### **IN THIS ISSUE**

Community Engagement & Economic Development Governmental Relations Community Relations Public Art

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Engagement Zone Fest Jan. 17, 2018 - UTRGV Brownsville Jan. 18, 2018 - UTRGV Edinburg Enter the "Engagement Zone" to learn more about volunteering and service learning opportunities. Free food, fun and conversations about how to give back to your community.

#### 58th Annual RGV Regional Science & Engineering Fair

Feb. 2 & 3, 2018 - Brownsville Middle and high school students from throughout South Texas will compete for a chance to advance to the state and international level competitions.

#### **Math Counts**

Feb. 9, 2018 - UTRGV Edinburg Designed to excite and challenge middle school students, Math Counts offers four levels of competition featuring both a rigorous written competition and a fastpaced oral competition.

#### **Regional Science Bowl**

Feb. 17, 2018 - UTRGV Edinburg Middle and high school students will compete in a fast-pace question-and-answer tournament designed to test their knowledge in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, earth science and general science.

#### CHARREDA AT UTRGV & TSC

Feb. 21, 2018 - UTRGV Brownsville UTRGV will kick off CHARREDA and Charro Days with live music, food booths, contests and games.

Feb. 22, 2018 - TSC Performing Arts Center UTRGV will join with Texas Southmost College to celebrate Charro Days and welcome Mr. Amigo to the campuses. Please visit this link for more details about CHARREADA.

#### FESTIBA 2018

Feb. 26 - March 3, 2018 There will be more than 100 events across the Rio Grande Valley including presentations by students and faculty, guest artists and internationally renowned authors and performers. Please visit utrgv.edu/festiba/.

#### HESTEC GreenPower USA

South Texas Electric Car Competition April 6-7, 2018 - Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport UTRGV will host this first time competition that uses the excitement of motorsport to inspire middle and high school students to excel in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) studies.

For more information, please visit the Upcoming Events section in the newsletter.

# **ENGAGE** Transforming Lives Through Engaged Partnerships

### DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS NEWSLETTER



Leadership Team for the newly formed Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development: Juan Santos Flores, Cristina Trejo-Vasquez , Maria Juarez, Dr. Doris Mendiola, Michael Uhrbrock, Linda Ufland, Hector Landez (not shown)

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

#### WELCOME TO ENGAGE

UTRGV is growing and our Division of Governmental and Community Relations is no exception. Allow me to welcome the university's economic development team to our Division.

In so many ways, economic development goes hand in hand with the work we do in governmental and community relations with our ultimate goal of being able to transform lives through engaged partnerships.

The offices joining our team are the Small Business Development Center, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, the Veterans Business Outreach Center, the Data and Information Systems Center and the Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center in Brownsville.

The offices will be led by Cristina Trejo-Vasquez. Cris currently oversees Community Engagement and Assessment, and the Nonprofit Resource Center.

Cris was the strategic planner and a key player in the development of Hidalgo County's 2010-2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and led a multidisciplinary team of faculty, graduate students and professional staff in the development and implementation of a regional asset map and an economic development strategy for 40 rural municipalities in South Texas. I want to thank Cris for taking on this leadership role.

In January, we will devote a special newsletter to highlight these offices and the employees whose work helps to bring economic prosperity to the Rio Grande Valley.

On behalf of everyone in our Division, thank you to all our partners for their commitment, support and continued engagement.

We look forward to working together in 2018.

Happy Holidays!

Veronia Hayler

**Veronica Gonzales**, Vice President for Governmental & Community Relations



### MEET THE TEAM



Sai Mullapudi Business Economic Research Associate IV

### What do you like about your job?

Learning new things has always been a great motivator for me. In every project we have had, I believe I have always been able to learn something new, or a new way to interpret the information available and solve a problem. The volume of information has been growing at an exponential rate and constantly changing dimensions. My job provides an ability to convert that information into useful knowledge and data for making better decisions.

#### What drives you in your job?

I am driven by the fact that our work directly or indirectly influences the local economy and helps the community in building a better future for the families.

What do you envision in the next five years for UTRGV? Education is the number one economic priority in the world. I envision UTRGV to be an institute that continues to embrace technological changes and be a leader in educational learning and teaching.

#### What do you do to relax?

I enjoy watching comedy shows, meditation, walking, volunteering, mentoring, reading, and traveling. I involve family and friends into all the activities.

### **CONNECT WITH** Sai Mullapudi (956) 665-2301 Sai.Mullapudi@utrgv.edu

## THE DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS EXPANDS ITS REACH

In an effort to position itself as an engaged university while supporting the overarching mission of one of the university's core priorities to be engaged with the community, the Division of Governmental and Community Relations is bringing together the Offices of Community Engagement and Economic Development.

The Small Business Development Center, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, the Veterans Business Outreach Center, the Data and Information Systems Center, the Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center, and the Office of Community Engagement and Assessment will form the new Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development.

"We are excited about this new formation. It is strategic

### FACULTY PEER EXCHANGE Collaboration

On October 11 and 12, the Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development partnered with the UTRGV Center for Teaching Excellence and the College of Sciences to host the Faculty Peer Exchange. Focused on community engaged scholarship, the Faculty Peer Exchange provided tools and resources to help them be successfully engaged scholars.

Guest lecturer and expert in the field of community engagement, Dr. Diane Doberneck, came to UTRGV. Approximately 30 faculty members representing various colleges and academic disciplines, participated in various presentations with Doberneck who is the associate director at the National Collaborative for the Study of University Engagement at Michigan State University.

"Being an engaged scholar means to actively integrate community engagement with research and



Cristina-Trejo Vasquez, associate vice president for Community Engagement and Economic Development welcomes new employees to the division.

and aligns with the university's commitment to engaged university and anchor institution principles. We look forward to being a contributing catalyst for regional prosperity," said Cristina Trejo-Vasquez, associate vice president of Community Engagement and Economic Development.

This newly formed team will concentrate on bringing the community and university resources together to address critical societal issues.

There are 28 employees who made the transition to the division.



Dr. Diane Doberneck spoke on community engagement to faculty.

teaching," said Dr. Javier Cavazos, assistant professor of Counseling and Director for the Center for Teaching Excellence. "We want faculty to identify ways to conduct and disseminate scholarly research with benefits for students and community members."

The Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development is committed to bringing quality professional development opportunities for faculty through the Faculty Peer Exchange.

## INAUGURAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

As UTRGV prepares to seek the Elective Community Engagement Classification by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a committee has been meeting to help guide the university.

The committee is comprised of one representative from each college, faculty senate, other key champions of community engagement, as well as, one community constituent. They held their inaugural meeting in October and plan to meet monthly.

"This classification is not an award; it is an evidencebased documentation of institutional practice used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement," said Cristina Trejo-Vasquez, associate vice president for Community Engagement and Economic Development. The committee will facilitate dialogue about how the university integrates community engagement into its academic mission and how to broaden its definitions of teaching, research and service for purposes of annual assignments and evaluations to credit activities that engage the community.

The next opportunity for institutions to apply for classification will be in the 2020 cycle, with the application process opening in January 2018.

#### ENGAGE

## VP GONZALES REPRESENTS UTRGV AT HACU ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Veronica Gonzales, vice president for Governmental and Community R elations served as a presenter at the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' (HACU) 31st annual conference at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront in San Diego, California in late October.

The theme of the conference was "Championing Hispanic Higher Education Success: Driving America's Prosperity." Gonzales and Dr. Patricia McHatton, interim vice president for academic affairs, represented UTRGV at the conference.

"I was honored to be a presenter on the Advocacy and Policy panel and to represent UTRGV," Gonzales said. "It was a great conference and a wonderful opportunity to make new friends who are committed to higher education."

Gonzales was on the panel "HACU Advocacy Needs New Recruits." The session, for both beginners and experts, highlighted the importance of engaging with elected officials to advance Hispanic-Serving Institution priorities.



of legislative affairs for HACU

HACU represents more than 470 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the United States, Puerto Rico, Latin America and Spain. HACU is the only national educational association that represents Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

The conference provides a unique forum for the sharing of information and ideas for the best and, most promising practices in the education of Hispanics.

## LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT AT HESTEC WEEK

During Educator Day at HESTEC Week held in October, the Office of Governmental Relations organized the annual Superintendents' Leadership Summit. Dr. Andre H. Sayles, Ph.D., acting director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity with the U.S. Department of Energy, and Kate Rogers, executive vice president of The Holdsworth Center, spoke at the summit.

Texas State Representative R.D. "Bobby" Guerra and Texas State Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa participated as panelists on the impact the 85th legislative session had on education in South Texas. Other panels focused on the importance of K-12 programs on STEM opportunities and issues that affect student success in college.

# THE **85TH** LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Every other year the Texas Legislature meets in a regular session for 140 days. The 85th Texas Legislative Session began on January 10 and ended May 29. A month later, Governor Greg Abbott called senators and representatives back to Austin for a special session that began on July 18 and ended August 15.

The Office of Governmental and Community Relations produced a legislative update that looks back at the legislative sessions and provides insight on how UTRGV and the Rio Grande Valley were impacted by the decisions made in Austin.



Veronica Gonzales and Dr. Guy Bailey, UTRGV President, with state representative R.D. "Bobby" Guerra and state senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa.

HIGHLIGHTS of the 2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

To view our special Legislative Newsletter, click here.

## **1ST FRIDAY BREAKFAST ON THE WATER**

The 1st Friday breakfasts, organized by Richard Sanchez, associate vice president for governmental relations, brings city, county, state and federal officials and their staffs together for a conversation about UTRGV and the regional issues shared by all entities across the Rio Grande Valley.

On the first Friday in May, participants spent the morning aboard UTRGV's the R/V Ridley. The floating classroom is an educational platform and a wonderful resource available to UTRGV students, schools and community groups and the public.



Dr. David Hicks, professor and director of the School of Earth Environmental and Marine Sciences, provided information on the academic programs available to students who want to study environmental science and marine biology at UTRGV.

### MEET THE TEAM



**Gilbert Perez** Administrative Manager

What do you like about your job? The realm of knowledge that I am exposed to on a daily basis. I really enjoy working for an organization that is so passionate about making a difference and exploring endless possibilities for our students, staff, faculty and the community.

#### What drives you in your job?

Being in a position that allows me to lead by example but at the same time, reinforces the abilities to be innovative and challenge my capabilities to achieve more. Being part of a team that helps create partnerships with internal and external constituents, generating new and promising programs for our students.

## What do you envision in the next five years for UTRGV?

I envision a diverse, premier institution of higher education that showcases the extraordinary talents of our students, the community and the local cultures. I see UTRGV leading the way in research and pushing beyond to the next frontier.

#### What do you do to relax?

I truly enjoy connecting with close friends and reminiscing fond memories and creating new ones. I love being an uncle to my nephew. He truly makes my soul laugh and smile. Spending time with my family is dear to me and helps me embrace every day and what it may bring.

> CONNECT WITH Gilbert Perez (956) 665-2128 Gilbert.Perez@utrgv.edu

### MEET THE TEAM



#### Karen Dorado Director of Special Programs

and Community Relations

#### What do you like about your job?

I love that our programs provide students, parents, teachers and community members with the opportunity to visit our university and learn all about the great research that our amazing faculty and university students lead.

What drives you in your job? I am driven by the knowledge that our team has the incredible and unique opportunity to serve our community through our programs and effect positive change in our community.

What do you envision in the next five years for UTRGV? I see the university continuing to be a place of opportunity and new ideas, where creativity meets innovation, where research becomes solutions for real-life problems in our community.

What do you do to relax? I like to spend time with my family, read, take Latin dance classes, and serve at my church.

CONNECT WITH Karen Dorado (956) 665-3361 Karen.dorado@utrgv.edu

## GET READY FOR ELECTRIC Car competition

Excitement is in the air as UTRGV gets ready to host the very first HESTEC GreenPowerUSA South Texas Electric Car Competition on April 6 and 7, 2018. The Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport will be the site for this competition that brings the excitement of motorsport to inspire middle and high school students to excel in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) studies.

To prepare for the event, more than 30 teachers from across South Texas took part in training sessions in September. They learned how to build and design the single seat electric cars.

"We learned how to put these cars together, so we know what we are talking about when students start building the cars," said Paul Tenison, STEM practicum coordinator at Harlingen High School. "I have an active engineering club with 24 students, and I know they all want to be on the Greenpower team".



Teachers test drove the cars they built during the information session.

Thirty teams from middle schools, high schools and colleges will participate in the competition. UTRGV and its award-winning program, HESTEC, Hispanic Engineering, Science, and Technology Week, is partnering with GreenpowerUSA Foundation, Siemens, Sports Car Club of America and the Brownsville South Padre International Airport to bring the competition to the Rio Grande Valley.

To learn more about the competition, please visit utrgv.edu/greenpower.

## **RAISING AWARENESS FOR SCIENCE AND MATH**

Thousands of students will visit UTRGV campuses during the month of February for events geared toward Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and career awareness.

The month begins with the **Rio Grande Valley Regional Science and Engineering Fair** on Friday, Feb. 2 and Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018. Seven hundred middle and high school students from throughout South Texas will converge at the Brownsville campus for a chance to advance to the state and international level competitions. Now in its 58th year, the RGV Regional Science and Engineering Fair supports students' interests in 17 different science-related fields of study. Grand Champions from the high school level will advance to the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in May to compete with students from 75 different countries, regions and territories. **MathCounts** will take place on Friday, Feb. 9, 2018 at the Edinburg campus. Designed to excite and challenge middle school students, the program offers four levels of competition featuring both a rigorous written competition and a fast-paced oral competition. More than 100 students will be participating.

**The Regional Science Bowl** is a fast-pace question-andanswer tournament designed to test student's knowledge in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, astronomy, earth science and general science. Two hundred students representing middle schools and high schools from throughout South Texas will be at the Edinburg campus on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2018. The first-place middle school and high school teams will advance to the National Science Bowl, which will be held in Washington, D.C., from April 26 to April 30, 2018.

To learn more about the competitions, please visit www.utrgv.edu/gcr/.

# NEW <mark>Scholarship</mark> Program Inaugurated During Hestec Week

The first UTRGV students selected for the HESTEC Scholars of STEM scholarship were introduced during HESTEC Week Oct. 1 through Oct. 7.

Katelyn Aguilar, Edinburg; Joel Flores, Roma; Sonia Garza, Brownsville; Cecilia Gonzalez, Rio Grande City; Arianna Guerra, Rio Grande City; Ashley Olivarez, Pharr; Mario Saenz, Roma; and Yazmin Salinas, Hidalgo received the one time scholarships.

"I will always remember that this scholarship given to me by HESTEC helped me and motivated me in taking my first steps to success," said Ashley Olivarez, a junior at UTRGV who hopes to become a doctor.

Yolanda Gonzalez, district manager for Wells Fargo for the upper Rio Grande Valley and Laredo, said the scholarship program ties in with the bank's vision of supporting the communities, and in particular, education.



Five of the HESTEC Scholars of STEM are pictured here with Veronica Gonzales, vice president for Governmental and Community Relations.

"We understand that HESTEC will inspire students in careers in the STEM fields," she said. "The scholarship program will allow students to pursue their dreams of coming to college and endeavor in the STEM fields." The scholarship program was created in 2016 to mark the 15th anniversary of HESTEC. To view the events during HESTEC Week 2017, visit www.utrgv.edu/hestec.

### Public Art

# GET READY FOR FESTIBA 2018!

Plans are underway for the 2018 Festival of International Books and Arts (FESTIBA) with the theme of *Transcending Borders: Building Bridges through the Arts.* 

FESTIBA was created in 2006 to promote literacy and to foster a culture that appreciates and celebrates the cultural arts. From Feb. 26 to March 3, 2018, there will be more than 100 events across the Rio Grande Valley including presentations by students and faculty, guest artists and internationally renowned authors.

FESTIBA will feature *Artrageous The Interactive Art and Music Experience*, a one of kind interactive performance that incorporates many different art forms on the stage. *"Artrageous* blends popular music, dance, art, theater, and a rollicking spirit that will delight the audience," said Dr. Dahlia Guerra, assistant vice president for Public Art. "You will see action painting - artists, live, creating portraits of famous icons, at lightning speed, done on giant canvases - accompanied by live music. It promises



Artrageous The Interactive Art and Music Experience comes to UTRGV!

to be a great concert!" There will be two evening performances and children's concerts at the Performing Arts Center on the UTRGV Edinburg campus and at the Texas Southmost College Arts Center in Brownsville.

UTRGV is especially grateful to the Tocker Foundation and the City of Edinburg for their generous contributions supporting FESTIBA 2018.

To learn more about this event and all other performances and presentations during FESTIBA 2018, please visit utrgv.edu/festiba.

# HURRY TO SEE THE **Maya** exhibit- ends January 8

Thousands of students and community members have visited the *MAYA: Hidden Worlds Revealed* exhibit currently on display at the Visitors Centers, UTRGV Edinburg campus.

The ancient Maya are one of the most complex and advanced civilizations of the ancient world, known for their monumental architecture, distinctive art and intricate knowledge of astronomy and time. Visitors can view the richness of Mayan culture by examining authentic artifacts, traditions, discoveries, and world views. Two artifacts on display date to 600 AD and are especially fascinating! "This remarkable exhibit was created by the Science Museum of Minnesota and gives our communities of the Rio Grande Valley a unique opportunity to discover a lost civilization," said Dr. Dahlia Guerra, assistant vice president for Public Art. "I encourage everyone to come see this exhibit before it leaves our campus."



The exhibit is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in the UTRGV Visitors Center on the Edinburg Campus at 1201 W. University Drive. This exhibit will be on display through Jan. 8, 2018. Admission is free.

School and community groups can schedule tours by calling 956-665-2353 and submitting the on-line form at utrgv.edu/maya.

# PAC PRESENTS COLLABORATIVE Community concerts that Fill the house!

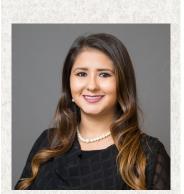
Peter and the Wolf came to life on stage before a packed house at the UTRGV Performing Arts Center (PAC) during HESTEC Community Day held in October. The symphonic fairy tale was presented through music and dance by the Dance Theater of Edinburg and UTRGV School of Music Faculty Wind Quintet.

The UTRGV Office of Global Engagement and the City of Edinburg hosted an event featuring indigenous dancers from Oaxaca, Mexico. The concert also featured UTRGV's own Ballet Folklórico and Mariachi Aztlán.



Please visit the Office of Public Art for a calendar of events for Patron of the Arts and Productions for Young Audiences concerts.

### MEET THE TEAM



Alyssa Medrano Accountant II

## What do you like about your job?

My job consists of ensuring that our accounts are upto-date and are ready for use by the different project managers. I like knowing that the work I do helps ensure that our division and its offices have the resources to serve our university and external community.

#### What drives you in your job?

I am driven by new challenges. I like learning new processes and working with our team to find ways to improve the way we can serve our community.

### What do you envision in the next five years for UTRGV?

I envision UTRGV growing in its academic programs and continuing to be a place where our students in the Rio Grande Valley and elsewhere can come and get a high quality education.

What do you do to relax? I love spending time with my family, friends and coworkers. When I am not working, I get to look forward to seeing my daughter and husband, and they make all of life's challenges worth it.

CONNECT WITH Alyssa Medrano (956) 665-3361 Alyssa.Reyna@utrgv.edu

HIDDEN WORLDS REVEALED.

# UTRGV. Visitors Center in Edinburg Exhibit ends Monday, Jan. 8, 2018



58<sup>™</sup> ANNUAL RGV Regional Science & Engineering Fair

February 2-3, 2018 Brownsville Jacob Brown Auditorium, *High School Division* Garza Gym, *Middle School Division* Friday: 4 - 7 p.m. Saturday: 7:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Call for Judges. To register visit this <u>link</u>. For more information, please call Javier Garcia at (956) 882-5058 or iavier.aarcia@utrav.er



Friday, Feb. 9 | 11 a.m.-5 p.m. | UTRGV Edinburg Campus Deadline to Register: Dec. 15, \$35 per individual Late Registration: After Dec. 15, \$55 per individual

For special accommodations, please contact the Division of Governmental and Community Relations at (956) 665-3351 (Edinburg) or (956) 882-5845 (Brownsville).

utrgv.edu



#### Register at ez.utrgv.edu

Special thanks to the Division of Governmental & Community Relations

The University of Texas RioGrandeValley Student Involvement

For more information or special accommodations, contact Student Involvement at (956) 882-5111 (Brownsville) or (956) 665-2660 (Edinburg).

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley



# TRANSCENDING BORDERS: Building Bridges through the Arts

February 26 to March 3, 2018

estiba)

CHARREADA AT UTRGV & TSC

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21, 2018 Student Union Lawn, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. UTRGV will kick off Charro Days with live music, food booths, contests and games

#### THURSDAY, FEB. 22, 2018

Mr. Amigo Presentation TSC Performing Arts Center, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. UTRGV and TSC will welcome Mr. Amigo to the campuses.

### THURSDAY, FEB. 22, 2018

TSC Paseo, Noon to 2 p.m. TSC will celebrate Mr. Amigo and Charro Days with music, food booths and games.

Please visit this **link** for more details.

FESTIBA will host more than 130 events across the Rio Grande Valley.

#### ENGAGE

**REGISTRATION FEE:** 

\$179 PER TEAM

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE IN MATH AND SCIENCE IN THIS FAST PACED, QUIZ SHOW-STYLE COMPETITION!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2018 UTRGV EDINBURG CAMPUS



FIRST PLACE WINNERS IN BOTH THE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL DIVISIONS WILL ADVANCE TO THE NATIONAL SCIENCE BOWL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



UTRGV



### The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Division of Governmental & Community Relations

Sign up to receive our newsletter

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

Brownsville Campus One West University Blvd. Luse Bookstore Annex 1325 Brownsville, TX 78520 Brownsv (956) 882-5058 (956 vpgcr@utrgv.edu vpgc

956) 665-3361 0

Lusena House 1325 E. Madison Brownsville, TX 78520 (956) 882-6535 vpgcr@utrgv.edu

#### utrgv.edu