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GETTING BACK ON TRACK

LUPE program to help students go to college

Fatima Gamez Lopez
THE RIDER

La Unión Del Pueblo Entero is accepting Spring 2023 applications from migrants, first-generation and low-income high school juniors and seniors to participate in the '¡Al Colegio, Si Se Puede!' college access program.

Carla Ocadiz, education equity specialist at LUPE, said the program has three major components.

"The first one would be our program sessions, which will be our monthly meetings in which we will deliver the curriculum," Ocadiz said. "Our second component is case management, which is our one-on-one advisements with students, and then the last one will be community engagement."

To apply to the '¡Al Colegio, Si Se Puede!' college access program, visit lupenet.org

The components work together to develop the areas of education, careers, leadership and foundational skills.

"We are here to provide the proper resources so they can have a better transition from high school to college," Ocadiz said. "Some of the topics are, you know, financial aid. A lot of undocumented students don't know that they can attend college and actually receive funding for their school. So, it's just delivering the proper resources so that the students can succeed on their journey to college."

Applicants must be high school juniors or seniors for the 2022-2023 school year, attend a high school in the

Jose Medina/THE RIDER

Freshman sprinter and jumper Jedediah Udonna practices sprints at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex. He achieved a second place school record for the long jump with a distance of 7.22 meters. See story, Page 7.

Conference of authors set for Feb. 10 at TSC

Teresita Dominguez
THE RIDER

Next month, Texas Southmost College will host its 21st annual "Letras en el Estuario," a conference that will feature 16 award-winning writers from across Texas and Mexico reading excerpts from their most recent works.

"Some of the writers that are going to participate in this occasion, apart from [keynote speaker] Eduardo [R. Langagne], come from other regions, like Guillermo Berrones de Monterrey, Mexico, and also Daniel Barrera from Matamoros, Tamaulipas," said Ramiro Rodriguez, president of *Ateneo Literario José Arrese* in Matamoros

and one of the 16 writers to be featured.

Rodriguez, one of the founders of the conference, will present his most recent book of haikus.

"They are framed by the art of Eduardo Vargas Lopez, who is a Tamaulipan poet and painter ... originally from Mexico City," he said. "We are going to be presenting this book of which I feel very happy and very proud to have edited."

This will be the second year the event is back on campus after being on hiatus for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, said Juan Antonio Gonzalez, a Spanish professor at TSC and one of the organizers of the conference.

Daniela Martinez Salazar/THE RIDER

Texas Southmost College Spanish Professor Juan Antonio Gonzalez speaks about the goals and vision of the conference, "Letras en el Estuario." The conference will take place Feb. 10 in the SET-B Lecture Hall on the Texas Southmost College campus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today
Learn German
The **German Club** will teach German from 5 to 6:15 a.m. and from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Wednesday in Main Building Room 2.502 on the Brownsville campus.

Rush Week
Omega Delta Phi will host activities to promote the organization from 6 to 9 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.103 on the Edinburg campus and at the same time and place Tuesday.

Fairy Care
Sigma Lambda Gamma National

Sorority will hold a **self-care session** from 7 to 9 p.m. in the University Center's Cenizo Room on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday Involvement Fairs
The **Center for Student Involvement** will host an **involvement fair** from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Main Courtyard on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Thursday on the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus. There will be **free food and items**.

Wednesday Economics Meeting
The **Economics and Finance Society** will hold a **general meeting** from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Robert C. Vackar College

of Business and Entrepreneurship Room 119 on the Edinburg campus.

Order of Omega
The **Order of Omega** will host an **information session** for Fraternity and Sorority Life members to learn about the Greek Honor Society from 1 to 2 p.m. in Student Union Room 2.418.

Thursday InqSpot Book Club
The **Student Union** will host a **book club meeting** from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Student Union Sage Room on the Edinburg campus and at the same time in the Student Union's La Sala on the Brownsville campus. To receive a **free e-book** of "Their Eyes Were

Watching God" by Zora Neale Hurston, register on VLink. There will be **free coffee**.

Friday Reading Volunteer
RedRover Readers RGV will host a **volunteer training workshop** from 9 a.m. to noon in Main Building Room 2.112 on the Brownsville campus and at the same time in Engineering Building Room 1.272 on the Edinburg campus.

Anthropology Meeting
The **Anthropology Club** will host a **general meeting** from 1 to 2 p.m. in Health Affairs Building East Room 1.122.

--Compiled by Landon Burns

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Jan. 20 and 25.

Jan. 20
6:09 a.m.: An employee struck his head on an open hatchback to a university vehicle while transferring equipment in Lot B-7 on the Brownsville campus. The employee sustained a small laceration to the top of his head and sought treatment at a local clinic.

4:07 p.m.: An officer was dispatched in reference to a male student feeling ill in the Interdisciplinary Engineering Academic Building on the Edinburg campus. The student was subsequently transported by emergency medical services to the hospital for further medical evaluation.

4:14 p.m.: A faculty member on the Edinburg campus reported that she received an email that caused her to be concerned and annoyed. The employee said she had received a previous similar email from the same email address. The case is under investigation.

Jan. 21
12:22 a.m.: A parent reported not hearing from her daughter, a student resident, after the student went for a walk. The student was located in the Casa Bella Apartments

on the Brownsville campus and was determined to be fine.

1:28 p.m.: An officer was dispatched to the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus in reference to an injured student. The student had dislocated his knee while playing basketball and was subsequently transported to the hospital by emergency medical services for further medical evaluation.

2:22 p.m.: An officer met with a student who reported being involved in a one-vehicle collision in Lot E-16 on the Edinburg campus. The student failed to control his vehicle's speed as he was making a left turn and collided with a light pole and a palm tree. No injuries were reported, and the vehicle was towed from the scene due to the damage sustained by the collision.

Jan. 23
11 a.m.: Officers responded to UT Health RGV Multispecialty Clinic on the Edinburg campus in reference to a disorderly patient. The female patient exhibited abusive and threatening language to employees but had left the area by the time police arrived. The case is under investigation.

11:43 a.m.: Officers responded to Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus due to several door decorations with

student names being drawn on with a permanent marker by an unknown individual.

1:37 p.m.: Officers responded to the School of Medicine Research Education building on the Edinburg campus, where a staff member reported feeling ill. Emergency medical services transported the staff member to the hospital for further evaluation.

6:55 p.m.: A student reported he left his bicycle secured at a bike rack near the Science Complex on the Edinburg campus about 4 p.m., and when he returned at 6 p.m., it was no longer there. The case is under investigation.

Jan. 24
9:05 a.m.: An officer responded to a three-vehicle traffic collision on the 300 block of North Sugar Road on the Edinburg campus. One of the drivers, a current student, complained of back pain and was transported by emergency medical services to a local hospital for medical evaluation.

10:55 a.m.: A UTRGV student on the Brownsville campus reported she has been harassed on several online platforms by a non-affiliated woman since the fall of 2021. The student reported that she believes the woman resides in Florida.

1:45 p.m.: A UTRGV student on the

Edinburg campus reported a man she does not know has been trying to contact her on several occasions at an on-campus bus stop. The man stands next to her but does not board the bus with her. He has tried contacting her through a social media app and has also asked her, in person, to verify her name and phone number that he obtained somehow, making her feel uncomfortable. The case is under investigation. On Jan. 25, UTRGV CID investigators identified and contacted the man, who is also a student. After further investigation, the criminal elements for stalking were not met and the case was unfounded.

Jan. 25
11:36 p.m.: An officer conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle on the 1800 block of West Chinese Street in Edinburg for a defective headlamp. When initial contact was made with the female driver, a strong odor of marijuana was coming from inside the vehicle. A subsequent search of the vehicle based upon probable cause yielded the discovery of marijuana paraphernalia. The paraphernalia was seized and the driver was issued a court appearance citation for possession of drug paraphernalia (a class C misdemeanor).

--Compiled by Arisbeth Rodriguez

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THE RIDER

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

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New housing units coming to Edinburg

Andrea Flores
THE RIDER

Martin Castillo, executive director of the Edinburg Housing Authority, announced the agency's newest development for public housing in over 30 years. Thirty-six new units will be built in La Posada Apartments at the EHA office on Sugar Road.

During the Edinburg City Council's Jan. 17 meeting, Castillo presented the EHA's annual and five-year plan.

The project will be the first public housing development completely owned by the EHA in the last 30 years.

In an interview with The Rider, Castillo said the money for the project will come from capital fund grants and proceeds collected from the sale of Albores Courts, which was the EHA's largest housing development.

The new units will be one-bedroom apartments in a three-story building, meaning they will meet the efficiency requirement.

Castillo anticipates the project will cost around \$5 million.

"In the private sector, it might be a little cheaper because you can probably control labor, but in our sector, there's a lot of guidelines that we need to follow," he said.

The contract for this development was signed Jan. 12, and the estimated timeline for substantial completion of the project is

one year.

Castillo said one of the reasons why there had not been any development done in the past 30 years is due to the availability of funds.

"Could there have been more units built prior to me coming in?" he said. "Maybe. Again, it just depends on the availability of funds, the options of funding."

Castillo added that some obstacles slowed the process for the project's continuation.

"Due to inflation, the pandemic, you know, that was a challenge, trying to get contractors to bid out the project and want to keep it within budget," he said.

A ceremony will be held for the new development soon.

During the meeting, Place 1 Councilmember Daniel Diaz asked if private developments take away potential residents from the EHA or if the demand for public housing is high enough that the EHA needs additional developments. Castillo replied the demand is high.

The EHA currently has 325 public housing units. He said for public housing, over 900 people are currently on the waitlist, which closed Dec. 31.

The Housing Choice Voucher program Section 8 is one of the options for people on the waitlist. The HCV program provides assistance in the form of a voucher for rental units chosen by the tenant in the private market, according to the EHA website.



Aurora Acevedo/THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

Martin Castillo, executive director of the Edinburg Housing Authority, presents information regarding its annual and five-year plan during the Jan. 17 Edinburg City Council meeting. Castillo announced that the development will have 36 new units built in La Posada Apartments on Sugar Road.

Castillo said the obstacle with the Housing Choice Voucher program is the difficulty of obtaining landlords for private developments since Section 8 is a concept that landlords are not fond of.

"Fair market value, you know," Castillo said. "Section 8 may not pay the same as in the private industry or in the private market."

Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. invited the EHA to participate in the City's Comprehensive Plan housing component, which has not been used

since 2005.

"We're going to need all the input we can," Garza said. "That's going to be the foundational plan that everybody is going to use to address housing."

In an interview with The Rider, he said he knows the importance of public housing firsthand since he grew up in one himself.

Public housing cannot be provided to everyone on the waitlist at the moment. However, Garza said the data can be documented and

sent to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for more resources to increase the availability of public housing.

He added that another way the city can help people in need of public housing is by providing other resources.

"For example, workforce training, so that they can get, perhaps, employed with higher pay," Garza said. "Then, they will be able to afford maybe even owning their own home at some point."

Rio Grande Valley and be at least one of the following: undocumented, DACA recipient, first generation or low income, and become a LUPE member, according to lupenet.org.

"They would have to become LUPE members, and for students, it's \$20," Ocadiz said. "With their LUPE membership, they have access to the program and they also have a free consultation with our immigration lawyer."

The deadline to submit the application is Feb. 8. To apply, visit the LUPE website.

The program starts Feb. 11 and continues until June.

Program sessions take place twice a month from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturdays at LUPE headquarters, located at 1601 U.S. Bus. 83 in San Juan.

The incentive is \$100 for every student who completes the program and gas cards at the end of every session to qualifying students.

As a DACA recipient, Ocadiz encourages students to apply.

"I know that when I was in high school, I would have benefited from this program because I had to figure out a lot

of the resources that were out there on my own," she said. "And, so, having this extra support would have been amazing."

Christopher Jerez said his experience in "¡Al Colegio, Si Se Puede!" 2022-2023 program was "spectacular."

"They have helped me a lot with all the procedures regarding school," Jerez said. "But what I liked the most about this program is that they make you feel at home, because when you live with other young people who are going through the same situations, it makes you feel more confident and happy because you know you are not the only one."

America Hernandez said her experience in the 2022-2023 program helped her.

"My personal experience has been extraordinary," she said. "I had the slightest idea of the steps to follow on a long journey, only what they explained to us in my school but, in fact, it is more complicated."

"In '¡[Al] Colegio, Si Se Puede!,' they gave us the steps and accompanied us in the process. For example, I called over and over again and they always answered my questions and in the meetings, they [brought] a lot of information and [allowed] us to express all our doubts, and the process [is] confidential."

PHOTO COURTESY LA UNIÓN DEL PUEBLO ENTERO

"¡Al Colegio, Si Se Puede!" is a college access program provided by La Unión Del Pueblo Entero through which first-generation, low-income high school juniors and seniors are provided resources to smoothly transition into college.

Have A Story Idea?
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Lamenting my femininity



Teresita Dominguez
REPORTER

Growing up, I hated all things girly. I was the epitome of a tomboy. I discovered early on that being a girl was not the same as being a boy. We were each treated as a separate species, with our own set of rules and stereotypes.

I had to sit a certain way. I had to act a certain way. I had to fit into a certain box and be a nice, sweet, pretty, little girl. I had to wear pink. I had to eat slowly. I had to wear skirts and do my hair. I had to help my mom in the kitchen because “girls belong inside,” while my brothers were outside with my dad. Girls are supposed to be quiet, never loud. Girls are supposed to be sweet and polite.

All of these things combined to shape me into the lovely pleasant little girl that I was expected to be. For a long time, this was the reason I loathed being a girl; I wasn’t weak or inferior, so why was I treated as such? I was taught through subliminal messages and

thousands of microaggressions that being a girl isn’t enough. It is projected that being feminine is a sign of weakness. Because I am a woman, I am inferior and incomplete.

In the hope of being treated fairly, I focused on being hypermasculine to demonstrate I was not inadequate. I dressed as ambiguously as I could, trying to hide, partially embarrassed of my gender.

I could sense from a young age that the boys in my school had power. Even though I couldn’t articulate those feelings and thoughts, I knew that playing kickball and football with the boys was more important than whatever the girls were doing on the other side of the playground.

Instead of jumping rope with the girls, I felt that proving myself to the boys by playing the same sports demonstrated that I, too, was a worthy adversary. I, too, was one of the boys, and I, too, was deserving of their approval.

Recently, I realized this aggressive behavior was merely reflections of the world around me. I had inadvertently internalized misogyny.

Throughout my entire childhood, I had been pursuing the wrong kind of power and validity. I instantly mourned my femininity. I wanted the power that’s inside of me, my own feminine power.

I realized I am enough. Women can be powerful and visible; I shouldn’t have to make

myself more masculine in order to legitimize my existence.

It’s now my goal to unwind and undo all of the ways I’ve unintentionally internalized this messaging and attitude. I started doing this by reading about feminism, the foundations of the patriarchy and how it affects everyone, not just women, not just me, but everyone.

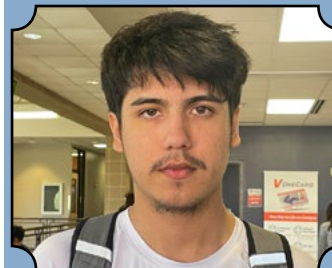
As I realized this, I grew enraged at the injustice of it all. These hurtful stereotypes not only affect me as a Latina woman, but every man who carries the burden of being the sole breadwinner and not being able to show an ounce of emotion because “real men don’t cry,” which kills off all emotional parts of themselves and emotionally cripples them all at once.

I say forget everything you know, forget the stereotypes. Be who you want to be, not who you were taught to be. Read about the patriarchy and the systemic oppression we, as Latinos and Latinas, have been stuck following. Educate yourself and you, too, will become enraged.

If there is ever an instance where you, as a woman, do not feel sufficient or seen, you are not alone. Just know you are seen, you are powerful and, as American author and social activist bell hooks said, “If any female feels she need anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already giving away her power.”



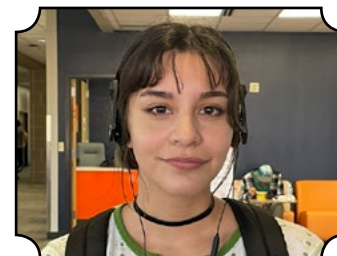
What three things would you do if you had all the money and time in the world?



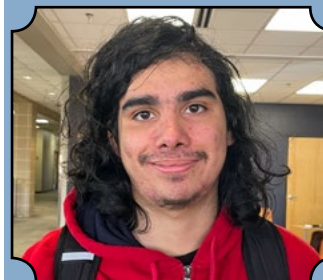
Victor Peña
accounting senior

“I would probably buy my mom a house. I’ll buy cars afterwards, and then give some to my dad and probably, like, my family and make them rich, too.”

“I would probably travel and then, maybe, I would probably start some kind of organization that helps the environment. And I would buy my mom a bigger house.”



Aleena Acosta
mass communication senior



Carlos Baltazar
computer science sophomore

“I would probably spend that money to buy a house, buy, maybe, a car, too, and probably use the rest of the money ... for resources for my job.”

“*Primero, dejaría de trabajar. Segundo, dejaría la escuela, y tercero, viajaría por el mundo.*”



Manuel Almazan
estudiante de segundo año de ingeniería mecánica

--Compiled and photos by Aurora Acevedo

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'Letras en el Estuario'

Conferencia de autores programada para el 10 de febrero en TSC



Nombre: Uxia Pereira Alonso

Carrera: Ingeniería mecánica

Clasificación: Estudiante de último año

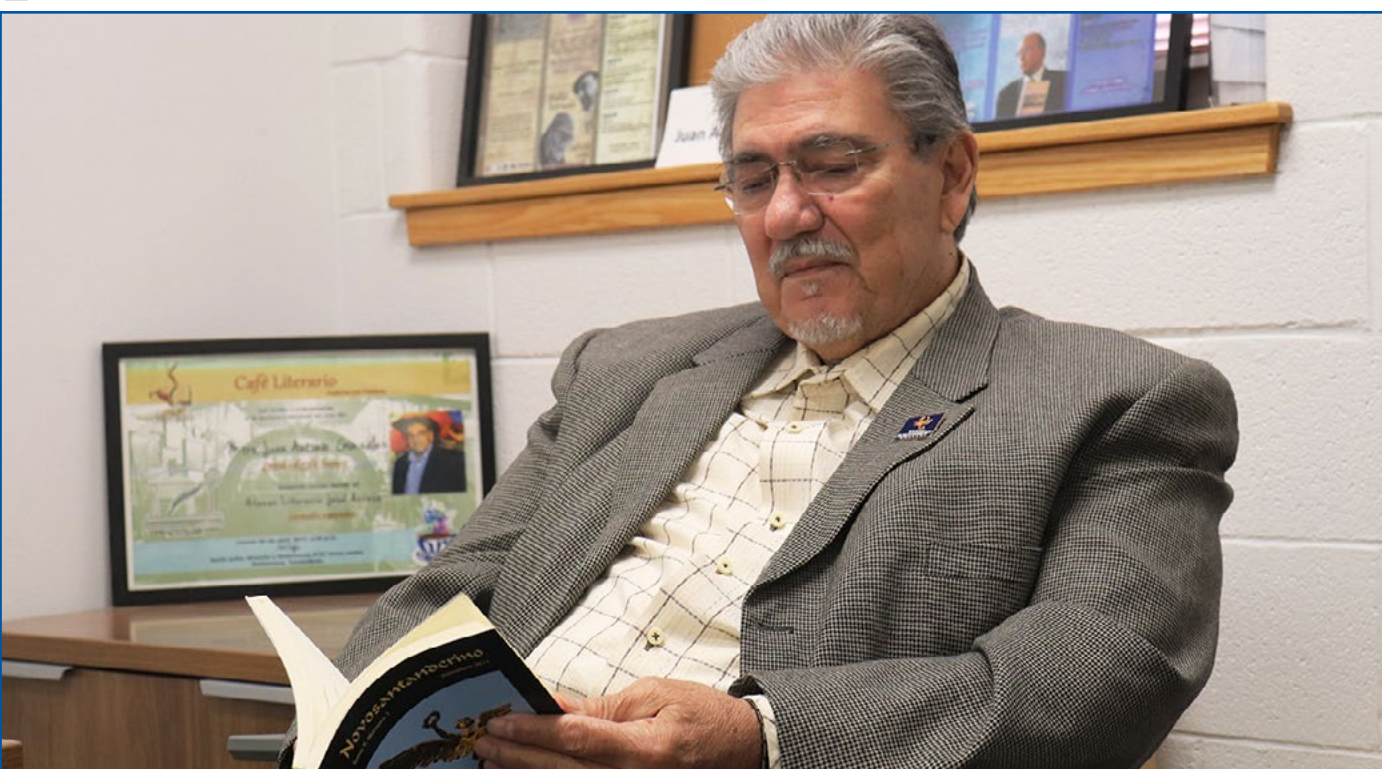
Fecha de graduación: Otoño 2023



Isabel Morales/FOTO RIDER

Ciudad natal: Lugo, España

Actividades extracurriculares: "Estoy en el equipo de atletismo aquí en UTRGV y eso básicamente toma todo mi tiempo".



Daniela Martínez Salazar /FOTO RIDER

Juan Antonio González, profesor de español en Texas Southmost College y editor en jefe de "Novosantanderino", lee un fragmento del libro. González es uno de los organizadores y autores que participarán en la conferencia "Letras en el Estuario", programada para el 10 de febrero en el SET-B Lecture Hall en el campus de Texas Southmost College en Brownsville.

Teresita Dominguez

THE RIDER

El próximo mes, Texas Southmost College organizará su 21ª conferencia anual "Letras en el Estuario", una conferencia que presentará a 16 escritores galardonados de todo Texas y México leyendo extractos de sus trabajos más recientes.

"Algunos de los escritores que van a participar en esta ocasión, además del [orador principal] Eduardo [R. Langagne], vienen de otras regiones, como Guillermo Berrones de Monterrey, México, y también Daniel Barrera de Matamoros, Tamaulipas, [México]", dijo Ramiro Rodríguez, presidente del Ateneo Literario José Arrese en Matamoros y uno de los 16 escritores que se presentarán.

Rodríguez, uno de los fundadores de la conferencia, presentará su más reciente libro de *haikus*. "Están enmarcados por el arte de Eduardo Vargas Lopez, quien es un poeta y pintor tamaulipeco ... originario de la Ciudad de México", dijo. "Vamos a estar presentando este libro del cual me siento muy feliz y muy orgulloso de haber editado".

Este será el segundo año que el evento regresa al campus después de estar en pausa durante dos años debido a la pandemia del COVID-19, dijo Juan Antonio González, profesor de español en TSC (por sus siglas en inglés) y uno de los organizadores de la conferencia. El evento se llevará a cabo de 3 a 8 p.m. el 10 de febrero en el salón de conferencias SET-B en el colegio, que está ubicado en Brownsville. A partir del 2003, la conferencia comenzó como una oportunidad para que los escritores locales mostrarán

su trabajo a la comunidad, creciendo gradualmente desde allí y pudiendo traer oradores principales.

En el 2008, González pudo reclutar al primer orador principal, el escritor y novelista chicano Rolando Hinojosa-Smith.

"El objetivo es que nuestros estudiantes también se involucren en la escritura y que conozcan a personas a las que han dedicado su vida y que es posible ser un buen escritor"

-- Juan Antonio González, profesor de español en TSC y uno de los organizadores de la conferencia

Langagne, el orador principal de este año, es un autor y poeta galardonado que González conoció en una conferencia en Los Ángeles hace 20 años.

En el 2022 ganó el Premio Nacional de las Letras por Sinaloa.

El evento contará con cuatro paneles de cuatro oradores cada uno. Cada panel tendrá una duración de aproximadamente 45 minutos con 16 oradores presentando primero, cada uno con aproximadamente 10 a 12 minutos para leer el trabajo elegido.

"Entonces, pueden leer una historia corta, pueden leer varios poemas o pueden leer parte de un poema largo", dijo González.

Como orador invitado, Langagne tendrá de 45 minutos a una hora disponible para presentar su literatura.

El evento comenzará a las 3 p.m. pero el auditorio estará abierto a las 2 p.m. para que los invitados tomen un café y tengan la oportunidad

de conocer y hablar con algunos de los autores.

"Me siento muy orgulloso de participar en estas [conferencias] porque, bueno, también es una forma de dar a conocer lo que uno escribe y conocer la obra de otros escritores, no solo de aquí del Valle o de la frontera norte de Tamaulipas, pero también de escritores que vienen de otras regiones como Houston, San Antonio, Ciudad Victoria, Monterrey

y, bueno, esta vez con la presencia del maestro Eduardo Langagne, de la Ciudad de México", dijo Rodríguez.

González dijo que Letras en el Estuario está orientado a la familia, es gratuito y está abierto al público.

"El objetivo es que nuestros estudiantes también se involucren en la escritura y que conozcan a personas a las que han dedicado su vida y que es posible ser un buen escritor", dijo González. "Es mucha edición y mucho trabajo, pero pueden salir cosas buenas y es una gran satisfacción poder escribir algo que también compartes".

--Traducido por Fatima Gamez Lopez

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¿Qué diferencias encuentras entre tu ciudad nativa y los Estados Unidos?

"Son muchas diferencias. Diré que lo primero es la interacción con personas, como la sociedad en general. Si eres hispano, sabes cómo funciona. Aquí, la gente ... celebra más tranquila o como, al principio, fue más difícil para mí integrarme, también por mi acento, mi idioma y todo. Pero diré que la principal diferencia es la comida".

¿Cuáles son tus metas?

"Entonces, básicamente, mi objetivo es graduarme. Estoy agradecida de poder hacer mi deporte y todo y poder estudiar. Pero sí, [regresar] a casa y empezar a trabajar hasta que pueda conseguir un trabajo independiente, ya sabes, trabajar un poco para mí sin tener un jefe y todo eso".

¿Quién es tu modelo a seguir?

"Mi modelo a seguir, diré [es] mi papá. Comenzó desde cero cuando tenía mi edad. Mis abuelos no tenían mucha salud financiera, ya sabes. Eran de clase media baja. Así que trabajó muy duro, terminó la escuela ... también en ingeniería. ... Estoy agradecida de que haya podido mantenerme".

¿Por qué elegiste la carrera en la que estás?

"Fue un poco de influencia en mi familia por los antecedentes que tengo. ... [Mi papá] me motivó mucho y como me gusta, dije, 'Bueno, intentemos'. Y me terminó gustando".

¿Qué películas o programas te gustan?

"No soy una gran fanática de la televisión, pero siento que realmente me gustan los programas sobre crímenes. Me [gusta] toda esa investigación, ya sabes, cómo las cosas dramáticas. ... Veo un poco de [CSI: Investigación de la Escena del Crimen] y todas esas cosas".

¿Qué consejo le darías a otros estudiantes internacionales?

"No te rindas. Creo que ese será mi principal consejo para ellos porque tengo amigos que están empezando, nunca acaban o se han vuelto a casa. ... Si necesitas ayuda, nunca dudes en preguntar. Si es fisiológico [o] ayuda con los estudios, aquí tenemos muchos recursos. No te rindas y usa los recursos que tienes".

--Recopilado por Fatima Gamez Lopez

Keeping tradition alive through dance

Omar E. Zapata
A&E EDITOR

Alegría 2023, an annual performance of the UTRGV Ballet Folklórico, take the audience through a crash course of Mexican folk dance from Pre-Hispanic Aztec dances to several different regions and states in Mexico.

Miguel Angel Peña-Caballero, director of the Ballet Folklórico since 2015 and an assistant professor in the UTRGV dance department, told The Rider the group started in 1970 and will showcase its 53rd rendition of Alegría.

"It's our biggest show of the year and it's a journey through Mexico," he said. "We present several regions and several states in Mexico."

"We start with a Pre-Hispanic dance, more

[specifically] the Mexica or Aztec dance. Then, from there we go to the

state of Tabasco then to the Huasteca region, and more specific, Huasteca Veracruzana. ... Then we do a section from the other side of Veracruz, Veracruz Jarocho. From there we go to Baja California Norte. The name of the dance is Calabaceados. Then we go to Colima, then the state of Sinaloa."

The first Alegría performance is at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. The final performance will be at 7:30 p.m. March 26 in the Texas Southmost College Performing Arts Center in Brownsville. For more information, visit utrgvarts.universitytickets.com.

Peña said with rehearsals starting in mid-August, at least 50% of the show is changed every year with new dance styles, regions and music.

Alegría 2023 collaborates Ballet Folklórico's 45 members with choreographers, scene designers and musicians, such as UTRGV's own Mariachi Aztlan.

"It's a really important role for all of us ... because we are like ambassadors of the Mexican culture and traditions here in the United States through dance," said Peña, who has a master's in dance from the University of

Wisconsin-Milwaukee and experience dancing throughout the U.S. and Mexico. "We travel quite a lot during the year and we are very well-received everywhere we go because there's always Hispanics and Mexicans all over the United States."

Ticket prices are \$5 for children, \$10 for UTRGV students with ID and senior citizens and \$15 for adults. Tickets can be purchased only at the box office upon entering the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.

Peña said with around 85% of the Folklórico's members being from the Rio Grande Valley, the company is a mixture of all types of majors. Almost all of the members have a minimum of three years' experience with some dancing from the time they were children.

Ezra Alcocer, a dance sophomore with a concentration in Mexican Folklórico, told The Rider he has been dancing since he was 10 and took part in the Folklórico program at Edinburg North High School.

Born in Fort Worth but raised in Nuevo Leon, Alcocer said he wanted to join UTRGV's program since he was little.

"To continue studying [Folklórico] and also being able to dance at the university level is what I feel made



Psychology graduate student Elizabeth Stamattio and education junior Carlos Lopez practice the Huasteca Veracruzana dance during rehearsal Jan. 23 in the Health & Physical Education II building on the Edinburg campus.

Omar E. Zapata/THE RIDER

Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

Danielle Perez
ONLINE EDITOR

Aries-Spending time with friends is a good way to heal from old wounds. From time to time, the soul requires laughter and good times to keep growing. Make an effort to socialize with people who are filled with great energy and make you feel better. Soon you'll feel the improvement.

Leo-Reconcile with old friends this week by catching them up on news you've been waiting to share. Make plans to keep meeting every now and then to maintain the friendship. Avoid feeling like a lone wolf and start reuniting with your pack. Friends are essential to help navigate through life.

Sagittarius-As time passes by, the doubt in your life is starting to fade. Be patient and positive in what you decide to achieve. The universe wants you to prioritize your to-do list before you start to focus on other things. Keep the momentum alive by being constant every day from here on out.

Libra-Time will heal the unknown in the next week. Don't be afraid to spend time alone to reflect on your past and determine what changes you'd like to make in the future. New opportunities will start to rise, and strong connections will be made. Be patient.

Gemini-If you are unsure about having certain individuals in your life, start to think about what kind of friends they are. Determine whether these connections should be part of your life or not. It is OK to cut off others who aren't there for you as much as you are for them.

Aquarius-A secret you've been keeping from others is starting to become too much for you to hide. Therefore, confront who you need to tell, and be honest about the situation. Be the friend you'd want others to be for you. Whatever happens, remind yourself you did the right thing.

Scorpio-Soon you will have an encounter with someone who will change how you perceive things. When this connection makes an appearance, don't shy away from it. Take in everything they have to say and consider how it can be applied in your life.

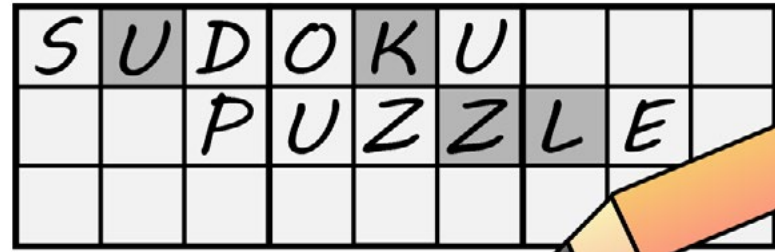
Pisces-Instead of hiding your achievements, take pride in them. Of course, don't brag about your work but rather, show people what you are capable of. Sometimes people need recognition to feel solidified in their field. Encourage others to do the same.

Cancer-Refrain from having many items in your shopping carts or in your mental notes. Go out and buy what you want or take the trip you've been planning. Purchasing items or going on a vacation you've been anticipating can help create new energy that will benefit you.

Taurus-Although reaching out to people can be intimidating, at times we need to push ourselves to do so. If this effort will benefit you, don't get caught up in your feelings. It is OK to reconnect with friends or to ask others for help. At the end of the day, everything is worth a shot.

Virgo-Take a moment to reflect on what you want to achieve in your future, then make certain decisions that can help lead you there. Be open-minded and selfish when determining things for yourself. You are in control of where you want to be and what you want to do, so take action.

Capricorn-This week will be very eventful, so try to keep your composure and remind yourself of your purpose. Don't let what happens or what others have to say set you back. Be true and authentic by holding the power within you.



					3			1
	6		4		2	5		
1			5	7	9			8
		7		2				
	5	6		9	7			
			1		3		9	
				5		4		3
8								6
4	9	2			8	7		

Last week's puzzle answer key:

8	5	9	4	1	6	7	3	2
2	4	1	9	3	7	5	6	8
3	6	7	2	5	8	4	9	1
5	7	3	8	6	9	1	2	4
6	9	2	5	4	1	8	7	3
4	1	8	3	7	2	6	5	9
7	3	4	1	9	5	2	8	6
9	2	6	7	8	4	3	1	5
1	8	5	6	2	3	9	4	7



Getting back on track



Jose Medina/THE RIDER

UTRGV graduate sprinter Jada Hoffman warms up at the Soccer and Track & Field Complex. Hoffman was a two-time qualifier for the indoor and outdoor NCAA Division II Championships.

Jose Medina

SPORTS REPORTER

UTRGV Men's and Women's Track and Field teams competed in their first meet Jan 20. at the Robert Platt Invitational at the University of Houston, achieving eight top-five placements.

Asked how the teams have been preparing for the season, head coach Shareese Hicks replied, "Mentally, just making sure that they know we practice how we compete. Every day is a great opportunity to really get better and better for your actual competition."

Hicks was a finalist in the 400-meter dash in the 2012 USA Olympic Trials and earned a bronze medal in the 2008 4x400-meter relay team in the World Indoor Championships, according to goutrgv.com.

She said the teams keep training and making sure that they push themselves in practice.

Hicks is excited about the next two Texas Tech meets because those are opportunities to compete in world-class facilities and has high expectations for the athletes.

"We're expecting everyone to contribute whenever it comes to scoring in conference," she said. "And for everybody to be a role player."

Freshman sprinter and jumper Jedediah Udunna said the team chemistry is really good. He said they are close like a family. Udunna said the coaches are like parent figures to them.

"We always have fun with them," he

said. "We're free to be able to express whatever we need to them. They definitely always help out."

Udunna placed sixth in the long jump at 7.22 meters, which set a second-place school record.

He has been preparing by practicing from 12:30 until 3 p.m.

"The coaches are bringing in a lot of experience. ... I feel like we're a whole bunch of raw athletes and they're going to help craft us to be what we're supposed to be."

--Jedediah Udunna

Freshman sprinter and jumper

Team members have been making sure that their technique is good and that everyone pushes each other as a team.

"As far as mentally, we have life skills as well as a bunch of other team bonding and meeting that just helps make sure everybody is in a good mental space," Udunna said.

Asked how he expects the season to go compared to last season, he replied that he expects it to go better than his high school season.

"The coaches are bringing in a lot of experience," Udunna said. "There's Olympians and world champions, like, they're all coming from different backgrounds and definitely bringing something to the table. I feel like

we're a whole bunch of raw athletes and they're going to help craft us to be what we're supposed to be."

Udunna said he is excited for the long-jump competitions and the 60- and 200-meter dash since those are the events he competes in.

He said he is ready to win some championships and wishes he could have done even better in his first meet.

"Again, this is my first time competing indoors," he said. "So, it's a change in environment. Hopefully, by the next meet, next time we're able to talk, I'll have the first place record in the school."

Hicks said the team chemistry is outstanding.

"Sometimes, I'm coach Hicks, sometimes I'm Mama Hicks," she said.

Hicks said the teams are like brothers and sisters, and they compete like brothers and sisters.

The teams were scheduled to compete last Friday and Saturday at the Texas Tech Open and Multis in Lubbock. Results were not available at press time. They will return to Lubbock Feb. 10 and 11 for the Jarvis Scott Open.

On the women's team, graduate thrower Marlene Gutierrez said the first meet showed how their hard work has paid off.

The teams' throwers are coached by four-time Olympian Cleopatra Borel, a finalist in the shot put event in 2016, finishing seventh with a throw of 18.37 meters, according to goutrgv.com.

"I feel like with the work that we've put in, we're gonna see results,"

Athlete of the week

Angel De La Cruz



Jose Medina/THE RIDER

Senior Angel De La Cruz is a first baseman for the UTRGV Baseball Team. De La Cruz is from Brooklyn, New York, and graduated from The High School of Enterprise, Business and Technology. He holds a bachelor's degree in multidisciplinary studies and is pursuing another in communication studies.

Q: What do you do for fun outside of baseball?

A: "Outside of baseball, I just hang out with my teammates, with the fellas, and we just play board games. We just play card games and we just watch sports together and just spend time enjoying each others' presence."

Q: Who is one of your role models?

A: "One of my role models has to be my father because, as a child, I watched him wake up at 3 in the morning, four days a week and just try to get money and try to put food on the table and try to pay rent for us. He's definitely a big role model."

Q: What motivates you?

A: "What motivates me is the sacrifices that my parents went through to get us here. I was the first one out of all my family members and all my siblings to be born in the United States. Just to have that privilege is just motivation that I use to just keep pushing forward every day."

Q: When did you begin playing baseball?

A: "When I was younger, I would always walk by the park. I'm talking about when I was a baby, like, 2, 3 or 4 years old. I would always see everyone play Wiffle ball or baseball, even sponge ball. I always told my parents to sign me up. ... Then, one day, they finally did and ever since that day I fell in love with the sport. I played baseball ever since I was, like, 5 years old up until now, every single summer, every single season. All or nothing, basically."

Q: What do you like about UTRGV and the Rio Grande Valley?

A: "Ever since I got here, everyone has just accepted me. Everyone accepted me with open arms. I feel like everyone here is really nice. I feel like the crowd we attract every game really reaches out to us. I feel like everyone here is one big happy family. The food here is amazing, also. Everyone is even better. Great weather, also."

--Compiled by Jose Medina

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

Men's Basketball

6:30 p.m. **Wednesday vs. Sam Houston State University**

Women's Basketball

6:30 p.m. **Thursday vs. Utah Tech University**

2 p.m. **Saturday vs. Southern Utah University**

AT THE UTRGV FIELDHOUSE

The event will take place from 3 to 8 p.m. Feb. 10 in the SET-B Lecture Hall on the Texas Southmost College campus in Brownsville.

Beginning in 2003, the conference started as an opportunity for local writers to show off their work to the community and gradually grew to be able to bring in keynote speakers.

In 2008, Gonzalez was able to recruit the first keynote speaker, Chicano award-winning writer and novelist Rolando Hinojosa-Smith.

Langagne, this year's keynote speaker, is an award-winning author and poet who Gonzalez met at a conference in Los Angeles about 20 years ago.

In 2022, he won the National Letters Award for Sinaloa.

The event will have four panels of four speakers each. Each panel will be about 45 minutes with 16 speakers presenting first, each having about 10 to 12 minutes to read their chosen work.

"So, they can read a short story, they can read several poems or they can read part of a long poem," Gonzalez said.

As the guest speaker, Langagne will have 45 minutes to an hour available to present his literature.

The event will start at 3 p.m. but the auditorium will be open at 2 p.m. for guests to get some coffee and have the opportunity to meet and talk to some of the authors.

"I feel very proud to participate in these [conferences] because, well, it is also a way to publicize what one writes and learn about the work

of other writers, not only from here in the Valley or from the northern border of Tamaulipas, but also from writers who come from other regions such as Houston, San Antonio, Ciudad Victoria, Monterrey and, well, this time with the presence of *maestro* Eduardo Langagne, from Mexico City," Rodriguez said.

Gonzalez said *Letras en el Estuario* is family oriented, free and open to the public.

"The goal is to have our students engaged in writing, as well, and for them to get to know people that have dedicated their lives to and that it is possible to be a good writer," Gonzalez said. "It's a lot of editing and a lot of work, but good things can come out of it and it's a great satisfaction to be able to write something that you share as well."

me want to come to UTRGV," Alcocer said.

He said the audience will experience something majestic due to all the behind-the-scenes work that has been put into the show.

"From all the choreography that we have, the stories we have and also all the enthusiasm that we put, I think the public will enjoy it a lot," Alcocer said.

With most of the UTRGV population being Hispanic, he encourages students to attend since it showcases Mexican traditions.

"Some Hispanics don't have the opportunity to go to Mexico to see their heritage or enjoy a show," Alcocer said. "To me, it's very important to carry on those traditions even though they are changing,

but I feel this will always help grow the community and remind us of where we come from."

Maria Garcia, a dance senior with a concentration in Mexican Folklorico, began dancing seven years ago at Hidalgo Early College High School.

Born in McAllen but raised in Reynosa, Garcia aspired to join Ballet Folklorico ever since she attended shows as a child. Also participating in all seven parts, Garcia's favorite will be the dance styles from Veracruz.

"From the first time I saw the dance, I loved it, especially the persistence it has," she said. "My favorite from the section is 'El Agua Nieve.' I feel that there is a lot of connection between the partners and I love it. I'm actually dancing it with [Alcocer]."

Garcia said the performance

will be something beautiful that people can enjoy and hopes the audience can feel the amount of rehearsing and preparation that has been put into the show.

"To me, it's something very sentimental to be in the Folklorico," she said. "Like how I said I'm from Reynosa, and my mom has been there and has never seen me dance. So, for me to be dancing Folklorico ... it makes me feel connected to my mom."

For more information and updates on the scheduled performances, visit the company's Facebook page @balletfolkloricoutrgv.

"I think what we are doing here at the UTRGV dance department and what the students are doing, it's very unique in the nation," Peña said. "I don't think there's any other group or department like us in the United States.

Omar E. Zapata/THE RIDER

Dance seniors Ramiro Silva (from left) and Raul Passamontt and UTRGV alum Leila Banda rehearse a Calabaceados dance Jan. 23 in the Health & Physical Education II building on the Edinburg campus. The dancers are preparing for the UTRGV Ballet Folklorico's upcoming performance of Alegria 2023, which will take place at 7:30 p.m. Friday in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.

I think it's worth [coming to] and see what we are doing and what the students are practicing so much for."

Gutierrez said. "So, I kinda like to keep my expectations as, 'Go out there, have fun and do what you do, throw' and that makes it easier."

Graduate sprinter Jada Hoffman said she was not nervous during her first meet.

"I wasn't even scared," Hoffman said. "I really felt prepared. I think what they've done, so far, has really

prepared us for this season. It's just happy, ready to get it done because you know we start indoor season kind of late. We're just sitting and waiting, and now we're finally here."

She said she felt excited to be competing against people other than her teammates and that she feels prepared since they have been training since August.

Hoffman also achieved second place for the school record for the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.74 seconds at

the Robert Platt Invitational.

A native of Chicago, she is excited to compete in Texas.

"You know, everyone always says, 'Texas is fast,'" Hoffman said. "I mean, we were in Houston last week and that was the fast track. I'm excited for every track meet in Texas."

She said she is ready for the next two meets, which are at Texas Tech.

"I've never been able to be at a Texas Tech meet before," Hoffman said. "I'm just excited to actually be

at the track. Last week, there was a collegiate record broken in the 60 hurdles. ... I can't wait to experience that, and, hopefully, we can all make history with UTRGV."

The Vaqueros are set to compete in the Western Athletic Conference Indoor Championships Feb. 27-28, followed by the National Collegiate Athletics Association Indoor Championships March 10-11. The season finishes with the NCAA Outdoor Championships June 7-10.

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