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VALLEY VOTES

O'Rourke and Vallejo encourage South Texans to exercise their voting rights

Fatima Gamez Lopez
SPANISH EDITOR

With an audience of over 300, Beto O'Rourke and Michelle Vallejo spoke Tuesday about the importance of voter participation in the upcoming elections and its impact on shaping the community's future.

The Round Up For Democracy event, held at University Draft House in McAllen, featured O'Rourke, a former Democratic U.S. representative, as the keynote speaker, alongside special guest Michelle Vallejo, Democratic nominee for Texas' 15th Congressional District.

Vallejo is challenging Republican U.S. Rep. Monica De La Cruz.

"Today is a reminder of the strength, the love, the energy that we have for our home here in South Texas," Vallejo said during the event. "I am so proud to be representing Texas' 15th as ... the youngest candidate who is running in a competitive congressional seat ... that will not only change the face of leadership for South Texas, not just change the future for our state of Texas, but change the future and the course of our

See **BETO**, Page 8



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke greets disaster studies graduate student Rolando Serna Thursday at the Chapel Lawn on the Edinburg campus.

Keep your car safe



Raquel Cazares/THE RIDER

Andrew Mayo
THE RIDER

An Edinburg Police Department official says the police station offers free steering wheel locks to help protect residents from car theft.

The relevance of this information becomes apparent as there has been a notable rise in autothefts over the last two years, according to Carla Bautista, a crime analyst for the police department.

See **CAR**, Page 2

'A lot more beyond our borders' Faculty showcase study abroad programs

Hugo A. Sepúlveda
THE RIDER

The Study Abroad Fair presented a variety of options and opportunities for UTRGV students to study abroad.

Hosted by the Global Affairs department, the event took place Tuesday in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus and Sept. 18 in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Dreams come true, Page 4

Management Professor Joo Jung told The Rider there are about 25 to 30 programs in multiple countries, including South Korea, Spain, France, Italy, Costa Rica and Peru.

"There are several scholarships, such as the Gilman Scholarship, which is quite a bit up to \$5,000,

See **TRAVEL**, Page 8



Venisha Colón/THE RIDER

Marketing Lecturer Deidra Johnson speaks to management junior Miranda Vera about a study abroad opportunity in Switzerland during the Study Abroad Fair, held Tuesday in the Main Building Courtyard on the Brownsville campus.

THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IS OCT. 7
Visit sos.state.tx.us for more information

THE RIDER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today
Boxing Training
The University Recreation Center will host **boxing classes** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus.

Zumba Toning
The University Recreation Center will host a Zumba class with **body-sculpting exercises** and **high-energy cardio** from 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 1 on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday
The Struggle is Real
The Counseling Center will host “The Struggle is Real” from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. online. Students can learn new techniques to enhance quality of life. For more information call 882-3897 or email carina.hernandez01@utrgv.edu.

Breaking Free
The Counseling Center will host “Breaking Free: A People Pleasing Recovery Group” at 3:15 p.m. every Tuesday in

University Center Room 102 on the Edinburg campus. For more information, email counseling@utrgv.edu.

Mile-A-Week
The University Recreation Center will host a “Mile-A-Week” challenge for the month of October. Students, staff, faculty and the public are invited to participate.

To register, visit utrgv.campuslabs.com.

U.T.C.A.R.E.S
The United Together Caring Adults Reaching Early Childhood

Students group will meet from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Education Complex Room 1.404 on the Edinburg campus throughout the semester. The group advocates for the well-being of young children in the Rio Grande Valley.

Wednesday
Emotions 101
The Counseling Center

will host “Emotions 101” at 11 a.m. in University Center Room 102 on the Edinburg campus. Students can utilize expressive arts to help understand emotions and learn about skills for emotional well-being. For more information, email counseling@utrgv.edu.

Thursday
Glutes and Gainz

The University Recreation Center will host “Glutes and Gainz,” a session focusing on high-intensity and lower-body workouts, from 5:30 to 6:15 p.m. in UREC Studio 2 on the Edinburg campus.

Cycle Fit
The University Recreation Center will host a cardiovascular workout during which 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.

Meditation
The Counseling Center will host a “10-Minute Meditation” session at 12:30 p.m. in University Center Room 102 every Thursday.

Friday
Mind & Body Reset
The Counseling Center will host a mental health and wellness fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Dining & Ballroom Complex on the Edinburg campus. The event is held in observance of World Mental Health Day.

Veterans Support Group
The Counseling Center will host a virtual “Veterans Peer Support Group” at noon every Friday. For more information, email counseling@utrgv.edu.
--Compiled by Vanessa Aguilar



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Sept. 18 and 23.

Sept. 18
5:03 p.m.: University Police officers responded to a minor collision involving a UTRGV vehicle at Jackson Street and University Boulevard in Brownsville. No injuries were reported.

10:12 p.m.: A student reported an intimate video of her was released without her consent. While a University Police officer spoke to the student in the Village Apartments on the Edinburg campus, the student received unwelcome calls from the suspect. The case is under investigation.

Sept. 19
1:44 a.m.: A University Police officer responded to a water leak in Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus. It was later determined the leak was coming from a damaged air

conditioning hose located on the second floor.

10:01 a.m.: An employee reported a male student was being disruptive and using profane language during class in the Science Building on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

2:42 p.m.: A University Police officer responded to a disruptive man in Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus. The man left the building before the officer arrived. University Police determined no crime occurred.

Sept. 20
9:24 a.m.: An employee reported finding an empty beer can in a trash bin while cleaning the men’s restroom in Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus.

Sept. 22
4:31 a.m.: A University Police officer responded to a fire alarm in the Biomedical Research and Health Building on the Brownsville campus. The Brownsville Fire Department deemed it safe for reentry.

4 p.m.: A University Police officer found graffiti on university property on the Edinburg campus. A work order was submitted for cleanup. The case is under investigation.

Sept. 23
5:53 a.m.: A University Police officer responded to a fire alarm in the Clinical Education Building on the Harlingen campus. Upon arrival, the officer observed no signs of smoke or fire. The Harlingen Fire Department cleared the building

for reentry.

8:36 a.m.: A University Police officer responded to a fire alarm in the Vaquero Dining Hall on the Edinburg campus. The officer found a water-boiler leak inside a mechanical room, which activated the smoke detector. Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management cleared the building for reentry.

12:18 p.m.: A University Police officer reported finding vomit and an empty beer can inside a men’s bathroom stall in the Education Complex on the Edinburg campus. A work order was submitted for cleanup.

1:26 p.m.: A University Police officer approached a student who was using a personal transportation device on the Bronc Trail, which is prohibited. The student was informed of university policy, which she understood and will comply with.

--Compiled by Rebeca Salinas



CAR *Continued from Page 1*

“You’ll see that the majority of the Rio Grande Valley did have a spike,” Bautista said.

She said the most common makes of vehicles being stolen are GMC, Chevrolet and Kia.

Criminal justice sophomore Carter Lincoln said he is aware of the auto theft problem, specifically when it comes to the more vulnerable makes and models of cars.

“The GMC trucks and all those four-by-four trucks are all hot items right now,” Lincoln said. “I wouldn’t have anything like that right now.”

However, Lt. Gabriel Vela-

Reyna, of the department’s Community-Oriented Policing Division, explained how any car can be at risk of theft.

“A lot of people think that there’s no way their latest model SUV is going to be stolen; it’s already equipped with an alarm and stuff like that,” Vela-Reyna said. “No. Unfortunately, there’s technology out there that gives [car thieves] an opportunity to take your vehicle.”

However, he emphasized how a deterrent, such as a kill switch, can slow down and ward off car thieves.

“There’s ways around it,” Vela-Reyna said. “But it’s too

time consuming for the people that are committing these crimes. Time is not on their side, so they want a quick in and out.”

A common tool Vela-Reyna recommends to deter criminals is steering wheel locks, which provide an extra barrier of protection.

“The steering wheel lock is a very effective tool, even though some will say, ‘It’s old technology,’” he said.

In addition to these extra measures, Vela-Reyna said simple steps people can take to protect their vehicles include locking their car doors, parking inside garages and not leaving spare keys in

the vehicle.

In order to inform the public about how to prevent themselves from being victims of autotheft, Vela-Reyna encourages residents to use the police department’s online resources.

“We made a video explaining how to properly install a steering wheel lock, and it can be found on our social media platforms, including Instagram and Facebook,” he said. “We are always pushing out public safety announcements whenever we see anything that might be an issue.”



Abbott, mayors discuss water, business, transport

Fatima Gamez Lopez
SPANISH EDITOR

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and mayors from several cities in South Texas, including Edinburg and Brownsville, attended a fireside chat Tuesday at the McAllen Convention Center to discuss economic and issues affecting regional communities.

The fireside chat, moderated by McAllen Mayor Javier Villalobos, was part of the South Texas Alliance of Cities quarterly meeting.

During the fireside chat, Abbott said one of the first things he would do if he was

president would be to order Mexico "to comply with the water treaty that we entered into last century to make sure that Texans and the [Rio Grande Valley] gets the water they need."

He said Texas is not going to wait for the federal government to do its job. Texas is going to do the job "by providing resources from the abundance that the state of Texas has," according to the governor.

The state is working on creating a water fund and a comprehensive water development plan to help communities and Texans from the Panhandle to the Rio Grande Valley, Abbott said.

"I think water is one of the most important pressing issues we have right now, not just in South Texas, but throughout the state of Texas ... even including Mexico," Villalobos said after the fireside chat with Abbott. "... We are very happy that the

governor was there today to discuss some of the issues, some of the important issues, including water. So, there's different things that we're looking at, and one of the most important ones would be dealing with Mexico."

Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr. told The Rider the city's budget is not enough to address its needs.

"So, it's important we partner with the state and our federal government so we can collaborate [with] one another," Garza said. "It's the only way for us to leverage resources because residents—to them, it makes no difference where the funds are coming from as long as the needs are being addressed."

He said the purpose of the South Texas Alliance of Cities is to tell their story.

"We formed this alliance so that we can tell our story because otherwise, somebody else is going to define who we are and what we are," Garza said. "And that's the important thing about the alliance: We're here to learn from one another what is happening in our area and define our area. We're the ones that are from here. We know our area. We know our needs. We come together to ensure that we bring resources to our region so that we can improve our whole South Texas region."

Abbott was also joined by Brownsville Mayor John Cowen, Weslaco Mayor Adrian Gonzalez, Laredo Mayor Victor Treviño, Edcouch Mayor Virgilio Gonzalez Jr.,

See **ABBOTT**, Page 8

"We formed this alliance so that we can tell our story because otherwise, somebody else is going to define who we are and what we are."

--Edinburg Mayor Ramiro Garza Jr.



Andrew Mayo/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott speaks about economic growth in South Texas during Tuesday's South Texas Alliance of Cities quarterly meeting at the McAllen Convention Center.



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (left) and McAllen Mayor Javier Villalobos discuss economic and local issues Tuesday at the South Texas Alliance of Cities quarterly meeting.

International student seeks to share her experiences through leadership

Pete Mendoza
THE RIDER

The Student Government Association appointed Esther Kipkoech as the new senator for the School of Nursing.

Juana Jimenez, vice president for External Affairs, administered the oath of office to Kipkoech, a nursing postbaccalaureate student, during the Sept. 20 SGA meeting, fully recognizing her as the new SGA senator.

During Kipkoech's speech, she said she studied at Eastern New Mexico University, where she obtained her degrees in forensic science, biology, DNA analysis and criminal justice.

"I am an international student from Kenya," she said. "I moved to the United States about six years ago, and

I came with a track and field scholarship to go to Eastern New Mexico University."

Before coming to UTRGV, Kipkoech was part of her previous university's SGA.

"I represented the College of Science, and I was the international affairs coordinator where I led the international club," she said. "... And during my time, we were able to achieve a few things. I became the student leader of the year and also my club became the student organization of the year."

Kipkoech said she wants to bring advocacy to international students and help open opportunities.

"I believe it's also very important to collaborate with teachers, students and everyone ... so that we can all meet the needs of the

students," she said. "... It's important being in SGA to listen to the students and advocate for them and work well with them."

During the meeting, SGA welcomed Director of Parking Services Pablo Aguilar to announce updates on parking and transportation.

"We manage parking lots that are distributed across all the campuses at UTRGV," Aguilar said. "The way that we manage them is through a system of parking permits and enforcement."

He said the Department of Parking is funded by permit sales and citation fees.

"We do not receive any funding from [the] state or tuition," Aguilar said. "The revenue that is generated, it helps fund improvements

See **SGA**, Page 8



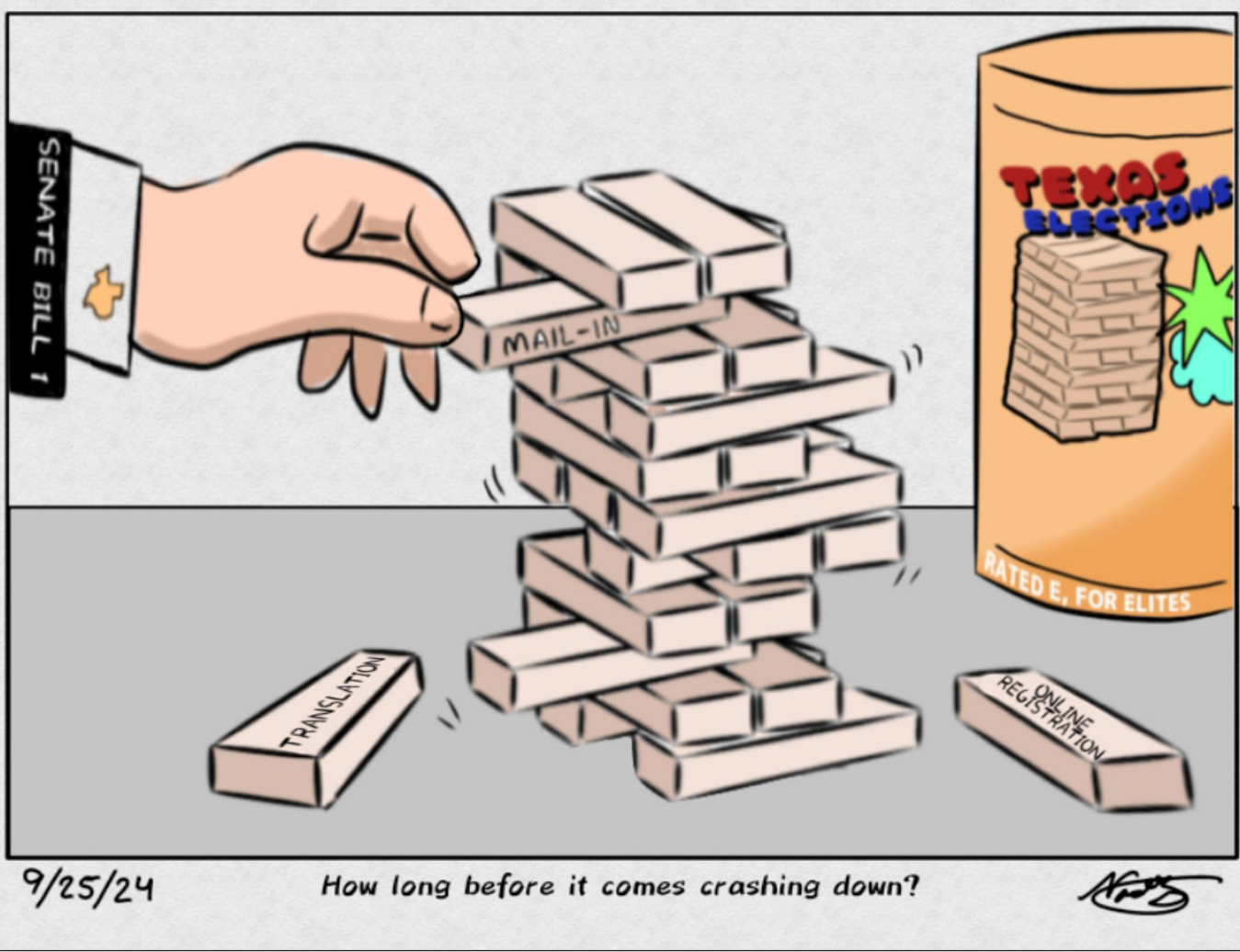
Silvana Villarreal/THE RIDER

Esther Kipkoech, a nursing postbaccalaureate student, is sworn in as a senator for the School of Nursing during the Student Government Association meeting Sept. 20 in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.



Silvana Villarreal/THE RIDER

Shown is Lot B-1 Sept. 23 on the Brownsville campus. Pablo Aguilar, director of Parking Services, said parking permits help fund lot improvements, such as lighting and security cameras.



How do you like to stay updated on current events?



“Social media because everybody gets to express their own opinions, and you get to express your own, and there’ll be judgment, but at the end of the day, it’s your own thing.”

Valerie Garza
kinesiology junior



“I do get a lot of stuff like on TikTok, but I’m in a politics class, so [the professor] has us read up on articles from trustworthy news sites. So, I feel that’s a really good place to look at.”

Silvana Quintanilla
undeclared freshman



“Me gustaría estar ‘updated’ por medio de Instagram [...] porque siento que es más fácil. Como, entras a las redes sociales y es como lo tienes ahí. Tienes las historias y pues ves todo más rápido. [...] Y a veces hay eventos en [...] que [...] están dando comida gratis. [...] Entonces, siento que es más fácil ver las redes sociales TikTok, Instagram y todo eso”.

Naomi Espinoza
biology freshman



“So on current events, usually when it’s breaking news, I’ll use social media apps like X, formerly known as Twitter, or I will use all of the open news outlets that are out there, like CNN, MSNBC and Fox News.”

Alex Martinez
computer science senior

--Compiled and photos by Andrew Mayo and Daniela Martinez Salazar

Dreams come true



Vanessa Aguilar
REPORTER

When I was little, my dream had always been to visit Europe, but as I grew older, I became interested in Italy.

Since then, my vision was that one day I will visit and ride a Vespa by the Amalfi Coast, eat gelato and plenty of pizza.

I never thought I would be able to visit the country, or at least not in my young adulthood, especially still being in college. Seeing my parents living paycheck to paycheck, I knew they could not afford it, and if I wanted my dream to come true, I would have to work hard for it.

Fast forward to this year, when I had the opportunity to study abroad. This

year is my last as a college student, and I’ve always wanted to study abroad, so it didn’t matter where or how much, but I was going to go.

I chose Italy and asked my mother if it was OK, since I knew it was going to be a huge expense for her. She agreed that if this was what I wanted, I would go, and it was now or never.

My adventure began on June 14, when I first arrived in Italy. What made it special was my arrival in Venice, the Floating City, but it was also a lesson.

I got lost walking through the small streets, crossing bridges and riding on gondolas to see the heart of Venice. I learned not to trust anybody, no matter how friendly they look.

After that, I traveled to Florence, where I walked every day by the beautiful Cathedral of Santa Maria de la Croce. My stay here was the best. Everything was walkable, people were friendly, the atmosphere was more cheerful and the scenery was out of a movie. Words can’t explain how great it was to be there for almost two weeks. I never thought I would meet people from other parts of the

world, try the best food there is and like coffee for the first time.

My stay in Italy ended in The Eternal City of Rome. Visiting The Vatican City was something I never thought I would do. Being in the same place as the pope was amazing. Going inside the Colosseum was surprising, seeing where the gladiators would fight for their freedom and lives.

Rome is a modern and fast-paced city, but at the same time, you will never get bored. There is always something to do, such as attending a museum, a theater, musical event or listening to street musicians.

I felt like Lizzie McGuire in her movie, where she falls in love with the city, rides a Vespa with her Italian boyfriend, and throws a coin into the Trevi Fountain, wishing she will be back to find the love of her life.

be back to find the love of her life. I fell in love with Rome.

To anyone who has doubts about going on a study-abroad trip, I recommend not hesitating. Go, it is a one-time experience and you will never be this young anymore. You won’t regret it; trust me.

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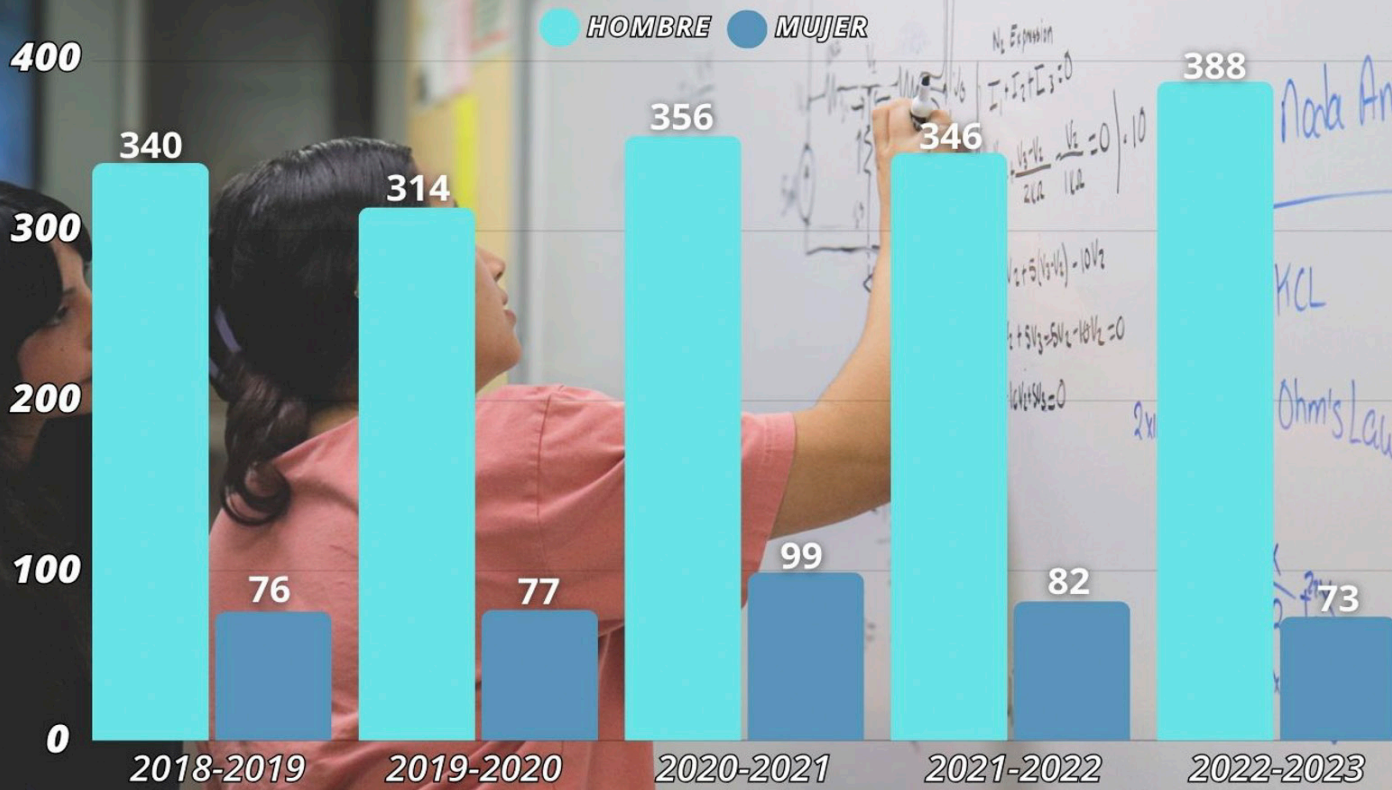
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‘Nosotras vamos a ser el cambio’ Reduciendo la brecha de género en ingeniería

ESTUDIANTES QUE SE GRADÚAN CON UNA LICENCIATURA DE LA FACULTAD DE INGENIERÍA Y CIENCIAS DE LA COMPUTACIÓN



Fatima Gamez Lopez
EDITORA DE ESPAÑOL

Las estadísticas de los graduados de licenciatura en la Facultad de Ingeniería y Ciencias de la Computación de UTRGV durante los últimos cinco años académicos resaltan la persistente brecha de género en ingeniería, según muestran informes de la universidad.

Informes de la universidad muestran que entre el 15% y el 21% de sus graduados que recibieron títulos de licenciatura en programas de ingeniería entre 2018 y 2023 fueron mujeres.

“Como saben, hay un sector subrepresentado de mujeres en ingeniería en general”, dijo Ala Qubbaj, decano de la facultad. “Por lo tanto, las mujeres en la fuerza laboral de ingeniería representan alrededor del 17, 16, menos del 20% en general. [...] Ahora, si hablamos de las latinas, es mucho menos. Hablamos de un 1 a 2% de las latinas. Ahora, si hablamos de, ya sabes, la representación de las mujeres en títulos superiores, es incluso menor. Como, por ejemplo, las mujeres que tienen doctorados en STEM son menos del 1%”.

En el año académico 2018-19, 340 hombres (81.73%) se graduaron con su licenciatura en programas de ingeniería de UTRGV, en comparación con 76 mujeres (18.26%). Después de aumentar al 21.7% en 2020-21, el porcentaje de mujeres que obtuvieron una licenciatura cayó al 15.83% durante el año académico 2022-23, en comparación con el 84.16% de los hombres.

Victoria Padilla, profesora asistente de ingeniería mecánica, dijo que los desafíos que enfrentan las mujeres en el campo de la ingeniería son “desafortunados”.

“Siempre tienes que estar trabajando al 300% para que la gente te vea”, dijo Padilla. “Es mucho trabajo, pero al mismo tiempo, te sientes orgullosa porque las cosas te han costado. Pero es posible”.

Qubbaj dijo que cuando la universidad comenzó en la década de 1990, había “una o dos [mujeres] en cada clase”. Ahora, la facultad tiene

más de 1,000 estudiantes mujeres.

“Somos el futuro de Tejas”, dijo. “Creo que somos el futuro de la nación. [...] Estoy feliz de que UTRGV esté tomando la delantera en términos de aumentar la representación en ingeniería, ya sabes, cuando se trata de mujeres, cuando se trata de latina, cuando se trata de hispanos también”.

Qubbaj dijo que los estudiantes no tienen que salir del estado para obtener un título cuando UTRGV ofrece educación de “alta calidad” a bajo costo.

“Una de nuestras graduadas [...] está trabajando en NASA”, dijo. “Está dirigiendo uno de sus diseños de cohetes y naves espaciales y cosas así. De hecho, me visitó el año pasado y me dijo, ‘Dr. Qubbaj, estoy realmente impresionada por lo que está sucediendo aquí y cómo estamos

Daniela Rivas Tapia, presidenta de la sección de la sociedad en UTRGV y estudiante de último año de ingeniería de fabricación, dijo que la organización está abierta a cualquier estudiante en UTRGV.

“Lo que tratamos de hacer es inspirar a otros”, dijo Rivas Tapia. “[...] La creación de redes es la clave del éxito y es por eso que tratamos de centrarnos en SWE. Trata simplemente de hacerles saber que no se trata de a quién conoces, sino de quién te conoce a ti. Y cuando lo establezcas, establecerás un camino que te ayudará en el futuro a convertirte en la ingeniera y la profesional que estás tratando de ser”.

Dijo que estaba feliz cuando Karen Horting, directora ejecutiva de la Sociedad de Mujeres Ingenieras, visitó la Facultad de Ingeniería y Ciencias de la Computación durante el semestre

Abigail Ollave / GRÁFICA RIDER

mujeres de ingeniería para saber qué piensan sobre la brecha de género.

“Siempre estuve rodeada de figuras masculinas”, dijo Kaylie Gonzalez, una estudiante de primer año de informática. “Trabajar es una parte muy importante de la vida de mi padre. [...] Él siempre fue una persona práctica y mi hermano siempre fue más del tipo informático. Así que desarrollé más ese tipo de estado, simplemente mirándolos a ellos y sin centrarme en lo que hacen otras mujeres, que se dedican principalmente a enfermería, y simplemente me adapté a esa sensación”.

Gonzalez dijo que el estereotipo común sobre las mujeres en STEM es que tienen que “trabajar el doble que un hombre para ser vistas como iguales”.

Lorena Astudillo, una estudiante de último año de ingeniería civil, dijo que siempre ha recibido ayuda en la escuela, pero tiene miedo de ingresar a la fuerza laboral y ser vista de manera diferente por ser una mujer en ingeniería.

“Los profesores son realmente atentos y están dispuestos a ayudar a todos”, dijo Astudillo. “[...] Pero tengo un poco de miedo de salir de la escuela. Realmente no sé cómo otras empresas me verán como mujer, porque sé que no es muy común que las mujeres trabajen en ingeniería. Sé que se está volviendo más común últimamente, así que, con suerte, eso no será un problema. Pero me da un poco de miedo salir”.

Ericka Salinas, una estudiante de último año de ingeniería civil, aconseja a las jóvenes que están considerando un futuro en ingeniería que acepten el desafío.

“Sé que puede parecer difícil cada año y tiene sus desafíos, pero si realmente lo quieres, si realmente te gusta, puedes hacerlo”, dijo Salinas. “[...] No se preocupen demasiado por los estereotipos sobre las mujeres en la ingeniería. En el mundo actual, las mujeres en la ingeniería están cada vez más fuertes y, con suerte, un día no se le considerará mujeres en ingeniería, sino que se tratará de ingeniería en general para mujeres y hombres”.

“En el mundo actual, las mujeres en la ingeniería están cada vez más fuertes”.

- Ericka Salinas, una estudiante de último año de ingeniería civil

cambiando la mentalidad de las nuevas chicas y mujeres que llegan a la ingeniería”.

Qubbaj dijo que en la ceremonia de graduación de la primavera de 2024 su hija, Intisar Qubbaj, se graduó con una Licenciatura en Ciencias en ingeniería mecánica.

“Fue algo muy personal para mí”, dijo. “He dado, ya sabes, no sé cuántos títulos todos estos años, pero fue personal darle el título a mi propia hija. Y ella se graduó como ingeniera de esta universidad y, ya sabes, veo a todos los estudiantes como o mi hija. [...] Es por eso que quiero darles la oportunidad a todas las [mujeres] de la misma manera que mi hija tuvo esta oportunidad”.

La Sociedad de Mujeres Ingenieras (SWE, por sus siglas en inglés) es una organización educativa y de servicios sin fines de lucro que empodera a las mujeres para que tengan éxito y avancen en el campo de la ingeniería, según su sitio web.

de primavera.

“Nos dio un discurso realmente genial, inspirando a otros, inspirando a las mujeres”, dijo Rivas Tapia. “Y nos dijo, ‘Chicas, están creando un movimiento’. Cuando nos dijo esas palabras, supimos que estábamos haciendo algo bien y queríamos [ir] más allá para seguir haciendo ese trabajo”.

Ella anima a los estudiantes a unirse a la organización a través de V Link.

“Hay un gran mundo ahí afuera donde vamos a ser el cambio”, dijo Rivas Tapia. “Estamos determinados a generar un impacto en el mundo. [...] Siempre inspiren a los demás como los inspiramos a ustedes, porque ese es el camino. Si inspiran a otros, harán de esto un círculo continuo que nunca terminará. Y es cuando vamos a generar un impacto. Y sé que mis miembros están generando un impacto, y sé que mis oficiales están generando un impacto”.

The Rider entrevistó a estudiantes

California-grown Red Pears play in McAllen



What is the dream you most vividly remember?



Allison Castillo
biomedical science senior
Went back to high school and was able to play sports like before.



Edward Vasquez
biology junior
He was a little kid in a car with his parents. Then, they disappeared, and the car crashed.



David I. Davila
computer science junior
After pranking a celebrity, he went to bed playing The Weeknd, and a disfigured Mickey Mouse poked and gave him a jump scare.

--Compiled and photos by Silvana Villarreal

Eduardo Escamilla

A&E REPORTER

From humble beginnings to headlining shows, The Red Pears, currently on tour to promote its new album, "Better Late Than Never," has carved out a niche in the indie-rock scene.

Formed in El Monte, California, the band members have been friends since their teenage years, a bond that is evident in their tight-knit onstage chemistry and heartfelt music.

The energy at The Red Pears concert on Sept. 20 at Cine El Rey in McAllen was palpable as the crowd surged forward, singing along to every word and losing themselves in the music.

Composed of friends Jose Corona on drums, Henry Vargas on vocals and Patrick Juarez on guitar and bass, The Red Pears' new album "Better Late Than Never" is a record both familiar and fresh, a perfect blend of old and new.

Corona described the latest album as "a time capsule," a collection of songs spanning from high school to the present.

The album's title aptly reflects the band's journey, according to Corona.

"A lot of things have taken a while to surface, or taken a while to, like, to flourish, and ... songs that were, like, finally also being completed," he said.

"Better Late Than Never" marks a significant milestone for the band because it was the first time they used two guitars on stage and in the recordings, according to Vargas.

"It was something we had always wanted to do but couldn't achieve due to the lack of suitable members in the past," he said.

The album's standout tracks "Didn't Realize" and "The Way You Talk" blend nostalgic elements with upbeat sounds, creating a memorable listening experience.

While the lyrics often touch on themes of broken relationships, they are also



Eduardo Escamilla/THE RIDER

The Red Pears drummer Jose Corona plays in rhythmic bliss during a live performance Sept. 20 at Cine El Rey, located at 311 S. 17th St. in McAllen, as part of the band's "Better Late Than Never" tour.

open to other perspectives.

"It's just like multiple things that I always try to get, like, when I write a song, like, something that's relatable in more than one way," Vargas said.

Many of the lyrics were penned in high school, reflecting the enduring nature of these emotions.

The album is characterized by its unique contrast between happy-sounding melodies and introspective lyrics.

"I don't know if you hear it, but it's like the songs sound happy, but they're like sad songs," Juarez said.

The Red Pears has cultivated honesty and vulnerability in its music.

"We've always, from like high school ... made a point to be very honest and wonderful with anything we're creating," Corona said.

The band's authenticity has

resonated deeply with fans.

"We had a fan who told us that their family member had recently passed away," Corona recalled. "They had bought tickets to see us before their loved one passed."

The fan attended the show as a way to honor their family member.

This experience had a profound impact on The Red Pears, according to Corona.

"It's important that we're, you know, always doing our best for people," he said.

As The Red Pears continues to make a mark on the indie-rock scene, the band hopes to leave a lasting legacy.

"I would want people to see us as, like, those kids that grew up and lived their dream and were able to share it amongst their, like, best friends," Juarez said.

Corona said he hopes their music and the way they carry

themselves can change someone's world, even if they do not necessarily change the entire world.

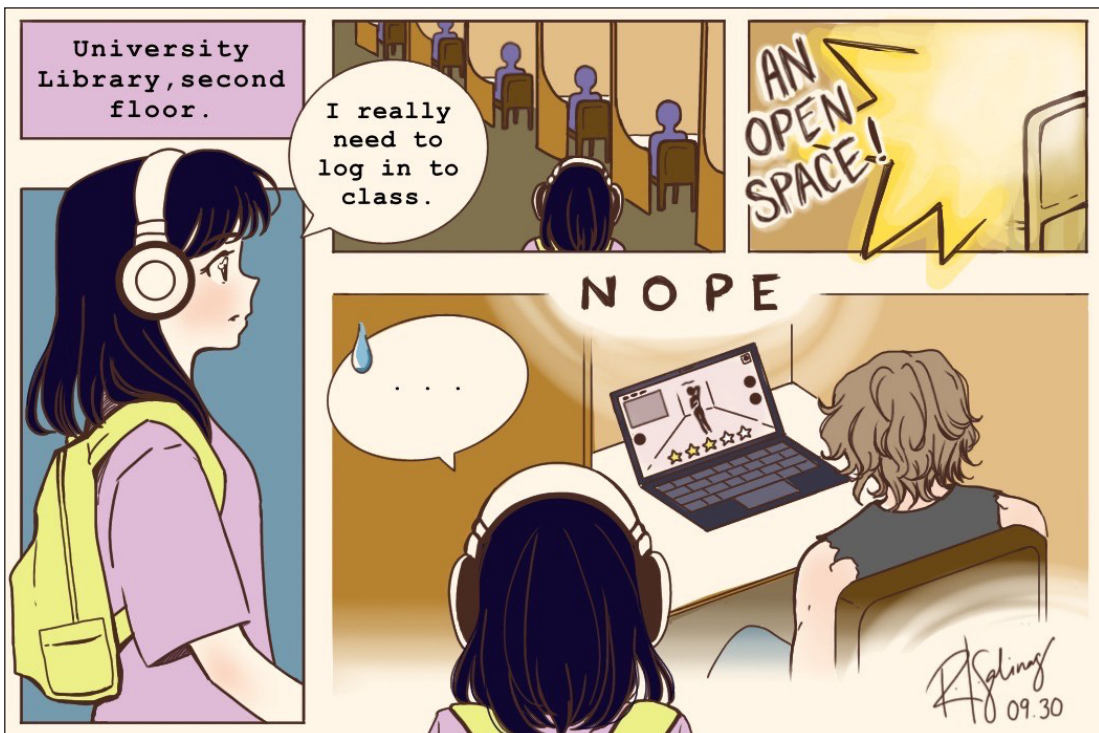
He wants The Red Pears to create a lasting impact that continues to influence people long after the band is gone.

Vargas said he wants his legacy in The Red Pears to be an example of what can be achieved, even as a "brown kid" defying stereotypes.

He added they came from nothing, with limited resources, but were still able to pursue their musical dreams and make an impact.

"If you really want to do it, you could ... and, like, this band is an example of that," Vargas said.

As the final chords faded, the crowd erupted in applause, proof of the band's ability to create a truly unforgettable experience.



SUDOKU

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK:

Arthit Kruaprayong



PHOTO COURTESY UTRGV ATHLETICS

Arthit Kruaprayong, a psychology junior from Thailand, plays for the UTRGV Men's Golf Team. On Sept. 17, he tied for seventh place at the JT Poston Invitational tournament in Waynesville, North Carolina. He placed best among the team by scoring 209 in three rounds, finishing the final round one over par.

Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: "I like playing golf, so I keep playing from 6 a.m. to, like, 8 p.m."

Q: Who or what got you started in golf?

A: "My dad and my grandfather. [They], all day, brought me to the driving range, so I [started] from there."

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

A: "It's Rory McIlroy. He's an Irish, Northern Irish golf player. He [was] formerly No. 1 in the world."

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

A: "I'm all in on [pop and hip-hop]. I can listen [to it] all the time."

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

A: "I'm not a big movie fan, so I didn't watch that much."

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: "I would say listening to music and playing video games."

Q: What is your biggest motivation?

A: "I want to make my dad proud of me."

Q: What do you like the most about UTRGV?

A: "The community, the friends. The environment around the school is pretty good."

Q: What are your biggest goals?

A: "I'm trying to make it to the PGA Tour."

--Compiled by Ali Halloum

Men's soccer aims to bounce back

Ali Halloum

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a 2-3-1 start to the season and a recent run of bad form, the UTRGV Men's Soccer Team is seeking a turnaround on its results ahead of the conference portion of its schedule.

As of press time, the Vaqueros were 0-2-1 in their last three matches, including a 6-0 loss on Sept. 21 against Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

UTRGV Men's Soccer head coach Bryheem Hancock said, although the Vaqueros have been a statistically solid team that has been "better" than previous teams, "the most important [statistic] is the scoreline."

"That's something we're working on in training," Hancock said. "The guys have an understanding of what needs to be fixed and I think we're working towards, each day, getting better in those areas."

The coach said the team needs to finish the chances it has created for itself on attack and clean up its efforts on defense. He described team defense as a collective effort.

"[We have created] a lot of chances," Hancock said. "[We] just need to get more on goal. Defensively, I think, if you look at the goals [our opponents] scored, it hasn't been anything they've broken our team down on."

Junior forward Kgodiso "KG" Sukati said the team's goal is to bounce back and do special things, which he believes they can do if they collectively "put in the work."

"We're just looking to improve our focus, our effort [and] our fight," Sukati said. "We want to be more aggressive in tackles and going forward and scoring goals."

Senior left back and midfielder Cesar Balthazar said the team is trying to shake off its recent form and come together as a group to do so.

"We're in a tough situation," Balthazar said. "We've been talking with each other [to] try to regroup, get some stuff situated and make the setting more positive."

The Vaqueros played their final nonconference match last Sunday on the road against Southern Methodist University. As of press time, results were unavailable.

Sukati is looking to continue contributing to the Vaqueros' attack. He has netted three goals and two assists in six games played this season.

"It's by the grace of God that I was able to contribute to the goals and to help the team win," he said. "But, yeah, I'm just looking to be able to provide more strength to keep on scoring."

Balthazar said "it feels good" to be able to perform well for the team. This season, he has tallied three assists in six matches.

The UTRGV Men's Soccer Team will return to Western Athletic Conference contention. Currently, it is one of only two UTRGV programs remaining in the WAC since the university announced its move to the Southland Conference



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

Vaqueros senior forward Oneeko Allen jumps for a header during a match against Texas A&M International University Aug. 22 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus. Allen scored the tying goal of the match.



Raquel Cazares/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Senior forward Oneeko Allen dribbles the ball during practice Sept. 18 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.



Junior forward Sota Matsuo seeks out the ball during practice Sept. 18 at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus.

last spring. The other program in the conference is Women's Swimming and Diving.

Hancock said he looks forward to coaching the team in the 2024 season, especially after San Diego State University, another "quality" program, joined the WAC.

"The WAC is a very strong conference," he said. "We look at every game to be like a conference

tournament match, not just regular season. ... The more you do that, the more you'll have success in the regular season."

The team will begin its WAC schedule when it takes on Grand Canyon University at 2 p.m. Sunday at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex on the Edinburg campus. Admission is free.

WOMEN'S SOCCER
6:30 p.m. Thursday
vs. Houston Christian University
11 a.m. Sunday
vs. Stephen F. Austin State University
at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

MEN'S SOCCER
2 p.m. Sunday
vs. Grand Canyon University
at the UTRGV Soccer and Track & Field Complex

BETO
Continued from Page 1

entire country.”
She said educators and senior citizens face a lot of challenges in Texas.

“Our teachers, our educators, are amazing and they’ve got a target on their back by, literally, the state of Texas,” Vallejo said. “*Ya basta con eso*. We are going to defend our senior citizens who have to work every single day to pay into Social Security. It is a shame that Republicans, like MAGA Monica De La Cruz, want to privatize [Social Security] and gavel them away. That’s not acceptable, and we are not going to stand for it.”

Affordable health care is one of Vallejo’s top priorities.

“Something that is so personal to me, and so personal to all of us in this room, is access to affordable quality health care right here in South Texas and making sure that women are treated with dignity and respect so that they can make their own health-care decisions no matter what,” she said. “It is wrong that Monica De La Cruz wants to tell you what to do with your body, with your family [and] with your future.”



Abigail Ollave/THE RIDER PHOTOS
Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Beto O’Rourke addresses the May 2022 shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde at the “Round Up For Democracy” event held Tuesday at University Draft House in McAllen.

Vallejo thanked the attendees for their support.

“I have not once felt alone in this fight for South Texas,” Vallejo said. “It is a hard thing to do, to put your name out there, to travel all the way up and down the district, to get to know people, to understand the challenges that we are all experiencing. But, I know that I’m doing this with each and every one of you.”

She encourages the community to go out and vote.

“Make sure that you are registered to



Michelle Vallejo, Democratic nominee for Texas’ 15th Congressional District, encourages the community to go out and vote during the “Round Up For Democracy” event held Tuesday at University Draft House in McAllen.

vote, even if you voted in the primary,” Vallejo said. “Right now, there are voter-intimidation tactics coming from the highest levels in our state leadership.”

O’Rourke said “smart political people” have told him not to go to South Texas because “the [Rio Grande] Valley doesn’t vote.”

“I probably would not vote either if no one bothered to show up for me, listen to what was on my mind here, my dreams and aspirations, the challenges in front of me and work

with me to make sure that we can realize those dreams and overcome those obstacles,” he said.

O’Rourke spoke about the impact of the Texas abortion ban.

“Remember what was on the ballot in 2022,” he said. “It wasn’t just Beto and Abbott. It was ... the most obscene abortion ban in America. ... In the 16 months after that Texas abortion ban was signed into law by Greg Abbott, made possible by Donald Trump, 26,000 women and girls in the state of Texas were forced to carry the child of their rapist to term. This has become the epicenter of a maternal mortality crisis.”

O’Rourke said the May 24, 2022, shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde was also on the ballot.

“Nothing has changed in this state to make it any less likely that any other child met the same thing,” he said.

Mission resident Angelica Almaguer attended the event and said she could not believe O’Rourke and Vallejo visited the Valley because not a lot of politicians do.

Almaguer said the top issues she sees in the state are abortion rights, health care and education.

TRAVEL
Continued from Page 1

and then Education Abroad Scholarship, which is somewhere about \$1,000 per student,” Jung said about the financial help that students can obtain. “And then, there are some colleges, for example, my college offers some additional scholarships for about \$1,000 a person.”

He suggested students check the website of the UTRGV Global Affairs program. Students will find all the programs that are approved by school and are being offered to students.

“Students will go to that country, go through the course, but also have an opportunity to interface with different organizations and also students and faculty or even companies at those countries,” Jung said. “Gaining the ... firsthand experience of the actual country itself is something

very valuable.”
He said studies have shown having a study abroad course as part of students’ experiences can help them get a job in the future.

“We encourage, obviously, for students to apply and have this experience,” Jung said. “Try to find out more about study abroad, education abroad, opportunities and find out more about what scholarships and funding is available and then, try to take advantage of it if you can.”

Creative writing Associate Professor Britt Haraway told The Rider he offers a travel writing course and a poetry appreciation class in Paris.

“It’s a great place to study poetry,” Haraway said. “All the buildings and museums, the river—all these places have inspired writers over the years.”

The creative writing associate professor said students will visit the Louvre,

the catacombs, attend a fashion show and experience a different culture.

“Instead of being at the lecture in front of the class ... you’re in a wonderful museum, or we’re going to Sainte-Chappelle with all the stained-glass windows, and we can talk about, well, different aesthetics,” Haraway said.

He said the benefit of studying abroad is the relationship with 10 or 15 people getting to know each other and experiencing this together.

“I went to Wales, and that was a great place to study literature,” Haraway said. “So, find a great class that works for your degree and you’ll get to use that credit. But also the credit you don’t see, the relationships you build, the new experiences you acquire is just as valuable.”

He said students are advised to apply early for the Gilman

scholarship.

“If you get that, it’s almost a lock that you can do this financially,” Haraway said. “It’s going to be available to you, and it’s going to be educationally rewarding.”

Jair Aguilar, an associate professor in the Teaching and Learning department, said he will offer a math methods course in Spain.

“The intention is that students have three weeks to know not only the city and everything that the cities have to offer, but also getting to know prestigious institutions in Seville, Granada and Madrid,” Aguilar said in Spanish.

He tells students to look outside of the objective, gather experiences, get to know other places and understand how the globalized world works.

“And then come back to the Rio Grande Valley and share all the knowledge with our people, to know that there is a

lot more beyond our borders, beyond the RGV,” Aguilar said.

Aguilar advises students not to waste the opportunity to study abroad.

“It’s now or never,” he said. “When someone finishes their collegiate career, other things start going on: start working, get married, have children. And the possibilities to travel abroad goes almost to zero—almost. I do not say it is impossible, I just say it gets harder.”

Iyovana Cantu, a junior pursuing a degree in business administration, said she is interested in studying abroad.

“I left really happy with all of the places that we would be able to study abroad,” Cantu said. “I would love to go to Mexico City because of the photography opportunity. ... I’m Mexican, so I would really love to learn more about my heritage, where I come from.”

ABBOTT
Continued from Page 3

Alice Mayor Cynthia Carrasco, San Benito Mayor Rick Guerra, Harlingen Mayor Norma Sepulveda, Mission Mayor Norie Gonzalez, Palmview Mayor Rick Villarreal, Donna Mayor David Moreno, Premont Mayor Priscilla Vargas, Granjeno Mayor Yvette Cabrera and San Antonio representative Rebecca Viagran.

Also at the event were Texas state Sen. Chuy Hinojosa (D-McAllen) and state Representatives Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) and Janie Lopez (R-San Benito).

Gov. Abbott shared a story that illustrates why several businesses are relocating to Texas.

In April 2020, he received a call from Tesla Motors and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, who expressed a need for a gigafactory, a facility “more than a mile long [and] larger than the Pentagon” in under 18 months.

“I don’t know if any of you guys have built a house, but it takes a long time just to build a house,” Abbott said. “... I committed to Elon Musk and Texas. We move at the speed of business. We will get that done. From the time of that, to turning the dirt, to building out the gigafactory ... he was able to do it in less than 18 months.”

Abbott praised the region’s potential when it comes to businesses.

“Our goal is to make sure that we will be able to move at that speed of business for everybody,” he said. “... I think that the Rio Grande Valley

is, in any, No. 1 as far as economic growth is concerned. You’re sitting on a veritable goldmine. ... Never in the history of Texas has there been a better time to be living and working and growing a business in the Rio Grande Valley.”

Abbott said it is important to collaborate among city and county leaders.

“This is important for ... anyone who’s involved in the process of trying to incentivize and encourage business development in this area,” he said. “There’s a new law ... that provides another form of economic incentive.”

Abbott said the initiative, known as JETI, stands for Jobs, Energy, Technology and Innovation.

“Any type of project that falls within those broad categories are projects that we are now providing economic incentives for through property tax abatements,” he said.

Besides JETI, the state has the Enterprise Fund, which provides incentives for businesses that want to come to Texas.

Abbott said Texas created its own version of the federal Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors, or CHIPS, Act to provide economic incentives to semiconductor industries. He said the state has maintained a leading position in semiconductor manufacturing for over a decade.

He also spoke about transportation. “I know how obvious the need is in the RGV for transportation relief

for more roads,” Abbott said. “You’re growing and you’re growing rapidly and it’s not stopping tomorrow. The growth is going to continue and accelerate.”

He said it is the state’s responsibility to support the cities in the development, particularly regarding transportation.

Abbott said the Unified Transportation Action Plan has a budget of \$148 billion that will help cities in Texas.

“Currently, we’re spending more than ever before for roads in the Rio Grande Valley,” he said. “What this new road construction budget does ... will match your growth. That will provide a good quality of living in your community, knowing that the residents here are going to be able to traverse the region and get to the places they want.”

The governor ended the fireside chat by encouraging everyone to advocate for the needs of the community.

“We can do a lot of things,” Abbott said. “One thing that we cannot do is read minds. And so, we like to hear from our local officials that you need this or you’re thinking that. ... By working together as a united team, we can deliver better solutions for your communities. In doing so, we will not only improve your areas but also elevate the entire state of Texas.”

The next South Texas Alliance Cities meeting will take place in Laredo. The date is yet to be announced.

SGA
Continued from Page 3

like parking lots improvements, construction, safety security, lighting [and] security cameras.”

He said there was a 2% increase in parking demand for Fall 2024.

“The park and ride, like, for example, the one in Harlingen, I guess that really helped as far as providing additional parking spaces because we did see a big increase in transportation ridership,” Aguilar said.

The director said VOLT is a transportation service that has a 10-to-15 minute frequency.

“You park far away, you don’t go around in circles waiting ... which is why we again, we value the service that VOLT provides,” he said.

Aguilar said there have been many challenges, especially with the heavy rain, this semester.

“What we’ve been trying to do is just stay very flexible, to try to provide solutions as they’re coming up and just trying to be proactive,” he said.

Aguilar said the university introduced a pilot program called Mobile Pay in Edinburg.

“It’s a contactless way of paying for daily parking,” he said. “... Students can take advantage of this. They don’t need to buy a parking permit, you can just scan the barcode that’s right there or the QR code, and it’s a very simple method.”