



# Vaquer@s of *UTRGV*

October 7-11, 2024

The University of Texas  
Rio Grande Valley<sup>™</sup>  
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Student Accessibility Services



## Welcome to our **Vaquer@s of UTRGV series!**

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Vaqueros of UTRGV began as a concept to share the personal experiences from our students.

Read real stories from people with different types of disabilities and how they cope with challenges and opportunities in their daily lives. Learn about their experiences, tips, and resources!

**- V's Up Vaqueros!**



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Alyna Lizcano

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# Vaqueros, meet Alyna Lizcano!

My name is Alyna Lizcano, and I am a Visual Communications major with a minor in Marketing. My current classification is a Junior here at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. My career aspirations is to become a Graphic Designer for UTRGV and to one day become an artist who does a variety of commissioned artwork.

UTRGV's Student Accessibility Services (SAS) has played a crucial role in my academic journey, offering vital accommodations to offset my struggles with depression and anxiety. Their unwavering support and tailored resources have been instrumental in turning overwhelming semesters into manageable ones, making it possible for me to continue my education.

SAS's dedication to inclusivity has not only helped guide me in my academic path but also instilled in me the determination to persevere despite the challenges posed by my mental health conditions. Without SAS, navigating university life while I deal with my mental health would have been impossible for me; Their commitment to equal access and support is something I am very grateful for as a student here at UTRGV.

To me, accessibility means giving every student a fair shot at education and life, no matter what hurdles they face. It's about showing that even during tough times, there's a way forward. Accessibility ensures that students get the support they need to succeed, regardless of any challenges or any conditions they may have. It's about leveling the playing field so that everyone has an equal opportunity to learn and grow.

I hope to promote accessibility and inclusion in my future career by creating an environment that makes everyone feel welcome. I wish to be a worker who makes others know that their moments of hardship are not things to be embarrassed about; We all face different challenges in life, and that's okay. I hope to be a Graphic Designer that works hard to include everyone and that my services are easy for anyone and everyone to access. That way if someone has a message to share to the world, they feel comfortable sharing their design passions with me.







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Jessica C. Fuller

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# Vaqueros, meet Jessica C. Fuller!

Hi, my name is Jessica C. Fuller, MAIS Graduate Student (anticipated degree completion Summer I 2024)!

Reflecting on what I have learned through my graduate courses, I see that my strengthened skill set thrives in an environment that assists the community. I love researching, writing, and learning about policies that benefit marginalized groups. I am confident that I will land a career within a field that encompasses these duties.

UTRGV/SAS has assisted me immensely over the last two years. When I returned to school in 2020, I realized that school seemed more difficult and challenging than during my undergraduate time. I thought I was overreacting and that returning to school may have been a mistake, but still, I was determined to find a solution to the challenges I was facing. SAS was great in providing me with resources to help alleviate the challenges I faced. I was blessed to be connected to an amazing therapist who was instrumental in diagnosing me with ADHD.

Wherever my journey takes me, I hope to be a valuable resource for anyone struggling to find the answers they desperately want.





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Cindy Ruiz Zamudio

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# Vaqueros, meet Cindy Ximena Ruiz Zamudio!

My name is Cindy Ximena Ruiz Zamudio, I'm a Criminal Justice Major with a minor in Spanish and my classification is Junior, I've been part of the UTRGV since summer of 2021, I'm a first-generation student and I identify as an Indigenous Chicana.

My desires are to become a Private Investigator or part of the CSI department in the police in the long run, but in short future I'll love to have a master's in Forensic Science or Forensic Psychology, both had been my passion since I was a little kid and the collection of evidence, process, and help to solve problematics relate to Law Enforcement have always been my interest.

I've been helped by SAS since I started my 2nd semester in the school after I finally got my diagnosis of ADHD by having accommodations related to my disorder, professors have had been comprehensive of it and I'm glad to say that I'll always be grateful for all the mentoring that I've received from the department, and how it had impacted my career on the long run, I know what standards I should have when it comes to my education and career experience and hopeful to find a job that suits those things.

To me, accessibility means that I'm able to become better than what I could be through help and access to services or products that can make my quality of life good, but it also means educating others to things related to any disabilities and ways on where we can validate and help other people with those disabilities without making them feel like they're not human.

I've been trying my best to learn ASL and derivatives from it to become more inclusive in one of the many disabilities that can be around, but I also hope that the education I've received and I'm continuing to experience can help to my work environment to become more disability friendly in a future.







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America Martinez

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# Vaqueros, meet America Martinez!



Hi, my name is America. As a returning student to UTRGV, I felt I was going to have a difficult time adjusting to the classroom. I knew I would miss some of the information the professors shared while lecturing and SAS has provided incredible support.

My personal experience with SAS has been exceptionally wonderful! The staff took their time to meet with me, explained the services I would be receiving, and continue to be available anytime I need something. I am extremely anxious when taking any kind of test or exam and services were provided for that. I was also given a device where I can go back on notes taken, in case I missed anything with my hearing device, on the lectures. These resources have helped tremendously! I have also made the President's List a few times and am very proud of myself for that accomplishment.

My overall experience as a returning student has exceeded my expectations. My confidence has grown every semester. I feel that classes have been easier to follow because of these resources that the university offers to the students. The professors I've had have also been amazing! I would advise anyone who needs these services to walk into Student Accessibility Services with a positive mindset. The staff is available to help you! They are knowledgeable, ready to answer your concerns and easy to speak to. Find out how they can assist you with your own needs.

I can't thank everyone enough who has helped me up to this point.



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Ameyalli De Jesus Jimenez

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## Vaqueros, meet Ameyalli!



My name is Ameyalli De Jesus Jimenez, and my major is in Rehabilitation with a concentration in deaf and hard of hearing studies. I have been with UTRGV since the Fall of 2019, and I am a first-generation Mexican American student. I am also the first in my family to graduate from high school.

With the diagnosis of my little brother, we got to learn about his numerous disabilities. He has autism, ADHD and epilepsy, and at the news of his disabilities the older sister protective instincts kicked in. Originally pursuing a major in communication science and disorders, I then made the change to rehabilitation. Understanding disabilities, bringing awareness, and learning how to advocate for people with disabilities.

At the start of my university, a global pandemic shifted everyone's lives including mine. I learned about the essentials of mental health and how disabilities can impact more than one area of a person's life. Impacting mine and my academics, I took a semester off and came back more motivated than ever.

With the assistance of Student accessibility services (SAS) and the counseling center. It has now allowed me to achieve my goal to soon graduate this Fall 2024. My best university experience was learning along the way that I too have a disability, and the resources provided by UTRGV to achieve students' success. Now with my graduating being around the corner, I strive to continue my education and obtain a masters in clinical rehabilitation.