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BREAKING BARRIERS

UTRGV No. 2 for Latinos in biological and biomedical sciences degrees

Fatima Gamez Lopez
 SPANISH EDITOR

Hispanic Outlook magazine has ranked UTRGV second in the nation in awarding biological and biomedical sciences degrees to Latinos for the 2020-2021 academic year.

In its July issue, the national monthly magazine, recognized the top 50 institutions that conferred 10,329 degrees to Hispanic/Latino students in all biological and biomedical sciences, with 1,342 degrees at the graduate level.

Among those degrees, UTRGV awarded 608 in biological and biomedical sciences. Of these, 91% were conferred to Hispanic/Latino students, placing UTRGV second in the nation.

"The whole field of health professions and STEM ... are underrepresented for the Hispanic population," said Saraswathy Nair, a professor and chair of the Health and Biomedical Sciences department. "So every time that UTRGV achieves an accomplishment like that, it's a step in the right direction."

Kaitlyn Dianne Ybáñez, a biomedical sciences senior, said she is happy that UTRGV



Azenett Valdez/THE RIDER

Exercise science sophomores Amanda Gonzalez (left) and Vianca Garza input the information gathered by their palm lab in their anatomy and physiology class Aug. 10 in the Life & Health Sciences Biology Wing on the Brownsville campus.

is being recognized for its efforts.

"In earning a degree in the biomedical sciences, we are entering a field where representation, our unique backgrounds, and intellect matters more than ever," Ybáñez said. "From research to clinic, it is important that diversity sparks collaboration,

for that cultivates new ideas and advances made in medicine."

UTRGV also ranked 10th in graduate degrees in biological and biomedical science, awarding 72% of 50 to Hispanic/Latinos.

"This ranking highlights that Hispanic students not only strive to delve into their

premedical interests but also are successful in accomplishing them," Ybáñez said. "As future health professionals and researchers, we should be even more inspired that the path in earning a biomedical degree is achievable."

Hispanic Outlook also recognized the top 50 See **BIOMEDICAL**, Page 3

Vaqueros saddle up for Welcome Week

Yamilet Galvez

THE RIDER

To kick off the Fall 2023 semester, the Student Union's Office of Student Activities is hosting Welcome Week, which gives Vaqueros the opportunity to get informed about organizations, campus life and resources offered by the university.

Students must bring their student ID for admission. For more information about Welcome Week, visit its website.

Cristina Rodriguez, assistant director for Student Activities, said the previous academic school year had a large number of attendees during Welcome Week.

"We did have roughly a little over 400 in Brownsville and close to 1,000 in Edinburg [for The Stomp]," Rodriguez said. "It is our goal this year to hit those marks."

Welcome Week will commence with The Stomp from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Student Union on the Brownsville campus and from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday at the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus. The event will give students the opportunity to get a glimpse of college life, receive UTRGV swag and entertainment.

The semester kickoff celebration continues through Sept. 14.

"I feel like it's a fun way to all get together and stuff," incoming biology freshman Dezerae Ibarra See **WEEK**, Page 3

Setting the rules on AI use in the classroom

Sofía M. Cantú Saucedá

THE RIDER

Artificial intelligence has become more popular on the UTRGV campus since November of last year, when the ChatGPT chatbot technology was released.

Now, several UTRGV departments are creating guidelines for courses that will be using AI and those that will not, university officials say.

"COLTT, Faculty Senate and others are working on developing a template for the syllabus for faculty who are going to be integrating AI into the courses or for faculty who don't want the students to use AI," said Francisco Garcia, director of the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology. "The statements are expected to be ready by the first day of classes."

He said the main goal of COLTT is students' success, preparing courses and providing an excellent learning experience for students.

"AI is something that is relatively new and that, you know, the world of academia is now facing and all indications are showing that is not going anywhere and it will probably get more and more part of our society," said Melba Latu, director of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

English Lecturer Charles McGregor said there are two stances among professors on AI.

"The ones who want to use it and the ones who want to police students using it and call it plagiarism," McGregor said.

On one hand, students agree AI is an enhancing tool for college assignments.

"I am for, it's just an evolution for searching in my opinion," said Marco Peña, a sophomore physics, math and computer engineering major. "Because, for example, in the past we used to search in books, and now in Google. And, now, we transition from Google into AI."

Other students say it depends on the assignment.

"I do think [AI is] useful when they correct your grammar, like Grammarly," said Mildred Infante, a psychology major. "But ChatGPT, I don't think it's really useful for students, because they are not really learning."

McGregor said he thinks AI "negatively impacts the students losing their voice."

"[It's] kind of letting AI talk for them and not having their own unique way of writing," the English lecturer said.

UTRGV does not have any specific policy for AI use in different courses, but it does for students' work.

"Our general student conduct and academic dishonesty policy does cover See **ARTIFICIAL**, Page 3



Aura Velasquez/THE RIDER

The Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology, the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Faculty Senate are developing syllabus templates for faculty members who want to incorporate artificial intelligence into the classroom and for those who are not in favor of AI.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Today Sex Education The Access for Sex- Education Organization

will hold **sexual education sessions** from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. today and Wednesday in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. Everyone in the community is welcome.

Hangout
Christians at RGV will host a **hangout and fellowship** from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Student Union Room 2.418 on the Edinburg campus.

BSM Welcome Week
The **Baptist Student Ministry** will celebrate the upcoming semester from 10:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. in the Main Courtyard on the Brownsville campus. There will be **free food and goodies**.

Campus Resource Fair
The **Center for Student Involvement** will host a **resource fair** from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Music, Science & Learning Center Room 1.105

on the Brownsville campus and from 3 to 4 p.m. in University Center Room 205 on the Edinburg campus. Students can hear about services and resources, meet others and ask questions. There will be **free food and goodies**.

Soccer Tryouts
The **UTRGV Men's Soccer Club** will hold tryouts from 5 to 7 p.m. in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus.

Brownsville Tabling
Christians at RGV will host a **meet and greet** from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the lawn outside the Main Building on the Brownsville campus and at the same time and place Tuesday and Wednesday.

Tuesday Edinburg Tabling
Christians at RGV will host a **meet and greet** from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Student Union Room 1.300 on the Edinburg campus and at the same time and place Wednesday.

Edinburg Bible Study
Christians at RGV will host a Bible study from 12:15 to

1:45 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.103 on the Edinburg campus.

Panopto Media
The **Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology** will host a **free virtual event** covering the **basics of Panopto** from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. The event can be accessed at utrgv.edu/online/training.

The Stomp Brownsville Student Activities will host **The Stomp** from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus and from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus. **The Stomp** is a signature event that brings university departments, academic programs and organizations together in a **festive environment** to welcome students during the first week of the fall semester. There will be **free food and goodies**.

Wednesday UTRGV Day
UTRGV is **celebrating its eighth year anniversary**

from 8:30 to 10 a.m. in the University Center Ballroom on the Edinburg campus and from 3 to 4:30 p.m. in the Student Union PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus. Events will also take place from 11 a.m. to noon in the McAllen Rio Bank fifth Floor Conference Room and from 1 to 2 p.m. in Harlingen Clinical Education Building Room 1.100. There will be **free food** and a **20% discount on one apparel or gift item** at the campus store.

Bible Study
Christians at RGV will host a Bible study from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in Education Complex Room 1.502 on the Edinburg campus.

Day of Giving
UTRGV **Day of Giving** is a one-day virtual fundraising event that runs from noon to 11:59 p.m. and aims to make a difference in the community. The event can be accessed at dayofgiving.utrgv.edu.

Graphic Thoughts
The **University Library** will host an open discussion of

anime and manga from 4 to 5 p.m. in University Library Room 3.117 on the Edinburg campus.

Political Science Meeting
The **Political Science Association** will host its **first meeting** of the fall semester from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in Liberal Arts Building North on the Edinburg campus. The association will talk about current political events and introduce new officers and plans.

Sunday Sunday Mass
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.

Women's Soccer
The **Women's Soccer Team** will play against the **Concordia University Texas Tornados** from noon to 2 p.m. at the Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus. Admission is **free**.

--Compiled by Alfredo Garcia Jr.

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Aug. 15 and 22.



Aug. 15 1:02 p.m.: A female student reported that she was

approached by an unknown man while painting a bench near the main entrance of Liberal Arts Building North on Aug. 8 on the Edinburg campus. The student said the man started an argument with her regarding the subject of her painting. Officers determined that no criminal offense occurred.

3:18 p.m.: University Police responded to a verbal dispute in the University Library on the Brownsville campus. When officers arrived, neither of the involved parties were present. Officers later spoke over the phone with a female employee who reported that a non-affiliated woman used abusive language towards her.

3:54 p.m.: A student reported discovering a broken side mirror to his vehicle after it was left parked in Lot E-38 on the Edinburg campus. It is unknown how the damage occurred.

8:31 p.m.: A university employee reported discovering a damaged window at the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus. The UTRGV Criminal Investigation Department identified the suspect as a current student. Investigators obtained arrest warrants for the suspect on charges of evading and resisting arrest. Investigators located and arrested the suspect on campus,

who was then booked into the Edinburg Municipal Jail without further incident.

11:48 p.m.: University Police observed a man attempting to damage a fence inside an enclosed and restricted construction site on the Edinburg campus. An officer contacted the individual and attempted to identify him, but the man fled the scene on foot. The case is under investigation.

Aug. 16 11:25 a.m.: University Police responded to Lot E-9 after a student was reportedly seen riding on the hood of a vehicle on the Edinburg campus. Officers arrived and contacted the student, who said she was just playing with her friends and decided to jump on the hood of her friend's moving vehicle. The officer did not observe the incident. No injuries were reported and no property was damaged.

1:09 p.m.: A non-affiliated woman fell on the stairs outside the Medical Education Building on the Edinburg campus. The woman declined emergency medical services.

2:14 p.m.: A male student on the Edinburg campus reported that a female student in his class had been verbally bullying him. No criminal offense occurred and the student was referred to Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Aug. 17 11:17 a.m.: A student reported that two tires on her vehicle

were damaged on Aug. 16 while it was parked in Lot E-9 on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

1:12 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported graffiti made with a permanent marker inside a restroom in the Math and General Classroom Building on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

4:28 p.m.: A female student on the Brownsville campus reported feeling dizzy and dehydrated. The student declined emergency medical services but was provided with water and escorted to a cool area.

Aug. 18 3:32 p.m.: Veterans Affairs staff members reported that a VA employee backed a golf cart into a parked vehicle occupied by a non-affiliated adult. No injuries or damage were reported.

4:38 p.m.: University Police responded to a man yelling in Lot E-5 on the Edinburg campus. Officers contacted the non-affiliated man who was found not to be in distress. The man left campus; no criminal offense occurred.

8:22 p.m.: University Police and the Edinburg Fire Department responded to an active fire alarm in the Learning Academic Center on the Edinburg campus. Officers determined that the fire alarm was triggered by a waterflow sensor. The fire department deemed the building safe for re-entry.

Aug. 19 5:22 a.m.: University Police observed closed-circuit TV footage of an individual on the south side of the border fence walking north toward the border fence near Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. University Police and U.S. Border Patrol responded to the area. U.S. Border Patrol agents apprehended a man on the south side of the border fence.

Aug. 21 6:44 a.m.: While viewing closed-circuit TV footage, a UTRGV Police Communications Operator observed an individual crossing the border fence near Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. U.S. Border Patrol agents and a University Police officer responded to the area. A search was conducted, but officers were unable to locate the individual.

11:11 a.m.: University Police responded to a traffic collision in Lot E-9 on the Edinburg campus. Officers contacted a student who said that she struck a parked vehicle while attempting to reverse out of a parking space. The student left a note with her information on the vehicle's windshield since it was unoccupied. No injuries were reported.

4:06 p.m.: University Police responded to a female patient who was upset and refusing to leave the UT Health RGV Behavioral Health Clinic on the Harlingen campus. The patient believed she had a scheduled

doctor's appointment. Upon the officer's arrival, the patient had already left the clinic.

8:04 p.m.: University Police responded to two students stuck inside the elevator in the Science Building on the Edinburg campus. The Edinburg Fire Department arrived on scene and removed the students from the elevator. No injuries were reported. A work order was placed to have the elevator fixed.

Aug. 22 12:06 a.m.: Custodial services employees waved down University Police in reference to a suspicious man at the Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus. Officers checked the area and did not locate the man.

10:39 a.m.: University Police and the Edinburg Police Department responded to an off-campus residence to check on the well-being of a female student. The Edinburg Police Department located the female student deceased inside her apartment. Edinburg Police are handling the investigation of the unattended death.

5:30 p.m.: University Police responded to a male student who reported having a seizure in the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus. Emergency medical services arrived on scene and transported the student to a hospital for further evaluation.

--Compiled by Rebeca Salinas

THE RIDER

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UTRGV Athletics brings the heat

Yamilet Galvez
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Department of Intercollegiate Athletics announced a new partnership with award-winning salsa company *Tio Pelon Salsita* to create a consumable product called *The Vaqueros Especial*.

Chasse Conque, UTRGV vice president and director of Athletics, said the department is currently working with *Tio Pelon Salsita*.

Jonah Goldberg, senior associate athletic director for Communications & Championships, said after the release of Los Vaqueros Beer, an immense amount of support from the community transpired.

"It's getting people excited," Goldberg said. "I think it's this realization that we've arrived. This is big."

The profits from the product will be going to support student athletes and are a part of the licensing program at UTRGV.

Goldberg said "D1.Ticker," a reader's digest about daily news on Division 1, releases information about consumables at college institutions. He utilizes this as a resource for ideas and how to expand on them for future products of UTRGV.

Tio Pelon Salsita can be found in several different locations throughout the state. It can be bought at H-E-B locations in the Rio Grande Valley. There are also some gift shops, boutiques and stores that carry the salsa, Conque said.

"Hopefully, in early 2024 to mid 2024 we will be able to launch in H-E-B in the Rio Grande Valley," said Oscar Javier Perez, *Tio Pelon Salsita* chief operating officer.

Perez said the process in creating the

salsa began in November to December 2022.

Conque said the primary goal of creating the product is "expanding the brand of UTRGV."

"We're certainly open and eager to continue to engage with folks that want to create co-brand consumables that our students, faculty, staff, fans and alumni can enjoy," he said. "Not just the product itself, but promoting their school spirit and pride in Vaqueros."

The flavor of the salsa can be described as "roasted jalapeno and chili *piquin* salsa."

"It has a very nice smoky flavor, with a nice kick," Perez said. "It's spicy."

Primarily, the salsa consists of chile *piquin* and dried spices, with the majority being jalapeno, he said.

"There's a lot of logistics to it," Perez said, referencing guidelines that must be followed when creating consumable products. "First, we had to get it approved by the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration]. We had to send it to a lab and get a test kit to make sure it's a safe product to eat."

"Once that is done, we have to go through [a Research and Development] process to get the salsa right and make sure we send the right recipe to the lab, as well as do an RND for a label. Then we get labels ordered. Once we have all that placed, we are able to cook it and sell it in stores."

The region of South Texas and Northern Mexico, where Perez is from, inspired the salsa concept.

"It's very typical to see chile *piquin* growing in a lot of places down there in the yard and backyards," Perez said.

He said it has enough spice and good



Eduardo Cortez/THE RIDER

UTRGV is a few weeks away from announcing the Vaqueros Especial salsa, university officials say. Shown is a mock-up of the design, although this is not the final look of the label. "The product has not been released yet," said Jonah Goldberg, senior associate athletic director for Communications & Championships. "... There are still a few details to flesh out, so this is all we have right now." The salsa is expected to be produced by Tio Pelon Salsita and it will be "creamy jalapeno" flavored

flavor to it.

"I would say it would be a seven and a half to eight on a scale of 10," Perez said.

Conque said the Vaqueros Especial is going to be tailored to the UTRGV brand.

"If you've had other *Tio Pelon Salsa*, you know they are very good," he added. "I'm confident that this is going to be an excellent addition to our brand, and also consumables that we are starting to see grow within our university and our athletics department."

The salsa is expected to be released in September. The item will be promoted at

future UTRGV Athletics games.

Dulce Sanchez, a senior bilingual education major said, "I knew about the salsa, I saw it on Facebook. Maybe I'll try it."

Olivia Scott, a junior education major, said she is open to trying the salsa.

"That sounds interesting," Scott said.

"Depending if it's spicy, definitely. If it's mild, sure. If it's like normal, then I uess. Either way, yeah."

BIOMEDICAL

Continued from Page 1

institutions that conferred a total of 25,923 degrees to

Hispanic/Latino students in health professions and related programs, with 9,485 degrees at a graduate level in all health professions.

Among those degrees, UTRGV awarded 770 in health professions and related programs. Of these, 78% were conferred to Hispanic/Latino students, placing UTRGV 11th in the nation.

UTRGV also ranked seventh in graduate degrees to health professions and related programs, awarding 68% of 460 to Hispanic/Latinos.

"So, we insist on a strong GPA," Nair said. "The average GPA of a Bmed student is 3.4. We have a progression requirement: If they fall below 3, we stop them out of the program and say, 'You can take non-biomedical science courses until your GPA is 3.' Then,

you can reenter the program, or you can consider changing your major."

Nair said the department is "very strict" on the GPA requirement because no health professional graduate school or graduate program admissions committee will even look at a student application if the GPA is below 3.5.

Ybáñez encourages students to stay in the biomedical sciences program.

"Don't ever doubt yourself," she said. "You are more than enough in obtaining all the knowledge coming your way. Find your support system and have fun in every step towards your goals because you deserve it."

For more information on the UTRGV Department of Health and Biomedical Science degrees, visit its website or email saraswathy.nair@utrgv.edu or healthandbiomedicalsciences@utrgv.edu.

ARTIFICIAL

Continued from Page 1

students doing their own work, so that will be covered by it," Latu said.

COLTT Director Garcia said AI is most used in courses such as computer science, government, history and English or other language classes.

Even if the university does not have a software to detect AI, specifically, "Respondus LockDown Browser used to monitor exams and also SafeAssign are leaning into that direction [to detect AI]," Garcia said.

The consequences students receive for using artificial intelligence is still in the hands of the professors.

Professors have the authority to penalize the student or re-assign the coursework, Latu said.

With the emergence of new technology, there can be issues on how it is used.

"Tech is going to be like that," McGregor said. "There's this reaction where we have to stop it, but I think, eventually, it is here to stay."

WEEK

Continued from Page 1

said about Welcome Week. "It's easier to make friends. Right now, we are kind of nervous for the first day of school, and I don't know what's going to happen."

Ibarra said she wants to meet people and make friends.

Rodriguez said new festivities will be held based on the time of day the events take place. Brownsville's activities are during the day, while Edinburg's are in the evening.

"We have Kona Ice as one of the nice giveaway items [in Brownsville]," she said. "In Edinburg, we do have a band. A live band that will perform the last hour. So those are unique items to both campuses. But we are with Pepsi and they will be giving out drinks as well as some snacks at the event. ... And then also Chartwells will be present as well. So you get to see a lot of new food opportunities that the campus is going to be offering to the students."

Wednesday, UTRGV celebrates its eighth anniversary with events on the Edinburg, Harlingen and Brownsville campuses and in McAllen.

"Since we do have The Stomp on both Edinburg and Brownsville, we wanted to add an element to the Harlingen campus," Rodriguez said. "We do have a couple of departments coming out and joining efforts with UTRGV Day to have a fair in Harlingen."

Students can learn about student

Welcome Week Events		
EVENT:	LOCATION:	DATES/TIMES:
The Stomp	Brownsville	11 a.m. Tuesday
The Stomp	Edinburg	4 p.m. Thursday
UTRGV Day	Brownsville	All day Wednesday
UTRGV Day	Edinburg	All day Wednesday
Day of Giving	Brownsville	Noon Wednesday
Day of Giving	Edinburg	Noon Wednesday
Job Fair	Brownsville	11:30 a.m. Thursday
Job Fair	Edinburg	11:30 a.m. Thursday

Eduardo Cortez/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

organizations at the Involvement Fair, which is scheduled from noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 5 in the University Ballroom and from noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 7 in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus.

"If you reach out to First Year Experience Trailblazers, there is an identified student that works with a group of freshmen, reminding them of upcoming events or being that support system for them," Rodriguez said. "... So as you're leaving class, we hope that there's an activity or something out there that can attract your attention."

Incoming freshman kinesiology major Rudy Vega looks forward to attending Welcome Week.

"It makes people stand out instead of being shy and staying in just one place, it expands our vision," Vega said "Like, there's other things not just for me, but for everyone else around."

A Part-Time Job Fair will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sept. 5 in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. The fair is also scheduled from noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 7 in Salón Cassia on the Brownsville campus. Students

can engage with campus departments and off-campus employers. Students are encouraged to bring a resume.

Late Nite at the Rec is a campus tradition for UTRGV students to have fun by engaging with one another with games, entertainment and learning about recreation programs and sports clubs that are offered by the Recreation Center. The event is free and will be held from 9 p.m. to midnight Sept. 7 in the UREC on the Edinburg campus. This event will only take place on the Edinburg campus. Brownsville students are welcome to attend.

Mabel Cortina Matos, assistant director of the Center of Student Involvement, said UTRGV has launched a program called Traditions Keeper.

"Within that program, Traditions Keeper is going to be a program that's going to exist on wheeling and dealing with the engagement platform that all of us use for marketing our events," Cortina Matos said. "It's a platform where student organizations are able to host all of their data."

A popular staple of Welcome Week is Picnic with the President, where students can meet UTRGV President Guy Bailey. Students will be served hamburgers and soft drinks from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 12 in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg Campus. In Brownsville, the event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sept. 14 in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón.



YAQUERO VOICE

What piece of advice would you give to other college students?



“I would say to take advantage of all the opportunities they give you with financial aid and scholarships.”

Jaime Pena
computer engineering freshman



“Definitely do your reading and do not procrastinate. Even though it seems easy, don’t do it.”

January Morin
psychology graduate student



“Just stay on top of things. Organize yourself and just do your best, whatever you can, and preferably do something you actually like doing.”

Leroy Uriel Delgado
UTRGV employee and May 2023 graduate with a master’s in educational technology



“I would definitely say just use your resources, use your maps, use Outlook Calendar. It’s such a good asset, especially if you don’t like writing on a planner.”

Selma Mendez
marine biology junior

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

Are you on BookTok?



Estefania Ramirez
PHOTOGRAPHER

Throughout my entire 13 years of schooling, I was required to read books for homework or for tests. Some students enjoyed it, while others dreaded it.

As a student, I was not fond of reading. It felt as if books were forced onto me. For example, from elementary to middle school, a part of a student’s overall grade came from the number of Accelerated Reader points we obtained.

I remember my seventh grade reading teacher would remind me when the deadline was coming up and I was falling behind in my points. I felt stressed, but I realized it had been my own fault for not reading.

Reading was not something I enjoyed, so I had to really motivate myself to do it to maintain an “A.” Once I graduated from high school, I was happy that I did not have to do any more required reading.

The summer after my senior year, I spent time hanging out with my friends and endlessly

scrolling on the social media app, TikTok. I came across a video of a girl reviewing a few books she had read. She captioned her video, “BookTok, books that you should read.”

I was not interested, so I scrolled onto the next video. Then, more BookTok videos started showing up on my “For You” page the same week.

After this one girl mentioned her favorite thriller books, I became intrigued. I was not a huge fan of reading, but thrillers and science fiction books did catch my attention.

I watched the entirety of the

It is beneficial to both the reader and the author. I believe that TikTok has encouraged individuals to read.

video and I decided I could give this book a chance.

During this time, my younger sister had already been introduced to BookTok. She would open up her Amazon app or go to our local Target to buy the book she had been interested in. Since she was already on BookTok, I was more open to the idea.

I read the book “Behind Closed Doors” by B.A. Paris. The book is well written, and it easily became one of my favorites. Over time, more TikTok creators were uploading their own opinions and thoughts on the books they read.

This became popular on the app, and people from all over

the world were introduced to a variety of books.

A lot of romance and drama books became more popular as they were getting more exposure through TikTok likes, views and comments.

About a year ago, Colleen Hoover’s books were highly popular and liked. There was a fandom of people on TikTok who commented what they liked so much about her collection.

Colleen Hoover became popular, but so did other authors such as Taylor Jenkins Reid, Emily Henry, Jennifer Lynn Barnes, Jenny Han, Riley Sager, Lucey Foley, Karin Slaughter and many more. Not-so-popular authors can and have become known as a result of TikTok.

It is beneficial to both the reader and the author. I believe that TikTok has encouraged more individuals to read. BookTok’s recommendations include drama, romance, science fiction, historical fiction and thrillers.

With so many choices, there’s certainly one that has to catch the eye of someone even if they claim to not like reading.

BookTok has introduced me to some of my favorite books and made me realize I can enjoy reading. A TikTok review can also help me get a sense of what the book is about and whether it’s something I’d like to read. BookTok is so popular it even has its own section at Barnes & Noble.



Eduardo Cortez/FOTO RIDER

Nombre: Laura Balboa

Carrera: Inglés

Clasificación: Estudiante de segundo año

Fecha de graduación: Otoño 2026

Ciudad natal: Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México

Actividades extracurriculares: “Me gusta tejer”.

¿Cuáles son las diferencias entre tu ciudad natal y los Estados Unidos?

“Siento que en México es más fácil encontrar formas en que pasar la tarde. Puedes salir de tu casa y a la vuelta está una tienda o un parque y en Estados Unidos tienes que ir en carro a cualquier lugar y básicamente solo puedes ir al mall de compras o a comer”.

¿Qué hay en tu lista de deseos?

“Tengo varios deseos pero creo que ninguno es algo como, ‘Ay, quiero ir a Florida’, o algo así. Es más como, ‘Quiero terminar este proyecto de tejido que tengo o quiero encontrar un trabajo’, cosas así”.

¿Quién es tu ejemplo a seguir?

“Creo que mi hermana. Ella siempre ha sido muy independiente. Ahorita, [ella] es [una] abogada y tiene mucho trabajo. La veo y digo, ‘Wow, quiero ser como ella’”.

¿Por qué elegiste la carrera en la que estás?

“Casi todos en mi familia son maestros. La mayoría de mis tíos, mis primos, todos son maestros y pues eso me puso, pues, en esa carrera. ... Cuando pensé pues que materia quiero enseñar realmente no soy tan buena con los niños pequeños así que dije, ‘Bueno la primaria no’. La [materia] que más soy buena pues es el inglés y dije, ‘Bueno pues el inglés’”.

¿Qué consejo le darías a otros estudiantes internacionales?

“Sería que aprovechen más los recursos que ofrece la escuela y que investiguen en qué maneras pueden salir adelante. Yo realmente no tuve mucha ayuda en eso porque solo ... una que otra persona en mi familia ha estudiado en Estados Unidos. Realmente no tuve mucho apoyo y siento que hubiera sido mucho mejor [y] me hubiera preparado mejor si hubiera aprovechado los recursos que da la escuela”.

--Recopilado por Fatima Gamez Lopez

‘Un paso en la dirección correcta’



Azenett Valdez /FOTO RIDER

Christian Gomez, estudiante de tercer año de ciencias del ejercicio (derecha), analiza los diferentes músculos del cuerpo con Marlene Gonzalez, estudiante de tercer año de ciencias de la salud integrada, en su clase de anatomía y fisiología el 10 de agosto en el edificio de Ciencias de la Vida y la Salud en el campus de Brownsville.

Fatima Gamez Lopez EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

La revista *Hispanic Outlook* ha clasificado a UTRGV en segundo lugar en la nación en otorgar títulos en ciencias biológicas y biomédicas a latinos para el año académico 2020-2021.

En su edición de julio, la revista mensual nacional reconoció a las 50 mejores instituciones que otorgaron 10,329 títulos a estudiantes hispanos/latinos en todas las ciencias biológicas y biomédicas, con 1,342 títulos a nivel de posgrado.

Entre esos títulos, UTRGV otorgó 608 en ciencias biológicas y biomédicas. De estos, el 91% se otorgaron a estudiantes hispanos/latinos, lo que coloca a UTRGV en el segundo lugar a nivel nacional.

“Todo el campo de las profesiones de la salud y STEM... están subrepresentados para la población hispana”, dijo Saraswathy Nair, profesora y presidenta del departamento de Salud y Ciencias Biomédicas. “Entonces, cada vez que UTRGV obtiene un logro como este, es un paso en la dirección correcta”.

Kaitlyn Dianne Ybáñez, estudiante de último año de ciencias biomédicas, dijo que está feliz de que UTRGV sea reconocida por sus esfuerzos.

“Al obtener un título en ciencias biomédicas, estamos ingresando a un campo donde la representación, nuestros antecedentes únicos y el intelecto importan más que nunca”, dijo Ybáñez. “Desde la investigación hasta la clínica, es importante que la diversidad genere colaboración, ya que cultiva nuevas ideas y avances en medicina”.

UTRGV también ocupó el décimo

lugar en títulos de posgrado en ciencias biológicas y biomédicas, otorgando el 72% de 50 a hispanos/latinos.

“Esta clasificación destaca que los estudiantes hispanos no solo se esfuerzan por profundizar en

el 78% se otorgaron a estudiantes hispanos/latinos, lo que coloca a UTRGV en el puesto 11 en la nación.

UTRGV también ocupó el séptimo lugar en títulos de posgrado en profesiones de la salud y programas relacionados, otorgando el 68% de 460 a hispanos/latinos.

“Entonces, insistimos en un GPA fuerte”, dijo Nair. “El GPA promedio de un estudiante de *Bmed* es 3.4. Tenemos un requisito de progresión: si caen por debajo de 3, los detenemos del programa y les decimos: ‘Pueden tomar cursos de ciencias no biomédicas hasta que su GPA sea 3’. Luego, pueden volver a ingresar al programa o pueden considerar cambiar de carrera”.

Nair dijo que el departamento es “muy estricto” con el requisito de GPA porque ninguna escuela de posgrado profesional de la salud o comité de admisiones de programas de posgrado examinará la solicitud de un estudiante si el GPA es inferior a 3.5.

Ybáñez anima a los estudiantes a permanecer en el programa de ciencias biomédicas.

“Nunca dudes de ti mismo”, dijo. “Eres más que suficiente para obtener todo el conocimiento que se te presente. Encuentra tu sistema de apoyo y diviértete en cada paso hacia tus metas porque te lo mereces”.

Para obtener más información sobre los títulos del Departamento de Salud y Ciencias Biomédicas de UTRGV, visite su sitio web o envíe un correo electrónico a saraswathy.nair@utrgv.edu o healthandbiomedicalsciences@utrgv.edu

“Al obtener un título en ciencias biomédicas, estamos ingresando a un campo donde la representación, nuestros antecedentes únicos y el intelecto importan más que nunca”

-- Kaitlyn Dianne Ybáñez, estudiante de último año de ciencias biomédicas

sus intereses premédicos, sino que también tienen éxito en lograrlos”, dijo Ybáñez. “Como futuros profesionales de la salud e investigadores, deberíamos estar aún más inspirados de que el camino para obtener un título biomédico sea realizable”.

Hispanic Outlook también reconoció a las 50 mejores instituciones que otorgaron un total de 25,923 títulos a estudiantes hispanos/latinos en profesiones de la salud y programas relacionados, con 9,485 títulos a nivel de posgrado en todas las profesiones de la salud.

Entre esos títulos, UTRGV otorgó 770 en profesiones de la salud y programas relacionados. De estos,

Camille Playhouse: musical for the ages

Silvana Villarreal
A&E REPORTER

“Rock of Ages,” the hit musical, will return to the stage after its last appearance at the Camille Playhouse SummerStock in 2017, but this time around, the production will feature a cast of actors all from the Rio Grande Valley.

The production follows a small town girl with dreams of becoming an actress, a bar called the “Bourbon Room” with threats of being demolished and a love story between the protagonists with twists and turns.

The cast is made up of 17 members, nine principals and eight ensemble members.

Camille Playhouse Artistic Director Brandon Binder, a Brownsville native, said the ensemble members are the ones who really create the scene and the environment of everything, as they have the hardest role of playing up to eight different characters throughout the show.

“This time that we’re doing it, it is solely people from our community, which extends all the way to people in Harlingen,” Binder said.

He said there is a stigma about live theater that it is only for older people.

“We really wanted to change that with this show, really inviting people who are interested in rock music and something a little bit more—I don’t want to say modern—but just really pulling to a younger diversity of the community,” Binder said.

“Rock of Ages” is a jukebox musical, meaning it features music taken from famous artists.

Musical Director Victoria Zamora, a vocal performance major at UTRGV, said the production includes a lot of classic rock songs, as well as music that is known by the general public and may be found in everyone’s playlists.

Songs included in the score are Pat Benatar’s “Hit Me With Your Best Shot,” Def Leppard’s “Pour Some Sugar on Me” and Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believin’.”



Aura Velasquez/THE RIDER

UTRGV music education major Larissa Chavez and other members of the “Rock of Ages” ensemble rehearse choreography last Wednesday in the Camille Playhouse.

“I think it’s a really fun score,” Zamora said. “It’s really fun to teach. It appeals more to people who aren’t used to any sort of musical theater. ... I think it’s more encompassing and more involving of people.”

The show will feature a live band, which includes two guitarists, a bassist, a pianist and a drummer.

“It is live music,” Zamora said. “It’s

it ... the dancing aspect really got people to open up with me a little more.”

As rehearsal started, Esparza said the cast was very tense and timid, but now she’s looking forward to seeing the audience’s reactions and giving them the “wow” factor.

Xitlaly Garcia, a music performance student at UTRGV, will portray protagonist Sherrie Christian in her first-ever production with the Camille Playhouse.

The words “extravagant, loud and rock ‘n’ roll” were used to describe the musical and Garcia said getting to dance and rehearse with her castmates has been great.

“This being my first time here at Camille, I think I’ve met some really great people,” she said.

With only a month of rehearsal, the playhouse will be ready for opening night at 8 p.m. Sept. 8. The musical will also be presented at 8 p.m. Sept. 9, 2 p.m. Sept. 10, 8 p.m. Sept. 15 and 16, and 2 p.m. Sept. 17.

“Rock of Ages” is recommended for theatergoers ages 18 and older.

The Camille Playhouse is located at 1 Dean Porter Park Dr. in Brownsville. Tickets are \$25 each and can be purchased at the box office or online.

“I think it’s a really fun score. It’s really fun to teach. It appeals more to people who aren’t used to any sort of musical theatre.”

--Musical Director Victoria Zamora

not being played with a track. It is going to be, basically, like everyone is at a rock concert for about an hour and 45.”

Actor Melanie Esparza, who will portray the role of Justice, is also the show’s choreographer.

Esparza said that a lot of the movement in the show is based around the female cast, making her feel empowered as a woman.

“It’s really cool seeing people break out of their shells because ‘Rock of Ages’ [has] a lot of mature content in it,” she said. “So, for people that are just hopping into

UPCOMING EVENTS

Community Events

First Friday

The City of Brownsville will host its First Friday-Hispanic Heritage Month event from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday. The event will feature local vendors, live music, pedicabs and family activities. Night life in the downtown Brownsville Market Square ends at 2 a.m.

Farmer’s Market

The City of McAllen will host its weekly Farmer’s Market where you can buy local produce, skincare, grass-fed meats and more from 9 a.m. to noon every Saturday at Firemen’s Park, located at 201 N. 1st St.

Mingle Event

Meet Texas will host a bookwork social at 7 p.m. Saturday in Búho Bookstore, located at 1140 E. Washington St. in Brownsville.

Tacos Fest

Tacos Y Tequila Fest will take place at 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in the South Padre Island Convention Centre, located at 7355 Padre Blvd. The festival will feature events such as a taco eating contest. Admission is free.

Arts

Art Gallery

Local artist Christopher Karr will present a gallery exhibition of his depiction of pyramids from Mesoamerica through Sept. 30 at the Kreative Grounds Cafe, located at 609 N. 10th St. in McAllen. Admission is free.

Museums

Free Museum Admission

The Weslaco Museum is offering free admission every first Saturday of the month. The current exhibit is “De Colores: Life in Color Art” by Roel Sandoval Florez. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and located at 500 S. Texas Blvd.

--Compiled by Silvana Villarreal



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Emilia Compian



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Emilia Compian is a goalkeeper for the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Compian is from Mesquite, Texas, and enjoys spending time with friends.

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

A: "I just kind of go out with my friends, mostly. I like going to the movies with my friends, especially my hometown friends. Here, a bunch of the girls like baking and like hanging out and like going shopping and stuff like that. I think that we actually have a really good chemistry in the team."

Q: What kind of music do you like?

A: "I like a lot of, like, R&B, sometimes, like, Brent Faiyaz, Frank Ocean or, like, rap. I like listening to Young Dolph, Drake, stuff like that. Right now, [my favorite song] is maybe, like, 'Ivy' by Frank Ocean."

Q: Who is one of your role models?

A: "One of my role models ... is, probably, my sister. She went through a lot growing up and we kind of, like, had different childhoods at different times because she is, like, a lot older than me. Seeing how far she's come and where she is now in life and how successful she is really drove me."

Q: What motivates you?

A: "Really just making my family proud back home. Because they have put a lot of effort and time into me and I really want to prove to them that it's not for nothing and that I'm here to do good and get my college education and everything."

Q: Would you want to keep playing soccer or do something with your degree?

A: "I'm thinking if the opportunity does come up, [playing soccer] will be something I do look into. But I do want to pursue, like, being an FBI agent somewhere in there or even go to law school after. It just depends where I'm at in four years time. I think it would be an option if it's there."

Q: What are some of your personal goals?

A: "My personal goal is to be able to be a good role model. I have two nieces that are pretty young. One is 8 and one is about to be 2 soon. I want to be a good role model for them, so I do want to be a homeowner. I want to have all these basic things that I almost didn't see growing up, so I want to give them that and be someone that they can look up to. So, that's really one of my big goals in life, just to be a great role model, 'cause they're such young girls."

--Compiled by Jose Medina

UTRGV Men's Club Soccer tryouts



Ryan Lugo/THE RIDER

The UTRGV Men's Club Soccer warms up for tryouts by doing two laps around the field. The tryouts are set to continue from 5 to 7 p.m. today at the University Recreation Soccer Fields on the Edinburg campus.

Jose Medina

SPORTS REPORTER

The Men's Club Soccer is set to continue tryouts from 5 to 7 p.m. today at the University Recreation Soccer Fields on the Edinburg campus.

Club President Diego Torres said the club is expecting about 50 people to try out.

"We have held tryouts multiple times," Torres said. "What we did for these tryouts is on our Instagram account. We have a link that you click so you make a tryout form. That way we can know and expect how many people are going to try out."

To join the club, applicants must be enrolled at UTRGV and have at least a 2.0 GPA to compete in the games.

The Rider asked Torres if there was a limit on the number of people who could join the club. He replied there is no limit.

Torres explained that there are two sides of the club. The competitive side that competes in tournaments and the recreational side that practices and plays friendly games.

"Maybe you don't want to travel," he said. "Maybe you don't want to spend the money of the fee of the competitive side. So that way you can join the recreational. You can still practice with everyone. You can still be part of all the activities, just not the competitive games. So there's no limit. We can have as many people as they come."

Torres said the recreational side of the club has a yearly fee of \$25, while the competitive side has a fee of \$50.

"We also know that things happen, so we promote to members of the club that it doesn't have to be, like, one payment," he said. "Maybe you can

pay, like, every month, or every week, so we don't put them in the pressure of paying that amount of money right away."

The club has previously played against other universities throughout Texas, as it is part of the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association.

"We've played against the [University of Texas at Austin] ... [Texas Southmost College], [South Texas College] and Trinity

comparison with the colorful training vests.

Akwarandu also reminds students to fill out the online form to make things easier going forward with the tryouts.

Helping the club with training is its new head coach Jesus Rodriguez, a former UTRGV Club Soccer member who has previous experience playing for New Mexico State University, as well as coaching younger players.

The Rider asked Rodriguez if there was a limit to the number of players who can join the competitive side of the club. He said there was going to be a limit.

"I usually like to take 22, just so I can have two in every position and, like, at least I can guarantee ... everybody can play," Rodriguez said. "But, yeah, so the limit's 25."

With this being his first semester as coach for the club, Rodriguez is ready to see what it is like to coach older players.

The schedule and tryout forms can be found on the club's Instagram page, @utrgvclubsoccer.

"You can join the recreational. You can still practice with everyone. You can still be part of all the activities,"

--Club President Diego Torres

[University]," Torres said.

Club Vice President Richmond Akwarandu said they will find games for the recreational side of the club to play in.

"They're not just coming to practice just to practice," Akwarandu said. "We're trying to see if we can find games for them. ... We're still in the works for putting them in ... like, a Sunday league or something and give them the equipment that they need."

"That way, they can just be involved coming to practice. That way, coaches can cater to them when it comes to Sunday league."

Akwarandu said the club leadership wants to make sure everyone in competitive and recreational sections will have a game during the fall.

He reminds individuals looking to try out to bring equipment, cleats, water, white T-shirts and black shorts to make it easier to be identified in

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THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Noon Sunday vs. Concordia University Texas

AT THE UTRGV SOCCER AND TRACK & FIELD COMPLEX



PART OF UTRGV'S
WELCOME WEEK

THE STOMP

BROWNSVILLE

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11 AM - 2 PM

BSTUN Lawn

EDINBURG

08.31

4 - 7 PM

EUREC

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UTRGV.edu/WelcomeWeek

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