

# ENGAGE

Transforming Lives Through Engaged Partnership

## DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS NEWSLETTER

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HESTEC Week 2018  
The Engagement Zone  
UTRGV Legislative Internships  
Spring 2019 Events

### Upcoming Events

January  
86th Texas Legislative Session  
Jan. 8 - The Texas Legislature convenes in Austin for the 2019 legislative session

UTRGV SBDC Wage & Hour for Agricultural Employers  
Jan. 16 - CESS Bldg., Edinburg, RSVP to (956) 682-4631

February  
RGV Science & Engineering Fair  
Feb. 1-2 - El Gran Salon, Jacob Brown Auditorium and Garza Gym, Brownsville

RGV Day at the Texas Capitol  
Feb. 5 - For information, please visit [www.rgvpartnership.com](http://www.rgvpartnership.com)

MathCounts  
Feb. 9 - UTRGV Edinburg campus

Regional Science Bowl  
Feb. 16 - UTRGV Edinburg campus

CHARREADA  
Feb. 27 - UTRGV Brownsville campus

FESTIBA  
Feb. 25 - March 3

April  
HESTEC GreenPowerUSA  
South Texas Electric Car Competition  
Apr. 5-6 - Brownsville

Dia de los Niños  
Apr. 27 - UTRGV Performing Arts Center, Edinburg

For more information on these events, please visit [www.utrgv.edu/gcr](http://www.utrgv.edu/gcr)



## FROM THE DESK OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### Welcome to ENGAGE

It has been a busy fall for the Division of Governmental and Community Relations. Spring will be even busier. In January, legislators will return for the 86th Texas Legislative Session, and the first of many of our outreach events will take place beginning in February. We are all in planning mode.

In October, we celebrated the 17th anniversary of HESTEC Week. The staff in the Office of Community Relations facilitated opportunities for education, community and corporate partners to encourage thousands of middle and high school students to pursue science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM) career paths. This year, we also reached out to fourth and fifth grade students, and we welcomed new partners that joined our effort.

Many of our students who volunteered during HESTEC Week signed on to the UTRGV Engagement Zone, a joint project between our Office of Community Engagement and the Office of Engaged Scholarship and Learning. UTRGV students can access the portal online, and volunteer for needs posted by nonprofit organizations in our communities. Volunteering is easy, and more importantly, it teaches a valuable lesson about service learning.

Speaking of volunteering, many of our employees across the university give their time to volunteer and serve on nonprofit organizations, school boards and community boards. Our staff in the Division of Governmental and Community Relations share their expertise and help when and where they are needed. They are passionate and committed in their jobs every day and the causes they support. Thank you for making a difference.

I saw this quote, and the words really struck a chord with me...

"We are not grateful because we are happy; we are happy because we are grateful."

We are so grateful to YOU... all our partners, volunteers, students, faculty and staff. We thank you for your support and continued engagement.

I wish you and your families a wonderful holiday, and we look forward to working alongside you in 2019.

Happy Holidays!

Veronica Gonzales  
Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations

# Changing the World Through STEM - HESTEC Week 2018



In early October, thousands of middle and high school students, educators and parents from across the Rio Grande Valley converged at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley for the Hispanic Engineering, Science, and Technology Week.

It was an exciting week filled with inspiring speeches, new events, hands-on activities and competitions designed to spur students' interest in the fields of STEM.

The growth and success that HESTEC has seen over the last seventeen years would never have been made possible without the support from so many. To all who collaborate in this venture, your investment in HESTEC is Changing the World Through STEM.

With your help, WE WILL develop the next generation of scientists, doctors and engineers.



*"HESTEC gave me the opportunity to actually think about my future and which direction I should be headed to set my dreams into motion. At HESTEC, I wound up finding both a college and a career that I would like to look into."*  
- Corina Ponce, San Isidro ISD Student



*"My HESTEC experience was definitely one for the books. I have a new outlook on my career path and where I plan to go with it. Thank you to UTRGV for putting everything together so well and thank you to San Isidro ISD for giving me the opportunity to make memories and more to come."*  
- Emma Garcia, San Isidro ISD Student



*"One little girl told me that she had never heard of most of the exhibitors at the expo and that she never thought girls could do so much in the STEM field. Latina Day was an eye opener for some and an opportunity to see themselves in great places doing really meaningful work someday"*  
- Sofia M. Pena, UTRGV GEAR UP Director



*"I had so much fun on the field trip cause I love science. My favorite exhibits were the health ones. The reason I liked the health ones so much is because I want to be a nurse or a doctor when I grow up"*  
- Student, First Baptist School, Brownsville



*"I think it's really fun cause you get to learn more about STEM. I personally don't like math, but doing Sea Perch helped me start liking it a lot more."*  
- Ana Sanchez, Guadalupe Regional Middle School, Brownsville



We invite you to view the 2018 highlights of HESTEC Week in our magazine at <https://www.utrgv.edu/hestec/news/hestec-magazine/index.htm>

**PARTNER WITH HESTEC**

Please contact:  
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# Thank You!



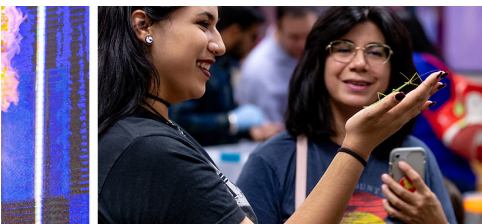
In 2001, a division was brought into a meeting to discuss “a grand idea”. The idea was to host a pre-college program in collaboration with a national conference on the legacy institution, UT Pan American, in Edinburg. I was part of that divisional team that bought into the idea of HESTEC and what it could mean for students, schools, parents and the community in the region. I

will admit that I did leave the first meeting thinking, this is CRAZY to bring in thousands of people onto the campus already filled with college students for STEM engagement and college awareness. Well, 17 years later that idea has continued, and never would I have imagined leading the efforts.

HESTEC has impacted millions of lives. Students have engaged with world-renowned, top-notch speakers and presenters who have impacted their career choices and desire to seek higher education. Many corporate and federal agencies have invested time, effort and monetary support to sustain the program while branding their organization name with families. The partnership with programs like GEAR UP and schools has been phenomenal, opening doors for so much more.

It has been a wonderful ride for me and I am very proud to have been a part of such a wonderful program and university. With this, I offer my FAREWELL to the many individuals that have worked alongside the university to support programs like HESTEC. It is my hope that the partnerships continue. There is so much work to continue together. WE WILL Change the World Through STEM!

**Velinda Reyes**  
 Assistant Vice President  
 for Community Programs and Operations





THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

To get connected, visit the Engagement Zone at ez.utrgv.edu or call (956) 665-7566.



*"Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more..."*

*H. Jackson Brown, Author*

From representing their communities on school boards, chambers of commerce, or volunteering in the soup kitchens providing hot meals to people who need a meal, the employees in the UTRGV Division of Governmental and Community Relations are setting a good example for others to follow. Their commitment and dedication to these organizations reaches far across the Rio Grande Valley. Thank you for all you do.

- Advocacy Alliance Center of Texas
- All Faiths United
- Alpha Omega Rho Sorority
- Arms of Hope
- Blessing Bags for the Homeless
- Boy Scouts of America
- Boys & Girls Club of Edinburg RGV
- Brownsville Animal Defense
- Brownsville Animal Regulation and Care Center
- Brownsville Church of Advent
- "Hot Meals for Chuys Friends"
- Brownsville SPARS
- Junior Service League Sustainers
- Brownsville Texas Exes Alumni Chapter
- Catholic Charities Respite Center
- Easter Seals
- Edinburg Chamber of Commerce
- Edinburg Cultural Activities Board
- Goodwill
- Greater South Texas Girl Scouts Council
- Guadalupe Regional Middle School
- Harlingen Battered Women's Shelter
- Laguna Madre Humane Society
- Lone Star National Bank Advisory Board
- Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
- Mission Hike and Bike Trails
- Ronald McDonald House Charities
- Salvation Army
- San Isidro Catholic Church
- San Isidro FFA Booster Club
- San Isidro ISD School Board
- Sharyland ISD CTE Advisory Committee
- Sharyland ISD Pioneer High School Business and Career Advisory Council
- South Texas Literacy Coalition
- St. Jude Thaddeus Catholic Church
- Thanksgiving Basket Sharing
- Starr County Fair Association
- Texas Association of School Board
- Texas Exes, The University of Texas at Austin
- The Laurie P. Andrews PAWS Center
- The Leo Aguilar Foundation
- The Rio South Texas Economic Council
- Tip of Texas Family Outreach
- Toys for Tots
- United Blood Services
- Wokforce Solutions

## Impact of UTRGV Volunteerism and Service Learning

UTRGV's Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development helps foster university-community partnerships that enhance teaching, learning and research while addressing issues that impact the long-term welfare of the community.

The office works in partnership with the Office of Engaged Scholarship and Learning to facilitate service-learning and volunteer opportunities with the help of an electronic volunteer platform called Engagement Zone (EZ). EZ connects university students, faculty and staff with volunteer, service and experiential learning opportunities across the Rio Grande Valley.

Since 2016, UTRGV students, faculty and staff members used the Engagement Zone portal to connect with nearly 200 nonprofit organizations that offered volunteer and service learning opportunities. UTRGV has contributed close to **82,000 volunteer hours** throughout the region, which translates to more than **\$2 million** in economic impact.

### Engagement Zone Usage and Impact

	2016-2017	2017-2018	TOTAL
<b>Hours</b>	<b>32,539</b>	<b>49,456</b>	<b>81,995</b>
<b>*Economic Impact</b>	<b>\$819,006</b>	<b>\$1,224,807</b>	<b>\$2,063,814</b>

*\*Estimated national value of each volunteer hour = \$24.69  
Retrieved from <http://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2018/>*

## On the Road in New Mexico with UTRGV Mariachi and Ballet Folklorico



UTRGV Mariachi and Ballet Folklorico have returned from their weeklong winter tour of New Mexico where they performed for thousands of children and adults. These tours provide opportunities to recruit new students to UTRGV and showcase our award winning student ensembles across the United States. Bravo!



# UTRGV Announces 11 Valley Legislative Internships for 2019



The 2019 Valley Legislative Interns with UTRGV representatives Veronica Gonzales, Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations; Dr. Ruth Ragland, Senior Lecturer Political Science; Richard Sanchez, Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations; and Veronica de la Garza, Director of Governmental Relations.

Eleven UTRGV students are about to embark on an experience that will change their lives, with a spring internship at the State Capitol during the 86th Texas Legislative Session.

Each student will work in the Austin Capitol office of a Rio Grande Valley legislator.

Following are the names of the students selected for the Rio Grande Valley Legislative Internship Program (VLIP), and the legislators to whom they are assigned.

- Khalid Aboujamous, McAllen - Sen. Judith Zaffirini (District 21)
- Javier Bustos, Pharr - Rep. Terry Canales (District 40)
- Giovanni Rosas Escobedo, Edinburg - Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (District 20)
- Jesus Galindo, Brownsville - Rep. Elect Alex Dominguez (District 37)
- Monica Garcia, Mission/Palmview - Rep. Oscar Longoria (District 35)
- Ylana Robles, Donna - Rep. Armando "Mando" Martinez (District 39)
- Jacquelynn Hernandez, Rio Grande - Rep. Ryan Guillen (District 31)
- Bertha Lance, Brownsville - Rep. Eddie Lucio, III (District 38)
- Erick Longoria, Brownsville - Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr. (District 27)
- Stacie Morales, Edinburg - Rep. Bobby Guerra (District 41)
- Eric Vargas, McAllen - Rep. Sergio Munoz, Jr. (District 36)

At an orientation held Dec. 14, Veronica Gonzales, UTRGV vice president for Governmental and Community Relations, told the students the internship program was established to create opportunities for students to learn about the legislative process.

"You will be working in the offices of our Valley legislators, interacting with people from all over the state. You will be ambassadors for UTRGV, and you will learn firsthand how laws are made. Embrace this experience," Gonzales said.

Some of the UTRGV VLIP students going to Austin shared their thoughts about the coming internship and its benefits.

## ERIC VARGAS

Vargas has always been interested in government. At UTRGV, he is pursuing two master's degrees, one in Public Affairs and the other in Creative Writing.

"The procedures and protocols that go into enacting policy has always fascinated me. The VLIP internship is exciting, and I plan to utilize my time to its utmost, learning different policies, procedures and experiencing firsthand government in action," he said.

## BERTHA LANCE

Lance never considered politics as a career until her fourth semester at UTRGV.

"I realized that politics was, indeed, what I want to do. I am grateful to have been given this opportunity to keep on living my passion and keep my dreams going strong," she said. "This internship will expand my skills and help me gain new experiences."

## KHALID ABOUJAMOUS

Aboujamous, a junior at UTRGV studying Political Science and English, plans to go to law school.

"Politics is a big part of my life. I study it in class, listen to it on the news, read about it online, and even share my opinions with friends and colleagues, but I have never experienced it first-hand. The VLIP internship gives me the chance to do just that. It is a great opportunity for me to learn from our legislators," Aboujamous said.

Student interns work full-time and must complete assignments in two online political science courses, for which they receive course credit. Students also receive monthly compensation through the VLIP program, thanks to the support and generosity of UTRGV President, Dr. Guy Bailey. The students will report to their assigned Capitol office a few days before the legislative session begins on Jan. 8, 2019.



# UTRGV Office of Community Relations EVENT CALENDAR Spring 2019



**RGV SCIENCE & ENGINEERING FAIR**

Friday-Saturday  
February 1-2, 2019



**MATHCOUNTS**

Saturday  
February 9, 2019



**REGIONAL SCIENCE BOWL**

Saturday  
February 16, 2019



**CHARREADA**

Wednesday  
February 27, 2019



**SOUTH TEXAS LITERACY SYMPOSIUM**

Friday  
March 1, 2019



**FESTIBA**

Monday-Saturday  
Feb. 25-Mar. 3, 2019



**GREENPOWERUSA SOUTH TEXAS ELECTRIC CAR COMPETITION**

Friday-Saturday  
April 5-6, 2019



**DIA DE LOS NIÑOS**

Saturday  
April 27, 2019



**STEM EARTH DAY**

April 2019

[UTRGV.edu/gcr](http://UTRGV.edu/gcr)

For more information or special accommodations, contact the Division of Governmental and Community Relations at (956) 665-3361 or (956) 882-5845 or email [vpgcr@utrgv.edu](mailto:vpgcr@utrgv.edu)

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