaping and e-cigarettes and is part of the UT System's Eliminate Tobacco Use Initiative," according to a UTRGV Facebook post dated Oct. 3.

According to a tweet from the UT System, all 14 institutions have been tobacco-, vaping- and e-cigarette-free as of June 2017.

"At the time, the UT System was the first public university system in Texas to become fully tobacco free," the tweet said.

In a March 7, 2017, news release, the UT System stated the goal of banning tobacco is to establish a healthier environment for students, faculty, staff, patients and visitors and to recognize that tobacco use is a preventable cause of premature death and diseases.

"More than 228,000 students and

100,000 faculty and staff learn and work on UT System campuses," the news release states. "Studies show that prohibiting tobacco use in the workplace helps significantly reduce the number of smokers and the amount of smoking done by those who continue to smoke. Tobacco prevention programs also are effective deterrents, which is important because approximately 90 percent of daily smokers report they first used cigarettes before they were 19 years of age."

Dr. Cristel Escalona, medical director of Student Health and Wellness and an assistant clinical professor for the Department of Pediatrics at the UTRGV School of Medicine, said there is a difference between vapes and cigarettes.

"So, the problem with the vaping is that it is not regulated. ... There's limits to exactly what they can put in cigarettes, but unfortunately, with vaping, they're not regulated," Escalona said in an interview with The Rider last Thursday.

She also said the chemicals from vapes can cause burns in the lungs.

"When they look at the lungs, like, under a microscope, it looks like they've been burned by a chemical and the reason why is because [vapes] are

not regulated," Escalona said. "People can put whatever the heck they want in them. They've even been putting, like, I think it was vitamin E, which, you know, you can put it on top of your skin and it doesn't do damage, but if you inhale it into your lungs, it burns your lungs."

She said if students want to quit smoking, they can utilize the Tobacco Cessation program or can make an appointment at Student Health Services for an evaluation.

One of the resources offered by the Tobacco Cessation is the Collegiate Recovery Program, which "are non-clinical services to help students work through the process of recovery from addictive behaviors such as substance abuse," according to its website.

For more information about the Tobacco Cessation program, visit www.utrgv.edu/hr/wellness/tobacco-cessation/index.htm.

Although Gonzalez believes a campus vaping ban is a good idea, he does not think a general ban on vapes is necessary.

"I don't think vaping should be, like, banned or whatever they're trying to do," he said. "I just think it should be left alone. As of right now, we don't know what the long-term effect of

vaping is, but time will only tell. For right now, it seems as though vaping is more of a healthier alternative than to smoke cigarettes."

In an Oct. 1 news release, Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp said society is facing a serious health risk in regard to vaping and the use of electronic cigarettes.

"I do not want to take any unnecessary chances with the health of our students, faculty and staff," Sharp said in the news release. "To that end, I am directing the presidents of each of the 11 universities and the directors of the eight state agencies within the Texas A&M University System to ban the use of e-cigarettes and vaping as soon as possible."

He also said smoking is banned in most places in the System, but banning vaping is necessary.

"This health threat is serious enough that I want to see the ban include every building, outside space, parking lot, garage and laboratory within the Texas A&M System," Sharp said. "The ban also should extend to every facility of our \$950 million research enterprise and all System properties in the 250 Texas counties in which the Texas A&M System has a presence."

REPORT*Continued from Page 1*

we're taking care of all of that appropriately," Shupala said.

The report was submitted last month. In the next phase, an off-site review team will read the report and send feedback on any section they might have questions on.

Shupala said UTRGV will then write a Focused Report to answer questions and submit them in January.

"We will work with the subject matter experts on campus who also helped us to write the original standards, so if somebody comes back with a question on financial aid and what we do for financial aid, we would go to our Financial Aid Office and they would help us with that," she said. "If somebody comes back with a question about

our faculty, we would talk to our faculty affairs people and have them help us answer those questions, so it just kind of depends on which questions they have."

Asked what the university can do at this point, Shupala said UTRGV will have to wait for the report to come back in order to take action.

She said the university is working on the Quality Enhancement Plan, the second portion of the reaffirmation process. Shupala said it is usually a project that they identify in order to help students be more successful.

"A lot of universities, they focus on ways that they can support students so that they can be retained and that they can continue taking classes and they can graduate on time," she said. "In some places, they focus on just very specific

topics like 'How do we help our students be better writers,' or 'How do we help our students learn more about the world' or it's up to the university to pick its topic based on the needs of its students and the university's mission."

When the compliance certification report and the QEP have been submitted and reviewed by the on-site teams, they will visit both campuses. The on-site team will visit UTRGV in March 2020 and meet with faculty, staff, administrators and students, according to a campuswide email Shupala sent Oct. 3.

The reaffirmation is awarded to member institutions every 10 years.

SACSCOC placed UTRGV under probationary status on Dec. 6, 2016, for not complying with 10 accreditation standards.

From Oct. 16 to 19, 2017, a SACSCOC special committee visited the UTRGV campuses to discuss the school's probationary status.

As The Rider reported on Oct. 2, 2017, UTRGV President Guy Bailey said university officials successfully addressed each of the findings.

Although UTRGV addressed the 10 accreditation standards in 2016, the university remained on probation for one more year for failure to comply with a federal requirement about program responsibilities.

From Oct. 9 to 11, 2018, a SACSCOC committee visited the campus to make a final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation.

UTRGV addressed issues regarding the cash management process, special

tests and return of Title IV funds, enrollment reporting and student loan repayment.

On Dec. 11, 2018, SACSCOC removed UTRGV from its probationary status after the university successfully addressed the agency's Principle Accreditation federal requirement 4.7.

"The school has always been accredited and it's still accredited," President Bailey said in a phone interview on Dec. 11, 2018. "What it means now is that we don't have to continually be monitored by the accrediting agency the same way we were. ... We've always been accredited and probation just means that you're being watched carefully and you have to prepare reports and you have to be evaluated. So, all of that is gone."