



FALL
COMMENCEMENT

2020

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

In April 2019, the UTRGV chess team defeated Harvard and other universities to claim its second-straight Final Four of College Chess in New York City.

FIRST-CLASS UNIVERSITY

UTRGV ranked as a Top 100 university in the country and 3rd best college in Texas behind Texas A&M and UT Austin, according to Washington Monthly.

STUDENT SUCCESS

During Fall 2020, UTRGV had a record-breaking fall enrollment of 32,618, an increase of 3,505 students – or 11.45 percent – from the previous fall semester. UTRGV is now one of only nine public universities in Texas to surpass the 30,000-enrollment mark.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In January 2020, UTRGV received the coveted Carnegie Community Engagement Classification for 2020, which honors an institution's commitment to community engagement and its collaborations with local, regional, state, national and global partners.



Dear UTRGV Alumni,

On behalf of everyone at the university, congratulations on your graduation!

You have truly accomplished something remarkable: You have gotten through the most disruptive year ever in the history of American higher education. Along the way, you learned about resiliency and perseverance — important life lessons that will only help you, as you embark on your professional career.

Chances are, you can probably name a few people who helped shape you into the person you've become. Your graduation milestone is also for them.

UTRGV stands alongside your family and friends with a great sense of pride in your achievement. All the hard work and sacrifices you made have paid off. Though the homework and late-night study sessions are over, the friendships you made at UTRGV along the way will always remain with you.

You are now a UTRGV graduate, and you join a family of over 100,000 prideful and successful alumni across the world. Like those who came before you, you have paved the way for students who will follow in your footsteps. As you begin the next chapter of your life, remember that the stature of UTRGV and the success of future students will be significantly enhanced by your success.

The Office of Alumni Relations invites you to stay connected with your alma mater and share your accomplishments. Follow the Office of Alumni Relations on Facebook at **UTRGV Alumni and Legacy** or email them at alumni@utrgv.edu.

Again, congratulations on your graduation. We wish you continued success, and we remind you that UTRGV will always be your home. You will forever be part of our Vaqueros family. Your friends, family, and everyone at UTRGV salute you - **V's Up!**

Sincerely,

Guy Bailey, President

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley



TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE

UTRGV's School of Medicine graduated its inaugural class in May 2020. The 39 graduates received their medical degree and are now continuing their clinical training in residency programs at hospitals here in the Rio Grande Valley, across Texas, and throughout the United States. UT Health Rio Grande Valley, the clinical practice of the UTRGV School of Medicine, currently has 22 clinical sites providing over 100 miles of care spanning from Rio Grande City to Laguna Vista.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

UTRGV has received more than \$168 million in private fundraising, including:

- The establishment of the THRIVE medical hub project.
- The naming of The Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship.
- The establishment of The UTRGV Institute of Neuroscience.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

UTRGV is partnering with the city of Harlingen and Harlingen CISD on the construction of a new building to be completed in March 2021, where high school students will be able to take dual enrollment courses.



Doctor of Philosophy

Keshab Acharya
Ravi Bala

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Kelvin K. King

Mei Han
Tony N. Lynch

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Bruno R. Arthur
Yahir G. Briz
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Krystal S. Chaverri
Yamel Z. Cortina

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Lillian A. Hernandez
Valeria Hernandez
Rolando Herrera, II
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Nicholas M. Keathley
Rissa Klein

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Roshni S. Manwani
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Rosa D. Martinez
Juan J. Rubio
Nathan T. Santiago
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Bachelor of Arts

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Bachelor of Business Administration

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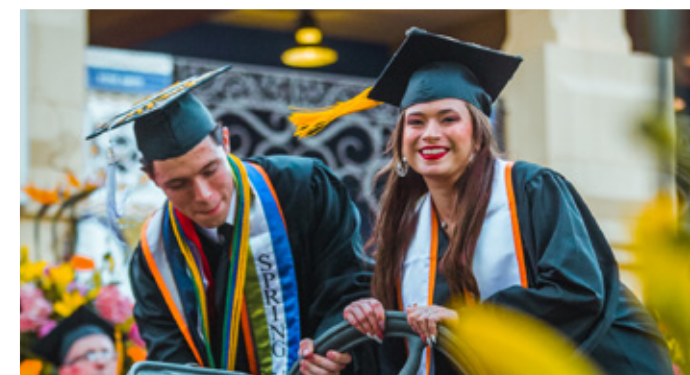
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 Janett C. Perez **SCL**
 Santiago Perez **MCL**
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 Devanny R. Ramirez
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 Akane J. Benitez
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 Rebecca Bernal
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 Naila P. Bravo **MCL**
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 Alessandra S. Cardona
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 Viannay Cantu
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 Omosola S. Oriretan
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 Oscar Quintanilla
 Md Faizur Rahman
 Md Sadequr Rahman
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 Mariana Aguilar
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 Lucero Alaniz
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 Vivian Barrera
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Master of Science in Nursing

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Master Thesis

Abu Musa Abdullah

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Lead Free Piezoelectric and Triboelectric Energy Film for Energy Harvesting and Sensory Applications
Committee Chair: Mohammed Jasim Uddin

Valerie Alvarez

College of Sciences
Non-caloric Sugars Formation of Memory in Apis Mellifera
Committee Chair: Julie Mustard

Md Hasan Anowar

College of Engineering and Computer Science
A Python Based Brain-Computer Interface Package for Neural Data Analysis
Committee Chair: Paul Choi

Mylen Arias

College of Sciences
Discerning Competitive vs. Facilitative Relationships of Weeds on Semi-Arid Forest Restoration Efforts
Committee Chair: Bradley Christoffersen

Raul C. Barbosa

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Development of Plant Extract-Based Composite Fibers and Aerogels
Committee Chair: Karen Lozano

Aaron Barrera

College of Engineering and Computer Science
SHA Performance Evaluation for Parallel and Non-Parallel Implementations In Verilog HDL Using Cyclone IV FPGA Technology
Committee Chair: Sanjeev Kumar

Suryarao Bethapudi

College of Sciences
Searching for Low Frequency Fast Radio Bursts with VLITE
Committee Chair: Teviet Creighton

Luis Mario Bres Castro

College of Sciences
Numerical Simulation for Patch Antennas
Committee Chair: Volker Quetschke

Kelesi A. Caballero Valdez

College of Sciences
Searching for Pulsars Using the Long Wavelength Array Telescope
Committee Chair: Teviet Creighton

Alejandro J. Castillo

College of Sciences
Nonwovens of Ceramic Decorated Cellulose Based Fine Fibers for Leaded Water Purification
Committee Chair: Karen Lozano

Johana Castro

College of Sciences
The Effects of Caffeine and its Metabolites on the Activity Levels of Apis Mellifera
Committee Chair: Julie Mustard

Luis Chavarria

College of Liberal Arts
How are Police Lineups Represented in Popular Crime Shows in the U.S.A.? Examination of Law & Order: Special Victims Unit
Committee Chair: Rosalva Resendiz

Chu-Wen Cheng

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Improving Hardware Implementation of Cryptographic AES Algorithm and The Block Cipher Modes of Operation
Committee Chair: Sanjeev Kumar

Enrique Chirino Andalco

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Toward a More Sustainable Ultra High-Performance Concrete: Cement and Cost Reduction
Committee Chair: Mohamed Abdel Raheem

Brishty Deb Choudhury

College of Sciences
Flexible dye-Sensitized Solar Cells: A Study of Photoanode and Counter Electrode Materials
Committee Chair: Mohammed Jasim Uddin

Muniruzzaman Chowdhury

College of Sciences
Unbinding of Testosterone from the Androgen Receptor and Two Bf-3 Site Mutants
Committee Chair: Evangelia Kotsikorou

Maria Gabriela Copeiro De Lestarte

College of Liberal Arts
The Mediating Role of Emotion Dysregulation in the Association between Intimate Partner Victimization Types and Symptoms of Depression in Young Hispanic Women
Committee Chair: Ruby Charak

Apu Deb

College of Liberal Arts
Governance and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Exploring the Relationship Between Governance and SDGs from Using an International Comparative Perspective
Committee Chair: Aziza Zemrani

Brent DeKock

College of Engineering and Computer Science
The Optimization of Efficiency and Infrastructure for Modern Potable Water Treatment Plants
Committee Chair: Alexander Domijan

Chaoran Dou

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Experimental Study of Graphene Energy Absorbing Layer in Femtosecond Infrared Laser Assisted Bioprinting
Committee Chair: Jianzhi Li

Alexis Echavarria

College of Sciences
Synthesis, Characterization, and Application of Metalloporphyrin Catalysts
Committee Chair: Jason George Parsons

Daniel Doroteo Flores

College of Sciences
Identifying Positive Selection in Multiple Subspecies of Xylella Fastidiosa
Committee Chair: Erin Schuenzel

Austin D. Fuentes

College of Sciences
Embryonic Exposure to the Synthetic Progesterone Levonorgestrel (LNG) Results in Hyperactive Behavior in Zebrafish (Danio Rerio)
Committee Chair: Robert Dearth

Javier Garcia

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Assessing the Feasibility of a Biofilter in Medium-to-High Scale Industries
Committee Chair: Hiram Moya

Monica Garcia

College of Sciences
Effect of Palm Fiber in Concrete
Committee Chair: Maysam Pournik

Adriana Garza

College of Education and P-16 Integration
Autoethnography: A Self Reflection of the Benefits in Attending a T-Stem High School
Committee Chair: Zulmaris Diaz

Akanksha Ghandhi

College of Sciences
Role of Insect Derived Secretions on Plant Defense Signaling
Committee Chair: Nirakar Sahoo

Melissa Guerra

College of Fine Arts
A Stove for Sister Norma - Parable & Memoir of a Border Crisis
Committee Chair: Jose Rodriguez

Adrian Guerrero

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Surface Pro 4 Performance Under Well-Known Cyberattacks
Committee Chair: Sanjeev Kumar

Taylor M. Hopkins

College of Sciences
Influence of Landscape Factors on Wildlife Presence and Road Mitigation Structure Performance
Committee Chair: Richard J. Kline

Md Shakhawat Hossain

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Signal Processing Combined with Machine Learning for Biomedical Applications
Committee Chair: Yong Zhou

Juan Huerta

College of Sciences
On Couple Reaction Diffusion Equations and Their Applications
Committee Chair: Erwin Suazo

Derek A. Katznelson

College of Liberal Arts
Predicting Collaboration: Risk, Power, and Dependence in the Gulf of Maine
Committee Chair: Owen Temby

Matthew D. Kutugata

College of Sciences
The Application of Advanced Technologies for Agriculture and Rangeland Management
Committee Chair: Alexis Racelis

Kaitlynn Lavallee

College of Sciences
Incorporation of Native Plants for Biodiversity Conservation and Soil Health in South Texas Agroecosystems
Committee Chair: Alexis Racelis

Master Thesis *continued***Cesar Alberto Leos Jr.**

College of Engineering and Computer Science
An Experimental Thrust Measurement Study on The Nozzle Asymmetry of Turbulent Pulsed Jets
Committee Chair: Isaac M. Choutapalli

Carl G. Litif

College of Sciences
Genetic Analysis of PI3K and MTOR Inhibition in U87mg Glioblastoma Cell Line
Committee Chair: Megan Keniry

Shaik Merkatour Hakim Marjuban

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Electromagnetic Shielding Effectiveness of Metal-Oxide, Conducting Polymer and Carbon Nanotube Filled Epoxy Reinforced Multilayered Polymer Composite
Committee Chair: Karen Lozano

Austin Marsteller

College of Sciences
Complete Integrability and Discretization of Euler Top and Manakov Top
Committee Chair: Baofeng Feng

Arturo J. Martinez

College of Sciences
The Period of the Coefficients of the Gaussian Polynomial
Committee Chair: Brandt Kronholm

Cecilia Martinez Tijerina

College of Liberal Arts
Hija del Sol
Committee Chair: Elvia Ardalani

Lili M. Martinez

College of Sciences
Examining the Efficacy of Cover Crops as an Integrated Pest Management Tool in Organic Farms in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
Committee Chair: Rupesh R. Kariyat

Mirella Martinez

College of Fine Arts
Birdcage
Committee Chair: Christopher Carmona

Faeqa Mohsin

College of Sciences
Optimizing Species Selection for Forest Restoration in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
Committee Chair: Bradley Christoffersen

Marisol Morales

College of Sciences
The Long-Term Persistence and Tissue Tropism of Brazilian Zika Virus in Monodelphis Domestica
Committee Chair: John M. Thomas III

Edgar Abraham Navejar

College of Liberal Arts
Displacement: An Analysis of Foreign Aid and its Effects on Migration Patterns in Latin America
Committee Chair: Michelle Keck

Precious Okwuchukwu

College of Sciences
Chemical Modification of Natural Products: Semi Synthesis of Magnolol and Honokiol Derivatives as Anti-Cancer Agents
Committee Chair: Debasish Bandyopadhyay

Omosola Oriretan

College of Sciences
Phase Transitions in Peo Nanofibers and Their Nanocomposites
Committee Chair: Mohammed Uddin

David A. Parra Peña

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Analysis of the Functional Relationship of Protein Kinase Families Using Phospho-Proteomics Data
Committee Chair: Marzieh Ayati

Raelynn D. Peña

College of Liberal Arts
Analysis of Fantasy Fiction Series of Sarah J. Maas: A Court of Thorns and Roses
Committee Chair: Amy Cummins

Yiqian Qian

College of Sciences
Methods for Multi-Source Resolution in Pulsar Timing Array Based Gravitational Wave Detection
Committee Chair: Soumya D. Mohanty
Co-Chair: Soma Mukherjee

Al Mazedur Rahman

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Optimization and Modeling of Machining Performance in Face Milling of Grade 5 Ti6Al4V
Committee Chair: Anil K. Srivastava

Md Faizur Rahman

College of Sciences
Effects of Elevated Temperature on 8-Hydroxy-2'-Deoxyguanosine Expression, DNA Damage and Oxidative Stress in the American Oyster (Crassostrea Virginica)
Committee Chair: Md Saydur Rahman

Md Sadequr Rahman

College of Sciences
Effects of Seasonal Variations and Heat Exposure on Antioxidant Expression and Redox Status in the American Oyster, Crassostrea Virginica: Field and Laboratory Studies
Committee Chair: Md Saydur Rahman

Qulina Rai

College of Sciences
Sunn Hemp as a Cover Crop, Enhancing Nodule Formation Using Different Adhesives and Assessing its Pathogenicity to Agronomic Crops
Committee Chair: Alexis Racelis

Ricardo Alberto Ramirez Garcia-Rojas

College of Sciences
Aquatic Stage Mosquito Biocontrol: Effects of Entomopathogenic Fungi Blastospores and Conidia on Aedes Aegypti Pupae
Committee Chair: Alexis Racelis

Eli Ruiz

College of Sciences
Superpooling Method for Testing SARS-CoV-2 Samples Collected via Nasopharyngeal Swab
Committee Chair: John Thomas

Krista M. Ruppert

College of Sciences
Development and Assessment of an Environmental DNA (EDNA) Assay for the Rio Grande Siren and Review of EDNA Metabarcoding Applications
Committee Chair: Richard J. Kline

Erick Sanchez

College of Sciences
Pipe Flow of Newtonian and Non-newtonian Fluids
Committee Chair: Dambaru Bhatta

Sarah Alicia Solis

College of Fine Arts
The Wind Still Blows Poems
Committee Chair: Emmy Pérez

Amanda Taylor

College of Liberal Arts
Transnational Triangulations: Genre and Traumatic Memory in the Novels of Esmeralda Santiago and Alejandro Zambra
Committee Chair: Cathryn Meria-Watson

Shreya Udawant

College of Sciences
Role of Glycolytic Metabolism in Glioblastoma Multiforme
Committee Chair: Megan Keniry

Laura Valdez

College of Sciences
Stem Cell Technology for Age Related Macular Degeneration Intervention
Committee Chair: Andrew Tsin

Magaly Vargas

College of Liberal Arts
Characterization and Quantification of Dopamine Neurons in the Ventral Midbrain: Implications for Neurological Disorders
Committee Chair: Mario Gil

Edgar D. Vasquez

College of Sciences
Exploring Plant-Plant Interactions and Nutrient Manipulation as Strategies for Thorn Scrub and Thorn Forest Restoration
Committee Chair: Alejandro Fierro-Cabo

Joy Youwakim

College of Sciences
Predicting Patterns of Heavy Metal Contamination in Rio Grande Valley Agricultural Soils
Committee Chair: Alexis Racelis

Md. Wasif Zaman

College of Engineering and Computer Science
Discrete Element Modeling of Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil Using a Flexible Membrane Boundary
Committee Chair: Thang Pham

Doctoral Dissertations

Keshab Acharya
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
Three Essays on CEO Activism, Strategic Choices and Firm Performance
Committee Chair: Michael A. Abebe

Daniel Aguilar
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Gauging Student Attainment of Academic Competencies
Committee Chair: Rene Corbeil

Rachel Renee Ayala
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Middle School Leaders' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy in an Urban School District along the Texas-Mexico Border
Committee Chair: Alejandro Garcia

Ruben Ceballos
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Two Sides of the Same Coin: Essays Investigating the Founder and Backer Dynamics of Crowdfunding
Committee Chair: Sijin Wu

Enrique H. De la Cruz
College of Education and P-16 Integration
A Comparative Study of Principals' Perceptions of Bilingual Education in School Districts in South Texas
Committee Chair: Velma Menchaca

Paz Elizondo Jr.
College of Education and P-16 Integration
The Relationship Between the 9th Grade State Assessment and Extra Curricular School Activities and Gender for Disadvantaged Hispanic Students in South Texas
Committee Chair: Marie Simonsson

Juan C. Garza
College of Education and P-16 Integration
The Relationship Between Academic Performance and Student Mobility, Gender, Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, and Number of Moves
Committee Chair: Marie Simonsson

Mei Han
Robert C Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
How Does Choice of Fitness Labeled Food Affect Consumer's Decision to Exercise
Committee Chair: Arturo Z. Vasquez

Ana Holland
College of Education and P-16 Integration
A South Texas Elementary School's Transition to a Constructivist Blended Learning Model of Instruction in Math: Perceptions of Students and Parents
Committee Chair: Karen Watt

Jeffery J Huerta
College of Education and P-16 Integration
The Influence of College Preparation in the Relationship Between High School Socioeconomic Context and College Enrollment
Committee Chair: Karen Watt

Alexandra E. Hughes
College of Education and P-16 Integration
A Study of Student Experiences of Racial Microaggressions at a Hispanic-Serving Institution
Committee Chair: Karen Watt

Katrieva S. Jones Munroe
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Exploring a Quality Assurance Tool on Remote Academic Advising for Higher Education Traditionally Underrepresented Students in Distance Education
Committee Chair: Javier Cavazos

Yuka Kato
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Exploring the Implementation of a Proficiency-Focused, Performance-Based Approach in Foreign Language Teaching
Committee Chair: Kip Hinton

Kelvin Kizito King
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
Diffusion of Falsehoods on Social Media
Committee Chair: Bin Wang

Nora Alicia Luna
College of Education and P-16 Integration
A Case Study of Elementary Teachers' Critical Understanding of Culturally Relevant Science Education: Mexican American Teachers of Mexican American
Committee Chair: Angela Chapman & James Jupp

Tony N.K. Lynch
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
A Darker Shade of Gray: An Empirical Examination of Gray Swans in the Supply Chain
Committee Chair: Joon Jung

Krystal Amaril Medrano
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Critical (En)Counters: A Girouexan Exploration of Contingent Faculties' Narratives on Laboring for Latinx Students in the Corporate University Using Critical Dialogue
Committee Chair: Laura Jewett

Tonya Paulette
College of Education and P-16 Integration
In Support of Student Persistence: How Student-Faculty Interactions Contribute to Perceived Sense of Belonging for Undergraduate Students with Disabilities at a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)
Committee Chair: Marie Simonsson

Sulema Perales
College of Health Professions
College Students' and Educators' Attitudes Toward Offenders with Mental Illness
Committee Chair: Eva Miller

Felipe Reyes
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Electronic Books: Educational Enhancement or Novelty
Committee Chair: Rene Corbeil

Md. Nazmus Sakib
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
How Youtube Health Vloggers Influence Viewer Compliance: The Interplay Between Vlogger Characteristics, Parasocial Interaction, and Viewer Characteristics
Committee Chair: Reto Felix

Jaime Villarreal
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Field of Dreams: Environmental Factors Contributing to the Academic and Professional Success of Mexican-American Former Migrant Students From the Rio-Grande Valley of South Texas
Committee Chair: Jesus Abrego

Joseph Ray Villarreal
College of Education and P-16 Integration
Principal Instructional Leadership Behavior as Perceived by Middle School Principals in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas
Committee Chair: Alejandro Garcia

James Gitau Wairimu
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
Creativity and Engagement in Ideas Crowdsourcing: A Situation Awareness Perspective
Committee Chair: Jun Sun

Xi Yang
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
Seeking a Perfect Match: The Effect of Spousal Capital on Performance of Family Firms
Committee Chair: Wanrong Hou

Honors College

Aaron Cuadras Diaz Andrea M. Morrison

Honor Societies

Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society for First Year Students

Naila Bravo	Edna Escamilla Rodriguez	Allyson Garza	Aranza Pedraza	Lando Vite
Miah Castillo	Alisa Escobar	Juan Huitron	Karina Perez	
Jose Duron	Reuben Farias	Alyssa Jackson	Victoria Torres	

Alpha Phi Sigma National Criminal Justice Honor Society

Selene Calderon	Lauren A. Escovedo	Noe Leal Jr.	Frank D. Lopez
Luis F. Chavarria	Alexandra M. Estevanes	Kimberly Longoria	Carlos Vasquez

Beta Beta Beta (Tri Beta) National Biological Honor Society

Shania Pintor	Mark Reyna	Cezar Serrano
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Lambda Alpha - Anthropology Honor Society

Shantal Brissette	Lizette Morales	Gabriel Rodriguez
Ramiro Garcia	Lauren M. Richardson	

Order of Omega

Jessica Escamilla	Jireh Shalom Lira	Aniza Ortiz	Kendra Puente
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Pi Alpha Alpha, The Global Honor Society for Public Affairs & Administration

Jorge A. Aguirre	Michael Elizade	Jacquelin Hernandez	Maria A. Perez	Russell R. Solis
Ashley M. Castro	Veronica Flores	Jahaira S. Hernandez	Conner S. Peterson	Linette Solorsano
Ashley E. Chacon	Janelle E. Gettmann	Yareli C. Hernandez	Kelli K. Quin	Linh T. Tran
Tiffany L. Damskov	Sandra M. Gonzalez	Armando A. Martinez	Kassandra N. Rodriguez	Leslie A. Trevino-Camacho
Marcela I. De Leon	Alexa D. Gonzalez	Nicole L. Mowbray	Betsy Roque	Anna Valdez
Taylor M. Dion	Julia Gorka	Eleanor Owen-Oshan	Clarissa Sanchez	

Pi Alpha Theta, The National History Honor Society

Kelly Lopez

Pi Sigma Alpha, The National Political Science Honor Society

Aimee Abalos	Fernanda Figueroa	Gabriel Perez	Itza Trevino
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Psi Chi International Psychology Honor Society

Narda Ayala	Megan Eve Estrada	Kristan Gonzalez	Veronica Torres
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Sigma Delta Pi, National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society

Luz Vania Aguirre Ayala	Erik Garcia	Miroslava Rangel
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Sigma Pi Sigma, The National Physics Honor Society

Emilio Hinojosa	Akilan Mohana
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Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

Ema Arce	Cynthia Arteaga	Maria R. Diaz	Jesus E. Huerta
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The National Society of Leadership and Success

Daryl Almanza	Diamantha Faith Esquivel	David Herrera	Paloma Coral Peña	Alexa Ruiz
Dante Avalos	Jose L. Garcia	Neftali I. Jameson	Mirka Ariely Ponce	Pablo Ruiz
Jennifer L. Brouwen	Pamela Lynn Garza	Katherine Jasso	Angelica Portales	Delilah Silva
Olga Campos	Daniela Gatica	Jessica Macias	Jeanette Ramirez	Brandy Tapia
Kayla Degollado	Jose Ivan Guel Garcia	Mario Alberto Martinez	Jose Roberto Rodriguez	Victoria Lynn Zavala
Natalia De La Garza	Joyceline Gutierrez	Erika Nazarea Olivarez	Melissa B. Rosalez	

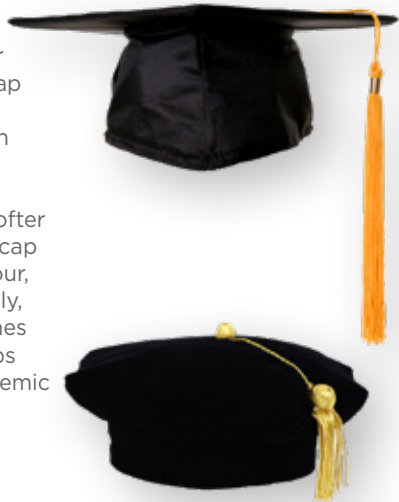


Costumes and Customs of Commencement

The colorful costumes and traditional customs of college commencements trace their beginnings back to the origins of the contemporary university in medieval Europe. Modern American colleges and universities carry on many traditions that began at Oxford and Cambridge to demonstrate the continuity of learning over the centuries and to emphasize the importance attached to commencement exercises. Academic regalia refer to the distinctive attire worn by students, faculty, and other university officials at commencement. The origins of academic dress date back to the 12th and 13th centuries, when universities were taking form. The ordinary dress of the scholar, whether student or teacher, was the dress of a cleric. Though the custom of wearing academic dress was brought to America in colonial times, it was not until 1895 that a standardized code of academic dress was established and followed by most colleges and universities. The gown, hood, cap, and additional ornaments are the main categories of academic regalia and are distinctive for each degree.

CAPS

Headwear is an important component of the cap and gown, and the academic costume is not complete without it. The standard commencement headwear is the Oxford cap: a skullcap topped by a square cloth-covered board - the reason for its "mortarboard" nickname. Some doctoral faculty members wear a softer Cambridge version of the cap that is a velvet tam with four, six, or eight corners. Usually, the color of the cap matches the color of the gown. Caps are worn throughout academic processions and during the ceremony of conferring degrees.



TASSEL

The tassel is attached to a button on the top of the cap and hangs down to the right for bachelor's candidates until their degree is conferred. Many universities ceremoniously have graduates move their tassel from the right to the left. Both master's and doctoral candidates' tassels often begin and remain on the left.

GOWNS

The gown is the most basic of academic regalia. The Costume Code calls for three types of gowns: doctoral, master's and bachelor's. Most gowns are black, but some universities have adopted distinctive colors. The bachelor's gown is the simplest of the three, a plain gown with long, pointed sleeves. The master's gown is distinctive for its extremely long, closed sleeves (originally used as a place to carry small books or other materials), the arms protruding through a slit at the elbow. The doctoral gown is the most elaborate, with front-facing velvet and three velvet bars on each of the full, billowing sleeves. The velvet can be black, Ph.D. blue, or the academic color to which the degree corresponds.



HOODS

The hood is derived from the cowls worn by clerics in the Middle Ages for warmth. Today, they are worn symbolically, hanging down the back. Master's hoods are 3 1/2 feet in length and have a velvet trim along the edge. Doctoral hoods are 4 feet in length and have a wider velvet trim. The satin lining of the hood, worn so that it can be seen, reflects the colors of the degree-granting institution. The color of the velvet trim signifies the academic discipline of the wearer's degree. As codified by the American Council on Education, some of the official colors associated with the various degrees and disciplines are:

- White: Arts and Letters
- Drab: Business/Accounting
- Light Blue: Education
- Orange: Engineering
- Purple: Law
- Lemon: Library Science
- Green: Medicine
- Pink: Music
- Brown: Fine Arts
- Apricot: Nursing
- Olive Green: Pharmacy
- Dark Blue: Philosophy
- Sage Green: Physical Education
- Salmon Pink: Public Health
- Golden Yellow: Science
- Citron: Social Work
- Peacock Blue: Public Administration



In the case of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, the dark blue color represents the mastery of learning and scholarship in any field, not just the field of philosophy.

ADDITIONAL ORNAMENTS

Some participants in the commencement ceremony will wear additional ornaments such as colored cords, medallions, stoles, or sashes. These ornaments signify the wearer's membership in an honor society or special group.

CHAIN OF OFFICE AND PRESIDENTIAL MEDALLION

The presidential medallion is the official insignia of the university president and is worn at commencement and other ceremonial occasions. Like many academic traditions, the display of a heavy "chain of office" comes from medieval regalia and represents the weight of responsibility for the wearer.

The UTRGV medallion and chain were designed in 2015 and executed by the jewelry students, jewelry faculty, and craftsman Lino Guiza in the UTRGV College of Fine Arts. The medallion is made up of two parts: the seal of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley surrounded by an abstract sunburst created with a brick and mortar design. The cactus flowers on the outer edges of the seal are placed at the four cardinal points with the largest flower pointing south. The counter weight to the medallion is a representation of the native sabal palm. The Chain of Office is a circlet of art deco-inspired links representing the past, while revealing an infrastructure of bridges, aqueducts, and gears that speak to the importance of our solid foundation, water, and movement into the future. The chain features many aspects of the Rio Grande Valley that aid our growth and commitment to higher education:

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Arches | Abacus | Butterfly |
| Water | Bone | Tortoise |
| Turbine | Binary Code | Finger Print |
| Neuron Tree | Leaves/Quills | Road Junction |
| Circuit Board | | Satellite |



BELL

Our stately bronze bell, circa 1850 is rung during commencement to symbolize a rite of passage and proclaims that a worthy and well-qualified individual has passed from one station in their life to a loftier one. Our bell is also the icon for the Bell Scholarship Endowment. Two outstanding students are selected to ring the bell at each commencement.

CEREMONIAL MACE

In medieval times, the mace was a symbol of authority and carried before or set near a high official when ceremonies or sessions were being conducted. Today, the mace symbolizes the university's governing authority and signifies the proceedings are officially sanctioned. Traditionally, the chair of the Faculty Senate acting as the Grand Marshal carries the mace to lead the academic procession at commencement and other special ceremonies.

The UTRGV 47" ceremonial mace was designed in 2016 by students in the College of Fine Arts and a committee of faculty from anthropology, archeology, geology, history, communication, and art. The head and seals of the mace were 3D printed and cast at the UTRGV College of Fine Arts. The mace is intricately imbued with historical, cultural, and architectural meaning.

The handles of the mace are made of mesquite wood locally sourced in the Rio Grande Valley and engraved with a decorative pattern of the state's official turtle, the Ridley, and wind turbines.

The helix, between the handles, represents the coming together of the legacy institutions. The helix is made of petrified palm, the official stone of Texas.

The base is crafted from mesquite and inlaid with blue selenite, thought to be associated with mental clarity, truth and honesty, and to represent the Rio Grande River.

The tip of the mace is made of El Sauz chert excavated and donated by Dr. Juan L. Gonzalez.



MEMORY STOLE

When students graduate from UTRGV they know they did not make the journey alone. The Memory Stole, a symbol of appreciation, is worn by graduates during the commencement ceremony. Following the ceremony they are encouraged to present the stole to a special family member, professor, or friend as a symbol of gratitude and appreciation for their support, inspiration, or mentorship.

UTRGV College Gonfalons

The college gonfalon—or banner—with roots in the Middle Ages, was a symbol of units or family groups. Today, gonfalons are used at official university ceremonies as heraldic devices and are frequently carried during processions at commencement.

At UTRGV, each college has a custom-designed banner signifying its academic unit. Each flag is rich in unique symbolism while also showing unity through size, shape, and color. The swoop at the bottom of each gonfalon represents the border of Texas, and the field of blue with gold stars of Texas represents the distributed nature of UTRGV—from Rio Grande City to South Padre Island.



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Symbols:
The central pattern intertwines the caduceus—a symbol for medical practice—with the tree of life. This pattern is surrounded by a DNA helix—the foundation for all living beings—and roots, which connect the human condition with all forms of creation.

Colors:
Blue for healing, green for earth, and white for air.

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Symbols:
A thousand petal lotus is the highest depiction of soul. Seven chakras symbolize the connection between mind, body, and spirit. Metatron's cube is for the profession's feminine and masculine side. Nightingale's Lamp represents beginning, laurel leaves for education and honor, and water for purity and source of life.

Colors:
Apricot for nursing, green, and blue for health professions.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Symbols:
Hands represent care and trust, while the rays of color are specialized paths guiding individuals on their road to recovery. The micro, macro, and mezzo programs are represented by three humans, and the lotus flowers symbolize how a beautiful life can bloom, even in the toughest of situations.

Colors:
Citron for social work, gold for honor and wisdom, and blue and green for caring and healing nature.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND P-16 INTEGRATION

Symbols:
The torch represents the guiding light—the ability for graduates to serve as a beacon for others and for the college to serve as a light that will lead the way for others.

The multicolored flame symbolizes the forward-thinking nature of the college, bringing power to ideas.

Colors:
Light blue for education, wisdom, intelligence and integrity.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Symbols:
The dominant image is an interpretation of Moore's Law: Every year, computer chips and components are able to compute twice as much data.

The eye of providence symbolizes the grand architect. In this case, the engineer takes all things into consideration.

Colors:
Orange for engineering and the metals involved in the processing and development of technology. Deep blue for social ethics.

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Symbols:
The waves represent the flow of the mind, freedom, imagination and knowledge. The three waves symbolize creativity, imagination, and motivation.

The interlocking shapes represent unity and strength between the arts and sciences.

The hummingbird stands for joy, beauty, strength, movement and independence.

Colors:
Wineberry for writing, khaki for fine arts, gold for art, and pink for music.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Symbols:
The dominant image is the peony flower, symbolizing health and medicine in Greek mythology; Paeon was turned into the flower by Zeus because Asclepius was threatened by his pursuit of knowledge.

The two snakes are Asclepius representing health and Hygeia representing wellness.

Colors:
Blue for the caring nature of the health professions and green for health and medicine.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Symbols:
The trivium is derived from the medieval symbol for the seven liberal arts and sciences.

The symbols of the lion and the scales of justice represent the dialogue between the value of the emotions, power, and creativity within the rational, law, and historical institutions.

Colors:
Crimson, gold, silver and blue represent the disciplines within the college.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

Symbols:
The infinity symbol for math and physics also represents perfection, unity, and balance.

The atom represents the sciences and the vertical pillars represent the foundation of all life and biology, while the vertical lines signify energy.

Colors:
Golden yellow is the color of science, mathematics, and physics, while gold represents wisdom, understanding, and enlightenment.

ROBERT C. VACKAR COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Symbols:
The two-headed eagle represents power and authority, while also symbolizing collaboration. Both heads are facing north, signifying innovation, looking forward, and success. Their wings are open, ready to fly and discover new horizons, and being open to new ideas. Wheat symbolizes wealth.

Colors:
Rust for economics, brown for business, and purple for leadership.



THE FUTURE OF TEXAS

#4
IN TEXAS
Most Hispanic Undergraduates Enrolled
(2018-2019)

#1 IN TEXAS **#3** NATIONALLY
Most Bachelor's Degrees Earned by Hispanic Students
(2017-2018)

#4 NATIONALLY
Most Master's Degrees Earned by Hispanic Students
(2019)

Source: *Excelencia in Education; Hispanic Outlook Magazine*



THE FUTURE OF TEXAS

#3 UNIVERSITY IN TEXAS

TOP 100 NATIONALLY

#1 IN TEXAS
Performance of Pell-Eligible Students
#5 Nationally

#1 IN TEXAS
One-Year Masters Programs Online

#1 IN TEXAS
Performance of First-Gen Students
#11 Nationally

Sources: *Washington Monthly; OnlineMastersColleges.com (2020)*

FREE TUITION FOR QUALIFYING STUDENTS

The all new UTRGV Tuition Advantage program fully covers the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for qualifying students with a family adjusted gross income of \$95,000 or less.

Learn more about how to qualify for FREE tuition at:
UTRGV.edu/TuitionAdvantage

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Alma Mater

Gather as one in voice ascending
 raising the song and anthem to thee.
 Orange and grey, your reign's unending;
 Hail to the mighty UTRGV!

Chorus:

Strength and devotion, we shall sustain.
 True to your colors we shall remain.
 Ever our song shall be raised on high.
 UT Vaqueros til' we die!

Joyful our days in halls eternal
 knowledge and skill forever endured.
 Let it be said "your love's maternal".
 Nurturing wisdom which all are ensured.
 (Repeat Chorus)

UTRGV™