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New learning platform starting Summer 2025

Hugo A. Sepúlveda
THE RIDER

Over the summer, the UTRGV Office of the Provost announced the university's transition from Blackboard to a new learning manager system, Brightspace.

Jonikka Charlton, senior vice provost for Student Success and Academic Affairs and dean of the University College, told The Rider the change will go into effect Summer 2025.

"Students who are in accelerated online programs, they will transition in the summer," Charlton said. "Module 2 and our medical school students will transition on July 1. That's when their new year starts."

"Our contract was coming up with Blackboard and, just like lots of things at the institution, when those moments happen, we do request for proposals. The learning management systems out there in the marketplace have gotten much better, so we were looking to make sure that we had the best quality

See **PLATFORM**, Page 3



VAQUEROS GET ELECTION-READY



Nursing graduate student Anna Solitaire (from left), nursing junior Corina Arizmendi and nursing senior Valerie Martinez answer a question for Constitution Day Trivia Tuesday in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus. Tuesday was also Voter Registration Day. See photos, Page 8.

Love is a battlefield

Eduardo Escamilla
A&E REPORTER

If reality shows have taught us anything about dating, it is that the fleeting sparks often lead to fizzling relationships. And, in an era dominated by online dating apps and social media, traditional methods of finding love may seem archaic.

Team Victoriam, a club at UTRGV, brought back a classic approach to connecting with potential partners through speed dating.

The club hosted "Fall For Me" on Thursday in the Student Union Sage Room on the Edinburg campus, in the hope students will fall in love with someone or just make a new friend.

"We want to get people together because it's fall, [and] the pun was too good for me to pass," said Kevin Flores, a computer science sophomore and Team Victoriam member.

While swiping left or right on dating apps can be convenient, many

See **LOVE**, Page 6



During the "Fall For Me" speed dating event Thursday in the Student Union Sage Room on the Edinburg campus, students played the "button" game to find their perfect match. History sophomore Anthony Reyes pressed the button on Avery Sullivan because, "She was like, 'I was only here to meet friends,' and all that. So, I was like 'I'ma press the button so you can go meet people.'" In the background is Juan Espinoza, a physics junior and president of Team Victoriam.

UTRGV inspires a new generation

Pete Mendoza
THE RIDER

The U.S. Education Department is partnering with UTRGV to renew the university's GEAR UP program for another seven years, as of September 2024.

GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, prepares low-income students to graduate high school and enroll in post-secondary education, according to a UTRGV official.

Cynthia Valdez, associate vice president for College Access and K-12 Partnerships, said UTRGV will receive a \$4,215,200 grant each year from the Education Department to fund the program.

"The total overall grant the university has received is almost \$29 million for the seven years," Valdez

See **EDUCATION**, Page 3



THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IS OCT. 7

Visit sos.state.tx.us for more information

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 Last Day to Withdraw
 Today is the **last day to withdraw from Fall 2024 classes** and receive a **25% refund.**

Zumba Toning University Recreation
 invites students to stay active and in shape through **body-sculpting exercises** and **high-energy cardio** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 1 on the Edinburg campus.

Air Hockey Tournament
 The Student Union will host an **Air Hockey Tournament** at 1 p.m. at the Game Room on the Brownsville campus.

Tuesday Ready UTRGV
 The Office of Emergency Management will host **Ready UTRGV**, offering safety resources for emergency preparedness from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dining & Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus, at the same time Wednesday in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Thursday in Clinical Education Building Room 1.100 on the Harlingen campus. The event is open to

all UTRGV students, faculty and staff. The first 100 attendees will receive a **free sling bag.**

Study Abroad Fair
 The Office of the Provost will host a **Study Abroad Fair** where students, faculty and staff are invited to learn about **short-term summer programs offered abroad** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus.

M.S. in Criminal Justice
 Marika Dawkins and Gordon Crews, program coordinators of **Graduate Recruitment & Admissions**, will conduct a webinar on the master of science in criminal justice degree. The academic program will enhance students' competence in the content of theories, principles and methods of criminal justice. The webinar, which will take place from noon to 1 p.m., is open to the public. Register online.

Linguistics Seminar
 Jamie Starling, associate professor in the History department, will present "**A Bilingual Republic? Texas 1836-1846**" from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in Academic Services



Building Room 1.106 on the Edinburg campus, at the same time in Music, Science & Learning Center Room 1.105 on the Brownsville campus and via Zoom. ID: 449 301 4031.

'Brain and Beyond' Seminar
 Dr. Jeremy Tanner, an assistant professor of neurology at the **Biggs Institute for Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases** at UHealth San Antonio and faculty in the **South Texas Alzheimer's Disease Research Center**, will present a virtual lecture titled "**Biomarkers for Alzheimer's Disease.**" The seminar is part of the UTRGV School of Medicine's "**Brain and Beyond**" series. The event is open to students, faculty and staff from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Zoom ID: 823 8006 9138.

Wednesday Yoga
 University Recreation offers **basic yoga** from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 1 on the Edinburg campus.

Thursday M.S. in Kinesiology
 Graduate Program Coordinator **Zasha Romero**

will discuss UTRGV's **Master of Science in Kinesiology**, which prepares students to **promote healthy lifestyles and improve quality of life**, from 5 to 6 p.m. To register for the virtual event, visit calendar.utrgv.edu/event/master-of-science.

Lotería Bash
 The Center of Innovation and Commercialization will celebrate **Hispanic Heritage Month** with **lotería, information booths and Mexican food** from noon to 2 p.m. in the Quad on the Edinburg campus.

Hazing Prevention Panel
 The Center for Student Involvement will sponsor a **Hazing Prevention Panel** from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the Dining & Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus.

Hazing Prevention Week
 aims to educate students on the **dangers of hazing and to foster a safe campus environment.**

Friday Boxing Training
 University Recreation offers **boxing classes** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. at UREC Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus.
 --Compiled by Vanessa Aguilar

POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 10 and 18.

Sept. 10
8:33 a.m.: A student reported receiving a text message from a non-affiliated man threatening him with violence. The case is under investigation.

1:57 p.m.: A University Police officer found marijuana while investigating a vehicle for a reckless damage offense in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. Officers contacted the owner, a non-affiliated woman, and arrested her for possession of marijuana. She was transported and booked into the Brownsville Police Department.

Sept. 11
10:16 a.m.: A student reported being involved in a vehicle collision in Lot E-26 on the Edinburg campus. The other driver left the scene. No injuries were reported. The

case is under investigation.

1:35 p.m.: An employee reported finding alcoholic beverage containers in the men's restroom in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.

Sept. 13
12:13 p.m.: University Police officers responded to Heritage Hall on the Edinburg campus for a report of a vape pen, which tested positive for THC and was submitted for destruction.

Sept. 15
4:07 p.m.: A University Police officer responded to an active fire alarm in Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus but found no signs of smoke or fire. Further investigation revealed the alarm was activated due to a water leak. Environmental Health,



Safety and Risk Management deemed the building safe for reentry.

4:52 p.m.: A University Police officer responded to a water leak in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus. Wet floor signs were placed along with a trash can under the leak. A work order for repairs was submitted.

Sept. 17
8:27 a.m.: University Police officers responded to a student feeling nauseated in the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus. The student declined emergency medical services.

11:56 a.m.: A student reported a concerning message in a group chat. University Police officers on the Edinburg

campus contacted the student who said he was OK and did not require assistance.

4:44 p.m.: An officer responded to a student who fainted in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus. Emergency medical services evaluated the student and transported her to the Edinburg Regional Medical Center.

6:11 p.m.: A University Police officer responded to the Harlingen Soccer Complex where a university-leased charter bus struck a non-affiliated parked vehicle. University Police notified the Harlingen Police Department.

Sept. 18
1:18 a.m.: An employee reported finding empty alcoholic beverage containers inside the men's restroom in the University Library on the Brownsville campus.
 --Compiled by Rebeca Salinas

GOT NEWS?

TELL US ABOUT IT
therider@utrgv.edu

UTRGV takes on the global stage

Cadence Vaughan

THE RIDER

The university chapter of Enactus, a network of leaders focused on social and environmental impact, will represent the United States in the entrepreneurial organization's World Cup 2024 Oct. 2 to 4 in Kazakhstan.

Each year, the group attends the USA Expo 2024 hosted by Enactus in different cities across the country.

The team won the national competition, which was held at the University of Texas at Austin last year, and qualified for the world cup.

Maria Leonard, assistant professor of practice in the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, is the faculty adviser for Enactus.

Leonard first got involved in Enactus in the 1980s when she was a student at legacy institution the University of Texas-Pan American.

In October 2015, when Leonard started teaching full time, she restarted the chapter on the UTRGV campus.

"I decided to restart the chapter because it had done a lot of things for my own development," she said.

As the faculty adviser, Leonard provides guidance and continuity while helping students navigate networking opportunities they need in order to make their projects grow.

She said the team has been working many hours in preparation for the competition in Kazakhstan.

"They are very, very committed to representing the United States and our



PHOTOS COURTESY ENACTUS RGV

Members of the Enactus student organization at UTRGV are shown after winning the national competition May 15 at the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin. Shown (from left) are Maria Leonard, faculty adviser and an assistant professor of practice in the Management department; Santiago Vazquez, accounting senior and vice president; Anthony Cardoza, graduate student in business administration; Daniel Guajardo, finance senior; Isaac Salas, marketing senior and club historian; Marshall Barbosa, accounting senior; Alheli Mondragon, graduate student in business administration and president; Kayla Flores, marketing senior; Cassandra Ayala, marketing alumna; Fatima Mancia Mendoza, accounting senior; Eric Arredondo, business analytics graduate student; Sheila Sanchez, accounting senior; Daniel Lopez, management alumna; Sasha Wynn, management alumna; Arianna Rosales, management senior; and Josiah Gonzalez, finance senior and treasurer.

institution," Leonard said.

She said the team will participate in a culture fair, where each team at the competition will showcase cultural items from its country.

Leonard said deciding what to bring to the culture fair was difficult.

"It's tricky because we're Hispanic," she said. "But we're not really Mexican, like, we're representing the United States, not Mexico."

The adviser said the team decided to bring small cowboy hats and American candy to the fair.

Leonard said she did not

See **GLOBAL**, Page 8



Members of the Enactus student organization at UTRGV present during a national competition on May 15 at the University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business. They are Historian Isaac Salas (from left), President Alheli Mondragon, Cassandra Ayala and Treasurer Josiah Gonzalez.

Brownsville native's journey through the Paralympics

Andrew Mayo

THE RIDER

U.S. Army veteran Jason Tabansky won the gold medal for Men's Individual W1 Para Archery in his debut at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games on Sept. 1. Despite Tabansky's disability, through his love for archery and drive for success, he stays determined to keep aiming for the stars.

Tabansky's journey in archery began after he was gifted a bow while he was stationed at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

"I had never shot archery in my life," the 41-year-old said. "All I knew was fishing growing up in Brownsville. This was a whole new hobby that I had just picked up. So, I got that old bow, got it set up, and I would go practice every once in a while, just so I was good enough to hunt, but that was the extent of it."

After getting orders to move to Germany from Alabama, Tabansky realized he would have to put his new hobby on pause.

"I get out to Germany and I find out bowhunting out there is illegal," he said. "I had my bow stuffed in a case in my basement. [I] didn't even open that case for four years."

In 2015, Tabansky suffered a life-altering spinal cord injury and lost his ability to walk.

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PLATFORM

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one for UTRGV."

She said the new Brightspace platform price is significantly lower than what the university is currently paying for the Blackboard platform contract.

The Rider asked Charlton for the cost of the two platforms. As of press time, The Rider had not received the numbers.

"The Brightspace platform has a lot of really great features and functionality," Charlton said. "Clearly, we wanted to make sure that we had a [learning manager system] that worked really well on mobile devices because we know that many of our students are using mobile devices to be able to access the platform."

She said Brightspace allows "students to see ... what progress they're making in their courses, what their grades look like."

Charlton said it will be easier for faculty to build courses on the Brightspace platform.

"There are a couple of pieces of functionality that will help them very easily create more engaging content for students, and to be able to see and manage grades and student progress a lot more easily as well," she said.

Charlton said Brightspace allows users to "give audio and video feedback to students."

"Human interaction, even if it's not in real time, I think, is critical to learning for students," Charlton said. "And students want to see their faculty, even if they're in an asynchronous course."

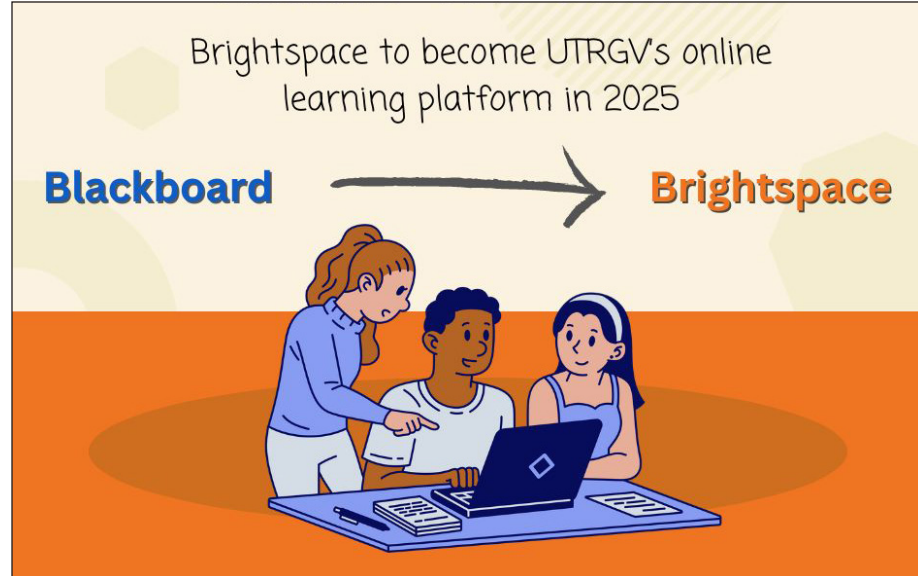
She said there are going to be modules to teach students how to navigate the new platform.

"We are taking this transition

process very seriously and we've got a lot of resources at the institution dedicated to it," Charlton said. "We did our due diligence to really look for the system that would help us to support the highest quality online experience possible, and we want it to be easy for students to navigate in

"Personally, the Blackboard platform seems a little out of date compared to, for instance, Canvas," Flores said. "There [are] much better alternatives out there, and I feel like definitely transitioning to a different one is going to be a lot better."

He said the Blackboard user



the system."

Biology junior Laura Guerrero, said Blackboard is easier to navigate than other platforms, such as Canvas.

"Blackboard is a cleaner look, and there's, like, a sidebar with the courses, calendar, and I feel like that makes it more modern," Guerrero said.

She would prefer to have a new tab open when viewing a course on Blackboard.

Guerrero said there are no issues with the website, but the Blackboard app has "been really slow, especially here at the campus."

Accounting freshman Kevin Flores said Blackboard is "out of date."

Venisha Colón/THE RIDER GRAPHIC interface is "confusing" and there are issues when accessing assignments.

Flores said he would like it if the new platform "allows students to communicate with each other."

"Let's say you are taking a course, Intro to Communication," he said. "Instead of just having access to that one class, you could have a group discussion with all the people taking Intro to Communication with that one professor. This would allow collaboration and networking among different classes on the same material, which I think would be very cool."

EDUCATION

Continued from Page 1

said. "... The GEAR UP grant allows us to provide services to the students, their parents and their tutors."

Targets for the program include 19 middle schools, 12 high schools and five school districts. The program will serve 5,269 seventh-graders.

Valdez said the university's goal is to provide support for the community and opportunities for the youth.

"Being able to have this program in the school districts is preparing students early to have that dream of going to college and having a premier university, such as UTRGV, in their very backyard provides that natural transition to come to this institution," she said.

Valdez said university students can gain experience through the program by becoming tutors.

"We will definitely be trying to [hire] UTRGV students that would like to work in the school districts as tutors and mentors for our students," she said.

Cristina Castillo, assistant director of GEAR UP and a former member, said university students can help the younger generation through peer-to-peer support.

"I think it's important to hire individuals that are closer in age so that they can understand more of what their needs are," Castillo said.

Nutrition sciences freshman Leslie Ortiz said she did not have resources and information on university preparation available when she was a middle schooler.

"I would like to see that emphasis to middle schoolers more on how knowledge and learning is far more valuable than just having a good job," Ortiz said.

More than the color we add



Andrew Mayo
REPORTER

As the racial demographics of the Rio Grande Valley become more and more diverse, I see a disturbing problem rising alongside it: fetishization.

According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, fetishization is defined as a sexual interest in an object, a part of the body that is not a sexual organ, or a person as if they are an object. This differs from typical attraction, however, as fetishization often dehumanizes the subject, making them more of a symbol rather than a person.

When someone is fetishized, it is usually based on preconceived notions and stereotypes about their sexual biology and personality. The reaction to the growing Black male population in the Valley, and specifically at UTRGV, is a prime example of this fetishization in action.

I've seen numerous social media posts of shirtless, Black student athletes, and no matter the post, there will always be comments saying something along the lines of, "We finally have some color in the Valley!" While this may seem innocent enough at first, its

implications reveal a much sadder truth.

Earlier in the month, when three Black male student athletes were arrested in a hit-and-run with a cyclist, I continued to see a disturbing trend with comments under social media posts about the incident.

There were people saying "Free them! Open the cell!" despite the reprehensible nature of their crimes.

Some on social media judged those three students not by the content of their characters, or even their actions, but by their perceived attractiveness.

Sure, there could have been a similar reaction from people if the student athletes were any other race and still seen as attractive, but it is only under those same social posts that you also might see comments saying the

This absence of cultural interaction has left an empty mold for people to fill about what they think Black people should look like, how they should act and what they should be.

For the first week in the semester, I'd constantly be assumed as an athlete due to people's expectations, and it did nothing but create awkwardness when I had to explain to them I wasn't.

The worst part of fetishization is the feedback loop it creates, especially in the Black community. The more someone is exposed to fetishization, the more they are inclined to act out in the way they are expected to.

They're also putting more of their worth and confidence into the aspects of themselves that are given the most attention.

For example, a common expectation for Black men is for them to have more dominant, "tough" personalities. As this personality trait becomes something that is expected from them, the more and more they lean into this expectation and become a less authentic version of themselves.

I've always made it an effort to remove myself from this narrative and show I am more than the stereotypes and expectations associated with

the intersectionality of my race and gender.

However, I do this while still embracing the culture and uniqueness that comes with being a Black man. Of course, the color of my skin and everything associated with it might be the first thing people see, but there should always be an immediate motivation to see what's beneath.

"I've always made it an effort to remove myself from this narrative and show I am more than the stereotypes and expectations associated with the intersectionality of my race and gender."

crimes were committed by "the usual suspects."

To me, this shows how many conceptions about Black people in the Valley are based on stereotypes.

Because of the lack of significant Black presence in the Valley until now, I've had many native Valley residents tell me of the few interactions or friendships they have had with Black people.



Do you feel connected to your heritage? Why or why not?



"Yes, I do. One because we live in the [Rio Grande] Valley—over here it is basically all Spanish, you know. If you go to stores, employees will speak to you in Spanish, which is pretty good. And also, back at home, we usually eat Mexican food."

Javier Ontiveros
criminal justice senior



"I do feel connected to my heritage because I feel, like, in this environment in the UTRGV aspect, I feel like everybody is very welcoming and homey, and understands the situations of being Hispanic or, like, being [a] first-generation student like I am."

Anahi Perez
nursing freshman



"I do because my family is Hispanic, and we all live here in Edinburg, and we are close to the border where most of our family is ... in Mexico. We just feel connected with everyone here because there is mostly Hispanic people and we could bond a lot with each other, and the food is awesome here."

Samantha Orozco
freshman

--Compiled by Vanessa Aguilar

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WACKY WEB POLL

WOULD YOU RATHER LISTEN TO ONE SONG FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE OR NEVER BE ALLOWED TO LISTEN TO THE SAME SONG TWICE?

38.46%	61.54%
LISTEN TO ONE SONG FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE	NEVER BE ALLOWED TO LISTEN TO THE SAME SONG TWICE

GOT NEWS?

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Mes de la Herencia Hispana

La importancia de celebrar la cultura

Mes de la Herencia Hispana

Del 15 de septiembre al 15 de octubre



Costa Rica

Costa Rica, junto con otros países centroamericanos, obtuvo su independencia de España el 15 de septiembre de 1821.



El Salvador

El Salvador obtuvo su independencia de España el 15 de septiembre de 1821.



Guatemala

Guatemala obtuvo su independencia de España el 15 de septiembre de 1821.



Honduras

Honduras obtuvo su independencia de España el 15 de septiembre de 1821.



Nicaragua

Nicaragua obtuvo su independencia de España el 15 de septiembre de 1821.



México

México declaró su independencia de España el 16 de septiembre de 1810.



Chile

Chile conmemora la formación del Primer Congreso Nacional el 18 de septiembre de 1810.



Belize

Belize obtuvo su independencia del Reino Unido el 21 de septiembre de 1981.

Daniela Chapa-Reyes

THE RIDER

Con el inicio del Mes de la Herencia Hispana, los estudiantes de UTRGV, una institución de servicio hacia los hispanos, dicen que es importante celebrar la cultura.

El Mes de la Herencia Hispana se celebra entre el 15 de septiembre y el 15 de octubre, cuando se conmemoran las diferentes culturas y el impacto que han tenido en los Estados Unidos.

Samantha Lopez, directora de Servicios para Estudiantes Internacionales, dijo que más de la mitad de los 800 estudiantes internacionales que asisten a UTRGV son de México.

“Somos una de las instituciones que brinda servicios a los hispanos más grande del país”, dijo Lopez. “Alrededor del 60% de nuestros estudiantes internacionales son hispanos”.

Lopez dijo que estudiantes de otros países hispanos, como Colombia, Chile, Perú, El Salvador, Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala, Ecuador y Panamá, también asisten a UTRGV.

Dijo que la universidad organizará eventos que muestren las ricas tradiciones culturales de la comunidad hispana, incluyendo exhibiciones de arte, música, danza y conferencias.

Stephanie Alvarez, profesora de estudios mexicano-estadounidense, invita a la comunidad a los eventos que se realizarán en el campus.

El evento *Xicanx Punk Poetry*, con Amalia Ortiz y Las Hijas de la Madre, se llevará a cabo a las 6:30 p.m. del miércoles en el edificio de Artes Liberales Sur Cuarto 107 en el campus de Edinburg, y a las 12:30 p.m. del jueves en el Salón Cassia en

el campus de Brownsville. El evento es patrocinado por el Programa Académico de Estudios mexicano-estadounidense y el Departamento de Escritura Creativa.

Jessica Lavariega Monforti, autora y vicerrectora de California State University Channel Islands, hablará sobre su libro, “*Proving Patriotism*”, a las 12:30 p.m. el 7 de octubre en el

campus de Brownsville. El evento es patrocinado por el Programa Académico de Estudios mexicano-estadounidense y el Departamento de Escritura Creativa. El libro trata sobre la vida de Montemayor como activista y educador chicano. Es asociado principal de educación y coordinador de participación familiar en la Asociación de Investigación para

Raquel Cazares/GRÁFICA RIDER

ha sido impuesto por el gobierno de los EE.UU. y resalta la ascendencia española”, dijo. “Para mí, es un mes importante porque visualiza a los chicanos y latinos en los Estados Unidos. [...] Esto brinda una oportunidad para, al menos durante un mes, destacar algunas de las formas en que los latinos han contribuido a los Estados Unidos”.

La estudiante de primer año de educación Gabby Torres dijo que la música juega un papel importante en la cultura hispana.

“Los artistas tejanos, los artistas de reggaetón, creo que realmente les dan a los hispanos el reconocimiento que merecen y realmente expanden nuestra cultura mucho más a través de su música”, dijo Torres.

Kimberly Harlow, una estudiante de primer año de ingeniería mecánica, dijo que es importante celebrar el mes.

“Creo que lo importante es expresarlo lo más que sea posible”, dijo Harlow. “Hoy en día, se está perdiendo con la cantidad de culturas que tenemos en Tejas, así que creo que expresarlo tanto como podamos es importante para mantenerlo vivo”.

En observación, *Conceptos Dance Ensemble* presentará *Nuestra Herencia*, un concierto que se llevará a cabo a las 7:30 p.m. el sábado en el Auditorio Municipal de Edinburg, ubicado en 200 N. Seventh Ave. La entrada cuesta \$10 para adultos y es gratuita para niños de 10 años o menos.

“Este concierto de baile de dos horas celebra el Mes de la Herencia Hispana con música vibrante y disfraces”, de acuerdo con una publicación de Facebook del departamento de Artes Culturales de la Ciudad de Edinburg.

--Traducido por Fatima Gamez Lopez

“Somos una de las instituciones que brinda servicios a los hispanos más grande del país”.

- Samantha Lopez, directora de Servicios para Estudiantes Internacionales

campus de Edinburg. La ubicación se anunciará más adelante. La conferencia es patrocinada por el Programa Académico de Estudios mexicano-estadounidense y el Departamento de Ciencias Políticas.

Los autores Aurelio Montemayor y Thomas Ray Garcia, profesor de inglés

en South Texas College, hablarán sobre su libro, “El Curso de la Raza”, a las 5:30 p.m. el 14 de octubre en el Cuarto 2.102 de Sabal Hall en el campus de Brownsville. El libro trata sobre la vida de Montemayor como activista y educador chicano. Es asociado principal de educación y coordinador de participación familiar en la Asociación de Investigación para

el Desarrollo Intercultural (IDRA por sus siglas en inglés) en San Antonio. Alvarez dijo que prefiere llamar a la celebración Mes de la Herencia Latinx, en lugar de Mes de la Herencia Hispana.

“Realmente no me gusta la palabra hispano porque es un término que

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LOVE

Continued from Page 1

Individuals are seeking more meaningful connections.

“Online, you can lie about a lot of things,” Flores said. “And you imagine things of how they [might be] that probably [are not] true. Face-to-face, you get a real sense of who they are.”

Speed dating provides an opportunity to meet in person, engage in conversation and gauge chemistry in a controlled setting.

“It’s good to meet someone new to talk to,” Flores said. “And even if it doesn’t end up as something, end up [a relationship], it’s just nice to meet someone and have a good time.”

The event was a lively affair, with students from diverse academic backgrounds mingling and sharing their passions and experiences.

I had never considered myself a speed dater. I even dislike speeding on the road. But, like many others growing weary of the virtual world, I decided to give it a try.

My first speed date was with studio art freshman Mox Liscano, who favors Olivia Rodrigo’s energetic music over Taylor Swift’s and has a deep-seated hate of spiders, stemming from a traumatic childhood encounter.

Liscano, already in a long-term relationship, said she attended the event to make new friends and that, for her, there was no difference between meeting people online or in person.

She added that, while in-person friendships require regular interaction and spending time together, online friendships can also be deep and meaningful if you invest enough time and effort.

Liscano was just chatting about her past heartbreak when the alarm buzzed, signaling it was time to switch partners, leading me straight to my next date. The speed in speed dating was no joke.

I moved over to the seat on the right and met electrical engineering sophomore Manuel Flores. His eyes were instantly drawn to the camera in my hands, given his deep

love for photography.

He shared beautiful photos of nature and butterflies that he took with his Canon camera in the Quad.

Flores came clean: He is not in the market for a relationship but was brought along by his friend.

“I like to have a good time, and I had free time,” he said.

He might not be seeking a relationship, but I wondered if he had any thoughts on the differences between online and offline dating.

“I do think there’s a difference,” Flores said. “... There’s not the same connection. There’s different things that can happen in person, like [each other’s] body language, how you speak, the way you present yourself. I feel it’s way different, and you can’t get that online.”

He said he does not use any dating apps, but his friends have tried them in the past, and none of their relationships have worked out. He thinks it is pretty rare for that to happen.

I asked Flores what would be a good way to meet someone.

He replied somewhere where you like to hang out.

“For instance ... you meet someone at the library, you walk up to them and say, ‘Hey, I thought you were very attractive. Can I get your number?’” Flores said. “That’s very forward. Me, personally, I’m not as forward. I’m very laid-back.”

“So, you just stare at them from a distance?” I asked.

Flores laughed and replied, “No ... [I prefer] meeting someone, like, that I have something in common with. Like, we’re in the same class [and] have some sort of dialogue together. ... That’s how a friendship or relationship starts.”

As quickly as it started, my speed dating adventure was as brief as a summer fling, but I had to ask Kevin Flores what his favorite pickup line is.

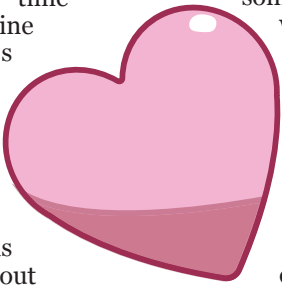
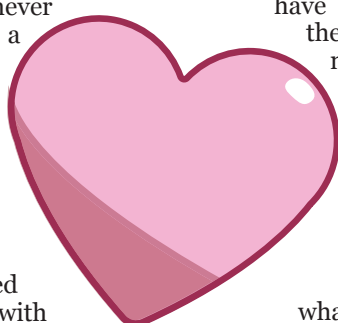
“My favorite pickup line? One or two?” he asked.

I told him to tell me two.

“Please pick one,” Flores said.

I said, “OK, one.”

He said, “You’re the one for me.”



Eduardo Escamilla/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Kevin Flores, a computer science sophomore and Team Victoriam member, chats with integrated health science freshman Joleth Gomez (left) and psychology freshman Emily Guerra during the “Fall For Me” speed dating event Thursday in the Student Union Sage Room on the Edinburg campus.



Team Victoriam, a club at UTRGV, brings back a classic approach to connecting with potential partners through speed dating on Thursday in the Student Union Sage Room on the Edinburg campus.



Team Victoriam, a club at UTRGV, brought strangers together for a chance at love or friendship. During the speed dating event, the “button” game was played, where one person rejects their date at the press of a button. Social work freshman Avery Sullivan rejected electrical engineering sophomore Manuel Flores. “I’m not really one for, like, working out,” Sullivan said. “I don’t want to be, like, letting him down because I don’t want to work out with him.”



If you had to choose a movie’s universe to be stuck in, which one would it be?

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Julio Torres
management freshman
“Jurassic World,” directed by Colin Trevorrow (2015)



Andrea Ochoa
visual communication design freshman
“10 Things I Hate About You,” directed by Gil Junger (1999)



Grace Sanchez
biology sophomore
“Flipped,” directed by Rob Reiner (2010)
--Compiled and photos by Silvana Villarreal and Pete Mendoza

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

Kailey Salazar



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Kailey Salazar, an exercise science sophomore from Laredo, is the captain of the UTRGV Women's Cross Country Team. She recently placed eighth overall at the 5K race in the University of the Incarnate Word Invitational Sept. 13 in San Antonio, leading the Vaqueros to a fourth-place overall finish in the tournament.

Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: "I actually didn't like running when I first started."

Q: Who or what got you started in cross-country?

A: "It was actually my family and my coaches. They kind of, like, forced me into running, sort of, because I guess they saw something that I didn't. So, I'm happy they did it."

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

A: "Honestly, my biggest inspiration has been my grandpa. He's never been a sports person, but he's kept me going, to be honest. He always prays for me before a race, so that's very nice."

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

A: "I love R&B and hip-hop. I can't get away from it."

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

A: "My favorite movie is 'Just Go With It' by Adam Sandler. I just think it's so funny and it's so cute. And then, TV shows, right now I've been watching just 'My Wife and Kids.'"

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: "I actually just got into reading. But, other than that, I like to do arts and crafts, make some bracelets and draw sometimes."

Q: What is your biggest motivation?

A: "Honestly, what motivates me the most is the vision I have for myself, which is to end up in the Olympics. I know it's, like, a far-fetched dream, but hey, I only have one life."

Q: What do you like the most about UTRGV?

A: "I like the sense of community. I love how all the sports are involved with each other."

Q: What are your biggest goals?

A: "My biggest goal, athletically speaking, this year, is to win championships."

--Compiled by Ali Halloum

Women's soccer gets ready for conference



THE RIDER FILE PHOTOS

Junior forward Olivia Trotter celebrates Sept. 6 with fellow members of the UTRGV Women's Soccer Team after scoring against the Howard Payne University Yellow Jackets at the Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

Ali Halloum

SPORTS REPORTER

The UTRGV Women's Soccer Team, after a 4-3-1 start to its campaign, is looking to carry some of the positives from early season success into its conference schedule.

The Vaqueros' start includes a streak of four-straight clean sheets against non-conference opponents, with final scores of 1-0 (vs. Southern University), 5-0 (vs. Howard Payne University), 3-0 (vs. University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) and 4-0 (vs. Prairie View A&M University). That streak ended with a 4-0 loss against the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

UTRGV Women's Soccer head coach Mark Foster said he was "delighted" with the preconference schedule, alluding to its crucial role in the team's growth.

"It's been great for us," Foster said. "It's left us in a place where we feel ready and really excited for a new year and the start of the Southland [Conference]."

While employing a similar system to the one they used last season, the Vaqueros look like a different team. Last season, they went 2-5-3 in non-conference and 3-10-4 overall.

Asked what changed, Foster replied the team is not only playing better, but is also more united.

"Every year is different; every team is different," he said. "[This year], we're very together, on and off the field. We're very hungry. We look to be enjoying ourselves more, and the simple part of it is we're playing better soccer."

Vaqueros junior winger Savannah Frisby said the team was "locked in" and ready to compete this season.

"We're excited about the tactics and we're excited to win, and everybody



Texas Southern University sophomore forward Isabella Dillow slides in an attempt to block the ball from Vaquero freshman midfielder Rubi Ortiz Aug. 15 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus. The Vaqueros lost 1-0 to the Tigers.

just has the same mindset," Frisby said. "And so, the culture's been really good about that."

Abbie Bailey, Vaqueros senior center back, said the team was "doing really well" this season.

"We have competed a lot more than we did last year already," Bailey said. "That's a great sign, and I feel as if we're gonna go really far this year."

One thing that changed this season was the Vaqueros' aggressiveness on attack. During non-conference play, they scored 14 goals in eight matches.

Frisby said UTRGV's attack played better and utilized space more effectively during non-conference.

"We have been attacking the wide spaces a lot more effectively," she said. "I feel like we've been having a lot of combinations through those areas along with the midfield. We get into the box, and we're scoring a lot more."

The Vaqueros have also looked good on defense: Of all players on the roster, UTRGV defenders have played more

minutes than other players, according to Foster.

"I think we have a set structure [on defense] now," Bailey said. "I think we know what's expected of us."

Foster said the team's success on defense and attack resulted from a cumulative team effort, replying that "it says a lot about the team" and its balance.

"For me, we're a more balanced team this year," he said. "We look like we're able to attack but then we lose the ball. We look quite solid without the ball. I think that's a balance of everybody buying into that team effort."

The Vaqueros began their conference schedule at noon Sunday against Texas A&M University Commerce at home. As of press time, results from the match were unavailable.

The Vaqueros will go on the road to play Lamar University at 7 p.m. Thursday in Beaumont, Texas.

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

VOLLEYBALL

2 p.m. Saturday
vs. Stephen F. Austin
State University

in the UTRGV Fieldhouse

WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING

Friday and Saturday
Orange and Gray Intrasquad Meet

at the City of Pharr Natatorium

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Noon Sunday
vs. McNeese State University

at the UTRGV Soccer and
Track & Field Complex

New voters on the block



Venisha Colón/THE RIDER PHOTOS
Management sophomore Juliana Guzman registers to vote Tuesday in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus.



Biology sophomore Emma Solis (from left) speaks to Estrella Torres, Texas Rising regional program coordinator and public affairs graduate student, and Madeline Camero, Texas Rising student leader and philosophy junior, during National Voter Registration Day Tuesday in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus.



Computer science freshman Mikhail Lopez and international business freshman Alejandro Jimenez participate in Constitution Day Trivia during National Voter Registration Day Tuesday in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus.

GLOBAL
Continued from Page 3

expect the team to advance this far.

“In the past, Enactus only really rewarded teams that competed with international projects,” she said. “Our students always made the conscious choice to work on projects that affect our community.”

Leonard said she believes, this year, the judges had a different directive that prioritized social impact over international reach, which allowed the team to win the national competition.

Isaac Salas, a marketing senior and the organization’s historian, said he joined Enactus after witnessing his brother’s professional growth

while he was a member. Salas said participating in the competition is stressful.

“It’s a stressful fun, though,” he said. “Being in the speaker position ... you get to stand in a room of, like, 300 people.”

Salas said the team is working hard to prepare and memorize the presentations for the world competition.

“We have to do a lot of practice, memorizing the lines and making sure that it’s, like, drilled into our head, that we can confidently present without having any errors or mistakes in our presentation,” he said.

Salas said the biggest strength of the team is conducting community projects locally rather than elsewhere.

“The work that we’re doing directly impacts our community,” he said.

Alheli Mondragon, a business

administration graduate student and president of the team, said she first got involved with the team after volunteering at a Thanksgiving food drive.

Mondragon said the team is working on writing scripts and preparing an annual report to present to judges.

“It’s a team effort,” she said. “It’s a lot of work, actually, but it’s a lot of fun.”

Mondragon said the biggest strength of the team is its commitment.

“If we didn’t have this [commitment], I don’t think we would’ve gotten this far,” she said.

The Enactus president said what she looks forward to the most about competing in the Central Asian country is being exposed to new cultures.

“Seeing all the cultures that are gonna be there, it’s

33 other countries,” she said. “I’m a big fan about learning about new cultures and new languages, so I’m excited to go abroad.”

Mondragon encourages students to join and take on the club’s community projects.

“We really need to work on our recruitment in terms of getting new members because a lot of us on the team are seniors,” she said. “We really want these projects to continue on for as long as we can.”

Cody Sanchez, an entrepreneurship and innovation senior, will compete as a speaker for the team.

Sanchez said he got involved in Enactus as a freshman when he attended a club meeting after hearing about the free food they were handing out.

He is excited to represent the U.S., especially the Rio Grande Valley.

“Representing the U.S. as well as our Mexican heritage, it’s really cool to go over there and do that,” Sanchez said.

He is preparing by remembering to have fun while practicing.

“Just knowing that once you speak, you put the practice in, you put the work in,” Sanchez said. “You just trust that.”

He said his participation in the team has helped him develop soft skills.

“Some people go to college and don’t know anything else rather than go to class and go back home,” Sanchez said. “When you’re in Enactus, you actually get involved in the community.”

Students interested in joining Enactus may do so through V Link and by accessing the WhatsApp chat on linktr.ee/enactusrgv.

GOLD
Continued from Page 3

He found himself in San Antonio at the Audie Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital.

“They have a spinal cord unit where I’m doing all my rehab, and I start getting involved with the [recreation] therapy and all these adaptive sports, you know, learn about them,” he said.

A recreation therapist suggested Tabansky try archery, believing it was something he would be good at. However, Tabansky was not confident in the idea, at first.

“At the time, I wasn’t very strong,” he said. “I didn’t have really good use of my hands. I have no balance from my chest down. So, I said, ‘There’s no way that I’m going to be able to shoot archery with all these deficits.’ And there were two guys sitting there, and they both looked at me and smirked and said, ‘Man, we don’t ever want to hear you say never or that it’s impossible for you to do something.’”

The two men found a way to strap Tabansky in a wheelchair and set up a bow light enough for him to draw back. From there, they took Tabansky to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, signed him up for archery, and he ended up winning the tournament in his division.

After doing well in an event for veterans with disabilities called the Valor Games, Tabansky decided competitive para archery was something he was going to take more seriously.

“In 2017, I got classified as a para archer officially, and that’s when I

decided I was going to pursue this at the Paralympic level,” he said.

Originally, Tabansky fell short at a last-chance qualifier for the Paralympics. But after a last-minute dropout from Australia, he was informed he was next in line to take the slot.

“It was a burst of various emotions,” Tabansky said. “All the heartache and sacrifice had paid off. I was thinking, ‘OK, now it’s official. I’m going to Paris.’”

With his late entry into the Games, Tabansky went into the para archery event with no expectations.

“I had nothing to lose,” he said. “I just wanted to go out there and do the best [I could].”

Competing against 12 other para archers in his division, Tabansky steadily climbed the elimination bracket, facing increasingly skilled competitors.

“When I got to the quarterfinals, I shot against my friend David from the Czech Republic, and this guy is like the LeBron James of W1,” he said. “This was his fifth Paralympics and he medaled at each one of the previous four.”

Even against the skilled competition, Tabansky won all the elimination rounds and found himself in the final round—the gold medal match.

He was up against Chinese para archer Han Guifei, who at the time was ranked No. 1. in the world in the division.

“It went all the way to the end, arrow for arrow,” Tabansky said. “We were staying pretty close to each other. I was ahead by one point and he shoots an eight [on] his last arrow. I looked up at these jumbotrons and it said ‘eight to win.’ All I have to do is hit one of the red circles and I’m going to win.”

He said his hand was shaking.

“I got into my shot and all I could think was, ‘Jason, just put it in the middle,’” Tabansky said. “As soon as I saw my sight touch the yellow, I let go of that arrow faster than I ever have in my life. I hit a 10 and everything kind of came together.”

Winning gold for Tabansky was not only a personal accomplishment but also a chance to represent the place in which he grew up.

“Whenever I got to the Games, it meant a lot for me to represent people from [the Rio Grande Valley],” said

Tabansky, who now resides in Boerne. “A lot of people don’t have a lot of opportunities that some of us might have, especially being up in Central Texas.”

Some students at UTRGV would like to see athletic opportunities for all students.

“If there was more accessibility, I wouldn’t mind joining any sports because to me, putting myself out there is no big deal,” said elementary education junior Jeselle Ochoa, a member of the Student Accessibility Council at UTRGV.

Criminal justice senior Aaron Worthington, the council’s historian, shared a similar sentiment.

“I do believe that every person, regardless of whether they have a disability or not, should participate in what they want to do, including athletics,” Worthington said.

Tabansky has worked with various foundations that coach veterans, athletes and children with disabilities, aiming to give them the same opportunity of excelling in athletics despite their conditions.

“One thing I like sharing with people is that there’s all types of injuries and events that [can] happen that change their lives,” he said. “Some people feel like their life is over, like their dreams, their passions are now gone. My message to everybody is always, ‘Life is not over.’ You still have a lot of life to live, you just have to do things a little differently. There might be something out there that will give someone a new purpose, a new drive, a new outlook in life.”

