

THE RIDER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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/UTRGVRIDER



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FAFSA now open

Paulina Longoria
THE RIDER

Students can renew or submit their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the priority deadline is Jan. 15.

The application period began Oct. 1.

“We would always recommend that [students] apply as early as the form becomes available,” said Jael Perez, associate director for Financial Aid Operations and community liaison.

“If you are not eligible to complete the FAFSA because of citizenship or visa status but are eligible to be classified as a Texas resident for tuition purposes, you may be eligible under SB 1528 to apply for state financial aid through the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA),” according to the UCentral website.

The TASFA can be completed in English or Spanish. The priority deadline to email it to UCentral is Jan. 15.

Perez said there are two main reasons for students to submit their TASFA early. The first reason is submitting the application is only the beginning of the process.

“Students can still be required to submit additional documents in order to complete their application for the upcoming year and that

Renewing your FAFSA

- 1** Login with FSA ID username and password
- 2** Update any pre-filled information
- 3** Provide requested financial information
- 4** Sign and submit

Federal school code: 003599

Visit www.fafsa.gov

Roxanna Miranda / THE RIDER GRAPHIC

process can take some time,” she said. “That’s why the earlier that they submit it, then the more time they have to submit any necessary documents and still be ready for the upcoming year. The other reason, and probably one of the most important ones, is that some financial aid programs are limited in funding.”

The FAFSA FAQs on the UTRGV website provides a list

of what eligible U.S. citizen students will need to complete the 2021-2022 application:

- Social Security number for student and parents (if applicable)
- Permanent Resident Card (for students who are not U.S. citizens)
- 2019 Tax Returns (for student and parent, if applicable)
- 2019 W-2s (for student and parent, if applicable)
- Federal Student Aid ID (for student and parent, if applicable). If forgotten, the username and password can be retrieved at <https://fsaid.ed.gov/>

--other pertinent 2019 income information, such as child support paid and received and benefits information.

The UTRGV Federal School Code is 003599.

According to the FAFSA FAQs, “Completing the FAFSA should now be faster and easier by using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.”

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool “electronically transfers your federal tax return information into your FAFSA,” the website states.

Perez said the IRS Data Re- See FAFSA, Page 2

Early voting begins Tuesday in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties

Omar Zapata
THE RIDER

With the Nov. 3 elections less than four weeks away, early voting runs Tuesday through Oct. 30 with Hidalgo and Cameron Counties having a combined 54 polling locations across the Rio Grande Valley.

Hidalgo County will have 31 early voting locations while Cameron County will have 23.

The UTRGV Ballroom at 1201 W. University Dr. in Edinburg is one of the early voting locations used in Hidalgo County.

This election, the UTRGV Brownsville campus will not be used as a voting location, but Texas Southmost College’s Jacob Brown Auditorium at 600 International Blvd. is.

In Hidalgo County, early voting sites are open on weekdays and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Sundays, the early polling locations are open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In Cameron County, on weekdays, polling locations are open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. On weekends, they are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Oct 29. and 30, the early voting locations are open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Both counties have a county-wide voting policy, which means registered voters may cast their ballots at any early

See VOTING, Page 6

UTRGV ranks among Top 100 National Universities



Robert Benavidez / THE RIDER

UTRGV was ranked No. 86 in the country, and third in Texas, in the Washington Monthly Top 100 National Universities list. The university was recognized for its contributions to social mobility, research and public service.

Brigitte Ortiz
THE RIDER

For the first time, UTRGV has made the Washington Monthly Top 100 National Universities list, ranking No. 86 in the United States, and third in Texas, for its contributions to social mobility, research and public service.

The university also ranked first in Texas for net price of attendance after financial aid, performance of Pell Grant-eligible students and first-generation students, and second in social mobility.

Since 2005, Washington Monthly, a nonprofit magazine, has ranked colleges based on what they have done for the country, according to its website.

UTRGV President Guy Bailey said the publication looks at student performance and success.

“Our retention rates this year are 81%, which are very good,” Bailey said. “So we have good student success. ... Most people don’t expect Pell Grant students to do as well but we do. We think our Pell Grant students are just as good as any other students and their performance shows that. It’s really students’

performance more than anything.”

He said UTRGV is offering a high-quality education at the best price possible, and he is proudest of ranking sixth in the United States in net price of attendance after financial aid.

“And there were four schools ahead of us who are Ivy League schools...,” Bailey said, “Stanford, Harvard, Duke, Princeton, and then The City College of New York, which is funded by the city. And so what that really says, and the takeaway from people should be this: You’re getting a very high-quality education at a very reasonable price. If we can do that, we perform a great service to the [Rio Grande] Valley.”

Asked what plans the university has for the campus community in the coming semester, he replied, “We’re going to be announcing another relief package for the spring. Again, we think these are very tough times, financially, for people and we’ve got a relief package for the spring that we think will be very helpful. In the fall, we want to continue on providing high-quality instruction and advising for our students. It’s just very important that we pay attention to our student success and that’s what we do more than anything.”

Patrick Gonzales, associate vice president for University Marketing and Communications, said the university is excited about being ranked because this is the first time that UTRGV has been in the Top 100 National List.

“In this particular ranking, in the last four years, we didn’t qualify for the national universities list because we didn’t offer enough Ph.D programs,” Gonzales said. “There’s criteria and so, this year was exciting not only because we made it to the national universities list, but we also made it to the top 100.”

He said he is proud of the ranking because it is a team effort. UTRGV trailed Texas A&M University-College Station (12) and the University of Texas at Austin (77).

“UTRGV started five years ago,” Gonzales said. “And so, to know that within five years we already ranked among some of the most prestigious schools in the country and the state is really a testament to the hard work of the students, the faculty and staff, and just proof that when you come together with one common goal that you can be successful.”

He said UTRGV is doing a great job of enrolling students, getting them through the university to graduate and placing them in a career.

“You know, this is one of the reasons people go to a university or [do] higher ed, is to get a degree to make a better life for themselves,” Gonzales said. “And UTRGV is successfully doing that for thousands of students, and these rankings are proof that we are doing a great job of that.”

He said UTRGV has a lot of momen- See RANK, Page 2

THE RIDER

The Rider is the official, award-winning student newspaper of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. A PDF copy of the newspaper can be accessed online at utrgvrider.com. Views presented are those of the writers and do not reflect those of the newspaper or university.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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ONLINE EDITOR

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SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Danielle Perez

COPY EDITORS

Arisbeth Rodriguez

Avery Arizola

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SPORTS REPORTERS

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SPANISH REPORTER

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REPORTERS

Sol Garcia

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Brigitte Ortiz

Alejandra Yañez

Fernanda Figueroa

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Aaliyah Garza

Jacqueline Wallace

Robert Benavidez

Roxanna Miranda

ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVES

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Dorilee Saycocie

FACULTY ADVISER

Michell Godinez

STUDENT MEDIA DIRECTOR

Azenett Cornejo

STUDENT MEDIA PROGRAM ADVISER

Jesus Sanchez

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

Ana Sanchez

Maggie Castillo

CONTACT:

EDINBURG CAMPUS

1201 West University Dr.

ELABS 170

Phone: (956) 665-2541

Fax: (956) 665-7122

BROWNSVILLE CAMPUS

1 West University Blvd.

Student Union 2.16

Phone: (956) 882-5143

Fax: (956) 882-5176

Email: TheRider@utrgv.edu

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MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER

Delivering news to UTRGV no matter the circumstances.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Today Año del Caldo chat

The Leadership and Change team will host a chat about students' stories and experiences of their culture at 6 p.m. via Zoom. RSVP is available through VLink.

Tuesday
People Series: Las Cholitas de Bolivia
Students can learn about indigenous women from Bolivia at 2 p.m. via Zoom. The series, sponsored by the Center for Diversity & Inclusion and DREAM Resource Center, will feature a range of people, cultures, identities and much more. Registration is available through VLink.

Book Club: 'Awakening' by Kate Chopin
The Student Union will host a discussion on the book, "The Awakening and Selected Stories of Kate Chopin," by Kate Chopin at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Participants will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win UTRGV apparel. RSVP is available through VLink. Students can download the book for free at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/160>.

Stress management strategies
The Counseling Center will offer students new strategies to help deal with stress from 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom. For more information, contact the Counseling Center at 665-2574 or email counseling@utrgv.edu.

Wednesday Suicide prevention

Clover Educational Consulting Group Inc. will conduct "Suicide Prevention for College Students," a 90-minute training via Zoom to learn how to recognize the warning signs of suicide and what they can do to help. The training will take place from 1 to 2:30 p.m. RSVP is available at clovered.org, or call (512) 494-4556.

Loncho Libre
Students can join a casual conversation about horror movies, villains and monsters at noon via Zoom. Sponsored by the University Library, participants will look at classic cinema, as well as contemporary movies and films, play games and win prizes. RSVP is available through VLink.

Meditation through midterms
UTRGV International Admissions and Student Services and Quiet Mind Yoga will present a breath workshop and Yoga Nidra guided meditation led by Yoga Alliance Certified instructor Matthew Morales at 1 p.m. via Zoom. Students can tackle the stress of midterms and distance learning with century-old techniques to help center their mind and empower their soul. Registration is available through VLink.
Celebration of Afro-Latinx Poetry
Malcolm Friend, author of the poetry collections "Mxd-Kd-Mixtape" and "Our Bruises Kept Singing Purple,"

will lead a discussion of poems in the "Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States" at 7 p.m. via the Center for Mexican American Studies Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/utrgvcmas>.
Watch Party: 'Goyo: The Boy General'
The UTRGV Leadership and Mentoring office will host a Netflix Watch Party to celebrate and honor Filipino American History Month. The movie "Goyo: The Boy General" will be shown at 7 p.m. RSVP is available through VLink. The first 30 students to RSVP will receive a movie snack pack.

Thursday
Café y Conversaciones: Higher Ed
The Civic Engagement Alliance will host a conversation for students to engage, learn and listen to different perspectives of the topic of higher education from 3 to 5 p.m. via Zoom. RSVP is available through VLink. The event is part of the university's observance of Hispanic/LatinX Heritage Month.

Friday
'Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson'
The Leadership and Mentoring office will host a Netflix Watch Party movie series in observance of LGBT+ History Month. The movie "The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson" will be shown at 7 p.m. RSVP is available through VLink.
--Compiled by Brigitte Ortiz

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 29 and Oct. 5.

Sept. 29

10:31 a.m.: An officer responded to the Biomedical Research and Health Building in Brownsville in regard to an active fire alarm. Police officers and the Brownsville Fire Department responded to the scene. It was determined that the alarm was triggered



by a water boiler failure. A work order was placed to have the boiler serviced. The building was deemed safe for re-entry.

Sept. 30

6:48 p.m.: A student reported losing his wallet while inside a UTRGV shuttle bus traveling to the Brownsville campus. The wallet contained personal identification and bank cards. The student wanted to document the lost property.

Oct. 1

9:49 a.m.: A student reported that her ex-boyfriend has been harassing her off campus. She has filed a report with the Edinburg Police Department. She is

worried that the harassment may occur on campus and wanted to document her concern. She was advised of the services available at the university.

5:55 p.m.: A staff member began feeling ill after arriving for work in Brownsville. She began to feel nauseous and dizzy after a meal she had previously consumed. The woman declined emergency medical services.

10:02 p.m.: An officer responded to the Edinburg Engineering Building in regard to an active fire alarm. The building was evacuated, and the Edinburg Fire Department was notified. It was determined that a heat detector in an elevator room was activated. The area was checked, and everything was OK. The Edinburg Fire Department later cleared the building for re-entry. A work order was placed to have the fire system checked.

Oct. 3

11:45 p.m.: An officer was waved down by a woman who reported occupants of two vehicles possibly shooting at each other. The vehicles were stationary on the westbound lanes at the intersection of University Drive and Sugar Road

in Edinburg. The woman reported hearing four gunshots coming from the vehicles. The vehicles then turned north on Sugar Road and traveled away from the UTRGV Edinburg campus. An Edinburg police officer arrived at the scene and initiated the investigation.

Oct. 4

4:01 a.m.: An officer patrolling the Student Academic Building on the Edinburg campus noticed a shattered window in one of the classrooms located on the south side of the building. The window was shattered, but still intact. The officer checked the area for any objects that could have caused the damage to the window, but none were located. The damage did not appear to be connected to the shots fired on Saturday. A work order to have the window repaired was placed.

Oct. 5

2:58 p.m.: A student reported losing her UTRGV access card, which grants access to certain buildings on the Brownsville campus. Access Control was contacted and the card was deactivated.

--Compiled by Fernanda Figueroa

FAFSA

Continued from Page 1

retrieval Tool allows you to import the income information for a tax filer.

"If the parent or the student filed a tax return, they're able to retrieve that information directly from the IRS into the FAFSA application," she said. "That is definitely the easiest thing to do because you don't need to worry about what number goes where. It will automatically put it where it needs to go and, of course, it will be 100% accurate."

Asked what could make the application process easier for students, Perez replied, "Definitely getting everything that you need ready. For example, retrieving the FSA ID, which is the username and password. ... Also using the IRS Data Retrieval, that is highly recommended. ... The No. 1 tip would be to try to do it as early as possible, and not

just submitting the FAFSA but then everything that comes after."

Karla Gonzalez, an exercise science sophomore, submitted her 2021-2022 FAFSA last Tuesday.

"Since my parents can't afford for my college, FAFSA has helped me because [it pays] for my college," Gonzalez said. "I'm actually super happy that I get money from the government to help me pay for my bills, for college and for my books."

She said the application took her about 20 minutes.

"I always go to the ... TRIO Student Support Services and they always help me do my financial aid there, but this time I kind of did it by myself," Gonzalez said.

Student Support Services at UTRGV is a TRIO program "funded by the U.S. Department of Education ... and dedicated to increasing the retention and graduation rates for low-income, first-genera-

tion and/or students with documented disabilities," according to its website.

Mariana Llanas, a senior at the South Texas High School for Health Professions, plans to attend UTRGV in Fall 2021 and has already submitted her FAFSA.

She said gathering the documentation was the only difficult part about completing her application.

Asked if high school students may have a hard time with FAFSA, Llanas replied, "I don't think so because there's a lot of help for us online, so it's not that hard because we have ... websites and people that can help us."

Gonzalez, Llanas and Perez said they encourage students to submit their FAFSA as early as possible to ensure they receive financial aid.

Perez said assistance to complete a FAFSA is available at UCentral for students on both UTRGV campuses.

RANK

Continued from Page 1

tum despite the pandemic.

"We have record enrollment growth, we're starting to be ranked nationally in

different publications and so the future is just very bright for UTRGV, and we just want to keep the momentum going," Gonzales said. "We want to stay true to our students, we want to provide quali-

ty education at an affordable price and graduate as many students as we can so they can get good jobs and contribute to the society."

UTRGV chosen for OpenStax partnership

Jacqueline Peraza
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

UTRGV is among 21 institutions that competed and secured a spot in the OpenStax Institutional Partnership Program, which provides students access to some free textbooks and other resources.

OpenStax is an educational initiative of Rice University. It publishes “high-quality, peer-reviewed, openly licensed college textbooks that are absolutely free online and low cost in print,” according to openstax.org.

The program is “designed to provide institutions with free coaching, training, and support with the goal of increasing use of OpenStax and other open educational resources,” according to the OpenStax website.

Other institutions that were awarded a partnership this year include Lamar State College-Port Arthur, Lincoln University, Minnesota State University, Molloy College, Saginaw Valley State University, San Antonio College, Spring Hill College, Tarleton State University, Texas Southern University, Texas Woman’s University and Volunteer State Community College.

Art Brownlow, UTRGV Faculty Fellow for Academic Innovation and director of UTRGV’s Open Education Resources Program, said the university sent the application to be approved for the program in July and was accepted in mid-August.

The purpose of the OpenStax partnership is to help universities with free consulting on



Roxanna Miranda/THE RIDER

UTRGV has been chosen to participate in the 2020-2021 OpenStax Institutional Partnership Network. The university will work towards a plan that will create a greater use of free textbooks among its students and faculty.

how to build open education resource programs, increase awareness about open-source materials, to provide free textbooks to students and increase adoption by faculty to offer these open sources for their courses.

“It’s basically a consulting service, but they also help us put together a strategic plan moving forward that we can use year by year to establish and grow our OER program,” Brownlow said. “They also provide one-on-one counseling for us. ... The third thing is that they inject us into a network with other universities across the country that are working on the same thing as we are, and we can get lots of great advice.”

The resources are available for all professors, but only about 50 are taking advantage of it, he said.

UTRGV’s Open Education Resource Team consists of Brownlow, OER Librarian Ga-

brielle Hernandez and Scholarly Communications Librarian Justin White.

“The three of us are basically leading the efforts for OER in the university,” Brownlow said.

A task force to spread awareness of OER is made up of nine members from various UTRGV colleges and departments. Members’ duties are to be affordability advocates in their colleges and departments.

“[They encourage] others to look into OER and what it’s all about,” Brownlow said.

Members include Akinloye Akindayomi, School of Accountancy; Michelle Alvarado, University College; Colin Charlton, Writing and Language Studies chair; Jamalin Harp, Department of History; Tracia Forman, Department of Health and Biomedical Sciences; Sofia Montero, University College; Randall Monty, Department of

See OPENSTAX, Page 8

Jacqueline Peraza/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

Celebrating LGBTQ+ history this month

Sol Garcia
THE RIDER

UTRGV is observing LGBTQ+ History Month with films and activities that educate about and celebrate the community.

In 1994, an openly gay high school teacher in Missouri started the recognition of October as LGBT History Month. He wanted to celebrate the achievements of the LGBTQ+ community, said Gabriel Sanchez, president of the South Texas Equality Project, a non-profit organization that advocates for the LGBTQ+ community.

“The idea was just to preserve and celebrate LGBTQ history, and to celebrate the accomplishments that we’ve made as a community because our history is not often taught,” Sanchez said. “We don’t typically learn about LGBTQ+ history or heroes of the LGBTQ+ movements for civil rights.”

When schools do teach about people who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, they often leave out that piece of information, said Sanchez, who is also a co-director of “Pansy Pachanga,” an upcoming documentary about the history of the Valley’s LGBTQ+ community.

“When we do learn about people who are queer or who

are part of the LGBTQ community, we don’t often learn about that part of their identity,” he said. “It was just a way to start to commemorate and celebrate that history.”

Other parts of the world celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month during October, including Canada and Australia, and it’s a different event from Pride Month, which is in June, Sanchez said.

“People sometimes don’t understand why we have two months, but my take on it is June is really just celebrating our identity in our community and where we are right now as a community,” he said. “LGBTQ+ History Month is more about celebrating and recognizing and honoring the people who came before.”

National Coming Out Day was observed Sunday.

“It’s an opportunity for people who are LGBTQ+ to have a day where they can come out and share their identity with other people in their lives who might not be aware,” Sanchez said.

The observance originated in the late 1980s in response to the AIDS crisis and served to let people know that there are many LGBTQ+ people around them, he said.

“A lot of LGBTQ activists re-

See MONTH, Page 5

Dow Jones internship application open

Alejandra Yañez
THE RIDER

The Dow Jones News Fund puts students in contact with paid internship programs, but has never had a student from the Rio Grande Valley accepted. In summer 2021, UTRGV students could be the first to participate in the program.

Applications are open to college juniors, seniors and graduate students. The deadline to apply is Nov. 9 and there is no application fee.

Within the program are four applications: business reporting, digital media reporting, multiplatform editing and data journalism.

“Business reporting and digital media reporting--this is reporting incidents, basically writing stories or creating content about business trends, labor relations, local businesses as well as the stock market,” said Linda Shockley, the managing director of the Dow Jones News Fund.

Shockley said the digital media program focuses on jobs related to analyzing web traffic, social media management, designing and creating audio

PHOTO COUTESY DOW JONES NEWS FUND

The Dow Jones News Fund has four internship applications: digital media, business reporting, multiplatform editing and data journalism. The deadline to apply is Nov. 9. Those eligible to apply for the internship are college juniors, seniors and graduate students who are enrolled full time as of the deadline.

or video content. “The editing program focuses on visual-design skills, headline writing, line editing, high-quality print and digital products on a deadline for newspapers, magazines and websites,” she said.

Data journalism involves using data to tell important sto-

ries. “So, whether that’s digging through public records, creating interactive data visualizations or learning how to use different computer software programs,” Shockley said.

She said a student from UT Arlington was selected in the past, “but we haven’t seen any-

body from the Rio Grande Valley, so we would love to have them.”

UTRGV’s Student Media department will sponsor an information session with Shockley on the program at 3 p.m. Friday via Zoom. To RSVP for the session, visit the Student Media page on VLink.

The Dow Jones News Fund has been arranging internships for students since 1960.

Students interested in applying must submit a resume, unofficial transcript as well as a 500-word essay. The application also required students to provide two references.

Shortly after submitting their applications, students will be emailed a one-hour test.

The test “emphasizes all the things that professors have been telling you, not just current events, but grammar, spelling, punctuation and knowledge of the world today,” Shockley said.

Every application cycle, 80 students are selected to participate in the program and reap the rewards. These include a \$1,500 scholarship, networking connections and becoming part of the alumni network.

“At the end of a successful internship, if you’re finishing school but you have outstanding federal loans, the Dow Jones News Fund will provide money towards paying back the student loan or money to-

See INTERNSHIP, Page 8



HISPANIC TERMS

On Oct. 5, The Rider conducted a poll on social media asking students, "Which of the following Hispanic terms do you use to describe yourself?" The results are shown below.

facebook

HISPANX 111

ALL OF THE ABOVE 58

LATINX 50

CHICANX 10



twitter

4 HISPANX

2 LATINX

1 CHICANX



Instagram

HISPANX 14

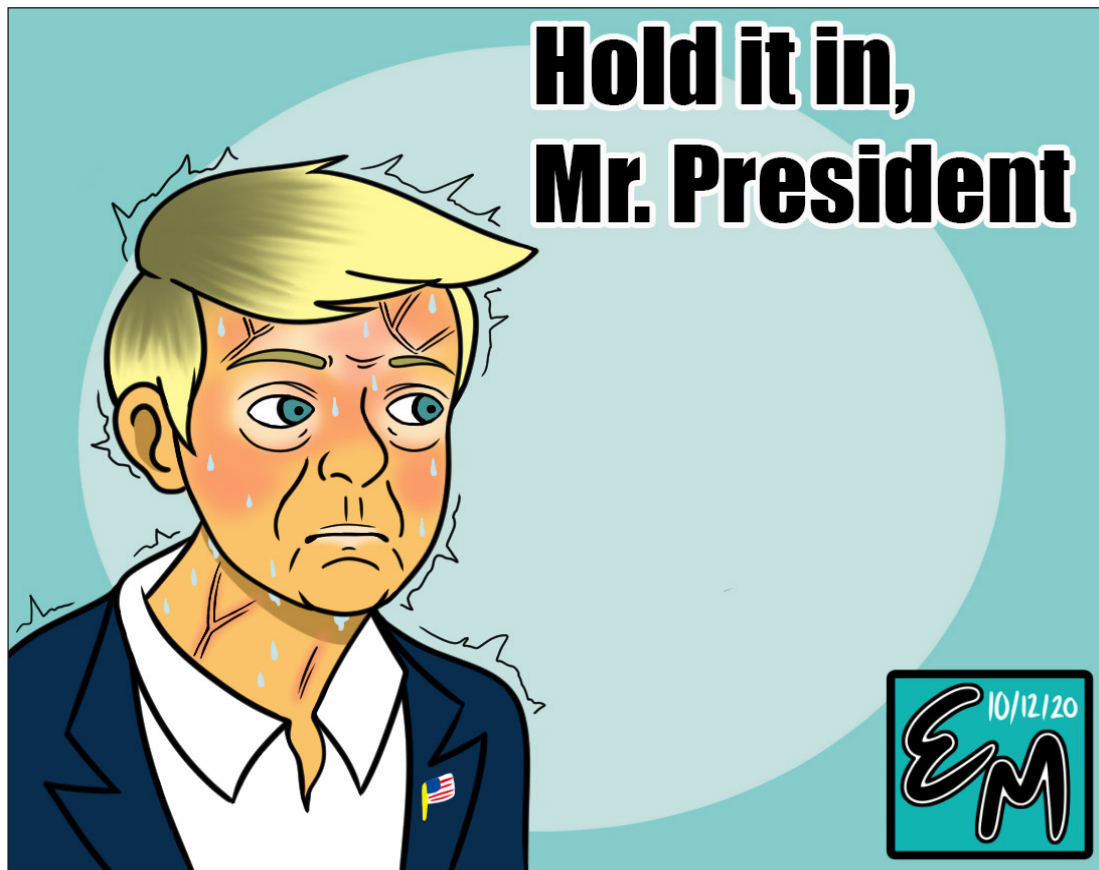
LATINX 12

ALL OF THE ABOVE 8

CHICANX 4



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO PARTICIPATE @UTRGVRIDER



Losing a best friend



Brigitte Ortiz
THE RIDER

My family is just like any other. We aren't perfect and we have our ups and down, but we would do anything for each other.

When I was a little girl, I grew up next door to my uncle. My cousin and I were two years apart and we always used to play. We practically did everything together. Even when she moved to a different house, we still tried to visit each other. We were almost inseparable.

My uncle decided to move to Mexico when I was in third grade. She was the only cousin I was really close to but after she

moved to a different country, we lost touch.

We would still video call my uncle and we would see each other that way, but it wasn't the same. Recently, she got sick from what the doctors said was colitis, a chronic digestive disease characterized by inflammation of the inner lining of the colon.

The doctors eventually performed surgery on her. She felt good for a while but not even a month after her surgery, she started to get high fevers again.

I remember the last time we video called. My mom, grandma and I were outside my house, showing her how it had been remodeled. She didn't know I had bought my first car and she said, "Wow Brigitte,

we got a car?" She was still her fun, strong self.

That was the last time I talked to her before our family got the news that she had died. My family was devastated. She was my uncle's firstborn and everybody loved her.

I was in shock and couldn't believe how fast everything was happening. My grandma and uncle were hit by her death the most, so the least we could all do is come together and stay strong for them.

It was not until afterward that I realized we all take advantage of the time we each have on this earth. The rest of our cousins made a group chat and we all decided to try to stay in touch because we never know when we might be seeing someone for the last time.

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.



VISIT US ONLINE AT
UTRGVRIDER.COM

FAFSA ahora disponible

Paulina Longoria
THE RIDER

Los estudiantes pueden renovar o completar su Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes (FAFSA, por sus siglas en inglés), con el plazo de entrega de prioridad programada para el 15 de enero.

El período de solicitudes comenzó el 1 de octubre.

“Siempre recomendamos que [los estudiantes] apliquen tan pronto como la forma esté disponible”, dijo Jael Perez, la directora adjunta de Operaciones de Ayuda Financiera (Financial Aid Operations) y enlace comunitario.

“Si no eres elegible para completar el FAFSA por la ciudadanía o el estatus de tu visa, pero eres elegible para ser clasificado como un residente de Texas para fines de colegiatura, puedes ser elegible bajo el SB 1528 para solicitar ayuda financiera estatal mediante la Solicitud de Ayuda Financiera Estatal de Texas (TASFA, por sus siglas en inglés), según el sitio web de UCentral.

El TASFA puede ser completado en inglés o en español. La fecha límite de prioridad para mandar la solicitud por correo electrónico a UCentral es el 15 de enero.

Pérez dijo que hay dos razones principales para que los estudiantes envíen su TASFA temprano. La primera razón es que mandar la solicitud es sólo el principio del proceso.

“Todavía se les podría requerir a los estudiantes que envíen documentos adicionales para poder completar su solicitud para el próximo año,

Renueve su FAFSA

1  **Inicie sesión con tu nombre de usuario y contraseña del FSA ID**

2  **Actualice la información prellenada**

3  **Proporcione la información financiera solicitada**

4  **Firme y entregue**

Código de escuela federal: 003599

Visite www.fafsa.gov

Roxanna Miranda/GRÁFICA DE THE RIDER

y ese proceso puede tomar algún tiempo”, ella dijo. “Por eso es que lo más pronto que la envíen, el más tiempo que tienen para mandar otros documentos necesarios y aún estar listos para el próximo año. La otra razón, y probablemente una de las más importantes, es que unos programas de ayuda financiera tienen los fondos limitados”.

Las preguntas más frecuentes de FAFSA (FAFSA FAQs) en el sitio web de UTRGV proporcionan una lista de lo que necesitarán los estudiantes estadounidenses elegibles para la solicitud del 2021-2022:

--número de Seguro Social para el estudiante y los padres (si procede)

--Tarjeta de Residente Permanente (para estudiantes que no son ciudadanos estadounidenses)

--declaración de impuestos del 2019 (para el estudiante y padre o tutor, si procede)

--W-2s del 2019 (para estudiante y padre o tutor, si procede)

--la identificación de Ayuda Federal Estudiantil (Federal Student Aid ID de estudiante y padre o tutor, si procede). Si fue olvidada, el nombre de usuario y la contraseña pueden ser recuperados en <https://fsaid.ed.gov/>

--otra información relevante de los impuestos del 2019, como manutención de los hijos pagada y recibida e información de

beneficios.

El Código de Escuela Federal de UTRGV es 003599.

Según a las FAFSA FAQs, “Completar el FAFSA debería ser más rápido y sencillo usando la Herramienta de Recuperación de Datos del IRS (IRS Data Retrieval Tool)”.

La Herramienta de Recuperación de Datos del IRS “transfiere electrónicamente la información de tu declaración federal de impuestos en el FAFSA”, el sitio web indica.

Pérez dijo que la Herramienta de Recuperación de Datos del IRS permite importar la información de los ingresos para un declarante de impuestos.

“Si el padre o el estudiante

presentaron una declaración de impuestos, son capaces de recuperar la información directamente del IRS para ponerla en la solicitud de FAFSA”, ella dijo. “Eso es definitivamente la cosa más sencilla de hacer porque no necesitas preocuparte de qué número va y en dónde. Automáticamente se pondrá donde debe ir y, por supuesto, será 100% correcto”.

Se le preguntó a Pérez qué facilitaría el proceso de la solicitud para los estudiantes.

“Definitivamente tener listo todo lo necesario”, ella respondió. “Por ejemplo, recuperar el FSA ID, el cual es el nombre de usuario y la contraseña. ... También usar la Herramienta de Recuperación de Datos del IRS, esa es altamente recomendada. ... El consejo No. 1 sería tratar de hacer todo lo más pronto posible, y no sólo enviar el FAFSA pero todo lo que conlleva después”.

Karla González, una estudiante de segundo año de ciencias del ejercicio, envió su FAFSA 2021-2022 el pasado martes.

“Ya que mis padres no pueden pagar por mi universidad, FAFSA me ha ayudado porque [paga] mi colegiatura”, González dijo. “De hecho estoy súper feliz de que recibo dinero del gobierno para ayudar a pagar por mis deudas, mi universidad y mis libros”.

Ella dijo que le tomó 20 minutos llenar la solicitud.

“Siempre voy a los Servicios de Apoyo Estudiantil de TRIO (TRIO Student Support Services) y siempre me ayudan a

Vea FAFSA, Página 8

ON CAMPUS

UTRGV partners with CBP for agricultural internship

Alejandra Yañez
THE RIDER

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is seeking UTRGV students to work as paid interns of the federal government in processing commercial produce shipments at the Rio Grande Valley Pharr port of entry.

The initiative began in 2017 with conversations of a collaboration between the university and CBP.

“The program was created to meet a need by Customs and Border Patrol to find folks who are trained in this kind of field, in particular, local qualified applicants ... and get them to eventually take on full-time positions,” said Alexis Racelis, an associate biology professor at UTRGV.

Racelis said many times specialists in this field only stay temporarily, for about three to five months, and then relocate. This is why the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol is looking for qualified applicants in the region who would like to stay in the profession as a long-term career.

Asked if she plans on staying in the profession, Alissa Rangel, a biology senior and intern in the program, replied, “Definitely. I actually ended up really liking it and I’m actually looking into becoming an agricultural specialist. I think it really did help me choose a



PHOTO COURTESY RUPESH KARIYAT

The UTRGV College of Sciences negotiates terms of the agricultural internship for students with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, South Texas Assets Consortium and Pharr International Bridge in 2018. The paid internship program provides students with hands-on experience in the agricultural specialist profession and the opportunity to qualify for full-time positions after graduation.

career.” Rangel shadows agricultural specialists as an intern at the Pharr port of entry, and said she is grateful for the opportunity to receive hands-on experience.

Students majoring in biology, environmental science and the university’s new sustainable agriculture and food systems major are highly encouraged to apply.

“These degrees have the courses that would qualify students for this type of position,” Racelis said.

Requirements to apply include being an undergraduate or recent graduate student in the favorable science majors, a

U.S. citizen or permanent resident, demonstrating a specific skill set, providing proof of enrollment in the university and an updated resume.

“It is for students in the biological and agricultural sciences that demonstrate a certain set of skills that they use at the port of entry,” Racelis said. “For example, skills of entomology, skills in biological sciences, skills in food safety. You know, these are classes they may have taken at UTRGV.”

He said the goal of the program is to give students the hands-on experience to transform them into full-time employees.

“UTRGV students get experience in these positions so that when they graduate they can qualify for a full-time position,” Racelis said.

After two years of negotiations, the program has finally taken off and interns work 10 to 20 hours a week.

“The government is expecting a huge demand in these types of students who are prepared to do that job, prepared both in experience and in education,” Racelis said. “So, that’s where we work together at UTRGV.”

He said the application is initiated by the federal government and the last application period was in February.

“What they do normally is they advertise and they tell us some positions will open up,” Racelis said. “The applicants need to be prepared and ready. So, what we’re going to try to do this time is announce it earlier so if students are in fact interested we can help them prepare their application.”

Racelis mentors students to take the proper courses throughout the semester and, when applications open, he helps them submit their application through the federal portal.

“That portal will open up whenever the federal government is ready to receive more interns, usually on an annual or semiannual basis,” he said.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Racelis said the interns have continued to work throughout the crisis.

“This is considered a position of national importance,” he said. “[The U.S.] requires a lot of food, and food has to come over safely. So the need for these types of positions is just going to grow. Even during COVID.”

Rangel’s message to students who are interested in applying to the program is to try it out, even if they are not completely sure if it is for them.

“It’s good to put your foot in the door in any way you can when it comes to government jobs,” she said.

UTRGV Athletics launches Varsity Club

Ivan Palacios

THE RIDER

The UTRGV Department of Intercollegiate Athletics announced the formation of its new Varsity Club Sept. 30. The Varsity Club will serve as the official organization for all former UTRGV and legacy institutions student athletes.

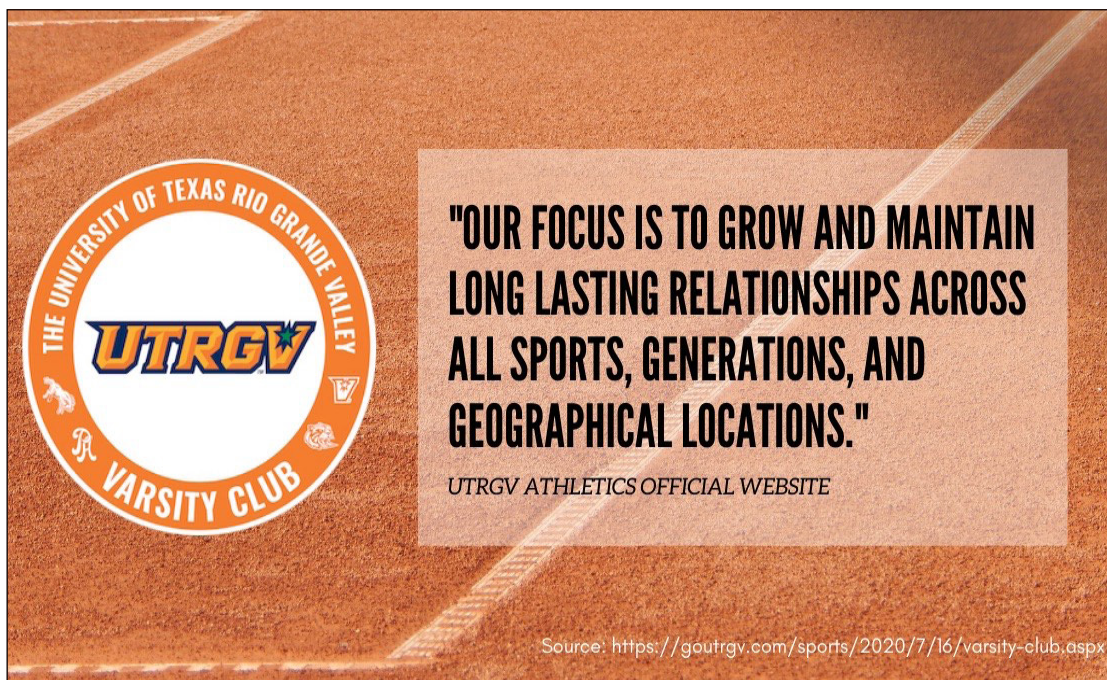
UTRGV Assistant Athletic Director for Development Rogelio Chanes oversaw the formation guided by the vision of UTRGV Vice President and Director of Athletics Chasse Conque.

“What led to the creation was ... Chasse,” Chanes said. “Chasse had this vision of putting together this letterman association. We spent late spring and most of the summer kind of working on how we were going to put this together in terms of the naming, the look, the branding of it and as well as the benefits that are going to entail for being a member.”

According to its website, the goal of the Varsity Club is “to keep former student-athletes engaged with UTRGV Athletics following their collegiate careers, provide an opportunity for current student athletes to have mentoring and networking opportunities with former student-athletes, and host letter winners on campus throughout the year.”

Through this organization, UTRGV hopes to form and maintain a relationship with its current and former student athletes from legacy institutions the University of Texas-Pan American and the University of Texas at Brownsville well beyond their graduation.

“The Varsity Club supports all 16 sports as we continue



to provide a first-class student-athlete experience while promoting excellence in the classroom as well as in competition,” Conque said in a Sept. 30 news release. “Our history is rich, and we are proud of those that dedicated their collegiate careers to UTRGV and our legacy institutions. Our former student athletes have helped pave the way for the success we enjoy today and will experience in the years to come. We are looking forward to working with this prestigious group of former letter winners to ‘Rally The Valley’ in support of UTRGV Athletics.”

Student athletes will be offered options to join the Varsity Club upon graduation. Those

signing up within one year of graduating may do so by paying

“The Varsity Club supports all 16 sports as we continue to provide a first-class student-athlete experience while promoting excellence in the classroom as well as in competition.”

**-CHASSE CONQUE
ATHLETICS VICE PRESIDENT
AND DIRECTOR**

a \$12 annual membership fee. Those looking to sign up that are beyond one year of gradu-

ation may also do so at a \$50 annual membership fee.

A final option for former student athletes looking to join the club is to become a lifetime member of the organization, which will cost a one-time \$500 membership fee and will also include an exclusive Varsity Club polo.

While the goal of the Varsity Club is to keep former student athletes engaged with the UTRGV community, becoming a member comes with benefits. Members of the club will also enjoy free tickets to select home games, a 15% discount at UTRGVGear.com, admission into Vaquero Village events, newsletter updates on UTRGV Athletics and more.

Current student athletes will also benefit from the new orga-

nization. Funds earned from the Varsity Club will go toward supporting the athletic programs at UTRGV, ranging from travel to academics to nutrition. Chanes also believes the benefits will extend beyond the field for current athletes.

“It gives our current student athletes access to connect to him or her [former student athletes] and just interact with what to do after athletics and what to do after they play sports,” he said. “Yes, we have a lot of student athletes that go on and play after college,

but those that are saying, ‘Hey I just want to get into the workforce,’ or ‘I want to pursue a career in a certain major or degree,’ this is an opportunity for those that are in those fields so they can connect. As we move forward and we progress, we’ll try

and provide opportunities where our Varsity Club members can engage and interact with our student athletes.”

Registration for the Varsity Club is now available with eight members already signed up since its launch. Chanes knows with it being a new organization, growth will take time, but he remains optimistic of its future.

“In a perfect world, if all of our student athletes would join, that would be awesome,” he said. “I don’t think [any] institution has 100% participation. In a perfect world, yeah, we would love to have them all. We’re going to try our best to get as many as we can.”

For more information on the program or to sign up, student athletes can visit [GoUTRGV.com/VarsityClub](https://goutrgv.com/VarsityClub) or contact Chanes at 665-4069 or email rogelio.chanes01@utrgv.edu.

Athlete of the Week: Delaney Carrell

Biology sophomore Delaney Carrell is a defender for the UTRGV Women’s Soccer Team. She began her collegiate athletic career during the 2019 season. Within her first season, she played in 18 matches. Carrell landed her career-high playtime of 110 minutes during the UTRGV vs. Kansas City game on Oct. 4, 2019. Her collegiate athletic debut was at the

UTRGV vs. Miami game on Aug. 22, 2019.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your sport?

A: “I just enjoy playing soccer. I always have and I like playing with my friends and meeting new people.”

Q: When did you first start playing soccer?

A: “When I was 3 or 4. My parents, just like when I was young, would, like, put me in a bunch of sports and I

kind of just chose to stick with soccer.”

Q: What is your favorite way to train and why?

A: “I would say I like to train more in a group. Individually, it’s more like you have to be more self-motivated [rather than] when you’re with a team you are working with people and, like, you have an adult or personal trainer telling you what needs to be done.”

Q: What do you plan to do after graduation?

A: “I plan to go to ... school to become a physician assistant.”

Q: What is the biggest challenge of being a student athlete?

A: “I would say time management, especially when it’s during the season. Because there is a bunch of traveling and you have to try to figure out how to arrange your classes to make sure you get everything in on time, plus everything with soccer.”

Q: Who is your sports model?

A: “I look up to Alex Morgan



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

or, like, I also like basketball. So, I look up to Steph Curry and Klay Thompson. So, [I] mostly look up to big sports people. There’s, like, always something that I can relate to. Whether it’s, for example, Stephen Curry has always had ankle problems, and I have those, too. It is just like how he was able to overcome all those and become just as big as he is now.”

Q: If you played any other sport, what would it be and why?

A: “Basketball and I don’t know. I feel like I would have done that one because I didn’t play that when I was younger. So, I’d already kind of picked soccer and then I played it in middle school and I really liked it, but it was kind of too late for me to get into it.”

--Compiled by Karina Rodriguez



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

RANK
Continued from Page 1

voting location in their county.

To request a mail-in ballot, voters must be 65 years or older, have a disability, be confined in prison or jail with the right to vote or be out of the county

during early voting or Election Day. The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is Oct. 23.

Both counties’ election websites have links to see who is on the ballot before heading to the polls.

To vote, there are seven acceptable forms of photo ID

to present at the polling location. A Texas driver license, Texas ID, Texas election ID certificate, Texas handgun license, U.S. citizenship certificate with photo, U.S. military ID card with photo and U.S. passport.

For the full list of early

voting locations and more information on the election, visit <https://www.hidalgocounty.us/2787/2020-General-Election> or <https://www.cameron-county.us/elections/>.

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Positive role models

Karina Rodriguez

THE RIDER

When it comes to role models, two UTRGV students say they don't have to look far.

Translation and interpretation senior Javier Flores Jr. said his parents, Javier and Marina Flores, instilled the virtue of hard work in him.

"She started going to college in Matamoros," Flores said about his mother. "She became a teacher, and my dad would work long hours, like, the whole week. So, they taught me that hard work makes a great person."

He said his parents have inspired and enabled him to achieve his dream of writing the novel, "Memorias de Noviembre," which was independently

published in 2020 and is available on amazon.com.

"Memorias de Noviembre" is a romance novel set in Brazil where a "stranger helps the protagonist kill the demons of his past."

"I recently published my first novel, and I would tell my mom to read it," Flores said. "I would tell both of them, like, 'How do I find a publisher?' and all these things and they would help me out. ... They do support me, my decisions and they care a lot for me."

He also recognized that, while his parents have had a positive impact on his life, there are areas where they could improve.

"I think they have a lot of things they should learn, or they are learning," Perez said. "It is not like I'm going to judge



COURTESY PHOTO

LeeAnn Carrillo and her son, Alec Carrillo, at his high school graduation.



COURTESY PHOTO

Javier Flores Jr. is shown with his parents, Javier and Marina Flores, in 2014. Flores said his parents taught him the virtue of hard work and inspired him to write his book, "Memorias de Noviembre."

because they made mistakes."

Political science junior Alec Carrillo said his mother, LeeAnn Carrillo, has had a positive influence on his life.

"I noticed the impact she had in my life, one year, when we had almost lost her when she got sick," Carrillo said. "I realized I should have been more sensitive with her and realized that she did do a lot for me. Because at that moment, when you notice that someone's on the deathbed, you're like, 'Dang, they did a lot for me.'"

He said his mom has helped him understand and talk to people despite being in different situations.

"I don't think I'd be as empathetic or sympathetic with people as I am," Carrillo said. "I wouldn't be as creative as I am. You know, like, I felt my mom's the one that's really been, like,

'Oh, we'll break the barriers.'"

He believes his mom's independence has made her an influential role model in his life.

"I think the fact that she's the type of person that never asked anybody for anything," Carrillo said. "The times I have seen her go through hardships, she doesn't expect anybody to be by her side. ... She's, like, an independent woman."

He said society could learn a valuable lesson from his mother.

"She listens to people," Carrillo said. "It doesn't mean that she's in [agreement] with them, and it doesn't mean she will disagree with them, but she sits down and listens to what they have to say. I feel like that's what people have to do more."

The Doodler

By Elizabeth Mendoza



LGBTQ+
Continued from Page 3

alized that one of the best ways to fight homophobia was to let people know that they knew more gay people, or bi people or queer people than they thought and that coming out was actually a radical act because you were owning your identity instead of hiding it," Sanchez said.

The Student Union hosted its annual United Union last Thursday to celebrate National Coming Out Day, with Aaron Hinojosa, coordinator for UTRGV's Center for Diversity and Inclusion, serving as the event's moderator.

The Superhero Project, Leadership and Mentoring, Health Services, Career Services, the Student Equality Alliance and student organizations Student Equality Alliance and Out in STEM provided presentations and available resources to LGBTQ+ students during the United Union.

"I feel really proud about the variety of presentations," said Mabel Cortina Matos, Student Union program manager.

After the presentations, attendees moved to Kanopy, a video streaming service, to view "The Mask We Live In," a movie about toxic masculinity. Attendees could chat during the movie via Zoom, and a discussion and Q&A session were held after the film ended.

"We want our students to know that we encourage them, we celebrate them," Cortina Matos said. "Once

they're actually out, we want to support them. This is the Student Union showing up for them and making sure that they have resources all the way through their process."

For National Coming Out Day, Campus Activities Board hosted a Drag Queen Bingo last Friday.

Leadership and Social Change also hosted a Netflix Watch Party last Friday to show "Moonlight" in honor of LGBTQ+ History Month after Career Service's LGBTQ+ Show Your Colors at Work Virtual Panel.

Leadership and Social Change will also show "The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson" this Friday and "Alex Strangelove" on Oct. 23.

The movies were chosen to not only educate students on the LGBTQ+ community, but to also "provide them an opportunity to see themselves, if they are LGBT students, on the screen," said Raul Leal, a program coordinator for Leadership and Social Change.

"If they're not LGBT students, [they will] be able to see what some of the struggles LGBT individuals might have," Leal said.

To attend, students must RSVP through VLink. The first 30 students to RSVP will receive a movie packet, which contains candy and microwavable popcorn, that can be picked up at Leadership and Social Change's offices in Student Union 1.28 on the Brownsville campus or University Center 205 on the Edinburg campus, he said.

Leadership and Social Change has also created a Spotify playlist that celebrates LGBTQ+ artists, Leal said.

"[Students] can add their own music with LGBTQ+ artists and just be able to listen to those songs together," he said.

LGBTQ+ History Month is important to celebrate because it provides exposure to the discrimination that LGBTQ+ people face, said John Goins, a history lecturer who has conducted research on LGBT history.

"If we were to stop talking about it and exposing other people to this, and the importance of them in our society, then things would not continue to improve," Goins said. "We've still got problems with discrimination, and we need to work on that. The best way to work on that is education and exposure."

The UTRGV community can further support the LGBTQ+ community this month by participating in Ally Safe Zone Training, which is hosted by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Participants can receive a sticker that states "UTRGV Ally," and professors can place it on their office doors, said Cathryn Merla-Watson, co-director of Gender and Women's Studies.

"This kind of visibility is really important because it shows support and solidarity for our queer community," Merla-Watson said.

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FAFSA

Continúa de Página 5

hacer mi solicitud financiera ahí, pero esta vez traté de hacerlo sola”, González dijo.

Servicios de Apoyo Estudiantil en UTRGV es un programa de TRIO “fi-nanciado por el Departamento de Educación de EE.UU ... y dedicado a incre-

INTERNSHIP

Continued from Page 3

ward the scholarship,” Shockley said.

Once accepted into the program, students go through a rigorous one-week training, which is administered by college professors who specialize in the field.

Daniella Medina, a graduate student from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, was an intern last summer.

Medina had originally applied to all four internships, and was selected for digital media reporting.

“I found out about the program at the beginning of Fall 2019 from one of my professors,” she said.

mentar la tasa de retención y graduación para estudiantes de bajos ingresos, primera generación y/o estudiantes con discapacidades documentadas”, según su sitio web.

Mariana Llanas, una estudiante de último año en la Preparatoria de Profesiones de la Salud del Sur de Texas (South Texas High School for Health Professions), planea asistir a UTRGV en

Asked what her experience in the program was like, Medina replied, “It was such a great experience and I had such a great team.”

During her time as an intern, Medina worked as the managing editor for a project called Behind the Screen, which focused on K-12 education and how it was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the pandemic, Medina’s group of interns was the first to attend the training virtually.

However, despite the challenges she said she was grateful to be able to work with like-minded people from all parts of the country.

Asked what she would consider to be the greatest takeaway from the program, Medina replied, “I think even

el semestre de otoño 2021 y ya envió su FAFSA.

Ella dijo que reunir todos los documentos fue la única parte difícil de completar su solicitud.

Se le preguntó a Llanas si los estudiantes de preparatoria podrían batallar con el FAFSA.

“No creo porque hay mucha ayuda en línea para nosotros, así que no es tan

though it was all virtual, I have people that I made a connection with for a lifetime. It’s really great to find people that are so like-minded and working in the same field as you because you don’t really find that often. Usually, at the university, it’s all competition-based or you don’t really get close to people in your class, but here working with such a small group of people, that was definitely a great part of it.”

Medina said she still keeps in touch with her teammates.

She said her training from the program has proven to be especially useful in her current internship with the USA Today Network.

“After I got selected into the Dow Jones News Fund, my internship was with the USA Today Network and they

He said when he first started working on OER three years ago, less than 25% of faculty knew what the acronym stood for and what it was. Now, that number is up to 40% to 50%.

“But we don’t want to stop there,” Brownlow said. “We want to increase awareness of what OER is and the pos-

difficil porque tenemos ... sitios web y personas que nos pueden ayudar”, ella respondió.

González, Llanas y Pérez dijeron que alientan a los estudiantes a enviar su FAFSA lo más pronto posible para asegurarse de que reciban ayuda financiera.

Pérez dijo que UCentral ofrece ayuda a los estudiantes para completar el FAFSA en los dos campus de UTRGV.

did offer me a full-time position,” Medina said. “So, I’m working with them now full time, which was awesome, especially right out of college. I was able to get a full-time job.”

Her message for students who are interested in applying to the Dow Jones News Fund is, “Apply! I heavily encourage any journalist. There were some people who weren’t even journalism majors in the program. They were English majors or film majors. There’s something for everyone in the field and the people you meet, the connections you make, you won’t be able to find anywhere else. It’s amazing to be a part of such a great group of people. I definitely encourage anyone even thinking about it to apply for sure.”

sibilities for saving students money, and the second goal is to increase adoption. Once faculty know that there are good-quality, free textbooks to use, we would like them to consider using them in their courses. ... The ultimate overall goal is to save our students money.”

OPENSTAX

Continued from Page 3

Writing and Language Studies; Volker Questschke, Department of Physics and Astronomy; Zaena Zamora, School of Mathematical and Statistical Studies.

The university will participate in the OpenStax Institutional Partnership Program for one year.

“What happens next year is that we will be [like past partners] and we’ll add our expertise to those new partners next year and help them learn about who we are and best practices,” Brownlow said.

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Memories Past

By Karlynn Hansen

The bitter cold bit at her exposed skin more painfully here than it had outside, but she hardly noticed. The grays and blues of the room blurred together as her eyes focused on the armored figure in front of her.

She had basically known the past few days what happened, but that didn’t make seeing it any less painful; in fact, it made it worse. Her friend, who always put his life in danger to save others, who always acted as the voice of reason when the others were struggling, who always gave her his spot when the others were having a videogame tournament, her friend since she was barely thirteen—who they’d lost before, but never this badly—was now a hollow, indifferent husk.

The ice blue glow of his eyes skimmed over her. Invisibility was an incredibly useful ability and likely the only reason why she didn’t break down emotionally right then and there. It would defeat the purpose of remaining hidden if she started to hyperventilate. Instead, his gaze landed on her companion. If she hadn’t been able to see the direction he was looking, she wouldn’t have even realized who he was looking at; there was no sign of familiarity in his expression, even though all three of them had been friends for years.

At least ... they had been until now.

Don’t think about that, she told herself, shaking her head slightly. There has to be some way to fix this . . .

“I-I don’t understand.” Her companion’s voice wavered, clearly expressing the hurt and confusion he felt as he realized what had happened to their friend’s mind, the spears pointed at his chest being an obvious clue as to the lack of recognition. “How is this possible?”

Oh, she had her suspicions. And it hurt. It hurt so much. She never would have wished for anyone to have to go through this.

“What are you talking about?” the figure, her friend—it hurt to think of him without the label—responded, but she barely focused on his words. She knew the voice came from him, but it was too low, the tonal patterns were off, and it just felt wrong, wrong, wrong. The tears froze on her face less than a second after they formed. Of all the things that had to happen to him, why did it have to be this? It had always been a risk. As an android, it wasn’t as though his mind worked the same way as a human’s. It wasn’t as safe, potential hacking being a vulnerability that most of her friends didn’t have, but even if she thought someone might try and get information from him, she didn’t think anyone would go to the extent of erasing him. No, there was a way to bring him back.

There had to be.

How can you get back what no longer exists? It didn’t work for you, why would it for him? The thought flashes across her mind before she mentally pushes it to the side. As she struggled to stay present, not to get lost in her own memories, she barely heard her companion’s heartbroken, “This isn’t you! Don’t you remember?”

She didn’t have to hear the response to know the answer was no.

No.

No.

No

The darkly lit room faded into white and beige as the memory she’d been resisting pulled itself to the forefront of her mind. The sight of what her friend had become shifted into a new figure, blurred due to time that had passed since this memory took place.

“Wait, so you don’t remember anything?” she had been asked. “No friends? Family?”

Hobbies? Do you...do you at least remember your name?”

Subject 132-M knew these questions. She’d just been asked them right before this conversation by the very people who did this to her. She hated the only answer she could give.

“No.”

Where Paths Diverge

By Bryan Rosario

The sound of metal clanging on metal echoes through the canyon, the blood-red sky a stark contrast to the scorched rock that dominates the crevasse. Dark clouds loom in the clear sky, threatening to ruin someone’s day. The grunts of effort echo through the walls, piercing the silence. Two blades clash fiercely, sparks flying from the grinding of steel. The first draws back, bringing his sword up in a defensive stance. Sweat lines his forehead and soaks parts of his dark-blond hair. The other, his counterpart, follows suit, taking time to wipe the dirt off his cheek. Dry, black dust swirls in the air, blurring the atmosphere.

“Why would you do this, Byron?” the first man asks, a bitterness in his question.

“You betrayed us!”

The second keeps his face emotionless. “I did what I had to do, Kris,” he answers.

“There was no other option.”

Kris’ voice cracks slightly, yelling, “I trusted you! You made me believe I could be greater!”

Scorn colors Byron’s next words. “Well, then that was your mistake!”

The boom of thunder follows a flash of light in the sky. The first drops of rain patter on the stone ground. Byron attacks quickly, but Kris prepares for him. The sound of their relentless sword-fighting, grunting and all, continues to ring through the ravine. As the stone below them collects rain, they find it now more difficult to keep their footing.

Nearly slipping, Kris pulls back again and brings his sword closer. Byron stops as well, water soaking his cloak and parts of his dark leather armor. The two wait for the other to make the next move. After a few moments, Kris takes a few careful steps closer to Byron. The puddles underneath splash with every step of his boots. Byron raises his sword to point it at his companion. “No closer.”

Kris stops walking. The falling rain goes from a sprinkle to a downpour and plinks off his silvery plate armor. His gaze drops to his feet as he speaks softly, just enough for his opponent to hear. “You were like another brother to me, Byron.”

Then he raises his head and locks his eyes with his friend. “Please. You don’t have to do this.”

Byron flinches but tries to cover it up by closing his eyes. “Don’t try to distract me with your words,” he says with contempt, though the melancholy in his voice is apparent. “This is our destiny now, to be rivals until only one is left standing.”

Kris shakes his head, causing the water dripping off his hair to scatter. “I don’t believe that.”

A single drop slides down Byron’s cheek, almost indistinguishable from the rainfall. “For what it’s worth, I’m sorry.”

“So am I.”

The two simultaneously charge and continue their duel on the top of the canyon, realizing with sorrow that only one could walk out of that place.

