

Cash grants to be awarded Friday



Luis Martinez Santillano/The Rider
Alejandra Yañez
the Rider

Vaqueros can expect to receive an email regarding cash grants of \$850 or \$750 as part of the UTRGV Fall Liftoff program by Friday, as students kickoff another semester amid the pandemic.

All students are eligible for this grant, which can be used toward tuition and fees or awarded directly to students to cover the emergency costs of food, housing, health care, child care, etc.

“Here at UTRGV, we look for every way possible to support our students,” said Griselda Castilla, associate vice president for Strategic Enrollment, during a Facebook Live July 29 to inform students about the Fall Liftoff. “We know that COVID has thrown a lot of curveballs our way and, so, with the liftoff program, we are hoping that we can provide you some financial relief.”

Funding for the cash grant incentive is authorized by

See **LIFTOFF**, Page 3

UP TO YOU

Safe return depends on critical thinking, personal responsibility

Verilu Infante
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Students, faculty and staff at UTRGV are returning to campus for the Fall 2021 semester without social distancing guidelines or a mask mandate, but with encouragement of personal responsibility.

“When school starts on Aug. 23, we will no longer be enforcing social distancing or capacity limits,” said Patrick Gonzales, associate vice president for Marketing and Communications at UTRGV. “Based on medical guidance, we ask students that, in order to safely do that, that they continue wearing masks and that they get vaccinated.”

“At UTRGV, the current split of course offerings is 60% are going to be traditional face-to-face or hybrid, which is a combination of face-to-face and online,” he said. “The remaining 40% are going to be completely online.”

See **RETURN**, Page 6



Verilu Infante/The Rider
Paulina Arteaga, a biomedical sciences major, returns to the Brownsville campus after working as a lab assistant on the Edinburg campus. Arteaga is registered to take in-person classes on the Brownsville campus for the Fall 2021 semester.



Roxanna Miranda/The Rider

On June 16, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was ruled “illegal” by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. The Obama administration executive order took effect in June 2012 to allow certain individuals to request consideration for a two-year period of deferred action, subject to renewal. The Center for Diversity and Inclusion and DREAM Resource Center at UTRGV provides students with updates on current situations regarding DACA through DREAM Zone Advocate Training.

DREAMS ON HOLD

Brigitte Ortiz
the Rider

On July 16, Judge Andrew Scott Hanen of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas ruled that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy is unlawful. The ruling ordered the Biden administration to stop granting new applications.

The executive order by then-President Barack Obama took effect in June 2012 for certain people who came to the United States as children to request consideration of deferred actions for a period of two years, subject to renewal.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration

Services website, deferred action is a use of prosecutorial discretion to defer removal action against an individual for a certain period of time. Deferred action does not provide lawful status.

Xochitl Hinojosa, a social service provider at La Union Del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) office in San Juan, said new DACA applications will no longer be adjudicated, but renewals will continue.

LUPE is a social service nonprofit organization that is based on values of self-help and services to be able to do peaceful organizing and give back to the community.

“If you’ve had DACA before, in the past, or have been a DACA recipient in the past,

you can continue renewing,” Hinojosa said. “It’s just those new applications that are coming in will not be granted but they will be accepted to be taken by immigration. They just won’t be given a decision on them.”

She said there is a fee along with the application but there has been no administration response regarding what will happen to the funds.

“The only certain thing that we have is that the applications are continued to be expected,” Hinojosa said. “If it’s a first-time application that has never been granted DACA, they will be accepted. The funds will be taken in, but that application just stays there frozen.”

See **DREAMS**, Page 2

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The Rider is the official, award-winning student newspaper of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The newspaper is widely distributed on and off campus in Brownsville and Edinburg, Texas. Views presented are those of the writers and do not reflect those of the newspaper or university.

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MORE THAN
A NEWSPAPER



WELCOME BACK,
VAQUEROS

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Tuesday
Get Your Course Ready

A **training and development** session will be hosted by the **Center of Online Learning and Teaching Technology** from 10 to 11 a.m. via Zoom. To register, visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/online/training>.

Wednesday
Day of Giving 2021

UTRGV's **Day of Giving 2021**, a fundraising event, will take place from midnight to 11:59 p.m. To donate to specific

colleges or programs, go to <https://dayofgiving.utrgv.edu/powerofone>.

Friday
Last Day to Register

Friday is the **last day to register or add a class** for the Fall 2021 semester.

HEERF Fund Distribution

Beginning **Friday**, students with **zero expected family contribution** as determined by their Free Application for Federal Student Aid are **eligible to be awarded \$850**, while students with **greater or equal to \$1 EFC or no FAFSA** will be eligible

to **receive \$750**, depending on availability of funds. Students with an outstanding account balance will be invited to submit an application/authorization for the Fall 2021 HEERF Grant. Students will be **notified of grant eligibility** along with an application/authorization link **via their UTRGV email address**.

Saturday

Last Day to Withdraw

Saturday is the **last day to withdraw (drop all classes)** and receive an **80% refund**.

--Compiled by Fatima Gamez Lopez

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Aug. 4 and 16.



Aug. 4

8:33 a.m.: A non-affiliated woman slipped and fell after stepping on a curb in front of Building 701, near Lot H-1 on the Harlingen campus. Emergency

medical services were requested but she declined medical transport.

3:04 p.m.: A student reported he lost his AirPods' case Aug. 2 in the Science Building on the Edinburg campus. The student wanted to document the incident.

Aug. 5

4:01 p.m.: A staff member accidentally reversed into a wooden ramp that leads into Portable Building no.4 while driving a university vehicle on the Edinburg campus. The ramp sustained minor damage but the vehicle sustained significant damage.

11:08 p.m.: An officer responded to an active fire alarm in the Health Affairs Building East on the Edinburg campus. The fire department later cleared the building for reentry. The alarm was triggered by a water flow issue.

Aug. 6

12:19 p.m.: The Edinburg Fire Department and UTRGV police were

dispatched to a dumpster fire outside the Engineering Building. The fire department put out the fire. No damage was caused to university property and no signs of arson were detected.

1:23 p.m.: A staff member reported he lost three university-issued keys about two years ago at his off-campus residence. The report was made for documentation purposes.

Aug. 7

5:16 p.m.: UTRGV Police Communications observed, via U.S. border cameras, two subjects jump the U.S. border fence located south of the Interdisciplinary Academic Building on the Brownsville campus. An officer responded to the area and detained three subjects on the sidewalk on University Blvd. U.S. Border Patrol agents arrived and took custody of the individuals without incident.

Aug. 10

3:09 a.m.: A UTRGV police officer, Texas Southmost College security and the Brownsville Fire Department responded to an active fire alarm at the TSC Science Engineering & Technology Building in Brownsville. The alarm panel indicated a water flow problem. A search of the building confirmed there were no signs of fire or smoke in the area. The fire department reset the alarm.

1:31 p.m.: A staff member reversed into a non-affiliated vehicle while driving a university vehicle in Lot B-7 on the Brownsville campus. No injuries were reported, only damage to both vehicles.

4:15 p.m.: A faculty member reported her purse, which contained her university-issued keys, was stolen from inside her vehicle on June 19 at an off-campus location in Edinburg. A burglary of vehicle report was initiated by the Edinburg Police Department.

Aug. 15

3:47 p.m.: UTRGV Police Communications observed, via U.S. border cameras, a large group of individuals walking alongside the U.S. border fence located west of Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. Police officers responded to River Levee Road and notified U.S. Border Patrol. A total of 14 subjects were detained, 10 adults and four children. The subjects claimed to be from several countries. All were taken into custody without incident by the Border Patrol.

Aug. 16

3:25 a.m.: An officer and the Edinburg Fire Department responded to a fire alarm at the Research Education Building. The alarm was triggered by a duct detector. The area was checked.

--Compiled by Danielle Perez

DREAMS

Continued from Page 1

"As of right now, they haven't stated whether they will be getting any refunds or if that will transfer on to a new process."

The DACA community has dealt with similar issues in the past. In 2015, the extended program for DACA was considered illegal by the same judge, according to Hinojosa.

"This program has been under attack since, basically, when the program started," she said. "It has been used as a political piece in many legislators' agendas. Whether to keep it, whether to remove it. And the main reason why they continue using it as a political power play is due to the fact that Judge Hanen has argued that this reaction was not created by a bipartisan congressional move. It was more of just a one-sided administration, in this case the Obama administration. They believe that it was an abuse of power, which is one of the reasons why we are really pushing Congress to look into the issue and create something that is bipartisan by both Republican and Democratic parties so that way we can stop playing with people's lives and continue moving forward with some type of protections that's not just something that could be taken away at any moment."

Comparing previous situations, she said that in 2017, when the program was first terminated under the Trump administration, only renewals continued until a certain time frame.

"This time around, because the program has been declared illegal completely, it kind of makes us wonder

what direction the administration will take this, or even the court themselves," Hinojosa said. "Back in the day, it was more a process of termination for the deferred action program. So that kind of leaves a lot of people in uncertainty. Will the program continue? Will they completely stop it? Right now, we do have renewals, but moving forward, will they completely change their mind and then completely take the program off? So, I think that's where we're at."

Asked for her reaction to the recent ruling, she replied that, as a social service provider to many clients who need this permit, it was heartbreaking.

"I've seen them start from the very beginning and, you know, flourish into model citizens where, you know, they pay taxes, they contribute to their communities, they give back, and being able to hear that the program has now been partially ended, it did break my heart, especially for those that had the hope to be able to start their path in creating careers," Hinojosa said.

In Fall 2020, the number of students who may have been considered Dreamers was just over 1,000, Rebecca Gadson, UTRGV associate vice president for Student Life and dean of students, wrote in an email sent to The Rider on Aug. 11.

"In the past estimated numbers of students that may be dreamers were based on individuals classified as Texas residents under Senate Bill 1528, which allows certain international students, U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and certain non U.S. citizens to establish residency in the state and to qualify for in-state tuition based on eligibility criteria," Gadson wrote.

Under the criteria, students must have lived in Texas the three years leading up to high school graduation or the receipt of a GED; and resided in Texas the year prior to enrollment in an institution of higher education (which could overlap the three-year period), according to the email.

Aaron Hinojosa, program coordinator for the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and DREAM Resource Center at UTRGV, said he was not surprised by the ruling.

The center supports culturally based affinity groups, enhances programming that builds cultural competence and civil discourse, provides direct support to students and resources for undocumented and DACA students.

"I think that sounds horrible saying it but I think, understanding our history, that's why I wasn't surprised," Aaron Hinojosa said. "It is shocking to me because I know that it affects our students, our local community, our [Rio Grande Valley] community, because I work with some of the students. I'm still hopeful, but I'm also worried for the well-being of the students who are being affected."

He said one of the ways the department informs students on DACA and other matters is through DREAM Zone Advocate Trainings.

"We haven't specifically designated just for this announcement, as it's always changing, and there's local organizations and also national organizations that provide as it's happening," Aaron Hinojosa said. "But we do offer DREAM Zone Advocate Training and that within itself always keeps attendees updated in the most current situation."

YOU'RE INVITED

Valeria Henderson

The rider

The UTRGV Fall 2021 semester is booked with in-person, on-campus events, including Best Week Ever, the Distinguished Speaker Series, drive-in movies, UTRGV Madness and more.

Best Week Ever started Sunday and continues until Sept. 2. Events will take place in person, virtually or hybrid and will be hosted on one campus with watch parties. Students interested in joining watch parties can keep an eye on the Student Activities V Link page and its social media accounts for updates.

Student IDs will be checked. Students can go to utrgv.edu/bestweekever to see scheduled events.

"[Student Activities is] planning for everything to come back this fall semester," said Cindy Mata-Vasquez, director of Student Activities.

Students can also find in-person Info Depots from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. today and Tuesday at the Student Union buildings on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses. Students can stop by to pick



Samuel Villarreal, orientation leader (left), helps incoming freshman Adrian Escobar, during Roundup last Friday on the Edinburg campus.

up snacks, campus resource flyers, maps or ask for directions.

Info Depots After Dark are from 7 to 8 p.m. today and Tuesday, via Zoom, where attendees interact and play games with student leaders.

Picnic with the President

is from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. today in the Ballroom on the Edinburg campus and at the same time in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón Tuesday on the Brownsville campus. Free hamburgers, chips and drinks will be served, according to Naomi Valdez,

a program coordinator for Student Activities.

UTRGV Day will be from noon to 3 p.m. Wednesday in the Ballroom on the Edinburg campus and in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus, according to Karen

Dorado, director of special programs & community relations.

On Wednesday, there will be a Spirit Rally-Vaquero Roundup from noon to 1 p.m. in the UTRGV Fieldhouse in Edinburg hosted by Student Activities and the UTRGV Spirit Program. The event will also be available as a watch party, Mata-Vasquez said.

The Stomp will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday in the UTRGV Baseball Stadium on the Edinburg campus. Students who cannot attend the event in Edinburg can view it as a watch party on the Brownsville campus at the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón or on YouTube at home, Valdez said.

Bidi Bidi Banda, a Selena cover band, will perform at The Stomp.

"We're really excited because they have never traveled to South Texas," Valdez said. "This would be their first UTRGV concert."

To RSVP for The Stomp, students can register through V Link at <https://utrgv.campuslabs.com/engage/event/7188499>.

See INVITED, Page 10

UTRGV preliminary enrollment steady

Natalie Lapsley

The rider

UTRGV has a preliminary enrollment of 32,419 students this semester, the same number it had in Fall 2020, university officials say.

As of Aug. 17, undergraduate enrollment totaled 27,124, followed by 5,073 students in the Graduate College and 222 in the UTRGV School of Medicine, according to Maggie Hinojosa, UTRGV's senior vice president for Strategic Enrollment.

The preliminary enrollment numbers are higher than the pre-COVID numbers of 2019. "Last year was an anomaly," she said. "Last year, there was just a lot of interesting things happening."

Because of the circumstances that come with COVID-19, the university did not expect an upward trend in student population to continue.

UTRGV does, however,

have a goal in mind to keep enrollment up.

"We knew that things would stabilize this year," Hinojosa said of the 2021-2022 school year. "So, our goal was really to maintain our enrollment above pre-COVID, being Fall 2019."

So far, the university has maintained this standard.

"Compared to 2019, which is pre-COVID, we are up over 13%," Hinojosa said.

Everything, from admissions and registration to financial aid, plays a huge role in the university enrollment rate, as this all supports students through the registration and enrollment process.

"There's a lot that goes into the actual number," Hinojosa said. "It's truly the campus community, our UTRGV community, that ensures we maintain a certain level of enrollment."

Services, such as schedule creation, advising and

recruitment, play a role in maintaining the rates, but, given the circumstances, this fall looks different.

"It's not going to be like last year, and it's not going to be like Fall '19, either," Hinojosa said. "We will actually have students on campus. I drove in to work this morning, and you can just tell that traffic is different. You can tell that things are definitely not like they were last year."

In 2020, during the beginning of the pandemic and quarantine, students learned remotely. This year, however, students are making their return to traditional face-to-face learning.

"Although we will have lots of students back on campus, and we are extremely excited about that, it's not exactly going to be Fall '19," Hinojosa said.

There will still be plenty of courses still offered online and in hybrid formats.

"I also think you're going



Roxanna Miranda/The Rider

Business junior Marilyn Fernandez (left) and education junior Ruth Estreda cross the Lozano-Blanco Resaca bridge last Wednesday on the Brownsville campus. UTRGV has reported an overall number of 32,419 students enrolled for Fall 2021 as of Aug. 17.

to continue to see folks wear masks, and that's important. I think we're trying to get back to some semblance of normalcy, but we're not quite there yet," she said.

Safety on campus is still important for students, faculty and staff, Hinojosa said. So masks are encouraged, and disinfectant wipes will still be

provided across campus.

"Your education is the one thing nobody can ever take away from you," she said. "We saw it last year and we will continue to see it this year: the resiliency of our students, and the determination of our students to come back to school and continue their education."

LIFTOFF

Continued from Page 1

the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II & III, which is meant to prevent, prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This federal funding is referred to as "more lenient" in comparison to the rules for eligibility under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, according to Castilla.

She said funding will be prioritized to students with exceptional needs. The university classifies students with exceptional need as those who have an expected family contribution of zero, which is determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

These students will receive \$850 grants while students with an estimated family contribution of \$1 or greater will receive \$750.

Students will be notified via their UTRGV email when they are eligible to receive the grant and will be given the option to authorize whether the grant funds go to their outstanding student account balance, directly to their bank accounts or by mailed check.

All institution mailed checks must be cashed within 30 days and will not be rewritten after their expiration date.

This is the second Fall Liftoff that the university has offered during the pandemic in an effort to keep students in school, said Patrick Gonzales, associate vice president for University Marketing and Communications.

The grant is also the second part of the 2021 Fall Liftoff program. Part one of the program was distributed to students on Aug. 18 where full-time students received up to \$1,000 to cover tuition and fees.

"We are excited again to be able to provide this financial assistance, because we know that our students are still struggling because of the pandemic and we want to do anything we can to help eliminate any financial obstacles so they can stay in school and continue toward their progress of graduating," Gonzales said.

Graduating seniors also qualified for the first part of the Fall Liftoff incentive, even if they were below full-time status. All they had to do was apply for Fall 2021 graduation. This was done to ensure seniors did not take more classes than necessary for the sake of receiving the money.

Not taking more classes than necessary seemed to be a common theme among the university's message for its Fall Liftoff program and its "Stay

on Track" requirements.

Stay on Track is a federal requirement that affects the distribution of financial aid. The requirement has been around for years, according to Jael Perez, associate director of Financial Aid Operations. However, it is being enforced now because UTRGV's technology has finally caught up.

This technology refers to the UTRGV student system working in conjunction with Degree Works, which is what is used to determine what classes a student needs to take.

Starting this semester, financial aid awarded will only be for courses that are applicable to students' declared degree plans.

This means that students should only be taking classes that they need to graduate and, if they are taking any additional courses in hopes of completing a minor in some other field, then it must officially be declared on Degree Works in order to be eligible for aid.

Perez encourages students to regularly check their Degree Works on ASSIST to ensure they are on the right track.

"I think the Stay on Track requirement is going to be beneficial to our students because we want to ensure that our

students are taking the right courses that apply to their academic programs and, more importantly, ensuring that they're not taking anything extra that they don't have to take," Gonzales said.

Despite the new collaboration between student systems and Degree Works making the course selecting process fairly independent, Perez said the expertise and guidance of academic advisers is still necessary in some cases depending on a student's major.

For example, things can become confusing, according to Perez, when it comes to other financial aid offer requirements, such as the UTRGV Tuition Advantage Grant, which deems all classes free after 12 credit hours.

Students received an email this summer making them aware of the new requirements and whether the courses they were enrolled for align with their degree plan.

Emails like these will be sent out regularly to alert students and ensure they are aware of the classes they are taking and how it will affect their financial aid awards.

Students in need of additional assistance can send their questions to stayontrack@utrgv.edu, which is being monitored by Financial Aid, Academic Advising and the Registrar's Offices.

YAQUERO VOICE

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

On Aug. 16, The Rider conducted a poll on social media asking students, "Do you think school districts should implement a mask mandate in their schools?" The results are shown below.

facebook

YES, IT'S SAFER 107

twitter

10 **YES, IT'S SAFER**

Instagram

YES, IT'S SAFER 52

NO, PARENTS SHOULD DECIDE 7

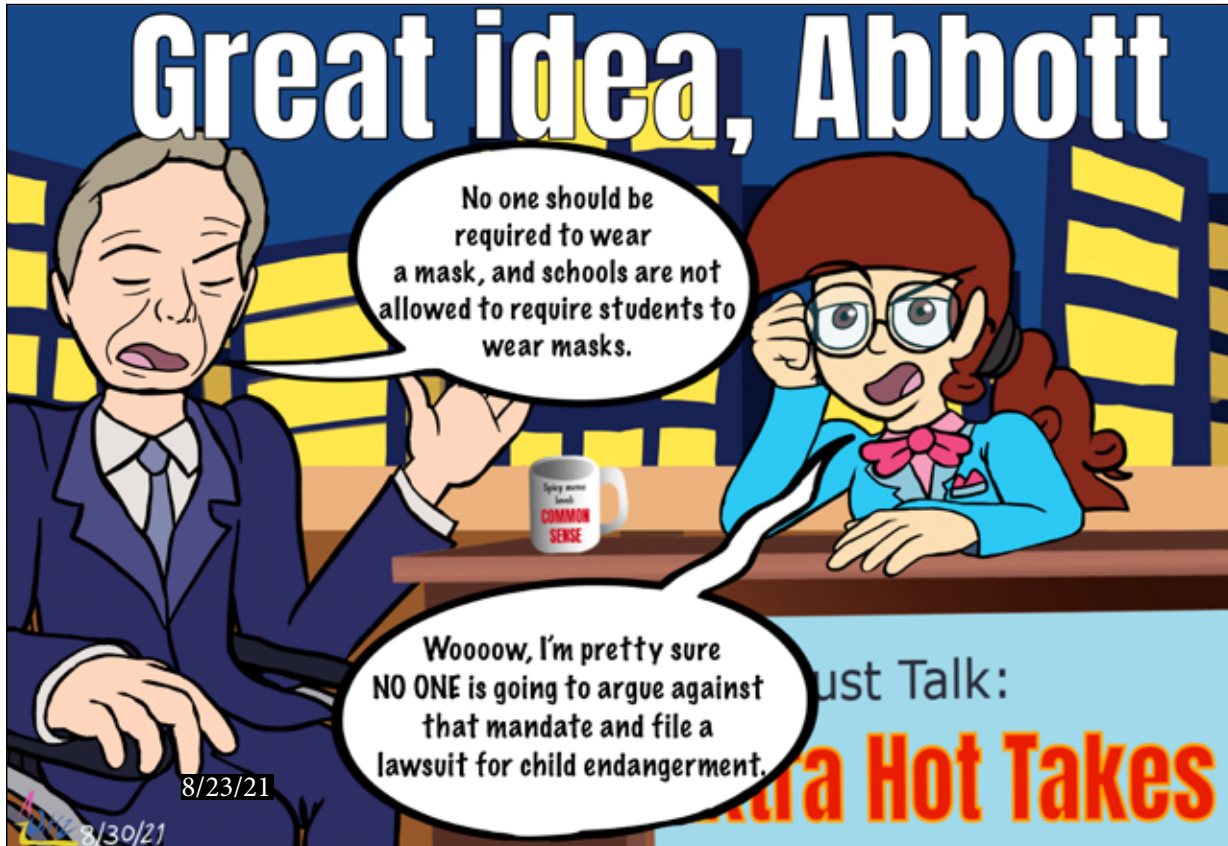
THIS DOES NOT AFFECT ME 2

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Déjà Vu

Living through the second wave



Alejandra Yañez
the rider
As we embark on the Fall 2021 semester, I cannot help but feel like I've seen this the pandemic

episode of "When the pandemic strikes" before. With cases surging and Gov. Greg Abbott's incompetency on the mask front, the climate seems awfully familiar. Around this time last year, the Rio Grande Valley was reporting about 150 to 200 cases per day. One year later, we can see that this trend is back with a vengeance. As of last Thursday, Cameron County reported 47,461 cases, an increase of more than 5,000 since June 28. The county also reported 1,742 county residents died of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. Hidalgo County also reported an additional 520 cases as of last Thursday, with 116 of those cases being children between the ages of zero to 11, and 89 cases of kids between the ages of 12 to 19. The county also reported eight

additional deaths, raising its death toll to 3,023. This time around, we are no longer being dealt the same strain of COVID-19 that we battled last year. According to Cameron County Public Health Authority Dr. James Castillo, the delta variant accounts for over 90% of the county's COVID cases and, unlike previous strains, delta does not spare children. In case you missed that, I wrote that delta does not spare children,

"So, I ask that parents, teachers and anyone around children, please protect our most vulnerable before it is too late."

meaning that, within the next couple weeks, not only will we continue to see adults die from this virus but the number of babies who fall victim will also begin to increase drastically. A month ago, CNN reported that the number of children dying in Indonesia from COVID-19 has quadrupled in recent weeks, according to the country's pediatrics society.

In an interview broadcast Aug. 12 on the "PBS News Hour," Dr. Anthony Fauci told William Brangham of PBS, "We were dealing with a different virus then. Now you have a virus that does a big and better job of infecting anybody much more efficiently than the previous virus, including children. So, relatively speaking, you are seeing more children getting infected." "And just on numbers alone, when more children will get infected, a proportion of them, a small proportion, albeit, are going to wind up with serious disease, getting hospitalized," Fauci said. "And that's one of the reasons why, maybe the overwhelming reason, why you're seeing children, in this particular context of delta, being in the hospital." Time and time again, press conference after press conference, I have listened as health authorities plead to parents and the public to protect our most vulnerable. Our most vulnerable being the babies in our communities, the toddlers and all those who are not old enough to be vaccinated. They have no line of defense against this variant and, now

See COLUMN, Page 10

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.

Regreso al campus en medio de COVID

Verilu Infante
EDITORA-EN-JEFE

Los estudiantes, profesores y personal de UTRGV están regresando al campus para el semestre de otoño de 2021 sin reglas sobre el distanciamiento social o un mandato de cubrebocas, pero con el estímulo de la responsabilidad personal.

“Cuando la escuela comience el 23 de agosto, ya no impondremos límites de capacidad o distanciamiento social”, dijo Patrick Gonzales, vicepresidente asociado de Mercadeo y Comunicaciones de UTRGV. “Basándonos en la orientación médica, pedimos a los estudiantes que para hacer eso de manera segura, sigan usando cubrebocas y se vacunen”.

En UTRGV, la división actual de las ofertas de cursos es que el 60% serán tradicionales cara a cara o híbridas, que es una combinación de cara a cara y en línea. El 40% restante estará completamente en línea.

En un correo electrónico enviado el 13 de agosto por Janna Arney, vicepresidenta de UTRGV y rectora interina, debido al aumento de casos de la variante delta y con base en la orientación médica, la universidad está fomentando la flexibilidad en sus cursos tradicionales e híbridos para el semestre de otoño del 2021.

Según el correo electrónico, los profesores pueden optar por utilizar una combinación de cursos presenciales y en línea si su curso figura actualmente en la modalidad presencial tradicional.



Verilu Infante/FOTO Rider

Marco Puente, un técnico de Comunicaciones de TelePro, pasa cables y prepara el aula 1.205 de Edificación Académica Interdisciplinaria en el campus de Brownsville para que se convierta en una “Sala de Zoom” para el semestre de otoño. Se espera que esta actualización se realice en 41 salones de clase en el campus de Brownsville y 48 en el campus de Edinburg.

“Si opta por ofrecer sus clases en una modalidad híbrida, puede ofrecer hasta el 84% de las reuniones de clase en línea, y el 16% restante se ofrece en formato presencial”, dijo Arney en el correo electrónico. “Esto le brinda la flexibilidad de determinar cuándo será necesario que los estudiantes estén en el campus en función de los requisitos y necesidades de cada curso”.

La universidad ha pasado los últimos ocho meses preparándose para regresar al campus recopilando información sobre el estado de vacunación de la comunidad a través del Portal de Vacunas de UTRGV, que incluyó temporalmente un incentivo

de \$100 para quienes completaron su perfil.

“No se habla de un incentivo en este momento, pero constantemente nos recordamos a las personas de las que no hemos tenido noticias que llenen el portal”, dijo Gonzales. “Creo que en este momento, estamos en un punto en el que probablemente hayamos llegado a todos los que pudimos con el incentivo y, por lo tanto, ahora solo vamos a seguir recordándole a la gente. Pero continuaremos monitoreándolo y si no vemos que los números aumenten, tal vez hagamos otro incentivo también”.

Dijo que el portal es solo para datos generales y no para identificar profesores,

personal o estudiantes específicos por estado de vacunación.

“No estamos usando esto para identificar empleados o estudiantes individuales que han sido vacunados y no vacunados”, dijo Gonzales. “La oficina del gobernador ha dejado en claro que no podemos usar el estado de vacunación como una forma de negar o permitir que la gente haga cosas”.

Dijo que la facultad y el personal pueden trabajar en el campus independientemente del estado de vacunación. Sin embargo, con respecto a la Orden Ejecutiva 38 del gobernador Greg Abbott, firmada el 29 de julio, la facultad no puede preguntar

el estado de vacunación de los estudiantes. Actualmente se desconoce si un estudiante puede preguntarle a su profesor si ha sido vacunado.

“Esa pregunta se ha hecho mucho”, el dijo. “A la inversa, ¿pueden preguntar los estudiantes? ¿Pueden preguntar los profesores? Y estamos buscando más orientación sobre eso de algunos de nuestros socios estatales--[Sistema de la Universidad de Texas], la oficina del gobernador-- porque todavía no tenemos claro eso”.

Cuando se le preguntó si los estudiantes pueden cambiar de clase si se sienten incómodos con un profesor no vacunado, Gonzales respondió que si la clase está disponible, la universidad hará ese tipo de adaptaciones.

“Tenemos una oficina completa que se dedica a las discapacidades y hace adaptaciones para los estudiantes que se sienten incómodos por una razón u otra”, el dijo. “Pero aquí hay otra cosa que me gustaría compartir: a pesar del estado de vacunación de un profesor o un estudiante, lo que les estamos haciendo saber a las personas que regresan al campus es que hay formas de protegerse al estar expuestos con otras personas y es usando cubrebocas y vacunándose”.

Si los estudiantes, profesores o miembros del personal sospechan que han contraído el COVID-19 o que pueden haber estado expuestos al virus, Gonzales dijo que hay normas específicas que cada

Ve **REGRESO**, Página 10

SUEÑOS EN ESPERA

Brigitte Ortiz
the rider

El 16 de julio, el juez Andrew Scott Hanen del Tribunal de Distrito de los Estados Unidos para el Distrito Sur de Texas dictaminó que la política de Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia (DACA, por sus siglas en inglés) es ilegal. El fallo ordenó a la administración de Biden que dejara de otorgar nuevas solicitudes.

La orden ejecutiva del entonces presidente Barack Obama entró en vigencia en junio de 2012 para ciertas personas que llegaron a los Estados Unidos cuando eran niños para solicitar la consideración de acciones diferidas por un período de dos años, sujeto a renovación.

Según el sitio web de los Servicios de Ciudadanía e Inmigración de los Estados Unidos, la acción diferida es un uso de la discreción del fiscal para diferir la acción de expulsión contra una persona durante un cierto período de tiempo. La acción diferida no proporciona un estatus legal.

Xochitl Hinojosa, una proveedora de servicios sociales en la oficina de La Unión Del Pueblo Entero (LUPE) en San Juan, dijo que las nuevas solicitudes de DACA ya no serán adjudicadas, pero que las renovaciones continuarán.

LUPE es una organización sin fines de lucro de servicio social que se basa en valores de autoayuda y servicios para poder organizarse pacíficamente y retribuir a la comunidad.

“Si ha tenido DACA antes, en el pasado o ha sido beneficiario de DACA en el pasado, puede continuar renovando”, dijo Hinojosa. “Es solo que esas nuevas solicitudes que están llegando no serán otorgadas, pero

serán aceptadas por inmigración. Simplemente no se les dará una decisión sobre ellos”.

Dijo que hay una tarifa junto con la solicitud, pero no ha habido una respuesta de la administración con respecto a lo que sucederá con los fondos.

“Lo único seguro que tenemos es que se siguen esperando las aplicaciones”, dijo Hinojosa. “Si es una solicitud por primera vez a la que nunca se le ha otorgado DACA, serán aceptadas. Los fondos se recibirán, pero esa aplicación permanece congelada. En este momento, no han indicado si recibirán reembolsos o si eso se transferirá a un nuevo proceso”.

La comunidad de DACA se ha ocupado de problemas similares en el pasado. En el 2015, el mismo juez consideró ilegal el programa ampliado de DACA, según Hinojosa.

“Este programa ha estado bajo ataque desde, básicamente, cuando comenzó”, dijo. “Se ha utilizado como pieza política en las agendas de muchos legisladores. Ya sea para conservarlo, o para eliminarlo. Y la razón principal por la que continúan usándolo como un juego de poder político se debe al hecho de que el juez Hanen ha argumentado que esta reacción no fue creada por un movimiento bipartidista del Congreso. Fue más una administración unilateral, en este caso la administración Obama. Crean que fue un abuso de poder, que es una de las razones por las que realmente estamos presionando al Congreso para que investigue el tema y cree algo que sea bipartidista tanto para los partidos republicano como para los demócratas para que podamos dejar de jugar con la vida de las personas y seguir avanzando con algún tipo de protección que no



Roxanna Miranda/The Rider Gráfica

es solo algo que se puede quitar en cualquier momento”.

Comparando situaciones anteriores, dijo que en 2017, cuando el programa se terminó por primera vez bajo la administración de Trump, solo las renovaciones continuaron hasta cierto período de tiempo.

“Esta vez, debido a que el programa ha sido declarado completamente ilegal, nos hace preguntarnos qué dirección tomará la administración, o incluso la propia corte”, dijo Hinojosa. “En el pasado, fue más un proceso de terminación para el programa de acción diferida. Así que eso deja a mucha gente en la incertidumbre. ¿Continuará el programa? ¿Lo detendrán por completo? En este momento, tenemos renovaciones, pero en el futuro, ¿Cambiarán completamente de opinión y luego quitarán completamente el programa? Entonces, creo que ahí es donde estamos”.

Cuando se le preguntó cuál era su reacción al reciente fallo, respondió que como proveedora de servicios sociales para muchos clientes que necesitan este permiso, fue desgarrador.

“Los he visto comenzar desde el principio y ya sabes, prosperar hasta convertirse en ciudadanos modelo donde, ya sabes, pagan impuestos, contribuyen a sus comunidades, devuelven y pueden escuchar que el programa ahora ha sido parcialmente terminado, me rompió el corazón, especialmente para aquellos que tenían la esperanza de poder comenzar su camino en la creación de carreras”, dijo Hinojosa.

En el otoño de 2020, la cantidad de estudiantes que podrían haber sido considerados Dreamers fue de poco más de 1,000, escribió Rebecca Gadson, vicepresidenta asociada de Vida Estudiantil de UTRGV y decana de estudiantes, en un correo electrónico

Ve **SUEÑOS**, Página 10

RETURN

Continued from Page 1



In an email sent to the UTRGV community Aug. 13, Janna Arney, UTRGV deputy president and interim provost, wrote that the university encourages flexibility in its traditional and hybrid courses for the Fall 2021 semester.

"Like you we have been anticipating the Fall 2021 Semester for many months," Arney wrote in the email. "However, the rise of the delta variant statewide and in our region is a reminder that this pandemic is not over. And while the resurgence of COVID-19 seemingly threatens our progress, please know that we continue to monitor the situation daily and that we've been preparing for this."

The email also states that professors may choose to use a mix of online and face-to-face classes if their course is currently listed in the traditional face-to-face modality.

"If you choose to offer your classes in a hybrid modality, you can offer up to 84% of the class meetings online, with the remaining 16% offered in face-to-face format," she wrote. "This provides you the flexibility to determine when it will be necessary for students to be on campus based on individual course requirements and needs."

The university has spent the last eight months preparing for a return to campus by collecting information about the community's vaccination status through the UTRGV Vaccine Portal, which temporarily included a \$100 incentive for those who completed a profile.

"There's no talks of an incentive right now but we are constantly reminding those people who we haven't heard from to fill out the portal," Gonzales said. "I think right now, we are at a point that we've probably reached everybody we could with the incentive and so, now,

we're just going to continue reminding people. But we'll continue to monitor it and if we don't see the numbers going up, maybe we'll do another incentive as well."

He said the portal is only for overall data and not to identify specific faculty, staff or students by vaccination status.

"We are not using this to identify individual employees or students that have been vaccinated and unvaccinated," Gonzales said. "The governor's office have made it clear that we cannot use vaccination status as a way to deny or allow people to do things."

He said faculty and staff are allowed to work on campus regardless of vaccination status. However, in regard to Gov. Greg Abbott's Executive Order 38, signed July 29, faculty cannot ask students' vaccination status. It is currently unknown if a student can ask their professor whether they have been vaccinated.

"That question has been asked, a lot," he said. "Vice versa, can students ask, can faculty ask, and we are looking for more guidance on that from some of our state partners--[University of Texas System], the governor's office--because we are still unclear with that."

Asked if students are allowed to change classes if they are uncomfortable around an unvaccinated professor, Gonzales replied that if the class is available, the university will make those types of accommodations.

"We have a whole office that's dedicated to disabilities and making accommodations for students who are uncomfortable for one reason or another," he said. "But, here's another thing that I'd like to share: Despite the vaccination status of a professor, or a student, what we're letting individuals know who come back to campus is that there are ways that you yourself can protect yourself from exposure by wearing a mask and by getting vaccinated."

If students, faculty or staff members suspect they have contracted COVID-19 or may have been exposed to the virus, Gonzales said there are specific guidelines each individual must follow, and a plan of action will be decided by the university's COVID Response Team.

"So, since there are so many scenarios, what we want students and faculty to do if you think you have COVID, if you have symptoms, if you've been exposed to someone who is positive, is to fill out the preliminary COVID-19 screening form, which will be sent to our COVID Response Team and they will walk you through your specific scenario," he said.

Asked what happens if a professor conducting in-person classes tests positive for COVID-19, Gonzales reiterated that a plan of action will be decided by the COVID Response Team based on that professor's specific situation.

"Just like we've had the past year, we will have sanitation stations, we'll have wipes in all the high-traffic areas in the buildings," he said. "We have made changes to our HVAC systems, the air-conditioning units where needed, and we'll just continue to message the importance of wearing a

mask, the importance of getting everyone to take part in all the daily screening questions before you even come to campus."

Gonzales also said that the university is monitoring COVID cases closely with and gaining medical guidance from local, state, and federal medical officials.

"The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] has come out with updated guidance that said even vaccinated people should wear their mask inside a building or indoors and we are strongly encouraging that as well," he said. "We did a great job doing it last year or in the past year when it was mandated from the state and it helped keep us healthy and it helped mitigate our COVID positives, so let's do it again."

"Let's do it again, especially during this time when the delta variant is surging, and cases are going up. We strongly encourage, we can't require, but we strongly encourage everyone to continue wearing masks. Not only to keep you safe but to keep others around you safe."

Dr. Michael Dobbs, UT Health RGV chief medical officer, said that although the medical scientific community is not sure whether the delta variant causes more severe disease, they know it's more contagious and being vaccinated is a "wonderful" defense against COVID-19.

"A very nice thing is that the vaccine protects you from severe disease including with Delta, and so if you get the disease with the delta variant and you've been vaccinated, it's unlikely that you would need hospitalization or die from COVID," Dobbs said. "It's more likely that you would have a minor illness."

According to the chief medical officer, the virus is not likely to mutate into something so completely foreign that the vaccine will not have an effect on it and, with the substantial advancements in vaccine science over the last couple of years, he believes the medical science community is better prepared to create boosters that can possibly be more specific to COVID-19 variants, such as the delta variant.

Dobbs advises students returning to campus in the fall to get vaccinated.

"I would urge people to take personal responsibility and encourage them to wear a mask in social settings, that includes the classroom, that provides some additional protection," he said. "Certainly, don't panic. Use common sense and I think people will do really well with that approach."

Dobbs also said that, although there are obviously things about the future scientists can only predict, the university always has to prepare if things get worse to rethink strategies.

"We're always ready to rethink critically," he said, referring to UTRGV. "Which is what a university does, right? Teach critical thinking."

Paulina Arteaga, a biomedical sciences major beginning her junior year this fall at UTRGV, said most of her classes are in-person or hybrid and she is excited to return to campus.

"I feel very excited because, in the pandemic, we didn't really have hands-on experience and, in my career, it's really important," Arteaga said. "So, learning from a computer is not really the same as here on campus, so I'm kind of excited to come back."

She said she is not as concerned about the vaccination status of her professors as she is about that of her peers.

"You are not as close to the professors as you are to your classmates, so I feel like it's a bit more comforting to me but, just in case, I would wear my face mask myself," Arteaga said. "Not because it's a mandate or anything but just to make me feel safe."

Back in business

Natalie Lapsley

the Rider

The Student Union is making a nearly full return this fall with several safety precautions in place.

"All of the food venues are coming back in the fall," Student Union Director Edna Zambrano said. "Probably the only exception is going to be The Grill in Edinburg."

It is not yet known if The Grill in Edinburg will have a replacement.

"It may likely remain closed the entire academic year," Zambrano said.

The rest of the concessions, including Pizza Hut, Starbucks and convenience stores, will be returning on both campuses.

Hours of operation are yet to be finalized, so the current expected schedule is tentative. The Edinburg Student Union will be open six days a week.

"Right now, the plan for us is to be open every day except Saturdays," Zambrano said. "Unless there's actually an event, nobody comes to the building on Saturdays."

The Union in Edinburg will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday. On Fridays, it will close at 5 p.m.

On the Brownsville campus, Sodexo plans to open The Grill inside the Student Union's El Comedor. Food services will run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but the area will remain open until 6 p.m.

La Sala, also in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus, will also be open from 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Seating on both campuses will also look different this fall. Until recently, most of the furniture was removed.

"Our plan for the fall is to return as much seating as we can," Zambrano said. "But still leave some distance."

Furniture will be returned but situated to allow for smaller groups and single diners.

However, groups of students will be able to push together tables as needed to hang out in the space.

"The other thing we're going to continue is our increased cleaning and our wiping down between customers," Zambrano said.

Disinfectant wipes and sanitizing stations will be available for visitors to use.

Students can expect both game rooms to make a full return.

"We want to bring them back this fall

and open them Monday through Friday," Zambrano said. "And the plan is also to have 'free play.' We'll no longer be charging for students to play."

The game rooms on both campuses will also be open longer.

"We are actually expanding them," Zambrano said about the game room hours of operation. "We are going to do 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday."

The department is hoping that by introducing "free play," expanding hours and increasing game selection, more students will take advantage of the rooms.

Safety in the game rooms is going to involve cleaning between visitors. Cleaning supplies for personal use will be provided to give visitors an extra sense of security.

Though the game rooms will be closed on the weekends, they will take turns opening on Sundays at least once a month with free activities for students. Times for these events will be scheduled as dates approach.

"We know that some students come to campus to study, but if you're done early ... and you're still with your group, maybe you can come over and enjoy an activity in the game room," Zambrano said.

SGA sets initiatives

Daisy Araujo

the Rider



Yahia Al-Qudah

Fall 2021

semester

with new initiatives, including

open educational resources

for students.

Preparations for the new

projects began this summer

after the SGA began its term

on May 3.

They have met with multiple

administrators, college deans

and departments.

"SGA has passed many

initiatives in the past,

and we want to continue

this effort this legislative

term," said SGA Brownsville

Vice President Yahia Al-

Qudah.

One of the first initiatives

SGA has in progress is the

Open Educational Resources,

an online platform that allows

students to obtain textbooks

at little to no cost.

The SGA is collaborating

with the UTRGV Library, which has its own open education resource initiative, Al-Qudah said.

He said the senate is trying to expand this resource to allow students to reduce their expenses.

They have been meeting with different faculty throughout the summer to persuade them to use the program in their courses.

"Since [UTRGV] serves majority low-income students, we understand that open educational resources are something that are very needed in our community," Al-Qudah said.

This program is something SGA hopes to develop through the UTRGV administration at both campuses, but is also respecting faculty members' decisions.

The SGA also has started the Collegiate Advancement Student Advisory Councils project, which would create a council within each college.

These councils would include one SGA student representative and the president of each organization under that specific college.

Each council will be made up of 30 to 50 members who will discuss any issues happening within the college

or organization.

The purpose behind the CASAC program is for the SGA to have better communication with the student body and help with any problems.

Lastly, the senate will organize a Constitutional Convention to revise bylaws, and students will vote on the proposed changes around October, Al-Qudah said.

If the amendments are approved by two-thirds of those who voted, the revised constitution will take effect in the 2022-2023 academic year, he said.

"There is a few rules that were initially made that haven't made the easiest path for SGA members to conduct their work to the best of their abilities, whether it's eligibility or specific roles and responsibilities," Al-Qudah said.

The vice president said the senate has many positions open for the 2021-2022 term. Interested students can find applications on the SGA page, <https://utrgv.campuslabs.com/engage/submitter/form/start/482628>. Students may apply through their V-link, and will be required to answer a few questions and to submit a resume.

Who is President Bailey?

Kaitlyn Polvado
the Rider

UTRGV President Guy Bailey has had a multitude of opportunities to thrive throughout his career and has taken them in stride.

Born in Montgomery, Alabama, Bailey attended college at the University of Alabama and earned a bachelor's and master's in English. He went on to earn his doctorate in English linguistics from the University of Tennessee. He later completed postdoctoral studies at Emory University and Stanford University.

"I learned to read before I went to school," Bailey said. "Every afternoon,

inaugural president of UTRGV.

Asked what he wanted to do when he was growing up, he said he had no idea he would be where he is now.

"I never expected to be in a position like this," Bailey said. "There were no formal expectations of me and what I would be. ... [Before becoming president], my only focus was being the best department chair I could be. I never thought about doing anything beyond that.

"As well, there was no formal preparation to be a university president. It was mostly just take one step at a time. If a door ever opened, I just walked through it and learned



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

UTRGV President Guy Bailey serves students hamburgers during Picnic with the President in Fall 2019.

we'd listen to baseball broadcasts and the next day, in the papers, my mother would show me the box scores and people's names. That's kind of how I learned to read."

He began his career as provost of the University of Texas at San Antonio, and made his move in 2006 to the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he then became chancellor of the school.

Following that, he made his mark at Texas Tech University when he landed the job as president in 2008.

Soon after, he became the president of his alma mater at the University of Alabama in 2012. He eventually stepped down from this position in order to focus on personal matters a few months later.

After a couple of years, Bailey received an offer to become the president of the newly created University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He became one of the finalists, and soon after, the news was released that Bailey would serve as the

what I needed to do."

Since joining UTRGV as president, Bailey said that he sees a bright future for the university.

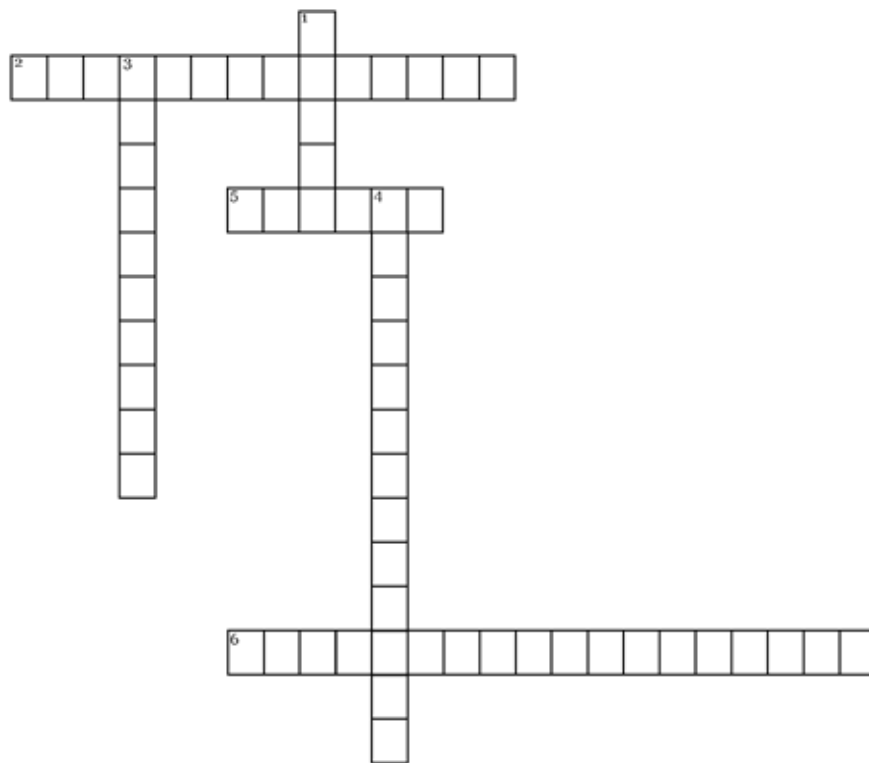
"Some of the best things that are going to be happening in the American higher education system will be happening right here," he said. "We have a new podiatry school opening up, we're going to have physical therapy opening up in a few years, and we also have new Ph.D. programs opening up."

When Bailey is not focusing his attention on the university, he enjoys the Netflix original biopic "Selena."

"It was someone whose music I really loved, and it was an area of the country I really love and appreciate, so I really enjoyed it," he said.

Asked about his favorite music and concerts he has been to, Bailey said, "I actually saw [Selena] live. Maybe it was in '89, but she was not a big star yet. If you lived in Texas and you loved Tejano music, you knew who she was. It was terrific."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

- Where can you view the online version of the paper?
- What day does The Rider usually distribute the papers?
- Where can you contact The Rider if you have a story idea?

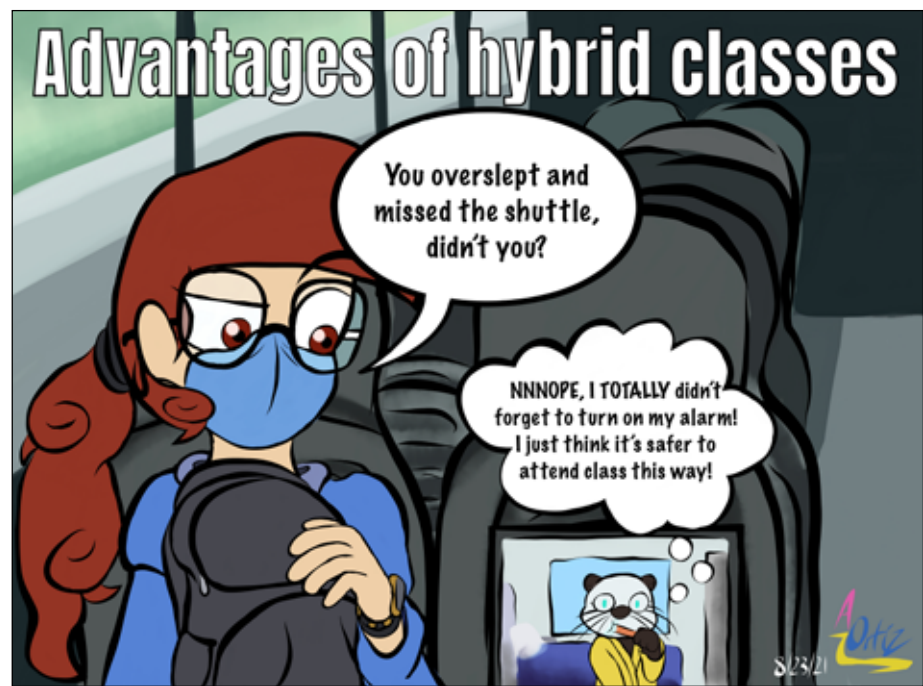
Down

- What volume of The Rider are you currently reading?
- What is the name of the person who was written about in the A&E section of the paper?
- What is the column in the newspaper dedicated to hearing the opinions of UTRGV students?

By Kaitlyn Polvado

Across: 2. utrgvrider.com 5. Monday 6. therider@utrgv.edu
Down: 1. seven 3. guy_bailey 4. vaquero_voice

Cartoon-ish Hijinks by Ariael Ortiz



Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

By Alejandra Yañez

Aries-Unlock your inner child this week, Aries, and remember to make time for play. The start of a new semester may mean the return of long readings and deadlines, but also new beginnings.

Taurus-You are always looking for ways to reinvent yourself to reach your best version. Channel that energy into being present and take this semester one step at a time. It might pass you by.

Gemini-Instead of dreading the end of summer vacation, use your energetic nature to get excited about accomplishing your goals. It is not in your nature to be intellectually idle for too long, so use the start of new classes to nourish yourself with the opportunity for knowledge.

Cancer-Take this fresh start to make your values clear. Be firm in your beliefs and use this new school semester to surround yourself with people who maintain your standards and respectfully challenge you.

Leo-As you reenter the social realm of school be sure to be intentional in your friendly and charismatic behavior. Your roaring lion nature can be intimidating to some, but you will have no trouble making friends.

Virgo-Your desire to be recognized can be exhausting. Do not worry so much about what others think of you this week, Virgo. Trust that you are doing the best you can and remember you are in comparison to no one.

Libra-Prepare to enter a stage of great growth this semester. While no one has much control right now, focus on what you can. Stay creative this week and find time to organize yourself before classes begin to really take off.

Scorpio-Although your passionate nature is ready to take on the semester, be sure to not bite off more than you can chew. Recognize your goals and be realistic in how you will attain them.

Sagittarius-Undoubtedly this year has been full of challenges, but you, Sagittarius, have taken this past year to dig deeper to realize what sets you apart. Use your unique personal findings to help be a pillar in your network this semester.

Capricorn-The start of new things is often scary for you. Instead of giving in to the fears of ensuring you fit in, take this week to spoil yourself. Get some new school supplies or even some new clothes. You deserve it.

Aquarius-Use this week as an opportunity to do some soul searching. Find what it is you truly want to get out of this semester. You tend to be very critical of yourself, but self-criticism without solutions is counterproductive, so take time to properly prepare yourself. You know what works for you.

Pisces-Your generous nature is one of your most beautiful traits, but not when it comes at your own expense. Use this fresh start as an excuse to put yourself first for a change. Find your favorite self-care practices and begin to implement them in your routine. Invest in your happiness.

Fee transparency



Fatima Gamez Lopez/The Rider

The UTRGV Men's Soccer Team warms up during practice last Friday at the Soccer and Track & Field Complex in Edinburg. Students are paying \$15 per credit hour for an Intercollegiate Athletics Fee to support Athletics. Previously, the fee was part of the Student Services Fee.

Omar Zapata

sports reporter

Starting this fall, the Student Services Fee will be separated into two fees, one for student services and the other for intercollegiate athletics.

Historically, the Student Services Fee was set at \$20.83 per credit hour. Now, under the two separate fees, the Student Services Fee is \$5.83 per credit hour and the Intercollegiate Athletics Fee is \$15 per credit hour. The restructuring of the fee is revenue neutral, meaning there is no increase in the overall charge to students.

In an email sent June 24 to students, the Dean of Students wrote, "The restructure will allow UTRGV to provide increased transparency with regard to the fees, funding that is focused on student programs and activities, [and] an opportunity for future growth of athletics."

Rebecca Gadson, associate vice president for Student Life and dean

of students, told The Rider that the fee separation makes it transparent to students how their student services fee money is being utilized to support different student life initiatives.

"So, this opportunity of kind of separating, it makes it really clear that that portion is being used to support intercollegiate athletics, and then, there's another portion of that funding that's being used to support other types of student services," Gadson said.

She said some of the things funded by the Student Services Fee are the Distinguished Speaker Series, the spirit program and a variety of music and theater groups.

Chasse Conque, vice president and director of Athletics, told the Rider he believes the separation of the fee allows Athletics to grow proportionally with the university.

"As students continue to choose UTRGV, we see our enrollment grow," Conque said. "Athletics now has an opportunity to grow proportionally with the student

body and, for us, that's exciting because we're at an institution that is experiencing unprecedented growth."

He said the university has 275 student athletes across 16 Division 1 sports and that the money spent in Athletics directly impacts students and student athletes.

"So, all of the resources that we're fortunate to receive from the athletics fee directly goes back to our student experience, but then there's a ripple effect beyond that," Conque said. "It's creating top-notch-Division 1 fun game-day atmosphere and being inclusive of our student body and making sure that we truly are a point of pride for all of our students."

Another reason for the separation of the fee is to allow the possibility for the Student Services Fee to increase.

"There's a maximum amount for students to pay towards student services fees, and this separation allows opportunity, should the student body in the future want to expand student services and the kinds of opportunities that could be provided at the institution," Gadson said.

She said the procedure to get the fee increased in the future would be determined if the student body desired an increase. Then, the student body would vote on the increase.

Jose Pablo Rojas, president of the Student Government Association, told The Rider he believes it is beneficial to students because now they can see where the money in the Student Services Fee and the Intercollegiate Athletics Fee will be going.

"I just think there's increased transparency because, like I said, in the past, it was pretty much grouped and we didn't know where exactly it was going to," Rojas said.

He said he hopes students are more active in student life and take advantage of the resources that they are paying for and have available to them.

Building trust



Shareese Hicks

Omar Zapata

sports reporter

Newly hired Track & Field and Cross-Country Head Coach Shareese Hicks said it is a dream come true to take charge of the programs.

"I'm extremely excited to be able to lead a program like this in the [Rio Grande Valley]," Hicks told The Rider. "It's something that, it sounds cliché to say, a dream come true, but it really is, so I'm very energetic and excited for what we're going to do."

Coach Hicks spent the previous two seasons at the University of Memphis as an assistant coach whose focus was sprints and hurdles. Before that, she spent five seasons as the Neosho County Community College track and field head coach.

Chasse Conque, vice president and director of Athletics, told The Rider that the program is excited to welcome Hicks.

"She's seen a lot, done a lot and has certainly experienced a lot, so she's a great fit for us," Conque said. "We're excited to welcome her. She's highly decorated, there's not many younger coaches that are already in their hall of fame at their alma mater."

Hicks was a standout student athlete at the University of North Carolina Charlotte from 2004 to 2007. She was a four-time All-American and has eight shared and individual Charlotte program records. In the fall of 2019, Hicks was honored in a jersey retirement recognition and then inducted into the Charlotte Athletics Hall of Fame as part of the inaugural class in 2020.

She also ran professionally from 2008 to 2015, competing primarily in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes. She was a 2021 U.S. Olympic trials finalist in the 400-meter dash.

Hicks said she wants the student athletes to know that she has their backs, wants to build that trust with them and get them to all buy into the program.

"Track and field has that misconception that it's an individual sport, but we really just all need to rely on each other," she said. "They're still building that close-knit kind of family and that's the first thing on the agenda."

Coach Hicks tweeted on Aug. 2, "Today I begin my new journey of leading the men's and women's track and field/cross country program at UTRGV. As a black woman in athletics, not only do I understand this monumental moment, but I'm extremely grateful for the shoulders I stand on."

Asked what being the head coach of the program means to her as a Black woman and other Black women or women of color, she replied, "It just shows that representation matters."

"I was able to look up to my [athletic director] at UNC Charlotte," Hicks said. "She was one of the first women to run a Division 1 athletic department, so because of her, I saw that that was possible. And then, later on in my career, I looked at other women of color, Caryl Smith Gilbert, Connie Price, that are taking over programs in the [Southeastern Conference] and things like that, and I see that and I'm like, 'OK, they kind of have provided that blueprint for that, so it's not lost on me that this is very big and very important.' So I take it very seriously and I'm very grateful and humbled at the opportunity."

Hicks said she wants the program to increase its community service and make sure it has a presence in the Valley.

UTRGV WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM EYES WAC CHAMPIONSHIP

Omar Zapata

sports reporter

With 24 players returning and three newcomers for the 2021 UTRGV Women's Soccer Team, Head Coach Glad Bugariu told The Rider the sky's the limit for this year's squad.

The team achieved a 10-7-2 record overall (7-6-1 conference) last season, the third time in program history to finish with at least 10 wins.

"To be fair, it was quite a big challenge," Bugariu said. "We had 17 new players, as well, so it was a freshman-heavy team. But, really, it came down to the players and their work and understanding what we want from them."

The Rider asked the coach how the experience of the returning players will help this year's squad.

"Sometimes one of the best recruits is continuity and having players return and having a large group of players return," Bugariu replied. "It's basically like having an extra player because they understand each other, they've played with each other, so it's a big advantage."

Among the newcomers are two transfer players: graduate midfielder Victoria Mayo, of Western Kentucky University, and junior midfielder Ana Recarte-Pacheco, of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. In Mayo's last season with Western Kentucky in 2019, she made 14 appearances. Recarte-Pacheco made four appearances for TAMUCC.

Bugariu said he expects them to contribute to the team right away. "They're quality players," he said. "We know them and we think they're going to make an impact."

Bugariu said this year's team is "very balanced" and believes they have at least two players in each position that could possibly start.

"It's going to be an exciting preseason," he said.

Of last year's 10 wins, eight were away from home, the most in program history.



Fatima Gamez Lopez/The Rider

The UTRGV Women's Soccer Team practices Aug. 3 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex. The team plays its first home match at 7 p.m. Friday against Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

The two impressive stats, however, came with a blemish, a 2-4-2 home record that Bugariu wants to improve.

"We're very proud of that away record, but we want to make sure we win our home games," he said. "That's really something we've done very well here in the past, and last season was a little disappointing because we didn't win as many home games as we would have liked. That's our main priority, to win our home games, make sure we win in front of our fans and continue to make sure this place is a fortress."

Last season, the defense allowed 19 goals, the second-fewest in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) and also recorded seven shutouts.

"We're never guaranteed to score a goal, so we want to make sure we don't concede one," Bugariu said. "We spend a lot of time in our defensive organization and what happens in the moments when we lose the ball, so we hope to continue that trend in the future as well."

Maile Lunardi, redshirt junior goalkeeper who made 17 starts last season and 81 saves, told The Rider it feels great to be back for her fifth season with UTRGV.

"I'm happy to be back [but] I'm sad it's my last season, but very excited to get started," Lunardi said.

Asked how it felt to have this defensive stat last season, she replied,

"It was awesome."

"My defense works extra hard and we work as a unit," Lunardi said. "And it's something I'm really proud of to see, and we will continue to do it this season, too."

She said more communication across the backline is how her team is looking to maintain its strong defensive presence.

"We all play for each other," Lunardi said. "Everyone has each other's back, so I think that works really well."

This summer and preseason, she has been working on more communication.

"Being louder, being vocal ... being more confident so my defense feels more confident in themselves," Lunardi said.

Asked about her expectations for the upcoming season, she instantly replied, "WAC Championship. I want to get a WAC ring, so I have high expectations for us, and I think we can do it."

On the offensive side of the *fútbol*, last season's leading scorer and assist leader, Emily Zapata, a junior forward, is back for her fourth season with UTRGV.

Zapata led the team with six goals and four assists in 18 appearances last season.

"We're working on getting the team together with the new players," she said. "It's always a new thing every time we come

INVITED

Continued from Page 3

The Campus Activities Board is also hosting a drive-in movie Tuesday from 8:30 to 11 p.m. in parking lot E-32 and will be showing "Grease." The event will take place Friday at the same time in Brownsville in parking lot B-3 and will be showing the same film.

COLUMN

Continued from Page 4

more than ever, we need to protect them.

Gone are the days when mothers took their babies to the grocery stores without a mask, but wore one themselves. I have seen this in many instances at local grocery stores and cannot help but become infuriated at the negligence each time.

This variant will not be as forgiving as the last. So, I ask that parents, teachers and anyone around children, please protect our most vulnerable before it is too late.

With this said, I call on all school districts in Texas to demonstrate the unwavering dedication to children that La Joya, Edinburg, Hidalgo, Brownsville, Crowley, Edcouch-Elsa, Lasara and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo school districts demonstrated on Aug. 13 when they filed a temporary restraining order against Abbott,

REGRESO

Continuación de Página 5

individuo debe seguir, y el Equipo de Respuesta al COVID de la universidad decidirá un plan de acción.

"Entonces, dado que hay tantos escenarios, lo que queremos que hagan los estudiantes y el profesorado si cree que tiene COVID, si tiene síntomas, si ha estado expuesto a alguien que es positivo, es llenar el formulario preliminar de detección de COVID-19, que se enviará a nuestro Equipo de Respuesta de COVID y ellos lo guiarán a través de su escenario específico", el dijo.

Cuando se le preguntó qué sucede si un profesor que imparte clases presenciales da positivo en COVID-19, Gonzales reiteró que el Equipo de Respuesta de COVID decidirá un plan de acción en función de la situación específica de ese profesor.

"Al igual que el año pasado, tendremos estaciones de saneamiento, tendremos toallitas en todas las áreas de alto tráfico de los edificios", dijo. "Hemos realizado cambios en nuestros sistemas HVAC, las unidades de aire acondicionado donde sea necesario, y seguiremos transmitiendo la importancia de usar un cubrebocas, la importancia de hacer que todos participen en todas las preguntas de selección diarias incluso antes de venir

SUEÑOS

Continuación de Página 5

enviado a The Rider el 11 de agosto.

"En el pasado, el número estimado de estudiantes que podían ser Dreamers se basaba en personas clasificadas como residentes de Texas según el Proyecto de Ley del Senado 1528, que permite a ciertos estudiantes internacionales, ciudadanos estadounidenses, residentes permanentes y ciertos no ciudadanos estadounidenses establecer su residencia en el estado y calificar para la matrícula estatal según los criterios de elegibilidad", escribió Gadson.

SOCCER

Continued from Page 9

back, but I'm pretty excited for the season. I think we have the ability and everything to try to get that ring that we want."

Asked what she has been working on to improve her stat line for this coming season, Zapata replied, "Working on my shots more, try to get the ball more and try to work as a team and make those assists and goals to break my record."

It will be a traditional drive-in where attendees stay in their vehicles, Mata-Vasquez said.

Students can go to utrgv.edu/vlink to find more activities, not only hosted by Student Activities but by campus partners and student organizations.

Student Activities will continue to host virtual and hybrid events to allow

keeping them from enforcing portions of Executive Order GA 38 regarding face coverings.

I commend these districts for proving that they are not sitting ducks and that their hands do not have to be tied to the illogical ideas of one man, despite his status.

With all the resources to educate online, I do not understand the logic behind exposing these kids in an in-person setting. It is not a matter of if these kids will fall, but when.

I know we all see what is happening at other districts that have already started school and how quickly this is spreading to our babies.

It is one thing to lose adults, who are conscious of the decisions they make, to this virus, but it is a completely different thing to lose innocent children.

As an upcoming clinical teacher this semester, I am not emotionally strong enough to watch as students begin to fall to this virus. I ask that anyone who knows somebody in the education system right now, ensure

al campus".

Gonzales también dijo que la universidad está monitoreando de cerca los casos de COVID y obteniendo orientación médica de los funcionarios médicos locales, estatales y federales.

"Los [Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades] han publicado una guía actualizada que dice que incluso las personas vacunadas deben usar su máscara dentro de un edificio o en interiores y también lo alentamos fuertemente", el dijo. "Hicimos un gran trabajo haciéndolo el año pasado o en el último año cuando fue un mandato del estado y nos ayudó a mantenernos saludables y ayudó a mitigar nuestros aspectos positivos de COVID, así que hagámoslo de nuevo.

"Hagámoslo de nuevo, especialmente durante este tiempo cuando la variante delta está aumentando y los casos están aumentando. Recomendamos encarecidamente, no podemos exigir, pero recomendamos encarecidamente a todos que sigan usando máscaras. No solo para mantenerse a salvo, sino también para proteger a los que te rodean".

El Dr. Michael Dobbs, director médico de UT Health RGV, dijo que aunque la comunidad científica médica no está segura de si la variante delta causa una enfermedad más grave, saben que es más contagiosa y vacunarse es una defensa "maravillosa"

Según los criterios, los estudiantes deben haber vivido en Texas los tres años previos a la graduación de la escuela secundaria o la recepción de un GED; y residió en Texas el año anterior a la inscripción en una institución de educación superior (que podría coincidir con el período de tres años), según el correo electrónico.

Aaron Hinojosa, coordinador del programa del Centro para la Diversidad e Inclusión y el Centro de Recursos DREAM en UTRGV, dijo que no le sorprendió el fallo.

El centro apoya grupos de afinidad basados en la cultura, mejora la programación que desarrolla la

She believes the team can win every game as long as they work hard and together.

"We already know how we play," Zapata said. "It's the two, three new players that we need to figure out, but we're going to get there."

The season consists of 20 matches and started last Friday against the University of South Dakota. Results were not available at press time.

Zapata said she is looking most forward to competing against the University of Texas at Austin on Sept. 12.

"We've always tried to challenge

students who do not have the opportunity to be on campus to participate.

The Brownsville campus can look forward to hosting the first distinguished speaker of the year on Sept. 21. Mata-Vasquez said the speaker will be announced soon.

Cindy Saucedo, a biomedical sciences junior, said attending UTRGV events

that your loved one is taking all the steps necessary to protect themselves and those around them.

The current state of in-person education is the equivalent of sending lambs to the slaughter.

We know these kids are defenseless, so what do we expect to happen? After this first week alone, I can guarantee that there will be many empty desks in schools. When this happens, I do not want to hear the condolences of elected officials who had the power to stop this from the beginning. They will not get to play the hero this time around when things get bad.

We should know better by now, so why can we not simply do better for the youths? The outcome of the next few weeks will be unforgivable, in my opinion, and it doesn't take a psychic to read the writing on the wall.

It is hard to explain to a 6-year-old that rubbing their eyes or putting their hands in their mouth could literally mean the difference between life and death, but for many parents, this is

contra el COVID-19.

"Algo muy bueno es que la vacuna lo protege de enfermedades graves, incluso con delta, por lo que si contrae la enfermedad con la variante delta y ha sido vacunado, es poco probable que necesite hospitalización o muera de COVID", dijo. "Es más probable que tenga una enfermedad menor".

Según el director médico, no es probable que el virus mute en algo completamente extraño que la vacuna no tenga ningún efecto sobre él y con los avances sustanciales en la ciencia de las vacunas en los últimos años, él cree que la comunidad de la ciencia médica está mejor preparada para crear potenciadores que posiblemente puedan ser más específicos de las variantes de COVID-19, como la variante delta.

Dobbs aconseja a los estudiantes que regresan al campus en el otoño a vacunarse.

"Insisto a las personas a que asuman una responsabilidad personal y las animo a que usen cubrebocas en entornos sociales, que incluye el aula, que les brinde protección adicional", dijo. "Ciertamente, que no cunda el pánico. Usemos el sentido común y creo que a la gente le irá muy bien con ese enfoque".

Dobbs también dijo que, aunque obviamente hay cosas sobre el futuro que los científicos solo pueden

competencia cultural y el discurso civil, brinda apoyo directo a los estudiantes y recursos para los estudiantes indocumentados y DACA.

"Creo que suena horrible decirlo, pero creo que al comprender nuestra historia, es por eso que no me sorprendió", dijo Aaron Hinojosa. "Es impactante para mí porque sé que afecta a nuestros estudiantes, nuestra comunidad local, nuestra comunidad [del Valle del Río Grande], porque trabajo con algunos de los estudiantes. Todavía tengo esperanzas, pero también me preocupa el bienestar de los estudiantes que se ven afectados".

Dijo que una de las formas en que el

ourselves," Bugariu said. "Over the last three to four years, we've played a number of Power Five teams. We even had a win against the University of Miami in 2018. You know, we want to make sure we put our name out there and compete with the very best and on the day [of the game], you never know."

The first home game for the Vaqueras is at 7 p.m. Friday against Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex.

"That's a team that has a Power Five-type stadium, Power Five-type

makes her feel like part of a family.

"I have part of my classes online and part of my classes here at the school," Saucedo said. "So, I think it's good for us to come back to school to know people and, for those who are just getting into college, to get to know that experience and know more people."

their reality.

To be completely transparent, I am still afraid of what is happening and I'm not sure that I have completely wrapped my head around it all yet.

Most of us have returned to work and in-person activities over the last few months to the infamous "return to normalcy," but just because we're in the eye of the hurricane doesn't mean it's over.

Now more than ever we cannot let our guard down, with breakthrough infections and hospitalization rates quickly rising, this is looking all too familiar.

They say déjà vu brings you an intuitive feeling of familiarity and is accredited to a neurological anomaly that can make you feel like you've lived through a scene before, whether it be a resemblance to the past or a similar scene in a dream.

I pray that this feeling of déjà vu will be free from the scenes of the past and that it will never resemble that of my nightmares.

predecir, la universidad siempre tiene que prepararse si las cosas empeoran para repensar las estrategias.

"Siempre estamos listos para repensar críticamente", dijo, refiriéndose a UTRGV. "¿Qué es lo que hace una universidad, verdad? Enseñe el pensamiento crítico".

Paulina Arteaga, una estudiante de ciencias biomédicas que comienza su tercer año este otoño en UTRGV, dijo que la mayoría de sus clases son presenciales o híbridas y que está emocionada de regresar al campus.

"Me siento muy emocionada porque durante la pandemia realmente no teníamos experiencia práctica y en mi carrera es realmente importante", dijo Arteaga. "Entonces, aprender de una computadora no es realmente lo mismo que aquí en el campus, así que estoy un poco emocionada de volver".

Dijo que no le preocupa tanto el estado de vacunación de sus profesores como el de sus compañeros.

"No estás tan cerca de los profesores como de tus compañeros de clase, así que siento que es un poco más reconfortante para mí pero, por si acaso, yo usaré mi cubrebocas", dijo Arteaga. "No porque sea un mandato ni nada, sino simplemente para sentirme segura".

--Traducido por Fatima Gamez Lopez

departamento informa a los estudiantes sobre DACA y otros asuntos es a través de las capacitaciones para defensores de la zona DREAM.

"No lo hemos designado específicamente solo para este anuncio, ya que siempre está cambiando, y hay organizaciones locales y también organizaciones nacionales que brindan mientras está sucediendo", dijo Aaron Hinojosa. "Pero ofrecemos Capacitación para defensores de la zona DREAM y eso en sí mismo siempre mantiene a los asistentes actualizados sobre la situación más actual".

--Traducido por Fatima Gamez Lopez

locker room and they now say they have the best recruiting class in their history," Bugariu said. "So, it's going to be a very tough game and if you look, historically, those games are extremely difficult."

He said it's the only true rivalry the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team has.

"There's great animosity there and it shows on the field," Bugariu said.

Lunardi said she loves playing against Corpus.

"It's always good competition for us, so I'm excited to play them, excited to beat them," she said.

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