UTRGV™ Campus Operations

INNOVATING THE VALLEY



ISSUE 2 | FALL 2026

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FROM THE HELM

MESSAGE FROM OUR VP & CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The ten-year anniversary of UTRGV's establishment provided an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our university. Milestones like these remind us to reflect on how far we have come while also preparing intentionally for what lies ahead.

As we move into a new year, Campus Operations continues to demonstrate that a thriving university is not built by chance. It requires proactive planning, thoughtful stewardship, and a deep commitment to service. While this newsletter highlights our projects, initiatives, and progress toward key goals, I want to recognize the people who make those achievements possible.

Our university is more than its buildings and infrastructure. It is the individuals who arrive early, stay late, and take pride in creating spaces that support learning, research, discovery, and connection. Often, their work happens behind the scenes—addressing issues before they are noticed, refining details that may never be named, and maintaining the standards that reflect who we are as an institution. Through their dedication, our campuses become environments where excellence and belonging can flourish.

I am proud to lead a team that understands service can be both visible and unseen. Their professionalism, care, and commitment help transform vision into reality and support UTRGV's continued growth. Every student, faculty member, staff member, and visitor benefits from their efforts each time they step onto our campuses.

This newsletter is for those who experience our work and for those who make it possible. While not every achievement can be captured in these pages, I invite you to keep an eye on the horizon as we continue sharing our story in future issues.

To the Campus Operations team: thank you for your dedication, professionalism, and commitment to building together.

With Gratitude,

Jason Hartley

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer



BUILDING THE V

A NEW LANDMARK FOR VAQUERO PRIDE

Created by **UTRGV Campus Facilities Operations**, this project was completed alongside a historic moment for the university: the launch of its first football season. Together, they mark a new chapter of **growth**, **pride**, and **identity** across each campus.

Designed and installed over Summer 2025, the feature is more than just a visual landmark. It reflects the work happening behind the scenes to maintain and enhance over **600 acres** of university space across the Rio Grande Valley.



If you've passed parking lot E16 on the Edinburg campus, you may have noticed something new—a bold landscape installation featuring the iconic Vaquero "V."







"IT TAKES A LOT OF MANPOWER AND RESOURCES TO MAKE THE CAMPUSES LOOK LIKE THEY DO, BUT WE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN SHAPING AN INTERACTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE," SAID ORLIE OZUNA, SENIOR IRRIGATION TECHNICIAN.

Sustainability also played a key role in the design. The project incorporates **native plants** and **water-efficient irrigation** systems to reduce resource use while maintaining a vibrant landscape.

As campus continues to grow, spaces like the Vaquero "V" serve as both a welcoming feature and a reminder of the people working every day to shape the UTRGV experience.



STAY ALERT, STAY READY, STAY VAQUERO

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

UTRGV's **Office of Emergency Management** helps keep our campus informed and prepared before emergencies happen.

Ready UTRGV is the university's official emergency alert system, delivering real-time updates and safety information to more than **46,000** students, faculty, and staff.

Stay Alert & Informed

- Emergency alerts and real-time updates
- Preparedness tools and safety resources
- Access to shelters and emergency guidance
- Visit utrgv.edu/readyutrgv

Always Prepared

UTRGV works with local and regional partners to **monitor threats**, **share information**, and **coordinate response** efforts across the Rio Grande Valley.

Even when emergencies don't directly impact campus, the team continues planning, monitoring, and preparing, because *safety extends beyond campus*.

CASA BELLA BEAUTIFICATION

CAMPUS FACILITIES

The *2026 MLK Day of Service* kicked off when the UTRGV **Student Involvement** partnered with the **Grounds Maintenance Department** to lead a beautification project at **Casa Bella Dormitory** in Brownsville, creating a meaningful on-campus volunteer opportunity for students.

Grounds Maintenance identified Casa Bella dorms as the perfect space for beautification and provided all necessary materials, including mulch, shovels, wheelbarrows, and gloves, and supported students throughout the day.

Over 20 student volunteers!



The project had an immediate visual impact, enhancing the campus environment while reinforcing a **shared sense of pride** and ownership among students. More importantly, it highlighted the **value of collaboration**, showing how students and staff can work side by side to support campus operations and give back to their own community.



"OUR TEAM ALWAYS KEEPS IN MIND THAT COMING TOGETHER BETWEEN STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF ACHIEVES A LARGER IMPACT THAN WHAT WAS PLANNED."
-RUBEN ZUNIGA, GROUNDS SUPERINTENDENT FOR +27 YEARS

VAQUERO IN THE BLUE SHIRT

Vaquero in the Blue Shirt announces a celebrational series to recognize the outstanding contributions of on-campus colleagues. Highlighting individuals who exemplify the spirit of UTRGV through **dedication**, **innovation**, and **positive impact** in our community.

Campus Operations invites YOU to participate in this initiative by nominating a deserving employee in a signature Blue Shirt. Your nomination will help shine a spotlight on **those who go above and beyond** in their roles, amplifying UTRGV as a better place for everyone.

To learn more about how to nominate a colleague, access our nomination form.

Follow **@utrgvcampusops** to follow the Vaquero in the Blue Shirt series.

Nominate a Vaquero
in the Blue Shirt Today

Click here to acess form













GO GREEN RGV

OFFICE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



The Mission

This semester, the Office for Sustainability (OFS) has been on the move, creating more ways for students to take part in real, hands-on impact across campus and the Rio Grande Valley. OFS will continue hosting events throughout the year so check the UTRGV events calendar under sustainability to get involved!















The Efforts

From campus cleanups and native planting efforts to a large-scale Spring Beach Cleanup at South Padre Island, students have been actively contributing to healthier ecosystems both on and off campus. OFS also partnered with STEM departments to recognize sustainability-focused research, highlighting student innovation and leadership.



Earth Month Momentum

April brought that momentum to life through Earth Month, where nearly 500 participants across Edinburg and Brownsville campuses engaged in interactive events, service projects, and community collaborations. From educational panels and volunteer days to campus activities and partnerships, Earth Month created space for students to connect sustainability to everyday action.



Recognition

The 2026 Spring semester also brought regional recognition, with UTRGV earning a renewed Tree Campus Higher Education designation. To celebrate Texas Arbor Day, students partnered with the City of Edinburg to plant native trees, investing in greener spaces and long-term community impact.

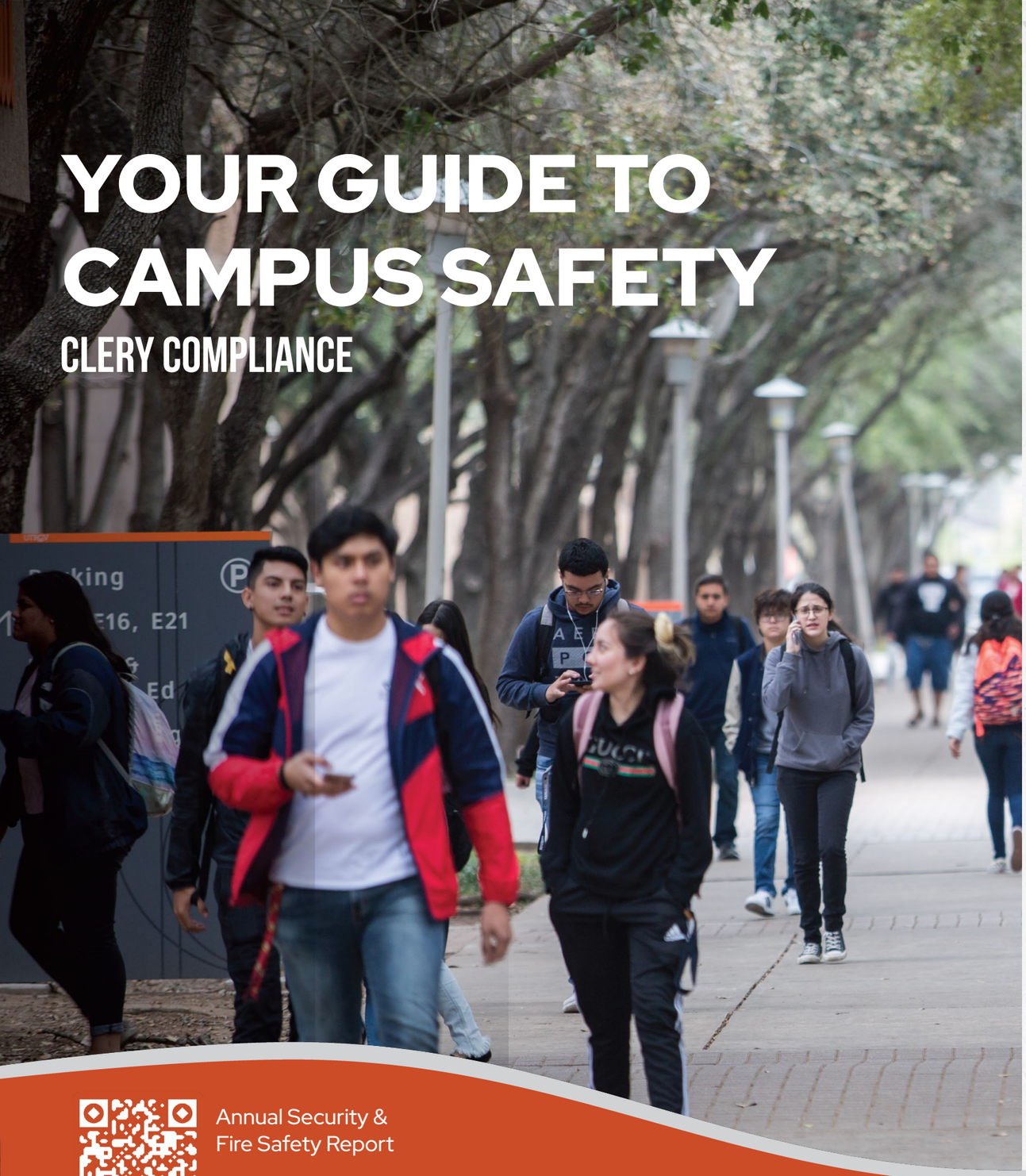


Vaqueros Recycle

Look out for coming to UTRGV in the Fall!

YOUR GUIDE TO CAMPUS SAFETY

CLERY COMPLIANCE



Know Your Campus Safety Information: Annual Security and Fire Safety Report

Each year, the **Clery Compliance Office** publishes UTRGV's *Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, which provides important information about campus safety and security at UTRGV.

The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report covers topics including:

- Campus security policies
- Building access
- Crime statistics
- Emergency procedures
- Missing student protocols
- Fire safety information
- Hazing prevention and reporting information

The 2025 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report is currently available online. The *2026 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report*, which includes crime statistics for 2023–2025, will be published by **October 1, 2026**. The Clery Compliance Office coordinates the **collection**, **review**, and **reporting** of information required for the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report and other Clery Act compliance requirements.

"BY STAYING INFORMED AND LOOKING OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER, VAQUEROS HELP CREATE A CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE CAN LEARN, WORK, AND THRIVE."



Are you a Campus Security Authority?
Do you know if you're a CSA and what's required of you?

You may be and not know it! Faculty and staff with significant responsibility for student and campus activities may be designated as **Campus Security Authorities** (CSAs) and have **reporting responsibilities** under the Clery Act.

Annual Security & Fire Safety Report

Scan QR Code or Click Here

Not sure if you're a CSA or what your responsibilities are?
Contact the Clery Compliance Office at clery@utrgv.edu to learn more.

RISK MANAGED.
EXCELLENCE DELIVERED.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT



Meet the Hazardous Waste Operations Responders (left to right):
Safety Specialist Hugo Rodriguez Jr,
Environment Program Manager Epifanio Flores,
Safety Coordinator David Shamlian (serving Brownsville and Harlingen).

Commitment to Sustainability

True to UTRGV's spirit of resourcefulness, this team works with lab partners to **repurpose unopened**, **unexpired chemicals**. Flammables may be repurposed for fuel; batteries are recycled, and some other materials undergo **ultra-high-temperature incineration**, leaving only a carbon byproduct.



Managing Hazardous Waste Across RGV

The **UTRGV Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management** (**ESHRM**) team manages hazardous waste disposal and protocols across all UTRGV sites, **spanning four counties**, in order to protect our people and local ecosystems.

This specialized team is certified as **Hazardous Waste Operations Responders**, trained annually to manage everything from **standard protocols to chemicals spills**. One of the Hazardous Waste Management Team's most impressive features is their capacity to accept an incredibly diverse range of materials.

Everything from batteries and paint to old chemicals and metal powders, their work helps keep labs and classrooms **safe for everyone**. Waste streams are generated by university research labs, educational spaces, training sites, administrative and operations-based buildings, and even *UTHealth RGV Clinics and Centers*.



Training Excellence

If you are enrolled in labs for *Chemistry*, *Biology*, *Engineering*, *Fine Arts* and *Theatre* then *Laboratory Safety/Hazard Communication training* with EHSRM may already be addressed.

Trainings like these ensure everyone understands **proper chemical storage and handling**, **personal protective equipment**, **hazard identification**, and **emergency response procedures**. Want to learn more check out the available training schedule.

To learn more scan or click here to check out the available training schedule.



BIG UPGRADES, FRESH EATS, & MORE

CAMPUS AUXILIARY SERVICES

Who said campus life can't get any better? From fresh eats and game-day additions to upgraded services and expanded transportation, there's plenty new across UTRGV this fall.

What's on the Menu?

There's plenty to enjoy across campus! **Heritage Coffee** brings made-to-order coffee and sandwiches to *The Market* in Brownsville.

At Vackar Stadium, football fans can enjoy Bubba's 33 specialty burgers on the southwest concourse, locally inspired drinks and pastries from **The Yellow Spur Lemonade Stand** on the northwest side, and grilled fajitas at **Cattle Drive BBQ**.



Show Your Vaquero Pride

The Campus Store powered by **BibliU** offers textbooks, educationally discounted technology, snacks, and Vaquero merchandise—available in person or online.

On game days, visit the **Team Store at Vackar Stadium** for official football apparel, hats, spirit items, and game-day essentials.

Vaquero Market

Vaquero Market brings local licensed vendors and unique UTRGV-branded merchandise to Vackar Stadium. A collaboration between Campus Auxiliary Services, Athletics, and BibliU, the market is located in the **HEB Tailgate Zone – Pavilion Circle** before home games.

Official Ring Provider

Following a competitive bid process, Jostens was selected as **UTRGV's official ring provider**, continuing its longstanding relationship with the university and offering students and alumni a symbol of Vaquero pride and achievement.



Print Services Gets an Upgrade

Expanded printing capabilities: Print Services is introducing two high-speed digital color presses capable of producing true UTRGV orange and gray, plus premium clear coat, silver, and gold embellishments for marketing materials, invitations, direct mail, and more.

Streamlined online ordering: The new **WebCRD** platform provides single sign-on and 24/7 access to submit and manage print jobs, preview finishing options, and track orders online.

More Transportation Options This Fall

Transportation Services has expanded and adjusted routes to better serve the campus community:

- **Extended weekday service**: Routes operate **6 a.m.–12:30 a.m.**, **Monday through Friday** on class days.
- **Saturday service**: Transportation connects **Edinburg**, **Brownsville**, and the **Weslaco CIC**.
- **Harlingen routes**: Schedules have been adjusted to better reflect expected travel times.

Check the Fall Transportation Schedules for complete route information.

VOLT Route Names: Routes have been renamed for easier identification.

Campus	New Route Name	*Formerly known as*
Edinburg	North Circuit West Circuit East Circuit	Orange Purple Green
Brownsville	South Circuit East Circuit West Circuit	Yellow Pink (New)











SECURING THE FUTURE HOME OF OPTOMETRY

OFFICE OF REAL ESTATE

UTRGV's acquisition of the former *Monitor* building in McAllen marks an important step in the university's long-term growth. The property will become the future home of the *School of Optometry*, giving the university room to expand academic programs and healthcare training in a location that is already familiar to the community.

The **Real Estate team** played a key role in making that move possible. Their work helped identify the property, guide the purchase process by contacting the listing agent to obtain an independent appraisal, and secure a space that **supports both academic and operational needs**. The building's layout offers flexibility for classroom, clinical, and support functions, while its location adds value by keeping UTRGV connected to the heart of McAllen. Beyond optometry, this location is also the new home to the **Distribution and Logistics** and **Records Management** offices, underscoring the efforts of *Strategic Space Management & Real Estate* for a growing and changing university.

This acquisition also reflects a broader strategy of making the most out of existing spaces in ways that serve future generations of students. By transforming a well-known local building into a center for education and care, **UTRGV is investing in both the campus and the region it serves**. For the Real Estate team, the project is a reminder that their work shapes more than property, it helps build the foundation for what UTRGV will become next.



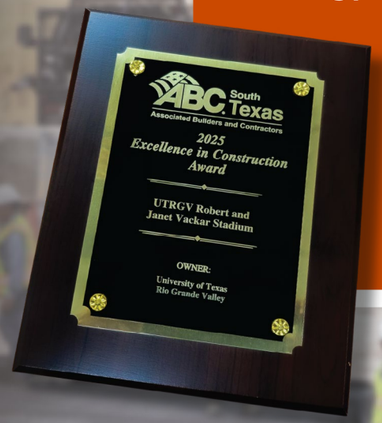
New location for Central Recieving and Records Management.

AWARD-WINNING IMPACT

PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION



The **UTRGV Planning & Construction Team** has been recognized with the *2025 Associated Builders* and *Contractors South Texas Excellence in Construction Award* for their work on the **Robert and Janet Vackar Stadium**, a landmark project that reflects the university's commitment to excellence and service to the region. This distinction highlights the team's ability to deliver a complex, high-profile facility with **exceptional quality**, **strong project management**, and a **steadfast commitment to meeting project timelines**.



Receiving this award recognizes not only the facility itself, but also the **dedication and collaborative spirit** of the UTRGV Planning & Construction Team whose work continues to **shape the university and region's innovation**.

FACES BEHIND THE PROJECTS



Luis Escalera
Facilities Project Manager II
At UTRGV Since 2025

Favorite Project: *Robert & Janet Vackar Stadium* ; Completed August 2025

The stadium will always stand out to me. Beyond being my first UTRGV project, it really was the start of something new. From the beginning, the intention behind it was bigger than the work itself, and faith drove us forward we knew we were building this for something far greater than ourselves. Our team put in long hours with passion and dedication, and you could feel that everyone believed in what we were creating. That's what made it special: it wasn't just a project, it was the beginning of a bigger vision.

What makes you proud to be a Vaquero:

You can't talk about the Valley or walk around the 956 without UTRGV being part of the conversation. UTRGV represents our community where we come from and where we want to go. It brings new ideas and methods into our everyday lives, draws people from outside the Valley who want to be part of the movement, and, just as importantly, gives our own people a reason to stay so they don't have to go "experiment" in bigger cities. That's our why in the planning and construction department: to bring the best facilities to our students and staff. Being a proud Vaquero means caring about the person next to you and working together toward the same goal and you get to see that all across the Valley.



MAKING SPACE WORK SMARTER

STRATEGIC SPACE PLANNING

As UTRGV continues to grow, **Strategic Space Planning** is focused on one challenge: making sure the spaces we already have are working as efficiently as possible.

Rather than expanding footprint, the team is taking a data-driven approach to understand how classrooms, offices, and shared spaces are actually being used. By analyzing room **scheduling patterns**, **utilization data**, and **department needs**, they're identifying opportunities to improve access and **reduce underutilized space** across each campus.

Recent efforts have centered on refining space data, improving workflows, and identifying areas that can be better optimized before considering **renovations**, **new allocations**, or **new construction.**

At the end of the day, it's about making every square foot count; supporting a campus that grows smarter, not just bigger.

One key tool supporting this effort is the **Space Allocation Request Form**, which streamlines how departments submit and track space needs. This process allows requests to be evaluated for a broader campus perspective, balancing immediate demands with long-term planning goals.

Optimize Space





NEW FLEET. STRONGER SAFETY.

CAMPUS POLICE

UTRGV Police is rolling out a **major** fleet upgrade to better protect the Vaquero community. Many existing units had reached the end of their service life, becoming costly to maintain and are less reliable. This year, those vehicles are being replaced with new, fully equipped patrol units built for **modern campus safety**.



Fleet Upgrade Snapshot

- **20 vehicles** being replaced
- Many units over **100,000 miles**
- Some nearing **200,000 miles**

Why This Matters to You

- Faster, more reliable response across campus
- Updated safety and communication technology
- A stronger, more visible police presence

Smarter Fleet, Lower Impact

- Retiring aging vehicles helps **reduce emissions**
- New units improve **fuel efficiency** and performance
- A long-term replacement cycle supports more sustainable operations

Prepared. Protecting. Proactive.

UTRGV Police continues working behind the scenes to keep campus safe, so you can focus on learning, living, and thriving.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


Sergio Perez


Jeremy San Miguel


Stephanie Trujillo


Maria Perez

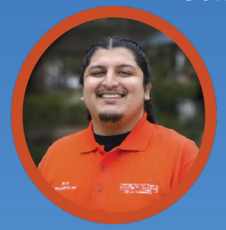

Karla Hernandez


Levi Jefferson

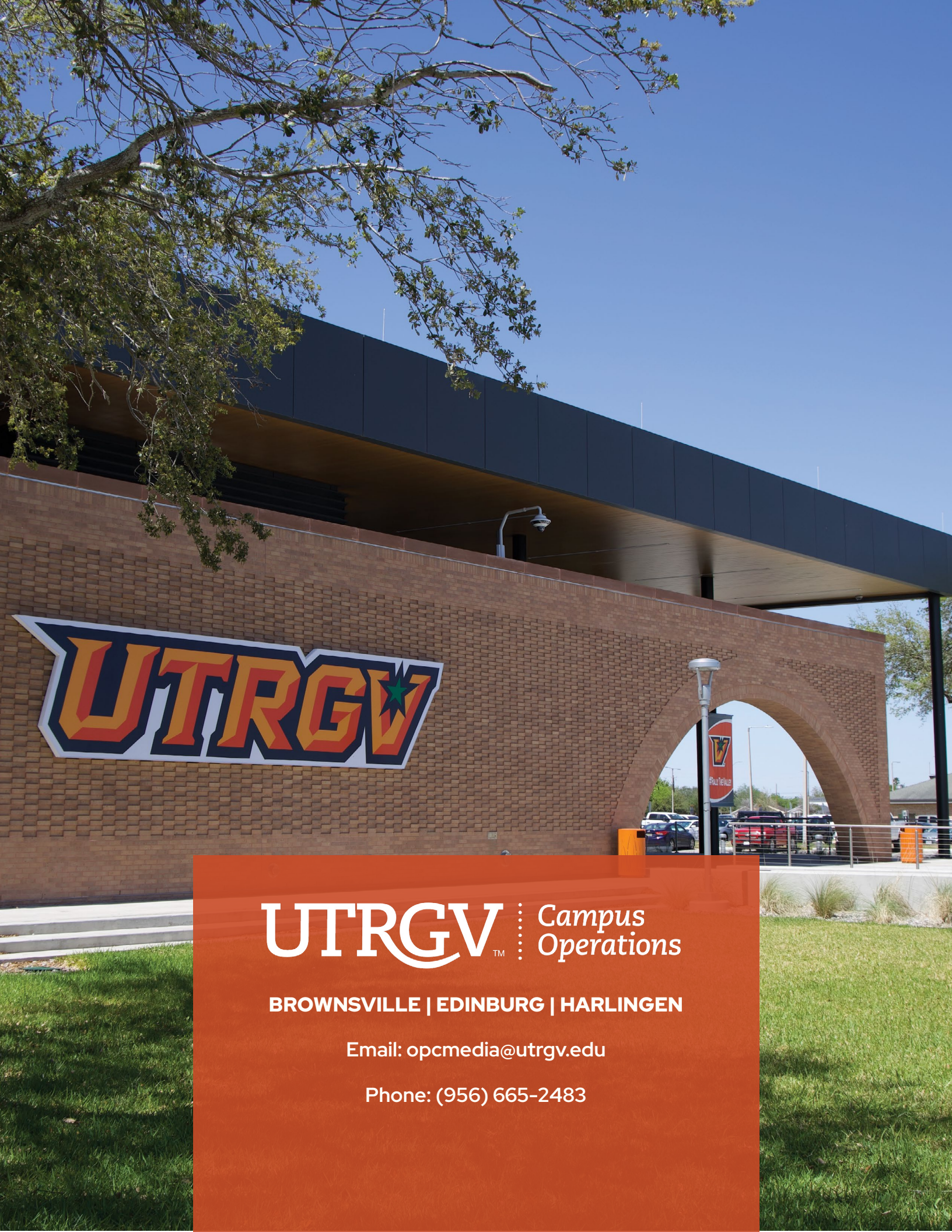

Jonathan Leal


Blue Hurtado


Emmalucia Elizondo


Kevin Arevalo


Valerie Hernandez



UTRGV™ Campus Operations

BROWNSVILLE | EDINBURG | HARLINGEN

Email: opcmedia@utrgv.edu

Phone: (956) 665-2483