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TAX ABOLISHED

Texas ends 'tampon tax'; campus community shares thoughts

Eduardo Escamilla
 THE RIDER

Senate Bill 379 went into effect Sept. 1 in Texas, exempting menstrual hygiene products from sales and use taxes. The law aims to address gender-based discrimination and ensure fair access and affordability for all, a UTRGV professor says.

"Every little dollar counts," health sophomore Mia Alvarez told The Rider when asked if this tax exemption would benefit those in need. "I've grown up in, like, a poorer family," Alvarez said. "Even more so now, we're struggling a lot, so I imagine that the tax exemption would help so much more, in little or big ways."

The Rider asked Amy Hay, an associate professor of history and an affiliated faculty member in sexuality, gender and women's studies, if the removal of the tax benefits the advancement of women's rights.

"Yes, and it's because it's

a recognition that this is a fundamental experience and, unfortunately, a price that women have paid to menstruate," Hay said. "For those individuals that menstruate, there's been a cost they've paid, and it's been mostly hidden."

Under the previous tax structure, menstrual products such as tampons, pads and menstrual cups were subject to sales tax.

"It was treated like a consumer item and was taxed," Hay said. "There was not necessarily a recognition of this as a health item."

Hay said the consciousness of what the product is used for has changed.

"What does it mean that we tax it like it's a consumer good versus a health-care item?" she said. "... Some people, they can't afford it. It puts a burden on their financial stability or health."

Texas is now the 25th state to exempt tampons and other feminine hygiene

See **TAX**, Page 8



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

Amy Hay, an associate professor of history at UTRGV, weighs in on the removal of the sales tax on feminine hygiene products. "It was treated like a consumer item and was taxed," Hay said about the products before Senate Bill 379 went into effect Sept. 1. "There was not necessarily a recognition of this as a health item."

University officials talk new equipment, construction for School of Art and Design

Natalie Lapsley
 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With a budget of about \$186,000, the School of Art and Design is in the process of acquiring new equipment and furniture. Meanwhile, a proposal for a new building is in the works.

Ed Pogue, director of the School of Art and Design, and Gina Palacios, associate director and an assistant professor, led a meeting Sept. 1 to announce the idea of new construction to house art classes on the Brownsville campus and update students on efforts to purchase furniture and equipment.

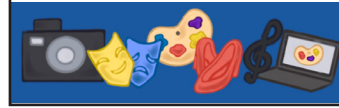
"Starting [Sept. 5], the office will be starting to order the equipment," Pogue said during the meeting. "We've already been talking with the faculty about their needs."

In an interview with The

Rider last Wednesday, Pogue said the university is going to purchase everything through its procurement system, which means lower costs and faster purchases than through a vendor.

On the shopping list are

**Room for Creativity:
 Second in a Series**



new tables and chairs, easels for painting and drawing, a kiln for ceramics, storage equipment and a few new computers.

Pogue and Palacios also reminded students during the meeting of the new computer lab located in Cortez Hall Room 139, which the university leases from Texas

Southmost College.

Palacios told The Rider last Thursday that five classes are conducted in the lab: design communication, two digital photography, multimedia emerging design and a special topics course on digital painting and drawing.

The lab is home to 14 student computers, two photography scanners, a 3D printer and a large format printer. Palacios said that hours of operation will depend on the lab managers' availability, adding that only one student is working in the lab, so far.

"Right now, what we really need is people in the morning, you know, 8 a.m. to [whenever] the first class in there is," she said.

The Handshake application for lab manager positions

See **CREATIVITY**, Page 8



Azenett Valdez/THE RIDER

Studio art senior Yental Márquez (left) and visual communication design junior Luz Rodriguez raise concerns at the Sept. 1 art town hall meeting on the conditions of Rusteberg Hall.

Correction

A caption underneath a photograph of UTRGV art Lecturer Clarissa Martinez that was published in the Sept. 11 issue of The Rider contained the wrong information. The caption should have read as follows: Art and Design Lecturer and Brownsville artist Clarissa Martinez showcases her digital art featured in a Coca-Cola campaign for Hispanic Heritage Month.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Today Corps Program
The UTRGV Center for Innovation and Commercialization will host the **National Science Foundation I-Corps Teams Program** to identify NSF-funded researchers who will receive additional support in the form of entrepreneurial education, mentoring and funding to accelerate innovation that can attract subsequent third-party funding. The event takes place online from 8 to 11:45 a.m. through Sunday. To participate, apply to the NSF I-Corps at nsf.gov.

Sex Education
Access for Sex-Education will host **educational sessions** from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. today and Wednesday in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. **Free goodies** will be provided.

Bible Study
Christians at RGV will hold a **Bible study** from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Life and Health Sciences Biology Wing Room 1.312 on the Brownsville campus. The event will also take place from 12:15 to 1:45 p.m. Tuesday in Student Academic Center Room 1.103 on the Edinburg campus.

K.I.S.S.
The **Korean International Student Society** will meet to talk about Korean culture, music and language from 4 to 5:30 p.m. through Thursday in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.

Prayer
The **Muslim Students Association** will meet to **pray** from 1 to 2 p.m. today and Tuesday in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Boot Camp
University Recreation will host

a **traditional boot camp-style exercise** for the entire body 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 in the same location.

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

Boxing Workout
University Recreation will host a **group training workout** that sculpts the body and burns calories while practicing boxing from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. today and Wednesday in University Recreation Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus.

Group Yoga
University Recreation will host a **group yoga session** from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday Rhythm Night in Brownsville
The **Student Union** will give **free** dance lessons hosted in partnership with **Fusion Latina Dance** studio from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Student Union's La Sala 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.

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.

UREC Barbell
University Recreation will host **barbell classes** that incorporate

functional strength training from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. in the University Recreation Center on the Edinburg campus.

Cycle Fit
University Recreation will host **cycle classes** that cover the foundational yoga postures practiced to align, strengthen and promote flexibility in the body from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. on the upper Fitness Floor of the Texas Southmost College Recreation Center in Brownsville.

Wednesday Brownsville Tabling
Christians at RGV will host a **meet and greet** from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

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 109 on the Edinburg campus. Students will learn about linguistics, medicine, biology, evolution and archaeology.

Camping 101
University Recreation will host a **camping course** where attendees can learn about proper gear selection, packing techniques and outdoor essentials. The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus.

Brand Geniuz CEO lecture

Yaw Sam, the CEO of **Brand Geniuz** and a renowned expert in branding and marketing strategy, will speak about building impactful brands and navigating the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Mathematics & General Classrooms Room 1.302 on the Edinburg campus. Sam's lecture will be hosted by the **Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization**.

Thursday Let's Chalk About It

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month will be the topic of **Let's Chalk About It**, hosted by the **Counseling Center** from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in front of El Comedor on the Brownsville campus and on the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus. This event will be an opportunity to learn about suicide prevention and chalk positive messages on the sidewalk.

Figma UI
Jorge Orta, vice president of **Valle Game Devs**, will speak about the basics of Figma and how to use the web application software to create user interfaces and design "digital products and experiences," according to its website. The discussion will take place from 6 to 7 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building Room 1.206 on the Edinburg campus.

Friday Faculty Duo Recital
In celebration of **Hispanic Heritage Month**, the **School of Music** will present a duo recital by Assistant Professor **Diana Seitz** on violin and Professor **Joel Pagán** on viola from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. The recital will feature music by **Nicky Aponte**, **Manuel M. Ponce**, **José L. Elizondo**, **Astor Piazzolla** and **Emiliano Revert**. Admission is free.

Poster Exhibit
The **Mission Consolidated Independent School District Agriculture Poster Exhibition** opens with a reception at 6 p.m. in the **Charles and Dorothy Clark Art Gallery**, located in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus. The series of posters shows the importance of agriculture in the Rio Grande Valley. Students in the Farmers, Agriculturists, Ranchers, Machinists, Engineers, Researchers

and Suppliers program at Mission Veterans Memorial High School created the posters.

Boss Workshop
The **UTRGV Center for Innovation and Commercialization** will host a workshop in which UTRGV students who want to be their own boss one day, start a business or open a practice in their field of study can learn what it takes to make that happen. The workshop will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the center, located at 307 E. Railroad St. in Weslaco.

Saturday I.E.A.D. Conference
The **Center for Student Involvement** will host the **Leadership and Education for Achievement and Development** conference to learn about leadership style and how to manage a student organization effectively. The conference will be from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. There will be **free food and goodies**.

Sunday Sigma Lambda Gamma
The **Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority** will hold an **informational session** on how to join, dues and other information about the organization from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the University Center's Cenizo Room on the Edinburg campus.

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. 6 and 11.



Sept. 6 9:21 a.m.: A student reported that one of her car's windows was shattered while it was parked in Lot E-36 on the Edinburg campus.

2:33 p.m.: A student reported that a male student had been following her on the Brownsville campus. Both parties are minors and UTRGV/Brownsville Early College High School dual enrollment students. University Police spoke with both parties, notified the male student's parents about the situation and informed the Brownsville Independent School District police. The case is under investigation.

4:17 p.m.: University Police responded to a vehicle collision in Lot E-15 on the Edinburg campus. A non-affiliated driver lost control of her vehicle and struck the wall of the Central Utility Plant, which resulted in her airbags deploying. The driver sustained a burn and laceration from the collision. She was transported to a hospital and the vehicle was towed away.

5:05 p.m.: A non-affiliated man reported discovering damage to

his vehicle after it was parked in Lot H-3 on the Harlingen campus. University Police reviewed surveillance footage and found that another vehicle struck the man's vehicle after exiting a parking space. The case is under investigation.

Sept. 7 12:18 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported that a nail punctured each of her rear tires while driving to campus.

4:17 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported that he backed a university golf cart into a university vehicle in the service drive of Troxel Hall on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported.

5:02 p.m.: A student reported that he had a verbal dispute with a university employee over who had priority using the handicapped seat in a UTRGV shuttle bus on the Brownsville campus. University Police conducted an investigation and determined that no crime had occurred. The case was taken for documentation purposes.

Sept. 8 10:01 a.m.: University Police responded to a non-affiliated man who was lying down by the entrance of the Visual Arts

building on the Edinburg campus. University Police determined that the man had a lengthy criminal background and issued the man a criminal trespass warning. The man departed from the location without further incident.

10:26 a.m.: University Police responded to a single-vehicle collision near the intersection of East Jackson Street and West University Boulevard in Brownsville. University Police determined that the driver lost control of his vehicle, departed the roadway and struck a tree stump. No injuries were reported. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

12:57 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported tripping and falling while exiting the elevator at the Science Building on the Edinburg campus. The employee reported pain in her ankle and knee but declined emergency medical services.

4:30 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported that a university computer monitor was missing at the Social Work and Occupational Therapy Building on the Edinburg campus. University Police determined that the monitor had been picked up by the UTRGV IT department for repairs.

7:31 p.m.: University Police and the Edinburg Police Department responded to an off-campus residence to conduct a welfare check on a student. Upon arrival, University Police and the Edinburg Police Department spoke with the student and confirmed his well-being.

8:13 p.m.: University Police observed several Border Patrol agents in the brush behind the University Library and the Lozano-Banco bridge on the Brownsville campus. Border Patrol agents said they were looking for two males who recently crossed the border. A search was conducted but the males were not located.

Sept. 11 7:14 a.m.: A UTRGV employee reported a water line break at the Life and Health Sciences Building on the Brownsville campus.

10:01 a.m.: A UTRGV employee reported finding several empty beer cans in Lot B-9 on the Brownsville campus.

10:55 a.m.: A university subcontractor reported that unauthorized material was dumped into the dumpster in Lot E-19 on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

1:51 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported finding a small dent on the bumper of a university vehicle. It is unknown how the damage occurred.

2:10 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported observing a vehicle speeding and driving recklessly near the Edinburg campus.

2:55 p.m.: A UTRGV employee reported that the unknown driver of a pickup truck used vulgar language and offensive gestures toward him when he was asked to move from the Main Building fire lane on the Brownsville campus. The case is under investigation.

3:29 p.m.: University Police responded to a minor collision involving two vehicles in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. No injuries were reported.

4:54 p.m.: A student reported he might have suffered a seizure while at the Academic Services Building on the Edinburg campus. The student declined emergency medical services.

5:40 p.m.: A student reported that his AirPods were stolen while in the Science Building on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

--Compiled by Rebeca Salinas

THE RIDER

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Hispanic Heritage Month

Celebration of culture underway

Julissa Hernandez

THE RIDER

The UTRGV Department of Literatures and Cultural Studies, Center for Mexican American Studies, Center for Latin American Arts, Department of Theatre and more will host lectures, concerts, exhibits and workshops in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Amy Cummins, an English professor at UTRGV, said the Department of Literatures and Cultural Studies will host lectures by author Viola Canales and Gabriela Baeza Ventura, an associate professor of U.S. Latina/o Literature at the University of Houston and a co-director of the U.S. Latino Digital Humanities Center.

Cummins said she reached out to Canales and Baeza Ventura because she loves their work and wants to “build pride and knowledge about achievements of writers with Mexican American heritage and expand conversations about the centrality of Latina, Latino people.”

Canales will talk about her creative process in writing her books, such as “The Tequila Worm,” (Wendy Lamb Books, 2007) from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday via Zoom. The meeting ID is 838 6056 0271.

Baeza Ventura, an executive director of Arte Público Press, will talk about the publisher’s history with Latino/a literature from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Oct. 4 via Zoom. The meeting ID is 869 5263 8802.

Canales said she is excited about the lecture.

“It’s like coming home because all my

books and writings are and have been inspired by the culture of the Rio Grande Valley,” she told The Rider in a phone interview last Tuesday.

Canales, a McAllen native, left home after she received a scholarship to attend St. Stephen’s Episcopal School in Austin when she was 15 and said that she felt homesick.

She wanted to keep the traditions, culture and the people that were dear to her alive in some way.

“It was then that I started to write stories to conjure up that culture and that’s how I became a writer,” Canales said.

She wants people to be proud of their culture and to find the magic in who they are.

“There’s a Mexican saying that my mother used to always say, which is, ‘Cada cabeza es su mundo.’ Every head is its own world, and I think it’s so important,” Canales said.

The Rider asked Canales what advice she would give to students.

“You’re living your own life and finding the magic and power and uniqueness in who you are and creating that world and then sharing it with other people,” she said.

Taylor Seaver, a first-year graduate student in Mexican American Studies and the historian for La Unión Chicanx Hijxs de Aztlán, has attended and volunteered at past events for Hispanic Heritage Month.

“It’s really fun because we have all these events like just meshing together the entire fall,” she said.



Estefenia Ramirez/THE RIDER

UTRGV international students carry flags from other countries during the Parade of Flags Thursday afternoon outside the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. The parade took place before Picnic with the President, where hundreds of students, staff and faculty were greeted by UTRGV President Guy Bailey and served a hamburger, chips, a cookie and a soft drink.

Seaver said she will attend the opening reception for “Civil Rights in the Rio Grande Valley,” a traveling museum exhibit, organized by the Center of Mexican American Studies and Nosotrxs Por El Valle. The reception will take place at 6 p.m. today in the Visual Arts Building, 2412 U.S. Business Hwy. 281 in Edinburg.

Seaver said one thing she loves about Hispanic culture is the community involvement.

“I love [that] the community we’re in is able to embrace these roots together and we’re able to celebrate our struggles but also celebrate our joy,” she said.

The Latino Theatre Initiative Program will host Fiesta Latina from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Thursday in Liberal Arts Building South Studio 107. The celebration will feature karaoke, improv, *loteria* and more.

The Center for Mexican American Studies has also collaborated with the Center for Latin American Arts to organize two events:

--a research workshop, “Surrounding Mexican American Life, Music and Art,” with guest speaker Nadine Hubbs, a professor of Women’s & Gender Studies & Music and faculty associate in American Culture at the University of Michigan. Guest panelists will be Christen Garcia, an assistant professor in the UTRGV School of Art and Design, and Teresita Lozano, an assistant professor in the UTRGV School of Music. The workshop is scheduled at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 3 in University Library Room 2.114 on the Edinburg campus.

--The Texas Sweethearts and other local bands will perform at 4 p.m. Oct. 4 in the University Library on the Edinburg campus, followed by a lecture by Hubbs in the Library foyer.

For more information on Hispanic Heritage Month events, visit the UTRGV events calendar.

Help prevent suicide

Fatima Gamez Lopez
SPANISH EDITOR

Suicide is the 11th-leading cause of death in the United States with over 48,000 deaths in 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

The UTRGV Counseling Center and the Center for Student Involvement will host a suicide awareness event from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday on the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus and at the same time Thursday in front of El Comedor on the Brownsville campus.

The goal of the event is “to spread messages of hope and provide the opportunity to learn about suicide prevention,” according to its flyer.

An estimated 12.3 million adults thought about suicide, 3.5 million made a plan and 1.7 million attempted suicide in 2021, according to cdc.gov.

Christopher Albert, director of the Counseling Center, said there is always new information about warning signs of suicide.

“There’s just a noticeable change in the way the person is, the way they talk,” Albert said. “Maybe they used to hang out a lot with people, [but] now they [have] withdrawn. Maybe the grades are falling in their classwork ... or maybe it’s suddenly the opposite.”

Albert said a specific sign is what the person says.

“Such as ...I’m wondering what it would be like if I’m not around anymore,” he said. “You know, just little hints there, right? That maybe they’re thinking about it. ... So certainly have those more obvious signs that it’s important to intervene.”

The Counseling Center offers Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training for the UTRGV community in groups of 10 to 30 people.

To request training, call 665-2574 or 882-3897 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or email counseling@utrgv.edu.

“I feel like everyone goes through a lot of stuff, and they’re afraid to talk about it,”

--Evelyn Santillan,
a mass communication junior

Albert said the training takes about 1.5 to two hours in which warning signs are discussed and the three-step process—validate, appreciate and refer—in assisting individuals who appear to be struggling.

“The first step is getting the person to talk, right?” he said. “And, usually, it’s best to start off by asking the question, ‘Hey, I’ve been noticing that you’re struggling right now. I just want to ask you a

question. Have you been thinking of suicide?”

Albert said the direct approach is oftentimes the best option depending on your relationship with the person.

The second step is to encourage the person to talk more and validate their feelings.

“Because then you get more information, but you’re also building that relationship,” Albert said. “You want to have that trust relationship, because that’ll tie into that third step.”

The third step is to ask the individual to seek help.

“If the person is, in fact, suicidal or they’re struggling a lot, find a way to communicate with them to kind of convince them, ‘Hey, it’d be a good idea to connect with those services,’” Albert said.

Asked what a person should not do if they are worried someone is in danger of suicide, Albert replied not to ignore it.

“If they don’t feel comfortable themselves, approach that person and talk with them to make sure that they get someone who will,” he said. “Avoid judgmental statements, such as ‘I don’t want to hear about that’ or ... ‘You shouldn’t think that way.’ ... You don’t want to say anything that will get them to shut up.”

The center offers the Vaquero Crisis Line, 665-5555, a 24/7 confidential helpline for the UTRGV

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

On average, there are 132 suicides per day, according to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

48,183 Americans died by suicide in 2021.

For mental health crisis services in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties, call Tropical Texas Behavioral Health at 877-289-7199.

UTRGV students can call the Vaqueros Crisis Line at 665-5555.

Call or text 9-8-8 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline or chat online at 988lifeline.org.

Aura Velasquez/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

community.

The Counseling Center will conduct a Recovery Walk-A-Thon from 9 to 11 a.m. Sept. 26 on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus and at the same time in the University Center Circle on the Edinburg campus. Attendees will be offered free snacks, water and T-shirts, while supplies last.

Valeria Valencia, a bilingual education senior, said it is a good idea to have events for suicide prevention to “bring attention to the issue.”

Asked about her thoughts on people making jokes about suicide, Valencia replied it is something people should not laugh about.

“Maybe some people don’t mean it like that, but you may be saying it in front of somebody who’s going through it in silence,” she said.

Evelyn Santillan, a mass communication junior, said she is aware of the services the Counseling Center offers.

“I feel like everyone goes through a lot of stuff, and they’re afraid to talk about it,” Santillan said when asked about the suicide awareness event. “I know some of my closest friends don’t like talking about stuff like that to anyone. ... They like to go to events that help them speak about it.”

She said people are afraid to talk about suicide because they do not want to see it as a problem.

Timelycare, a new 24/7 virtual mental health and well-being support, will be available for UTRGV students by the end of September.

“It includes a lot more and includes on-demand social support,” Albert said. “You don’t have to be in an emotional crisis to utilize it. And it could be through, like, video chat or text or phone [call] and mental health counseling, just like at a counseling center.”



YAQUERO VOICE



What does your perfect day look like?



“A perfect day to me would probably be spending all day here in the practice rooms, just making music and hanging out with my friends.”

Orlando Castaño
music education freshman



“When I don’t have any homework, like left over, and I have everything done, I can just go outside and get a little breath of air, and get ready for the next week. That’s like my perfect day.”

Ricardo Rios
business freshman



“My perfect day, probably just be like being at home, watching movies and playing video games.”

Jerry Villarreal
multidisciplinary studies freshman



“Well, my perfect day is that professors are, like, ‘Hey, I’m going to cancel class today.’ Awesome, great. I get to relax at home, maybe catch up on a few TV shows, listen to music, you know. I feel like that would be a really good day. Just because a lot of my days are filled with student org activities, classes and work.”

Ana Rosario
marketing senior

--Compiled and photos by Daniela Martinez Salazar

Searching for love



Daniela Martinez Salazar
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Humans are always looking for love, whether in school, at an extracurricular activity, with a group of friends or even among family. We look for a place to belong, be part of and be loved.

Growing up, I remember hearing in my great-grandmother’s church about this Father who loved me. I remember sitting in one of the Sunday school classrooms, waiting impatiently to run around and draw with the other kids.

The caregivers would try to calm us down and share stories with us, but I never really paid attention to what they said.

I look back, and apart from remembering all the rascal things I did as a kid, like throwing toys around with a target on someone or drawing on the walls with a Sharpie, I remember the caregivers sharing about a greater love, a deep love this Father had for me.

As I got older, I continued to hear about this God and His love, but I did not quite understand it. I saw love as an affection between two people, love toward someone you cared for, but how can a Father I cannot see love me? How was that even possible?

I kept these questions in my head and decided to search for what this love was. I noticed everyone around me was also looking for love, and to be accepted as they were.

Many of us tried to find love

There was love when the bees pollinated the flowers. There was love when the rays of the sun touched my face. There was love when people smiled as I walked.

in a relationship and to play the best image of ourselves to fit the expectations of others, but love was not there, only hurt and disappointment.

So, what is love? Love is when you accept someone as they are, when you see past their imperfections and when you would do anything for that person. Love is when you deeply care for someone. Once, one of my aunts told me: “If we know where to look, we can find love all around us.”

Then, an idea came to my head.

If I could change my perspective, maybe I could see love. I would wake up, play music and see the good side.

It was a surprise when I went out and started seeing everything differently. There was love when the bees pollinated the flowers. There was love when the rays of the sun touched my face. There was love when people smiled as I walked.

So if love was all around, what was the possibility of that Father to show me His love? It took me some time to figure out what His love was because how could someone give His life for me? (John 3:16) How could someone deeply love me before I was even born? (Jeremiah 1:5) How could someone love me when I am at my lowest? (Psalm 34:18)

But once I opened my heart,

I saw and felt His love toward me.

I could try to explain it, but there are no words other than whole. It changes you, fills you and reminds you how wonderfully created you are (Psalm 139:13-14). His love forgives and transforms you. His love is something I had never experienced before, and now I am so happy to walk, showing his love to others.

So, in the end, what is love? Love is everything around you. Open up your heart and start seeing with the eyes of love.



Nombre: Olivia Silva

Carrera: Sociología

Clasificación: Estudiante de primer año

Fecha de graduación: Primavera 2026



Ciudad natal: Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México

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

“Bueno, primero que nada, pienso [que sería] ... la comida. Puedes encontrar comida en todas partes. Por ejemplo, para el Día de la Independencia de México puedes comer pozole, sopes, tostadas y cosas así. Y en Estados Unidos, UTRGV también hace esas cosas para [el Día de la Independencia de México] pero no es como en México”.

Si pudieras comer solo un alimento por el resto de tu vida, ¿cuál sería y por qué?

“Tacos, puedes conseguir tacos de bistec, tacos al pastor, tacos de barbacoa, carnitas y todo eso”.

¿Quién es tu ejemplo a seguir?

“Mi mamá. Desde pequeña la he visto superar todo tipo de obstáculos para que seamos felices”.

¿Por qué elegiste sociología cómo tu carrera?

“Porque siempre me ha encantado aprender sobre diferentes culturas, idiomas y sociedad en general. Siento que es algo que puede brindarte el conocimiento necesario para conocer diferentes orígenes”.

¿Qué hay en tu lista de deseos?

“Me gustaría viajar a España. También me gustaría aprender a tocar el piano y la guitarra”.

--Recopilado por Fatima Gamez

Celebración de la cultura en marcha



Estefania Ramirez/FOTO RIDER

Los estudiantes internacionales de UTRGV portan banderas de otros países durante el Desfile de Banderas el jueves por la tarde frente al césped de la Unión Estudiantil en el campus de Brownsville. El desfile tuvo lugar antes del Picnic con el Presidente, donde cientos de estudiantes, personal y profesores fueron recibidos por el presidente de UTRGV, Guy Bailey, y se les sirvió una hamburguesa, papas fritas, una galleta y un refresco.

Julissa Hernandez

THE RIDER

El Departamento de Literatura y Estudios Culturales de UTRGV, el Centro de Estudios México-Americanos, el Centro de Artes Latinoamericanas, el Departamento de Teatro y más organizarán conferencias, conciertos, exhibiciones y talleres para celebrar el Mes de la Herencia Hispana.

Amy Cummins, profesora de inglés en UTRGV, dijo que el Departamento de Literatura y Estudios Culturales albergará conferencias de la autora Viola Canales y Gabriela Baeza Ventura, profesora asociada de literatura latina estadounidense en la Universidad de Houston y codirectora del Centro Latino de Humanidades Digitales de EE.UU.

Cummins dijo que se acercó a Canales y Baeza Ventura porque ama su trabajo y quiere “generar orgullo y conocimiento sobre los logros de los escritores con herencia mexicanoamericana y ampliar las conversaciones sobre la centralidad de los latinos y las latinas”.

Canales hablará sobre su proceso creativo al escribir sus libros, como *“The Tequila Worm”* (Wendy Lamb Books, 2007) de 11 a.m. al mediodía del martes vía Zoom. El ID de la reunión es 838 6056 0271.

Baeza Ventura, directora ejecutiva de Arte Público Press, hablará sobre la historia de la editorial con la literatura latina de 9:30 a 10:30 a.m. el 4 de octubre a través de Zoom. El ID de la reunión es 869 5263 8802.

Canales dijo que está entusiasmada con la conferencia.

“Es como volver a casa porque todos mis libros y escritos están y han sido inspirados en la cultura del Valle del Río Grande”, dijo a The Rider en una entrevista telefónica el martes pasado.

Canales, nativa de McAllen, se fue de casa después de recibir una beca para asistir a la Escuela Episcopal St. Stephen’s en Austin cuando tenía 15 años y dijo que sentía nostalgia.

Quería mantener viva de alguna manera las tradiciones, la cultura y las personas que le eran queridas.

“Fue entonces que comencé a escribir historias para evocar esa cultura y así me convertí en escritora”, dijo Canales.

Ella quiere que la gente esté orgullosa de su cultura y encuentre la magia en quienes son.

“Hay un dicho mexicano que mi madre solía decir siempre, que es: ‘Cada cabeza es su mundo’. Cada cabeza es su propio

itinerante en un museo, organizada por el Centro de Estudios México Americanos y Nosotrxs Por El Valle. La recepción tendrá lugar a las 6 p.m. hoy en el Edificio de Artes Visuales, 2412 U.S. Business Hwy. 281 en Edinburg.

Seaver dijo que una cosa que le encanta de la cultura hispana es la participación comunitaria y cómo “me encanta [que] la comunidad en la que estamos sea capaz de abrazar estas raíces juntas y podamos celebrar nuestras luchas pero también celebrar nuestra alegría”, dijo.

El Programa de Iniciativa de Teatro Latino será el anfitrión de la Fiesta Latina de 5:30 a 9 p.m. jueves en Estudio Sur del Edificio de Artes Liberales 107. La celebración contará con karaoke, improvisación, lotería y más.

El Centro de Estudios Mexicanos Americanos también ha colaborado con el Centro de Artes Latinoamericanas para organizar dos eventos:

–un taller de investigación, “En torno a la vida, la música y el arte México-Americano”, con la oradora invitada Nadine Hubbs, profesora de Música y Estudios de Género y Mujeres y profesora asociada de Cultura Estadounidense en la Universidad de Michigan. Los panelistas invitados serán Christen Garcia, profesora asistente del Escuela de Arte y Diseño UTRGV, y Teresita Lozano, profesora asistente del Escuela de Musica UTRGV. El taller está previsto a las 5:30 p.m. el 3 de octubre en la Sala 2.114 de la Biblioteca Universitaria en el campus de Edinburg.

–los Texas Sweethearts y otras bandas locales actuarán a las 4 p.m. el 4 de octubre en la Biblioteca de la Universidad en el campus de Edinburg, seguido de una conferencia de Hubbs en el vestíbulo de la biblioteca.

Para obtener más información sobre los eventos del Mes de la Herencia Hispana, visite el calendario de eventos de UTRGV.

--Traducido por Fatima Gamez Lopez

“Me encanta [que] la comunidad en la que estamos sea capaz de abrazar estas raíces juntas y podamos celebrar nuestras luchas pero también celebrar nuestra alegría”

-- Taylor Seaver, estudiante de posgrado de primer año en Estudios México-Americanos e historiadora de La Unión Chicanx Hijxs de Aztlán

mundo, y creo que es muy importante”, dijo Canales.

The Rider le preguntó a Canales qué consejo le daría a los estudiantes.

“Estás viviendo tu propia vida y encontrando la magia, el poder y la singularidad de quién eres y creando ese mundo y luego compartiéndolo con otras personas”, dijo.

Taylor Seaver, estudiante de posgrado de primer año en Estudios México-Americanos e historiadora de La Unión Chicanx Hijxs de Aztlán, asistió y fue voluntaria en eventos anteriores del Mes de la Herencia Hispana.

“Es realmente divertido porque tenemos todos estos eventos que se combinan durante todo el otoño”, dijo.

Seaver dijo que asistirá a la recepción de inauguración de “Derechos Civiles en el Valle del Río Grande”, una exhibición

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Encuétranos en Redes Sociales

Brownsville mural unveiled

Silvana Villarreal
A&E REPORTER

“Welcome to Brownsville,” a mural curated by Jesse James Lopez and located at 1268 E. Elizabeth St., was unveiled last Wednesday after months of development following the downtown mural contest in June.

The 22-year-old artist, who has never created a work on this scale before, had the help of nine designated volunteers while painting the 23-foot-tall mural.

Lopez, who does freelance work on the side, said it was a pleasure bringing color to the plain and busy street through the third mural commissioned by the City of Brownsville to revitalize downtown.

He said many people in the community contributed to the mural.

“Random people that would pass by, I would give them the brush and just let them paint a little bit because it’s community

involvement, and I think that’s really important,” Lopez said.

The artist changed his major from engineering to studio art after transferring to UTRGV in 2022 and took the Fall 2023 semester off to finish the Brownsville mural.

The mural incorporates such local staples as the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Gladys Porter Zoo, a mariachi band, SpaceX and South Padre Island.

Alma Ponce, the artist’s grandmother and a retired Brownsville Independent School District teacher, said everything about the mural portrays Brownsville, starting with the charros.

“That’s exactly what Brownsville is all about,” Ponce said. “The cathedral—I got married in Immaculate Conception, and my kids were all baptized in Immaculate Conception. So, that is important to me.”

--Alma Ponce
Retired BISD Teacher

what Brownsville is all about,” Ponce said. “The cathedral—I got married in Immaculate Conception, and my kids were all baptized in Immaculate Conception. So, that is important to me.”

Brownsville District 1 City Commissioner Bryan Martinez praised Lopez’s work and



Eduardo Cortez/THE RIDER
Jesse James Lopez holds ceremonial scissors after cutting the ribbon during the official unveiling of his mural, “Welcome to Brownsville.”

said that many aspects of the mural take from the identity of the city’s community.

“Very good job, Jesse, in including everything that is in our community,” Martinez said in Spanish during the unveiling. “Something that I appreciate a lot is that we see our identity as a frontier community here in Brownsville and our culture that is only found here in Brownsville.”

Brownsville District 3 City Commissioner Roy De los Santos was on the reviewing committee in the process of choosing the mural in June.

De los Santos said both private and public partnerships contributed to the mural and that public input inspired the piece.

“It was a pleasure to see everything that was out there and that all of this talent was local and was homegrown,” he said.

City Manager Helen Ramirez said Lopez’s mural represents the collaboration between Brownsville and its twin city Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, making the city great.

“Thank you for making our downtown even more beautiful,” Ramirez told Lopez during the unveiling.

Amanda Davé, vice chair of the Brownsville Beautification Committee, said the reasons for choosing the mural are to

accomplish cultural expression, show pride in heritage and the power of community, and to have public art.

Davé said the art piece is in line with the beautification of the city, and the committee is looking forward to supporting similar projects in the future.

The mural, which was funded by the Musk Foundation and the Brownsville Beautification Committee, was a collaboration among the City of Brownsville, Brownsville Museum of Fine Art, Consulate of Mexico in Brownsville, UTRGV and Revival of Cultural Arts.

--Copy Editor Teresita Dominguez contributed to this report.



Eduardo Cortez/THE RIDER
Jesse James Lopez’s mural, “Welcome to Brownsville,” features such elements as mariachis, flamenco dancers, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, animals from the Gladys Porter Zoo, SpaceX and South Padre Island. Lopez selected these elements to fully represent the uniqueness of Brownsville.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Community Events
Let’s Get Cookin’ Series
Learn how to make flour tortillas from 6 to 7:30 p.m. today in the **Brownsville Public Library Main Branch**, located at 2600 Central Blvd. **Admission is free.** The event is part of the library’s “Let’s Get

Cookin’ series.
Movie Night
“Under the Same Moon,” a 2007 film directed by **Patricia Riggen** and starring **Eugenio Derbez**, will be screened at 6 p.m. Thursday in the **Brownsville Public Library Main Branch**, located at 2600 Central Blvd. **Admission is free.**
Cyclobia Brownsville
The **Brownsville Parks and Recreation Department** will host “**Cycle the Streets**,” an ‘80s-themed event from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday. The route starts on East Seventh Street, between Ringgold and East Taylor streets, and ends on East 10th Street, between Washington and Elizabeth streets. **Admission is free.**

Carnival
The **Kiwanis Club of Edinburg** and the **Doctors Hospital at Renaissance Health** will host a “**Carnival of Hope**” for children who have been affected by cancer from 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday in the Edinburg Activity Center, 123 E. Palm Drive. **Admission is free.**
Museums
Art Show
The **48th International Art Show**, featuring artists from the Rio Grande Valley and across the country, will open at 6 p.m. Friday in the **Brownsville Museum of Fine Art**, located at 660 E. Ringgold St. **Admission is free.**
--Compiled by Silvana Villarreal

SUDOKU



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Sept. 5 puzzle answer key:

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



Athlete of the week
Estrella Medellin



Ryan Lugo/THE RIDER

Estrella Medellin is a senior distance runner for the UTRGV Women's Cross-Country Team as well as a mid-distance runner for the Women's Track & Field Team. Medellin is pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

Q: What do you do for fun outside of cross-country?

A: "I think, mainly, either go play with my roommates, which are my brother and my cousin, and my teammates. We go play at the rec or something or, honestly, just listen to music. We play basketball or volleyball or something. We just find something to do."

Q: What kind of music do you like?

A: "I kind of listen to just about anything. So, like, I like country, reggaeton, Latin music mainly, I guess. Favorite artist, I mean, it's always been Bad Bunny, Rauw [Alejandro], Myke Towers."

Q: What movies or shows do you like?

A: "I'm usually very into horror movies. So, like, right now, I need to go see 'The Nun.' It just came out. Shows, I'm currently watching 'El Chapo' and, like, 'Narcos.'"

Q: Who is one of your role models?

A: "Honestly, it'll probably be my parents. They're always working. Even though they're always working, they always find a way to, like, still go to watch all our siblings. My other siblings are still in high school and elementary, and they still find ways to be at their events and everything. Four [siblings], I'm the oldest."

Q: What motivates you?

A: "Since I'm the oldest, I have to set the example. Being the first generation in my family to go to college, too, and being a student athlete, I really have to set the standard, I guess, and motivate my little sister, especially the little one."

Q: What are some of your personal goals?

A: "For cross country, I just want to really be more up there compared to last year. Because, I guess, last year was an OK season. But, I mean, I feel like as I grow older, like, I feel like my time needed to improve even more. For track, I want to go at least a 2:10 in the [800-meter dash]."

Q: Do you have a fun fact about yourself?

A: "I do ranch [dressing] with tamales. I guess that could be one, ranch with tamales. ... I can put salsa, pero I prefer ranch. I love ranch."

--Compiled by Jose Medina

Vaqueras sweep Cardinals

UTRGV to play first conference game of season

Jose Medina
SPORTS REPORTER

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Volleyball Team swept the University of the Incarnate Word 3-0 (25-19, 25-10, 25-17) last Tuesday to improve its overall record to 6-4.

More than 2,000 fans attended the game as part of the "Kids Day Match," making it the second-largest crowd in program history.

Junior outside hitter Ilana De Assis led the Vaqueras with 11 kills on .450 hitting and Cardinal senior outside hitter Allison Palmi put up six kills on .143 hitting.

Head coach Todd Lowery said the win reassures the team in knowing what it is capable of and liked the way it played.

"I didn't feel like there was any kind of letup on our side," Lowery said. "Really just constant pressure for UIW and I think a lot of that is our girls feeding off the crowd and going in there and really just rolling."

UTRGV junior setter Luanna Emiliano ended with 29 assists, 15 digs and two kills.

Vaquera senior middle blocker Luisa Silva Dos Santos put up 10 kills on .450 hitting.

Lowery said the Vaqueras kept going after digs to put pressure on the Cardinals to cause them to make more hitting errors.

Dos Santos said seeing the crowd come out and support them was amazing.

"No words," she said. "I was telling Luanna, I wish we had more games here because it's insane. It's amazing. They're amazing."



Yamilet Galvez/THE RIDER

The Vaqueras allow a hit by the Cardinals to go out of bounds during the third set of last Tuesday's match against the University of the Incarnate Word Cardinals in the UTRGV Fieldhouse.

Asked about her connection with Dos Santos, Emiliano said she has known the middle blocker for many years.

"I think it's just natural," she said.

with everything else."

Emiliano said she feels the team still has room to grow and is excited about the games against California State University,

"Really just constant pressure for UIW and I think a lot of that is our girls feeding off the crowd and going in there and really just rolling."

--Volleyball head coach Todd Lowery

"We don't just come here and try to make this connection. It's just something that is day in, day out. ... We like to play together, enjoy the time we have together, so I just think it comes

Thursday against the University of Texas at Arlington.



Yamilet Galvez/THE RIDER

Vaquera junior setter Luanna Emiliano (left) speaks about the connection between her and senior middle blocker Luisa Silva Dos Santos (right) last Tuesday during a news conference in the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. Also shown is head coach Todd Lowery.

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

WOMEN'S SOCCER

6:30 p.m. Thursday vs. Abilene Christian University

Noon Sunday vs. Tarleton State University

AT THE UTRGV SOCCER AND TRACK & FIELD COMPLEX

TAX
Continued from Page 1

products from a sales tax, according to the Alliance for PERIOD Supplies website.

“It allows [people] to spend that extra little bit of free money to purchase the things they need,” management senior Alexis Garcia said.

Theatre education junior Ileana Ibarra told The Rider that legislation can go even further.

“I don’t really think it’s necessary for women to be buying these products,” Ibarra said. “It should be free for us, because every woman goes through this and they’re just profiting off of it.”

This move toward menstrual equity is seen as a significant step in destigmatizing menstruation and poverty.

Hay said there is the issue of not being able to afford products in the event of an emergency and that there is a “broader issue about not being able to buy it, potentially, at all.”

The Rider asked Hay if there were any resources available on campus for students to access these items at no cost. She replied that the Office for Advocacy and Violence Prevention is the only source she is aware of, but suggested the university invest in “some kind of vending machine where you could use your V card” or “at least get an emergency tampon or pad [from] a dispenser in the bathrooms.”

In an email to The Rider on Sept. 12, Food Pantry Attendant Katia Valdez wrote that the pantry does not currently have any feminine hygiene products available, but accepts donations as long as they are not damaged.

Maria Barrera, a communication

science and disorder junior and food pantry attendant, told The Rider, that a few years ago they had feminine hygiene kits donated to the food pantry.

“After the program was over and we did run out of the supplies, students were still requesting the items,” Barrera said. “Whenever we do have them on hand ... they’re a very popular item to give out in the pantry.”

The Rider asked Hay if she believed there might still be students who struggle to pay for the items even without the tax.

“The tricky part is, we say we have a cycle but it’s not necessarily identical every month,” she replied. “So you might have a month where you have a light menstrual cycle and the next month it might be more heavy.”

This makes budgeting difficult for individuals whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold.

Priscilla Palacios, associate director of special programs at OVAP, told The Rider in an email on Sept. 12 that students who need these items may stop by the OVAP office in Marialice Shary Shivers Building Room 3.160 on the Edinburg campus to request them.

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CREATIVITY
Continued from Page 1

is now closed, but Palacios said she hopes to have it reopen today. Interested students can also email gina.palacios@utrgv.edu for more information about the position.

“We’re excited to have the lab up and running,” Palacios said during the interview. “We just need more students. So, if they’re interested, you know, let me know.”

In an interview with The Rider last Thursday, art junior Kiona Brooks said she is happy there is a new computer lab in Cortez Hall.

“I don’t have any courses over there, but I did get a chance to go and look,” Brooks said. “And I was actually really happy to see that the director was helping to put together some of the computers for the course. He was actually under one of the tables, wiring everything together. So it was good. I got to see some of my other friends and my other classmates working together over there.”

The art junior said she is “looking forward” to better conditions for students in the School of Art and Design.

“Anything that’s going to help with getting better conditions is always going to be a plus,” Brooks said. “... Even if I graduate before [a new building] gets finished, I’ll still be happy about it, because at least the next few semesters of students will actually be able to work in better conditions.”

Art graduate student Kimberly Sandoval said she spends Tuesday through Friday in Rusteberg Hall, which UTRGV also leases from Texas

Southmost College, and travels to the Visual Arts Building in Edinburg on Mondays for class.

“[The need for a new space] has been a thing that’s been going on for years and years now,” Sandoval said. “... I’m hoping that we’ll actually get the building by the 2024-2025 academic year, but I won’t get my hopes too far up.”

Pogue said during the meeting that the proposal is for a 48,840-square-foot building, roughly twice the size of the current home to visual art classes in Brownsville, Rusteberg Hall. He added that the proposed budget for the facility is about \$30 million.

“[We would] be getting a building that is twice the size of the current facility that we’re leasing,” Pogue said during the interview while explaining the building might be shared with other schools if art and design classes do not fill the entire space. “Therefore, in order to maintain our presence solely within the new art building, over the next several years, we will need to increase our enrollment.”

Plans to increase enrollment in Brownsville include recruitment strategies that focus on “engagement with the area high schools,” he said.

“It’s really exciting ... this possibility,” Pogue said. “We believe and we hope that the [University of Texas System] Board of Regents will approve the request and then we can move forward in our planning at that point.”

He said Jeffrey Ward, dean of the College of Fine Arts, is working on the proposal. The Rider reached out to Ward for details and scheduled an interview for Tuesday.



Join us for:

- Free pizza 
- Technology prizes
- IT services & support information 

I.T. TECH DAYS

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thursday, Sept. 21, 2023

Brownsville Campus:

PlainsCapital Bank

El Gran Salón