

ENGAGE

Transforming Lives Through Engaged Partnerships

DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS NEWSLETTER



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

Veronica Gonzales,
Vice President for Governmental &
Community Relations

WELCOME TO ENGAGE.

UTRGV's Division of Governmental and Community Relations serves as the university's liaison to the community and builds and promotes positive relationships with federal, state and local elected officials, agencies, nonprofits and the private sector.

Our division consists of four departments – Governmental Relations, Community Relations, Community Engagement and Assessment and Public Arts – all with one mission: to positively transform the lives of our students and our community through engaged partnerships. Our team hit the ground running from the moment we opened our doors at UTRGV and we haven't stopped since. In our first year, our team:

- Hosted over 22 members of Congress, State Senators and State Representatives from outside the Rio Grande Valley as well as representatives from NASA, DOE, USDA, VA, EPA, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and others.
- Welcomed thousands of students,

educators, federal officials, corporate representatives and community members on campus for weeklong activities at the award-winning and nationally recognized HESTEC and FESTIBA.

- Revived a dormant Nonprofit Resource Center and hosted over 200 nonprofits at a regional summit that has resulted in strengthened partnerships in addition to creating a portal that connects community organizations with students who wish to volunteer their time and talents.
- Coordinated and presented literacy, art and musical events for the Rio Grande Valley and in September, we will bring back the popular dinosaur named Sue.

As we celebrate our first anniversary as UTRGV, we thank you for your commitment and support and your continued engagement.

We all know that the eyes of Texas are upon one of our sister schools but we can proudly boast that the eyes of the nation are upon UTRGV. Working together, WE WILL transform the RGV and be a success story known throughout our state and nation.



GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

From UTRGV to Austin to Capitol Hill, the Governmental Relations team led by Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations, Veronica Gonzales, has been busy sharing the importance of UTRGV's successes to garner support for the university.

The support that our governmental partners have shown the University speaks volumes about their interest in the advancement of the entire Rio Grande Valley region, and it is these types of partnerships that will sustain the growth and success of the Valley.

With the 85th legislative session approaching, the staff has been working diligently to ensure that UTRGV's opportunities and funding needs are known to our legislative partners.

SAVE THE DATE:

RGV Day at the Capital
February 7, 2017

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD REPRESENTATIVES TOURS CAMPUSES

The staff of the Texas Legislative Budget Board (LBB) toured the campuses in early April. Their visit was the perfect opportunity to discuss UTRGV's legislative priorities in preparation for the 85th legislative session. Organized by the Governmental Relations team, visitors toured the campuses and met with Dr. Guy Bailey, President, Dr. Havidán Rodríguez, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Veronica Gonzales, Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations, several Deans and the STARGATE team. The LBB is a permanent joint committee of the Texas Legislature. The board and its staff serve a vital role in developing budget



Dr. Leonel Vela,
Sr. Assoc. Dean, School of Medicine

and policy recommendations for legislative appropriations, complete fiscal analyses for proposed legislation, and conduct evaluations and reviews to improve the efficiency and performance of state and local operations.



Richard Sanchez, Associate Vice President
for Governmental Relations

UTRGV BROWNSVILLE CAMPUS HOSTS COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Texas' role in the international economy was the topic of discussion at a joint committee hearing of the Texas House Committees on Business & Industry and International Trade & Intergovernmental Relations. Dr. Mark Kroll, Dean of the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship provided testimony and Richard Sanchez, Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations for UTRGV provided the welcome.

TAKING THE UTRGV MESSAGE TO CAPITOL HILL

In the spring, Veronica De la Garza, Director for State and Local Government Relations, represented UTRGV at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Capitol Forum. She also visited with U.S. Senator John Cornyn and his staff. Veronica Gonzales, Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations, also testified before the Congressional Education and Workforce Committee.



THE BREAKFAST CLUB WITH RICHARD SANCHEZ

Once a month, Richard Sanchez, Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations invites city, county, state and federal officials and their staffs to join the government relations team for a conversation about UTRGV and the regional issues shared by all entities across the

Rio Grande Valley. The BYOB (Buy Your Own Breakfast) talks are held at favorite breakfast venues across the Valley. These sessions provide opportunities to share what is happening at UTRGV and in the Valley, and more importantly, hear what constituents have to say.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY HESTEC

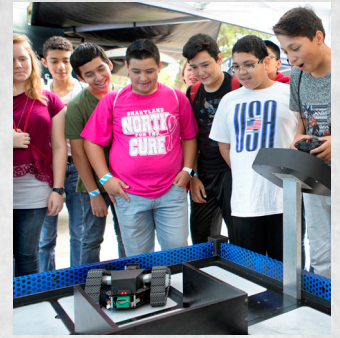
Planning is in high gear for the 15th anniversary of HESTEC, the Hispanic Engineering, Science, and Technology (HESTEC) Week. From October 2 through October 8, thousands of middle and high school students, educators and parents will hear engaging presentations by world-renowned speakers, interactive educational exhibits, take part in dynamic robotics competitions and much more.

"HESTEC has impacted more than one million people over the course of its existence. We are proud of our history, and we invite everyone to come out and celebrate this important milestone," said Velinda Reyes, Assistant Vice President for Community



Programs and Operations.

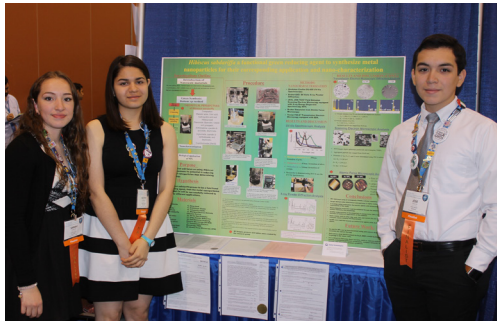
While many of the events are held on the UTRGV Edinburg campus, HESTEC will expand to the cities of Brownsville and Harlingen with Robotics Day and the U.S. Navy SeaPerch Challenge respectively. Watch a [short video](#) about HESTEC and for a complete list of events visit the [HESTEC website](#).



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

When it comes to introducing students in the Rio Grande Valley to career pathways through the avenue of education, the Office of Community Relations works tirelessly to coordinate programs that inspire students to be empowered to pursue their dreams. Under the direction of Velinda Reyes, Assistant Vice President for Community Programs and Operations, her team collaborates with over 45 local and national key partners to facilitate programs that have proven impactful on the lives of thousands of students.

STUDENT SCIENTISTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE



Sarah Chacon, Kathy Estrella and Jose Chacon at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

10 high school students from the Rio Grande Valley took part in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, the world's largest international pre-college science competition held in Phoenix, Arizona.

The students earned the right to compete at the international fair because of their success at the Regional Science and Engineering Fair, organized by the Office of Community Relations.

"These are the most students we have ever taken to the International Science Fair from the Valley," said Javier Garcia, Director of STEM Community Outreach for UTRGV. "On behalf of UTRGV, I want to thank all our sponsors. Their contributions make it possible for our future scientists and engineers to attend these meaningful research experiences."

GCR PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON STEM

The opportunity to represent UTRGV on a platform like President Obama's My Brother's Keeper +STEM Initiative was an honor for Veronica Gonzales, Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations, and Velinda Reyes, Assistant Vice President for Community Programs and Operations. In December, they joined with leaders and stakeholders from around the country to discuss integrated strategies that can enable and inspire students and help disconnected youths find their way into opportunities through STEM and entrepreneurship. [Read more](#) about their participation in the national roundtable.



Veronica Gonzales and Velinda Reyes

SAVE THE DATE:

South Texas Women Leading
in Government Conference
October 21, 2016
UTRGV Brownsville Campus



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

The Office of Community Engagement and Assessment (CEA) serves as the institutional support unit that promotes university-community engagement to expand opportunities for engaged scholarship, teaching and learning, while addressing critical societal issues.

Under the direction of Assistant Vice President Cristina Trejo and Data and Research Manager Dr. Doris Mendiola, the CEA builds and fosters effective relationships with internal and external constituents to address the needs of the community and the university in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Whether you're a nonprofit organization looking for help with a business plan, a student seeking experiential learning or volunteer opportunities, or a researcher interested in community-based research, the Office of Community Engagement and Assessment can help.

SAVE THE DATE:
MLK Day of Service
January 16, 2017



Dr. Fernando Valle, Associate Professor at Texas Tech University, speaks to participants.

BUILD • CONNECT • PROMOTE

More than 200 participants representing nonprofit organizations from across the region heard inspiring speeches at the first RGV Nonprofit Business Summit organized by the Office of Community Engagement & Assessment. Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott and renowned strategic partnership expert Barbara Harrington were the featured speakers. The conference included breakout sessions on a variety of topics with different tracks related to organizational leadership and social entrepreneurship.

[Read more](#) about the summit.



THE **ENGAGEMENT** ZONE

The Engagement Zone (EZ) is an online portal that assists in documenting community engagement and impact. It pairs students with service learning and volunteer opportunities and offers a fast and simple way to log service hours in real time.

Community partners are now able to quickly and easily load profile details, events, and needs that UTRGV students and faculty can address. Engagement Zone facilitates

involvement from nonprofit agencies, volunteers, and other community groups to affect real change in our communities.

Engagement Zone is a result of the collaborative efforts of the Offices of Community Engagement and Assessment, Engaged Scholarship and Learning, Student Academic Success, and Student Involvement, in partnership with the United Ways of the Rio Grande Valley. Visit the [Engagement Zone](#) for more information.



COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP **CHAMPION** RECOGNITION AWARD

The Office of Community Engagement and Assessment in partnership with the Office of Engaged Scholarship and Learning, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity created the Community Engaged Scholarship Champion Recognition Award. The award promotes research that is relevant to the needs of the community, and recognizes the cutting edge work that UTRGV faculty is facilitating across the region. Last fall, the department recognized eight UTRGV faculty

members as STEM Champions. The award promotes distinguished faculty who designed their STEM-related research to embrace the principles of community-engaged scholarship. Throughout the year, they made special appearances at signature events on campus. They shared their research with UTRGV, middle, and high school students. This year, all disciplines will be recognized. For more information, call the Office of Community Engagement and Assessment at (956) 665-3361.



WELCOME BACK SUE

She's Back! Sue, the largest, most complete and best preserved specimen of a Tyrannosaurus rex ever discovered returns to the Rio Grande Valley. The exhibit "A T. Rex Named Sue" opens in late September. The 42 feet long, 12 feet high, and 3,500 pound dinosaur will make her home

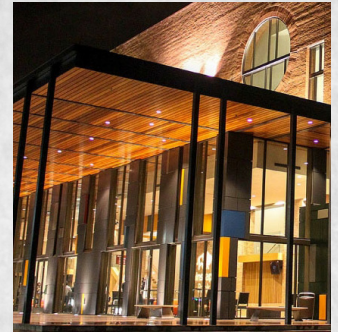
in the Visitors Center on the Edinburg campus. The exhibit opens September 29 and continues through January 8. Schools and community groups are encouraged to schedule tours. Check out www.utrgv.edu/sue for more details.



Students take time to pose at the JFK Center for the Performing Arts.

STUDENTS PERFORM AT NATIONAL VENUE

The talented students of the Ballet Folklórico and the Mariachi Juvenil Aztlán performed at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C. in late June. Deemed one of the top 10 presentations for its elegant choreography of dance and music from the Mexican state of Puebla, nationally recognized adjudicators made the selection based on artistic excellence and merit. [Read more](#) about our students who brought national recognition to the university and the Rio Grande Valley.



PUBLIC ART

UTRGV is deeply invested in enriching the communities of the Rio Grande Valley with the cultural arts. Under the direction of Dr. Dahlia Guerra, Assistant Vice President for Public Art, the department collaborates with the College of Fine Arts to present performances and art exhibitions in two fabulous venues: the TSC Arts Center in Brownsville and the Performing Arts Complex (PAC) in Edinburg. National and world-renowned performances are offered year-round for audiences of all ages.



PRODUCTIONS

FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES



SOMETHING NEW FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

"Productions for Young Audiences" will share the joy of music, dance and theater with the next generation by providing unforgettable cultural experiences for children and young adults. Working with the College of Fine Arts, concerts and performances will be offered year-round. [Please visit](#) this site for a calendar of events.

SAVE THE DATE:

FESTIBA 2017
The Healing Arts:
Arte y Salud
February 27-March 4, 2017
utrgv.edu/festiba

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

HSTEC

Hop on Engineering, Science and Technology Week

COMMUNITY DAY



FOOD BOOTHS



SABRINA CARPENTER

HANDS-ON
ACTIVITIES

CHANGING
THE WORLD
THROUGH STEM

WWW.UTRGV.EDU/HSTEC

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 8, 2016 • 4-10 P.M.

UTRGV EDINBURG CAMPUS • FREE EVENT

UTRGV

NRC
Helping Here.



A T.REX NAMED SUE



THIS DONATION WAS CREATED BY THE EDINBURG MUSEUM OF NATURE AND WILDLIFE. THE DONATION WAS MADE BY THE EDINBURG MUSEUM OF NATURE AND WILDLIFE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS, CONTACT
THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN EDINBURG, (956-665-3361) OR BROWNSVILLE, (956-882-3645); OR AT VPCOR@UTRGV.EDU

Build • Connect • Promote

At The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, the Nonprofit Resource Center (NRC) provides tools and resource to advance the growth, sustainability and impact of the nonprofit sector in the Rio Grande Valley region.

We help **BUILD** organizational structures that foster performance and success through:

- Training
- Workshops
- Technical Assistance

We help **CONNECT** organizations to develop collaborative alliances that leverage strengths and produce lasting regional benefits through:

- Networking
- Events
- Ongoing Dialogue

We help **PROMOTE** partnerships where the community and the university join together to identify needs and share resources through:

- Engaged Learning Courses
- Community Based Research
- Volunteer Connections



(956) 665-3361

nrc@utrgv.edu



GUESS WHO'S BACK

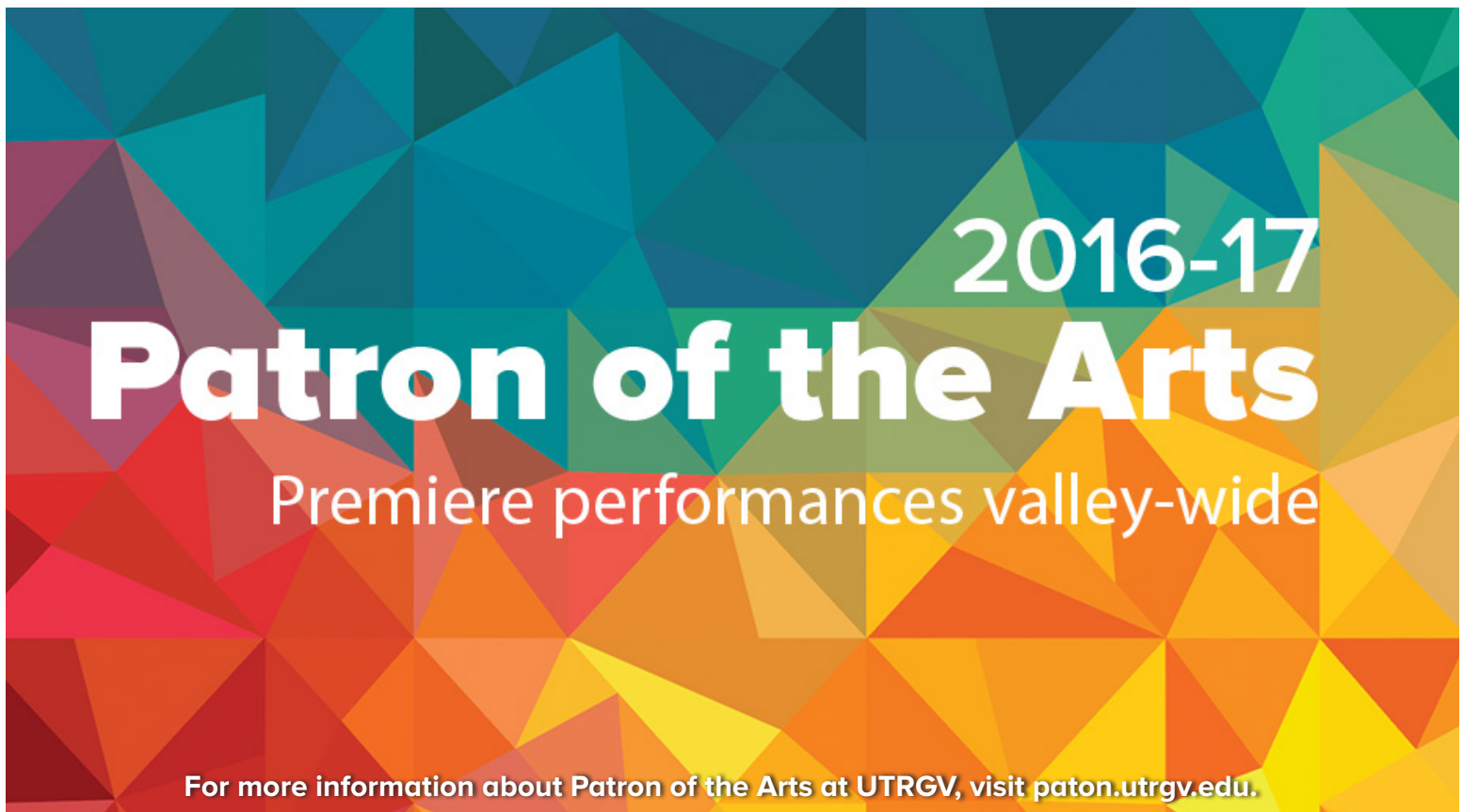
UTRio Grande Valley
September 29
Visitors Center - Edinburg
utrgv.edu/sue

A T-REX NAMED
SUE



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This exhibition was created by The Field Museum, Chicago, and made possible through the generosity of McDonald's Corporation.



2016-17

Patron of the Arts

Premiere performances valley-wide

For more information about Patron of the Arts at UTRGV, visit paton.utrgv.edu.



The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley
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*Division of Governmental
& Community Relations*

Edinburg Campus
1201 W. University Dr.
ITT 1.404
Edinburg, TX 78539
956/665-3361
vpgcr@utrgv.edu

Brownsville Campus
One West University Blvd.
Bookstore Annex
Brownsville, TX 78520
(956) 882-5058
vpgcr@utrgv.edu