

# END OF THE LINE

## Trump visits RGV amid second impeachment process



Justin Elizalde/VAQUERO RADIO

President Donald Trump arrived last Tuesday at the Valley International Airport in Harlingen for his first public appearance since the storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. Later, Trump traveled to Alamo and briefly spoke about the addition of the border wall, the prospect of a second impeachment, the Capitol incident and the coronavirus vaccine.

**Jacqueline Peraza**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As President Donald Trump visited the Rio Grande Valley last Tuesday, Congress was considering the impeachment of Trump for the second time during his four-year term.

The next day, Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives, 232-197, and charged with “incitement of insurrection” after a mob attacked the Capitol

on Jan. 6 while Congress confirmed the electoral college presidential votes.

He is expected to be out of office by the time the impeachment trial begins as President-elect Joe Biden’s inauguration is set to take place Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Anthony Knopp, an emeritus history professor at UTRGV, said the impeachment process is made up of two steps: the indictment by the House of Representatives

and the approval to remove the sitting president from office by the Senate.

“I’m not at all convinced that he will be convicted and removed from office,” Knopp said. “Remember, it’s a two-thirds vote that’s required, and I don’t know that the votes are there. If he continues, of course, he will have left office by the time any of this happens, [and] the Senate fails to convict him, then he will be free to participate

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Jacqueline Peraza/ THE RIDER

Shown is the Osprey, which carried President Trump, landing at the McAllen International Airport last Tuesday during his visit to the Rio Grande Valley.



Avery Arizola/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

# WAC EXPANSION

## UTRGV football team could be on the horizon

**Karina Rodriguez**  
THE RIDER

The Western Athletic Conference announced last Thursday that five universities have been added to the conference, and that might also pave the way for a football program at UTRGV, officials say.

The new additions to the WAC will be effective tentatively by July 1, 2022. The new schools are Abilene Christian University, Lamar University, Sam Houston State University, Stephen F. Austin University and Southern Utah University.

Along with the announcement, Commissioner Jeff Hurd also said the WAC

will reinstate football at the subdivision level by the 2022 season.

The additions open up new paths that UTRGV can take to further the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

UTRGV President Guy Bailey wrote in a letter to the community last Thursday that the addition of universities to the WAC allows for conversations to begin about adding a football program to the university.

“The expansion also opens opportunities for UTRGV that have not previously existed,” Bailey wrote. “Among the new opportunities is the possibility of new athletic programs, including ad-

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# 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](http://utrgvrider.com). Views presented are those of the writers and do not reflect those of the newspaper or university.

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# MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER

Delivering news to UTRGV no matter the circumstances.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Tuesday**  
**Pet Show and Tell**  
The **Student Union** will host a **virtual Pet Show and Tell** from 2 to 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. RSVP is available on **VLink** and the Zoom link will be emailed the day of the event.

**Wednesday**  
**Virtual Involvement Fair**  
The **Leadership and Mentoring** office will host a **virtual involvement fair** from noon to 2 p.m. via Zoom. The fair will be a chance for students to connect with **UTRGV organizations**. RSVP is available on **VLink**.

## National Handwriting Day

In celebration of **National Handwriting Day**, the **Student Union** will teach the **basics of calligraphy** from 6:30 to 8 p.m. via Zoom. The first 15 people to sign up will receive a **free journaling kit**. RSVP is available on **VLink**.

## Thursday

**ASL Club General Meeting**  
The **ASL Club** will host its first general meeting of the semester from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. During the meeting, the club will share information about events and have **games and activities** for students to interact and practice their **ASL skills**. RSVP is available on **VLink**.

## Virtual Involvement Fair

The **Leadership and Mentoring** office will host a **virtual involvement fair** from 5 to 7 p.m. via Zoom. The fair will be a chance for students to learn about **fraternities and sororities** registered at UTRGV. RSVP is available on **VLink**.

## Friday

**Access for Sex-Education Meeting**  
**Access for Sex-Education** will host its first meeting of the semester from noon to 1 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting will review **emergency contraception** and **risk management**. RSVP is available on **VLink**.

--Compiled by Omar E. Zapata

# POLICE REPORTS



The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Jan. 4 and 10.

**Jan. 4**  
**7:01 a.m.:** UTRGV Police Communications observed, via the border cameras, a man jumping the U.S. border fence located behind the Facilities Services building in Brownsville. U.S. Border Patrol agents detained the man without incident. The man claimed to be from Mexico.

**Jan. 6**  
**7:39 a.m.:** An officer responded to Vaquero Plaza on the Brownsville campus in reference to a man found sleeping behind Building C. The man was issued a criminal trespass warning and escorted off the property without incident.

**9:22 a.m.:** A faculty member reported property that has been missing since 2018, such as notebooks, teaching material and other items, from a lab at the Research Education Building on the Edinburg campus. He requested a

report be generated for documentation purposes.

**4:48 p.m.:** An officer observed a man approach and solicit a ride from another man who was in Lot B1. The former was issued a criminal trespass warning.

## Jan. 7

**7:37 a.m.:** An officer and the Edinburg Fire Department were dispatched to the Community Engagement for Student Success Building in Edinburg in response to a report of smoke coming from the building. The smoke was caused by a tar machine being used to repair the roof.

**11:09 a.m.:** An individual reported losing her wallet inside the Medical Education Building on the Edinburg campus on Jan. 3. A report was generated for documentation purposes.

**12:30 p.m.:** An officer responded to the Multispecialty Health Clinic in Harlingen in regard to a disturbance between two individuals. A divorced couple was arguing over who had the right to be with their son during his doctor's appointment. The individuals

left the clinic without incident.

**2:38 p.m.:** A staff member reported twisting his ankle while working at the Medical Education Building on the Edinburg campus. A UTRGV First Injury Report was generated and submitted to Environmental Health and Safety for review.

## Jan. 8

**8:50 p.m.:** An officer responded to an office in the Performing Arts Center on the Edinburg campus in regard to a used prophylactic found in a trash can.

## Jan. 10

**3:46 a.m.:** An officer and the Harlingen Fire Department responded to the Clinical Education Building on the Harlingen campus in regard to an active fire alarm. The officer and fire department confirmed there was no smoke nor fire in the building. A sprinkler monitor alarm had been somehow activated, and the alarm was reset.

--Compiled by Sol Garcia

## VISIT

Continued from Page 1

in politics just like anybody else. ... He could run for the presidency again."

He said Trump's impeachment would not directly have an impact on Biden's presidency but more within the Republican Party.

"Will Trump continue to be the major factor in the Republican Party or not? Will he be able to run for office again? Those [questions] would remain to be determined," Knopp said. "But as far as Biden would be concerned, from the Democrats' point of view, they better hope Biden has a successful presidency if Trump is still around."

He said he believes it is disturbing that the United States has reached the point of impeaching, and possibly convicting, a sitting president for the second time.

"No matter what one thinks about whether it's a good thing to do it or a bad thing to do it, it's very disturbing to have it happening in our country," Knopp said.

Last Tuesday, dozens of supporters rallied at the La Plaza Mall parking lot, near the McAllen International Airport, awaiting the arrival of President Donald Trump. This was the president's first public appearance since the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6.

President Trump touched down in the Osprey at the airport as supporters, of all ages, cheered and waved their flags from the sidewalk to the third level of the Dillard's parking garage.

Trump proceeded to travel to Alamo, where he briefly spoke to the public about the addition of the border wall, the prospect of a second impeachment, the Capitol incident and the coronavirus vaccine.

"And we're now delivering it to states, including your state, where your governor and government are doing a terrific job in getting it administered in Texas," the president said during his visit, according to [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov).

Trump went into detail about the successes of the addition of 450 miles of border wall along the Texas-Mexico border, which he said included a decrease in drug smuggling and people crossing into the U.S. illegally.

"We've arrested nearly 500,000 illegal aliens with criminal records-- some with very serious criminal records of the type you don't want to know about, like murder," he stated. "Through the landmark reforms we've put into place, we have ended the immigration chaos and reestablished American sovereignty."

About the same time, protesters gathered outside La Unión Del Pueblo Entero headquarters in San Juan to denounce the president's visit to the Rio Grande Valley. Former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro attended the protest.

"Trump started his campaign by demonizing immigrants, and he's ending his presidency in a shameful way by continuing to demonize immigrants and telling lies about our immigration system," Castro said in an exclusive in-

terview with The Rider. "It's a shame that he spent so much time and taxpayer money on a wall that is useless."

Asked why he believed Trump had decided to visit the Rio Grande Valley now, Castro replied that when the president finds himself in "political hot water," he returns to highly politicized American issues.

"Every time Donald Trump gets into political hot water, or every time he sees his numbers slipping, he goes back to the red meat of demonizing immigrants [and] stirring up white nationalism by brown people, and that's what he's doing today," he said.

The president's visit prompted the counties judges of Hidalgo and Cameron to issue statements to the public.

On Jan. 11, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez urged supporters and opponents of Trump to stay peaceful among each other.

"The Rio Grande Valley has a unique opportunity to demonstrate to the world that peaceful public discourse is far more effective than public violence," Cortez stated in the Jan. 11 news release.

In Cameron County, Judge Eddie Treviño Jr. asked that Trump cancel his visit entirely for the safety and well-being of the Valley in a Jan. 12 news release.

Asked if he had any comments he would like to share with UTRGV students, Castro replied, "People will often tell you, as young people, that you're the future, but you're really the present. We need your leadership, your voice, your vision, right now."

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# Time flies, literally SpaceX 2020 recap

**Alejandra Yañez**

THE RIDER

From explosions to successful launches, 2020 was full of unexpected ups and downs for SpaceX.

Although it may not always seem like it, Boca Chica Village has been home to SpaceX's trials and tribulations, as well as its success, since 2016.

With history taking place in the backyard of the Rio Grande Valley, it is surreal at times to imagine the plans that SpaceX has in store for the village.

Last August, Elon Musk, the SpaceX CEO, announced on Twitter that he aims to turn Boca Chica Village into a "21st century Spaceport" for commercialized space travel and interplanetary civilization.

From the beginning of Musk's operations in 2020, he made it clear that the primary goal for the Boca Chica location was to travel to Mars.

The year started off with a bang for SpaceX when the Starship SN1 prototype exploded during a pressure test in February.

Later the Starship SN3 prototype, which was scheduled to run a series of tests during the spring, also exploded in

April due to a leaky valve, according to space.com.

In May, the Starship SN4 prototype met a similar fate when it exploded a minute into its fifth static fire test with a single Raptor engine rocket.

SpaceX also posted a job listing for a resort development manager in early August for the Boca Chica site.

"Boca Chica Village is our latest launch site dedicated to Starship, our next generation launch vehicle," the job description reads.

"SpaceX is committed to developing this town into a 21st century Spaceport. We are looking for a talented Resort Development Manager to oversee the development of SpaceX's first resort from inception to completion."

Evidently something was learned from the failed prototypes of the past because in August the Starship SN5 prototype successfully hopped 150 meters, which set the momentum for the rest of the year for the company.

September held a prompt paralleled 150 meter hop for SN6, but later proved to set the company back when it purposefully ruptured the Starship SN7 prototypes tank during a pressure test.

While November was a bit of a wait-

See **SPACEX**, Page 5

From the beginning of Musk's operations in 2020, he made it clear that the primary goal for the Boca Chica location was to travel to Mars.



Roxanna Miranda/ THE RIDER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION



Photo Courtesy Marco Antonio Cabrera

Marco Antonio Cabrera, a clinical laboratory technician at the UTRGV School of Medicine, receives his second dose of the Pfizer vaccine on Jan. 8 at UTRGV.

## The journey to herd immunity

**Omar E. Zapata**

THE RIDER

With the Food and Drug Administration authorizing the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, UTRGV, Rio Grande Valley health departments, hospitals and clinics have been administering both of these vaccines to those who qualify.

In an interview with The Rider, Dr. Michael Dobbs, vice dean of Clinical Affairs for the UTRGV School of Medicine and chief medical Officer for UT Health RGV, explained how the vaccines work, the possible side effects and the long-term goal of herd immunity.

Dobbs told The Rider that both of these vaccines have an active component in the vaccine compound called messenger RNA (mRNA), which is genetic material from the virus.

"The vaccine ... like any other vaccine, gets your body's immune system ready to fight off the virus," he said. "So, when your body gets exposed to it, it creates an alarm-defense mechanism that keeps you from getting sick with the virus."

The Moderna vaccine is 94.1% effective in preventing COVID-19 and the Pfizer vaccine is 95%, according to studies done by the FDA.

"It's really a miracle that we're able to create a vaccine in just a few months after a new disease shows up, considering that smallpox ravaged us for 3,000

years before we had a vaccine," Dobbs said.

Asked how long these vaccines will be effective, he replied that experts do not know.

"With vaccines for COVID, it's such a new disease that we just don't have those years of data to really be able to say for sure," Dobbs said.

He said the vaccines are extremely safe, but with any substance entering your body, there is always a risk for a reaction, including an allergic reaction.

"Any substance you put in your body, any food, any medicine, there's always a risk of an allergic reaction and, so, it's recommended that people who have had allergic reactions to ingredients in the vaccine don't take it and those who have serious, severe allergic reactions, in general, are very cautious about it," Dobbs said.

The common side effects that people can expect from the vaccines are some pain and swelling at the site of injection in the arm, fever, chills, tiredness and headaches, he said.

Dobbs said these common side effects are likely to occur but are relatively mild and vary among people.

"The good news is that the side effects signify your body responding and creating immune readiness," he said. "I kind of like to think of it like practicing for a big game. The vaccine is kind of like

See **SIDE EFFECTS**, Page 8

## Enrollment passes Spring 2020 numbers

**Brigitte Ortiz**

THE RIDER

This semester, enrollment numbers have increased from last spring amid the COVID-19 pandemic. UTRGV's preliminary numbers, as of Jan. 11, the first class day, show 30,147 students attending the university.

Of these, 24,384 are undergraduates, 5,542 are graduate students and 221 are medical students.

There are 3,560 freshmen, 4,783 sophomores, 6,450 juniors and 9,136 seniors. On average, students are enrolled in 12.5 credit hours.

In Spring 2020, enrollment was 27,316.

Magdalena "Maggie" Hinojosa, senior vice president for Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs, said spring numbers are always lower than fall.

In Fall 2020, 32,441 students were enrolled at UTRGV.

"So, what you really want to do is compare spring to spring, not necessarily fall to spring," Hinojosa said. "And so, it is a decrease from fall, which is expected. That's what always



Aaliyah Garza/ THE RIDER

Kinesiology sophomore Alexandra Gomez (center) and mechanical engineering sophomore Abel Gomez wait in line last Tuesday at the Student Services building.

happens, but it is an increase from last spring."

She said UTRGV is currently teaching 17.6% of classes in the traditional, in-person format, 15.5% hybrid, 34.6% asynchronous and 32.2% synchronous. Hybrid classes are taught both

online and in person. Asynchronous classes are conducted completely online, and synchronous classes have scheduled meeting times online.

Asked what the university is doing to continue growing enrollment numbers, Hinojo-

sa replied that they will continue with programs such as the Tuition Advantage grant, which covers the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for students with a family income of \$95,000 or less.

"Something that we have

maintained ... is our four-year guarantee rate at the undergraduate level, that when students start with us, their tuition does not increase for four years," she said. "Of course, we also have the addition of CARES funding and distribute the money to students from that and then this past summer we did a summer relief program for our students. So, you know, we've done quite a bit, from increasing current programs to the addition of programs."

CARES stands for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. It is a \$2.2 trillion federal stimulus bill meant to alleviate the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the Treasury Department.

Hinojosa said she wants to wish students the best of luck this semester.

"This isn't necessarily the spring that, you know, we all want," she said. "We're ready to be back together, but it is where we are at today, and I hope [students] have a great

See **ENROLLMENT**, Page 8





### JOE BIDEN'S FOCUS

On Jan.10, The Rider conducted a poll on social media asking students, "What should Joe Biden focus on first when he begins his term as president of the United States?" The results are shown below.

## facebook

**COVID-19** 25

**IMMIGRATION** 5

**ECONOMY** 2

**HEALTH CARE** 1



## twitter

**24 COVID-19**



**3 ECONOMY**

## Instagram

**COVID-19** 29

**ECONOMY** 4

**CIVIL UNREST** 3



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# Social Media Ban



# Puppy love



**Brigitte Ortiz**  
THE RIDER

Small paws, big eyes and smooth fur are all the things that make us feel admiration when we see a puppy. There are different breeds that people choose because of their personality or intelligence. Huskies are described as friendly, intelligent, outgoing, alert and gentle.

Before I got my puppy, Luna, I thought I did all the research I needed to prepare for her. I knew it would be a challenge because they are known to be

destructive and stubborn. My best friend and I had talked about adopting dogs together but the thought of having a husky never crossed my mind.

When we saw how small and playful they were, our hearts melted. She got a boy, and I got a girl. Right off the bat, the girl was feisty and playful. I knew there would never be a dull moment with her.

I like to believe that I got my dog at the right moment because she brought my family closer together. It was like she always belonged to my family.

Many would say that having a husky is a lot of work, but I believe that it is all about having patience like with any breed. We have these expectations

of a well-behaved, smart and understandable dog, but we have to work for it.

So far, my experience of having a husky has been a rollercoaster. Although, I do not think I would want it any other way.

There is not a time where I am not laughing at the things she does. Luna has made my life go at 100 miles per hour, trying to get her everything she needs and balancing my job and schoolwork.

My husky is now four months old, biting her life away, barking at us to play with her, running around the yard like 10 times, leaving her toys scattered around the house and being dramatic when we put her in timeout.

## 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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**UTRGVRIDER.COM**



# El tiempo vuela, literalmente

## Resumen del 2020 sobre SpaceX

**Alejandra Yañez**  
THE RIDER

Desde explosiones hasta lanzamientos exitosos, el año pasado estuvo lleno de altas y bajas para que SpaceX finalmente haya dejado atrás el 2020.

Aunque no siempre haya sido así, el poblado de Boca Chica ha sido el hogar de las pruebas y tribulaciones de SpaceX, con todo y su éxito, desde el 2016.

Mientras que la historia está sucediendo en el patio de atrás del Valle del Río Grande, a veces es irreal el imaginarse los planes que SpaceX tiene en mente para el poblado.

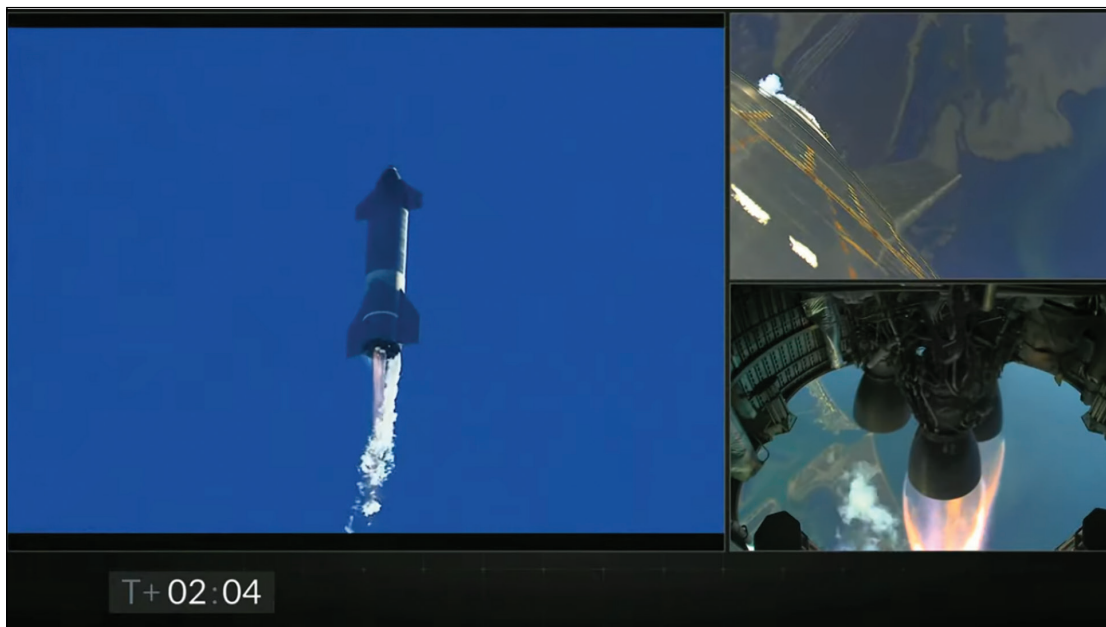
El pasado agosto, Elon Musk, el director ejecutivo de SpaceX, anunció en Twitter que pretende convertir al poblado de Boca Chica en un "puerto espacial del siglo XXI" para el viaje espacial comercializado y civilización interplanetaria.

Desde el principio de las operaciones de Musk en el 2020, él dejó claro que su principal objetivo para la ubicación de Boca Chica era viajar a Marte.

El año comenzó con estruendo para SpaceX cuando el prototipo Starship SN1 explotó durante una prueba de presión en febrero.

Después el prototipo Starship SN3, que estaba programado para pasar por una serie de pruebas durante la primavera, también explotó en abril por una válvula averiada, según space.com.

En mayo, el prototipo Starship SN4 tuvo un destino similar cuando explotó al minuto en su quinta prueba estática de fuego con un cohete de un solo motor Raptor.



CAPTURAS DE PANTALLA TOMADAS POR ROXANNA MIRANDA DE LA TRANSMISIÓN EN VIVO DE SPACEX. El prototipo Starship SN8 despegó el 9 de diciembre en la base de lanzamiento SpaceX del sur de Texas en Boca Chica. Fue el último despegue de los cohetes de SpaceX conducido en el 2020.

SpaceX también publicó una oferta de empleo para un gerente de desarrollo de resorts a principios de agosto para la base en Boca Chica.

"El poblado de Boca Chica es nuestra base de lanzamiento dedicada a Starship, nuestro vehículo de lanzamiento de próxima generación", lee la descripción del trabajo. "SpaceX está comprometido a convertir esta ciudad en un puerto espacial del siglo XXI. Estamos buscando un Gerente de Desarrollo de Resorts para que supervise el desarrollo del primer resort de SpaceX desde su inicio hasta su finalización".

Evidentemente se aprendió algo de los prototipos que fallaron en el pasado porque en agosto el prototipo Starship SN5 subió 150 metros exitosa-

mente, el cual estableció el ímpetu para la compañía por el resto del año.

Septiembre tuvo un salto paralelo de 150 metros para SN6, pero más tarde demostró que la compañía retrocedió

 **Para más información**  
[www.spacex.com/launches/](http://www.spacex.com/launches/)

cuando rompió intencionalmente el tanque del prototipo Starship SN7 durante una prueba de presión.

Mientras que noviembre fue un tiempo de espera para el lanzamiento del prototipo Starship SN8, el retraso valió la pena cuando el despegue por fin sucedió el 9 de diciembre

convirtiéndolo en el último lanzamiento del 2020 para la base de Boca Chica.

El prototipo Starship SN8 estaba equipado con tres motores Raptor, un logro que no se había obtenido hasta el SN8. Además de los tres motores Raptor, el SN8 también estaba equipado con una ojiva aerodinámica y aletas traseras para aumentar la estabilidad durante el vuelo.

SpaceX describió el lanzamiento de la siguiente manera, "El prototipo Starship número de serie 8 (SN8, por sus siglas en inglés) despegó desde nuestra plataforma de lanzamiento del Condado de Cameron y ascendió exitosamente, transicionó, y realizó su maniobra de aterrizaje con el control preciso de las aletas traseras para alcanzar su

punto de aterrizaje. La baja presión del tanque superior de combustible durante el encendido de aterrizaje provocó una velocidad alta de toma de contacto resultando en un aterrizaje fuerte (¡y emocionante!)."

Después de un año de prueba y error, SpaceX terminó el 2020 con una victoria no solo para el viaje al espacio pero también para el Condado de Cameron y el resto del Valle pues los habitantes se reunieron para ver el espectáculo en despegue.

"Agradecemos a todos los habitantes que están apoyando nuestros esfuerzos en el Condado de Cameron y otras bases", lee el sitio web de SpaceX. "¡Felicidades a los equipos enteros de Starship y SpaceX en la prueba de hoy! ¡Sigue el SN9; Marte, allá vamos!"

Se espera que las perspectivas para el lanzamiento del SN9 tomen lugar tan pronto como en este mes, según el sitio web de SpaceX.

"Hoy en SpaceX se trata sobre estar practicando los despegues de los cohetes Starship", Elon Musk tuiteó el miércoles. "La nave está sujeta por pernos masivos mientras los motores están despegando. Dos despegues han sido completados, estamos por intentar el tercero".

Según el sitio web del Condado de Cameron, los cierres de carreteras estaban programados de las 8:00 a las 17:00 horas el jueves pasado y el día de hoy para el lanzamiento del SN9.

--Traducido por Paulina Longoria

## ON CAMPUS

# UTRGV Chess Team qualifies for Final Four

**Sol Garcia**  
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Chess Team A will defend its title at the Final Four after placing fourth at the Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament Jan. 4-6.

In 2018 and 2019, the team won the championship tournament back-to-back. In 2020, the team did not advance to the Final Four, but the Final Four competition was canceled due to COVID-19.

This year's Pan American tournament took place online, with 59 teams participating from across the country, Canada and Mexico.

UTRGV's Team A was the only team

in the championship that did not lose a match, with four wins and five draws.

"We're the only team in the entire championship that didn't lose even a single match," said Bartek Maciejka, chess coach and grandmaster. "We didn't win all of them, but we didn't lose."

Vladimir Belous, grandmaster and an accounting graduate student, competed in Team A. Playing online didn't affect Belous, but he did get nervous about playing in such a big event, he said.

"I'm always nervous in such [a] competition because it's actually the main competition of the year," he said. "This

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SCREENSHOT TAKEN BY JACQUELINE WALLACE VIA ZOOM JAN. 5 DURING THE PAN AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE CHESS TOURNAMENT

UTRGV Women's Chess Team player Lorena Garcia Ramon, a doctoral candidate in marketing, competes in the Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament on Jan. 5 via Zoom.

### SPACEX

Continued from Page 3

ing game for the launch of the Starship prototype SN8, it was well worth the delay when the craft finally took flight on Dec. 9, making it the last launch of 2020 for the Boca Chica launch site.

The Starship SN8 prototype was equipped with three Raptor engines, a feat that had not been attained until SN8. Aside

from the three Raptor engines, SN8 was also equipped with a nose cone for aerodynamics and sported body flaps on its side to increase stability during the flight.

SpaceX described the launch as follows, "Starship serial number 8 (SN8) lifted off from our Cameron County launchpad and successfully ascended, transitioned propellant, and performed its landing flip maneuver with precise flap control

to reach its landing point. Low pressure in the fuel header tank during the landing burn led to high touchdown velocity resulting in a hard (and exciting!) landing."

After a year of trial and error, SpaceX ended 2020 with a victory not only for space travel but also for Cameron County and the rest of the Valley as many residents gathered to watch the spectacle take flight.

"Thank you to all the locals supporting our efforts in Cameron County and beyond," reads the SpaceX website. "Congratulations to the entire Starship and SpaceX teams on today's test! Serial number 9 (SN9) is up next - Mars, here we come!"

Prospects for the SN9 launch are expected to take place as early as this month, according to the SpaceX website.

"Today at SpaceX is about practicing Starship engine starts," Elon Musk tweeted Wednesday. "Ship is held down by massive pins while engines are fired. Two starts completed, about to try a third."

According to the Cameron County website, road closures were scheduled from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. last Thursday and today for the launch of SN9.



# Athletics produces YouTube 'Road to Victory' series

**Karina Rodriguez**  
THE RIDER

UTRGV Athletics created a YouTube series titled "Road to Victory" on Nov. 19 to showcase the different programs and how they are managing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Director of Athletics Vince Volpe said the "Road to Victory" series was created to promote the brand.

"We wanted to bring our brand [and] continue to deliver our brand to the fans, our alums [and] our students all throughout the Rio Grande Valley in a unique way," Volpe said. "So that was one approach. Then, secondly, we have dozens of corporate partners that have attached their brand to our brand, and we needed to co-brand some content."

He also said a major hope he had with the release of the series is to help gain support for UTRGV Athletics from the community.

"The third piece of the puzzle is probably continuing to 'Rally the Valley' from a community-unifying standpoint," Volpe said.

The series currently has two episodes that feature the UTRGV Men's and Women's Basketball teams.



SCREENSHOT TAKEN BY JACQUELINE WALLACE/THE RIDER

UTRGV Men's Basketball Head Coach Lew Hill discusses his experience with changes brought on by COVID-19 on "Road to Victory," Episode 2.

Athletics Video Production Coordinator Davis Van Egdom explained some of the challenges with producing the series.

"Some of the best parts of the series [are those] really close personal looks into the athletes' lives," Van Egdom said. "We couldn't do a lot of that, like, we couldn't go into their dorms, we couldn't follow them to the classrooms because, in reality, they kind of went straight from their dorms to the Fieldhouse.

Then they came right back to the dorms. So, I had to show off the personal side, when they all really couldn't do too much, [which] was difficult.

While producing the series, he said they followed social-distancing guidelines.

"For the interviews, as you see, those are usually recorded on a zoom lens, so we can zoom in pretty tight," Van Egdom said. "So, while it may look like we're pretty close to

the athletes, they're actually usually 12 to 15 feet away from us. ... We [also] have some additional PPE ... we wear gloves ... masks, face shields and just being really cautious when it is unavoidable to be at least 6 feet apart."

UTRGV Women's Basketball Coach Lane Lord said he hopes the community will learn more about the athletes and cheer on UTRGV Athletics.

"Our rallying cry here in

Athletics is to 'Rally the Valley,'" Lord said. "So, it's up everywhere. We want everybody to know they have a Division 1 school right here in the Valley. We represent all our teams [and] represent not only this university but our community. We play for the people in the Valley, and, you know, as we continue to grow as an athletic department, we start winning championships and we get to go to the NCAA tournament."

He said that he is happy that the hard work the athletes put in outside of athletics is showcased in the series.

"Besides their academics, you know, the 20-plus hours a week on the basketball floor [and] studying film, you know, it's a full-time job to be a student athlete and maintain their studies," Lord said.

Volpe said that people can look forward to seeing baseball highlighted in upcoming episodes of the series.

"Episode 3, which will come out either later this month or early February, will actually now start to weave in baseball," he said. "We're going to plan to continue all the way through whatever postseason run all three programs go to."

To view the first two episodes of the "Road to Victory" series, visit the UTRGV Athletics' YouTube channel, GoUTRGV.

## THIS WEEK IN ATHLETICS



### Volleyball

- 1:30 p.m. Friday vs. University of Texas at San Antonio in Corpus Christi
- 6:30 p.m. Friday vs. Texas A&M-Corpus Christi at the Texas Showdown in Corpus Christi

### Women's Basketball

- 6 p.m. Friday vs. New Mexico State University at the UTRGV Fieldhouse
- 3 p.m. Saturday vs. New Mexico State University at the UTRGV Fieldhouse



### Men's Basketball

- 8 p.m. Friday vs. New Mexico State University in Phoenix
- 8 p.m. Saturday vs. New Mexico State in Phoenix



### CHESS

*Continued from Page 5*

tournament, by itself, it motivates me to give my best."

Team A will compete in the Final Four competition in early April, and Belous said he would love to give it his best.

"We already [won] two times, so why not three?" he said.

Team B placed ninth in the tournament, while the Women's Team placed second in the women's classification.

Lauren Tovias, a nursing freshman and member of the Women's Team, was nervous about playing online and against high-rated players.

"I wasn't very sure with online," Tovias said. "I was more nervous if I lost connection, or for example, they had a high rating. ... It was different, especially if you had two cameras on you, so it was a little pressuring."

The championship taught Tovias she needs to study hard-

er and play more, she said.

"I know that I got to study a lot harder than I usually do and play a lot more games," Tovias said.

Participating in a team with other women is a good experience for Tovias, since there had not been many girls who played chess in her high school, she said.

"It's nice to have women who are playing chess in a solid team," Tovias said.

Despite the online transition, the Chess Team kept its motivation for the championship, Macieja said.

"My students took it really responsibly, so they prepared well," he said.

Macieja and Alex Mista, manager for the Chess Program, virtually met with the team members to help set up the required technology and prevent internet connection issues for the competition. One player went to a hotel to participate in the competition, fearing his internet connection

would fail and result in a disqualification.

"I could really see the highest level of motivation, and I was very proud of him," Macieja said.

Team A will compete against Webster University, Saint Louis University and Texas Tech University in the Final Four.

"[We] know that some of the colleges, they want to take the championship from us, and we're really motivated to ... keep the trophy at UTRGV," Macieja said. "We will not let anybody take our trophy."

On Jan. 9, the UTRGV Men's Chess Team beat Russia's Ural State Mining University in the Clash of Collegiate Chess Champions with a score of 13.5 to 10.5. The URSMU's Women's Team beat UTRGV's Women's Team 11 to 5.

The Chess Team's next virtual competition will be the Texas Collegiate Individual Championship at the end of January.





# 'Mandalorian,' 'Queen's Gambit' tops among UTRGV community

**Paulina Longoria**

THE RIDER



Roxanna Miranda/THE RIDER

During the winter break, the UTRGV community took advantage of not having schoolwork to binge-watch TV shows. The Rider conducted a poll on the UTRGV Students Facebook group to gauge the most popular shows.

The poll received 43 responses:  
--"The Mandalorian" with 17 votes  
--"The Queen's Gambit" with 10 votes  
--"Cobra Kai" with nine votes  
--"Bridgerton" with three votes  
--"Naruto Shippuden" with two votes  
--"The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina" with two votes.

Arianna Lopez, a mathematics senior, binged-watched "Bridgerton" and "The Queen's Gambit" on Netflix, "The Mandalorian" on Disney+ and "PEN15" on Hulu.

Lopez said she enjoyed "Bridgerton," a period drama series based on Julia Quinn's novels in which the eight Bridgerton siblings attempt to find love, because it was different from other shows.

"Most of the shows, I think, are kind of the same nowadays, but this was based ... [on another] era," she said.

Lopez said the opposite of "Bridgerton" is "PEN15," an adult comedy available on Hulu, in which 33-year-old actresses Maya Erskine and Anna Konkle play themselves as middle schoolers in 2000.

She also watched the drama miniseries "The Queen's Gambit" because Anya Taylor-Joy portrays Beth Harmon, a strong female lead character who enters a chess tournament.

"The main character was a female," Lopez said. "It was very cool to see her succeed and be better than all the men."

She believes people do not need to be a fan of the "Star Wars" movies to enjoy watching "The Mandalorian," a sci-fi show about the adventures of a lone bounty hunter operating in the Outer Rim.

Just like Lopez, Hortencia Montemayor, a graphic design senior who works for Student Life, has been watching the show despite not liking the "Star Wars" movies.

“  
**The main character in 'The Queen's Gambit' was a female. It was very cool to see her succeed and be better than all the men.**  
--Arianna Lopez  
**Mathematics senior**  
”

Montemayor prefers watching Korean dramas such as "Start-Up" and "It's Okay to Not Be Okay" on Netflix.

Asked if she would recommend Korean dramas, Montemayor replied, "It isn't for everyone. It's from a different country, I get it. ... And they are cheesy, actually, but they're cute."

She enjoys watching lighthearted and romantic movies and TV shows.

Literatures and Cultural Studies Professors Linda Belau and Ed Cameron have not watched any of the shows that the UTRGV students did during the winter break.

Cameron said he added "Cobra Kai" to his Netflix list, but has not watched it yet.

Belau said she is interested in watching "Bridgerton" for two reasons.

"It is sort of a period piece in England, and I love that kind of stuff," she said. "It's also produced by Shonda Rhimes,

and we just love her work; she's fantastic. That show is really transformative and interesting, particularly with their casting decisions."

Belau and Cameron shared the TV shows they binge-watched during the break:

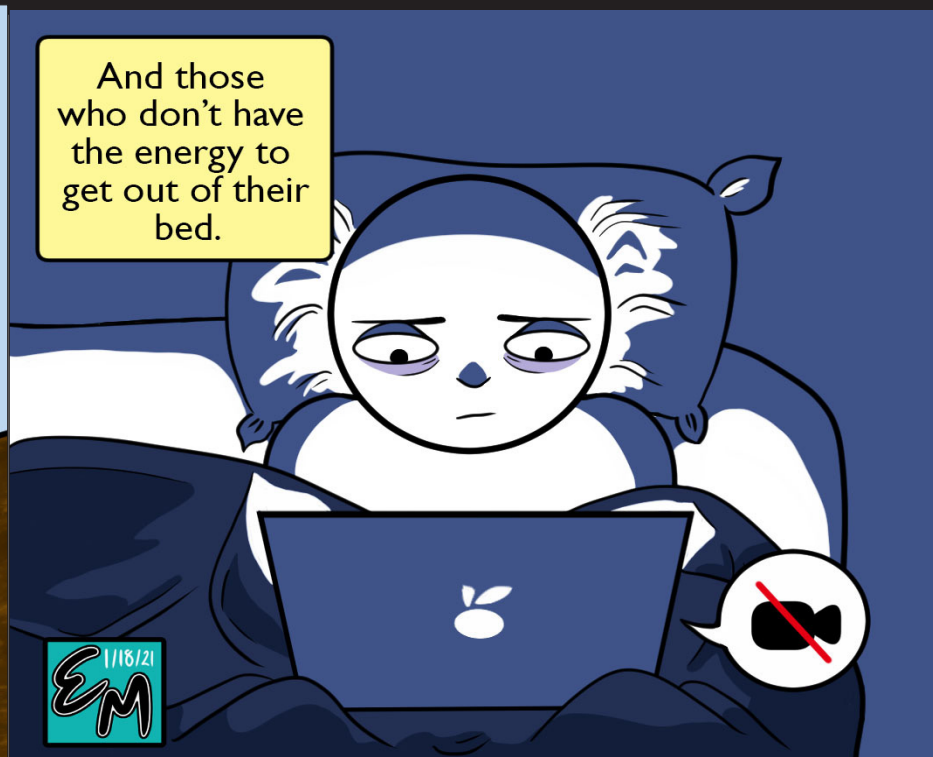
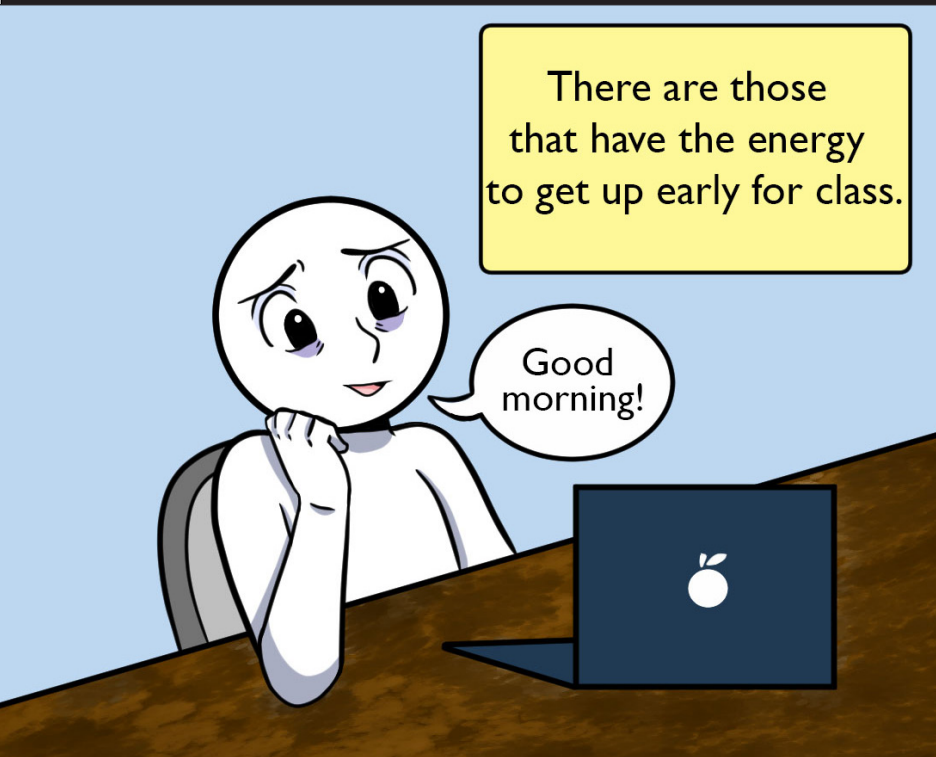
--"Reprisal," "The Great," "Normal People," "Chance" and "Little Fires Everywhere" on Hulu  
--"Mrs. America" on FX on Hulu  
--"Ray Donovan" on Showtime  
--"Big Little Lies," "The Outsider" and "Sharp Objects" on HBO.

Belau and Cameron believe television has become the new independent Hollywood.

"TV, these days, they consider it the new Hollywood 'cause all the really good stuff is coming out on TV networks as opposed to streaming channels as opposed to the movie theaters," Cameron said.

## The Doodler

By Elizabeth Mendoza





**WAC**  
*Continued from Page 1*

ditional women's sports and football." While a UTRGV football team may be a possibility, there are still conversations to be had and work to be done to make it happen. UTRGV Basketball Head Coach Lew Hill said there are benefits to expanding the department. "I'm excited to have all these Texas

teams come in," Hill stated in a news release issued last Thursday by Athletics. "I think it helps us tremendously with recruiting. We were the only team from the WAC in Texas for a long time and, this year, one of two. Half of our student athletes are from Texas, and now, their families will have more chances to see them play. Playing all these Texas opponents helps to expand our recruiting base as well. The great teams that are coming in just made this conference even better and more competitive from

top to bottom." UTRGV Volleyball Coach Todd Lowery sees the benefit the expansion could have on the community. "Locally, people will see the names of teams that they identify with a little more," Lowery was quoted as saying in the news release. "And I think that's going to increase the excitement in the community. We're going to be way more visible throughout the state while developing rivalries with these new Texas opponents."

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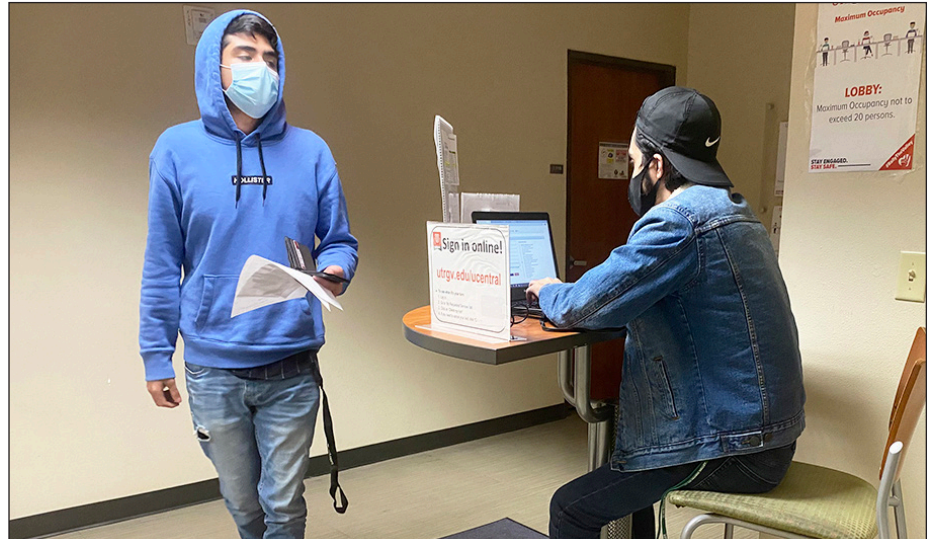
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**ENROLLMENT**  
*Continued from Page 3*

semester. And, of course, any issues they have, to make sure that they, you know, reach out to us because we're here to help." Parwinder Grewal, executive vice president of Research, Graduate Studies and New Program Development and dean of the Graduate College, said enrollment numbers for the Graduate College increased 48% from last spring semester. He said 377 students are pursuing a doctorate, 5,149 a master's and 60 are in a certificate program. In addition, 221 are medical students.



**Aaliyah Garza/THE RIDER**  
Freshman Hector Banda signs in last Tuesday at U Central. This semester, UTRGV is teaching 17.6% of classes in the traditional, in-person format, 15.5% hybrid, 34.6% asynchronous and 32.2% synchronous. Hybrid classes are taught both online and in person. Asynchronous classes are conducted completely online, and synchronous classes have scheduled meeting times online.

master's programs that will be added by the upcoming fall and spring semesters. "One of them will be [a] master's in pharmaceutical science, the other one would be [a] master's in medical science," Grewal said. "Both these programs are coming out of the school of medicine. Then we are adding a master's in art education to prepare people for teaching art. Then we are also adding UX and UI (User Experience and User Interface Design) as master's programs, so this is an interdisciplinary program." He said a doctorate in mathematics and statistics with interdisciplinary application has been approved and it will

start in Fall 2021. "Then the next program that is undergoing review is Ph.D. in physics," Grewal said. "Then we will have another program in human genetics. Both of these programs will start by spring." The UTRGV Graduate College is also working on two more programs, cellular, molecular and biomedical sciences. "Another one we can add is material science and engineering," Grewal said. "So both of those programs are at early stages at this time. They both have received, what we call, planning authority. That means the university is now allowed to develop a full program pro-

posed." Two new professional doctorate programs in pharmacy and physical therapy will also be added in the coming semesters.

Asked what the Graduate College is doing to grow enrollment numbers, Grewal said they have made a promise that every new student who joins their master's programs, if they are admitted unconditionally, will receive a \$1,000 dean's scholarship. "On the top of that, during the pandemic, we have done two more major things," he said. "One, we waived the GRE and GMAT requirement for all our programs until this summer. Even from the fall we will continue the waiver, except one or two programs that have opted out. They will require the GRE and GMAT. Those would be MBA (master's in business administration) ... and, I believe, master's in physics. Others still are waived for the fall." Grewal said they are excited about the response they are receiving from students and are focusing more on creating student retention opportunities. "We have added a very comprehensive orientation program, in which we highlight all the different services that we provide, new and existing services so that students know up in front," he said. "We have a better Grad Central Program, just like U Central ... that offers many services, financial aid. You can text graduate college, you can email, you can have phone calls and our staff works long hours, including weekends, to help students answer their questions and, you know, succeed."

**SIDE EFFECTS**  
*Continued from Page 3*

practice to get your body ready and that the big game is when the virus shows up, and you certainly want to win." Dobbs said he was glad he felt those symptoms after he was vaccinated because they gave him confidence that the vaccine was working. "[The side effects are] relatively mild from personal experience," he said. "They didn't keep me from living my life. ... I didn't feel like doing exercise for a couple of days, and that was really the big difference." Dobbs said these side effects could occur during the first or second doses of the vaccine and even both times. Marco Antonio Cabrera, a clinical laboratory technician at the UTRGV School of Medicine, told The Rider he received the first dosage of the Pfizer vaccine on Dec. 18 and the second one on Jan. 8. Cabrera said he works directly with COVID-19 at the laboratory and that is why he qualified for the vaccine. "We process, analyze and interpret specimen samples from patients around the Rio Grande Valley, such as hospitals and clinics," he said about his work at the laboratory. "So, we work directly with COVID-19 samples to determine if patients are positive or negative." Cabrera said after the first dose, his body reacted pretty well and only experienced slight soreness at the site of injection that lasted less than a day. "Other than that, I felt great throughout the weeks," he said. "I felt quite normal. I felt like I wasn't even given a vaccine." Asked how he felt about being more immune to COVID-19, Cabrera responded that he feels, in a way, safer for not only himself but also for the

safety of others. "I think it's very important to get vaccinated because it not only protects yourself from getting a very serious illness, but it also protects others indirectly," he said. Cabrera said he believes everyone should get the vaccine when they qualify for it, for the doctors, nurses, medical professionals and others who have lost their lives to COVID-19. "I think we should [all get vaccinated], not only for ourselves, but for the safety of others. ... We should lead by example to have a better tomorrow," he said.

With vaccines being administered daily across the nation and the world, this is working toward the goal of herd immunity. "Herd immunity basically means that when enough people get immune to an infectious disease, that the disease gets under control, and there are only a few isolated cases, or even none at all," Dobbs said. "If the community gets enough immunity, then the disease is under control in that community and that's what we're talking about with herd immunity." Asked what percentage it will take to reach herd immunity, Dobbs said experts are not certain about that yet. "Experts are saying maybe 70% will get it under control. I'm not sure if that's enough or not, but certainly it would have a wonderful effect on getting the

disease under control," he said. Dobbs said with the U.S. population being very large, around 330 million, according to the [Census Bureau](#), it means getting a lot of people vaccinated. "It would ordinarily take several, several months, at least, to get that many people vaccinated," he said. "So, I think that the early momentum in vaccination overall is a little slower than what maybe was hoped for, but it is happening, and we just need to keep getting more and more people vaccinated over the next several weeks to months, so that we can reach herd immunity."

The World Health Organization's (WHO) chief scientist, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, said during a [news conference](#) on Jan. 11 that herd immunity is unlikely to happen in 2021. "Even as vaccines start protecting the most vulnerable, we're not going to achieve any levels of population immunity or herd immunity in 2021," Swaminathan said. "Even if it happens in a couple of pockets, in a few countries, it's not going to protect people across the world." Eduardo "Eddie" Olivarez, chief administrative officer for Hidalgo County Health and Human Services, told The Rider at a news conference at the PSJA Early College High School vaccine clinic last Wednesday that herd immunity depends on the type of vaccine and illness.

**"I think we should all get vaccinated, not only for ourselves, but for the safety of others. ... We should lead by example to have a better tomorrow."**  
**--Marco Antonio Cabrera**  
**Clinical laboratory technician**

Asked what it would take to reach herd immunity in Hidalgo County, Olivarez said if the county has 1.3 million people, then about 900,000 people would have to be either vaccinated or have enough antibodies in their system to be protected from COVID-19, and he does not know if there is going to be the capacity to vaccinate that many people. "I don't know what the national plan is for that [as of right now] because it is a national plan," Olivarez said. "The reality is, we were hoping that a combination of vaccine and how many people first survived COVID will eventually get us to herd immunity, but that might not be for many months." Dobbs said some people might be scared of getting vaccinated and that he thinks it will range from people with a fear of needles to an extreme end of people who are vaccine conspiracists and are fearful of the vaccine itself. "People sometimes don't understand that these vaccines are extremely safe," he said. "They're much, much safer than risking getting the disease. I would just say to the folks who are concerned about it that it's much safer to get the vaccine than to risk getting COVID-19." Dobbs said, at some point, all adults will qualify for vaccination, and he recommends, as a physician and a member of the community, for people to get vaccinated when they are given the chance. "It is a dangerous disease, and the vaccines are extremely safe and the side effects are really pretty mild," he said. "So I just would encourage everyone to take advantage of it to really be part of protecting themselves, protecting their community and get rid of this disease."