

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™



DIVISION OF FINANCE & BUSINESS AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2 | SPRING 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT & CFO

Dear Vaqueros,

I am pleased to share this edition of our newsletter and extend my sincere appreciation for the continued dedication and professionalism demonstrated across the university. The work highlighted here reflects our commitment to operational excellence, collaboration, and service to the UTRGV community. As we move forward, our focus remains on supporting (you), the university's mission through sound financial stewardship, thoughtful planning, and continuous improvement.

I would like to thank the university community for their hard work, adaptability, and engagement. I encourage you to take a few moments to review the updates and accomplishments featured, and I look forward to our continued progress together.

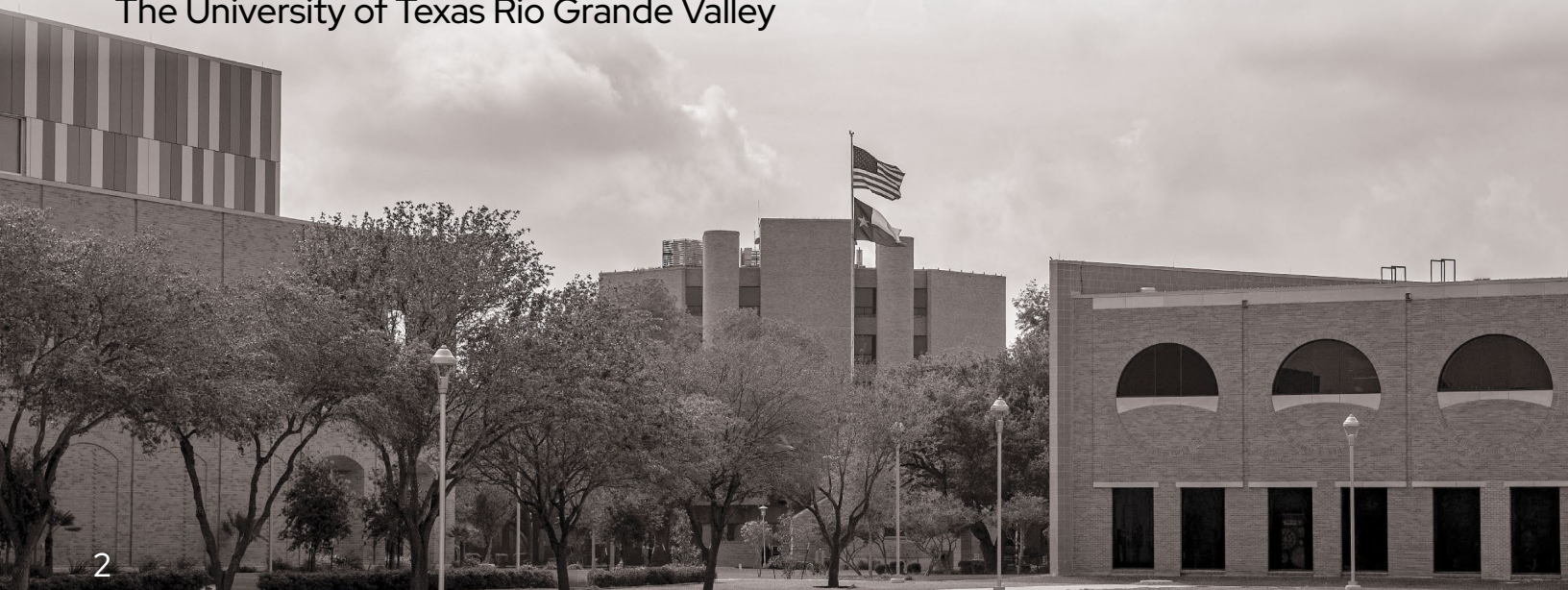
Best regards,



Michael Mueller

Executive Vice President for Finance and Business Affairs
Chief Financial Officer
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ACROSS THE DIVISION



TREASURY, STUDENT & FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

Accounts Payable & Assets Management

The Treasury, Student & Financial Systems department supports the University's financial integrity through **Accounts Payable** and **Assets Management**, located in the Financial Services Building in Edinburg.

Accounts Payable focuses on **efficiency**, **compliance**, and **user support** across campus financial and property processes. The team ensures timely vendor payments and employee reimbursements while providing clear, accurate guidance throughout the payment process. Recent efforts emphasize on-demand support to reduce delays, including:



Improved training and communication tools to address recurring questions and streamline workflows.



Expansion of the training library with updated documentation and brief instructional videos covering most common processes such as invoice creation and travel expense reports to clarify itemization errors, missing explanations, and timing issues.



The quantity/cost receipt threshold for invoicing recently increased from **\$500** to **\$5,000**. Only invoices of \$5,000 or greater now require receipt, reducing administrative burden and improving procure-to-pay efficiency.

Assets Management administers the asset lifecycle in compliance with State Property Accounting guidelines for **operational consistency**. Responsibilities include reconciling funding for construction/plant assets and submitting required reports to the UT System and the Texas State Comptroller.

The team prioritizes accuracy through timely action, including:

- ◆ **Annual Physical Inventory Certification**: conducted in two phases every year. The first phase concludes in December, followed by an extensive review period, while a second certification cycle began on Thursday, April 16th and is **due Friday, May 29th**.
- ◆ Current priorities include **improving surplus workflows**, approval timelines, and property tracking.
- ◆ Future updates will include enhanced procedures, guidance, and inaugural **Assets Management Newsletter**.



FINANCE & FISCAL REPORTING

As UTRGV prepares for the **Annual Financial Report** and upcoming **SACSCOC** (*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges*) reaffirmation audit, the availability of accurate, timely, and well-supported financial information is essential. Departmental reconciliations play a critical role in substantiating financial activity and maintaining the overall integrity of the University's reported financial results.

To support these objectives, the Finance & Fiscal Reporting team continues to prioritize the following areas:

Enhanced Monthly Financial Reviews

Strengthened monthly review and reconciliation processes help ensure that financial data is complete, accurate, and audit ready. These reviews facilitate the timely identification and **resolution of discrepancies**, support strong internal controls, and contribute to reliable financial reporting at both the departmental and university-wide levels.

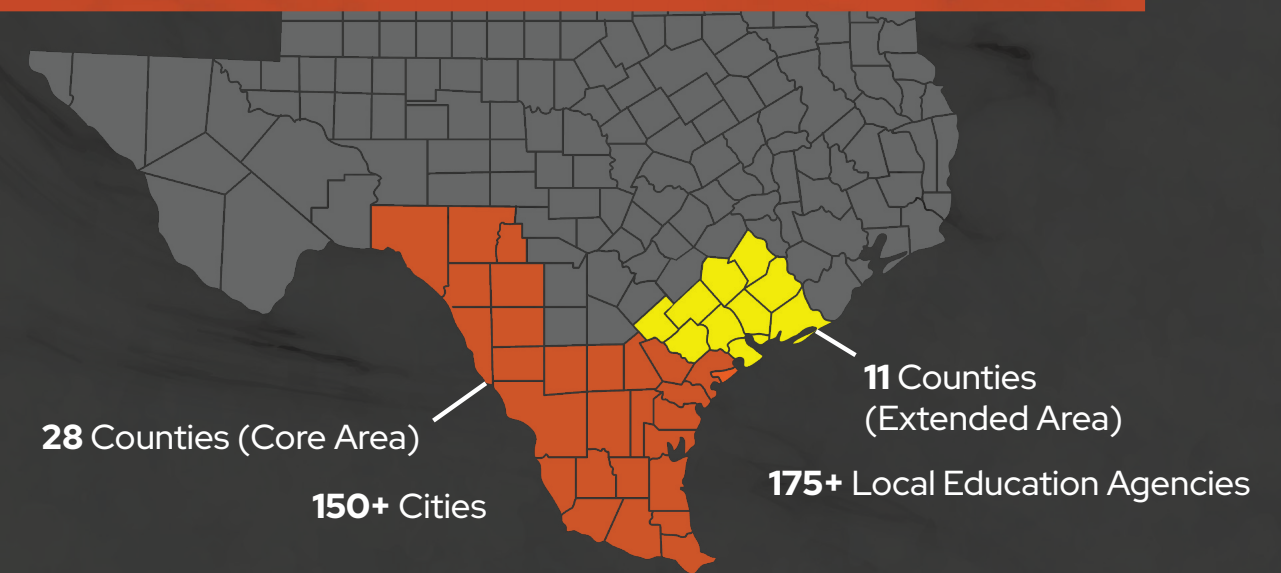
Payroll Accuracy & Compliance

The Payroll & Tax Compliance Office plays a key role in ensuring **accurate payroll processing** and adherence to regulatory compliance. Accurate pay is a shared responsibility and **relies on active participation from departments** and employees to:

- ◆ Submit personnel changes accurately and on time
- ◆ Ensure timecards are complete, accurate, and approved by established deadlines
- ◆ Substantiate banking and direct deposit changes entered in the PeopleSoft system

Through ongoing payroll monitoring and close coordination with departments, these efforts help ensure employees are paid correctly and on schedule while maintaining compliance with IRS regulations, UT System policies, and university requirements.

INFORMATION SECURITY



Since 2024, UTRGV has transformed how our region navigates digital safety. What began as an internal defense strategy has evolved into an **RGV-wide protection shield**. Established in partnership with the Texas Department of Information Resources, the *Regional Security Operations Center (RSOC)* serves as a zero-cost cybersecurity guardian extending beyond campus.

A Shield for 28 Counties

The pace at RSOC is relentless, we don't just safeguard UTRGV; we monitor the pulse of the Rio Grande Valley. By providing **immediate-response threat detection** to 60 participating school districts and local governments, we are securing the essential services our communities rely on, spanning from Laredo to Brownsville. Our core services include:

- ◆ **Incident Response:** Providing remote and onsite assistance to counter active security threats and data exposure.
- ◆ **Monitoring & Alerting:** Real-time detection of security events to help organizations protect their digital assets.
- ◆ **Policy & Planning:** Guiding partners in developing robust cybersecurity strategies and maintaining security policies.
- ◆ **Training & Awareness:** Offering educational resources and model policies to help organizations establish sound security practices.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Powering Game Day

As the crowd roared at UTRGV's first football games, few fans realized another team was hard at work behind the scoreboard lights and streaming screens; the university's IT division. Their goal: *make game day magic happen without a glitch.*

"Every light, every stream, every connection you see during a game comes from weeks of preparation," said Irma Hermida, IT Business Relationship Manager. "When fans are cheering, it means our systems are performing exactly as we planned."

"Seeing everything work together – the lights, video boards, scanners, and systems – reminds us how much **teamwork matters**," Hermida added. "It's more than technology; it's part of what makes Vaquero pride visible on the field." From football to basketball and beyond, IT continues powering every sport and event with **dedication** and **unity**, proving that success on the field starts with strong systems behind it.

As Vaquero Athletics continues to grow, IT teams are looking ahead to the next season with a focus on improved data systems, innovation, and delivering an even stronger game day experience.



To make each event run smoothly, IT teams handled a wide range responsibilities:

-  **Infrastructure and Operations / IT Media Systems:** Managed pre and post event checks for all audio, video, and streaming systems in the stadium and fieldhouse. Installed digital displays and supported live broadcasts throughout game day.
-  **Desktop Support:** Prepared hardware, printers, and network access for the Athletics offices and the new Vaquero Performance Center to ensure full readiness before kickoff.
-  **Data Center Services:** Maintained network and server stability, keeping real-time data flowing for Athletics operations and campus safety systems.
-  **Enterprise Information Systems:** Supported the TicketReturn platform so students can easily claim and access their free athletic tickets.
-  **Customer Support Team:** Offered on site technical help, Wi-Fi assistance, and ticket scanner setup to keep entrances and connections running smoothly.
-  **Business Information Systems:** Supports the Athletics department by ensuring they can securely process their online payments and sales using TouchNet (uStore).

PROCUREMENT OFFICE



Starting Spring 2026, UTRGV has officially wrapped up its switch to the U.S. Bank procurement card program. All CITI Bank procurement cards were shut down to meet the State of Texas's year-end transaction requirements. This milestone marks the end of an era and the launch of a new one with U.S. Bank, following the statewide contract awarded by the Texas Comptroller on September 1, 2025.

Program Highlights

- Over **800 cards** issued to returning staff and **150+** to new eligible employees.
- New qualification requirement: minimum annual spend of **\$2,500**
- Employees who met the threshold last fiscal year were automatically transitioned.
- Employees below the spending threshold can be referred to leadership for final determination.
- Updated mileage reimbursement: **\$0.725 per mile**

Leadership Perspectives

"We undergo frequent auditing to **guarantee ethical procurement**, especially when federal funding is involved. Overall, our priority is to ensure funds are secure and we are good stewards of university funds" - Maggie Rangel, Director of Procurement and Contracts

Procurement & Travel will continue refining processes and welcomes feedback or additional questions related to qualifications, reimbursements, repayment needs and more.



PROCARD@UTRGV.EDU
or TRAVEL@UTRGV.EDU



(956) 665-2168



<https://www.utrgv.edu/procurement/departments/travel/index.htm>



Central
Receiving

New Address
3901 N Jackson
McAllen Texas, 78501
**Starting June 1st



THE NEW ONE CARD.



CAMPUS OPERATIONS

BUILDING A SAFER CAMPUS, ONE SLICE AT A TIME

Through strategic use of **Permanent University Funds (PUF)**, Campus Operations is addressing critical deferred maintenance needs that help extend the life of campus infrastructure, one facility at a time.

Every building is made up of systems with defined life cycles, including roofs, building exteriors, HVAC, plumbing, electrical systems, fire detection, and interior infrastructure. As these systems age, Campus Operations carefully monitors their condition and **prioritizes repairs** and replacements based on urgency, safety, and operational risk.



Roof replacements



Aging plumbing repairs



Exterior building improvements



Modernization of outdated control systems



Deferred maintenance priorities, spanning UTRGV's distributive campus model, are based on the condition, **life cycle stage**, and **urgency of each building system**, rather than by campus location, ensuring that resources are directed first to the areas where safety concerns or operational impacts are greatest.

While more than **\$100 million in PUF funding** is being deployed for deferred maintenance, this amount represents only a small slice of the overall resources needed to fully address needs across a growing and aging university. In many cases, Facilities teams must keep systems running well beyond their expected life span, **providing extra care and maintenance** until full replacement becomes possible.

Through **careful planning** and a **commitment to stewardship**, Campus Facilities Operations continues to protect the university's physical assets, ensuring today's buildings can serve tomorrow's students, faculty, and staff.



BUDGET & PLANNING

Budgeting in higher education can be complex and continuous but consider our team of eight finance professionals your **Budget Buddies**.



Locate your Unit



Email:

PLANNINGANDANALYSIS@UTRGV.EDU



Connect with your Budget Buddy

As the primary contact for specific colleges or divisions, each *Budget Buddy* will ensure a structured proposal of support between the institution and your office. Budgets have many moving pieces, but we will **navigate changes**, projections, and **updates together** while ensuring compliance with university policies. We will support all administrative and academic units as they prepare their future budgets.

Have a question about operation guidelines or need assistance with an appropriations request? We encourage you to leverage the resources you have with us. Send an email to planningandanalysis@utrgv.edu and we will link you up with your P&A budget contact.

Once one fiscal year plan is finalized, rest assured we are preparing for the next.

Whenever you are ready to plan next year's budget, Budget Buddies offer practical support with **expert guidance** and tools to **keep your unit on track**.



NEW YEAR, NEW UNIT: WELCOMING HUMAN RESOURCES TO DFBA

This year marks a new chapter for the Office of Human Resources as it officially joins the Division of Finance and Business Affairs. The move brings people and processes closer together, linking those who manage university resources with those who support the people behind them.

For employees, HR is often the first stop on their UTRGV journey and the team they connect with throughout their careers. From **answering benefits questions** to offering **professional training**, HR aims for every employee to feel supported.

SO, WHAT DOES HR PROVIDE UNDER DFBA?



Recruitment, compensation review, and onboarding services



Benefits, wellness, and leave assistance



Training, employee engagement, and career development opportunities



Verification of employment and oversight of employee-related transactions and records to ensure accuracy and timeliness



Employee relations and workplace accommodations

Bringing HR into DFBA is more than an administrative addition, it's a **commitment to collaboration and service**. Together, both offices are working to build on UTRGV's momentum and further position it as a responsive, people-centered employer of choice committed to growth and community impact.



SHAPING RESPONSIBLE AI AT UTRGV

A Collaborative, Institution-Wide Effort

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Task Force** represents a deliberate and collaborative effort between *UTRGV Academic Affairs*, *Information Technology (IT)*, and *Information Security* to guide the **responsible, ethical, and effective use of AI** across the institution. The task force brings together faculty, administrators, IT leaders, information security professionals, legal and compliance experts, and representatives from various divisions.

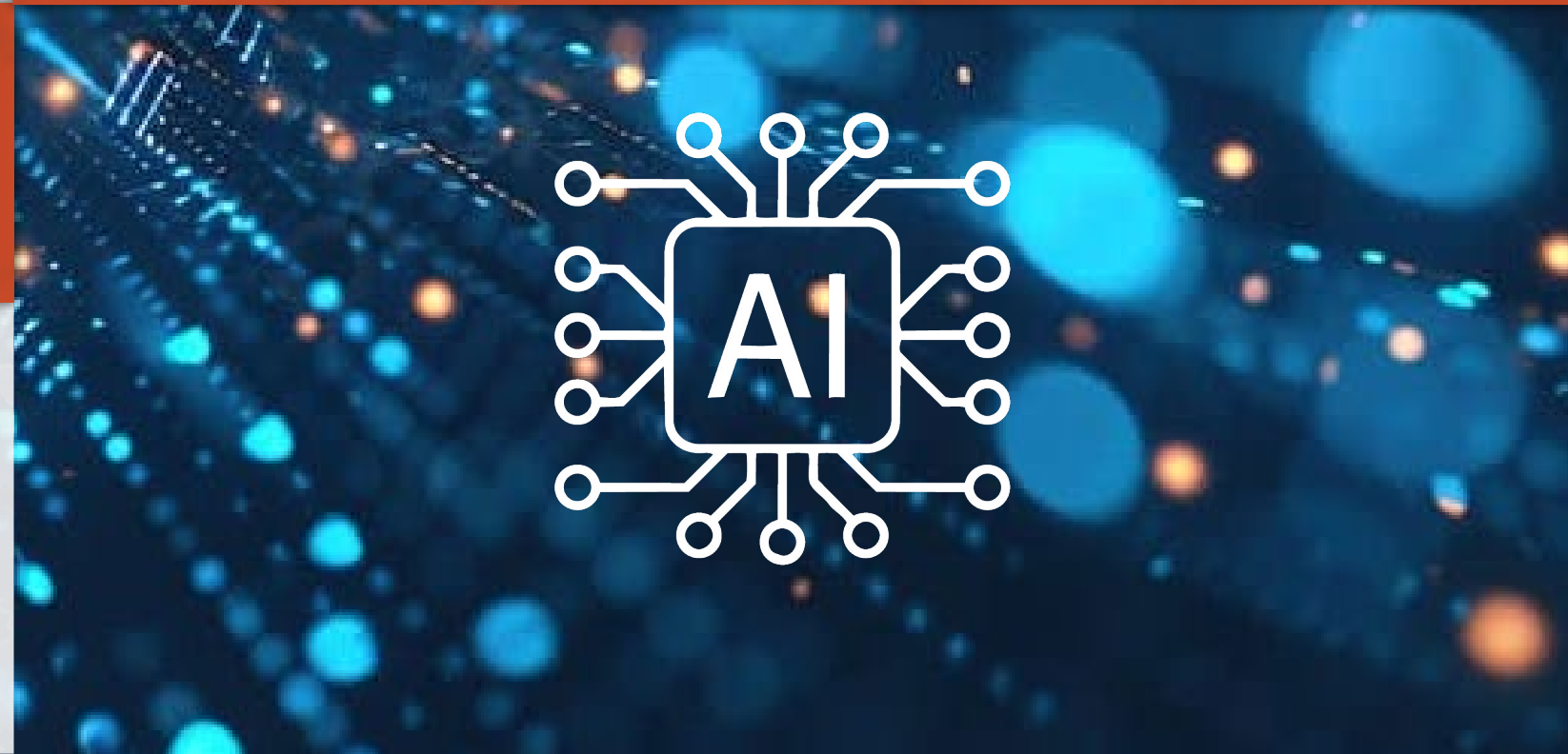
Academic Affairs has played a central role in framing AI's impact on teaching, learning, research, and academic integrity, ensuring that institutional guidance **supports innovation** while **preserving core educational values**. This includes developing faculty guidance on AI use in instruction and research, syllabus-level expectations for students, and a purpose-driven framework that emphasizes thoughtful decision-making about when and how AI should be used and the opportunities to leverage AI in academic programming.

UTRGV IT has been contributing technical expertise and operational insight, helping translate academic goals into secure, scalable tools and resources. IT's collaboration ensures AI is positioned as a **productivity-enhancing resource** for faculty and staff, by supporting tasks such as programming, automation, and workflow efficiency, rather than as a replacement for human judgment or labor. IT will also serve as a major partner in the **dissemination of AI updates** and changes.



The **Information Security** department has been providing the governance backbone of the task force through institutional AI policy, industry and ethical standards, and compliance with emerging state and federal requirements, including the *Texas Responsible Artificial Intelligence Governance Act (TRAIGA)*. This work establishes clear expectations for transparency, **human oversight, privacy protection, and risk management**, particularly for high-impact or decision-making AI systems.

Together, these units are shaping an AI framework that seek to serve the needs of students in a changing world, empower faculty with clarity and flexibility, and equips staff with tools to work smarter and more securely. The AI Task Force reflects UTRGV's **commitment to collaboration innovation**, ensuring AI strengthens the university's mission.



SIGNIFICANT DATES



COMPLETION OF THE PROPOSED
UTRGV SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY
FALL 2027



HR PORTAL 2.0 IS
OFFICIALLY LIVE
3/2/26



TRAVEL AND/OR CREDIT CARD EXPENSE REPORTS
DUE 20TH OF EACH MONTH



ANNUAL EVALUATIONS
DUE MAY 31ST



BUDGET SUBMISSIONS
6/2026



KNOWBE4 TRAININGS
AS ASSIGNED BY EMAIL



FINANCIAL ACCOUNT RECONCILIATIONS IN SAHARA
DUE 30 DAYS FOLLOWING ACCOUNTING PERIOD CLOSE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Executive Vice President
for Finance & Business Affairs
& CFO



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Director of Division
Operations & Editor



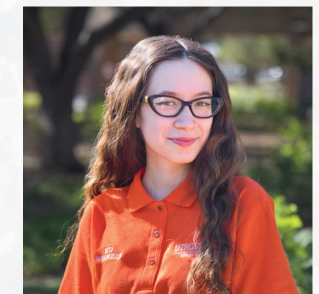
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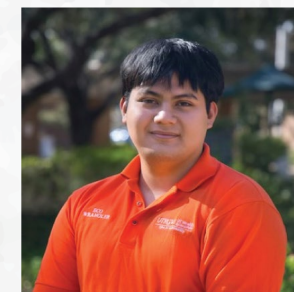
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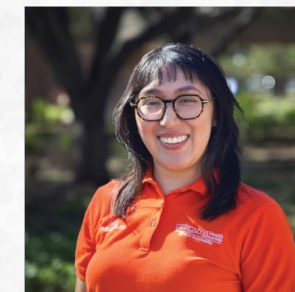
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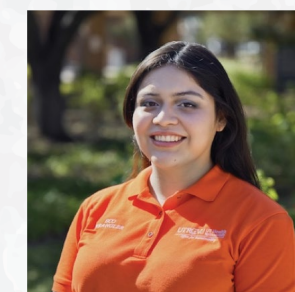
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