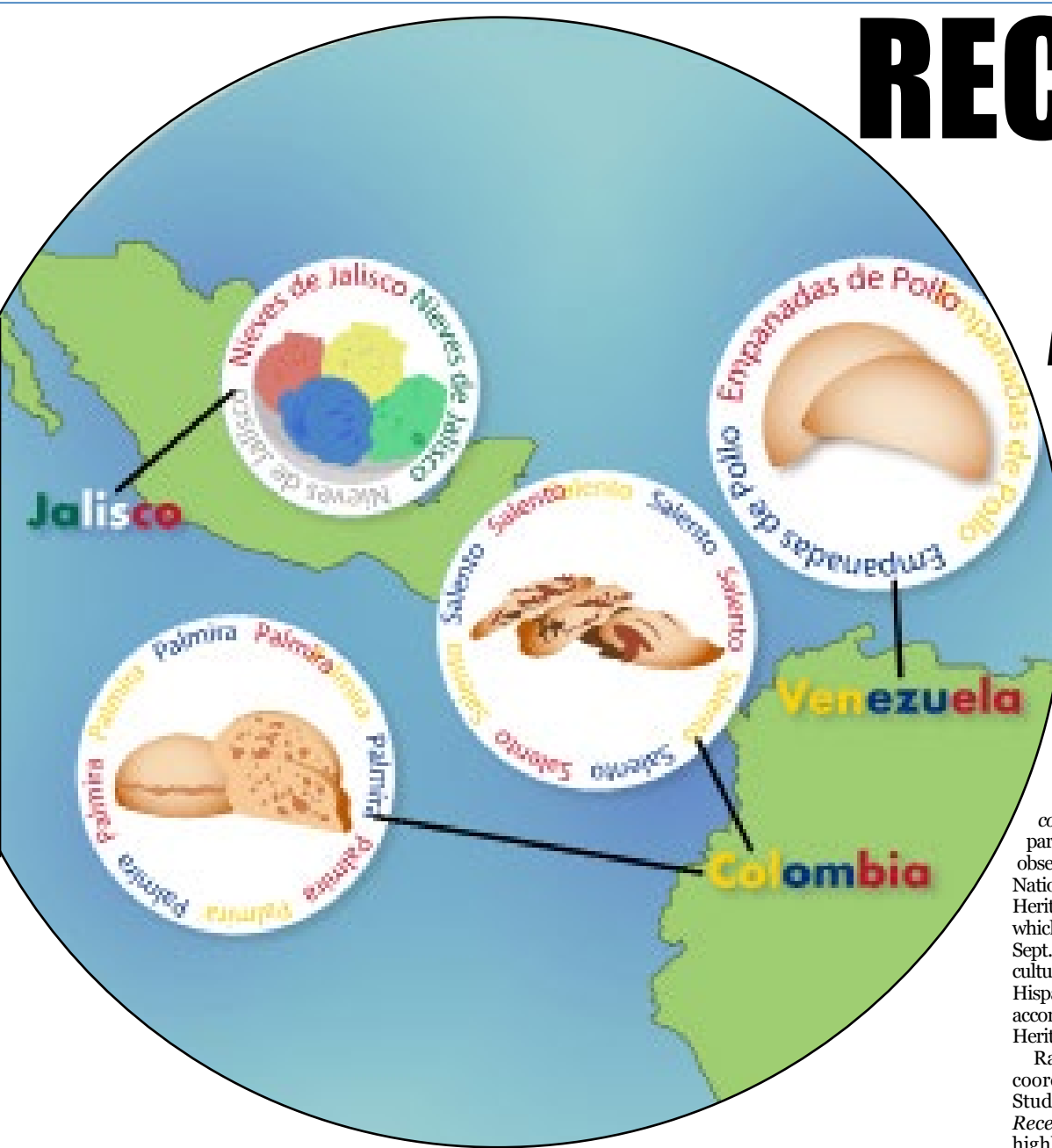


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 UTRGV student, graduate earn honors at art show  
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Aura Velasquez/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

# RECETAS CON AMOR

**Fatima Gamez Lopez**  
 SPANISH EDITOR

The Center for Student Involvement and the Council for Cultural Activities will host *Recetas con Amor* on both campuses to embrace the Latinx heritage through the universal language of food.

The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus and from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

*Recetas con Amor* is part of UTRGV's observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated each year from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 to honor the cultures and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans, according to the National Hispanic Heritage Month website.

Raul Leal Jr., program coordinator for the Center for Student Involvement, said *Recetas con Amor* was created to highlight comfort foods. "So foods that make people

feel warm and reminds them of home," Leal said. "We were also thinking about our Latinx students who are not necessarily from the area and probably are missing that home-cooked meal from mom and dad."

The Center for Student Involvement and the Council for Cultural Activities tried to make the event "sound like a love letter to Latin American countries and provide students with an opportunity to get to try some foods from Latin American areas," he said.

The council used to host a similar event called Café Latino Americano, but this year they wanted to change the event and focus on "comfort foods."

"We opted to change the title of the event to *Recetas con Amor*," Leal said. "We were wanting it to be kind of like a love letter to Latin America, to the culture, and just making sure that we were highlighting as much as we possibly could."

Attendees will be able to enjoy different Latin American dishes.

"The first one is an ice cream

## National Hispanic Heritage Month

See **HERITAGE**, Page 3

# Do not struggle in silence

**Yamilet Galvez**  
 THE RIDER

Mental Illness Awareness Week, observed during the first week of October, was created by the National Alliance on Mental Illness to raise awareness and educate about the condition.

According to NAMI, one in five U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.

Fidencio Mercado, the interim school director for the School of Rehabilitation Services and Counseling, addressed the most prevalent mental health issues and the challenges individuals face today.

"I think now, over the last three years, we've seen somewhat of an increase post COVID," Mercado said. "... We've seen that increase in anxiety and depression primarily with younger clients, with adolescents. So as rehab professionals, we've identified these needs."

The UTRGV Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to address mental health concerns among the campus community through education and outreach services. The center is located in Student Union Room 2.10 on the Brownsville campus and in University Center Room 109 on the Edinburg campus.



Azenett Valdez/THE RIDER

Richard Clayton, a clinical therapist for the Counseling Center, advises students to spread the word about the different services the center has to offer last Tuesday on the Student Union Lawn on the Brownsville campus. Also shown are the Recovery Center of Cameron County Interim Executive Director Jesus Daniel Ramos and center Lead Counselor Dulce Campos.

**VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE**

**Oct 10**

**ELECTION DAY IS NOV. 7**

Students can receive a range of See **HEALTH**, Page 3

## 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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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Today K.I.S.S Fundraiser**  
The **Korean International Student Society** will sell ramen, Asian snacks, stickers and shoe charms today and Tuesday from 3:30 to 5:15 p.m. in the University Library on the Edinburg campus.

**Boot Camp**  
**University Recreation** will host a **boot camp-style exercise** from 5 to 5:45 p.m. today and Wednesday in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus. All fitness levels are welcome. The event will also take place from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday in the same location.

**Boxing Workout**  
**University Recreation** will host a **group training workout** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. today and Wednesday in University Recreation Center Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus. The boxing workout will sculpt the body and burn calories.

**Zumba Workout**  
**University Recreation** will host a **Zumba fitness program** that combines Latin and international dance moves from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. today and Wednesday in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus.

**Tuesday German Club**  
**RGV German Club** members will meet from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in Main Building Room 2.502 on the Brownsville campus.

**Holy Mass**  
The **Catholic Students Association** will celebrate **Mass** from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the University Chapel on the Edinburg campus.

**Spanish Bible Study**  
The **Baptist Student Ministry** will host **Spanish Bible study** from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.205 on the Edinburg campus.

**Recetas con Amor**  
The **Council for Cultural Activities** will celebrate **Latinx Heritage Month** by hosting an event where you can experience the taste of Latinx foods and embrace the culture. The event will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Main Building Room 2.402 on the Brownsville campus. **Free food** will be available.

**Edinburg Bible Study**  
**Christians at RGV** will host **Bible study** from 12:15 to 1:45 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.103 on the Edinburg campus and from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. Thursday in Music, Science & Learning Center Room 1.114 on the Brownsville campus.

**Wednesday Environmental Awareness**  
The **Environmental Awareness Club** will meet from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in Student Union Room 2.418 on the Edinburg campus to discuss fundraisers, field trips and symposiums.  
**Free Lunch**

The **Catholic Student Association** will provide **free lunch** to all UTRGV students, faculty and staff from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in the Newman Student Catholic Center on the Edinburg campus. This event will take place every Wednesday until the end of the semester.

**Pre-Dental Society General Meeting**  
The **Pre-Dental Society** will host a meeting where they will emphasize volunteer opportunities, informative dental school panels and discuss dental problems. The meeting will be from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in Health Affairs Building West Room 2.212 on the Edinburg campus. **Food will be provided.**

**Anthropology Club Meetings**  
All majors are welcome to attend the **Anthropology Club** meeting from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Liberal Arts Building North Room 106 on the Edinburg campus. Students will learn about linguistics, medicine, biology, evolution and archaeology.

**Rhythm Night**  
The **Student Union** will host **free cumbia dance lessons** for all UTRGV students from 6 to 8 p.m. in the University Center Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. There will be **free snacks** and students will have a chance to **win UTRGV merch.**

**Thursday Cycle Fit**  
**University Recreation** will host

**cycle classes** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. on the Texas Southmost College Recreation Center Upper Fitness Floor in Brownsville. The classes will cover the foundational yoga poses practiced to align, strengthen and promote flexibility in the body.

**Game Day**  
The **University Library** will host a **game day** from 2 to 8 p.m. in the Brownsville Library Room 1.118 and at the same time in the library's Shary Room on the Edinburg campus. **Board, card and video games** will be available for students depending on the campus.

**IEEE Food Fundraiser**  
The **Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers** will sell hot dogs, nachos and sodas to raise funds for its region 5 conference in the spring. The fundraiser will be from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building on the Edinburg campus.

**Friday Reading Workshop**  
The **Student Union** will host a **reading workshop** from 10:30 a.m. to noon in Salón Gardenia on the Brownsville campus. Students can learn new strategies to help have a better understanding when reading.

**Sunday Mass Celebration**  
The **Catholic Student Association** will celebrate **Mass** from 3 to 4 p.m. in the St. Newman University Chapel, located at 1615 W. Kuhn St. in Edinburg.  
--Compiled by Alfredo Garcia

# POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 19 and 25.

**Sept. 19 5:43 a.m.:** University Police observed a small fire in Lot E-21 on the Edinburg campus. Officers responded to the location and spoke with a non-affiliated man who was burning toilet paper. The man had no official business on campus. He was issued a criminal trespass warning and escorted from campus without further incident.

**2:14 p.m.:** University Police responded to a male student carrying a suspicious case in the University Library on the Edinburg campus. Officers spoke with the student and determined that the case was music equipment.

**4:59 p.m.:** A UTRGV employee reported a suspicious vehicle that she had observed the previous night in Lot E-5 on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

**10:18 p.m.:** University Police responded to an active fire alarm in the Casa Bella apartments on the Brownsville campus. Officers determined that a resident had burned some food while cooking. Officers found no damage and cleared the building for re-entry.

**Sept. 20 12:38 p.m.:** A student reported finding several scratches on her vehicle in Lot E-38 on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

**7:38 p.m.:** University Police spoke with a non-affiliated man in the Academic Support Facility complex parking lot after he was observed loading wooden pallets on a flatbed trailer. Officers determined the man was not authorized to take the items from their location and issued him a criminal trespass warning.

**Sept. 21 12:31 a.m.:** University Police found two students after hours inside the UTRGV Tennis Courts on the Edinburg campus. The students were identified

and escorted out of the tennis courts.

**1:43 a.m.:** Two male students reported being followed by a suspicious vehicle on the Edinburg campus. Officers located the vehicle and determined the driver was playing a location-based game on his cellphone.

**12:33 p.m.:** A female student reported that a male student in a student organization demanded to be reimbursed for purchases that were not agreed upon. She requested the incident be documented.

**2:44 p.m.:** University Police responded to three students entering the UTRGV Campus Research Office Building through a window on the Brownsville campus. Officers determined students' authorized access cards were not working. The students had permission to be in the building.

**4:03 p.m.:** A UTRGV student was struck by a vehicle while crossing the 700 block of North Sugar Road on his bicycle. The student sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to the hospital by emergency medical services.

**5:23 p.m.:** UTRGV Parking and Transportation Services employees reported that a male student had a fraudulent parking permit in Lot E-26 on the Edinburg campus. The permit was seized and the incident was documented.

**Sept. 22 12:08 a.m.:** A student reported being involved in a disturbance with a non-affiliated man who visited her roommate after she had asked him to leave. The man and the roommate were not on location upon the officer's arrival.

**11:08 a.m.:** A UTRGV employee reported that the tire of a university shuttle bus burst Sept. 18 while driving on the expressway, causing minor

damage to the front right rim of the vehicle. No injuries were reported.

**Sept. 23 4:49 p.m.:** University Police were dispatched to the Casa Bella apartments on the Brownsville campus regarding a disturbance between a female student and a male student who previously dated. Police determined that no criminal offense occurred. The male student left the area without further incident.

**11:11 p.m.:** A student reported that another female student said an unknown man may have been following her the previous night near the Chapel on the Edinburg campus.

**Sept. 24 8:20 a.m.:** A student in the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus requested emergency medical services because he was not feeling good. Emergency medical services later arrived and transported the student to the hospital for further evaluation.

**Sept. 25 8:45 a.m.:** A UTRGV employee reported that an unknown woman was possibly ill. University Police checked the area but were unable to locate the woman.

**9:04 a.m.:** A UTRGV employee reported that he ran over debris while traveling on interstate I-69C in a university vehicle, causing minor damage to the vehicle's undercarriage.

**12:51 p.m.:** University Police stopped a non-affiliated man for a traffic violation in Lot E-38 on the Edinburg campus. The driver was found to have an active arrest warrant out of Hidalgo County for possession of marijuana. The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office was notified and took custody of the man.

**1:15 p.m.:** A UTRGV employee notified University Police of a gas leak near Lot H-4 on the

Harlingen campus. UTRGV Facilities and Texas Gas Service employees assessed the gas leak as officers kept the area clear.

**4:09 p.m.:** A student suffered a seizure in the University Center on the Edinburg campus and was transported to the hospital by emergency medical services for further evaluation.

**6:16 p.m.:** A UTRGV employee reported feeling ill after being exposed to a gas leak on the Harlingen campus. The employee declined emergency medical services.

**6:23 p.m.:** A UTRGV employee reported that she believed that another employee's wife was following her vehicle while off campus.

**Update:** A report was generated **May 22** in reference to a student who failed to return a university-owned instrument after being asked to return the property. Several attempts were made to recover the musical instrument to no avail. Upon further investigation, University Police investigators found that the instrument, a saxophone valued at \$3,000, was stolen from the student's residence, according to Assistant Police Chief Van Slusser.

On **Sept. 25**, UTRGV investigators recovered the musical instrument from a local pawn shop. The individual who pawned the instrument was identified and an arrest warrant was obtained. A Cameron County Sheriff's Office deputy, while responding to an unrelated call, detained the non-affiliated female suspect in the case on the outstanding warrant. University Police later arrived at the Cameron County Adult Detention Center and served the woman with the arrest warrant for theft, a state jail felony. Claudia Ruiz, 46, was arraigned before a Cameron County magistrate on **Sept. 26**. The magistrate set a \$7,500 cash surety bond on the theft charge.  
--Compiled by Rebeca Salinas



# Hidalgo County, UTRGV awaiting updated COVID-19 vaccines

**Sofia Cantu Saucedo**

THE RIDER

Hidalgo County and the UT Health RGV Student Health Center officials say they will buy the updated COVID-19 vaccine and make it available for residents and the university community, respectively.

Eduardo “Eddie” Olivarez, chief administrative officer for the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services department, said the monovalent COVID-19 vaccine has been approved.

“It’s been put on sale,” Olivarez said. “Hidalgo County has not received it yet. We’re going to be buying some and making that available.”

Glenn Rick Gray, director of Health Services at UTRGV, said, the university is on a waitlist for the vaccine.

“When it’s available, we will have it for students and employees, of course,” Gray said.

In a news release issued Sept. 12, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that “everyone 6 months and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against the potentially serious outcomes” of the illness for fall and winter.

Olivarez said the price of the vaccine is expensive.

“To give you an idea, a flu vaccine is about \$24 a dose,” he said. “This is \$100 a dose.”

The Rider asked how much the vaccine will cost students and faculty.

“We don’t know for sure because the state is still debating over whether they’re going to help fund these,” Gray said. “If we have to buy it with no subsidies, it’s going to be expensive and the cost is prohibitive.”

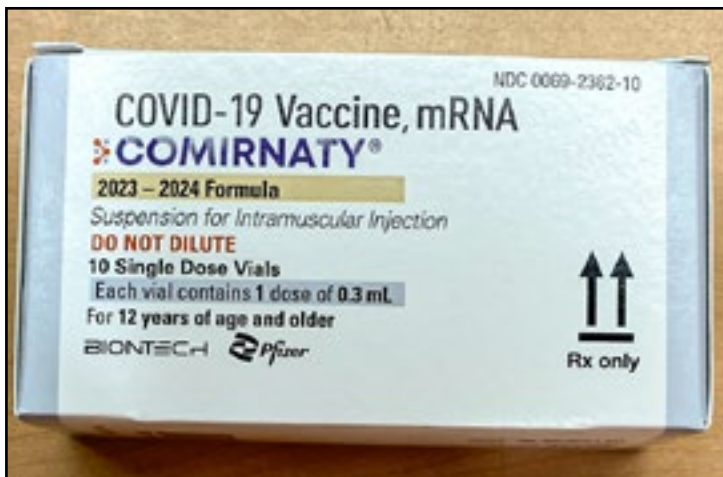
He said that the UT Health RGV Student Health Center will have it available for students and on the employee health side as well.

The Rider called the Walgreens pharmacy on Central Boulevard in Brownsville last Thursday and was told the updated COVID-19 vaccine is available by appointment at most Walgreens in the Rio Grande Valley.

The newspaper also called the CVS pharmacy on Ruben M. Torres Boulevard in Brownsville and was told the location currently has the updated vaccines by appointment through the app or its website.

The CVS y Más pharmacy on Alton Gloor Boulevard said it had run out and due to limited supplies, most of the CVS pharmacies in the Brownsville area have been running out. They are not sure when the next shipment will arrive.

The vaccines are covered by insurance, including private



Azenett Valdez/THE RIDER

The Rider called the Walgreens pharmacy on Central Boulevard in Brownsville last Thursday and was told the updated COVID-19 vaccine is available by appointment at most Walgreens in the Rio Grande Valley.

insurance, Medicare and Medicaid plans, according to the CDC’s website.

Uninsured children and adults have access through the Vaccine for Children Program and the Bridge Access Program, according to the CDC website.

The CDC’s Bridge Access Program provides no-cost COVID-19 vaccines to adults without health insurance or whose insurance does not cover all COVID-19 vaccine costs.

“No-cost COVID-19 vaccines through this program will be available until Dec. 31, 2024,” according to its website.

The program is said to be a temporary “bridge” to a permanent Vaccines for Adults program proposed in the Presidential Budget in both Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. This has not yet been enacted into law, according to the CDC news release.

Olivarez said there will be a fee for Hidalgo County residents who do not have insurance, Medicaid or Medicare.

“And we’re trying to figure out the cost right now,” he said.

Gray said that for members of the UTRGV community who cannot afford the vaccine, the county health departments usually have clinics where they will support the vaccines, as well as other low-income clinics in the area.

He also said students do not have to pay out of pocket for the vaccine.

“I mean, we always post your charges to your student account,” Gray said. “And then students can pay there when they have the funds to do so.”

The CDC has amended “existing Increasing Community Access to Testing program contracts with CVS, Walgreens and eTrueNorth to offer vaccinations services in areas with low-coverage and access,” according to its news release.

The Rider tried to contact Esmeralda Guajardo, the Cameron County health administrator, but as of last Thursday, she had not returned calls.

The agency will also “ship and fund administration of vaccines to public health providers designated by state and local health departments, which could include more than 1,400 Health Resources and Services Administration-supported health centers and 12,000 other vaccine providers,” the news release states.

The Rider asked some UTRGV students if they have received any vaccines or boosters for COVID-19.

“I did receive some,” said Jackeline Gutierrez, a biomedical science junior. “If I’m not mistaken, about a year ago, I received my last booster vaccine.”

Gutierrez said she would get the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

“If my insurance covers it, I would be down to getting a booster just to help my immune system fight off COVID,” she said.

Diana Sofia Martinez, a nursing freshman, said she received both the vaccine and booster.

Martinez was asked if she would consider getting the new annual vaccine.

“Yeah, for sure, just in case, because I believe they do actually help,” she said.

Gray said the university works closely with county and state health departments to watch the incident rates for illnesses.

“Hopefully, the vaccine will be available soon where we can get it out to our students and staff and faculty,” he said.

The updated vaccines “should work well against currently circulating variants of COVID-19, including BA.2.86, and continue to be the best way to protect yourself against severe disease,” according to the CDC website.

## HEALTH

Continued from Page 1

assistance such as online services, consultation, individual and group counseling, mental health screenings, suicide prevention gatekeeper training and workshops.

During Mental Illness Awareness Week, there are several days to educate the public about mental health. Tuesday is National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness and Recovery and Understanding Day, and Thursday is National Depression Screening Day, according to the NAMI 2023 Partner Guide.

Vianey Gonzalez, a clinical therapist for the School of Medicine, says there are steps people can take to prioritize their mental well being and reduce the risk of developing mental health issues in the future.

Gonzalez said physical self care includes getting enough sleep, food, water, sunlight and exercise, which prevents symptoms of stress and burnout.

There is also emotional self care, which means “getting comfortable with talking about our feelings” and social self care, “having a social network with people who we feel are strongly connected with,” she said.

The UTRGV Collegiate Recovery Program provides a safe environment that allows students struggling with addictions to support each other and develop ways to sustain a life of recovery.

The program provides a community for students participating in recovery through peer and sober activities. Outreach events include information tablings, walk-a-thons, presentations and learning opportunities.

The Recovery Walk-a-Thon, a special event for National Recovery Month, took place last Tuesday on the Student Union Lawn on the Brownsville campus and the University Center Circle on the Edinburg campus.

Richard Clayton, the director of the Collegiate Recovery Program, said the purpose of the walk was to reflect.

“I didn’t ask any students or participants to self disclose, but maybe they themselves are struggling with addiction or somebody they know struggles with addiction,” Clayton said. “And so,

during the walk, it was a time to reflect on that.”

NAMIWalks 2023, a free community event hosted in solidarity of those who experience mental health issues and also raises awareness about the conditions, will occur Saturday across the country in several states. For a list of locations, visit namiwalks.org.

Gonzalez said there are misconceptions and stigma associated with mental illness.

“It’s not necessarily something that is a moral deficit, or a lack of not trying their best to do better to help themselves, but oftentimes, it’s biology or issues because of the way that their brain works and, sometimes, with all of the factors that we think about, including the environment,” Gonzalez said. “... We know that we can’t blame the individual for not trying.”

Mercado said mental health “can be treated” and “it should not be stigmatized.”

The school of Rehabilitation Services and Counseling offers a bachelor’s of science in addiction studies and rehabilitation services as well as minors in rehabilitation, addiction studies and expressive arts. The need for substance use counselors is on the rise, according to its webpage.

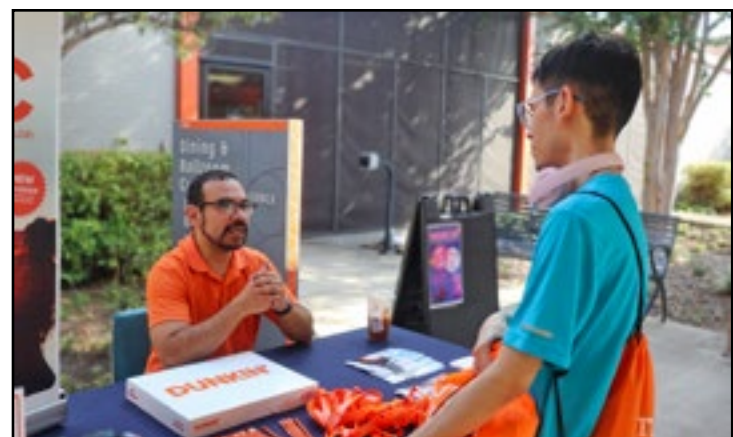
Mercado reminds students there is a counseling center on campus.

“We have other support services that have already been paid for through student service fees, so they should take advantage of the services and take advantage of the resources we have on campus,” he said. “... The more we continue to educate ourselves, and educate our community about mental illness and what it is and what it’s not, it’s going to continue ... to break the stigma, and bring down the stigma associated with it.”

Gonzalez said you do not need to have major events going on in your life to seek counseling and support.

“Counseling is a form of self-care,” she said. “People can come for all different reasons, and it doesn’t necessarily have to be for major reasons.”

To schedule a screening appointment, for more information or accommodations, contact the Counseling Center at 665-2774 or 882-3897. Email counseling@utrgv.edu for other assistance.



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

UTRGV Clinical Assistant Professor Eluterio Blanco informs social work junior Andrew Martinez about the fully online undergraduate addiction studies major offered by the university last Tuesday morning at the University Center Circle on the Edinburg campus.

## HERITAGE

Continued from Page 1

shop, La Garrafa, and they do ... *nieves artesanales*,” Leal said about the ice cream shop located in Mission and Pharr. “And, so, we found them because they had an article recently in the news about how they do Jalisco-style ice cream.”

Students will also be able to taste food from Venezuela and Colombia during the event.

“We are hosting *iQue Chevere!*, and they specialize in Venezuelan food,” Leal said about the restaurant in McAllen. “And, so, we’ll be doing *empanadas de pollo* from there. And then the last restaurant that we have will be Café Canasto. [They] specialize in Colombian food. And we’ll be doing a dish called *salento* and *palmira*.”

Café Canasto is a restaurant in Brownsville. *Salento* is a guava-and-cheese puff pastry and *palmira* is a cheese bread.

The Center for Student Involvement and the council want to make students feel welcome and at home.

“We also want to make sure that students that are not necessarily from the area feel represented in the things that we’re doing and we’re hosting,” Leal said.

Olga Zulema Villaseñor, an integrated health science sophomore, said the event will help represent the Hispanic community.

“I think it’s great because it’s like they care about us,” Villaseñor said. “It’s important because I feel like most people here are Hispanic.”

Jose Manuel De Leo, a mass communication junior, said the event is an opportunity for students to know about other cultures and try different dishes.

De Leo encourages students to always remember where they came from.

“It reminds you of where you come from [and] your family,” he said. “Never forget your Mexican roots. No matter how successful you are or how your life is going, always remember where you came from.”

Leal encourages students to attend the event and have fun.

“The really cool thing about the event is that you get to learn about the different cultures through food,” he said. “The way to my heart is my stomach. And, so, I like to learn about other people and the things that make them feel at home. We’ll also have some arts and crafts so students can paint at the event if they’re interested in attending.”

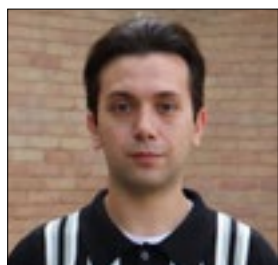
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# Enemy of the state



**Eduardo Escamilla**  
REPORTER

Last month, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott invited Hungarian President Katalin Novák to his mansion to discuss trade and economic partnerships. When I read about this, an intrusive thought entered my mind: Abbott knowingly welcomed autocracy to his doorstep.

Novák is a member of Fidesz, Hungary's populist right-wing ruling party, which had its foundation paved by Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Orban, a prolific anti-woke autocrat, has adopted an increasingly conservative political agenda, dismantling independent media and refuting the basic human rights of LGBTQIA+ people.

After initiating a law allowing Hungarians to report to officials of LGBTQIA+ residents raising children, it has become quite clear that Novák, the first female president in Hungary, hangs like a marionette doll ready to be maneuvered by the hands of Orban.

Hungary is a country reflecting the idealism of American conservatives. It is the homogenous utopia sought after by those who hope to "Make America Great Again," so it is not surprising Orban as a guest speaker for the 2020 Conservative Political Action Conference.

In his speech, Orban reaffirmed that LGBTQIA+ individuals pose a

threat on traditional family values and the "gay agenda" they push onto children, an idea popular among insatiable conservatives who love to cry about it on Tucker on X.

The danger of autocracy extends beyond the border. As autocratic regimes gain strength and influence, they can undermine international norms and institutions that support democracy and human rights.

I sat through Orban's speech, watching it virtually on my iPad. He beckoned Texans to adopt stricter laws to show an intolerance toward the LGBTQIA+ community because they are a danger to the conservatives' ideological bubble and a threat to civilization.

As I was listening to the speech, I wondered, when did I become the enemy of the state?

We can look back at history and find several instances when a minority or a marginalized group was used as a scapegoat for a dictator to unite a nation simply by appointing them as an enemy they could all be afraid of.

But too often, what comes to mind when picturing an autocracy are images of an insidious dictator who orchestrated a massive coup to overthrow democracy. In our modern era, an autocracy is much more sophisticated and precise.

Instead of a huge upheaval, pawns are placed in power to play their roles in what seemingly appears to be a game of democracy. Interestingly, the results always favor the leader you just cannot shake off.

In the 21st century, a militia of autocrats will not come crashing through my door with tanks, displacing me from my home, sticking a pink triangle on me and sending me to a concentration camp.

In the 21st century, autocrats will send their lawyers to lobby and change laws that are inconvenient.

You can say Hungary walked so

Florida could run because shortly after the country passed a bill banning LGBTQIA+ instruction for those under 18, an oddly familiar "Don't Say Gay" bill was passed in The Sunshine State.

I do not have to stray too far from home to find political parallels with Hungary.

In Texas, several laws were recently passed targeting the LGBTQIA+ community that were blatantly anti-trans. New cultural norms continue to sprout, such as drag queens increasingly being threatened and berated. In the past year, books have been taken off the shelves of public libraries. Women's anatomical rights have been restricted more and more. Medical professionals risk prison sentences for administering abortions. Buoyants continue to endanger the lives of asylum-seekers who, in the eyes of Abbott, are pests that have no place in our country. The atrocities in Texas go on and on.

Even at the university level, a homogeneous agenda is seemingly creeping its way on campus through Senate Bill 17, which by the beginning of next year will forbid inclusive offices to provide services to students throughout Texas.

Through all atrocities, I gather a sense of complacency on campus. There is only so much a student, professor or administrator can do when the power is centralized in the hands of one group: the University of Texas System Board of Regents, who just so happen to be nominated and appointed by the governor.

It is difficult for me to not feel like a walking target for political polarization.

As a liberal-minded gay man who was previously undocumented, I'm the poster boy for what conservatives despise. It is just so jarring to realize that I'm a bigger threat to this country, and to this state, than an assault rifle.



When you are stressed, what do you do to relax?



"I usually go outside, and kind of just sit there, and just either play with my dogs or, basically, pet my horse. ... And, I guess, that just soothes me. So, yes, that's what I do."

**Laci Rios**  
biology freshman



"I like watching old Pixar movies or, like, childhood movies, 'cause that helps me calm down. So, I'll usually just do that and get some food."

**Luis Garza**  
finance senior



"I think my biggest vice is eating hot Cheetos, or eating snack foods, or being irresponsible with money. I guess, another thing I do is just, like, use YouTube as an escapism, and I just watch a lot of manifestation videos. That's literally what I do when I'm stressed."

**Brandon García**  
multidisciplinary studies junior



"To relax, I usually put on a movie, and have, like, a little movie night to myself. So, I would feel like I know I am here, but I am in a different world."

**Dulce Sánchez**  
education freshman

--Compiled and photos by Aura Velasquez and Daniela Martinez Salazar

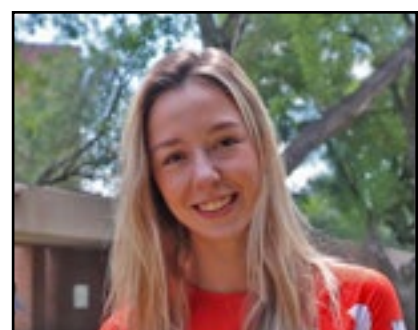


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**Nombre:** Ingridy Foltran  
**Carrera:** Ingeniería Civil  
**Clasificación:** Estudiante de tercer año  
**Fecha de graduación:** Primavera 2025



Angel Ballesteros/FOTO RIDER

**Ciudad natal:** Osasco, São Paulo, Brasil  
**Actividades extracurriculares:** “Soy jugadora de voleibol. También trabajó como productora de video para la Oficina para Sostenibilidad. Y soy como una *influencer* en Instagram”.

**¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre tu ciudad natal y los Estados Unidos?** “El estilo de vida en general y principalmente el inglés. Así que sería el idioma porque mis primeros meses [aquí] fueron un poco difíciles para mí, para adaptarme a él. Pero después, yo disfruté mucho el inglés y principalmente aquí en el Valle, estoy aprendiendo más español. [...] Y diría que también el estilo de vida en general. Porque en Brasil tenía a mi mamá conmigo, así que hacíamos todo juntas. Pero aquí tienes que hacer todo por ti. Entonces siempre digo que vine a Estados Unidos como una chica con sueños, 18 años, como wow. [...] Ahora soy mujer [...] Sé cuál es mi objetivo. Sé lo que tengo que hacer y me concentro en ello”.

**Si solo pudieras comer un alimento por el resto de tu vida, ¿cuál sería y por qué?** “En Brasil es algo que me encanta y que no tenemos aquí en los EE.UU., así que comemos arroz y frijoles con proteínas todos los días. [...] Así que si pudiera comer algo todos los días [...] sería arroz y frijoles con una proteína. Así que carne, pollo [o] huevos”.

**¿Qué hay en tu lista de deseos?** “De hecho, tengo un tatuaje en mi [pantorrilla] como de todo el mundo. Entonces una de mis metas es viajar por el mundo para saber más. Y eso es algo que venir a los EE.UU. y ser estudiante internacional [...] me permitió hacerlo, porque he estado en muchos lugares aquí en los EE.UU. que no sabía que podía visitar. [...] Además, quiero algún día hacer un libro. También quiero ser directora de proyectos o trabajar en ingeniería relacionada con la sostenibilidad. ¿Qué más? Quiero casarme, tener hijos, una familia, traer a mi mamá a los Estados Unidos o donde quiera que esté en el futuro porque mi mamá es mi todo”.

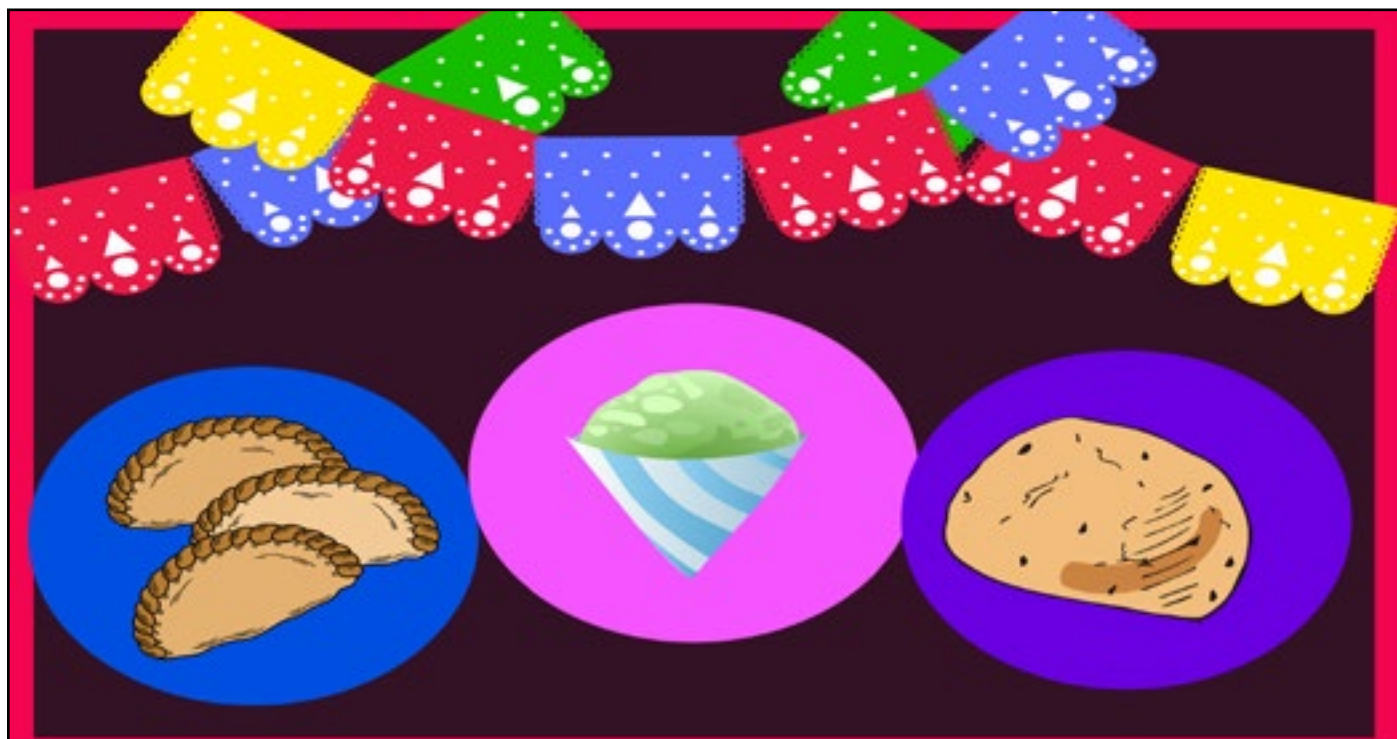
**¿Quién es tu ejemplo a seguir?** “Mi modelo a seguir es mi mamá porque toda mi vida fue solo ella y yo. Así que de todos modos no podría estar aquí sin ella. Y ella es mi modelo a seguir porque es muy trabajadora. Y todo lo que ha logrado en su vida lo hizo casi ella sola. [...] Quiero ser la misma mamá que ella es para mí, para mis hijos. Y ella es como una inspiración para mí”.

**¿Cuál es tu recuerdo favorito de la infancia?** “Mi recuerdo de infancia también sería con mi mamá, porque ella hacía las mejores comidas. Y eso es como algo que extraño mucho, es solo tenerla a mi lado. Entonces, en Brasil, cuando yo era niña, solíamos [pasar] tiempo juntas. No importa si tienes demasiado dinero o si tienes demasiadas cosas materiales, solo ser nosotras [dos juntas]. Puede ser en la iglesia, puede ser como en un parque, o lo que sea, simplemente como estar con ella y pasar un buen rato conversando”.

**¿Qué consejo le darías a otros estudiantes internacionales?** “No es fácil venir aquí a Estados Unidos y hacer que todo sea posible, pero vale la pena. Entonces, todos los desafíos que enfrentarás valdrán la pena. [...] Mi primer semestre fue un poco duro. Pensé, ‘¿Wow, qué está pasando?’ Pero después, me convertí en otra persona. Ahora estoy muy orgullosa de la mujer en la que me convertí gracias a las decisiones que tomé. Entonces, para los [estudiantes] internacionales que realmente están pensando en venir aquí a los EE.UU. o ir a otro lugar, sean valientes. Ve y hazlo, porque valdrá la pena”.

--Recopilado por Fatima Gamez Lopez

# Recetas con Amor: una celebración culinaria



Fatima Gamez Lopez/GRÁFICA THE RIDER

## Fatima Gamez Lopez

EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

El Centro de Participación Estudiantil y el Consejo de Actividades Culturales organizarán Recetas con Amor en ambas instalaciones para abarcar la Herencia Latinx a través del lenguaje universal de la comida.

El evento se desarrollará de 11 a.m. a 1 p.m. el martes en el Salón Cassia del campus de Brownsville y de 5 a 7 p.m. el jueves en el *University Ballroom* del campus de Edinburg.

Recetas con Amor es parte de la celebración de UTRGV del Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana, que se celebra cada año del 15 de septiembre al 15 de octubre para honrar las culturas y contribuciones de los Hispanos y Latinos Americanos, según el [sitio web](#) del Mes Nacional de la Herencia Hispana.

Raul Leal Jr., coordinador del programa del Centro de Participación Estudiantil, dijo que Recetas con Amor se creó para resaltar las comidas reconfortantes.

“Entonces alimentos que hagan que la gente se sienta cálida y les recuerden su hogar”, dijo Leal. “También estábamos pensando en nuestros estudiantes Latinx que no necesariamente son del área y probablemente extrañan esa comida casera de mamá y papá”.

El Centro para la Participación Estudiantil y el Consejo de Actividades Culturales intentaron que el evento “sonara como una carta de amor a los países Latinoamericanos y brindará a los estudiantes la oportunidad de probar algunas comidas de áreas Latinoamericanas”, dijo.

El consejo solía organizar un evento similar llamado Café Latino Americano, pero este año querían cambiar el evento y centrarse en “alimentos reconfortantes”.

“Optamos por cambiar el título del

evento a Recetas con Amor”, dijo Leal. “Queríamos que fuera como una carta de amor a América Latina, a la cultura, y simplemente asegurarnos de resaltar todo lo que pudiéramos”.

Los asistentes podrán disfrutar de diferentes platos latinoamericanos.

“La primera es una heladería, La Garrafa, y hacen [...] nieves artesanales”, dijo Leal sobre el negocio en Mission y Pharr. “Y los encontramos porque recientemente publicaron un artículo en las noticias sobre cómo hacen helado estilo Jalisco”.

“Nunca olvides tus raíces mexicanas. No importa el éxito que tengas o cómo vaya tu vida, recuerda siempre de dónde vienes”.

--Jose Manuel De Leo, estudiante de comunicación

Los estudiantes también podrán degustar comida de Venezuela y Colombia durante el evento.

“Estamos hospedando a ¡Que Chevere! y se especializan en comida venezolana”, dijo Leal sobre el restaurante en McAllen. “Y entonces haremos empanadas de pollo de ahí. Y luego el último restaurante que tendremos será Café Canasto. [Ellos] se especializan en comida colombiana. Y haremos un plato llamado salento y palmira”.

Café Canasto es un restaurante que está en Brownsville. Salento es un hojaldre de guayaba y queso y la

palmira es un pan de queso.

El Centro para la Participación Estudiantil y el consejo quieren que los estudiantes se sientan bienvenidos y en casa.

“Especialmente teniendo en cuenta que tenemos una población estudiantil internacional tan grande”, dijo Leal. “También queremos asegurarnos de que los estudiantes que no son necesariamente del área se sientan representados en las cosas que hacemos y organizamos”.

Olga Zulema Villaseñor, estudiante de segundo año de ciencias de la salud integrada, dijo que el evento ayudará a representar a la comunidad Hispana.

“Creo que es genial porque es como, que si se preocupan por nosotros”, dijo Villaseñor. “Es importante porque siento que la mayoría de la gente aquí es hispana”.

Jose Manuel De Leo, estudiante de comunicación, dijo que el evento es una oportunidad para que los estudiantes conozcan otras culturas y prueben diferentes platillos.

De Leo anima a los estudiantes a recordar siempre de dónde vienen.

“Te recuerda de dónde vienes [y] tu familia”, dijo. “Nunca olvides tus raíces mexicanas. No importa el éxito que tengas o cómo vaya tu vida, recuerda siempre de dónde vienes”.

Leal anima a los estudiantes a asistir al evento y divertirse.

“Lo realmente interesante del evento es que puedes aprender sobre las diferentes culturas a través de la comida”, dijo. “El camino a mi corazón es mi estómago. Y por eso me gusta aprender sobre otras personas y las cosas que las hacen sentir como en casa. También tendremos algunas artes y manualidades para que los estudiantes puedan pintar en el evento si están interesados en asistir”.

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# UTRGV student, graduate earn honors at art show

**Silvana Villarreal**

A&E REPORTER

A UTRGV student and a recent graduate each placed third in separate categories in the 48th International Art Show at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art among 100 artists and 330 submissions from across the United States.

Studio art senior Karla Cruz earned her award for “Ven y quitale los zapatos a tu papá,” which represents the machismo ideology in Mexican culture, in the painting oil and acrylic category.

In the painting, Cruz’s father sits on a chair with his arms crossed, and two hands are seen reaching for his feet and taking a sock off his foot.

“I was raised in a way that we had to respect [men], attend to them and help them in any way that we can,” Cruz said. “So that is where the ideology of machismo comes from.”

She explained the piece was inspired by the chiaroscuro techniques and colors used during the Baroque period (1600-1750).

“First, I did a monochromatic underpainting on the gray scales and then, once I was done with that, I added color where the light source hits to create a more dramatic narrative scene,” Cruz said. “... I wanted to create a dramatic scene, a strong scene.”

Brownsville resident Jose Angel Lozano, who graduated from UTRGV with a bachelor’s of fine arts in studio art in 2021, placed third in the three-dimensional category with a piece titled “Asymmetrical Purity.”

Because asymmetrical rectangles were pieced together and primary colors were solely used for the sculpture, Lozano landed on the name for his artwork.

What started as a project done in school in 2021 and inspired by Art and Design Professor Stephen Hawks, turned into an award-winning work.

“I feel like the fact that the exhibit was in Brownsville, too, and me being around my community, that kind of helped me out a lot,” Lozano said about competing against more experienced artists. “I was just, kind of, happy and proud to be there.”

Hannah U, of Mays Landing, New Jersey, won the \$1,000 Best of Show for “Light the Space in Between” in the category ink and pen on paper.

The International Art Show was the museum’s first since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This year we only had the opportunity to showcase artists from the United States, but we are focusing for the upcoming years to invite more and more artists,” said Deyanira Ramirez, executive director of the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art.

Ramirez said the nine categories encompass all techniques.

“This show is very complete and very balanced,” she said. “It has as much photography as printmaking and sculptures. ... And, obviously, there are different tastes to all the pieces and



Eduardo Cortez/THE RIDER

Juan Velez, one of the 37 artists in the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art’s 48th International Art Show, explains his art piece “Another Boot in Wardrobe.” Velez, through his painting, tries to answer the question, “To what extent can I be a Texan?” “Naturally, I feel very proud, so it is a representation that attempts that the viewer has the maximum possible interpretations with an element that is supposed to represent Texas,” Velez said in Spanish “... From there, I let the viewers react and feel whatever they can feel.”



Eduardo Cortez/THE RIDER

“Another Boot in Wardrobe” (watercolor on 300-pound handmade cotton and rag watercolor paper) by Juan Velez, one of the artists in the 48th International Art Show. Juror Christina Rees awarded Velez’s work second place in the water media category. Velez’s artwork is displayed at the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art along with 57 other pieces by Rees selected among more than 300 entries.

techniques, but I think this year we shined.”

The competition consisted of nine categories: painting oil and acrylic, drawing, water media, mixed media, printmaking, fibers, three-dimensional, photography and digital media.

Christina Rees, who served as the show’s jurist, reviewed the 57 works and recognized 32 with awards. Rees, of Dallas, is a writer who covers art, the art market, design and entertainment, according to the museum’s website. She is an

inaugural recipient of the Rabkin Prize, a national award for arts writing.

Lee Vang, of Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, received the \$250 Clara Ely Award for the piece “Nude Self-Portrait” in the painting oil and acrylic category.

“Zapotec Legacy: Three Generations of Alebrije Artistry,” featuring the works of Efrain Fuentes and Silvia Gómez, of Oaxaca, Mexico, opens Nov. 2.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Night Out

The San Benito Police Department will host its 16th annual National Night Out from 6 to 8 p.m. today in Heaven Memorial Park, located at 705 N. Bowie St. The event will feature food, music, games and vehicle tours. Admission is free.

### Spotlight Bands

The Chorus of the Rio Grande Valley will host a rock-and-pop experience starting at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in the Harlingen Community Theatre, 1209 Fair Park Blvd. The chorus will perform hit songs from bands, such as The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Spice Girls, Queen and more.

### Sandcastle Days

The 35th annual Sandcastle Days on South Padre Island takes place Thursday through Sunday. Access to the celebration is through Clayton’s Beach Bar & Grill, 6900 Padre Blvd. The celebration will feature live music, art booths and food in addition to the sand sculpting competition. Admission is free.

### Cosplay Night

Downtown Brownsville will host First Friday, Halloween Edition, from 7 to 10:30 p.m. for family friendly activities and 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. for nightlife in the Market Square area. Bars, restaurants and other businesses will participate. The event will feature live music, games and photo booths. Admission is free.

### Day of the Dead Festival

The International Museum of Art and Science will host a Day of the Dead Festival, showcasing markets, exhibits and more from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday. Admission is \$5, \$3 for children, students with ID and seniors age 65 and older, and \$1 for WIC and EBT cardholders. The museum is located at 1900 W. Nolana Ave. in McAllen.

--Compiled by Silvana Villarreal

# SUDOKU



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### Sept. 18 puzzle answer key:

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





**Alejandro Huerta**



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

Alejandro Huerta, an exercise science senior with a concentration in physical therapy, earned the fourth championship title for Club Boxing at UTRGV in April at the United States Intercollegiate Boxing Association's national tournament.

Huerta claimed his victory with no boxing competition experience after joining in September 2022. The title holder trained in wrestling, jiu jitsu and kickboxing, as well as in mixed martial arts for the last six years, before he started training in boxing.

**Q: Why did you switch to boxing?**

A: "It was the opportunity. Before, I told [my family] I [wanted] to compete, like, [in] MMA. They were like, 'Why do you want to do that? Like, just ... study.' I was like, 'Yeah, I'm studying, but I still want to do it.' And then when [a training partner] told me about college boxing, I was like, 'I could convince them for that. I don't have to pay for my trips. It's school-funded. I'm always at school, too, so I could still study.' And I did it."

**Q: How do you stay motivated?**

A: "Before, I was just all 'I want to be a better fighter. I want to win that belt.' That was the motivation. Now, the motivation is 'How do other people win that belt?' I want to get that second title. ... I'm on that path. But I don't want to be the only one to win it. ... I believe we could take the tournament championship as a team."

**Q: Who has been your biggest inspiration or role model?**

A: "Well, I'm always going to say my pops. I'm always going to say my dad, because that man has worked so hard for my family and I try my best to do right by him."

**Q: What advice would you give to a beginner boxer?**

A: "Basics and fundamentals shine bright. A lot of times, what we see is ... new people who never box ... or learn boxing from YouTube. They [will] try to do these fancy moves. They try to look at these top professional boxers and try to copy them. There's a reason why it worked for them, because they worked on their basics for a long time and perfected the basics so that they can do other things."

**Q: What do you like to do in your free time?**

A: "I, sometimes, read books. I try to get the energy to read. But [for] most of my time, I just play video games, spend time with my dog or my family. I like to go out with my family, sometimes."

**Q: What's your favorite video game?**

A: "Right now, I'm a sucker for 'Legend of Zelda: Tears of [the] Kingdom.' ... I finished 'Breath of the Wild' recently and after that ... 'Tears of the Kingdom.' That's what I'm into, right now. I also love boxing and UFC. I play 'Fight Night' and 'UFC' on Xbox."

**Q: Which movie would you want to be a character in?**

A: "My favorite movie is 'Planet of the Apes,' but I don't want to say I want to be a part of that movie. ... Like, I would say, a movie I would be part of, because it's, like, right off the bat or out of my head, 'cause it has to do with boxing ... the 'Rocky' movies."

**Q: What song could you listen to on repeat for the rest of your life?**

A: "Mr. Rager' by Kid Cudi. ... It's a good song. I listened to that song before my final fight at nationals."

--Compiled by Abigail Ollave

# Hispanic pride in UTRGV athletics

**Jose Medina**

SPORTS REPORTER

Several UTRGV athletes explain what being Hispanic means to them in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, which is observed between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15.

Alexis Gonzalez, a sophomore goalkeeper for the UTRGV Men's Soccer Team, said it feels amazing to be a Hispanic Division 1 athlete.

"Being a D1 athlete here, and close to home and around the Hispanic people, is probably the dream that any Hispanic wants," Gonzalez said.

He said it feels like an honor to be Hispanic because of the culture.

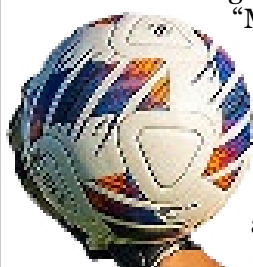
"Not a lot of people can have, like, the amazing food we have," the goalkeeper said. "And everything that we have, the culture, just makes everything more special for us."

Asked what the culture is to him, he replied it was the food and having a good time with the people around.

"Especially when we have parties," Gonzalez said. "Having a good dance, having quinceañeras, having a lot of that culture, that means a lot to us. *Dia de los Muertos*, everything like this."

Gonzalez looks up to other Hispanic athletes, one of them being Guillermo

"Memo" Ochoa. "He's been to a lot of World Cups," he said. "He's been playing in Europe and Mexico. ... He's one of the



Freshman goalkeeper Emilia Compian throws a ball on media day Aug. 24 at the Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS



Jose Medina/THE RIDER

Sophomore goalkeeper Alexis Gonzalez practices blocking shots last Tuesday during practice at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

Hispanics I look up to."

Gonzalez thinks his culture fits in great with the other

Balcázar and Hirving "Chucky" Lozano since she grew up watching them.

Garcia said with some holidays coming up, she wants to show some of her teammates how she and her family celebrate those holidays.

"We're trying to, like, convince them to come over ... to see ... how we, like, celebrate," Garcia said.

Emilia Compian, a freshman goalkeeper for the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team, said soccer in the U.S. is a white-dominated sport.

"But then you have a really strong community that loves the sport," Compian said. "Like my family and all my friends love the sport, so it's just more of a push."

She said it was nice to be an athlete in Division 1, especially at UTRGV where there is a large population of Hispanics.

Similarly to Gonzalez, Compian also looked up to Guillermo "Memo" Ochoa because he is a Hispanic goalkeeper.

Compian has family in the U.S. and Mexico and wants to make them proud and represent them both.

She also said work ethic is a big part of Hispanic culture.

"Growing up, my dad had to work in construction," she said. "A bunch of my friends' dads worked construction. That's a really hardworking job. It's very taxing on the body and mind."

Compian said that work ethic was passed on to her and it has pushed her to work harder.

"Just seeing him go [work hard] every day made me want to go every day," she said.

**"Everything that we have, the culture, just makes everything more special for us."**

--Volleyball head coach Todd Lowery

cultures on the team.

"We have a little bit of South Africans here," he said. "Their culture is really kind of similar. We're always dancing. We're always having a good time together. So, I feel like we blend in really, really well."

UTRGV Women's Soccer Team freshman midfielder Ayloni Garcia said she looked up to Javier "Chicharito" Hernández



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