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THE STUDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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Writing about the Valley

Ethan Maldonado
THE RIDER

Political science faculty from UTRGV and El Colegio de la Frontera Norte discussed their upcoming book on regional politics during a talk Feb. 28 on the Edinburg campus.

The event featured some of the book's contributing authors presenting their research on governance, economic issues and political engagement in the Rio Grande Valley.

"Politics of the Rio Grande Valley: An Insider's Perspective to Regional Politics" brings together

See **BOOK**, Page 3



Jose Rodriguez/THE RIDER

Political science lecturer Ruth Ragland speaks about the history of legacy institution University of Texas-Pan American Feb. 28 in the Liberal Arts Building North on the Edinburg campus.



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

Studio art junior Lorenzo Salinas drives a cart while wearing "drunk goggles" that simulate vision while under the influence during the Spring Break Lu'au March 5, 2024, on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. Guiding Salinas is Sergeant Roel Reyes.

Let the luau begin

Dept. to host Spring Break safety awareness event

Sophia Cortez
THE RIDER

Spring Break is coming soon for UTRGV students, a time to relax, have fun and leave the stress of school behind for a while.

UTRGV Student Rights and Responsibilities will host the "2025 Spring Break Lu'au" from noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Music, Science and Learning Center courtyard

on the Brownsville campus and from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday at the Quad on the

The Lu'au will take place on both the Edinburg and Brownsville campus.

Edinburg campus. Students may enjoy free music, drinks and games.

"The purpose of this event is to show students that they can have a lot of fun and still make sure that they are being safe and careful," said Kristina Yzaguirre, judicial affairs officer for Student Rights and Responsibilities. "We want students to enjoy the break and use it as a time to rest and relax."

Community and campus

See **LUAU**, Page 8

Break without the risk

Daniel Aguilar
THE RIDER

As Spring Break comes close it is important to keep in mind ways to keep safe and out of trouble while having a fun and restful break.

In an interview with The Rider, UTRGV police officer Marco Huerta explained the importance of being able to have fun during this time as well as keeping safe and making smart decisions.

"They earn that right to have fun, relaxing and an exciting week off of school, but it's important not to ruin it, not throwing all the cautions into the wind," Huerta said.

He explained the importance of the "buddy system."

"Especially in crowded areas, we want them to know where they are, let people know where they are going and try to stick together at all times," Huerta said.

When asked about keeping track of personal belongings, he replied to "protect their assets."

"If they can make copies of credit cards, ID, passports, and keep them in places where they are safe," Huerta said. "We also asked them to leave their flashy jewelry at home or if worn in public not flash it around because that is an attraction for thieves."

See **SAFETY**, Page 2

New learning platform is around the corner at UTRGV

Hugo A. Sepúlveda
THE RIDER

Brightspace is set to inaugurate Summer 2025.

The UTRGV Office of the Provost and the Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology gave updates on the transition to the new learning system, Brightspace, for Summer 2025.

Jonikka Charlton, senior vice provost for Student Success and Academic Affairs and dean of the University College, said COLTT is

running a pilot of the Brightspace platform during the spring semester.

"We've been getting a lot of feedback from those people directly as they're using it for their courses, and the feedback that we've gotten has been really positive," Charlton said.

She said some of the feedback from Brightspace has shown a user-friendly platform, but some faculty were nervous that the transition would take longer for them to learn.

"There's a lot of new functionality that's in there that improves the students' experience and improves the faculty experience," Charlton said. "... I think what they're

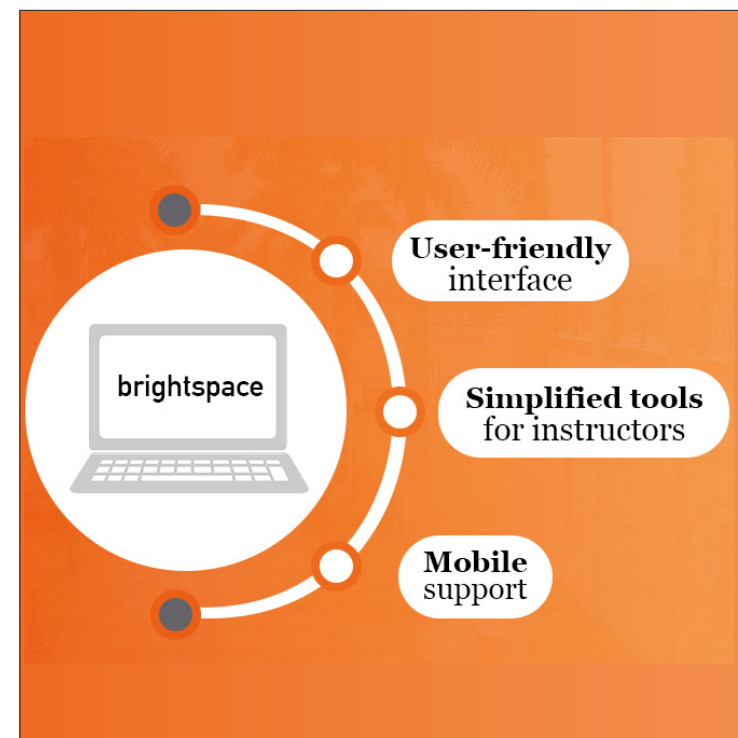
finding is it was really far easier than they feared it would be."

She added engaging with a project of transitioning from one learning management system to another has had a huge impact in teaching.

"I think we've done a really good job," Charlton said. "We've taken the time that we needed to make sure that we on board our own staff, for instance, in COLTT and our faculty who are going to be using the system."

Based on the feedback from students and faculty, the senior vice provost said she feels confident that people are going to be ready when the

See **PLATFORM**, Page 3



Mykel Del Angel/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
DIY Charm Bracelet
The **Learning Center** will host a **charm-bracelet making** event from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Music, Science and Learning Center lobby on the Brownsville campus and from 2 to 4 p.m. Wednesday at the Learning Center courtyard on the Edinburg campus. **All materials will be provided.**

Free Aguas Frescas
The **Baptist Student Ministry** will host a session from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Student Union on the Brownsville campus to talk about **Christian faith. Free aguas frescas** will be provided.

IEEE Workshop
The **Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering** will host a **workshop**

on report writing from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Engineering Building Room 1.272 on the Edinburg campus.

Tuesday
Explore Graduate Programs
Graduate Recruitment and Admissions will host a virtual session from noon to 1 p.m. for students interested in how to apply for the graduate program, requirements, tuition and fees, and financial support. Registration online is required.

Wednesday
Women's History Month
The **Center for Student Involvement** will host a **celebration for Women's History Month** from noon to 2:30 p.m. in the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can meet **inspiring women of the**

RGV and network with business owners, lawyers and entrepreneurs, **featuring arts and crafts, snacks** and a celebration of women's impact in the world.

BAA Meeting
The **Brownsville Accounting Association** will meet from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. in Interdisciplinary Academic Building Room 1.221 on the Brownsville campus.

Thursday
Environmental Awareness Club
The **Environmental Awareness Club** will meet from noon to 2:30 p.m. in the Student Union Palmetto Room on the Edinburg campus. Attendees will discuss upcoming events including field trips, fundraisers and symposiums and can meet people who are environmen-

tally conscious and make new friends.

Friday
COLTT Session
The **Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology** will host a virtual session from 10 to 11 a.m. The session will provide students and faculty an introduction to **Brightspace**, the university's new learning management system. Registration is required through utrgv.edu/training.

Holi Celebration
The **Indian Cultural Association** will celebrate **Holi**, the Indian festival of colors, from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus. Attendees can experience the festival and its cultural values.

--Compiled by Sophia Cortez



POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Feb. 25 and March 2.

Feb. 25
9:33 a.m.: An employee reported damage to a screen projector pad in a Sabal Hall classroom on the Brownsville campus. The case is under investigation.

Feb. 26
4:55 p.m.: An officer was advised a student was injured while on a mechanical

bull during an event on the Brownsville campus. Contact was made with the student but they refused emergency medical services.

8:43 p.m.: An officer met with a staff member who located an unattended vape pen in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus. The officer took custody of the vape pen and tested the content, which yielded a positive result for THC. The vape pen was submitted for destruction.

Feb. 27
9:20 a.m.: A student reported a suspicious man possibly following her around the Brownsville campus. The officer attempted to locate the man but was unable to do so. After further investigation, it was determined that no crime had occurred.

March 1
6:03 p.m.: Officers responded to an active fire alarm in the Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium in Edinburg. The

building was placed on fire watch.

March 2
4:56 a.m.: An officer responded to an active fire alarm in the Clinical Education Building on the Harlingen campus. The building was checked and no signs of smoke or fire were located. Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management was informed.

--Compiled by Narda Serna

SAFETY,
Continued from Page 1

He provided information about what students should look for in a safe hotel or rental property.

"Pictures can be deceiving, but it is always important to look at the reviews and talk with others who may have stayed there," Huerta said.

Enrique Suarez, a communication studies sophomore, gave some of his personal ideas and shared first hand experiences on this topic.

"I always make sure to go with time and never be in a rush, because having a rush can affect you negatively," Suarez said.

He said to travel with groups, rather than traveling alone.

"Traveling in a group is pretty cool, having the environment, having those people to uplift you," Suarez said. "I recommend if you are going to drink, to have a plan."

When asked about his thoughts on safety regarding hotels or rental properties, he replied, "Look at reviews beforehand and make sure the people you travel with are responsible as well."

He concluded by providing his ideas on avoiding unsafe situations.

"Surround yourself with good people that are going to be at their 100%," Suarez said. "Don't put yourself in any bad circumstances."

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PHOTO COURTESY ZEIDY GARZA

Sonia Chapa, a beloved dance lecturer and mentor, died Feb. 26 at the age of 58. A lifelong dancer and educator, Chapa dedicated her life to the art of dance, particularly Spanish flamenco, which she had been passionate about since childhood.

Sonia Chapa, dance lecturer

Eduardo Escamilla
THE RIDER

Sonia Chapa, a beloved dance lecturer and mentor, died Feb. 26. A lifelong dancer and educator, Chapa dedicated her life to the art of dance, particularly Spanish flamenco, which she had been passionate about since childhood. She was 58.

Chapa was born Jan. 9, 1967. At 19, she took a bold step by opening Pointe and Plie School of Dance in McAllen, which she ran for 25 years before it was renamed Sonia Chapa Dance Studio. In 2015, she began working at UTRGV as a lecturer, eventually becoming the artistic director of Ballet Español.

Cristian Gomez, her son, said she was known for her incredible spirit—a giver, teacher and mentor who

never stopped learning. She was described as someone who could light up any room, offering non-judgmental advice and inspiration to all who knew her.

Throughout her life, she traveled to Spain multiple times, studying and perfecting her craft at dance academies.

A devoted wife to Jaime Gomez, whom she had known since second grade and was married to for 23 years, Chapa was also a loving mother who cherished her family and students. Even in her final battle with cancer, she remained strong, maintaining her faith and positive spirit, her son said.

Chapa is survived by her husband and son.

A memorial service for Chapa took place Friday in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.

BOOK,
Continued from Page 1

multiple perspectives on the region's historical and contemporary challenges.

Each chapter, authored by a different person, explores themes such as labor conditions, criminal organizations, cross-border governance and the evolution of local political structures.

UTRGV associate professor Alexandre Couture Gagnon and lecturer Carlos Gutierrez-Mannix served as the book's editors and hosts of the event. Other contributors from the university also include assistant professor Alvaro Corral and lecturer Ruth Ragland.

Professors José Andrés Sumano Rodríguez, Xavier Oliver González and Arturo Zárate-Ruiz, contributors from El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, were also present to share each of their chapters.

Zárate-Ruiz's part focuses on the historical experiences of Mexican Americans in Brownsville and how political and social structures have shaped their place in the community.

Ragland's chapter further goes into the history of Brownsville, providing the first comprehensive account of Texas Southmost College's separation from the University of Texas-Pan American and the University of Texas at Brownsville, highlighting how the community college

challenged Texas legislation and contributed to the creation of UTRGV.

Cross-border governance was another key theme. González examines binational parks and the challenges of governing twin cities along the Lower Rio Grande/Bravo. Sumano Rodríguez analyzes the evolution of criminal organizations in the Rio Grande Valley, exploring how economic factors have reframed the issue from

accounts.

Gutierrez-Mannix said the event successfully engaged students and encouraged them to explore regional politics.

"I think the event did a good job of including as many students as we could," he said. "We're so proud because, then, everyone will get to read it. The goal is that students will know we're writing about the Valley. Hopefully, some of [the students] will be interested in learning a bit more about the politics."

Political science graduate student Zanela Bajanás said she found the discussion interesting.

"It's been really interesting to me so far, especially the chapter on the twin cities because of my experiences and background," Bajanás said.

The authors said they hope the book will encourage further research into the Valley's political landscape.

"The Rio Grande Valley is known across the United States," Couture Gagnon

said. "Researchers come here because they want to study the Rio Grande Valley ... but they don't really know what to expect. We need more academic literature to start research on the Rio Grande Valley. ... We just started with the book. We just want more people to research the Rio Grande Valley because the politics of it are so interesting."

The book will be published by Lexington Books Saturday.

"We just want more people to research the Rio Grande Valley because the politics of it are so interesting."

--Associate professor Alexandre Couture Gagnon

a security concern to an economic one.

The book also explores labor and economic struggles. Corral and José Villagrán, a California State University, Bakersfield assistant professor, authored one chapter. "The Wall: The Politics of Low-Wage Work" details the long history of economic targeting of Latino communities, using real-world examples and personal



Jose Rodriguez/THE RIDER

Students and visitors applaud the authors and editors of "Politics of the Rio Grande Valley: An Insider's Perspective to Regional Politics" on Feb. 28 in the Liberal Arts Building North on the Edinburg campus.

Celebrating women's achievements



Isabelle Mascorro/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Brownsville City Commissioner, District 2 Linda Macias speaks during an International Women's Week Government panel March 3 in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus. The event was hosted by the International Business & Entrepreneurship Student Association and the Accounting Society.



Jovanna Rangel (left), director of Business Retention and Expansion for Greater Brownsville Initiatives Corporation, receives a certificate of recognition during an International Women's Week Government panel March 3 in the PlainsCapital Bank El Gran Salón on the Brownsville campus. Also shown are marketing sophomore Margarita Trevino (center), director of social media for the Accounting Society; and Casey Juarez, a marketing junior.

PLATFORM,
Continued from Page 1

time comes for the transition.

Francisco Garcia, director of COLTT, said the center selected Brightspace with the aim of improving teaching and learning at university level.

COLTT is running a pilot spring semester with close to 40 courses and about 1,000 students, currently taking classes on the Brightspace platform.

"Nowadays, faculty use technology a lot in the classroom and, of course, [a learning management system] being one of the important technologies that they use," Garcia said.

He said there is a mix of feelings about the transition because Blackboard has been used since UTRGV started. Some students still prefer Blackboard; others do not see a difference, but the majority of students on the survey say the visual organization of Brightspace and the use of it is easier.

"We have a chance to survey some of the students and some of them are very happy," Garcia said. "... They love the look and feel. It's a more modern platform."

He said orientation sessions for Brightspace started at the beginning of the spring semester and take place

every Friday, one at 10 a.m. and another at 2 p.m. He invites students to attend the training session they offer.

"[Students and faculty] have to register in order to attend these sessions," Garcia said.

The COLTT director added some features of Brightspace students should be on the lookout for are intelligent agents. These agents would track your progress, send reminders and prepare students for an exam.

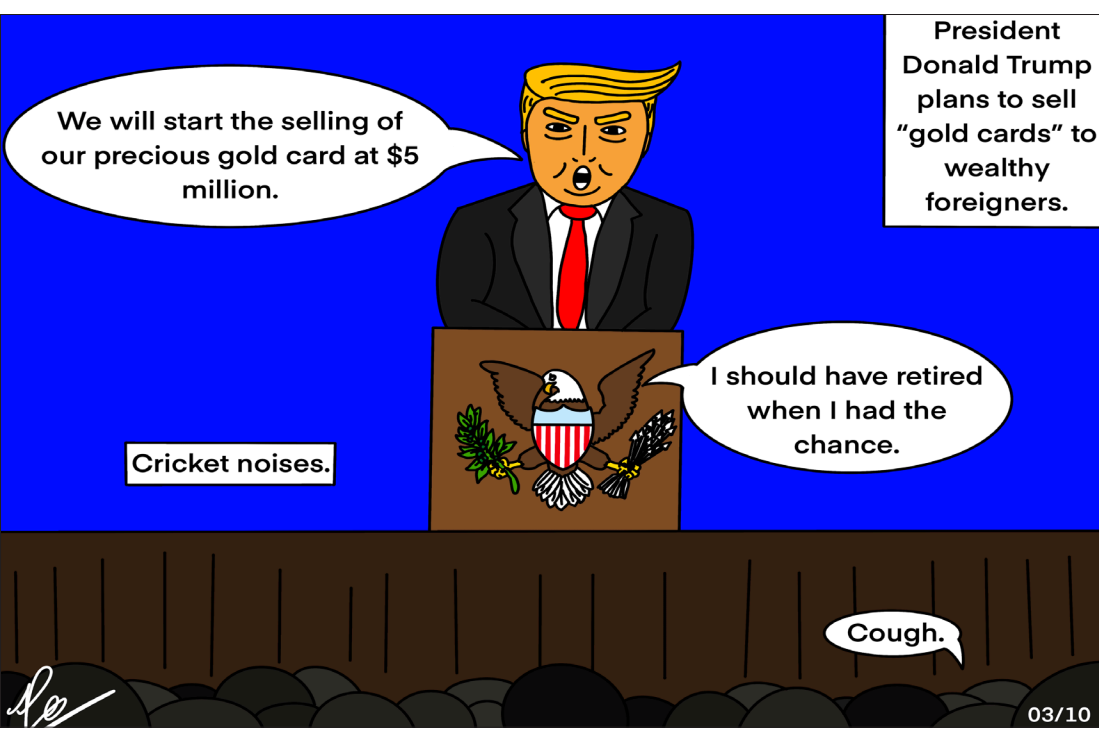
"We offer training for faculty from Tuesday to Friday," Garcia said. "We do it through Zoom, face-to-face. They can pick and choose from any delivery mode."

Jerald Hughes, an associate professor in the Information Systems Department and associate dean for Undergraduate Studies, said he had a great experience at the Brightspace orientation sessions.

"I was very happy with them," Hughes said. "The COLTT people are just the best all round. They're very fast to respond and the training are very well taught."

He said he thinks some faculty and students should preview Brightspace before the system goes up.

For more information, visit utrgv.



¿Cómo estás, miya?



Daniela Martinez Salazar
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Recently, my family and I went through a loss. Though some weeks have passed, it still feels like my grandfather will walk through the door and ask me, “¿Cómo estás, miya?”

I admired my grandfather so much. He was a living testimony of perseverance and resilience.

He started working at the age of 5, selling eggs, bread and newspapers to support his family. At the age of 8, with the help of his older brother, he opened his first trade store. By 15, he had built my great-grandmother her own house.

He was a man who always taught us to give back to our community and to be proud of our beginnings.

Since his passing, I’ve

heard many stories from people in our community who he helped over the years, from a high school student who didn’t have the resources to finish his studies to a mother who was fighting cancer and couldn’t cover the expenses of her treatment.

And though many people knew him as a pillar of our community, I had the blessing to call him “grandpa” and see his love and devotion toward our family.

For him, family and faith always came first. During his last couple of years, he

“I admired my grandfather so much. He was a living testimony of perseverance and resilience.”

struggled with his health. But something I noticed time and time again was that he never lost hope; no matter the circumstance, he would always welcome us with a warm

smile and a hug.

I still remember the last time we spoke during his stay at the hospital before his last surgery. Even though he was lying in bed, he always put others before himself and encouraged us by saying, “Échenle ganas. Yo estoy bien. Dios tiene el control.”

He would constantly tell me, “Miya, ora por mí.” But that last day, something felt different. It felt like a goodbye, and I wasn’t ready. Sixteen days after the surgery, he gave his last breath.

All I can think of are the treasured memories by his side, from when he waited for me daily with a Magnum ice cream bar after kindergarten to our last family trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, which we enjoyed so much.

I’m blessed God allowed me to have him as my grandfather. He may not be here with us anymore, but I know he is finally resting in His arms, and I will continue to know him through my mom, aunts and uncles. Thank you, grandpa, for marking our lives with yours.

Te amaré por siempre, abuelito.



How has college been a stepping block for your future?



“I think college is really important to learn social skills. I dropped out twice and came back, and I think it’s been really important for me to interact with a lot of people at once, do public speaking and performance.”

Brandon Isaiah Garcia
multidisciplinary studies senior

“It has been a huge stepping block on my career, so far is to better serve our community and to help those who need help and assistance.”

Chelsey Garcia
counseling graduate student



“I joined a sorority, I am a vice president, I work in development for them. ... It has also allowed me to weekly do public speaking in front of all my girls, so I was able to have that stepping stone of going into leadership while also having to balance work and school.”

Michelle Guiza
marketing sophomore

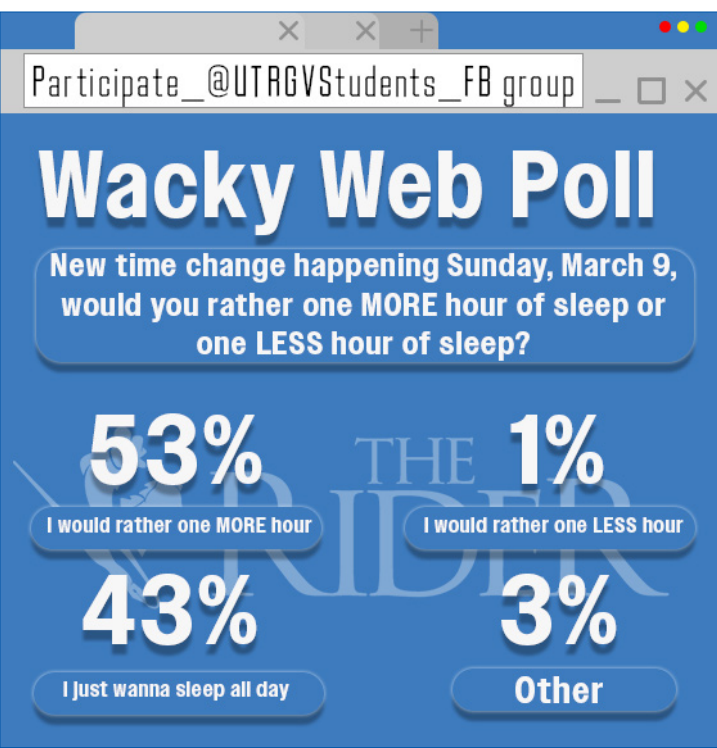


“I think it has been a stepping stone towards my future of like improving communicating to other people and socializing. I think I see a lot of new faces every day, and it’s great to make new friends here.”

Robert Peralez
marketing freshman



--Compiled and photos by Amara Cazares and Daniela Martinez Salazar



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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.

Bolster the scene with raw talent

Eduardo Escamilla
THE RIDER

Cannon the Dealers, an emerging alternative indie band in the Rio Grande Valley, has solidified its lineup and is making waves with its raw, nostalgic sound and commitment to bolstering the local music scene.

From their first jam session two years ago to their EP launch "At Least the Weather's Nice," on Feb. 22 at the Jukebox Bar in Brownsville, the band is focused on bringing attention to the Valley's evolving music landscape.

The band's unusual name stems from a Canon camera and a photo file.

"Our friend Eddie ... he would record our sets ... would be called 'Cannon the Dealers,' lead singer Nick Tamayo said.

They simply added an extra "n," and the name stuck.

Bassist Tony Olivarez said he and drummer Luis Segura had been playing with other friends but struggled to find the right lead singer. Initially, Tamayo auditioned for guitar.

"[Tamayo] started singing, and I remember we're like 'Nah, you're a singer,'" Olivarez said.

The lead singer said he became interested after seeing a video of the band on Facebook.

"[Segura] was like, 'All right show up,'" he said. "I show up, [but] a band doesn't need three guitars. The shoegaze scene might fight me on that."

Lead guitarist Lane Flores was the final piece of the puzzle.

"We needed another guitarist because Nick was ... the only guitarist at that point," Olivarez said. "... We knew [Lane] from ... his shows and stuff."

Tamayo said he "had to sell" Lane on joining, asking how important, making money was to him.

"I remember liking the music enough to where I was like, 'I don't care about the money,'" Flores said. "... The money will come soon enough ... but the music's good, and I enjoyed hanging out with these guys all the time."

Tamayo described the band's sound as a nostalgic blend of early 2000s indie rock, shoegaze and hardcore, with influences from The Strokes, The Red Pears and Tommy Oeffling. The music incorporates a moody, nighttime feel, local shoegaze influences and hardcore elements, such as aggressive vocals and feedback.

The band has learned to appreciate



Eduardo Escamilla/THE RIDER

Cannon the Dealers lead singer Nick Tamayo thanks the audience for attending the band's EP release "At Least the Weather's Nice," Feb. 22 in the Jukebox Bar, located at 122 E. Adams St. in Brownsville. Also pictured are drummer Luis Segura and lead guitarist Lane Flores.

its audience, particularly after playing early shows with poor attendance.

"We've learned to be, like, really grateful for the people that go," Tamayo said.

The band members shared some memorable performance anecdotes.

"I think ... if you're gonna make music, make something for yourself. Art should always be for the creator first."

--Lead singer Nick Tamayo

"I think the weirdest [story is] we [were] playing a show, and this older lady ... she threw her panties at us," Olivarez said.

The woman later asked for them back but, unwilling to handle the garment, the band told her she could retrieve it herself after they packed up their equipment.

Tamayo recalled a time he threw up on stage. He vomited after chugging a beer and jumping into the mosh pit. The vomit splattered on another band's equipment.

"I remember they pick it up and

they're like, 'What's this stuff on the bottom of our amps?'" Tamayo said.

"And I was like, 'Guys, we have to go.'"

Olivarez discussed the common perception that musicians must leave the Valley to succeed.

"We help out this city, like, you're pretty much helping yourself," he said. "Because if other bands come here ... and shows get bigger ... more bands will come."

Tamayo cited Glare, Twin Tribes and Grupo Frontera as examples.

"People have tried to agree ... 'Oh, you need to move out ... and stuff if you want to make it,' but there's been a lot of big bands that come out of [the Valley]," he said.

"I think ... if you're gonna make music, make something for yourself. Art should always be for the creator first and, then, if someone else likes it, that's, like, the greatest payoff."

Regardless, Cannon the Dealers members said they will continue creating music they love, right here in the Valley.

For concert dates, visit @officialcannonthedealers on Instagram.



If you could swap lives with a famous person for a day, who would it be and what would you do?



Bella Urango
marine biology freshman

"The artist that I would choose is Bhad Bhabie because I would want to make multiple diss tracks with their voice and divorce her husband."



Fernanda Ochoa
Spanish freshman

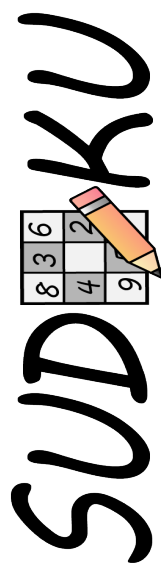
"I would choose Tom Holland because he's dating the baddest actor, music artist. She's everything."



Francisco Alvarado
integrated health sciences junior

"I would want to be ... Vicente Fernández and just to have all of the Mexican glory that he has."

--Compiled and photos by Sofia Cantú Saucedo



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March 3
Crossword
answer
key:

ACROSS
2. Midterms
4. Union
7. Houston
10. Blackboard

DOWN
1. VOLT
3. Spring Break
5. Charreada
6. Job X
8. EUREC
9. Casa Bella

Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

Eduardo Escamilla
THE RIDER

Aries (March 21 - April 19): This week, your fiery energy is high! Mars is pushing you to take on leadership roles in group projects.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20): Venus is highlighting your need for comfort and stability.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20): Mercury's influence makes this a week of vibrant communication.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22): Your emotional intuition is heightened. Trust your gut when making academic decisions.

a study group that provides emotional support will be beneficial.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22): Your confidence is radiating! This is an excellent week for presentations and public speaking.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): Your attention to detail is your superpower. Use it to excel in research and analytical tasks.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): Venus emphasizes harmony in your social and academic life.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): Your intensity and focus are heightened. Dive deep into your studies, and you'll

uncover valuable insights. However, avoid academic obsession.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Your adventurous spirit is calling! Explore new academic interests and engage in stimulating discussions.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): Your ambition and discipline are strong. This is an excellent week for achieving academic goals.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): Your innovative thinking is at its peak.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20): Your intuition and creativity are heightened. Trust your instincts when approaching academic challenges.

‘Estamos escribiendo sobre el Valle’

Ethan Maldonado
THE RIDER

Facultad publicará libro sobre la política local

Miembros de la facultad de ciencias políticas de UTRGV y profesores de El Colegio de la Frontera Norte discutieron su próximo libro sobre política regional durante una plática el 28 de febrero en el campus de Edinburg.

El evento incluyó a algunos de los autores colaboradores del libro que presentaron sus investigaciones sobre gobernanza, cuestiones económicas y participación política en el Valle del Río Grande.

“Politics of the Rio Grande Valley: An Insider’s Perspective to Regional Politics” reúne múltiples perspectivas sobre los desafíos históricos y contemporáneos de la región.

Cada capítulo, escrito por una persona diferente, explora temas como las condiciones laborales, organizaciones criminales, la gobernanza transfronteriza y la evolución de las estructuras políticas locales.

Alexandre Couture Gagnon, profesor asociado de UTRGV, y el profesor Carlos Gutiérrez-Mannix fueron los editores del libro y anfitriones del evento. Otros colaboradores de la universidad también incluyen al profesor asistente Alvaro Corral y la profesora Ruth Ragland.

Los profesores José Andrés Sumano Rodríguez, Xavier Oliver González y Arturo Zárate-Ruiz, colaboradores de El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, también estuvieron presentes para compartir cada uno de sus capítulos.



Jose Rodriguez/FOTO RIDER

Alvaro Corral, profesor asistente de ciencias políticas en UTRGV, presenta sus contribuciones a “Politics of the Rio Grande Valley: An Insider’s Perspective to Regional Politics”, centrándose en la pobreza y los salarios de los latinos en Texas el 28 de febrero en el Liberal Arts Building North del campus de Edinburg.

La parte de Zárate-Ruiz se enfoca en las experiencias históricas de los mexicoamericanos en Brownsville y cómo las estructuras políticas y sociales han dado forma a su lugar en la comunidad.

El capítulo de Ragland profundiza en la historia de Brownsville, proporcionando el primer relato completo de la separación de Texas Southmost College de la Universidad de Texas-Pan American y la Universidad de Texas en Brownsville, destacando cómo el colegio

comunitario desafió la legislación de Texas y contribuyó a la creación de UTRGV.

La gobernanza

criminales en el Valle del Río Grande, explorando cómo los factores económicos han cambiado el problema de una preocupación de seguridad a una preocupación económica.

El libro también explora las luchas laborales y económicas. Corral y José Villagrán, profesor asistente de la Universidad Estatal de California en Bakersfield, fueron autores de un capítulo. “The Wall: The Politics of Low-Wage Work” detalla la larga historia de ataques económicos contra las comunidades

“Simplemente queremos que más personas investiguen el Valle del Río Grande porque su política es muy interesante”.

--Profesor asociado Alexandre Couture Gagnon

latinas, utilizando ejemplos del mundo real y relatos personales.

Gutiérrez-Mannix dijo que el evento involucró exitosamente a los estudiantes y los fomentó a explorar la política regional.

“Creo que el evento hizo un buen trabajo al incluir a tantos estudiantes como pudimos”, dijo. “Nosotros estamos muy orgullosos porque, entonces, todos podrán leerlo. El objetivo es que los estudiantes sepan que estamos escribiendo sobre el Valle. Ojalá, algunos de [los estudiantes] estén interesados en aprender un poco más sobre política”.

Zanela Bajanás, una estudiante de posgrado de ciencias políticas, dijo que la discusión le pareció interesante.

“Ha sido muy interesante para mí hasta el momento, especialmente el capítulo sobre las ciudades hermanas debido a mis experiencias y antecedentes”, dijo Bajanás.

Los autores dijeron que esperan que el libro fomente más investigaciones sobre el panorama político del Valle.

“El Valle del Río Grande es conocido en todo Estados Unidos”, dijo Couture Gagnon. “Los investigadores vienen aquí porque quieren estudiar el Valle del Río Grande [...] pero realmente no saben qué esperar. Necesitamos más literatura académica para iniciar la investigación sobre el Valle del Río Grande. [...] Acabamos de empezar con este libro. Simplemente queremos que más personas investiguen el Valle del Río Grande porque su política es muy interesante”.

El libro será publicado por Lexington Books el sábado.

--Traducido por Daniel Aguilar

Estudiantes vuelven a lo vintage



Jose Rodriguez/FOTOS RIDER

Linda Vela (izquierda), estudiante de segundo año de contabilidad; y Cristina Vela, estudiante de tercer año de ciencias nutricionales, buscan ropa de segunda mano en una tienda temporal de House of Fashion el martes en el patio del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.



Ana Lucía Camacho (izquierda), estudiante de último año de comunicación y vicepresidenta de House of Fashion, ayuda a los estudiantes en la tienda temporal de la organización el martes en el patio del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.



Estudiantes compran artículos de segunda mano en una tienda temporal de House of Fashion el martes en el patio del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.



Un grupo de estudiantes se reúne alrededor de la tienda temporal de House of Fashion el martes en el patio del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.



Estudiantes miran la selección de artículos de segunda mano en una tienda temporal de House of Fashion el martes en el patio del Student Union en el campus de Edinburg.



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SEEING AND HEARING THE SIGNS

UTRGV Baseball begins using PitchCom in 2025

Ali Halloum
THE RIDER

PitchCom is a relatively new technology in baseball, but one that has proved its weight in gold. Introduced in Major League Baseball in 2022 to combat sign-stealing, it has improved communication within batteries across the league.

Now in 2025, three years removed from its proliferation with all 30 MLB clubs, the UTRGV Baseball Team is using PitchCom to facilitate pitch calling during its games.

In an interview with The Rider, Vaqueros assistant coach Ryan Jackson, who coordinated the team's integration of the system, said it is not only for calling pitches but also controlling the run game.

"Basically on PitchCom, you can run your whole offense, your defense, call your pitches any picks that you may have," Jackson said.

The way the system works is Jackson can, from the dugout, suggest which pitches a pitcher should throw. When there are runners on the basepaths, he can also call for pickoff attempts.

"All pitches are called from the dugout with their PitchCom that's in their device and their head," he said. "And then, we use our picks



Angel Ballesteros/THE RIDER

Junior pitcher Daren Barrera utilizes the PitchCom during practice Feb. 25 at the UTRGV Baseball Stadium on the Edinburg campus.

and holds and all that stuff. First and third defenses, any defense that we're really running."

Catchers also have the ability to make those same calls the dugout can. All infielders, the battery and the center fielder have earpieces in their caps that allow them to hear what is being called.

Senior catcher Steven Lancia told The Rider wheth-

er it is him or the dugout, the calls will be determined on a per-game and per-situation

can go back and forth, talk about what we're seeing and adjust. If he feels like there's

"Now, we have it to where it's just in our hat and out of our way. We can just listen to it and get ready to go."

--Graduate pitcher Angelo Cabral

a certain pitch and I'm seeing a better [one], he'll give me that, 'You got it.'"

PitchCom as a means of delivering signs is relatively new. The 2025 season will mark the fourth season of its use in the major leagues and its first year in use at UTRGV.

The technology was implemented after concerns about sign stealing arose following the 2017 and 2018 seasons. MLB penalized the Yankees, the Red Sox and, notably, the Astros for using technology to steal signs.

Last season, the Vaqueros used a device called Armilla Tech to relay signs. Jackson said making the switch to PitchCom has been tremendously helpful as it is more efficient to use than previous technologies.

"With this device, it's seamless," he said. "As soon as I press that button, it's in their hat. ... Last year, you would click three or four different buttons."

Graduate pitcher Angelo Cabral has utilized the system in his outings this season and said without the armbands used in Armilla Tech, he and the team can better focus on their work on the field.

"It's pretty helpful," Cabral said. "Now, we have it to where it's just in our hat and out of our way. We can just listen to it and get ready to go."

Although not all Vaquero pitchers use PitchCom to receive signals, the option is there for them to opt in to its use. The team will use the technology through the season, according to Jackson.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK: HOWIE FLEMING JR.



Howie Fleming Jr., a multidisciplinary studies junior from Louisville, Kentucky, is a point guard for the UTRGV Men's Basketball Team. Fleming Jr. scored 18 points and made the last 4 points on March 3 against the Southeastern Louisiana University Lions.

Q: What is a fun fact about yourself?

A: "I can give two, actually. I like cooking and I also like playing video games."

Q: Who got you started in basketball?

A: "Basketball was kind of one of those things that I just kind of gravitated to. I started off at the YMCA, stuff like that. So, it wasn't much minor league stuff and a whole bunch of different sports that came with that. So eventually, basketball [was] just ... the one I ran with."

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

A: "I would say my auntie and my mother. Those two women are the ones who raised me. I was raised by mostly women and just to see the things that

they went through, how they persevered, relied on their faith to get them through a lot of the hardships through life."

Q: Who is your favorite basketball player?

A: "LeBron."

Q: What kind of music do you listen to?

A: "I listen to rap. I like listening to a lot of rap, but I also switch it up. I listen to a little R&B and stuff like that and it just depends on the vibe."

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

A: "So, there was this new one that just came out not too long ago. I think it was called 'The Penguin.' I'm not much of a movie guy, man. I have ADHD, so I tend to tune out of those."

Q: Do you have any

hobbies?

A: "Just basketball. Like I said, playing video games. I also like cooking as well in my spare time."

Q: What is your biggest motivation?

A: "My family. I think just seeing the things that my family's been through and just being able to have the opportunity to make their situations better. I think that just motivates me to the core."

Q: What do you like most about UTRGV?

A: "The hospitality, how nice people are here. I've been to some places where people are very rude, disrespectful and mean. It's a very loving and family atmosphere out here."

Q: What are your biggest goals?

A: "Something big for me is just graduating. I know, as far as my family and stuff, I'll be like one of the very few to graduate from college, including the men and women in my family. So, graduating is a big thing to me. That's the goal, getting to play at the highest level. That's something that I always dreamed of as a kid. And, you know, being in the position I'm in now to make it achievable, I think I owe it to myself to just continue with that. And then lastly, just continuing my faith with God, just getting a close relationship with Him and just relying on Him and appreciating all the things that He's done for me."

--Compiled and photo by Jose Rodriguez

BASEBALL

6:30 p.m. Friday & Saturday vs. Nicholls State University

Noon Sunday vs. Nicholls State University

in the UTRGV Baseball Stadium

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

MEN'S GOLF

All day today & Tuesday South Texas Match Play

in the McAllen Country Club

TENNIS

WOMEN'S

10 a.m. Thursday vs. UT Permian Basin

MEN'S

2 p.m. Thursday vs. UT Permian Basin

in the Orville I. Cox Tennis Center



THE RIDER FILE PHOTO

Andrea Vela (left) and Samantha Pena, rehabilitation services and counseling seniors and practicum students for Student Accessibility Services, set up a Connect Four game during the Spring Break Lu'au March 5, 2024, on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.

LUAU,
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partners, including University Police and Cameron County Health and Human Services, will attend this year's event.

Students will be able to enjoy a giant inflatable chair, music and a photo backdrop.

The Center for Student Involvement is collaborating with 23 student organizations that will hold fundraisers during the event. This includes selling food and non-alcoholic beverages.

"We have over 200 organizations on campus, and we want to remind students of fun ways to spend their Spring Break while also supporting them through fundraising," said Berta Maldonado, assistant director for the Center for Student Involvement.

The event will feature a driving-while-intoxicated (DWI) simulator, giveaways and raffle prizes.

"It's a great way to get together in

the Vaquero community before going off for a whole week," Maldonado said.

Criminal justice freshman Rosa Chavez said it is important to make responsible choices during the break.

"I'll be driving safely and, since I'm underage, I won't be drinking or anything," Chavez said. "I'll just stay home and relax."

Yzaguirre said she encourages students to prioritize themselves by taking Spring Break as a time to recharge for the second half of the semester, as well as focusing on their safety this vacation.

"This event is important because it can be easy to get caught up in school activities and stress and not make sure you're taking care of yourself," she said. "It's important for students to think of themselves as a being that needs care, whether it's mental health, physical health or eating good foods."

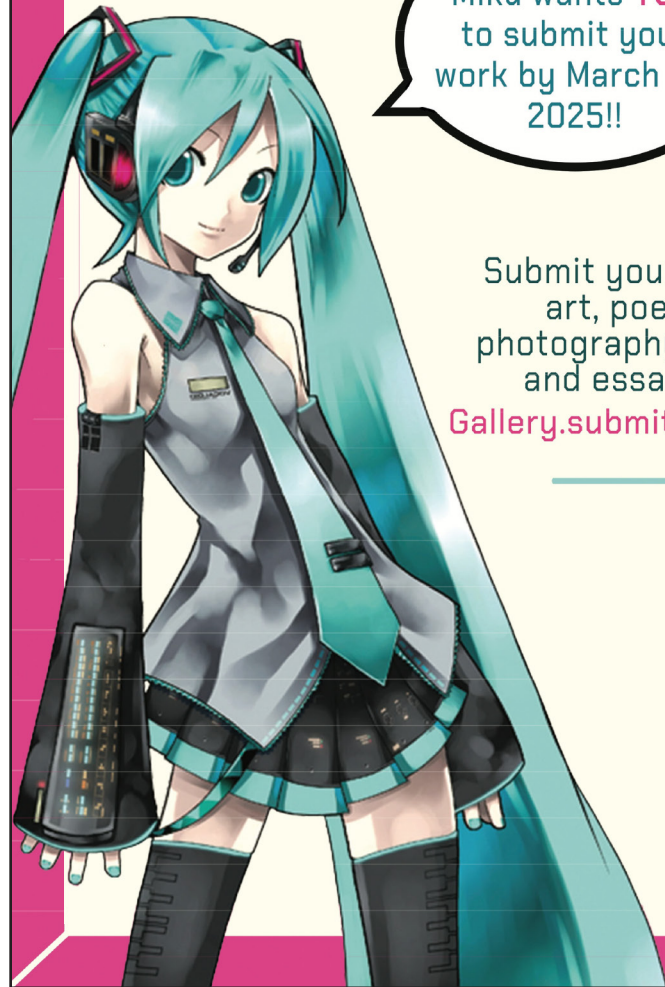
For more information, visit the event page on V Link.

SPRING 2025:

GALLERY

Magazine

Miku wants **YOU** to submit your work by March 25, 2025!!



Submit your prose, art, poetry, photography, plays, and essays at Gallery.submittable.com

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT UTRGVRIDER.COM

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