

ENGAGE

Transforming Lives Through Engaged Partnerships

DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL & COMMUNITY RELATIONS NEWSLETTER



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Upcoming Events

Ballet Folklorico and Mariachi Juvenil Aztlán Perform at Kennedy Center

June 8-John F. Kennedy Center for the Performance Arts, Washington, D.C.
For tickets, please visit <http://www.kennedy-center.org/calendar/event/RXSB>

UTRGV SBDC Training and Business Networking

June 6- June 21-SBDC will offer various opportunities for business training and networking.
Sept. 6-Nov. 15-Special Training for Kauffman FastTrac GrowthVenture.
Pre-register at utrgv.edu/sbdc/training/seminar.

UTRGV ECC hosts Kauffman FastTrac Program

Aug. 8-Gain the necessary tools to grow your non-profit organization using the Kauffman Fast Trac. The five week session begins Aug. 8 and ends Sept. 5. Register at <http://www.utrgv.edu/ecc/access-to-knowledge/kauffman-application/index.htm>.

Hispanic Engineering Science and Technology Week

Oct. 1-6-HESTEC promotes science, engineering and math education (STEM) to middle and high school students and teachers. Sponsors are vital in promoting the importance of STEM education. Please contact Velinda Reyes at velinda.reyes@utrgv.edu for ways to participate.

WELCOME TO ENGAGE

Summer is upon us and for many, this means it's time to relax and slow down. For our Governmental and Community Relations team, however, summer is a time to plan and prepare for what will be a very busy fall and spring.

An important date on our calendar is Jan. 8, 2019. That is the day state legislators return to the Texas Capitol in Austin for the beginning of the 86th Legislative Session. Our governmental relations team is in full swing as we meet with as many legislators and stakeholders as we can, to ensure they are aware of UTRGV's priorities and funding needs and as we put together our Legislative Appropriations Request.

In June, our Government Relations team will be going to Washington, D.C as part of the delegation for the RGV2DC trip. Planning is underway for the RGV Legislators Tour, which will take place in January and RGV Day at the Capital on Feb. 5. The RGV Partnership, the regions chamber of commerce, organizes these events and we are proud to collaborate with them as we work together to advocate for our region.

Our team in the Office of Community Relations recently held the inaugural and successful GreenpowerUSA Electric Car competition. Now it is time to switch gears for HESTEC Week in October when thousands of middle and high school students descend on the UTRGV campuses to become inspired to take the STEM career path.

Our Community Engagement and Economic Development team just completed an intense 20-hour training for 15 College of Science faculty preparing to teach Community Engaged Scholarship and Learning courses in the fall. The courses will involve community partners working with faculty and students on

research projects that are relevant to the community. The economic development team continues to help new and existing businesses flourish through trainings, incubation services and economic research.

The Office of Public Art is proud to announce that our Ballet Folklorico and Mariachi Juvenil Aztlán have received national recognition through the American College Dance Association. They will perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performance Arts in Washington, D.C. on June 8. Planning is underway to bring an exciting new exhibit during HESTEC Week. We hope to announce this very soon and we promise it will be as big as some of the past exhibits.

I use the word "team" throughout this message because our office with many collaborators come together as a team to achieve a common goal; to transform lives through engaged partnerships.

I thank all our staff for their dedication and commitment they bring to work every day. I especially want to congratulate the employees that have earned milestones in their years of service at UTRGV and our legacy institutions. They are featured in this newsletter.

Have a wonderful summer. I look forward to providing you an update this fall.

Veronica Gonzales
Vice President for Governmental & Community Relations

INAUGURAL ELECTRIC CAR COMPETITION SPARKS INTEREST IN STEM

The twelve pit crew members and drivers of the Brownsville Oliveira Middle School worked after school and weekends to build their electric car, the Odyssey.

“It took us three weeks. It was the first car we ever built. It was a little harder than expected, but we were pretty focused. We really wanted to win,” said Angel Valdez, student.

Oliveira Middle School won top honors in the middle school division in the inaugural HESTEC GreenPowerUSA South Texas Electric Car Competition, held April 6 and 7 at the Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport. Thirty-one teams representing middle schools, high schools and colleges from across South Texas competed.

Cynthia Castro, principal of Oliveira Middle School, said students had to submit an application to be on the team.

“That was the most difficult part of the process, to pick the students that would participate. We had a huge amount of students apply,” said Castro. “I know the need is there, the want is there, and if we can give the students the tools, they will use them and learn.”



Jim Tipton, president of Tipton Auto Group, waves the flag to start the high school division race. 31 teams competed in the first HESTEC GreenPowerUSA South Texas Electric Car Competition.

UTRGV and its award-winning program, Hispanic Engineering, Science, and Technology Week (HESTEC), were the first in Texas to host this competition. The goal was to inspire middle and high school students to excel in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) studies.

“We are so glad that our Community Relations team was able to coordinate a safe and successful competition. We are especially grateful to all our sponsors for supporting this inaugural competition,” said Velinda Reyes, assistant vice president for Community Programs and Operations. “With their support, we are changing the world through STEM.”

The students built and designed their electric cars using SIEMENS 3D software. Students also learned how to market their cars, and each team produced a video about their team and the car they built.

“Being part of such an event has ignited the hope and interest of students in academics. It was especially invigorating to see our students conversing with college students,” said Alberto Treviño, director of the Santa Rosa High School Afterschool Project.

To view photos and news stories, please visit utrgv.edu/greenpower.

HERNANDEZ HONORED AS TEXAS MATHCOUNTS COORDINATOR OF THE YEAR



Milton Hernandez accepting MATHCOUNTS Coordinator of the Year Award from Maryella Begley, P.E.(DOW) and state MATHCOUNTS committee chair.

Dedication and hard work on the MATHCOUNTS state program has garnered a top award for Milton Hernandez, program coordinator in the UTRGV Office of Community Relations.

Hernandez is the Texas MATHCOUNTS Coordinator of the Year for 2017-2018. He received the award at the Texas State MATHCOUNTS competition in March in Austin.

“It’s really an honor to be awarded. I started with this program three years ago, and I’m happy that all the hard work and dedication my team and I did these past few years is being recognized by the state,” Hernandez said.

The MATHCOUNTS national program offers four levels of competition featuring both a rigorous written competition and a fast-paced oral competition. This national program provides students the opportunity to compete

in live, in-person contests against and alongside their peers.

In February, UTRGV hosted a regional MATHCOUNTS competition, with more than 100 middle school students from across the Rio Grande Valley competing at the UTRGV Edinburg campus. Hernandez was lead organizer of the regional competition.

“Milton is very deserving of the recognition. He has really demonstrated his abilities to manage programs and projects with a high level of confidence and a ‘can-do’ attitude. He has built relationships and trust with many of the educators we work with,” said Velinda Reyes, assistant vice president for Community Programs and Operations.

The regional MATHCOUNTS competition was made possible with support from the Texas Society of Professionals Engineers of the Rio Grande Valley and AEP Texas.

UTRGV CELEBRATES CHARREADA!

UTRGV was proud to celebrate Charro Days, Sombrero Festival and the Mr. Amigo festivities held during the 81st Charro Days celebration in late February. The annual fiesta honors the friendship between the cities of Brownsville and Matamoros.



In the photos above, Mr. Amigo, Pedro Fernández, dances with children from the TSC Early Childhood Center; Dr. Guy Bailey flashes the “V” for Vaqueros at the Grand International Parade; and a Charro demonstrates the art of roping at CHARREADA, hosted by the Office of Student Involvement.



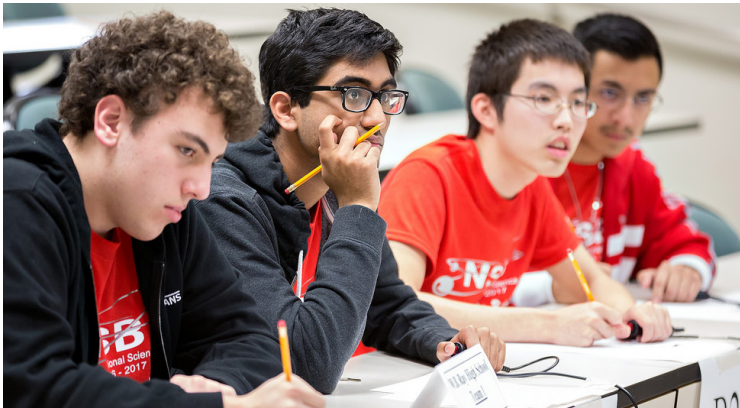
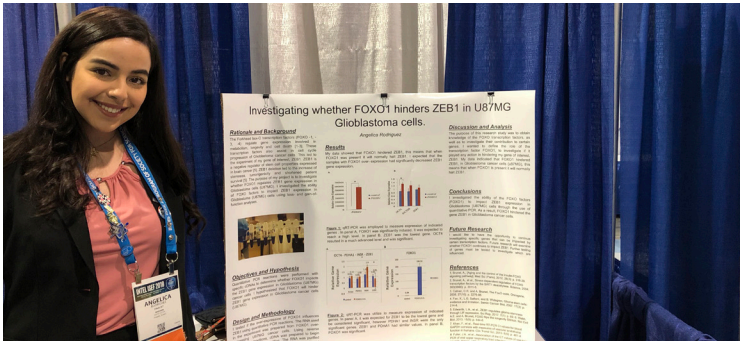
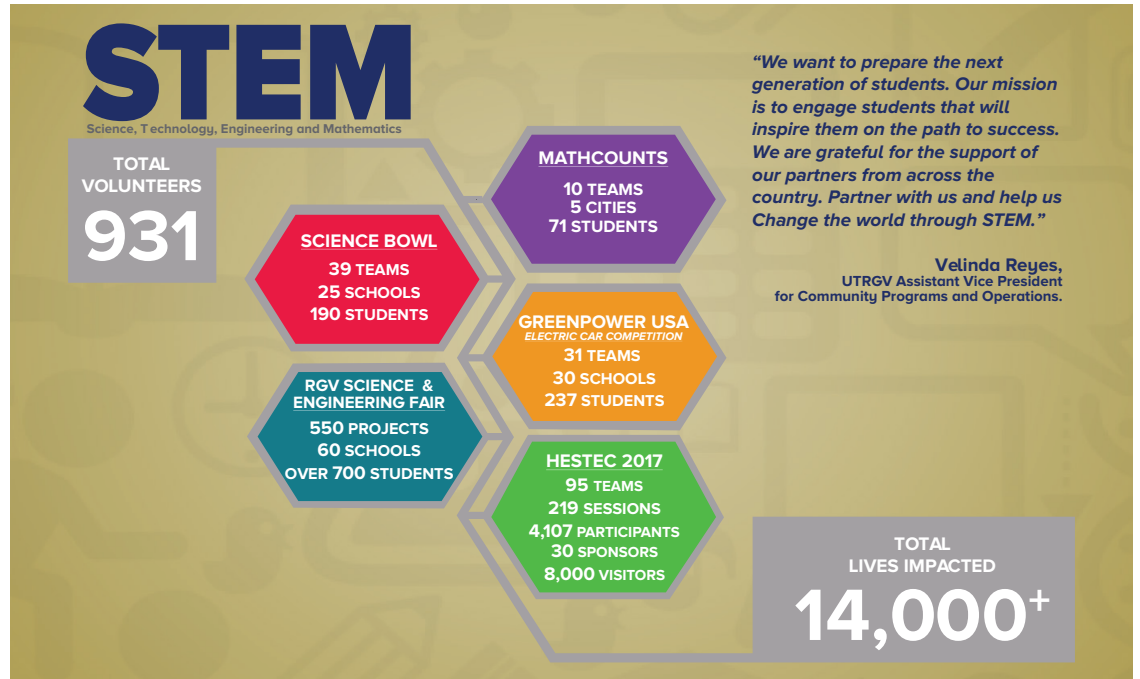
To view more photos, visit www.utrgv.edu/gcr and click on photo gallery.

CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH STEM

Every year, UTRGV's Office of Community Relations reaches over 10,000 K-12 students across the Rio Grande Valley through community-based outreach programs.

HESTEC Week, the Rio Grande Valley Regional Science and Engineering Fair, the regional Science Bowl, the regional MATHCOUNTS competition and the HESTEC GreenPowerUSA South Texas Electric Car Competition are geared toward science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and career awareness for students of all ages in the Rio Grande Valley.

UTRGV advanced 24 secondary level students to state and/or national competitions.



A LOOK AHEAD TO 86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION



Governmental Relations staff from across the state have had January 8, 2019 marked on their calendars for months. That is the day state legislators return to the Texas Capitol in Austin for the beginning of the 86th Legislative Session.

The 140- day session should start out much like it did in 2017 with dire predictions of reduced state revenue on hand and an expectation of budget cuts, and unlike last session, a power struggle in the Texas House of Representatives as it elects a new Speaker in the opening days of the session.

As it is with many institutions, much of the session is about funding, and thus all eyes focus on the Texas Economic Outlook leading into a legislative session. Comptroller Glenn Hager has expressed cautious optimism, saying that sales tax receipts and severance tax revenues are up, the price of oil is up and stable, and there is a very sizable balance in the Rainy Day Fund, estimated to be \$11.2 billion at the end of fiscal year 2019. Despite the somewhat positive outlook, legislators are expected to cover unmet obligations for the current budget cycle and underfunding of other programs for the next cycle. This type of stress on the budget process leaves very little discretionary revenue for legislators to appropriate.

“Our leadership team at UTRGV is considering its priorities for the session and working diligently to ensure that our Valley’s legislative delegation and other stakeholders know about the University’s programs, students, and challenges,” said Veronica Gonzales, Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations. “We are grateful for the support our governmental partners have shown the University.”

To prepare for the legislative session, administrators and faculty hosted staff from the Legislative Budget Board and Governor’s Budget Office in March. The campus visit allowed University administrators and students to highlight programs at the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses. Participants were also treated to a performance by the award-winning UTRGV Mariachi Atzlan.

SAVE THE DATE

JAN. 24-27, 2019 - RGV LEGISLATORS TOUR
FEB. 5, 2019 - RGV DAY AT THE CAPITOL

STUDENTS ENCOURAGED TO APPLY FOR LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIPS



Ann Jacobo with Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush at RGV Day at the Capitol in 2017.

This fall, applications will be accepted for the Rio Grande Valley Legislative Internship Program (VLIP). Students selected for the program are placed in the capitol offices of Rio Grande Valley State Legislators and will work during the 86th Legislative Session, which begins in January of 2019. The internships are available to juniors and seniors.

Students put their academic knowledge into practice as they assist legislative staff in administration, engage in research and writing assignments, work with constituents and perform tasks at public events.

“Having worked in the State Capitol, I know our students will leave with valuable experiences that I hope will lead them on a path to public service careers,” said Richard Sanchez, associate vice president for Governmental Relations

During the 85th Legislative session in 2017 Ann Jacobo, a UTRGV senior majoring in government and communications, was assigned to the office of State Representative Eddie Lucio III.

“It was a great experience working as an intern. Although working as a legislative aide was rigorous at times, knowing that my work could make a major impact on the daily lives of Texans made it worthwhile,” said Jacobo.

After her internship ended, Jacobo continued to work for Lucio. She is based in Lucio’s Brownsville office while she completes her degree in government and communications.

For more information, contact Dr. Ruth Ann Ragland at ruth.ragland@utrgv.edu.

UTRGV PARTICIPATES IN SECOND ANNUAL RGV2DC TRIP

A 40-member delegation will be in Washington, D.C. June 11-13 advocating for the Rio Grande Valley. The RGV Partnership in coordination with the offices of U.S. Congressmen Filemon Vela, Henry Cuellar and Vicente Gonzalez organizes the RGV2DC trip.

Representing UTRGV will be Veronica Gonzales; vice president for Governmental and Community Relations, Richard Sanchez; assistant vice president for Governmental Relations, Veronica de la Garza; director of

State and Local Government Relations and Velinda Reyes; assistant vice president for Community Programs and Operations.

“This will be our second RGV to DC trip. We feel it is critically important that we go to Washington with one voice to advocate on behalf of our international trade community, our ports of entry, and our educational institutions,” said Sergio Contreras, president and CEO of the RGV Partnership.

In 2017, UTRGV was part of the inaugural delegation that also included business, community and education leaders from all four counties in the Rio Grande Valley.

UTRGV RANKED AMONG THE TOP 100 PARTNERS IN 2017 BY NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

UTRGV was commended by the National Voter Registration Day for ranking among the top 100 partners in terms of how many voters were registered on National Vote Registration Day held on Sept. 22, 2017.

Held on the fourth Tuesday of September, National Voter Registration Day is a national holiday encouraging voter registration awareness in an effort to reach tens of thousands of voters who might not register otherwise.

“At UTRGV, we have over 17,000 students and 3,000 employees registered to vote,” said Veronica de la Garza, Vaqueros Vote Co-Chair and director of State and Local Governmental Relations. “We work very hard to create awareness on the importance of registering to vote. It is a year around effort with many



student organizations also registering students to vote on campus.”

To gear up for the 2018 National Voter Registration Day, events to register voters will take place on the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses. The campuses will also be polling locations for early voting which begins on Oct. 22 and Election Day on Nov. 6. UTRGV also hosted early voting sites on both the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses for the May 22 runoff elections.

The Vaqueros Vote Initiative at UTRGV is a nonpartisan coalition of faculty, staff, students and community organizations dedicated to increasing political and civic participation among the UTRGV community.

FESTIBA 2018 REACHES FAR AND WIDE



With the theme “Transcending Borders: Building Bridges through the Arts”, FESTIBA invited the public to discover that the arts can be a humanizing force that has great potential to build bridges throughout the world between cultures and communities.

FESTIBA is a weeklong celebration of the arts featuring academic presentations, workshops, competitions, presentations and book signings by authors and poets, artistic presentations,

and musical concerts. From Feb. 26 to March 3, more than 130 events were held across the Rio Grande Valley, with over 15,500 students and the public in attendance.

“FESTIBA collaborated with The Texas Book Festival again this year to bring authors and books to five public schools through its wonderful literacy program, called Reading Rock Stars,” said Dr. Dahlia Guerra, assistant vice president for Public Art. “The school visits inspired children with dynamic author presentations and then sent them home with their very own book signed by the author.”

Among the highlights of FESTIBA was Artrageous, The Interactive Art and Music Experience, a one of a kind interactive performance that incorporated popular music, dance, onstage performance, art, and theater on the stage. Special performances were held for school children at the UTRGV Edinburg campus and at the TSC Arts Center in Brownsville. Over 1,500 children and

community attended the performances.

Award winning authors Angela Cervantes and Alejandro Zambra spoke to more than 300 GEAR UP students. A well known author, Cervantes also authored the junior novelization for Disney/Pixar’s animated film, *Coco*, which earned an Oscar for Best Animated Film. Zambra is an award winning author of this year’s NEA Big Read book selection, *Ways of Going Home*.

Over 100 educators and librarians visited UTRGV as part of Librarians and Educators Day. The week ended with more than 600 students from all over the state competing during the Middle School and High School Mariachi Competition and a Grand Concert featuring winners of the competition, Mariachi Sol de México de José Hernández and UTRGV Mariachi Aztlán.

To learn more about the impact of FESTIBA, please visit <http://www.utrgv.edu/festiba/>.

SOUTH TEXAS LITERACY SYMPOSIUM ADDRESSES ILLITERACY

More than 130 participants came together to address the alarming illiteracy rates in the United States at the South Texas Literacy Symposium held in January at UTRGV Edinburg. The Office of Public Art collaborated with the South Texas Literacy Coalition, Literacy Texas, and FESTIBA to host this symposium that also served as a professional development conference for local literacy providers, parent involvement staff, librarians, teachers, and volunteer teachers in literacy programs.

“We are proud to partner with volunteers and organizations like Literacy Texas and the South Texas Literacy Coalition that work tirelessly to help as many people as possible to learn basic literacy skills in order to successfully participate in society,” said Dr. Dahlia Guerra, assistant vice president



for Public Art. “Above all, this symposium addressed the alarming illiteracy rates in the United States and represents a significant partnerships with the potential to make a great impact on literacy.”

The free conference included information on various literacy topics including volunteer management, teaching strategies to reach low-literacy audiences, digital literacy, collaboration ideas with local school and public libraries, and management techniques for literacy administrators including grant writing tips and program evaluation.

REACHING OUT THROUGH BRIDGE TO THE ARTS

The Bridge to the Arts program continues to reach out into the community to make the Distinguished Performers Series at the Performing Arts Complex (PAC) at the UTRGV Edinburg campus accessible to all.

The mission is to give community members an opportunity to attend and enjoy world class performances, who would not have the opportunity or resources to do so.

“Many who attend performances through this program are young students who may possibly be the first in their family to step foot on a college campus,” said Dr. Doris Mendiola, data and research manager. “This program is a bridge to close that gap by bringing them on campus, and hopefully inspiring them to enroll at UTRGV one day.”

The project consists of a partnership between the Office of Public Arts and the NonProfit Resource Center (NRC).

UTRGV HOSTS ¡DÍA DE LOS NIÑOS, DÍA DE LOS LIBROS! CELEBRATION



Children and books were the center of attention at ¡Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros!

More than 600 attendees joined in the celebration which was held at the Edinburg City Hall. This special day is a national holiday that celebrates children and motivates them and their families to be lifelong readers.

This was the second annual celebration of Día de los Niños presented by the UTRGV Office of Public Art. It was held in collaboration with the South Texas Literacy Coalition and the Dustin M. Sekula Memorial Library at the Edinburg City Hall. Children enjoyed a variety of music and dance performances, games, hotdogs and cookies, and every child received a free book.

MARIACHI AZTLÁN ON TOUR



In April, Mariachi Aztlán performed for thousands of children and the public in Santa Barbara County. They were invited by the UC Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures Performance Series.

AWARDS HONOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY AND THE UNIVERSITY

The Excellence Award in Community Engaged Scholarship and the Distinguished Community

Engagement Partner Award honor the efforts of faculty and community partners who offer engaged scholarship and learning opportunities for the students at UTRGV, while addressing the needs of the community.

“Meaningful community partnerships are the core of an engaged university and necessary

for faculty and students to take teaching and learning outside of the classroom walls,” said Cristina Trejo-Vasquez, associate vice president for Community Engagement and Economic Development. “We applaud these two recipients for all they do for our students and communities.”

EXCELLENCE AWARD IN COMMUNITY ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP



Whether she is mentoring students or giving presentations on her binational Zika monitoring program, Dr. Teresa Patricia Feria is described as an “industrious leader in community engagement” at UTRGV.

An associate professor in Biology, Feria received the Excellence Award in Community Engaged Scholarship at the Faculty Excellence Awards and Recognition ceremony held in May.

An internationally recognized climate change specialist, Feria is the first biology faculty member to develop and implement two experiential learning courses that involve 30 hours of community service. She has an outstanding record of accomplishment of obtaining external funding for scientific

research and training undergraduate students in research.

“Community engagement is a priority for me because I am part of the community. I live in Edcouch-Elsa. When I visit with people, I talk to them about the problems that we have, the water, the pollutions, how to educate our children. I want a better world and better communities for the present and the future,” said Feria.

The Excellence Award in Community Engaged Scholarship promotes the scholarly work faculty are doing in partnership with communities in the Rio Grande Valley. The award is sponsored by the Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity.

DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTNER AWARD

Esther G. Herrera, Operations Manager at La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE), received the Distinguished Community Engagement Partner Award for her work in educating and empowering colonia residents and immigrant families for social change.

In her role at LUPE, she brings many years of experience in working with youth, college students and parents from low-income, migrant and first generation college communities.

Working with UTRGV, Herrera’s work has focused on developing the leadership capacity of both the community as well as the university



to engage in partnerships where there is a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources.

More specifically, Herrera helps coordinate the initiative Unidos por RGV led by mothers

and youth from the community organizations La Union del Pueblo Entero, LUPE and A Resource In Serving Equality, (ARISE). These community organizations partner with UTRGV on various initiatives.

“Colonia residents from LUPE and ARISE are changing the way academics at UTRGV think, teach, and engage with the community,” said Herrera. “As an alumna from UTRGV, I am proud of the progress we are making in learning about the issues affecting local communities and in taking an active role in collaboratively seeking solutions.”

The Distinguished Community Engagement Partner Award was created by the Office of Community Engagement and Economic Development.

UTRGV & THE COMMUNITY



UTRGV and the Community is a new portal where students, faculty and the community can explore the many ways UTRGV serves

and learns with the community. The interactive portal will be launched this summer and will be the place where community engagement activity will be collected.

“We invite faculty, staff, students, and the public to submit information regarding the community engagement work they are directly involved with,” said Cristina Trejo-Vasquez, associate vice president for Community Engagement and Economic Development. “Anyone can also discover the many ways UTRGV serves and learns with the community”.

The portal has four areas where the public can learn about programs and community engagement events in education, community and economic development, health and wellness and culture and art.

To view the portal, visit <https://webapps.utrgv.edu/gc/ce/home>

For information or questions, please email partnerships@utrgv.edu or please call (956) 665-7566 about reporting community engagement activities.

BUSINESSES ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER FOR “WHAT’S BEHIND THE NUMBERS?”

This summer, the UTRGV Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will host “What’s Behind the Numbers?” at various locations across the Rio Grande Valley. The workshop focuses on increasing awareness of financial literacy and management amongst business owners and is part of the Business Financial Literacy Initiative® (BFLI).

“We are proud to offer the BFLI training, as it is one of several training programs that the SBDC Center offers to complement its core advising service and support continuous learning,” said Maria D. Juarez, UTRGV SBDC Director.

The comprehensive, business financial-literacy education program provides a set of trainings along a basic-to-advanced continuum of financial topics, incorporating a backdrop of wealth accumulation and basic, risk



UTRGV SBDC advisors lead presentations for small business owners on business financial literacy. Seating is limited. Please register at utrgv.edu/sbdc.

management training. SBDC Center launched the workshops in April in honor National Financial Literacy Month.

“We know these workshops have an impact. The results have shown that many of the participants are learning, applying the concepts, and seeing results,” said Juarez. The BFLI trainings workshops are made possible with financial support from the BBVA

Compass Foundation, the University of Texas Foundation, and support from other resource partners.

Dates for the summer workshops are posted at utrgv.edu/sbdc. For more information on the BFLI project, and the work of the UTRGV SBDC, please contact program director Maria D. Juarez at maria.juarez@utrgv.edu.

ECC STAFF TO HELP NEW UPCOMING BUSINESSES



From left to right: Julio Quiroga, Administrative Coordinator; Maria Julia Villalon, Economic Development Marketing and Research Coordinator; Linda Ufland, Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center Manager, and Perla Feria, Program Specialist

The Buena Vida neighborhood in east Brownsville has an incredible strength of cultural resources, and many people are ready to start turning their creativity into small businesses. Providing the tools to start a business and help them succeed will be the staff in the UTRGV Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center (ECC).

“Our role is to provide the different cohorts that will be selected with business training, so they may have the proper planning and understanding of starting a venture or a business,” said Linda Ufland, ECC Manager. “We are excited to be working with Las Imaginistas/Taller de Permiso group to help these small businesses succeed.”

Las Imaginistas/Taller de Permiso is led by

Celeste De Luna, Nansi Guevara and Christina Patiño Houle. They have received a \$350,000 grant in funding from ArtPlace America’s 2017 National Creative Placemaking Fund. Las Imaginistas/Taller de Permiso is one of only 23 projects selected for funding that will receive more than \$8.7 million to execute their creative projects.

“Many people told us that they had started to or wanted to start a small business, but they got so frustrated along the way that they gave up on the process,” said Patiño Houle. “We welcome the expertise from the Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center and working together, we can help our business owners imagine, dream and succeed.”

The training will begin in August and will use the Kauffman FastTrac New Venture program which equips aspiring entrepreneurs with the business skills and insights, tools, resources, and peer networks necessary to start and grow successful businesses.

The ECC serves as a real life entrepreneurship laboratory for the University and the community where entrepreneurs can collaborate to take advantage of opportunities and create value through business incubation, networking, funding opportunities, and research in today’s global environment.

The ECC is located in Resaca Village, 1601 East Price Road in Brownsville.

For more information, please visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/ecc/index.htm>

GONZALEZ NAMED SENIOR BUSINESS & INNOVATION ADVISOR OF THE YEAR



Aaron Gonzalez, Senior Business and Innovation Advisor, was honored as Small Business Development Center Advisor of the Year by the RGV Partnership.

To mark National Small Business Week, the RGV Partnership hosted an awards ceremony and luncheon to recognize the winners of the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Lower Rio Grande Valley District in May.

“This award is a tribute to all the hard work that my team and the entrepreneurs we work with put in”, Gonzalez said. “We are measured by the successes of the business owners we help.”

At the UTRGV Small Business Development Center, Gonzalez works with aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and offers assistance and guidance to help them with their business ventures.



Hector Landez
 Director, Regional Procurement
 Technical Assistance Center

(956) 665-7564
 hector.landez@utrgv.edu

What do you like about your job?

The ROI or return on investment. While working for one of the university's economic development centers, we counsel, train and assist local businesses to acquire government contracts. When a client is hitting all cylinders, they start submitting and receiving contract awards; local jobs are created and retained. That's the return we aim for!

What drives you in your job?

The motivation of reaching out to as many local businesses and their owners as I can before my time is up and hopefully making a positive difference in their lives.

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

I envision an institution of higher education that will not only be the catalyst in teaching those who crave knowledge but also service through community engagement and economic development. UTRGV, through its legacy institutions, were once recognized by presidents, cabinet members, international entertainers, renowned writers and poets, military and corporate leaders. If we did this as individual units, then I cannot wait to see what we can do over the next five years as a united force. With a spaceport in our backyard, I believe that the sky is no longer the limit but now looking towards the heavens.

What do you do to relax?

I guess it all depends on what mood you catch me. One day it might be traveling between here to Austin and any point in between or a dictated weekend in old sweats lounging listening to vinyl's (no not a collector, just LP's I have acquired over the years). Whichever the wind may blow, two things will always be constant, it will be with family, and the day will end with a glass of Tennessee or Kentucky vintage over rocks in my hand.



Sandra Montalvo
 Administrative Coordinator,
 Community Relations

(956) 665-3361
 sandra.montalvo@utrgv.edu

What do you like about your job?

Being part of a fast pace environment such as our division makes me feel like I am contributing back to the community. It is nice to see the excitement and satisfaction from the community during our events. There is a lot of hard work and preparation that goes on behind the scenes that a lot people do not see. Once the events have been completed, I have much satisfaction knowing that I helped implement our outreach programs. My motto is the busier, the better!

What drives you in your job?

I am motivated by the people I work with, the community and the projects and events that are held. I have seen the passion that goes into these projects and events and the results are amazing. This department is always striving to do more and enhance each program it takes on, and I love that I am a part of this team.

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

I foresee the University growing in enrollment and more of the Rio Grande Valley Student wanting to attend and graduate from UTRGV with their masters as well as their PhD.

What do you do to relax?

I love to spend time with my family and friends. My husband and daughter keep me focused on what is truly important in life and that everyday should be cherished. We love to take mini trips and explore new places and make great memories. My daughter and I love to take pictures and do tons of shopping together. I strongly believe that a strong support system really makes a world of difference.



Beverley Gonzales
 Administrative Associate,
 Community Relations

(956) 665-7566
 beverley.gonzales@utrgv.edu

What do you like about your job?

I am excited to be working in this division because our focus is on forming university and community partnerships that will enhance the lives of people in the Rio Grande Valley. I find a lot of satisfaction in my job when I am able to use my talents and skills to contribute to making our office run smoothly and efficiently. I enjoy challenging and diverse projects, and learning new technology and skills.

What drives you in your job?

What drives me in my work is my commitment to serving the needs of my team members to help facilitate reaching our goals. I like being part of a team because it allows for brainstorming and collaboration. Each person brings ideas and skills to the table, which results in synergy, creativity and greater productivity.

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

In the future, I would like to see UTRGV expand even more into our region by continuing to encourage student community service, and by integrating more service learning into the curriculum. I also foresee UTRGV becoming the premiere support center for nonprofit partnering and start-ups, and entrepreneurial endeavors.

What do you do to relax?

I like to read, visit nature parks, bird watch, and go to the beach. I also love spending time with my family.



Perla L. Feria
 Program Specialist
 Entrepreneurship
 and Commercialization Center

(956) 665-3361
 perla.feria@utrgv.edu

What do you like about your job?

The nature of my job is to be able to support the leadership of the Center and its initiatives. I like the opportunity to work directly with people and help them develop their businesses and at the same time helping our economy to grow with the initiatives and assistance that we provide to our campus and communities in the areas of business incubation and professional development as well as business development.

What drives you in your job?

I am driven in all I do in the work setting. When I coordinate an event, project, etc., I always give it my all, exceed expectations and pay close attention to every detail. Working together with my team drives me as well because when creative people come together, it is amazing how we can complete exceptional and difficult projects.

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

I see UTRGV growing and creating better opportunities for the Rio Grande Valley for students, faculty, staff and the community.

What do you do to relax?

I love to spend time with my family, friends and planning my vacation.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU!



Veronica Gonzales
Vice President for Governmental &
Community Relations
5 Years



Cristina Trejo-Vazquez
Assoc. Vice President
Community Engagement and
Economic Development
15 Years



Dr. Dahlia Guerra
Asst Vice President for Public Art
30 Years



Letty Fernandez
Community Relations Liaison
25 Years



Eva Martinez
Administrative Associate, Procurement
Technical Assistance Center
20 Years



Michael Uhrbrock
Associate Director, Data &
Information Systems Center
20 Years



Maria D. Juarez
Executive Director, UTRGV Small
Business Development Center
20 Years



Arturo Rene Gonzalez
Sr. Business & Trade Advisor
UTRGV Small Business
Development Center
20 Years



Esperanza Delgado
Training Coordinator, UTRGV
Small Business Development
Center
15 Years



Dr. Doris Mendiola
Data & Research Manager
Community Engagement
10 Years



Marcela Arredondo De Arranga
Sr. Business & Trade Advisor
UTRGV Small Business
Development Center
10 Years



Sandra Montalvo
Administrative Coordinator
Community Relations
10 Years



Reynaldo Soto
Procurement Business Advisor
Procurement Technical Assistance
Center
5 Years



Sandra San Agustin
Program Assistant, Procurement
Technical Assistance Center
5 Years



Orlando N. Castaneda
Procurement Business Advisor
Procurement Technical Assistance
Center
5 Years



Linda Ufland
Manager, Entrepreneurship &
Commercialization Center
5 Years



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 Thursdays | 9/6, 9/13, 9/20, 9/27; 10/4, 10/11, 10/18, 10/25; 11/1, 11/8
 9 am—12 pm | UTRGV CESS Bldg, Suite 1.200 (Edinburg, TX)
 *Program graduation: 11/15 | 11:30 am-1:30 pm

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- ✓ Established business in the Rio Grande Valley/U.S.
- ✓ One year or more in operation
- ✓ Average annual revenues between \$150,000 and \$500,000

*Business Financial Statements or Tax Returns will be required for review.

Participant Fee: \$900
 *One participant per legal entity
 *Ask about available scholarships!

Pre-Registration/Information:
 (956) 665-7535 or sbdc@utrgv.edu



UTRGV
Entrepreneurship & Commercialization Center

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Join us ~
3:00 - 5:00 pm
June 15, 2018

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley HESTEC

Hispanic Engineering, Science and Technology Week

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Become a partner and join the journey to inspire and empower our students. Please contact Velinda Reyes at velinda.reyes@utrgv.edu for sponsorship opportunities.

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

*Division of Governmental
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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

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