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# THE ART OF HORROR

**Natalie Lapsley**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

While Celtic people once donned spooky masks to, according to their belief, avoid hauntings from evil spirits walking the Earth, dressing up at Halloween time has become more of an activity for fun than anything.

Originally known as All Hallows Eve, Halloween began as a time to ward off ghosts, according to a blog entry in the National Library of Congress.

Today, people celebrate Halloween because it is fun, said Jennifer Saxton-Rodriguez, a UTRGV Theatre professor.

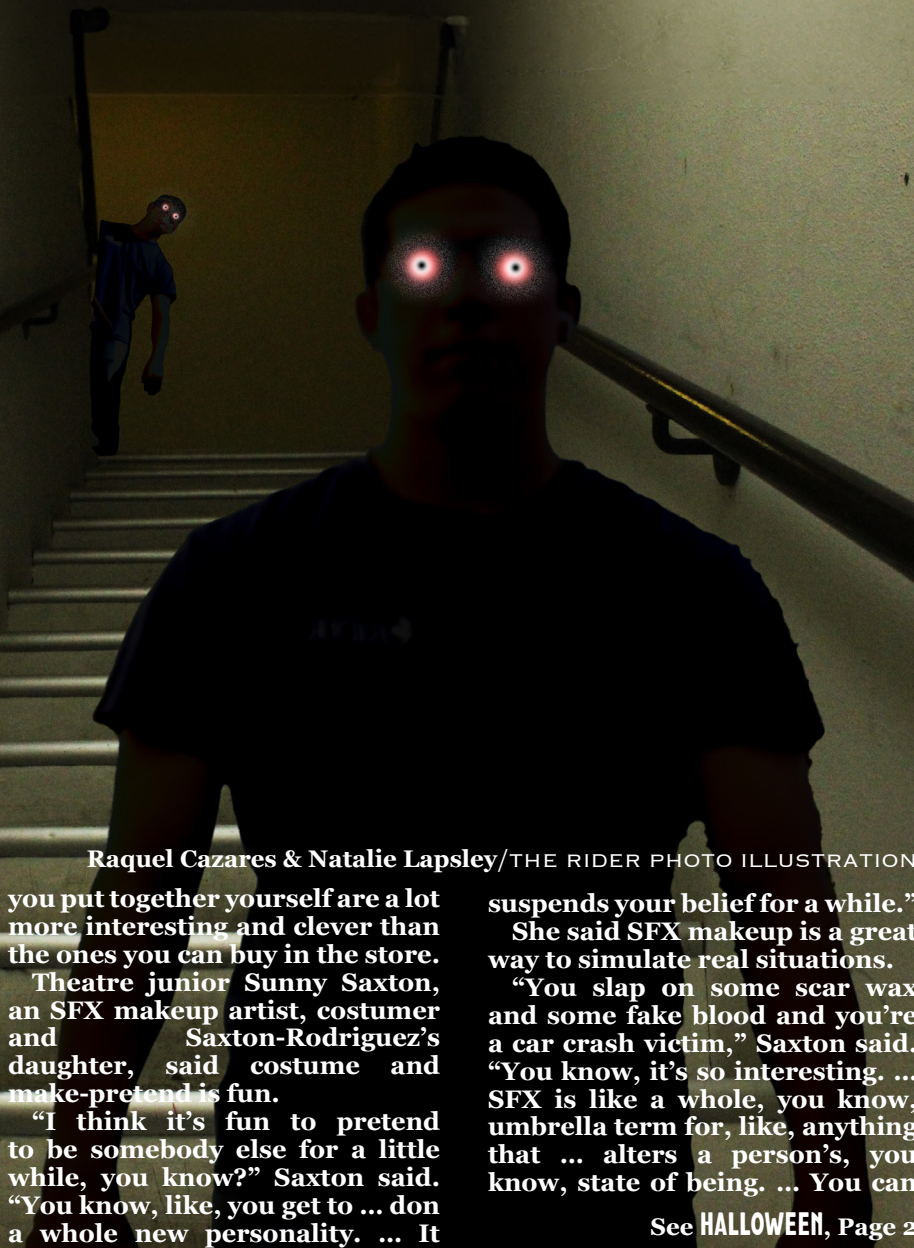
“How we think about Halloween really started in the ... early 1900s,” Saxton-Rodriguez said.

She said dressing up in costume for Halloween is different from doing so for theatre and performance, but that it is rewarding.

“If you dress up as somebody that other people know, you get the joy of people affirming that you’ve done a good job by recognizing it, and they get the pleasure of being smart and recognizing it,” Saxton-Rodriguez said. “People love to play, and they love dressing up. There’s something really wonderful about it.”

She said wearing costumes for Halloween is a way people express themselves.

“You don’t have to spend a lot of money,” Saxton-Rodriguez said. “It can be creative. And no matter what ... the world won’t end if the costume doesn’t work out. Half the time, the costumes



Raquel Cazares & Natalie Lapsley/THE RIDER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

you put together yourself are a lot more interesting and clever than the ones you can buy in the store.

Theatre junior Sunny Saxton, an SFX makeup artist, costumer and Saxton-Rodriguez’s daughter, said costume and make-pretend is fun.

“I think it’s fun to pretend to be somebody else for a little while, you know?” Saxton said. “You know, like, you get to ... don a whole new personality. ... It

suspends your belief for a while.”

She said SFX makeup is a great way to simulate real situations.

“You slap on some scar wax and some fake blood and you’re a car crash victim,” Saxton said.

“You know, it’s so interesting. ... SFX is like a whole, you know, umbrella term for, like, anything that ... alters a person’s, you know, state of being. ... You can

See HALLOWEEN, Page 2

## From the RGV to NYC

### Ballet Nepantla shares its journey of identity, dance

**Fatima Gamez Lopez**  
SPANISH EDITOR

Ballet Nepantla’s co-founder Andrea Guajardo told the UTRGV community about her journey from dancing in the Rio Grande Valley to creating her own company in New York City.

Hosted by the UTRGV Center for Mexican American Studies, the “Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy through Meaningful Movement” panel discussion took place Oct. 21 in the Education Complex Borderlands Room on the Edinburg campus.



**Raquel Cazares/THE RIDER**  
Andrea Guajardo, co-founder, artistic director and resident choreographer of Ballet Nepantla

Guajardo said she began her ballet and *folklórico* journey at Dancentre in Edinburg, her hometown.

“I went to school where ... like 90% of us were Mexican American,” Guajardo said. “I was taller and whiter than everybody around me, and I didn’t really speak Spanish. ... I was always, you know, *la güera*, the ballet dancer. ... I made it my goal at a pretty early age to get out of the Valley, move to New York City and be a professional dancer.”

At 17, she moved to New York on a scholarship where she obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance at Fordham University in 2013.

After graduating, Guajardo performed with MOMIX, a dance company based in Washington, D.C., until 2017.

See BALLET, Page 8

# Brownsville mayor hits commencement change

## Bailey clarifies reasons for decision; SGA president declines to speak on issue

**Pete Mendoza**  
THE RIDER

In a Facebook post Thursday night, Brownsville Mayor John Cowen stated he has strong bias over the loss of the UTRGV commencement in the city.

“When I found out about the rumor prior to the official announcement, I immediately met with UTRGV President, Dr. Guy Bailey and Veronica Gonzalez, Senior Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations, and I clearly expressed my disappointment with their

decision,” Cowen wrote at 5:39 p.m. Thursday.

He wrote the change is a financial setback for the community.

“This is also a huge loss to our local economy as now thousands of people will be going to restaurants and staying in hotels outside Brownsville for this special weekend,” the mayor wrote.

As previously reported by The Rider, UTRGV President Guy Bailey said the decision was primarily based on surveys from incoming freshmen and graduates from Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.



RIDER FILE PHOTO  
Brownsville Mayor John Cowen

“There were two groups of people,” Bailey said in an interview Tuesday with The Rider. “One group of people

who have been through the commencement and we wanted them to tell us about their experiences ... and then the incoming freshmen, just to see their views on it, too.”

In an Oct. 9 interview, Bailey said the cost of an outdoor ceremony is more expensive than holding it in a venue.

“It’s very expensive to do it outdoors in Brownsville,” he said. “I think it’s probably \$100,000 a year or more, more than ... doing it in Bert Ogden.”

Holding commencement only in Edinburg would cost

\$320,243.52 less than holding it on each campus, according to expense reports provided by Patrick Gonzales, vice president for Marketing and Communications.

Graduates and incoming freshmen were more accessible to survey for the upcoming commencement ceremony, Bailey said.

“We don’t have any reason to believe that a junior would have any different opinion about this than a sophomore or a freshman,” he said.

Bailey said juniors could

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## THE RIDER

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

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Today Sundaes on Mondays

The **Student Union** will serve **free ice cream sundaes** while supplies last from **noon to 1 p.m.** in the veranda on the Brownsville campus. Students must bring their ID to receive a sundae.

### MCAT Webinar

The **American Medical Student Association** will host an MCAT webinar as part of Dr. **Hugo Rodriguez's "Get Ready, Pre-Med Series!"** from 5 to 6 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.112 on the Brownsville campus. The presentation will feature **insights from UTRGV Admissions committee officers** and include free food and giveaways.

### Early Voting

The **Center for Student Involvement and Vaqueros Vote** invite students to participate in **early voting on campus** until **Nov. 1** in the Student Academic Center lobby on the Edinburg campus and in Student Union Salón Gardenia on the Brownsville campus. To view times and dates, visit [utrgv.edu/vaqueros-vote](http://utrgv.edu/vaqueros-vote).

### Tuesday Disney Karaoke

The **Student Union** will host **"Disney Karaoke"** from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Student Union Game Rooms on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses. Register through V Link or in the Game Rooms. Participants must present a valid student ID.

### Trick or Troxel

The **Department of Housing and Residential Life** will host **"Trick or Troxel"** for those who live on campus and other UTRGV students from 8 to 11 p.m. in Troxel Hall on the Edinburg campus. There will be attractions such as a **haunted tunnel, an escape room, DIY Halloween treats, crafts** and the annual costume contest where participants can **win \$30 in VBucks**. Students must present their ID.

### Siempre con Nosotras

**La Unión Chicana de Hijxs de Aztlán** will host a **convivio** honoring Chicana feminist scholar **Gloria Anzaldúa** from 6 to 8 p.m. in the University Library on the Edinburg campus.

The event will feature **poetry readings, reflections on Anzaldúa's legacy** and a communal altar in observance of **Día de los Muertos**.

### Wednesday Spooktacular Movie Screening

The **Campus Activities Board and University Recreation** will present **"Beetlejuice"** as part of their annual **Spooktacular Movie Screening** from 8:30 to 11 p.m. in the University Recreation Building on the Edinburg campus.

### K.I.S.S. Fundraiser

The **Korean International Student Society** will sell

a variety of **stickers and snacks, including elote, Hot Cheetos with cheese and pancakes** from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. outside the University Library on the Edinburg campus.

### Thursday Costume Contest

The **Student Union** will host **"The Haunted Union Costume Contest"** where **students can show off their best costume** for a chance to **win up to \$150 in VBucks** from noon to 1:30 p.m.

in the Student Union's La Sala on the Brownsville campus and in the PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus. Register through V Link. Participants must present a valid student ID.

### Fright Fest

The **Center for Student Involvement** will host a **"Fright Fest"** for students to **participate in activities** from noon to 2 p.m. in the Student Union's La Sala on the Brownsville campus and in University Center Room 205 on the Edinburg campus. The event will include a **mystery challenge, a costume contest with prizes, spooky wood painting and trick-or-treating**.

**Glutes & Gainz University Recreation** will

host **"Glutes and Gainz"** from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus. The session will focus on **high-intensity and high-energy** lower-body workouts.

### Friday Turkey Trot

**University Recreation** will host the **"Turkey Trot 5K"** challenge, open to students, staff, and faculty, virtually from Nov. 1 to 30. The goal is to complete a 5K during the month to keep the UTRGV community active. Participants must register and use STRAVA to record their distance to complete the challenge. To join the Turkey Trot STRAVA Club, visit [www.strava.com/clubs](http://www.strava.com/clubs). To be contacted after completing the challenge, register via V link at [utrgv.campuslabs.com/engage](http://utrgv.campuslabs.com/engage).

### Senate Meeting

The **Student Government Association** will meet from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.101 on the Edinburg campus. Students can present concerns or projects during the meeting. For more information, email [sga@utrgv.edu](mailto:sga@utrgv.edu).

### Cycle Fit

**University Recreation** will host a **cardiovascular workout** where students can pedal through varying cycling settings, including **hills, climbs and sprints**, from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 1 on the Edinburg campus.

--Compiled by Vanessa Aguilar



## POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Oct. 16 and 21.

### Oct. 16

**5:46 p.m.:** A University Police officer assisted U.S. Border Patrol agents in the search for a man suspected of entering the Casa Bella Clubhouse on the Brownsville campus. The man was located inside the women's restroom, and U.S. Border Patrol agents took the man into custody as he was suspected of entering the country illegally.

**8:53 p.m.:** University Police officers responded to a report of a non-affiliated man heckling at referees during a flag football game on the University Recreation Center soccer fields on the Edinburg campus. Officers determined no crime occurred and advised the man to avoid heckling the referees. The man apologized and complied.

### Oct. 17

**4:01 p.m.:** A U.S. marshal reported a district court in

Cameron County received two telemarketing phone calls from a phone number associated with UTRGV. After further investigation, the Information Technology department reported the phone number provided was inactive and most likely used as a spoofed number.

**5:02 p.m.:** University Police, the Edinburg Fire Department, Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management and Facilities Services personnel responded to a gas leak in Health Affairs Building East on the Edinburg campus.

To ensure the safety of the campus community, the building was evacuated and an emergency notification was sent out to avoid the area. The gas leak was located near a boiler, and the gas lines were shut off. The building remained closed for the rest

of the day while repairs were done.

### Oct. 18

**8:17 a.m.:** A University Police officer responded to a traffic collision with reported minor injuries in Lot E-5 on the Edinburg campus. The officer later reviewed the closed-circuit TV cameras and determined

the driver had made a false statement regarding the crash. The case is under investigation.

**9 a.m.:** A Parking and Transportation Services employee reported that while placing a

wheel lock on a vehicle in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus, the driver arrived, removed the wheel lock and drove off. The wheel lock sustained minor damage. The case is under investigation.

### Oct. 20

**3:25 a.m.:** A University Police officer noticed a group

of people with alcoholic beverages in Lot E-7 on the Edinburg campus. After approaching the group, the officer discovered one non-affiliated man was under age 21 and had an open alcoholic beverage. The man was issued a citation for the violation and instructed to dispose of the alcoholic drink.

**7:10 p.m.:** University Police officers responded to an odor of gas coming from the kitchen in the Dining & Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus. Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management personnel and the Edinburg Fire Department deemed the building safe for reentry once the gas was turned off.

### Oct. 21

**10:59 a.m.:** An employee reported being struck by a student riding an electric scooter on the Bronc Trail on the Edinburg campus. The employee declined medical services. The case is under investigation.

--Compiled by Rebeca Salinas



## HALLOWEEN

Continued from Page 1

turn someone old or you can make someone, you know, a zombie."

She said students who are interested in makeup and costume should take a makeup class or swing by the costume shop on campus.

"There's a makeup class in the Theatre Department that's really good," Saxton said. "And in that class, you learn about mostly makeup and, like, you know, how to put a face on, you know. ... We talk about, like, SFX and and, like, gore and old age and all of that stuff. So, I think it's a really good

starting place."

Students can access the costume shop, which has "industrial-grade sewing equipment" as well as "a computer lab with production space within the Library Media Center," according to the UTRGV Theatre Department website.

"There's so many new faces and everybody's brand-new," Saxton said about visitors to the costume shop. "Like, it's not like everybody knows what they're doing automatically. And I think that's really cool. ... No one even knows how to thread a hand-sewing needle, you know, and everybody gets to start from scratch."





# Ballet Nepantla's 'Mística'



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Ballet Nepantla dancer Lindsey Jorgensen holds Aoi Ohno during "Llorona" Oct. 21 in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. "Llorona" is a performance about love, grief, loss and the bond between mother and child.



Members of Ballet Nepantla dressed as angels perform "Angelitos" Oct. 21 in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.



Ballet Nepantla dancer Anthony Bocconi dances during "La Bruja" Oct. 21 in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. "La Bruja" tells the story of a man who is haunted by his long-lost love.

## CHANGE Continued from Page 1

not be surveyed because their graduation dates are irregular.

"There are a lot of people who classify as juniors," he said. "Your graduation could be two years down the road, one year down the road, three years down the road. If we do juniors, why not sophomores, why not freshmen after their first semester?"

Bailey said the survey was brought up in meetings with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs groups.

"They ask constantly, 'How can we make this better?'" he said. "What can we do? What's going wrong? What's going right?" And again, they solicit student feedback, student surveys. And so, the ideas came up in those kinds of meetings."

Cowen wrote in his post that the "original purpose" for the creation of UTRGV was to increase resources and growth of both campuses.

"As of May of this year, UTRGV has committed \$210m in investment in Brownsville facilities and \$312m in Edinburg representing a higher investment per student for the Brownsville campus," he wrote. "This is very much appreciated (and needed), but there is definitely more to be done."

Communication Professor William F. Strong said the decision should have included more students, faculty and parents.

"I think that interviewing

freshmen—what do they know?" Strong said in an Oct. 17 interview. "This is a long way from graduation, and they don't have, at their age, the communal perspective."

The president said it is difficult to identify whether a student is Brownsville- or Edinburg-based.

"If you live in Edinburg but you're a biomedical science major, you're gonna take, probably, most of your courses in Brownsville," Bailey said. "If you're a Ph.D. student in human genetics, you take most of your courses in Brownsville. If you're an engineering student ... regardless of where you live, you're going to take most of your courses in Edinburg."

He said the university has attempted to host an indoor commencement for Brownsville three times in the

**"I am committed to continue to advocate to move this ceremony back to Brownsville for our students and also push to have more local class programming, better student life, and a return of UTRGV athletics to Brownsville,"**

**--Brownsville Mayor John Cowen**

past 10 years.

"One time, we had weather delayed," Bailey said. "We had a hurricane, or something, come through, and so we hosted events at Jacob Brown [Auditorium]. I think we had eight or nine ceremonies to get that done, and we had a much smaller graduating class back then."

He said another example was when the university moved commencement to



RIDER FILE PHOTO

UTRGV President Guy Bailey greets Claudia Lupescu, a marketing senior and outside hitter for the UTRGV Volleyball Team, during Picnic with the President in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Harlingen, which had the same issues as the Jacob Brown Auditorium.

"Moving it to Harlingen didn't seem to make people any happier than moving it to

Chacon, Brownsville director of Communications and Marketing, to request an interview with Cowen. In an Oct. 16 phone call, Chacon responded that Cowen was

Cowen wrote in his post that commencement is "one of the most important occasions in a person's life."

"By moving the ceremony, they have created an additional barrier for students' families (while I do understand that UTRGV plans to provide free transportation to Edinburg for this event)," he wrote.

Strong said the matter of commencement is not just an issue with students.

"The commencement is for parents and grandparents and the community at large," he said. "There's not just a student opinion that should be driving this. The biggest problem here is the signal that it sends to the Brownsville community."

Bailey said he understands and has empathy for students upset over the decision.

"I think all of us enjoy going down [to Brownsville]," he said. "[We] enjoy interacting with families there. Many of us have family in that area. And, you know, it's disappointing to all of us. ... On the other hand, the issues of safety, comfort and the wishes of our students really have to take precedence over everything."

Cowen said local leadership needs to work with UTRGV to ensure the university's future.

"I am committed to continue to advocate to move this ceremony back to Brownsville for our students and also push to have more local class programming, better student life, and a return of UTRGV athletics to Brownsville," he wrote.

"out of town."

The Rider emailed SGA President Odalys Saenz to request an interview.

"Thank you for reaching out," Saenz replied in an email Tuesday. "I have decided not to participate in an interview at this time."

The Rider contacted Faculty Senate President Christopher Gabler and Staff Senate President Rolando Segovia, but both declined to comment.

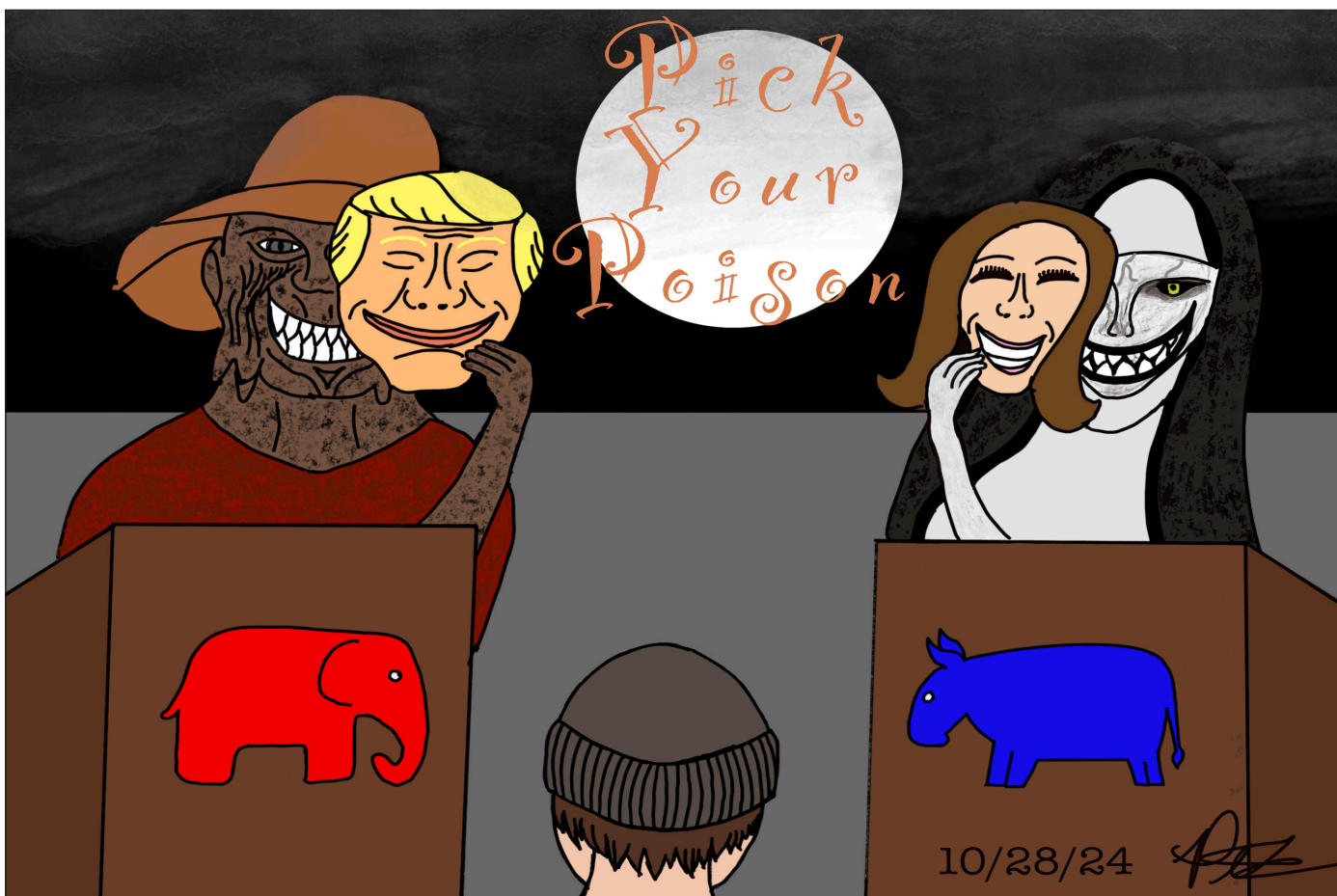
Edinburg," Bailey said. "... We got a lot of criticism, actually, for moving it to Harlingen."

Bailey said the decision to move the ceremony was made by a commencement committee and the institution.

"We certainly inform and get feedback from [the Student Government Association] and also from Faculty Senate executive leadership," he said.

On Oct. 8 and 14, The Rider emailed Manuel





What are your plans for Halloween this year, and how do you typically celebrate?



"I usually give out candy every Halloween in my neighborhood, and if I am there, I would usually get candies with my friends in mostly neighborhoods in Brownsville."

**Christian Solis**  
medical laboratory science senior



"Mis planes para este Halloween—probablemente estar con amigos y disfrazarnos. Así es, reunirnos. Y, ¿cómo lo celebros? Pues con amigos."

**Erika Gomez**  
estudiante de tercer año de comunicación



"Other than, you know, come to school, [my plan] is to go out and go trick-or-treating. Hopefully, I don't get tricked and get a bunch of treats and eat a lot of candy. ... Celebrate it by, you know, going out, having fun, wearing silly costumes and doing stupid gags and making people laugh, 'cause that's what matters."

**Joseph Gonzalez**  
kinesiology freshman



"I like to go out trick-or-treating, making everybody laugh, just having fun ... and just having a great time. And it only happens once a year."

**Moises Cortina**  
freshman  
—Compiled and photos by Vanessa Aguilar

# Your voice matters



**Daniela Chapa-Reyes**  
THE RIDER

Voting has always been really interesting to me. I have always liked the thought of people caring so much about their community, their state and even their country that they want to make a change in it—leave their mark in it, if you will.

So much is going on around us as citizens of this country that we get caught up in our own little worlds. We tend not to look up to see what can be affecting today's society and the secondary effects they may have in the future.

Voting is something that can be taken for granted. According to the Texas Secretary of State website, for the 2022 general election, the voter turnout for Hidalgo County

was 34.6%, while Cameron County's was 34.23%. Many people think, "Well, why should I vote anyway? It's not like it will make a difference," or, "Well, it's not like it affects me either way, so who cares?" And the thing is, a difference will be made, and it will end up affecting you.

Many aspects of society are impacted by politics, such as our education and the economy to keep the list short, and people don't even try to make a change. Those people tend to be the lot that will complain about how the president is doing a sloppy job of running the country or about whatever event the U.S. had no business getting into for the billionth time. But even then, they deem it unnecessary to vote.

If you have so much to say—or better yet, complain about—make your voice heard through the ballot.

It's important for people to do their research and find the right candidate

for them. The point isn't to just vote for whoever and hope and pray for the best. Look into each candidate who is running. If you share most of your ideas with that same candidate, go and make your voice heard. Make the choice for who you think is the best option.

I turned 18 in late July, and I can genuinely say I was excited about the fact that I am now able to vote. To think everything I agree and disagree on can now be heard through my vote is still unbelievable to me.

My parents would vote whenever they could back home in Mexico to try to advocate for what they believe in. My older brother takes after them and is always up to date on U.S. and world politics and votes whenever the chance presents itself. Now, I get to follow them and vote for what I stand for, and you should, too!

If you have so much to say—or better yet, complain about—make your voice heard through the ballot.

VISIT US ONLINE AT [UTRGVRIDER.COM](http://UTRGVRIDER.COM) TO PARTICIPATE

## WACKY WEB POLL

WOULD YOU RATHER WALK THROUGH A HAUNTED HOUSE OR WALK THROUGH A GRAVEYARD?

63.16%	36.84%
HAUNTED HOUSE	GRAVEYARD



# Del Valle a la gran manzana

**Fatima Gamez Lopez**  
EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

Andrea Guajardo, la cofundadora de Ballet Nepantla, le contó a la comunidad de UTRGV sobre su recorrido desde bailar en el Valle del Río Grande hasta la creación de su propia compañía en la ciudad de Nueva York.

Organizado por el Centro de Estudios Mexicoamericanos de UTRGV, el panel de discusión “Pedagogía Sostenible Culturalmente a Través de un Movimiento Significativo” se llevó a cabo el 21 de octubre en el cuarto Borderlands del Education Complex en el campus de Edinburg.

Guajardo dijo que comenzó su trayectoria en el ballet y folklórico en Dancentre en Edinburg, su ciudad natal.

“Fui a la escuela donde [...] como el 90% de nosotros éramos mexicanoamericanos”, dijo Guajardo. “Yo era más alta y más blanca que todos a mi alrededor, y realmente no hablaba español. [...] Siempre fui, ya saben, la güera, la bailarina de ballet. [...] Me propuse salir del Valle a una edad bastante temprana, mudarme a la ciudad de Nueva York y ser bailarina profesional”.

A los 17 años, se mudó con una beca a Nueva York, donde obtuvo su licenciatura de Bellas Artes en danza en la Universidad de Fordham en el 2013.

Después de graduarse, Guajardo actuó con MOMIX, una compañía de danza con sede en Washington, D.C., hasta el 2017.

Dijo que durante los seis años que vivió en Nueva



Raquel Cazares / FOTO RIDER

Andrea Guajardo (centro), cofundadora, directora artística y coreógrafa residente de Ballet Nepantla, habla con los asistentes durante el panel de discusión “Pedagogía Sostenible Culturalmente a Través de un Movimiento Significativo” el 21 de octubre en el cuarto Borderlands del Education Complex en el campus de Edinburg. También aparecen Martín Rodríguez (izquierda), cofundador, director asociado y coreógrafo residente; y Argelia Arreola, bailarina y coreógrafa.

York, siempre le preguntaron sobre su identidad.

“Con el tiempo, desarrollé este tipo de responsabilidad de educar a estas personas”, dijo Guajardo. “Sabes, los mexicanos vienen en todas las formas, tamaños y colores diferentes. Hay mexicanos judíos. Hay mexicanos pelirrojos, mexicanos rubios, mexicanos de ojos azules. Hay mexicanos negros”.

Raquel Pérez, directora de programa del Centro de Estudios Mexicoamericanos, dijo que una gran área de la pedagogía sostenible culturalmente es comprender quiénes somos.

“Encontré la plática muy interesante porque había muchas áreas con las que podía identificarme, como una

mexicoamericana que vive aquí en las fronteras”, dijo Pérez al panel. “Sientes que no eres ni de aquí, ni de allá, ¿verdad? Tuve la oportunidad de ir a México todos los viernes y sábados y hablar con mis abuelitos y hablo español y estoy agradecida por eso. Pero ahora, con el paso de las generaciones, me he dado cuenta de que algunos de mis sobrinos y sobrinas no pueden tener eso”.

La pasión de Guajardo la inspiró a fundar Ballet Nepantla en enero del 2017 y ahora se desempeña como bailarina, coreógrafa y directora artística.

“Fundar Ballet Nepantla fue la primera vez que pude tender un puente entre mis identidades como bailarina de

ballet y una mexicanoamericana, y fue a través de la danza”, dijo. “Y por primera vez, creo que lo que soy tiene sentido para mí”.

Guajardo dijo que Ballet Nepantla es una forma de conectarse con sus raíces mexicanoamericanas y compartirlas con los demás.

“Al final del día, el arte es expresión e identidad, y todo comienza en algún lugar”, dijo. “Entonces, lo que estamos haciendo en Ballet Nepantla es fusionar todas nuestras identidades y expresiones culturales para crear algo muy nuevo y algo que la gente nunca ha visto”.

Martín Rodríguez, cofundador y coreógrafo residente de Ballet Nepantla, comenzó su trayectoria en la

danza a los 9 años cuando se unió a la Academia de Danza Imagen en Guadalajara, Jalisco, México.

A los 15 años, Rodríguez emigró con su familia a Los Angeles, donde buscó una comunidad de danza para sentirse cerca de su identidad.

“Quería sentir que pertenecía a algún lugar porque [...] [estaba en] un nuevo país, un nuevo idioma; todo era nuevo”, dijo. “Y siento que es parte de nosotros en general, como humanos, buscar esa comunidad”.

En el 2016, se mudó a Nueva York, donde Guajardo le contó su idea de abrir Ballet Nepantla. Ahora, él dirige y coreografía para la compañía.

“Sentí que teníamos que seguir impulsando y mostrando quiénes somos [...] [haciendo] que la gente se conecte o reconecte con sus orígenes”, dijo Rodríguez.

Dijo que Ballet Nepantla quiere captar la atención de la gente ayudándola a comprender historias culturales y tradiciones que quizás no conozcan.

“Creo que Ballet Nepantla es una compañía que siempre intenta impulsar el trasfondo cultural [y] nuestra identidad”, dijo Rodríguez. “Siento que esa es una gran parte del trabajo [...] hacer que la gente sepa que puede explorar sus propios caminos con sus propias experiencias y seguir creciendo como comunidad”.

Argelia Arreola, bailarina y coreógrafa de Ballet Nepantla, dijo que sintió nostalgia después de haberse mudado de México a Nueva York.

“Nunca hice folklórico en México hasta que me mudé a Nueva York”, dijo Arreola.

Vea [NEPANTLA](#), Página 8

# Elecciones afectan relaciones México-EE.UU.

**Hugo Sepúlveda**  
THE RIDER

El departamento de Ciencias Políticas de UTRGV organizó una plática el 21 de octubre sobre los cambios en la relación internacional entre Estados Unidos y México debido a las elecciones en ambos países.

Mariana Aparicio Ramírez, profesora de relaciones internacionales en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México y coordinadora del Observatorio de la Relación Binacional México-Estados Unidos, habló sobre cómo el cambio de presidencia en ambas naciones puede influir en la relación entre estas.

Ramírez dijo que ambas naciones se encuentran ante la posibilidad de establecer líneas proactivas en agendas interdomésticas, entendidas como agendas domésticas, su propósito y su impacto en la política exterior.

“Para entender la política exterior de la administración de la presidenta Claudia Sheinbaum, es necesario alinearla con el sexenio anterior del presidente Andres Manuel López Obrador”, dijo en inglés.

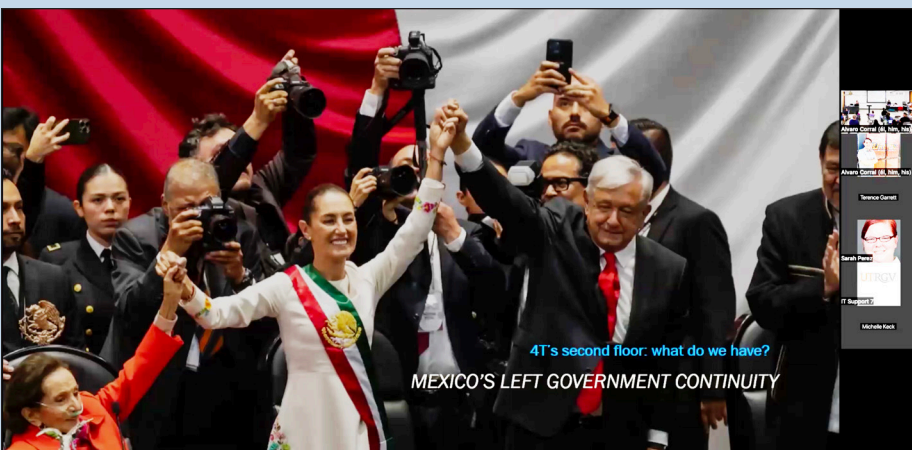
Ramírez dijo que el presidente López Obrador se convirtió en una de las figuras políticas más importantes de México. Su proyecto político luchó valientemente contra la corrupción y trabajó en revertir las políticas neoliberales implementadas durante los últimos 65 años.

Dijo que la política exterior



Silvana Villarreal / FOTO RIDER

Marcela Escalante, asistente administrativa del departamento de Ciencias Políticas, moderó el 21 de octubre la discusión virtual “Relaciones México-EE.UU.: Elecciones y paradigmas cambiantes” con la oradora principal Mariana Aparicio Ramírez, profesora de relaciones internacionales en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. El evento fue organizado por el Centro de Investigación y Análisis de Políticas.



Silvana Villarreal / CAPTURA DE PANTALLA RIDER

mexicana está basada en principios constitucionales “con las más importantes: autodeterminación y no intervención”.

“Estamos cerrando otra vez nuestra economía, con más proteccionismo”, dijo Ramírez. “Pienso que toda la disparidad que estamos teniendo, ahora en parte con el [Tratado entre México, Estados Unidos y Canadá], será algo muy incómodo para ambos países”.

Dijo que Juan Ramón de la Fuente, secretario de relaciones exteriores, dijo que la disminución del incremento de inmigración a través de México será una prioridad para el país en términos de política exterior.

“Nos encantaría cooperar [con Estados Unidos] porque nos necesitamos el uno al otro”, dijo Ramírez. “No podemos concebir seguridad en ambos países si no podemos cooperar. [...] La política se trata de intereses, y política exterior se trata de poder”.

Jose Vazquez, estudiante de tercer año de inglés, dijo que es importante saber sobre las relaciones fronterizas.

“Nuestros oficiales electos tienen mucho que ver en cómo [...] interactuamos con México porque tiene influencia en muchos aspectos de nuestras vidas”, dijo Vazquez.

Bryan Garza, estudiante de tercer año de biología, dijo en inglés que “tal vez las elecciones afecten las relaciones”. Los candidatos en Estados Unidos tienen puntos de vista diferentes sobre lo que debemos hacer con nuestros vecinos.



# Ante Books: a bet on the community

**Eduardo Escamilla**  
A&E REPORTER

Since opening in June, Ante Books and Creative Studio in McAllen has brought a sense of community to the local literary and art scene, becoming a destination to nab a rare find or take part in a creative workshop and fostering a vibrant cultural scene.

“Ante’ [means] a bet that everyone makes in a game of poker initially, so without knowing, like, what cards you’re dealt, which is kind of like life, like, you make with what you have,” store owner Selena Herrera said. “And you just decide what path you want to take ... and that’s what I’m doing here with Ante Books.”

Herrera said her vision for Ante Books goes beyond just selling books. It is about fostering a creative hub where people can gather, explore and connect.

Alongside Herrera, Creative Workshop Coordinator Gloria Reyes has been instrumental in bringing the community together through a variety of programming.

STEP administrative assistant and *Voces Unidas* fellow John Taylor De la Garza, who describes themselves as an artist, activist and dog dad, led a “*Día De Muertos* Flower Making Workshop” on Oct. 20 at the bookstore.

Taylor De la Garza taught attendees how to construct paper *cempasúchil* (marigold) and shared the story behind why these flowers are placed



Eduardo Escamilla/THE RIDER PHOTOS

UTRGV Visual art junior Asayne Maltos creates a paper *cempasúchil* (marigold) Oct. 20 at Ante Books, located at 1713 W. Hackberry Ave., Suite B, in McAllen. Maltos said she enjoys attending workshops at Ante Books to make art and take a break from her busy schedule.

on altars during *Día De Muertos*.

As they demonstrated their method to construct the flower, they told the story of Xóchitl and Huitzilin, childhood friends turned lovers, who were separated by a war that tragically took the life of Huitzilin.

Heartbroken, Xóchitl pleaded with Tonatiuh (the Aztec Sun God) to reunite them, according to Taylor De la Garza’s telling of the story. Touched by her grief, Tonatiuh transformed her into a *cempasúchil* bud, but time passed and the flower never fully blossomed, “no matter how much rain or sunlight would touch this flower,” they said.

Taylor De la Garza said, as

if guided by a mystic hand, a hummingbird hovered over the flower and gave it a kiss, and suddenly the *cempasúchil* bloomed “just as radiant as the sun.” The hummingbird had the spirit of her lost love, Huitzilin, who was reborn as the bird—their souls were reunited.

“And that’s also why the legend of, like, the butterflies and the hummingbirds are the souls returning back from the land of the dead ... [and] why we have the *cempasúchil* flower in the altars,” they said.

Reyes said workshops, such as “*Día De Muertos* Flower Making Workshop,” attract customers who also explore the in-store library, which in turn helps to promote literacy.

“I feel like writers are very creative, and people who read a lot, and so I feel like providing a space to kind of escape into, like, a creative bubble, is a goal for us, too,” she said.

When Ante Books opened, it started with a modest inventory of donated books. Over time, the collection has grown through a combination of donations, purchases and personal discoveries. Herrera takes pride in the challenge of finding specific books for customers, referring to the process as a “hunt.”

The bookstore is an official vendor for A24 screenplay books.

“I had a lot of [screenplay books] when we first opened, and those were, like, the first thing to go,” Herrera said.

She said she submitted a professional photo of its display and was excited to

learn their bookstore had been chosen as an official vendor for the screenplay books, alongside bookstores in larger cities, such as New York and Los Angeles.

One of the unique aspects of Ante Books is its focus on accessibility and affordability. The store offers a selection of used books, as well as a free library at the bar and grill Roosevelt’s at 7, located at 821 N. Main St. in McAllen, allowing more people to access literature.

But Ante Books is more than just a bookstore—it is a hub for creativity and community engagement.

The store hosts regular events, including movie nights, poetry readings every last Thursday of the month and the popular Hush Hush Club silent-reading hour every last Saturday of the month.

“There is no obligation to make a purchase or to take a workshop,” Reyes said. “People are welcome to just come in and enjoy the space or come and read a book.”

As Ante Books continues to grow and establish itself as a vital part of the McAllen community, Herrera and Reyes remain committed to their vision of creating a space that celebrates literature, art and the power of human connection.

Ante Books is located at 1713 W. Hackberry Ave., Suite B. Hours of operation are noon to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m. Sunday.



What scary movie do you think you could survive?



“I don’t think I could survive [in] any movie but, especially, I wouldn’t survive in ‘It’ because I am so scared of clowns.”

**Valeria Yopez**  
engineering technology junior



“Probably ‘Monster House,’ since that’s the only one I’ve seen. ... I mean it’s a big house, just run from it.”

**Joel Berlanga**  
integrated health science freshman



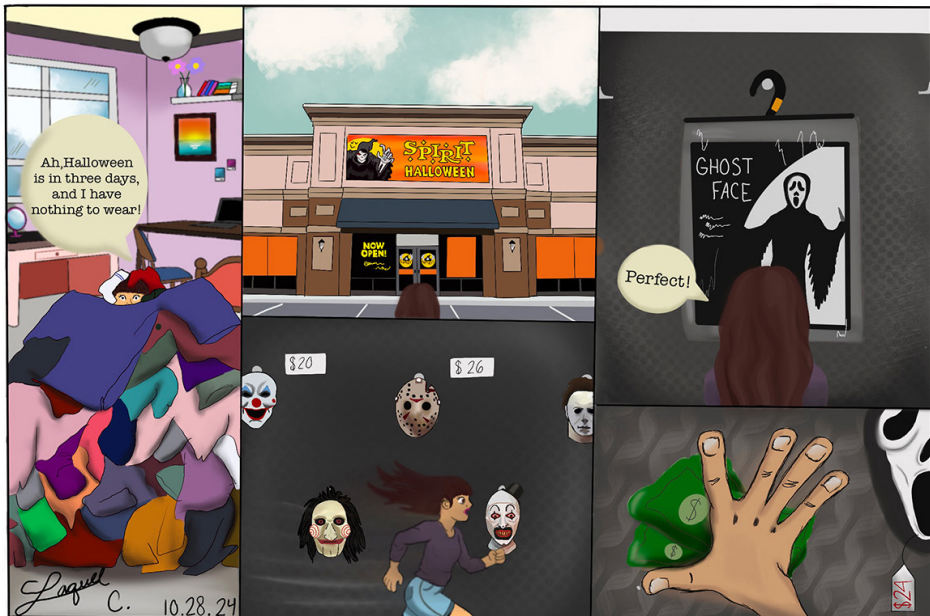
“I’d say ‘Scream.’ First of all, why would you answer the phone if you don’t know who is calling? Second, who doesn’t lock their doors?”

**Isabella Garza**  
marine biology freshman

—Compiled and photos by Silvana Villarreal



Ante Books Creative Workshop Coordinator Gloria Reyes unfolds her paper *cempasúchil* (marigold) during a *Día De Muertos* Flower Making Workshop Oct. 20 at Ante Books, located at 1713 W. Hackberry Ave., Suite B, in McAllen.



## SUDOKU

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	3				8		6	

Oct. 21 puzzle answer key:

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



# First NIL deal for UTRGV Football made official

## Ali Halloum

SPORTS REPORTER

Two UTRGV Football players have signed the first Name, Image and Likeness deals ahead of the program's inaugural season in 2025.

Slot receiver Sergio "Ale" Aparicio and offensive lineman Joe Derek Vecchio, both alumni of Pharr-San Juan-Alamo North High School, signed their deals with the Law Office of Daniel Gonzalez PLLC, according to an Oct. 10 news release from the 1 Mi AD Agency.

The deal will include both athletes producing social media content for the law firm, starring in on-air commercials

profit from their name, image and likeness in the NCAA v. Alston decision.

Gregory Selber, a UTRGV communication professor and former sports writer, said amateurism drove universities to bar athletes from profiting from their own name, image and likeness.

Selber said since colleges cover all expenses through scholarships and amateur ranks are separate from professional leagues, universities gained more control over how they profit off athletes.

"The universities and schools have been making money off athletes for a long, long time," he said. "Under the guise of amateurism, the

and teach myself how to be a businessman."

Aparicio also thanked God and Gonzalez for helping him be in the first generation of UTRGV Football and the NIL deal.

Selber said NIL deals are often organized by what he calls "collectives" of donors and advertisers to connect athletes and companies.

"The university can't pay the student directly," he said. "The bottom line is, for all the work that [the athletes] do and all the money that they bring in for the university, the idea was that athletes should be compensated to some extent if their name, image and likeness are used."

Gonzalez, also an alumnus of PSJA North, said the main driver behind the NIL deals was supporting student athletes in the Rio Grande Valley.

"One of the things I always wanted to do was give back to my community, [not just] the Rio Grande Valley, but more specifically, Pharr, PSJA, PSJA North," he said. "The goal is to support them in their college experience."

UTRGV Athletics has partnered with the developers of the INFLCR (pronounced influencer) platform for an NIL exchange on the site.

Derek Schramm, UTRGV senior associate athletic director for Advancement and Administration, said INFLCR allows student athletes to connect their brands with companies and vice versa on one platform.

"Once [businesses] register, they can see every one of the student athlete profiles," Schramm said. "So, it's almost like any other kind of social media page."

Selber said NIL opportunities will have an impact on UTRGV Athletics given their growing brand with football on the horizon.

"Athletics is popular," he said. "People love to go to games. They're selling a ton of tickets [and] they're building a brand. Part of the whole concept of building a brand in modern times is that you wanna make it lucrative. You're not doing it for the fun or for the ego."



Sergio Aparicio is a slot receiver for the UTRGV Football Team.



PHOTOS COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Joe Derek Vecchio is an offensive lineman for the UTRGV Football Team.

as well as a podcast taking listeners inside the team, which will be sponsored by Gonzalez.

It also includes stipulations granting bonuses to the student athletes if they earn a semester GPA over 3.5.

An NIL agreement is a deal between a company and a student athlete that allows them to use their name, image or likeness for profit.

In 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court opened the door for student athletes to be able to

university was profiting off the athletes' performance and, occasionally, their name, image and likeness. But, the student athletes weren't seeing any sort of compensation from that."

Aparicio said putting himself out there and developing skills as a businessman was what led him to sign an NIL agreement with the law firm.

"Signing the NIL deal is a big thing for me, especially," he said. "It allows me to pick up on big responsibilities

## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK: Isabella Costantini



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Isabella "Tini" Costantini is a nutritional sciences sophomore from Curitiba, Brazil, and a setter for the UTRGV Volleyball Team. This season, she has averaged 11.89 assists per set, tallying 547 assists overall.

**Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?**

A: "Is having a twin brother a fun fact? I have a twin brother."

**Q: Who or what got you started in volleyball?**

A: "I have a twin brother, and I used to be way taller than him. And so, everybody would ask, 'Oh, do you play volleyball? Do you play basketball?' And I said 'No.' So, one day, I kinda just tried it. And ever since then, I played volleyball."

**Q: Who has been your biggest**

**inspiration or role model?**

A: "I would say my dad."

**Q: Who is your favorite volleyball player?**

A: "Her name is Macris Carneiro. She's a setter from Brazil."

**Q: What practice drills help you the most in your position on the team?**

A: "I believe doing setter drills like we've been working on. Just setting in the pocket, setting out of pocket and just with the targets—that's really helpful to get location."

**Q: What kind of music do you like to listen to?**

A: "I'm from Brazil, so I listen to mostly Latino [music]. So, reggaeton and all that stuff. They're my favorite type of songs."

**Q: Which shows or movies do you like to watch?**

A: "I love 'Gossip Girl.'"

**Q: Do you have any hobbies?**

A: "I like to bake."

**Q: What is your biggest motivation?**

A: "I think it's just knowing that I'm here with a purpose, and that keeps me going."

**Q: What do you like the most about UTRGV?**

A: "I love the environment and how it feels like a family."

**Q: What are your biggest goals?**

A: "I think it's just giving my best every day and just being happy and letting the people around me [be] happy."

--Compiled by Ali Halloum



**NEPANTLA**

*Continúa de Página 5*

“Realmente quería saber más sobre mi cultura y sabía algunas cosas, pero no sabía mucho. Entonces, cuando me mudé a Nueva York, comencé a investigar con personas de la comunidad”.

Dijo que sus historias los ayudan a compartir sus raíces.

“Venimos de tres experiencias completamente diferentes”, Arreola dijo. “Tanto yo que vengo de México y estoy en un país ajeno, o como el de Andrea que era encontrar su raíz mexicana y Martín igual

que siempre ha tenido esa conexión con México”.

Joy Esquierdo, vicerrectora de la Oficina de Integración Bilingüe, agradeció a los oradores por compartir sus historias.

“Lo que comparten es tan profundo y tan importante para que nuestros estudiantes lo entiendan”, dijo Esquierdo. “[...] Ese viaje es tan hermoso y se necesita valentía para atravesarlo y compartirlo con otros y luego usarlo en su carrera, infundirlo en la coalición con el objetivo de ayudar a otros a explorar también su viaje y explorar sus identidades”.

**BALLET**

*Continued from Page 1*

She said during the six years living in New York, she was always questioned about her identity.

“I had developed this kind of responsibility over the course of time to educate these people,” Guajardo said. “You know, Mexicans come in all different shapes, all different sizes, all different colors. There are Jewish Mexicans. There are red-haired Mexicans, blond-haired, blue-eyed Mexicans. There are Black Mexicans.”

Raquel Pérez, the program manager for the Center for Mexican American Studies, said a big area of culturally sustaining pedagogy is understanding who we are.

“I found the *plática* very interesting because there was a lot of areas that I could relate to as well as a Mexican American living here in the borders,” Pérez told the panel. “You feel like *no eres ni de aquí, ni de allá*, right? I had the opportunity to go to Mexico every Friday and Saturday and speak to my *abuelitos* and I speak Spanish

and I’m grateful for that. But now, as generations are passing, I noticed that some of my nephews and nieces can’t have that.”

Guajardo’s passion inspired her to found Ballet Nepantla in January 2017 and now serves as a dancer, choreographer and artistic director.

“Founding Ballet Nepantla was the first time that I was ever able to bridge the gaps between my identities as a ballet dancer and a Mexican American, and it’s been through dance,” she said.

Guajardo said Ballet Nepantla is a way for her to connect with her Mexican American roots and share it with others.

“At the end of the day, art is expression and identity, and it all starts from somewhere,” she said. “So, what we’re doing at Ballet Nepantla is fusing all of our cultural identities and expressions to create something very new and something that people have never seen.”

Martín Rodríguez, co-founder and resident choreographer of Ballet Nepantla, began his dance journey at age 9 when he joined the *Academia de*

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@UTRGVRIDER

*Danza Imagen* in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

At 15, Rodríguez emigrated with his family to Los Angeles, where he searched for a dance community to feel close to his identity.

“I wanted to feel like I was belonging somewhere because ... [I was in a] new country, new language, new everything,” he said.

In 2016, he moved to New York, where Guajardo told him her idea of opening Ballet Nepantla. He now directs and choreographs for the company.

He said Ballet Nepantla wants to capture people’s attention by helping them understand cultural stories and traditions they might not know.

“I think Ballet Nepantla is a company that always tries to push the cultural background [and] our identity,” Rodríguez said. “I feel like that’s a big part of the job ... to let people know that you can explore your own ways with your own experiences and keep growing as a community.”

Argelia Arreola, a dancer and choreographer for Ballet Nepantla,

said she felt homesick after moving from Mexico to New York.

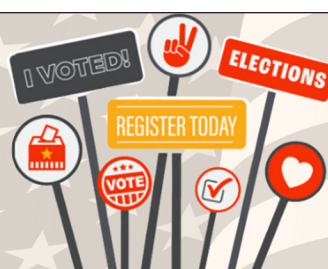
“I really wanted to know more about my culture and I knew some stuff, but I didn’t know a lot,” Arreola said. “So when I moved to New York, I started doing research with people in the community.”

She said their stories help them share their roots.

“We come from three completely different experiences,” Arreola said in Spanish. “Me, coming from [Mexico] and being in a foreign country, or like Andrea who was finding her Mexican roots and Martín who has always had that connection with Mexico.”

Joy Esquierdo, vice provost for the Office of Bilingual Integration, thanked the speakers for sharing their stories.

“What you share is so deep and so important for our students to understand,” Esquierdo said. “... It takes bravery to go through that and share it with others and then use it to your career, infuse it into the coalition with the goal of helping others also explore their journey and explore their identities.”



## DID YOU KNOW? UTRGV IS A POLLING SITE

### EDINBURG

Hidalgo County

### Early Voting & Election Day

#### ESTAC 1.100 Lobby

Monday, October 21 - Saturday, October 26 | 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Sunday, October 27 | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday, October 28 - Friday, November 1 | 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 5 | 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.



For questions or accommodations, contact your local elections office.

Cameron County 956-544-0809  
Hidalgo County 956-318-2570

@vaquerosvoteutrgv

### BROWNSVILLE

Cameron County

### Early Voting

#### BSTUN 2.24 Salón Gardenia

Monday, October 21 - Friday, October 25 | 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Saturday, October 26 - Sunday, October 27 | 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Monday, October 28 - Friday, November 1 | 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

### HARLINGEN

Cameron County

### Election Day

#### HCEBL 1.100 Auditorium

Tuesday, November 5 | 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Scan for voter ID information

