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THE RIDER THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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UTRGV officials discuss potential campus expansion

Rebeca Salinas EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The University of Texas System Board of Regents granted UTRGV authorization Feb. 20 to begin negotiating the purchase of three tracts of land across the Rio Grande Valley for potential campus expansion.

president of University Marketing and Communications, said the authorization allows the university to enter the "exploration" stage of the purchase process.

"What this did was give us authorization to enter negotiations with the owners of these [properties] and to see if it is something that we truly want to purchase,"

Gonzales said.

Once the price of the land is agreed upon, the university will need to seek approval from the UT System Board of Regents again to proceed with the purchase.

In Harlingen, the university is seeking to begin negotiations on 1.05 acres of land, located at 1601 Treasure Hills Blvd. next to the UTRGV Clin-

ical Education Building.

Gonzales said the location could potentially be used for the future expansion of the School of Podiatric Medicine.

He added the potential purchase of the 7.22 acres located at 1100 N. McColl Road in McAllen would allow UTRGV to expand its foothold in the area.

The 7.22 acres are located

between the McAllen Collegiate Academy and the University of Texas Health RG Cancer and Surgery Center, which is supposed to go "online" later this year, according to Gonzales.

"Wherever we have preexisting facilities, we're always looking at contiguous parcels

See CAMPUS, Page 2

FIESTA ON CAMPUS



Mykel Del Angel/THE RIDER

Students ride the swing carousel Wednesday at the Charreada on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. The event was hosted by UTRGV Student Activities, Campus Activities Board and the Student Union.

\$39M visual arts project is approved in Brownsville

Pete Mendoza COPY EDITOR

Construction and destruction plans are underway for the Brownsville Visual Arts Complex, which university officials describe as a "state-of-the-art" facility for students and faculty.

The total cost for the project is \$39 million and includes building cost, site development and project management.

Dean of the College of Fine Arts Jeffrey Ward said demolition will be the first part to begin construction of the building.

"Some things that will be taken out, such as the covered walkways that are there, the current structures," Ward said. "We'll do some removal of the roofs because they'll be putting new roofs on."

He said the architects

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Students struggle to stay motivated as semester progresses

Ethan Maldonado THE RIDER

As the middle of the semester approaches, burnout among UTRGV students can start to emerge. While university resources are available, some students rely on personal strategies and community support to push through the exhaustion.

Rizza Bermio-Gonzalez, a psychological science

lecturer at UTRGV, explained that burnout differs from temporary stress and is often the result of prolonged academic and personal pressure.

"Stress happens in response to a test or a tough assignment, but burnout builds up over time," Bermio-Gonzalez said. "It's that persistent exhaustion where even sleep doesn't

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New marine research facility approved

Hugo A. Sepúlveda THE RIDER

The University of Texas System Board of Regents approved on Feb. 20 the construction of the UTRGV Port Isabel Marine Ecosystems Research Facility.

Guy Bailey, president of UTRGV, said he is proud of the approval because of the productive research conducted at Port Isabel.

"They're in portable buildings; that's kind of like trailer homes, and it's not really appropriate in that environment," Bailey said.

He said the university



Mykel Del Angel/THE RIDER

UTRGV is hoping to be able to increase the number of graduate and undergraduate students in the program after building the facility.

was approved to build a first-class facility and seven significant research labs with other

appropriate spaces.

"It'll make a huge difference for our research and for the

graduate students who work down there," Bailey said.

He said the new facility would benefit the School of Earth, Environment and Marine Sciences because it will give its productive researchers facilities that will enhance their competitiveness for grants, and it will help them recruit graduate students.

"I think this is a wonderful addition to our campus and to our facilities," Bailey said.

Roldan Valverde, director of the School of Earth, Environment and Marine Sciences, said he expects the facility will develop more research

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Sofia Cantú Saucedo/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

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
RGV German Club Meeting
The RGV German Club will meet at 12:30 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 2.212 on the Brownsville campus.

Tuesday
DSAA Meeting
The Data Structures and Algorithms Architects will meet from 4:45 to 5:45 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Engineering & Academic Building Room 1.208 on the Edinburg campus. Attendees will discuss new LeetCode problems.

Wednesday
Ash Wednesday Mass
The Catholic Student Association will host a Catholic open service for prayer, reflection and the

tradition of receiving ash from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

FLA Workshop
The Freshman Leadership Academy and the Center for Student Involvement will host a professional development workshop aligned with National Association of Colleges and Employers competencies from noon to 1 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.105 on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Friday in Student Academic Center Room 1.1.01 on the Edinburg campus. Free pizza will be provided.

BAA Meeting
The Brownsville Account-

ing Association will meet from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 1.221 on the Brownsville campus.

Thursday
Environment Awareness Club Meeting
The Environment Awareness Club will meet to discuss future events and ideas presented from noon to 2 p.m. in the Student Union Palmetto Room on the Edinburg campus.

ACJA General Meeting
The American Criminal Justice Association will meet to discuss future events and opportunities in the criminal justice field from 3 to 4 p.m. in Sabal Hall Room 2.110 on the Brownsville campus.

Friday
IEEE ESB Video Game Tournament
The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers will host an open video game tournament from 6 to 9 p.m. in Engineering Building Room 1.272 on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can make new friends and compete for prizes.

Student Senate Meeting
The Student Government Association will meet from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.101 on the Edinburg campus. Students attending can present concerns or projects to the Student Senate.

--Compiled by Daniel Aguilar



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Feb. 18 and 24.

Feb. 18
11:05 a.m.: A student reported she found some damage to her vehicle when she returned from class in Lot E-33 on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

Feb. 19
9:47 a.m.: An officer was dispatched regarding a suspicious man who was giving away books and requesting a fee for them outside the University Library on the Edinburg campus. The unaf-

filiated individual was advised of the university policies and procedures and advised to leave. He refused to leave and was subsequently arrested on a charge of criminal trespass. He was transported for booking procedures to the Edinburg Jail Facility.

3:44 p.m.: A student reported misplacing her bag with her vehicle keys and several debit and credit cards inside her bag in the Liberal Arts Building South on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

Feb. 20
1:16 p.m.: An officer

responded to a two-vehicle minor collision in Lot E-5 on the Edinburg campus. No injuries were reported.

11:11 p.m.: A student reported suspicious activity on her social media account involving an unknown individual who requested explicit photos in exchange for money. The case is under investigation.

Feb. 21
6:38 p.m.: An employee reported previous concerns about a student's behavior while on campus. The student was not at the location when the officer arrived. The case is under investigation.

Feb. 24
7:10 a.m.: A student reported that an unknown person had poured an unidentified liquid on his vehicle in Lot E-8 on the Edinburg campus. The case is under investigation.

5:15 p.m.: An officer responded to a two-vehicle accident with injuries in Lot B-1 on the Brownsville campus. Both parties refused emergency medical services. The injured party said her mother would take her to be seen by her doctor.

--Compiled by Narda Serna

CAMPUS, *Continued from Page 1*

of land nearby that will allow for easy expansion," he said. "So, we don't know what we're going to do with that land yet, but we do know that it's right by the other facilities that we own ... in the same area so, you know, it'll be good for future expansion when needed."

In Edinburg, UTRGV is seeking to potentially purchase 26.24 acres of land from IDEA Public Schools. The land is located east of the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium.

University President Guy Bailey said the property is across the street from the UTRGV Edinburg CISD Collegiate High School and the UTRGV Community Engagement & Student Success Building; however, there are still no plans for it.

"Any time you have the opportunity to acquire land ... that is contiguous to one of your facilities, you do it," Bailey said. "You always need future expansion, and really our space on both the Brownsville and the Edinburg campus is very tight now. And so, we're always looking for opportunities. We might not use that land for five years, even 10 years, but you need to have it for future expansion."

Gonzales said as UTRGV continues to add more programs and see increases in enrollment, it needs to expand.

"When you talk about longterm growth, [it] is looking at those opportunities to expand our footprint across the Rio Grande Valley to meet the needs of our new programs and our increasing enrollment," he said.

--Pete Mendoza contributed to this report.

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CORRECTION:

In the issue published Feb. 24, The Rider printed the incorrect spelling of the name of Jeffrey Ward, dean of the College of Fine Arts. The Rider made the correction on the online article.

A time to support UTRGV women

Daniela Chapa-Reyes
THE RIDER

In observance of Women's History Month, The Rider interviewed an alumna and an associate professor from UTRGV to share their journeys to success.

According to the Women's History Month website, the celebration started off as only a week in 1982; originally named Women's History Week. It wasn't until 1995 that the whole month was celebrated.

Gisel Garza, UTRGV alumna with a Bachelor and Master of Science in biology, was awarded the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship and is currently a doctoral student at Texas A&M University.

"That was a very big honor," Garza said. "I remember feeling the support at UTRGV; even when I was an undergraduate student when I first expressed interest in research. That really built a foundation for me



Gisel Garza

going on to apply to Ph.D. school and receiving the NSF."

Garza said Teresa Patricia Feria Arroyo, associate dean for Faculty Success and professor in the School of Integrative Biological and Chemical

"Women have been pillars of our society forever."

--Gisel Garza

Sciences, was one of the reasons she wants to pursue being a conservation biologist.

"I had expressed interest to her that I wanted to do research, and she was really supportive with that," she said. "Seeing her and seeing how inspirational of a conservation biologist she is and seeing that this is a possibility for me, especially her being a fellow Latina, really inspired me."

Garza said it is important for Women's History Month to be celebrated.

"Women in STEM aren't super common, especially Latino women in STEM," she said. "I can't tell you the conferences that I've gone to and it's mostly men ... that makes me even

more inspired to be a woman in that role. Women have been the pillars of our society forever."

Christian E. Zúñiga, associate professor in the Department of Bilingual & Literacy Studies and director of the Center for Bilingual Studies, said if it were up to her, Women's History Month would be celebrated all-year long and not just one month.

"Women have played such an important role in so many fields and it isn't until recently that some of them have started to get credit," said Zúñiga, who has a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin. "Fifty years ago, it would've been unheard of for someone of my background to have a Ph.D., to be a professor."

She has been a part of two research projects in which she seeks to prove the importance of bilingualism and the impact it has on education.

The associate professor said she has always been interested in the idea of being bilingual and has an appreciation

for that skill.

"I'm very thankful to my family and my community that fostered that love for both languages and

"Find the women that you feel comfortable with that make you want to be the best version of yourself."

--Christian E. Zúñiga

my development in both languages; through that, I became a bilingual teacher," Zúñiga said.

Her message to women and girls who want to pursue higher education is: Identify a mentor.

"Acknowledge their wisdom and their guidance and use it to build upon the confidence that you have as a younger generation because y'all are the ones who are going to eventually fill our roles just as I am filling the role of the people who came before me," she said. "Find those mentors, find the women that you feel comfortable with that make you want to be the best version of yourself."

--Photos courtesy Michael Miller and David Pike

HEALTH, *Continued from Page 1*

help. Students might start skipping assignments, feel disconnected from their goals or even experience physical symptoms like muscle tension, headaches or frequent colds."

Isaac Rodriguez, a mechanical engineering freshman, shared that he starts feeling burnout around the one-third mark of the semester.

"I just stop doing the work I'm supposed to do," Rodriguez said. "Instead of doing homework, I'd spend time with family, friends or play video games. I wasn't using my time wisely."

Marketing sophomore River Mara noted that burnout often peaks before major academic breaks, such as Thanksgiving or spring break.

"It's always before the big breaks," Mara said. "That's when I feel the burnout coming, and I try to prepare mentally to push through the semester."

She said she balances a full course load, a job and leadership roles in two student organizations, said it can feel overwhelming.

"A lot of people I know are working full time while being full-time students," Mara said. "Burnout is bound to happen."

The symptoms of burnout vary from student to student. Rodriguez described losing motivation and procrastinating.

Mara experiences emotional exhaustion and withdrawal.

Bermio-Gonzalez emphasized that poor time management and procrastination are two of the biggest contributors to burnout.

"A lot of students wait until the last minute to start assignments, which leads to all-nighters, poor sleep and a cycle of stress that makes everything worse," the professor said. "Breaking assignments into smaller, manageable tasks and setting realistic deadlines can help prevent that spiral."

ARTS, *Continued from Page 1*

and construction managers are constantly aware of ensuring the efficiency of construction.

"[To] prevent the elements from coming ... they'll time all of the removal of the roofs and those kinds of things in such a way that it'll account for potential bad weather," Ward said.

The dean said it is important to ensure quality for the students and faculty while also providing a safe work environment.

"We will meet all current building codes for safety, for ventilation, for HVAC," he said. "And so, when our students are in the space, it will be a state-of-the-art space designed for art."

Rusteberg Hall was not created for the arts, according to Ward.

"It wasn't designed for that use, so trying to create something that wasn't built [for the] purpose of that will

not be the case [for the new building]," he said. "[The Visual Arts Complex] is going to be renovated for purpose."

UTRGV President Guy Bailey said a first-class education is not possible in a second- or third-class facility.

"Part of your learning is the environment you're in, especially if you're in arts and visual arts," Bailey said. "[The complex] will significantly

The estimated time of completion for construction is December 2025, according to Dean Jeffrey Ward.

enhance the learning environment."

Ward said after completion of the building, phase one will be moving all courses offered in Rusteberg into the complex to begin classes as soon as possible.

"The additional phases

will be tied to adding new programming there that students who are based in Brownsville have asked for, for years and/or have to come to Edinburg to take those courses," he said.

The dean said the estimated time of completion for construction is December 2025 to start classes in Spring 2026.

"That would be amazing, but that is 10 months from now," he said. "I've seen things go up a lot faster and I've seen things go up slower. I know that everyone who's involved wants to see us meet that timeline, but ... that'll be out of our control."

Bailey said the construction of the new building is "a remarkable opportunity" for the university.

"It's good for the school district that we're able to take an elementary school that is being shut down," he said. "And we can convert that into a really first-class, fine-arts-and-visual-arts center."

PORT, *Continued from Page 1*

in different coastal areas, such as Laguna Madre at South Padre Island and in the Gulf of Mexico, providing enhanced training opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

"Right now, what we have is portables, and the portables are not functioning properly," Valverde said. "We have many problems with maintenance. ... It's exposed to fluctuations in humidity, in temperature. The power is not stable, so we want to make sure that we can provide our researchers an adequate facility where they can develop the programs."

The Board of Regents will meet in March for the approval of the draft of the facility. In May, another meeting

is expected to take place to approve the draft at the state level. If those two meetings are cleared, construction is expected to start in July.

"If that goes according to plan, then the facility will be pretty much finalized by December of 2026 and should be able to move in by January

The UT System Board of Regents will meet in March for the approval of the draft of the facility.

2027," Valverde said.

He said the original cost was \$11 million but went up to \$20-\$21 million.

"We hope that it's not going to be increased because it just becomes more and more difficult to accomplish," Valverde said.

Erin Easton, assistant professor and director of the

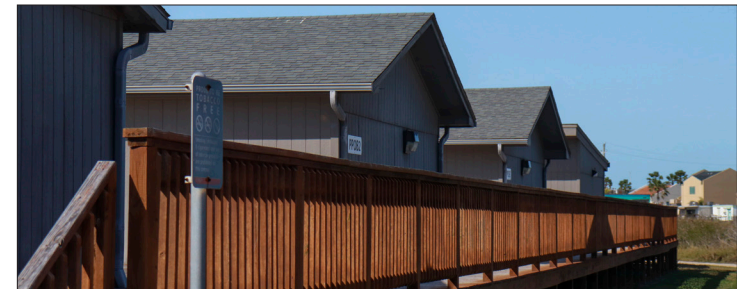
Marine Ecosystems Institute (MEI), said the division of research was established in Fall 2024 and will be dedicated to student access and success.

"We plan to advance integrative education, training research and community engagement across the

marine ecosystem sciences, which include areas such as biology, chemistry, geology, physics, oceanography, human dimensions, natural resource management, climate change, among other areas of marine ecosystem sciences," Easton said.

The director said the Port Isabel facilities have a lot of potential to grow and could have visitors, a living shoreline and educational spaces.

--Pete Mendoza contributed to this report.

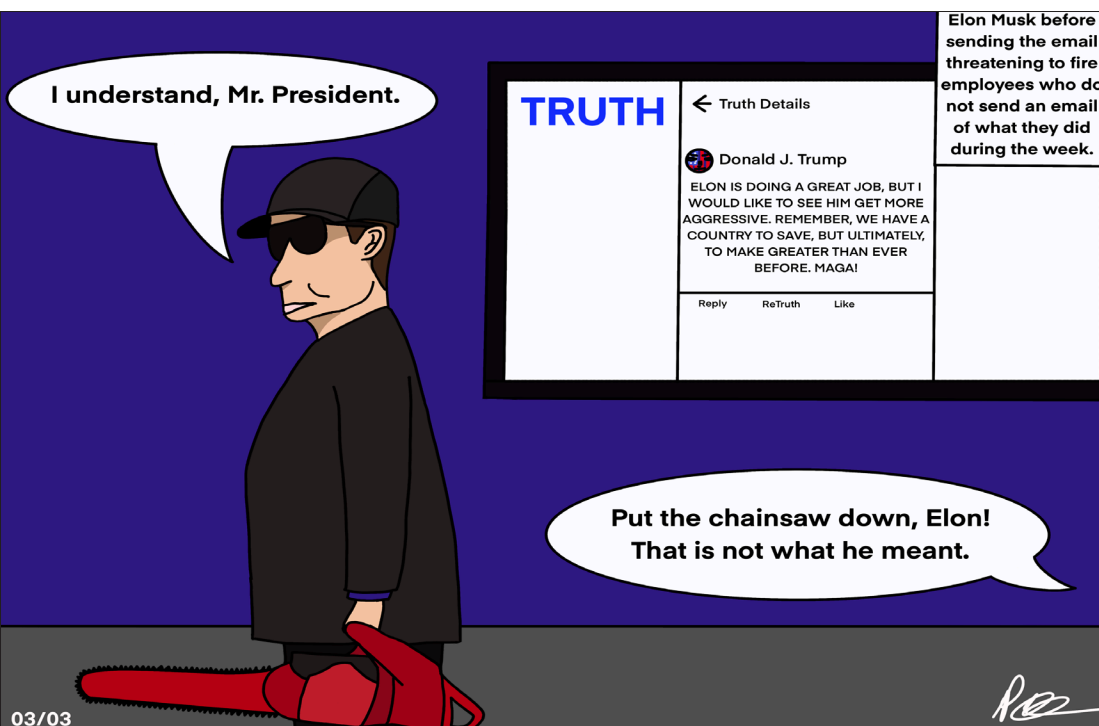


Mykel Del Angel/THE RIDER PHOTOS

The School of Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences currently operates out of five portable research buildings located in Port Isabel.



The new facility will have seven research labs and is being designed to endure coastal conditions and to have about a 20-year lifespan.



'Emilia Pérez' fails to care



Mykel Del Angel
THE RIDER

Movie adaptations of musicals are always hit or miss, which is why the massive success of "Wicked" was so refreshing. After last year's disastrous "Mean Girls" adaptation, I had nearly lost hope that filmmakers could do justice to musical movies. And if "Mean Girls" made me lose hope, then "Emilia Pérez" buried it.

Where do I even begin? The film suffers from atrocious lyrics, weak storytelling and an unnecessarily long intro packed with nearly two minutes of logos, but let's start with the casting.

Despite being set in Mexico, the film features few Mexican actors. While some cast members are Latino or Hispanic, Adriana Paz was the only actress actually from Mexico, while Karla Sofía Gascón is from Spain.

Unfortunately, this wasn't the only ignorant decision

behind the film. The French-to-Spanish translations weren't done properly and the movie leans heavily on stereotypes. Worst of all, the director openly admitted he didn't research Mexican culture or the cartel because he believed he "knew enough" to make his film.

Unsurprisingly, while "Emilia Pérez" may have received critical acclaim globally, its reception in Mexico has been largely negative, with many viewers calling it disrespectful to the culture.

And that's all before even touching on the plot.

nonprofit, she treats her ex-wife horribly.

From the very few lines of dialogue, I could understand (even if you can understand the interesting accents, a lot of the Spanish didn't seem to make sense), Emilia wanted to keep her kids, but Jessi (Emilia's ex-wife), wanted to run off with her new lover and take their kids.

They try to paint Jessi as selfish for this—as if we didn't witness Emilia make more objectively selfish decisions throughout the film.

Then there's the music. Musicals can have goofy lyrics, but even the silliest ones carry some artistry.

"Emilia Pérez" fails completely in this regard. The lyrics don't feel like poetic storytelling—they're just spoken lines awkwardly sung. The result is more like a choppy script with music

slapped on top.

Overall, the movie is a complete mess, riddled with ignorance and misguided creative choices. The director has defended his approach, insisting he wanted to tell his story and that cultural accuracy wasn't a priority.

At the end of the day, "Emilia Pérez" is one of the worst musical adaptations I've seen. It's not just bad—it's frustratingly careless. If this is the direction musical films are heading, then the industry has a serious problem.

"Overall, the movie is a complete mess, riddled with ignorance and misguided creative choices."

The story follows a cartel leader, Manitas del Monte, who fakes his death, transitions into a woman (now Emilia Pérez) and tries to reconnect with his family. The problem? The film glosses over the countless horrific crimes Manitas committed.

The transition is framed as a get-out-of-jail-free card, as if becoming Emilia Pérez absolves her of the past. The narrative tries to suggest she's changed into a better person, and while she does do some good, such as starting a



What are your hobbies outside of academics?



"I like to make little silly videos on the internet and kind of engage in the college life and the college atmosphere to get more character. It goes from things as crazy as going up to a bunch of strangers and doing really silly dares for charity."

Nate Sacurom
chemistry sophomore

"For hobbies outside of academics, not really much, I do tend to walk a lot with my dog at the Edinburg Municipal Park. I get to put in some steps every now and then, and I just generally, like, work out and be outside in nature."

Octavio Castillo
sustainable agriculture and food systems junior



"I like to dance and paint, and I like to sing, too."

Kaitlyn Rodriguez
education freshman

"My hobbies outside of academics are sports, hanging out with friends and family, and playing video games."

Isaac Rodriguez
mechanical engineering freshman



"My hobbies outside of academics are going for runs, reading. I like to paint a lot. Spending time with family is one of my bigger hobbies as well."

Allison Garza
exercise science sophomore

--Compiled and photos by Jose Rodriguez and Angel Ballesteros

Letter to the Editor: In Memoriam George Gause

Almost 200 people attended a memorial service for longtime legacy institution librarian, George R. Gause, at the UTRGV Performing Arts Complex last September. Gause passed away in May 2024 at the age of 77. The service began with a performance by university piano instructor, Brendan Kinsella, which was followed by speeches delivered by current and former university faculty and staff, as well as educators and librarians from across the Rio Grande Valley, the state and the nation. The service was organized by the love of his life, Virginia Haynie-Gause, who was at his side during his career, as a fellow librarian.

Gause's life was devoted to education and helping oth-

ers achieve their educational goals and dreams. He graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts in History and Germanic languages from Park College in Parkville, Missouri, in May 1969. George then obtained a Master's of Library Science from Peabody College, in Nashville, Tennessee (where he and Virginia met), with an emphasis in academic librarianship. George gave his entire professional career to UTRGV's legacy institutions. Beginning in September 1973, George began work as a Library Coordinator for the Pan American University (PAU) Library in Brownsville.

He then became Circulation Librarian in Edinburg, in September 1977, then from September 1980 to August 1985, he was Interlibrary Loan,

"Gause's life was devoted to education and helping others achieve their educational goals and dreams."

Microforms and Periodicals Librarian. He then became Special Collections and Reference Librarian from September 1985 until October 1992. From November 1992, until his retirement in August 2011, George managed the universi-

ty library's Special Collections [Archives and Rare Books], which today is housed on the fourth floor of the building he worked in for decades.

Such a professional resume might be sufficient for many, but when George was not at the university library, he served on several historic association and publication boards such as the now defunct Valley Library Association (from 1977-1992) and the Texas State Historical Association (1995-2011), among many others. He held local memberships with museums, history associations and published works on his-

toric architectural designs in the Lower RGV, an annotated bibliography of Brownsville History and other works on travel writing.

After retirement George didn't slow down, serving on and helping launch several local community art and history projects, on top of traveling, for which there is insufficient space in this brief letter to the editor to even summarize. George was larger than life, which is why it's fitting that myself and others discussed after his memorial service the possibility of dedicating the library's special collections division in his honor, paying a historic tribute to somebody who dedicated his life to history.

-- Johnathan L. Salinas

From Verona to the Valley

Eduardo Escamilla
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Theatre Department has staged William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," infusing the timeless tragedy with regional colloquialisms and cultural references, creating a production that aims to resonate with modern audiences.

Performances are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre on the Edinburg campus.

"What the world needs now is love," said Brian Warren, director and professor in the Department of Theatre. "Every year there's tension and hatred ... so this story is timeless in that ... these young people ... don't care about how different [they] are, what different family [they] come from. That's a theme we should all share."

Warren, who has directed four Shakespearean plays at UTRGV, cited the strength of his student cast as the reason for tackling the ambitious production.

"I have an excellent group of theatre students ... so it was time to take on something this big," he said.

Ashley Cantú, a theatre performance junior playing the role of Juliet Capulet, said she hopes audiences learn "that story isn't about two teenagers committing suicide, it's about grief ...

[and] how hatred is such a powerful thing."

Elyza Roldan, a theatre design senior playing the role of the Nurse, added that it is "also [about] how powerful love is."

Warren said contemporary young adults could identify with the play's themes of generational conflict, noting that "parents don't understand." He also highlighted the production's setting, a "nebulous area that looks more

words, and for some of them, not all," he said. "... We've changed the actual word so it isn't something so obscure, but more modern."

The iconic Capulet party scene, where Romeo and Juliet meet, features a quinceañera dress, a nod to Hispanic cultural traditions.

"I think this could very well happen anywhere in the Valley, as far as someone sneaking in, and you know, crashing the party," Warren said. "... So, I really tried to mix feelings, places, ideas, so that it seems relevant to us."

He described the production process as "very friendly, collaborative," highlighting the contributions of lighting designer Mike Salazar and associate professor in the Department of Theatre and fight choreographer Peter Mikolasky. For the first time, the department employed an intimacy coach, Sabrina Rodriguez, to ensure actor comfort during intimate scenes.

"That's a first," Warren said. "... We've never had a person specifically hired to make sure everyone's comfortable with kisses and close combat."

Addressing contemporary interpretations of Romeo and Juliet's relationship as toxic, the director offered a nuanced perspective.

--Amara Cazares contributed to this story.

"I have an excellent group of theatre students ... so it was time to take on something this big."

--Brian Warren, director and professor in the Department of Theatre

like the [Rio Grande] Valley than it does Verona, Italy," as a point of connection for audiences.

In this modernized interpretation, the feuding families are portrayed as "border families. ... The implication is that they're crime families," the director said. Actors incorporate Spanish colloquialisms, adding a layer of regional authenticity.

Warren described the actors' approach to Shakespearean language, emphasizing their focus on punctuation, intention and motivation.

"Shakespeare did have some archaic



If you could be part of any band in the world, which one would it be?



Carolina Oyervidez
exercise science sophomore
"Eslabón Armado because I listen to them a lot."



Jezreel Garza
criminal justice freshman
"If I were part of a band, I would be part of Simple Plan just because I like them."



Vianey Treviño
exercise science senior
"If I was part of any band, I would be in The Marias because it is my favorite band."

--Compiled and photos by Sofia Cantú Saucedo

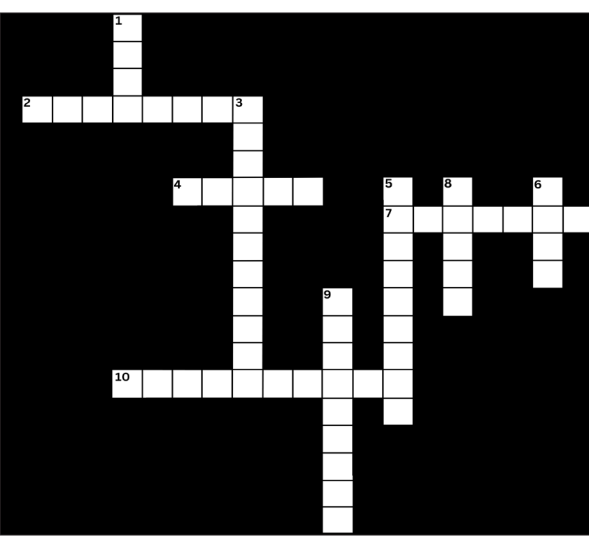


Amara Cazares/THE RIDER PHOTOS

The "Romeo & Juliet" cast practices a dance sequence during Tuesday's rehearsal in Theatre Studio 107 on the Edinburg campus.



Theatre professor Brian Warren, director of "Romeo and Juliet," provides feedback to actors during Tuesday's rehearsal in Theatre Studio 107 on the Edinburg campus.



- ACROSS**
- Exams that take place in the middle of a semester
 - Student ____: game room and place to eat on campus
 - Men's Baseball plays against the University of ____ Tuesday, March 4.
 - Online platform for classes

- DOWN**
- Intracampus transit service provided by electric transport carts
 - A short break during the spring semester
 - On-campus event to observe the City of Brownsville's annual Charro Days
 - Online platform where students can find on-campus jobs
 - Acronym of the recreation building on the Edinburg campus
 - A place where students live on the Brownsville campus

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

Feb. 24 Sudoku answer key:

Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

- Eduardo Escamilla**
THE RIDER
- Aries (March 21 - April 19):** You should expect increased energy. Mars moving direct provides a surge of drive. Relationship matters may require caution.
- Taurus (April 20 - May 20):** Anticipate potential financial growth. Jupiter in Taurus may bring opportunities. Review spending habits.
- Gemini (May 21 - June 20):** You will experience heightened communication. Be prepared for increased social interactions.
- Cancer (June 21 - July 22):** Your

- emotional sensitivity is heightened. Mars moving direct provides energy for personal goals.
- Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22):** Your confidence is expected to rise. Mars moving direct boosts self-assurance.
- Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22):** Attention to detail is advantageous. Financial partnerships may require re-evaluation due to Venus retrograde.
- Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22):** You should focus on relationships. Venus retrograde indicates a need for balance and compromise.
- Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21):** You may experience heightened emotions. Mars moving

- direct provides drive.
- Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21):** Your optimism is strong. Venus retrograde prompts reflection on personal beliefs.
- Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19):** You should focus on career goals. Venus retrograde may prompt a financial review.
- Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18):** Emphasize social responsibility. Mars moving direct provides energy for related goals.
- Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20):** Your intuition is heightened. Venus retrograde suggests a review of personal boundaries.



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TOURNEY BOUND

Women's basketball clinches SLC Tournament berth

Daniela Chapa-Reyes
THE RIDER

On Feb 22, against Nicholls State University, the UTRGV Women's Basketball Team (16-14, 11-8 SLC) officially clinched their spot in the Southland Conference Basketball Tournament.

Head coach Lane Lord said point guard Tierra Trotter has made a difference in the team's playing style, helping secure the team's fourth-place spot.

"She's really been a facilitator: finding the right people when they're open, and when it is time to score, she scores," Lord said. "Being a playmaker first before a score, it's really helped her game."

With a record of 12 points and 5 assists, Trotter's goal for the tournament is to be one of the best point guards in the conference.

"Being one of the top point guards in the conference and having the most assists, I feel like it aligns with this team because we have a lot of shooters, so they need someone to pass them the ball," she said.

Trotter was fourth in the conference in free throws but dropped down to eighth, according to Lord.

"She's getting fouled and she's making free throws at the end of the game, which you need your point guard to do," he said. "All the little intangibles make up a great point guard. Tierra is really doing that for us."



Senior point guard Tierra Trotter dribbles the ball during a game against East Texas A&M University Jan. 9 in the UTRGV Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus.

Kade Hackerott, graduate guard/forward, said the offense has been flowing a lot better.

"It is that point in the season where all the hard work starts coming to fruition," Hackerott said. "I think we've done a great job at sticking together through the highs and low points of the season. Now, we are just reaping the benefits of that."

She said she feels no pres-

sure with it being her last year and the lingering tournament on its way.

"Personally, I am just en-

going into it. Of course, it is sad. A journey of a big part of my life is coming to an end. ... I've played for a long time and

I know there's exciting things coming next."

In recent games, she has made 20 points, 8 rebounds and 6 assists.

"I think it is just my attitude

and mentality of helping the team in any way, shape or form, no matter what that is on any given night," she said.

"We want to try to shock the world and get to the NCAA tournament."

--Head coach Lane Lord

joying it," Hackerott said. "It's been an awesome ride and all I can really be is thankful and grateful, so that's my mindset

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK: KIELI SAENZ



Kieli Saenz, an exercise science freshman from Corpus Christi, is a player for the UTRGV Women's Golf Team. Saenz tied for second place at the South Texas Showdown on Feb. 17 at the Islander Classic in the Corpus Christi Country Club.

Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: "My favorite movie is 'La La Land.'"

Q: Who or what got you started in golf?

A: "My dad. I started when I was around 12 years old, and he was definitely the main

component of my start in golf."

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

A: "My dad, as well, and I think also my mom. They both just showed me what hard work gets me."

Q: Who is your favorite golfer?

A: "Definitely Tiger Woods."

Q: What kind of music do you listen to?

A: "I listen to a variety of music, but my top artist was Frank Ocean."

Q: Which shows or

movies do you like to watch?

A: "Well, my favorite one [is] 'La La Land.' But, some of my other favorites are 'Mamma Mia!' and 'Good Will Hunting.'"

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: "I love reading, painting and running."

Q: What is your biggest motivation?

A: "Definitely my faith. It's a really big part of me, so that really motivates me through, like, all of my tournaments."

Q: What do you like most

about UTRGV?

A: "I really love the culture here. My teammates are really great, and they support me and everything. And I just really love the environment of UTRGV."

Q: What are your biggest goals?

A: "I definitely want to see how far I can get in golf, and that's ... a really big goal. And also, with my major, I'm planning on doing physical therapy."

--Compiled and photo by Jose Rodriguez

MEN'S BASKETBALL

11 a.m. today
vs. Southeastern Louisiana University
at the UTRGV Fieldhouse

**THIS WEEK
IN SPORTS**

WOMEN'S TENNIS

6:30 p.m. today
vs. McNeese State University
at the Orville I. Cox Tennis Center

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- Respond to five short-answer questions to demonstrate writing competency and communication skills.

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