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THE RIDER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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A ponerse el sombrero

Hugo A. Sepúlveda
THE RIDER

Charro Days Fiesta and UTRGV Student Activities will celebrate the 88th anniversary of Charro Days. The festivities will take place through Saturday in Brownsville.

Henry LeVrier, president of Charro Days Fiesta, talked about the events happening in the city for the annual commemoration that kicked off with Baile Del Sol on Sunday at the Charro Days Fiesta headquarters. The event was the official grito to start the Charro Days festivities.

On Thursday, the BISD Children's Parade will take place at 2:30 p.m. in downtown Brownsville, followed by a Noche Mexicana Dance featuring Noe Pro and The Band, and Mariachi 7 Leguas at the Texas Southmost College Jacob Brown Auditorium.

On Friday, the Illuminated Night Parade will take place at 7 p.m. Friday on Elizabeth Street in downtown.

On Saturday, the Color Guard Parade will take place at 12:30 p.m. in Elizabeth Street in downtown, followed

See **CHARREADA**, Page 3



PHOTO COURTESY PULSE MAGAZINE

Brass section from the Viking Band performs during the BISD Children's Parade as part of the 2024 Charro Days events.



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

Students dine in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. UTRGV and Chartwells said they will not charge added egg fees.

NO INCREASE

Chartwells will not charge additional egg fees

Pete Mendoza
COPY EDITOR

With the increase in prices for egg-related items from other establishments, UTRGV and its food service partner, Chartwells, have decided to not charge any additional fees for eggs.

The university looks at the consumer price index for the previous calendar year when making any price changes, according to a Feb. 17 email to The Rider from Letty Benavides, associate vice president for Campus Auxiliary Services.

"We have mutually agreed upon a price adjustment based on 3.97% starting Fall 2025 which was the average change in CPI for our region for the period covering January - December 2024,"



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

Mechanical engineering graduate students Cesar Sanchez (left) and Oscar Rivas study Tuesday outside the Student Union on the Edinburg campus.

Benavides wrote.

In an interview with The Rider, she said the CPI is used as an indicator to anticipate any price adjustments with

the university's contractors.

"[CPI is] basically the weighted average of a

See **EGGS**, Page 3

Awareness lags amid Bronc Trail crowding

Ethan Maldonado
THE RIDER

A hike-and-bike trail introduced on the Edinburg campus to keep personal transportation devices off the student-heavy Bronc Trail has gone unnoticed by many. PTDs include bicycles, scooters and skateboards, among others.

Computer science junior Ashley Cantu was surprised to learn about the trail when asked about it.

"Wait, so it's new? I didn't know it existed," Cantu replied. "I just don't see it. Maybe I'm not going to the places where they put it."

Many students remain

PTDs are prohibited from use on covered walkways

unaware of the trail's existence, despite efforts by the university to enforce PTD restrictions on the Bronc Trail.

The UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures states that PTDs are prohibited from use on covered walkways, breezeways and pedestrian bridges on all UTRGV campuses. The policy has been in place since Spring 2020. Despite the new hike-and-bike trail offering an alternative route, students continue to use the Bronc Trail for convenience.

See **TRAIL**, Page 2

Edinburg mayoral candidates promote transparency

Daniela Chapa-Reyes
THE RIDER

The election for Mayor of the City of Edinburg will be held on Nov. 4 with former city attorney Omar Ochoa and former city councilmember Johnny Garcia in the running.

Currently, Ramiro Garza Jr. holds the position of mayor for the city. However, he announced that he will not be running for reelection as he had planned due to a recent cancer diagnosis.

Andrew Smith, assistant

professor and pre-law adviser, said local politics is an important aspect of government.

"Local politics are more likely to affect your daily lives, whether that be in terms of property taxes, criminal justice matters, a number of things," Smith said. "It is a shame that people don't pay more attention [to

local politics]."

Ochoa said it was a surprise that he would decide to run.

he said. "I started getting phone calls from members of the community encouraging me to consider running."

Ochoa said he knows the city, its projects, its people and the operation well.

"I've advised the city council for that period of time; I know in my heart that I can do a really good job as the city's mayor," he said. "It just dawned on me that if

"Local politics are more likely to affect your daily lives, whether that be in terms of property taxes, criminal justice matters, a number of things,"

--Assistant professor Andrew Smith

"I've been the city attorney for the last five and a half years and recently stepped down towards the end of last year,"

I don't do it, it's just me being selfish not providing that option for the community to vote on."

Garcia said he has a desire to serve the community.

"I felt there was an opportunity to run again, to make a difference," he said. "I think the east side of Edinburg and other areas have been neglected for a long time. I want to try to focus on fixing the infrastructure of the east side of town."

See **MAYOR**, Page 3

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 Cesar Chavez Day of Service Virtual Info Session

The **Center for Student Involvement** will host a virtual info session for student organizations interested in participating in the Cesar Chavez Day of Service today and Tuesday at noon via Zoom. ID: 869 7329 3911.

Black History Month Celebration
The **Center for Student Involvement** will host an event honoring Black History Month at noon in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. The celebration will highlight the rich history, culture and contributions of the Black community.

Tuesday Friendship Bracelets

The **Baptist Student Ministry** will host a friendship bracelet-making event from 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. in the Liberal Arts Building South lobby on the Edinburg campus.

Chess Club Meeting
The **Chess Club** will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. in Education Complex Room 2.102 on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can **learn and play chess**. All individuals are welcome to attend.

Wednesday Charreada
Student Activities will host a **Charreada** in honor of the City of Brownsville's annual **Charro Days festivities** from 2 to 5 p.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

Attendees can enjoy live music, a dance performance, a petting zoo, rides, contests and more.

Thursday Lunch & Learn
The **UTRGV Center for Innovation & Commercialization** will host Lunch & Learn at 12:30 p.m. in its building, located at 307 E. Railroad St. in Weslaco, and via Zoom. ID: 259 222 0700. The session will explore **cooperative business models**. **Free food** will be provided.

Duo Billiards Tournament
The **Student Union** will host a **Duo Billiards Tournament** at 1 p.m. in the Student Union game rooms on the Edinburg and Brownsville cam-

pus. Students can register through V Link or at the Game Room for a chance to win V-Bucks. Free popcorn will be available. A **Student ID is required** to participate.

Friday IEEE ESB 24-Hour Hackathon
The **Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers** will host a 24-Hour Online Hackathon at 5 p.m. via Zoom. ID: 677 661 2742. Participants can put their **coding skills to the test, tackle challenges and compete for prizes**. Join from anywhere and collaborate with peers to create innovative solutions. The event is open to all students.

--Compiled by Ethan Maldonado



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Feb. 11 and 17.

Feb. 11 5:15 p.m.: A resident assistant reported seeing a suspicious activity involving a student and an unknown subject exchanging money in the Unity Hall lobby on the Edinburg campus. The incident is under investigation.

Feb. 12 9:35 a.m.: A student reported she noticed some damage on her vehicle that appeared to have been caused by another vehicle door in Lot E-38

on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

1:39 p.m.: A student reported that a male subject who had been issued a criminal trespass warning was looking for a woman in the Rusteberg Hall on the Brownsville campus. He left the area after she told him she did not know the woman. Officers searched the area but were unable to locate the male subject.

3:47 p.m.: Officers were dispatched regarding a man with an active criminal trespass walking around the Visual Arts Building on the Edinburg campus. Officers located and

arrested the man on a charge of criminal trespass. He was transported to the Edinburg Police Jail facility.

6:32 p.m.: Officers were dispatched regarding a loose animal in Lot E-9 on the Edinburg campus. The animal was detained and turned over to the Edinburg Animal Control.

Feb. 13 3:20 p.m.: A student reported his vehicle was damaged while it was parked in Lot B-3 on the Brownsville campus. The case is under investigation.

Feb. 15 11:08 a.m.: An officer made

contact with an ex-employee over the phone who had sent disturbing images to another employee. The ex-employee was issued a criminal trespass warning for the campus and was advised to contact human resources before attempting to return to campus.

Feb. 16 8:33 p.m.: An employee reported a minor water leak in a lab in the Biomedical Research & Health Building on the Brownsville campus. The main water line was shut off, and UTRGV Facilities were notified of the situation.

--Compiled by Narda Serna

TRAIL, Continued from Page 1

Kyran Hee, a marketing freshman, said the lack of awareness is a major reason for low usage.

"I barely found out it existed," Hee said. "I think people that know about it use it, but the people that don't know about it just ride around wherever they can, like on the Bronc Trail."

Matthew Moncus, interim director for Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management, said while some students are using the new trail, many still default to the Bronc Trail.

"I have seen the [hike-and-bike] trail being used by people on bikes and scooters," Moncus said. "However, I have still seen students using their scooters and bikes on the Bronc Trail as well. I feel like not everyone understands that the trail is there for them to use."

He suggested better communication is needed to encourage students to switch.

"I don't think the campus has done a great job of advertising it," Moncus said. "When you actually walk the trail, you can see that there are signs all along it but, if you never get onto the trail in the first place, you're never going to know it's there."

Beyond awareness, Cantu also raised concerns about the hike-and-bike trail's location.

"Don't you think it would be at a disadvantage for some people?" she said. "The Bronc Trail is in the center of campus, so it's just easier to use it to go places."

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CHARREADA,
Continued from Page 1

by the Grand International Parade at 1 p.m. In the evening, the Costume Ball Dance will take place at 8 p.m. in the TSC Jacob Brown Auditorium, with the performance of Jay Perez and The Band, David Lee Garza y los Musicales, and Mariachi 7 Leguas.

“The community can expect a lot of excitement, a lot of planning,” LeVrier said. “We’re planning for the parades; we’re working on all our floats. There will be a lot of bands participating. So, the community should be ready to see a lot of very nice floats in parades.”

He said the Charro Days tradition started in 1938 because the community needed to do something that lifted the spirits of the people by starting a binational and bicultural celebration between Matamoros and Brownsville.

“Matamoros brings several floats from Matamoros,” LeVrier said. “They bring their dignitaries, so they come and participate in our parades, also a lot of the tradition, a lot of the culture that we celebrate.”

He said it is important to keep that culture and tradition going and encouraged the community to come and celebrate.

Raul Leal, UTRGV program

coordinator for Student Activities, said the major university event for the celebration is the Charreada: the signature event that UTRGV hosts in honor of Charro Days, bringing culture to campus.

The Charreada event will take place from 2 to 5 p.m. Wednesday on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

“We will be having a lot of cool attractions, games and rides and the major thing is that we will have a guest appearance by Mr. Amigo at the event, as well as the [Charro] Days president,” Leal said.

He said it is a great opportunity for students to meet organizers from Charro Days Fiesta and to engage with the big cultural celebration. The event is open to UTRGV students with their ID.

“Students who do attend and check in with us are also eligible to receive a free T-shirt, a Charreada T-shirt, and also a Charreada stadium cup, provided by our sponsors, Pepsi,” Leal said.

He added that students can expect a lot of fun with performances from folklórico clubs, rides and activities for the university community to engage with.



PHOTO COURTESY PULSE MAGAZINE

Dancers dressed in Charro Days costumes perform at UTRGV’s 2024 Charreada. The event will take place from 2 to 5 p.m. Wednesday on the Student Union Lawn on the Brownsville campus.

EGGS,
Continued from Page 1

basket of goods that are monitored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and, as prices go up, it indicates inflation, or deflation if the prices go down,” Benavides said.

In January 2025, the index for eggs increased to 15.2%, which was the largest increase since June 2015. Within the past 12 months, the index for eggs increased to 53%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Benavides said when looking at the university’s food and vending contracts, the food away from home section of CPI is evaluated, which includes ingredients, demand and labor.

“We even kind of hone in on the region,” she said. “We look at the southern region. We look at population sizes from 50,000 to one and a half million.”

The associate vice president said UTRGV’s contractors need to submit documentation if they would like to make any price adjustments to their menu.

“I have not received any such request from Chartwells, who is our food service operator or [from] any of our vending partners, which are Pepsi and Snacktime Vending,” Benavides said.

She said it is important to look at the CPI constantly for any changing factors.

“I’m hoping that there’s a downward adjustment as the year progresses because again, we look at the 12-month average,” Benavides said.

Social studies senior Arely Munoz said eggs have always been a food for low-income people.

“I feel like it’s harder to get around and also harder to feed, like, kids, harder to feed anyone,” Munoz said.

Alejandra Garcia, chef manager at El Comedor on the Brownsville campus, said she wants to see a decrease in prices in the future.

“I just hope there is support for people with low income, so they can actually have access to eggs,” Garcia said.

For any questions or concerns regarding food or vending operations, contact dining@utrgv.edu.

MAYOR,
Continued from Page 1

Ochoa said he believes Edinburg has potential to be “exceptional.”

“The city really needs a strong, visionary leadership to continue in this growth trajectory and to take [the city] to the next level,” he said.

Smith said that both candidates are basing their candidacies on the fact that they have been in city government.

“They see that as advantageous to their candidacies,” he said. “Former council member Garcia ... he has had to run an election campaign, so he may have some election infrastructure;

Mr. Ochoa is banking on the fact that he is a relatively high profile attorney.”

Transparency is something that both candidates deem important for the city.

“I am very knowledgeable of laws that ensure the city remains open,” Ochoa said. “As mayor, I would ensure that opportunities are available for the public to not only know about what the city is doing, but to comment on it and to welcome as much citizen participation.”

Garcia said the city needs to communicate with the community.

Celebrate Black History Month



Andres Estrada/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Students and staff write what inspires them Thursday in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus.



Mofivinfoluwa Oluwafemi, an accounting senior, writes a note on a craft table inspired by African American figures Thursday in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus.



Shown is a poster of important African American figures to celebrate Black History Month Thursday in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus.



Shown is an inflatable representing a rise for African Americans celebrating Black History Month Thursday on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

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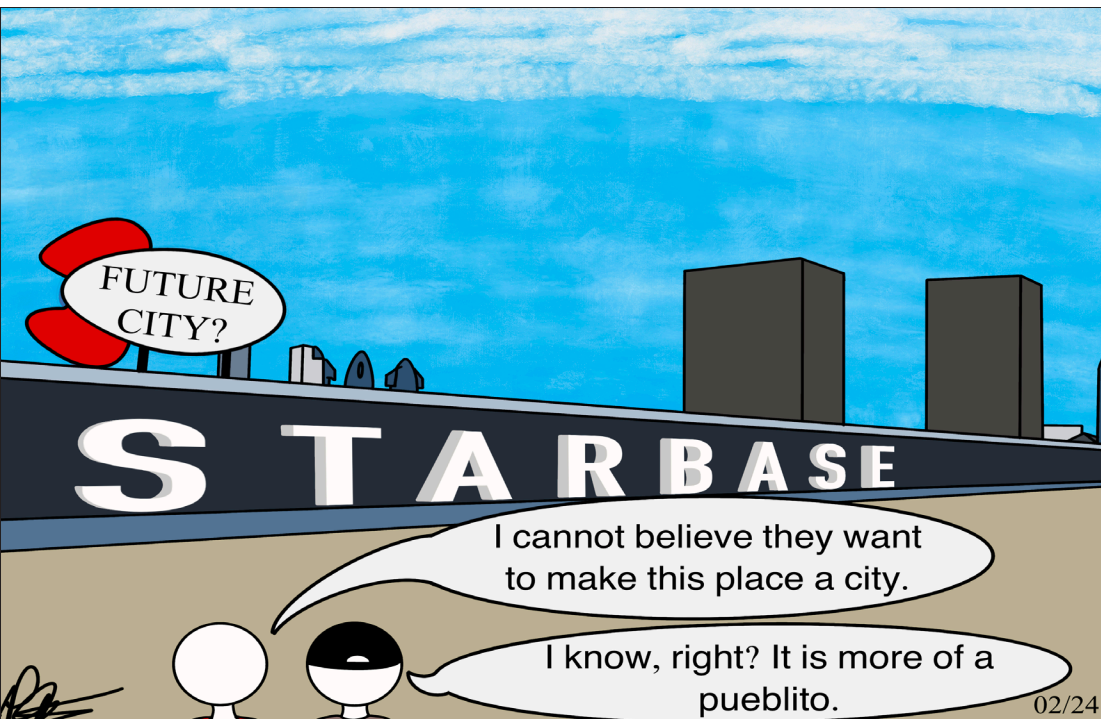
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Why, Dallas? Why?



Ali Halloum
THE RIDER

On the night of Feb. 1, the sports world paused for a brief moment in total shock.

That night, ESPN Senior NBA Insider Shams Charania, in a tweet that shook the sports world, announced the Dallas Mavericks had traded Luka Dončić, the face of their franchise, to the Los Angeles Lakers.

But just what exactly did the Mavs get for their star? Anthony Davis, Max Christie and a 2029 first-round draft pick. That's it.

This marks the first time in NBA history that two All-NBA players were traded for each other midseason, according to ESPN.

In all honesty, it is an absolutely pathetic return for the Dallas Mavericks.

You don't need to look back that far to see what kind of return they could have gotten

for him. Just a couple of years ago, the Oklahoma City Thunder got a king's ransom worth of draft picks (plus all-star guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander) that they used to build the best team in the Western Conference.

It's not hard to see why the Mavericks could have gotten so much more for Luka Dončić. He has been one of the best players of this generation. At the age of 25, Dončić has made the All-NBA

American Airlines Center. Luka was supposed to be the guy, the successor to the great Dirk Nowitzki. Dallas loved him and Luka loved Dallas.

The organization, not taking too kindly to it, removed fans from the arena during games for calling for general manager Nico Harrison to be fired.

Currently, the Mavs are not a bad team. Kyrie Irving and Anthony Davis are both incredible players. But, it was a team that was built around Luka Dončić.

If they do not win a championship in the next three years, this will go down as one of the worst trades in NBA history, and Harrison will forever be known as "the guy that traded Luka."

On the flipside, Lakers general manager Rob Pelinka looks like a genius for getting Dončić on his team for cheap and securing the future face of the franchise.

Luka, when healthy, is a top-10 player in the league and will be entering his prime with the Lakers.

And this season, he will be a great piece alongside LeBron James, as the Lakers try to make a post-All-Star break push in the West.

"Mavs fans, understandably, have been devastated. Luka was supposed to be the guy, the successor to the great Dirk Nowitzki."

team five out of his first six seasons, averaging over 28 points and around 8 assists a night.

He's been especially prolific in the playoffs, leading the Mavericks to the NBA Finals last season despite playing through a leg injury.

Mavs fans have been devastated, going as far to hold protests outside the



What do you do to wind down after a stressful day?



"Working out is really good, also playing video games on the weekends or just watching YouTube and Netflix. That really helps out."

Christian Cepeda
mathematics senior

"If it was extremely stressful, I just take a nap. But I do like to use other methods, like I write poetry, so I do that. Or I would just draw, just find other ways to take it out instead of just going to sleep."

Michaëlle Rodriguez
criminal justice junior



"I get home and I play video games or I listen to music, or just take a nap."

David Pinales
accounting junior

"I like to listen to music. I like to play 'Fortnite' with my friends. ... I like to go on long drives and just talk about nothing. That's pretty much it; I do a lot of the music listening."

Raiën Whilby
undeclared freshman



"I usually play video games because I usually spend a lot of time actually writing. So, video games are how I usually calm down."

Isaiah Deocampo
English junior

--Compiled and photos by Jose Rodriguez and Amara Cazares

**AIR MAIL
PAR AVION**

The Rider encourages letters but does not guarantee publication. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar and content. Letters for The Rider may be sent to therider@utrgv.edu. All letters must be typed and no longer than 400 words. Letters must include the name, classification and phone number of letter's author or the letter cannot be published. Opinions expressed in The Rider are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rider or UTRGV administrators.

New arts building: who dis?

Eduardo Escamilla
THE RIDER

The College of Fine Arts town hall meeting shared updates on the long-anticipated Brownsville Visual Arts Complex, scheduled to open in two phases: December 2025 and Spring 2026.

Last Thursday, the University of Texas System Board of Regents approved the total project cost of \$39 million and the design development plans.

The town hall took place Wednesday in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus.

College of Fine Arts Dean Jeffery Ward said during a presentation that they collaborated with Alamo Architects to design the school in a way that was authentic to the Brownsville campus aesthetic and “using some of those architectural elements, such as arches, [and] to have seating and VOLT stops.”

Ward revealed the namesake for the new building.

“We have landed on the acronym because [BVACX], you know, it wouldn’t be UTRGV if we didn’t have some obscure acronym to name our buildings,” he said.

BVACX will be located in the old R. Longoria Elementary School.

“It is about a half-mile from the Student Union,” Ward said. “We are planning to have a VOLT stop as well as ... a large parking lot that’s about a block away from the campus.”

The original plans of finding a building downtown to renovate had many logistical issues.

“We had so many concerns about the cost, but also about the parking situation and distance from campus,” Ward said.

Renovating the old elementary school provided better opportunities to create a state-of-the-art arts facility.

He also added that he hopes the new gallery space will become a staple in the community.

“It’s really important to us ... to have it be a space that the public feels very well in and so, we’re already thinking about some outreach programs that we’re able to provide the community,” Ward said.

The dean said he would rather see



Narda Serna/THE RIDER

Photography assistant professor Romeo Di Loreto asks questions during the College of Arts town hall meeting Wednesday in the Music, Science and Learning Center on the Brownsville campus. Also shown is art lecturer Carl Vestweber.

all the studio spaces be fully outfitted and invest the budget in those rather than a general classroom building and not skimp out on important equipment like a ventilation system.

The project is in the final stages of approval with enrollment projected to commence in Spring 2026, which the dean admitted was “pretty ambitious.”

The dean added that he would not be surprised if the timeline gets moved

options, similar to what’s in Edinburg,” replied Ed Pogue, director of the School of Art and Design, “It’s not the best but, hopefully, that would be some food options.”

Pogue added that BVACX will not be far from campus, offering economic options for students.

Visual communication design freshman Jon Delacruz asked about the safety precautions considered for the new building, such as speed bumps.

Ward said the roads were already equipped with such features.

“That’s one of the issues with Rustenburg,” Pogue added. “[We were] grandfathered in, meaning it does not have to meet many of the standards that in this new construction we

must meet. So there will be [American Disabilities Act] compliance ... there will be security cameras ... in a few of the studios, primarily sculpture metals in the wood shop.”

He added that cameras will be set up throughout the new school with lights throughout the pathways.

“All the ventilation system will be to code,” Pogue said. “That includes all of the laboratories. ... So, in relationship with Rustenburg as far as safety for the students and working in labs, it’s gonna be much more safe.”

“... in relationship with Rustenburg as far as safety for the students and working in labs, it’s gonna be much more safe.”

--Ed Pogue, director of the School of Art and Design

back and instead enrollment would open in Fall 2026.

He also addressed lease concerns at Texas Southmost College and said “if we have to stay in Rustenburg [Hall] for another semester, it wouldn’t be a lease issue. Of course, it’s going to continually be a maintenance issue and an issue of not being an appropriate facility for what we need.”

During the meeting, photography Assistant Professor Romeo Di Loreto asked on behalf of students about dining options.

“[We are] looking at the food



If you were a professional musician, what instrument would you play?



Janell Tamayo
psychology senior

“I guess I like jazz. Maybe or maybe not jazz, but I want to do something with piano.”



Kassy Garcia
kinesiology sophomore

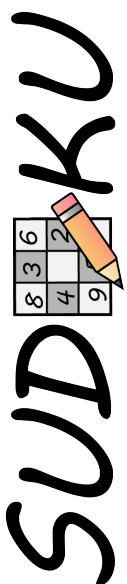
“I would like to play the piano because I really enjoy jazz music.”



Alexandra Garcia
marketing senior

“I would play the harp. I think it’s a very beautiful instrument, very beautiful to look at, beautiful to listen to.”

--Compiled and photos by Sofia Cantú Saucedo



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DOWN

- Colleges
- Homecoming
- Womens
- Letters
- Madness
- Dye

ACROSS

- Block
- Home Opener
- ESTUN
- EBSBL
- UTRGV

Feb. 17 Crossword answer key:

Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

Eduardo Escamilla
THE RIDER

Aries (March 21 - April 19): This New Moon encourages you to explore new study avenues.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20): The New Moon highlights your creative potential.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20): This is a time for intellectual exploration.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22): The New Moon emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in your academic pursuits.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22): This New Moon

encourages you to express your creativity and individuality in your academic work.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): The New Moon highlights the importance of attention to detail and analytical thinking in your studies.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): This New Moon emphasizes the importance of collaboration and teamwork in your academic pursuits.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): The New Moon encourages you to delve deeper into your studies and explore complex ideas and concepts.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): This New Moon inspires you to broaden your intellectual horizons and explore new fields of study.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): The New Moon highlights the importance of discipline and perseverance in your academic pursuits.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): This New Moon encourages you to think outside the box and challenge conventional wisdom.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20): The New Moon in your sign marks a fresh start in your academic journey.



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A RUSH IN THE LANES

Swimming & Diving prepares for their first conference tournament

Ali Halloum
THE RIDER

As the inaugural season for the UTRGV Women's Swimming & Diving begins to wind down, the Vaqueros are looking ahead of the Western Athletic Conference Championships, which will take place from Wednesday to Saturday in Houston.

As of press time, the Vaqueros are 5-10 in their meets. However, they have competed against universities with both men's and women's programs, with the results from both programs totaling their score.

This will be the first and final season that UTRGV Swimming & Diving will be competing in the WAC, as the university announced that the program will be competing in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation next season.

In an interview with The Rider, swimming and diving head coach Betsy Graham said she saw some positive results in the program's inaugural season, but that she would like to see the team get faster.

"I'm a believer [that] fast swimming breeds fast swimming," Graham said. "The main focus that I've kept the whole year with them was, 'We only worry about what we're doing, not what everyone else is doing.'"

Vaqueros junior diver Delaney Murphy said this

season has been a "growing thing," with the team creating how they want practices to run, their goals and even team chants during meets.

"We've really been striving to reach [our goals]," Murphy said. "I think it's been fun because we've been creating things we want at meets. [The cheers] set the tone and kinda keeps us in high spirits."

She said although some of the meets had rough results for the team, its members have always kept their heads

tournaments.

She added the team is in what she calls "taper," meaning the team is lowering its intensity to allow for full rest and recovery ahead of the tournament. Murphy described "taper" as "less things but more technique work."

"They're just taking one day at a time," Graham said. "Hopefully by next week, they'll be repaired enough and ready to go."

Murphy said the team is hoping that she and her teammates can reach personal bests at the conference tournament.

"That's all anyone can ask for is doing your own personal best," she said. "For me personally, I'm excited because I haven't been in this conference."

Murphy will compete tower for the first time in the conference tournament and is "excited" to do so.

"I never competed tower when I was younger," she said. "So competing [in] it for my first time here, it's exciting. Diving is an adrenaline rush, so I definitely get amped up and nervous at the same time. But when I'm competing, it feels great because I'm doing something I haven't done before, and it's scary but fun."

Following this, UTRGV will send diver Manou Meulebeek to the NCAA Zone D Diving Championships March 10 to 12 in Iowa City, Iowa, as well as any diver that qualifies for it at the WAC tournament.

"The main focus that I've kept with them was 'we only worry about what we're doing not what everyone else is doing'"

--Head coach Betsy Graham

up and attempted to meet their own goals.

"For swimming and diving, we kind of each have our own goals based on what someone swims, or what dives I want to get, or what my other teammate wants to get," Murphy said. "For me, I want to get specific dives throughout the season. ... I want to get my gainer 2.5 on 3 meter and my back 2.5 on 3 meter."

Graham said she is looking forward to see the team compete in the conference and is hoping to see some of her swimmers qualify for NCAA Swimming and Diving



FILE PHOTO
Members of the UTRGV Swimming & Diving Team dive during the Orange & Gray Intrasquad Meet Oct. 12, 2024, in the Pharr-PSJA-UTRGV Natatorium.



FILE PHOTO
Members of the UTRGV Women's Swimming & Diving team compete during the Orange & Gray Intrasquad Meet Oct. 12, 2024, in the Pharr-PSJA-UTRGV Natatorium.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK: ESTEBAN GONZALEZ



Esteban Gonzalez, a management sophomore from McAllen, is a member of the UTRGV Men's Golf Team.

Gonzalez moved his way to the Top-10 and tied for 10th place in the second round of the Vaqueros Intercollegiate on Feb. 3 at Playa Paraiso Golf Club in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: "I would say I'm from the [Rio Grande] Valley. I haven't left the Valley. I was born and raised here in McAllen."

Q: Who or what got you started to golf?

A: "I think it was kind of a group

thing, but my dad mainly. And so, we played baseball before golf for a pretty long time and we discovered golf when I was about 11, 12. I made the switch and never looked back."

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

A: "My dad, just because I base a lot of the things I do off of his work ethic and his attitude. And I know he wasn't really like the golfer to look after, but his attitude, his work ethic really pushed me to be

better. And I kind of implement all of that in my life."

Q: Who is your favorite golfer?

A: "I have to say Will Zalatoris."

Q: Which movies or shows do you watch?

A: "I'll give you my three top movies of all time. So, it's 'Interstellar,' 'Man on Fire' and 'Ford v Ferrari.'"

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: "I like to fish and hunt every now and then."

Q: What is your biggest

motivation?

A: "My biggest motivation is thinking about my future and what I want for my future."

Q: What do you like the most about UTRGV?

A: "The community, the people. Everyone here is awesome."

Q: What are your biggest goals?

A: "My biggest goal, I would say ... is to graduate from this school and have, like, no regrets."

--Compiled and photo by Jose Rodriguez

BASEBALL

6:30 p.m. Friday & Saturday vs. Lamar University

Noon Sunday vs. Lamar University

in the UTRGV Baseball Stadium

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

4:30 p.m. Saturday vs. University of New Orleans

in the UTRGV Fieldhouse

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Noon Thursday vs. Southeastern Louisiana University

2 p.m. Saturday vs. University of New Orleans

in the UTRGV Fieldhouse



CHARREADA

¡Viva La Fiesta!

Wed. Feb. 26

2PM - 5PM

BSTUN Lawn

Rides | Performances | Contests
Fundraising | Petting Zoo