



**2<sup>ND</sup>**  
in Texas  
for Social  
Mobility

**1<sup>ST</sup>**  
in Texas for  
Least Student  
Debt

**81%**  
1st-Year  
Retention  
Rate

**1<sup>ST</sup>**  
in Texas for  
Performance of  
First-Generation  
Students

**#1**  
COVID  
Testing  
Leader in  
the RGV

**1<sup>ST</sup>**  
in Texas for  
Performance  
of Pell-Eligible  
Students

**UTRGV**™



**UT** Health  
Rio Grande Valley™

**THE FUTURE OF TEXAS**

Legislative Priorities | 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session

[utrgv.edu/87th](http://utrgv.edu/87th)



## MESSAGE FROM DR. GUY BAILEY

### President, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Having completed our fifth year as UTRGV, I must thank you, the Texas legislature, for creating and investing in UTRGV and our School of Medicine. Your investment has proved invaluable to South Texas.

2020 was a challenging year, but I could not be prouder of how our university and our medical school worked together to keep our students and our community safe. In addition to implementing safety protocols on our campuses and offering instruction primarily online, UTRGV led the way in COVID-19 testing and contact tracing in the region. Testing sites were set up across the Rio Grande Valley and UT Health RGV, our practice plan, partnered with hospitals, cities, counties and others to serve as their clinical/diagnostic lab. Over 90,000 PCR tests have been conducted to date, with an average turnaround time of 24 hours for results. Most recently, UT Health RGV became a vaccination hub and in a few short weeks, over 16,000 people have been vaccinated, with that number growing exponentially daily.

Our School of Medicine could not have been established at a better time and in 2020, we were proud to graduate our first class. The graduates matched 100% to a residency training program, with 62% staying in Texas. Fifty percent of this year's medical school class is from the Rio Grande Valley and we have one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation with 42% Hispanics, 14% Black, 16% Asian/Indian and 20% White/Caucasian.

Next to ensuring our student's safety, our top priority is to assure our students' academic success. Maintaining one of the lowest

tuitions in the country and increasing our Tuition Advantage Plan to the highest in the state, were key to keeping our students in school. Students whose families earn less than \$95,000 a year pay no tuition or mandatory fees.

We also guarantee tuition and mandatory fees for 4 years, and cap our tuition at 12 hours, while encouraging students to take 15 hours or more each semester. It is no wonder that UTRGV ranks #1 among national public universities for the least student debt.

Knowing that the health pandemic would affect many of our students and their families financially, UTRGV provided innovative Summer, Fall and Spring Relief Packages which, through a combination of CARES Act and university funds, provided eligible students direct cash grants and tuition relief. And rather than reduce student employment when we transitioned most operations online due to the pandemic, UTRGV set aside over \$2 million for student employment so our students would have jobs during this difficult time.

These are challenging times, but despite the pandemic, UTRGV's enrollment grew to over 32,000, making us the 9th largest public university in Texas. And, we are especially proud to rank 2nd in Texas for enhancing the social mobility of our students. Keeping tuition and debt low, keeping students on track to graduate, increasing our students' social mobility, and keeping our region healthy are vital to our state's economic recovery from the pandemic and to the future of Texas. We thank you for your continued investment in UTRGV and look forward to what UTRGV will accomplish in the next five years.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 has been especially devastating to the Rio Grande Valley, with few left untouched by the pandemic's reach. Throughout the summer, the RGV made national news as our hospitals reached capacity and we accounted for 15% of the state's virus-related fatalities. UTRGV has been key in the fight against COVID-19 and in keeping the region healthy through testing, contact tracing and vaccination services, as well as increasing telemedicine capacity.

### • New UT Health RGV Clinical Laboratory

- Leader in COVID-19 testing in the RGV, UT Health RGV Clinical Laboratory has processed over 90K COVID tests as of January 2021
- Average turnaround time of 24 hours
- Capacity of up 2,000 samples per day

### • Patient Communication Center

- Current daily volume is between 500-1,000 inquiries with over 200,000 calls/forms received to date

### • Three Drive-Thru Testing Sites & Mobile Testing Service

- Offers mobile testing services across the Rio Grande Valley

### • Vaccination Sites

- UT Health RGV, the practice plan arm of the UTRGV School of Medicine, has been designated a vaccine hub and has, in a few short weeks, vaccinated over 16,000 people, with that number growing daily

### • Using Telemedicine To Care For Patients

- In April, UT Health RGV launched telemedicine capability across our 25 clinical sites to improve access to healthcare across the county and region
- 8,500 telemedicine encounters and growing

### • Supporting Texas Contact Tracing Efforts

- Contracted with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) for contact tracing
- A total of 299 contact tracers, investigators, and epidemiology leads are available to help with state efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19



## General Academic Institution: 2022-2023 Biennium

### MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF FORMULA FUNDING AND FUND ENROLLMENT GROWTH

A sustained commitment to formula funding for enrollment growth and inflation is critical to maintain the significant positive educational strides being made in the RGV and across the state. Funding enrollment growth is vital; not funding growth creates a disproportionate allocation of the formula.

### MAINTAIN CURRENT LEVEL OF NON-FORMULA SUPPORT FUNDING \$21.4 Million For The Biennium

Maintain UTRGV's current level of funding by restoring the 5% budget reduction, including \$16.8M for Institutional Enhancement which is critical to funding four new programs.

- Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) the 1st in Texas
- Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Bachelor of Science in Integrate Health Sciences
- Bridge Pipeline Program to Biomedical Sciences and Other Health Professional Programs

### TUITION REVENUE BONDS

In the event the State is considering funding Tuition Revenue Bonds, UTRGV requests \$76 million for a 130,000 sq. ft. Health Affairs Building, which is needed to address the increasing demand for existing and new programs and future workforce needs in all health professions in the RGV.

## School of Medicine (SoM): 2022-2023 Biennium

### SUSTAIN NON-FORMULA START-UP FUNDING

#### \$39.8 Million For The Biennium (After 5% Reduction)

UTRGV's nascent SoM opened in 2016. General Revenue is derived primarily from non-formula support (NFS) and practice plan revenues. Formula funding is limited due to enrollment caps until full accreditation is received and our young practice plan, while it has grown to over 30 sites across the region, serves a largely uninsured/ Medicaid population and lacks a regional hospital district to help support operations. Continued start-up funding is necessary to maintain and grow operations and to achieve full accreditation.

### CONTINUE FUNDING THE CANCER IMMUNOLOGY CENTER \$2 Million For The Biennium

The UTRGV SoM is building the first South Texas Center of Excellence on Cancer Research (ST-CECR). Continued NSF funding will allow research critical to developing advanced diagnostic, imaging, and therapeutic modalities for combating cancer in the RGV. The amount requested for the biennium has been reduced by \$712,500 because UTRGV and UTMB agreed not to transfer operations of a clinic in downtown McAllen.

### POLICY PRIORITIES

#### Financial Aid For Student Success

TEXAS Grants and work-study programs are cornerstones of student success. A large majority of UTRGV students are benefactors of these programs.

#### Tuition

Preserve tuition set-asides to provide critical student financial aid, and the current tuition-setting process whereby the authority resides with boards of regents to set tuition.

#### Hazlewood

Provide funding for the increasing cost of the Hazlewood tuition benefit.

#### Research

Research investments are an important component of operations. Continued, stable support for research programs benefit the state, and are especially critical to the mission of UTRGV and its School of Medicine.

#### Expand Broadband Coverage

Limited access to reliable broadband impeded many students' transition to online education across the state and in the Rio Grande Valley.

### RESTORE THE 5% BUDGET REDUCTION \$2.2 Million For The Biennium

The SoM stepped up as a leader in the fight against COVID-19 but was severely impacted by the pandemic. The 5% reduction was especially devastating and equates to the largest among the UT System HRIs.

### FUNDING FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY \$3 Million For The Biennium

UTRGV is requesting ongoing relief associated with COVID-19 related expenditures not otherwise eligible for reimbursement by federal funds. The SoM has led the region in COVID-19 PCR-based testing, contact-tracing and is now providing vaccinations for the campus community and the larger community across the entire RGV region.

### CONTINUATION OF DSRIP UNDER 1115 WAIVER

The Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program under the 1115 Waiver has been instrumental in UTRGV's ability to establish the SoM's 16 residency and fellowship programs. DSRIP's last funding cycle is set for FY21 and without this program, there will be a significant funding gap for FY22 and beyond.





"I was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley and chose to continue my education here for my undergraduate studies and for medical school. My experiences here have been outstanding. The faculty really care about changing healthcare in the RGV and I really get a sense of community togetherness. I am so grateful for the creation of the UTRGV School of Medicine and I am excited that I can be part of the success. In fact, I plan to ultimately practice primary care in the RGV in order to continue to provide care to my community."

**Vanessa Sanchez**  
MS3, UTRGV School of Medicine



"From student life to the classroom, UTRGV has been an amazing experience! This university offers more than just a degree, it offers a lifetime of memories. Whether students join an organization, attend campus events, use the campus' resources, or take part in an internship, UTRGV holds a place for everyone."

**Mayra Alejandra Camero**  
Computer Science Major,  
President of UTRGV IEEE Edinburg  
Student Branch, Community Outreach  
Director: UTRGV SHPE (Society of Hispanic  
Professional Engineers)

## NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS

**TOP 100**  
NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY

**#3**  
IN TEXAS

TOP NATIONAL UNIVERSITY &  
3rd BEST IN TEXAS

12.	Texas A&M (College Station)
77.	UT Austin
<b>86.</b>	<b>UTRGV</b>
95.	Rice
103.	UT Arlington
112.	UTEP
115.	Sam Houston State
136.	UTSA

LOWEST NET PRICE OF ATTENDANCE  
(AFTER FINANCIAL AID)

**1st in Texas**  
**6th nationally**

1.	Stanford \$1,875
2.	Harvard \$2,433
3.	Duke \$2,646
4.	Princeton \$3,233
5.	CUNY City College \$3,235
<b>6.</b>	<b>UTRGV \$3,298</b>



**in One-Year Masters  
Program Online**

by onlinemasterscolleges.com (2020)



**Nationally for Total  
Bachelor's Degrees Awarded  
to Hispanics in 2019**



**Nationally for Total  
Master's Degrees Awarded  
to Hispanics in 2019**

## UTRGV AT A GLANCE

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) was created by the Texas Legislature in 2013 as the first major public university of the 21st century in Texas. This transformative initiative provided the opportunity to expand educational opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley, including a new School of Medicine.

UTRGV stretches over 120 miles and has campuses and off-campus research and teaching sites throughout the Rio Grande Valley including in Boca Chica Beach, Brownsville (formerly The University of Texas at Brownsville campus), Edinburg (formerly The University of Texas-Pan American campus), Harlingen, McAllen, Port Isabel, Rio Grande City, South Padre Island and Weslaco. UTRGV, a comprehensive academic institution, enrolled its first class in the fall of 2015, and the School of Medicine welcomed its first class in the summer of 2016.

UTRGV offers programs through its 12 colleges and a School of Medicine.

- 9th largest 4-year public university in Texas and the 4th largest within the UT System
- Largest Hispanic enrollment in Texas
- One of the most diverse medical schools in the nation
- #1 in Texas and #5 Nationally for performance of Pell-Eligible students
- #1 in Texas and #11 Nationally for performance of First-Generation students
- #1 in Texas and #3 Nationally for awarding the most undergraduate 4-Year Degrees to Hispanics
- #1 in Texas and #4 Nationally for awarding the most graduate degrees to Hispanics