

La network

the college of liberal arts newsletter



CLA
Fall Commencement



from the _____ **Dean's Desk.**

Resolution(s). Resilience. Reliance.

We are winding down the Fall semester and getting ready for a few days of solace and tranquility, during which we often take time to think about the year that ends and what we have ahead in the upcoming months. It has been a year of changes at many levels, and change, especially when very frequent, calls for resolution, resilience, and reliance.

In an unprecedented time of new realities for our region, our institution, and our college, we will find that some of the new things will be obviously good. But, certainly, some of the unknown ones will call for our collective trust and reliance on each other. The words “college” and “colleague” are closely related. They relate to being together, speaking together, and responding to the same legacy of duty. As a college of colleagues, I would like to thank all of you who are devoting so much time, effort, and gusto to working towards getting us in good shape for the upcoming realities by reading the new situations positively and productively. From the many committee members for the ongoing and exciting faculty searches, who will bring us a whole new cohort of colleagues, to all of you who have been working on faculty review guidelines, validations, curriculum actions, design of new programs, grants, collaborative research, community outreach, assessment, scheduling, and so many other activities that make our college one of the richest ones in the entire university, I wanted to express my gratitude for your reliance in, an contribution to, the shared project.

The many new situations, the obviously good ones and the uncertain ones too, will indeed require resilience too. Those of us who have been around UTRGV and its legacy institutions for several decades have witnessed a lot of that. Ours is a singular socioeconomic region experiencing unparalleled economic and demographic growth. As the 2026 “demographical cliff” approaches fast (that would be the year when the number of high school graduates in the

U.S. will peak and start decreasing), our institution will still be benefiting from the unique trends in the region, which are already drawing interest from and action by large players in higher education within the State of Texas, and from elsewhere. As new university campuses open in the region and other universities provide financial incentives for South Texas students to attend their programs, many of them online, we need to make sure that we persevere in the difficult task of combining growth, presence, and quality. I think it is possible. It does require resilience in change, though.

It also involves ingenuity, nimbleness, and the ability to think positively beyond the existing paradigms. That is, resolve. Let’s make the best of some of our advantageous situations, and let’s be resolute. Yes, this has a little bit to do with New Year’s resolutions, but more than that, with the confidence that solutions to challenges lay in our resolve. Our large, varied, polyphonic group will have a lot to say in the future of our institution and, more importantly, in that of our students.

Reliance, resilience, and resolution, not just an “R1”— but three of them!

In the meanwhile, I wish you all a nice winter break full of repose, rejoicing and repasts, and a great New Year for all of us. We all deserve those “Rs” too!

¡Felices fiestas! to all of you.

¡Vamos!

José Dávila-Montes, PhD.
Interim Dean · College of Liberal Arts
Professor of Translation and Interpreting



Getting to know...

Sheila Dooley: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

Dr. Sheila Dooley has been the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education in the College of Liberal Arts since 2018. She has a PhD in Linguistics from Caroline Lund University and is a tenured associate professor in the Department of Writing and Language Studies.

As the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Dr. Dooley oversees almost every aspect of undergraduate education for the college; she takes care of the behind-the-scenes and keeps things running smoothly.

There are four major areas in which this associate dean is responsible: recruitment, class scheduling, undergraduate curriculum changes, and student approvals.

Recruitment

It is said that everyone is responsible for helping their department and the college grow. Still, for Sheila Dooley, that responsibility for the entire College of Liberal Arts falls squarely on her shoulders. One way she does this is by coordinating the CLA Discover UTRGV and RoundUp presentations. Dr. Dooley and Faculty Fellow Dr. Mi-Son Kim have rigorously revised presentations to suit today's high school audience better. Focusing on careers and jobs to help bridge the understanding of what to major in if you want to do X. Dr. Dooley works closely with Dr. Dara Newton, Associate VP for Strategic Enrollment, on the enrollment funnel for the college, monitoring our growth very closely. In the Spring 2025 semester, Dr. Dooley will be holding workshops to assist departments in creating strategic enrollment plans.

Class Scheduling

While initial scheduling happens at the department level, any changes to class schedules or modality changes find their way to Dr. Dooley's desk. This also includes monitoring class enrollment numbers and making the difficult decision to cancel low-enrollment classes. She monitors enrollment in real-time, allowing her to recommend adding course sections when needed. This is no small task, as CLA offered 1088 undergraduate sections in Fall 2024.

Undergraduate Curriculum Changes

All changes to the curriculum go to Dr. Dooley before moving on to the university undergraduate curriculum committee.

Student Approvals

Not all students make it through their degree without a hitch; some need substitutions, file grade appeals, or request approval to take 18 hours or more. All these issues flow through the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education.

Office of the Dean

Interim Dean

Dr. José Dávila-Montes

Associate Deans

Senior Associate Dean Graduate Studies

Dr. Pamela Anderson-Mejia

Research

Dr. Russ Skowronek

Undergraduate Education

Dr. Sheila Dooley

Interim Associate Deans

Assessment

Dr. Michael Faubion

Community Engagement

Dr. Kimberly Selber

Faculty Success

Dr. Dawid Wladyka

Faculty Fellows

Assessment

Dr. Randall Monty

Faculty Development

Dr. Ruby Charak

Graduate Studies

Dr. Salvatore Restifo

Research

Dr. Mario Gil

Undergraduate

Dr. Mi-son Kim



RETIRING

Dr. Peter Brown
Associate Professor
Department of Spanish

Dr. Peter Edward Brown, Associate Professor with the Department of Spanish, will retire after 31 years of academic service at the end of December. A pillar at the university and a resolute colleague,

he started with the University of Texas-Pan American in 1993 and stayed with UTRGV in 2015. He received his PhD in Modern Languages and Literatures (Spanish) from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1991. He is the author of three books,

Antología Otoñal, *El Archipiélago de los Vocablos*, and *Antología de la Primavera*, four book chapters, “The Poem is Lurking There,” “Malcolm Lowry,” “Mexicayotl,” and “The Road to Taxco,” along with numerous academic journal articles and presentations. His literary work shares his passion for languages, Andalusí literature, Spanish literature of all periods, creative writing, and the borderland. Dr. Brown advises, “As long as you have strength of body and mind, keep up the good work.”

Congratulations to Dr. Brown on a remarkable career. He has inspired countless students with his enthusiastic teaching and service commitments, shared words of wisdom and discussion points with all he met, and was a great storyteller. We wish him all the best in his new chapter and continued enjoyment of writing creatively, reading his favorite works, and being an avid nature watcher.



RETIRING

Dr. Christopher Miller
Professor
Department of History

On January 1, 2025, Professor Christopher Miller (Ph.D. University of California Santa Barbara) will end a 40-year career in the history programs of Pan American University, The University of Texas-Pan American, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He joined our legacy institution in 1985, following three years as a visiting assistant professor at Rutgers University and a year as a resident fellow at the Charles Warren Center at Harvard University. Early in the century, he had a Fulbright at Moscow University in Russia. Since 2012, he has served as Associate Director of the CHAPS Program.

An early adopter of online teaching, Dr. Miller has instructed thousands of undergraduate and graduate students in this and traditional modalities. Many of his students went on to earn doctorates. Outside of the Rio Grande Valley, his four co-authored American History textbooks have gone through multiple editions and have been used by hundreds of thousands of undergraduates over the past thirty years.

Additionally, he has authored or edited seven scholarly books on topics ranging from Native American-Anglo interactions on the

Columbia Plateau to the Gülen Hizmet Movement (Turkey), the American Civil War in deep South Texas, and the Ancient Landscapes of South Texas and more than 25 articles and scholarly book chapters.

While part of the CHAPS Program, Chris was the Executive producer of four films dealing with the American Civil War, Fort Ringgold, and the Ancient Landscapes of South Texas. He also worked with students, other faculty and community members, and the CHAPS Program team to develop three highly successful webpages, podcasts, maps, and traveling exhibits: “Discovering Fort Brown the First Military Border Post in Texas,” “War and Peace on the Rio Grande, 1861-1867,” and “Ancient Landscapes of South Texas, Hiding in Plain Sight” which have been viewed by nearly 200,000 visitors in venues from Brownsville to Laredo, and north to Kingsville, Corpus Christi, and San Antonio.

Through the years, Miller has been a mentor to students and faculty. His colleagues and friends characterize Chris as humble, modest, helpful, proactive, and sincere. Profound and soft-spoken, he offers advice only when asked.

While Chris Miller will be stepping down from his official duties at UTRGV, he will continue to serve our community as the Director of Public Heritage of South Texas, a non-profit organization that supports public heritage and community engagement endeavors.

Thank you, Dr. Miller, for enriching the lives of our students, faculty, and community over the past forty years. We look forward to your continued success.

FACULTY KUDOS

Grant to Establish Gulf Scholars Program

School of Interdisciplinary Programs and
Community Engagement

The Gulf Research Program (GRP) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine announced the addition of six colleges and universities to the Gulf Scholars Program (GSP). This five-year, \$12.7 million pilot program prepares undergraduate students to address pressing environmental, health, energy, and infrastructure challenges in the Gulf of Mexico region. This 2024 cohort of institutions includes Alabama State University, Florida Gulf Coast University, Sam Houston State University, the University of Alabama at Huntsville, The University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley, and the University of West Florida.

The Co-PIs and Program Directors are Dr. Marla Perez-Lugo and Dr. Friederike Bruehoefener. They will work with a multidisciplinary Steering Committee consisting of Drs. DM Witman (School of Arts), Jonikka Charlton (Senior Vice Provost for Student Success), Patricia Ramirez-Biondolillo (Department of Teaching and Learning), Katherine Christoffersen (Language and Writing Studies), Erin E. Easton (School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences), Reto Felix (Department of Marketing), Jungseok Ho (Department of Civil Engineering), Maria Leonard (Department of Management), Cecilio Ortiz-Garcia (SIPCE), and Ian Werkheiser (Department of Philosophy).

The Gulf Scholars Program at UTRGV will train 48 Gulf student scholars (4 multidisciplinary cohorts of 12 student scholars each) to become change agents who engage in participatory action to help create a more sustainable, resilient, and socially just Gulf region. To achieve this goal, the GSP at UTRGV will focus on the interrelation of food, energy, and water—also known as the FEW Nexus. Over the course of a year (spring-summer-fall), participating student scholars will engage in curricular programming that is interdisciplinary, community-engaged, and service-learning oriented.

FACULTY KUDOS

Dr. Elena Vega-Sampayo

Department of Spanish

Dr. Elena Vega-Sampayo received the Don Quixote de La Mancha Scholarship for travel to Toledo, Spain from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and the University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM).



FACULTY KUDOS

Dr. Carina Marques

Department of Anthropology

Dr. Marques was recently elected president of the Texas Association of Biological Anthropologists. At UTRGV, she is the Director of the Forensic Anthropology Research Laboratory in the Departments of Anthropology and the School of Integrative Biological and Chemical Sciences, and part of the CHAPS Program.



FALL GRADUATION 2024*

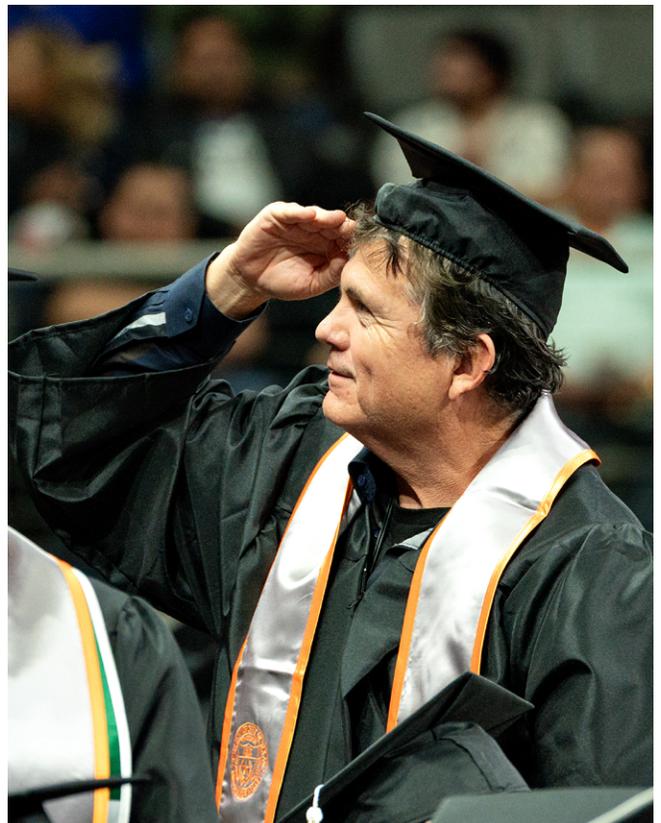
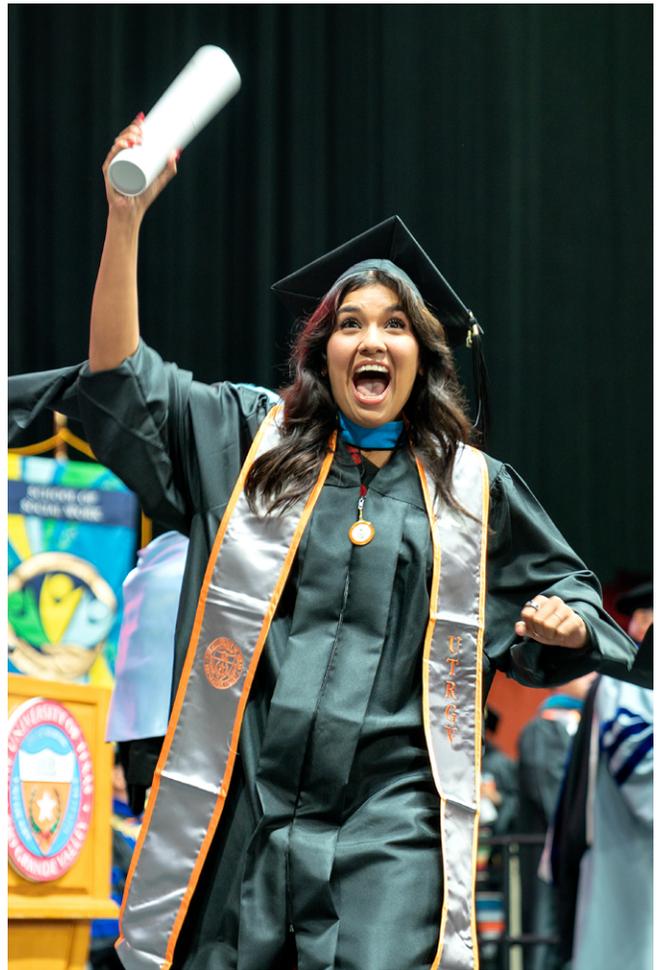
2,728 UTRGV Graduates

College of Liberal Arts Graduates

777 Bachelors Degrees Awarded

146 Master's Degrees Awarded

*based on commencement program



Photos Courtesy of UTRGV UMC





CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

Dr. Minzhi Ye

Department of Sociology

Dr. Ye presented her study, *A Three-Step Latent Profile Analysis of Custodial Grandmothers' Parenting Practices*, at the Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting in Seattle, WA.

PUBLICATION

Dr. James Parisot

Department of Sociology

"American Capitalism and the Decline of Debtors' Prison in the 19th Century," in the journal *Critical Sociology*.



JOURNAL EDITOR

Dr. Caleb González

Department of Writing and Language Studies

Dr. González was selected as the next editor of the International Writing Across the Curriculum (IWAC) collection, which will be forthcoming in 2026 and published by the WAC Clearinghouse. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is the study of writing integration across students' academic careers, how faculty across disciplines integrate writing in their teaching, and the study of writing across domains (e.g., disciplines, professions, communities, and academic levels). Dr. González's work will build on previous IWAC collections in addition to his disciplinary service as the director of the 2025 International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, which will take place in northern Colorado July 16-19, 2025.



CONFERENCE

Department of Sociology

The Center for Community Resilience Research Innovation and Advocacy (CCRRIA) held its Second Annual Conference on November 13 and 14th, 2024, titled "Developing Pathways to Community Resilience: Communities Leading Communities." The CCRRIA is an organized research unit under the College of Liberal Arts' School for Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Engagement. In its second annual conference, the CCRRIA provided an opportunity for geographic communities and communities of practice to assist and lead one another with an overarching goal of developing pathways to community resilience. Through a series of convergence workshops, discussion panels, and inspirational keynotes, UTRGV again became a platform for the convergence of university knowledge and community wisdom. As communities face increasing public health threats—from emerging diseases, pandemics, extreme weather events, and health crises exacerbated by environmental shifts—there is a rising need for innovative, collaborative solutions. Across regions, disciplines, and sectors, communities are coming together to develop strategies that strengthen public health systems and build resilience against future crises. In the first CCRRIA Conference, held in November of 2023, we explored community resilience imaginaries with a particular focus on the characteristics, dimensions, and conditions vulnerable communities experience during these public health threats. We asked: What approaches, processes, and organizational innovations can help us bring the imaginaries generated in the first CCRRIA Conference into actionable pathways to resilience? How can communities of practice flourish around some of the most intractable problems the RGV and the world face today? And, ultimately, how can we, as members of communities of interest ourselves, converge in a collective vision of community resilience?



Faculty Development Team Hosts B3 Course Designation Workshop

On November 8, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) Faculty Development team hosted a B3 Course Designation Follow-up Workshop at the Brownsville campus. The event brought together ten CLA faculty members who presented their innovative and impactful B3 course projects. These presentations highlighted how the principles of Bilingual, Bicultural, and Biliterate (B3) integrations are being creatively integrated into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences.

Interim Dean of CLA, Dr. José Dávila-Montes, delivered opening remarks, commending the faculty for their dedication and underscoring the significance of their work in advancing the college's mission. The workshop was led by Dr. Dawid Wladyka, Interim Associate Dean of Faculty Development, and organized by faculty fellow Dr. Ruby Charak. Drs. Katherine Christoffersen and Dania López García, two key leaders in the B3 initiative, spoke about the transformative potential of the program. Dr. Christoffersen highlighted the symbolic importance of the B3 Scholar Seal and the collective efforts that laid the foundation for its success. Dr. López García, Director of B3 Curriculum and Professional Development, provided insights into the success of the course designations, emphasizing the faculty's commitment to curriculum innovation.

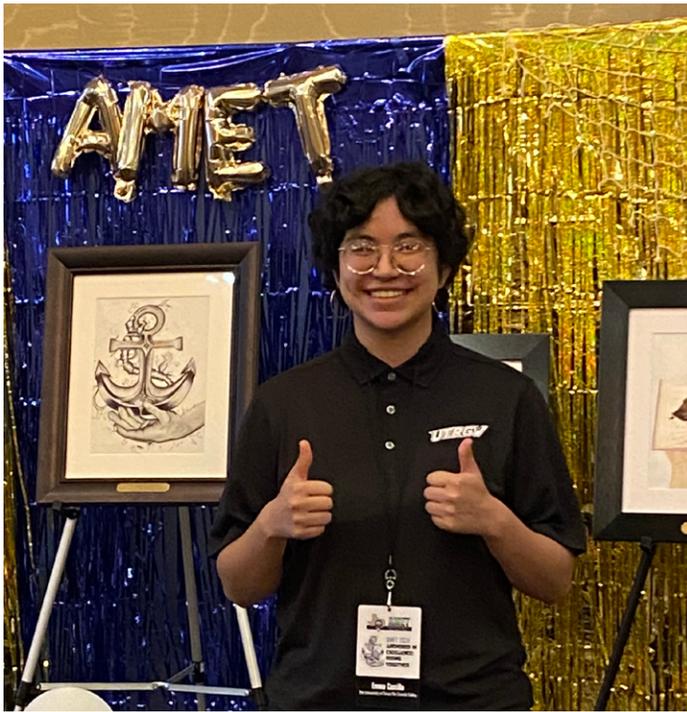
As part of the workshop, stipends and certificates of appreciation were awarded to recognize the exceptional contributions of participating faculty. Honorees included Drs. Denise DeLeon, Marcela Hebbard, Alexandre Couture Gagnon, Carlos Gutierrez, Lupita

Strong, Mario Gil, Marianita Escamilla, Sebastian Castillo, Yemin Sanchez, and Arlett Lomeli.

The event celebrated the remarkable work of these CLA faculty members and reinforced the importance of collaboration and innovation in shaping a curriculum that embodies the B3 principles. By fostering belonging and breaking barriers, the CLA continues to pave the way for transformative educational practices that resonate with both students and the broader academic community.



Of the 314 students recognized as B3 Scholars for Fall 2024, 73 are from the College of Liberal Arts.



STUDENT SUCCESS

Emma Castillo

Freshman, Journalism

Emma Castillo was an invited speaker at the Association for Migrant Educators conference held in Corpus Christi, Texas.

"It was a wonderfully planned event for migrant students of the CAMP program to join together and learn the importance of leadership skills. I was given the opportunity to speak to an audience about the adversities faced as a migrant worker and offer insight as to how to help improve the lives of students who share the same experience. Though not every student is the same, I was grateful to know that my experience could be shared and used to further the understanding of educators who assist migrant students!

I got a standing ovation from the audience, and it made me feel really special."

STUDENT SUCCESS

Department of Philosophy

Ethics Bowl Team Advances to National Competition

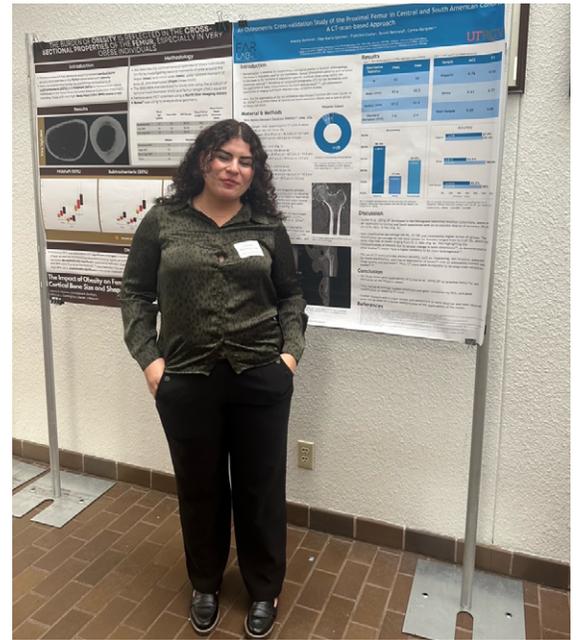
The UTRGV Ethics Bowl Team from the Department of Philosophy did so well at the Texas Regionals held on November 9th at Texas A&M-San Antonio that they won a place for the Nationals in Norfolk, VA, in February 2025!

The team is led by Dr. Chris Gomez and Dr. Stephen Leach with support from Dr. Greg Hakos and Dr. Ioan Muntean.

The team L to R: Harley Schumitz, Kaidyn Nelson, Megan Francis, Andres Ojeda, and Karina Villareal.

Congratulations on all your success!





STUDENT SUCCESS

Anthropology Graduate Student, Aracely Balderas, Recognized at Texas Association of Biological Anthropology Conference

Dr. Carina Marques, Director of the Forensic Anthropology Research Laboratory, a faculty in the Department of Anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts and in SIBCS, College of Science, and part of the CHAPS Program team attended the Texas Association of Biological Anthropology (TABA) in San Marcos, Nov 2, 2024. UTRGV students Amando Montalvo, Olga Ibarra-Sanchez, Aracely Balderas, Francisco Cunha, Ozziel Valle, and Victoria Rosas joined her.

Aracely Balderas was awarded 3rd place for best poster presentation for her poster “An Osteometric Cross-validation Study of the Proximal Femur in Central and South American Cohorts: ACT-scan-based Approach.” Balderas’ research was recognized among the amazing works of students from UT Austin, Texas State University, University of North Texas, UT San Antonio, and Texas A&M.



STUDENT SUCCESS

Department of Political Science

ELECTION NIGHT: More than 50 students and faculty attended the Election Night Pizza & Politics event on Nov. 5. For many of the students, this was the first election where they were eligible to vote. Despite the tension of the evening, everyone enjoyed sharing the experience together!

PILOT PROGRAM: The Department of Political Science launched the POLS Stay-in-Brownsville program starting in Spring 2025. This new program will support four students—two undergraduate and two graduate—by covering housing expenses in Casa Bella on the Brownsville campus.



STUDENT SUCCESS

Department of Spanish

Faculty, students, and families gathered to celebrate the Department of Spanish's second graduating class. Students received their B3 Scholar Seal Pin, Sigma Delta Pi-Alpha Alpha Iota chapter cord, and cord for liberal arts. A special thanks to Dean José Davila, Director of B3 Scholarship and Student Connection, Dr. Katherine Christoffersen, B3's Program Manager, Dr. Michelle Cavazos, and Dr. Walter Diaz for joining us and sharing their words of wisdom and celebration with the students.

Thank you to the department's recruitment team for making this event possible (Ms. Ana Peña, Dr. Laura Garza, Ms. Carmela Garcia, Dr. Maria Mendiola, and Dr. Elvia Ardalani), and staff, Ms. Sarah Muñoz, and Ms. Adelina Sifuentes.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Barbára Krug, Class of 2019

Mass Communication, Advertising/PR



Meet Barbára Krug, a social media and digital marketer who has transformed her passion for storytelling into a global career.

Originally from Brazil, she came to the US to play volleyball for UTRGV. After graduating, she headed to Spain, where she played professionally while pursuing a

master's in Communication and Creative Industries at the University of Alicante.

Barbára's professional journey spans continents, cultures, and platforms, showcasing her talent for crafting impactful content that resonates with diverse audiences.

ROOTS IN STRATEGY AND COPYWRITING

Barbara's career began with three years as an organic social media content strategist and copywriter at a leading advertising agency in Brazil. While there, she managed accounts for both local clients and an American brand, honing her skills in creating culturally relevant and impactful content. This experience laid the foundation for her ability to think globally and act locally, a skill she continues to apply in her current roles.

A KEY PLAYER ON TEAM GARYVEE

Becoming a part of Team GaryVee was no accident. As an undergraduate at UTRGV, Barbára religiously followed the inspiring marketer. In September 2024, Barbára became an integral part of the team behind renowned entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk's online presence. Her responsibilities include content creation for Gary's primary social media accounts across platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube Shorts, TikTok, and Snapchat—where he has a cumulative total of over 43 million followers.

Barbara's expertise extends beyond English-speaking audiences; she also serves as the International Platform Manager, running and creating content for all Spanish-language accounts. Her work ensures that Gary's messages of entrepreneurship, positivity, and hustle reach audiences across the Spanish-speaking world.

CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

In addition to her work with Team GaryVee, Barbara contributes to the digital success of Peter Diamandis, a pioneer in innovation and founder of organizations like the XPRIZE Foundation. As Content Distribution Manager, she oversees content distribution on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and YouTube Shorts. Barbara also lends her creative eye to designing engaging thumbnails for Peter's YouTube clips.

LIVING AND WORKING ABROAD

Barbara enjoys the Mediterranean lifestyle of Alicante while managing her global workload. And she still manages to play professional beach volleyball.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Writing about Dinosaurs treks into the Ancient Landscapes of South Texas

On Friday November 1st, Drs. Juan Gonzalez (SEEMS) and Russell Skowronek (Anthropology & History), directors of the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools Program [CHAPS] led an expedition into the Ancient Landscapes of South Texas for students in Dr. Randall Monty's "Writing about Dinosaurs." Advanced Specialization in Rhetoric, Composition, & Literacy Studies (ENGL 4340, CRN 40274). In this class students explore how humans compose prehistoric life through different kinds of science communication and storytelling: scholarly research, news reports, fiction, podcasts, film museum and park exhibits, natural writing, and visual art.

The day-long trip in Starr County included 27 million year old Catahoula volcanic ash and petrified trees and the 43 million year old Eocene beach in what is today Roma, Texas. The following captures some of the students' reactions to their adventure.

Hayla Muñoz: Philosophy (major); English, Environmental Studies (minors) said, "I have grown up in the Rio Grande Valley all my life, yet I had no idea we had something as magnificent as this special site right in our backyard. Witnessing it in person was truly breathtaking, and my appreciation and awe for the valley grew deeper. I hope others get to experience this unique location as well and learn just how many extraordinary gems the RGV holds."

Angela Valencia: English (major), Rhetoric, Composition, & Literacy Studies (concentration) said, Visiting the Catahoula Volcanic Ash site changed my view on the Rio Grande Valley. It really is hidden in plain sight and I encourage anyone in the RGV to pay a visit to this hidden gem, and witness the incredible findings of Professors Gonzalez and Skowronek!

Those interested in joining the CHAPS Program for a similar adventure should watch this space for a Saturday trip in late February or early March.



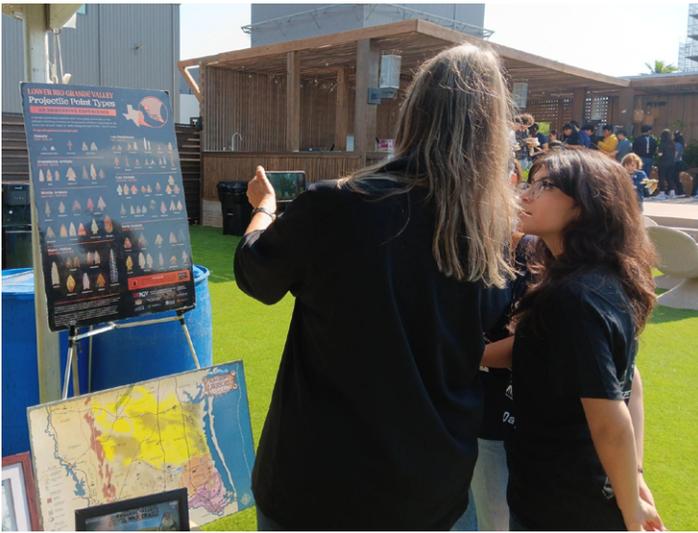
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

LUCHA: Supporting the Sidewalk School

LUCHA (La Unión Chicanx Hijxs de Aztlán), UTRGV's only Mexican American Studies club annually hosts both canned food and toy drives during the holiday season. For the 2024 holiday season, they decided to donate to the Sidewalk School. One of LUCHA's core pillars is *comunidad*. By contributing to a cause that supports our mission of advocating for equal and equitable education for all, we hope to empower our community by bringing joy this holiday season.

The Sidewalk School is a rapid response organization founded in 2019 to aid asylum seekers. While necessities such as food and shelter are recognized as essential needs, this organization realized that another need was equitable education. To provide education to the Matamoros Tent City, the organization was founded and has been active ever since.

Pictured from left: Kimberly Grimaldo, Taylor K. Seaver and Aaron Garza. Follow LUCHA on Instagram @Lalucha_956.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CHAPS At SpaceX

The CHAPS team had a great outing with 200 high school seniors and their teachers from all 6 Brownsville high schools at the Starbase facility. Thank you to SpaceX for organizing a wonderful “Environmental Education Day” along with our colleagues at the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, and Sea Turtle Inc. We enjoyed having the opportunity to highlight our Ancient Landscapes of South Texas and Rio Grande Valley Civil War Trail projects. Students were able to touch items that were 43 million -years old (giant fossilized oyster shells) and 27 million years old (Catahoula Volcanic Ash, as well as learn about Civil War soldiers and US Colored Troops marching Brazos Santiago Island to Palmito Ranch Battlefield—the land they were currently standing on.



SPEAKERS & GUESTS

Philosophy’s In-house AI Specialist

as they relate to education and teaching.

During his presentation, Dr. WerkHeiser showcased impressive advancements in AI technology, such as its ability to quickly and efficiently create PowerPoint presentations, syllabi, tests, and even handle grading. This sparked a lively discussion among fac-

ulty about the ethical challenges posed by these tools, as well as concerns regarding students using AI to complete assignments and answer online exams. Together, the department brainstormed strategies for addressing these emerging issues.

Dr. Ioan Muntean, another faculty member in the Philosophy department, contributes extensive expertise in science, philosophy, and the ethics of machine learning. His work explores the ethical dilemmas arising from the rapid expansion of AI and internet-based technologies, complementing the ongoing departmental discussions around these challenges.



SPEAKERS & GUESTS

From Sports to News: TV-Pro Gives Back at UTRGV

Television personality Bella Michaels of KRGV-TV Channel 5 made a stop by the university this week, visiting Dr. Greg Selber's journalism class Monday to talk about her career and offer mentorship and motivation to the class. Originally from Chicago, Michaels, now 26, started in sports at KRGV more than three years ago and now has branched out into news, and she regaled the students with tales of her upward path through college and into the profession.

She stressed that journalists need to have the right approach to their subjects, exhibiting curiosity, respect, and love in order to build rapport and connection, with the ultimate goal of providing storytelling that hits home and makes a difference. To wit, Michaels spoke movingly about the Valley, her adopted home, praising its sense of community and closeness and describing some of the favorite stories she's done here. She also entertained the group with anecdotes about such topics as the NBA All-Star Game, which she was a part of while in school at De Paul.

The high point among many came when the effervescent Michaels, while discussing her ethnic background (first-generation Assyrian-American, her family is from Iraq) and love of languages, spoke to the class in the ancient language of Aramaic. Later, she told the students that her background in theater and performance has translated well to the world of television, advising the class members to find what they do best, what they love, and get busy working in a job or internship to develop the skills that are necessary in a highly competitive media world.

SPEAKERS & GUESTS

Danish Researcher Visits Dept. of Psychological Science



The Department of Psychological Science and the Adversities in Childhood and Trauma Studies Research Lab recently hosted Dr. Sidsel Helena Karsberg, a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences at Aarhus University, Denmark. During her visit, Dr. Karsberg presented findings from her grant-funded research project on trauma-informed substance use treatment, focusing on young adults. Dr. Karsberg's talk delved into the complex relationship between trauma and substance dependency, emphasizing how addressing trauma is essential for effective treatment. She highlighted evidence-based therapeutic approaches such as Seeking Safety and Creating Change, both of which are supported by the Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Dr. Karsberg's research, rooted in the Danish treatment context, showcased how these trauma-focused strategies can be successfully applied, offering valuable insights for adapting these methods across different cultural and clinical settings. In addition to her engaging presentation, Dr. Karsberg took time to connect with both undergraduate and graduate students during her visit.

We want to know.

Send in your “did you know” accomplishments,
kudos, grants, student successes,
and other bragging points - big and small -
to be included in our monthly college newsletter



Use the below QR Code to access our submission form.



<https://tinyurl.com/4ukp3m3v>