

COMMENCEMENT



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School of Medicine

CLASS OF
2022



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Michael B. Hocker, M.D., M.H.S.

Dean

UTRGV School of Medicine

Senior Vice President

UT Health RGV

On behalf of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine family, I want to congratulate you on this momentous accomplishment!

As your dean, I am proud of the legacy you are building at our School of Medicine. You are incredible examples of the young medical professionals we are training to lead medicine, here and around the world.

As you graduate from our UTRGV School of Medicine, you can take pride in knowing that you are now part of an extensive generation of physicians who, like you, have answered the call to serve others with dedication and compassion. Soon you too will be practicing physicians inspired to make a difference in the communities you serve.

As you join other physicians in the practice of medicine, remember you have faced and overcome difficult challenges with courage and humility during this pandemic. That is why I am confident that you will conquer any challenges that come your way moving forward and as you establish your career as a physician.

Class of 2022, you bring so much pride to our UTRGV School of Medicine. You are a testament of our promise to train diverse and talented physician scientists for the benefit of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.

Each of you represents UTRGV's commitment to provide high quality healthcare, life-changing research, and innovative education in the Rio Grande Valley.

A big congratulations to not only you – but to your friends, family, and all the champions who have helped you in your journey as a medical student.



School of Medicine

Mission

We will transform the health of the Rio Grande Valley and beyond by providing advanced academic medicine through these five pillars:

- Innovative Education
- Life-Changing Research and Discoveries
- High Quality Patient-Centered Care
- Serving our Community
- Sustainability and a Culture of Entrepreneurship

Values

In addition to the UTRGV Values of excellence; shared governance; diversity, access and inclusion; leadership; inquiry, discovery and creativity; health and well-being; and engagement and impact; the school of medicine's core values include:

- **Open Communication & Transparency:** Share information openly across all levels (of the school) to engrain a collaborative and trustworthy environment.
- **Community Focus:** Commitment to improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities of at-risk populations through community and population-based interventions.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Integration of knowledge, awareness, and empathy to successfully work with the diverse and unique needs of any community.
- **Empathy & Compassion:** Care for and understand others to provide support and achieve positive outcomes.
- **Good Stewardship:** Selfless service (for the common good) to promote accountability and a culture of responsibility.
- **Innovation & Transformation:** Embrace change and promote creativity to shape the future of academic medicine.
- **Integrity:** Act with honor, honesty, and truthfulness. Know and do the right thing in all undertakings – learning, discovery, patient care, service, and entrepreneurship.
- **Respect, Collegiality & Inclusive Citizenship:** Treat people with respect and kindness to create a community of Inclusivity, cooperation, and connectedness.

History of Medical Education in the Valley

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine is the realization of the decades-long effort of community leaders, legislators, and countless supporters to establish a medical school in the Valley to provide health care to a region that historically has been burdened by health disparities.

In **1997**, the Texas Legislature approved the creation of the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) under UT Health San Antonio, formerly UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, with sites in Harlingen and Edinburg.

In **2002**, the RAHC started training third and fourth year medical students.

In **2009**, the Texas Legislature approved for The University of Texas System Board of Regents to create a medical school, using the resources from the RAHC, for the Valley in the future.

Three years later, The UT System Board of Regents approved the creation of a new university and medical school in the Rio Grande Valley, using resources from two universities within the UT System—The University of Texas at Brownsville and The University of Texas- Pan American—and the RAHC.

In **2013**, the Texas Legislature authorized the formation of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and its School of Medicine.

In **2015**, The UTRGV School of Medicine received preliminary accreditation from the LCME, which allowed the school to recruit its first class.

The UTRGV School of Medicine welcomed its charter class of 55 medical students in the summer of 2016, which graduated in 2020.

December 2019 - The School of Medicine submitted the briefing book for the limited survey visit to the LCME.

February 2020 - Limited survey visit conducted by the LCME at the School of Medicine.

March 2021 - School of Medicine submits status report to the LCME.

June 2021 - Provisional accreditation granted by the LCME for the School of Medicine.

February 2023 - First full LCME accreditation survey visit to take place at the School of Medicine.

The UTRGV School of Medicine now has more than **220 medical students** and over **240 medical residents and fellows** serving in 19 hospital-based training programs throughout the Valley, with more training programs on the horizon.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Alma Rodriguez, M.D., M.A.C.P.****Professor of Medicine**

Department of Lymphoma/Myeloma;
Division of Cancer Medicine

Medical Director

M.D. Anderson Survivorship Program
University of Texas M.D. Anderson
Cancer Center

Dr. Maria Alma Rodriguez received her medical degree from UT Medical School at Houston where she was an Alpha Omega Alpha Honors graduate. She completed her residency in Internal Medicine at the UT Health Sciences Center in San Antonio, Texas, and a fellowship in Hematology/Oncology at the University of Arizona Cancer Center in Tucson, Arizona.

Dr. Rodriguez is currently Professor of Medicine in the Department of Lymphoma/Myeloma, Division of Cancer Medicine, at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Rodriguez has published extensively in the specialty of Oncology, including over 200 articles in peer-reviewed journals, 25 book chapters, and four books, in addition to publishing or presenting over 190 abstracts. She has been a highly sought national and international speaker on the diagnosis and treatment of lymphomas, cancer outcomes, and health care of cancer survivors. Dr. Rodriguez has been a funded researcher by the National Institutes of Health and the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT).

At M. D. Anderson, Dr. Rodriguez has served as Vice-President for Medical Affairs and Physician-in-Chief. She completed a Fellowship with the National Association of Public Hospitals, named Fellow in Clinical Safety & Effectiveness at MD Anderson, and selected as a Master Member of the American College of Physicians. She has previously served on the Oncology Drugs Advisory Committee for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Ethics Committee of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), and the Survivorship and Education Committees of ASCO. Dr. Rodriguez is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Medical Oncology, and she has continually been selected among the “Best Doctors in America” since 2007. Dr. Rodriguez received the “Distinguished Alumna Award” from The University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

Presently, Dr. Rodriguez is a member of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Survivorship Guidelines Workgroup. She has been the Medical Director of MD Anderson’s Survivorship Program since its inception in 2008. In this role, she has provided leadership, management, and advocacy in the development, growth, and sustainability of the Program’s clinical, educational and research components. She has led in the development and implementation of 11 disease-specific survivorship clinics and is working with staff to develop additional site-specific clinics. She has directed successful initiatives for the financial, operational, and institutional support for building the infrastructure of the program. In fiscal year 2021, more than 10,000 cancer survivors received care in the Survivorship Care Clinics.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

Introduction to Ceremony Leonel Vela, M.D., M.P.H., Senior Associate Dean for Education Resources,
Chief Physician for Community Health Partnerships and Outreach,
and Chair, Department of Population Health and Biostatistics

National Anthem

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISE

Presiding Michael B. Hocker, M.D., M.H.S., Dean, School of Medicine
and Senior Vice President, UT Health RGV

Dean's Greeting and Address Michael B. Hocker, M.D., M.H.S., Dean, School of Medicine
and Senior Vice President, UT Health RGV

Presidential Remarks Guy Bailey, Ph.D., President

Keynote Speaker Alma Rodriguez, M.D., M.A.C.P., Professor of Medicine,
Department of Lymphoma/Myeloma; Division of Cancer Medicine,
Medical Director, M.D. Anderson Survivorship Program, University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Conferring of Degrees Michael B. Hocker, M.D., M.H.S., Dean, School of Medicine
and Senior Vice President, UT Health RGV

Presentation of Diploma and Hooding of Candidates

Recitation of Physician's Oath Adaeze Stephanie Onyechi, Class of 2022 student, School of Medicine

Ring of the Bell Sahar Panjwani, Class of 2022 student, School of Medicine

Closing Remarks Michael B. Hocker, M.D., M.H.S., Dean, School of Medicine
and Senior Vice President, UT Health RGV





**Future Leaders in Medicine,
Research, and Patient Care**



DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Alexander Abraham
Rotherham, England

Christian Thomas Abraham
Houston, TX

Bhargavi Akkineni
Plano, TX

Maria Auxiliadora Alvarenga
Houston, TX

Alejandro Aquino
Pharr, TX

Alfredo Arriaga De La Garza
Brownsville, TX

Naba Asif
Mission, TX

Dakota Bigham
Rockwall, TX

Carson Ann Bogatto
Houston, TX

Kevin Matthew Camstra
Houston, TX

Julian Phillip Casabar
Helotes, TX

Brayden H. Chamberlain
Saint George, UT

Jefferson Todd Russell Chandler
Willamette, OR

Lily Chen
Dallas, TX

Lekha Chilakamarri
Flower Mound, TX

Irma Nora Duncan
Laguna Vista, TX

Elif Şefika Duran
Houston, TX

Unyime-Abasi Eyobio
Houston, TX

Carlos Javier Flores
Mission, TX

Michael Christopher Gallegos
San Antonio, TX

Nelson Donovan Gonzalez
Edinburg, TX

Oscar Ruben Gonzalez
Fort Worth, TX

Peter Julio Gonzalez
San Antonio, TX

Juliana Hope Hager
Houston, TX

Khairiya Camilia Fathi Haj-Yahya
McAllen, TX

Sebastian Hinojosa
Houston, TX

Madeline Elaine Huff
Harlingen, TX

Michaela Quanisha Iglesia
San Diego, CA

Lane Anthony Kelly
Dripping Springs, TX

Adam Christopher Kvinta
Yoakum, TX

Mattie Lain Lastovica
Fredericksburg, TX

Sravani Mannuru
Austin, TX

Areeb Masood
Austin, TX

Ronkino Tyreece Mccoy
Malden, MO

Lord Crescens Mvoula
Katy, TX

Daniel Chiemezu Nwosuocha
Richmond, TX

Mallory Jane Ogburn
Albuquerque, NM

Joseph Anthony Olivarez
Rio Grande City, TX

Adaeeze Stephanie Onyechi
Sugar Land, TX

David Ortiz
Weslaco, TX

Rebisi Anthony Owihonda
Fort Worth, TX

Sahar Panjwani
Sugar Land, TX

Matthew Norman Parvus
Vero Beach, FL

Adriana Saavedra-Simmons
Edinburg, TX

Rachel Elizabeth Salinas
Edinburg, TX

Vanessa Sanchez
McAllen, TX

Gilbert Silva, III
McAllen, TX

Siddanth Chandra Singh
San Antonio, TX

Jared Alexander Sperling
Austin, TX

Jewel Nneka Udenwagu
Sugar Land, TX

Sarvani Uppati
Austin, TX





Hippocratic Oath

I do solemnly swear, by whatever I hold most sacred: That I will be loyal to the profession of medicine and just and generous to its members. That I will lead my life and practice my profession in uprightness and honor.

That into whatsoever house I shall enter, it shall be for the good of the sick to the utmost of my power, holding myself far aloof from wrong, from corruption, from the tempting of others to vice. That I will exercise my profession solely for the cure of my patients, and will give no drug, perform no operation for a criminal purpose, even if solicited; far less suggest it. That whatsoever I shall see or hear of the lives of all persons which is not fitting to be spoken, I will keep inviolably secret.

These things do I swear. While I continue to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all, in all times. But should I trespass and violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot!

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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Douglas Arney, M.B.A.	Senior Vice President for Administration Support Services
Veronica Gonzales Villarreal, J.D.	Senior Vice President for Governmental and Community Relations
Magdalena Hinojosa, Ed.D.	Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment and Student Affairs
Michael B. Hocker, M.D., M.H.S.	Dean, School of Medicine, Senior Vice President of UT Health RGV
Michael Mueller, M.B.A.	Senior Vice President for Finance and Planning
Chasse Conque, M.B.A.	Vice President and Director of Athletics
Eloy R. Alaniz, Jr.	Chief Audit Officer

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Michael Patriarca, M.B.A.	Executive Vice Dean, School of Medicine, Vice President, UT Health RGV
Sofia Hernandez, M.P.A.	Chief of Staff and Strategic Initiatives
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Joe A. Galvan, J.D., M.B.A.	Deputy Chief Legal Officer

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Monica Jean Alaniz-McGinnis, Ph.D.	Assistant Dean for Assessment, Evaluation and Quality Improvement
Kelsey Baker, Ph.D.	Interim Assistant Dean, Educational Affairs, Preclerkship
Chelsea Chang, M.D.	Assistant Dean/Assistant Designated Institutional Official, Graduate Medical Education
Naomi D'Acolatse, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.F.P.	Associate Dean, Educational Affairs, Undergraduate Medical Education
Michael Dobbs, M.D.	Vice Dean, Clinical Affairs
Stanley Fisch, M.D.	Associate Dean, Student Affairs
Jeremy Gibson, M.D.	Vice Dean, Education
Wendy Innis, Ph.D.	Interim Assistant Dean, Pre-Clerkship
Nausheen Jamal, M.D.	Associate Dean/Designated Institutional Official, Graduate Medical Education
Betty Monfort, M.P.H.	Senior Assistant Dean, Admissions and Recruitment
Robert Nelson, M.D.	Senior Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs, Interim Dean for Clerkships
Michael Patriarca, M.B.A.	Executive Vice Dean, School of Medicine, Vice President, UT Health RGV
John Ronnau, Ph.D.	Senior Associate Dean, Community Health Partnerships
Adrian Sandoval, PharmD, B.C.P.S., B.C.A.C.P.	Associate Dean, Interprofessional Education
Stephanie Atkins Sharpe	Associate Dean, School of Medicine Library
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Andrew Tsin, Ph.D.	Senior Associate Dean, Research

Adela Valdez, M.D., M.B.A.	Associate Dean, Special Programs
Leonel Vela, M.D., M.P.H.	Senior Associate Dean, Educational Resources
Muriel Warren, M.B.A.	Assistant Dean, Accreditation

UTRGV SCHOOL OF MEDICINE CHAIRS

Daniel Albo, M.D., F.A.C.S.	Chair, Department of Surgery
Diana Chapa, M.D.	Interim Chair, Department of Psychiatry
Subhash Chauhan, Ph.D.	Chair, Department of Immunology and Microbiology
Michael Dobbs, M.D., M.H.C.M.	Chair, Department of Neurology
Jimmy Gonzales, M.D.	Interim Chair, Department of Family Medicine
Nausheen Jamal, M.D.	Chair, Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
Robert Nelson, M.D.	Chair, Department of Pediatrics
Tony Ogburn, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.	Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Ihsan Salloum, M.D., M.P.H.	Chair, Department of Neuroscience
Michael Sander, M.D.	Chair, Department of Orthopedic Surgery
Andrew Tsin, Ph.D.	Chair, Department of Molecular Science
Leonel Vela, M.D., M.P.H.	Chair, Department of Population Health and Biostatistics
Sarah Williams-Blangero, Ph.D.	Chair, Department of Human Genetics

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS

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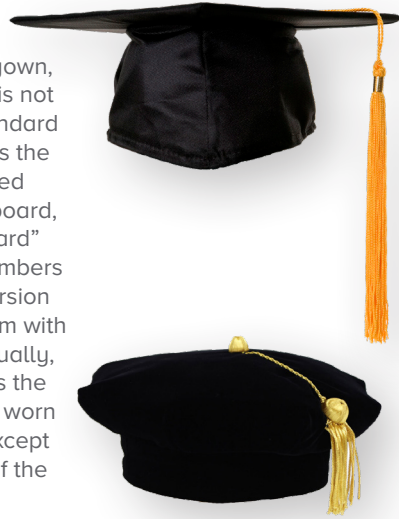
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COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF COMMENCEMENT

The colorful costumes and traditional customs of college commencements trace their beginnings back to the origins of the modern university in medieval Europe. Modern American colleges and universities carry on many traditions that began at Oxford and Cambridge to demonstrate the continuity of learning over the centuries and to emphasize the importance attached to commencement exercises. Academic regalia refer to the distinctive attire worn by students, faculty and other university officials at commencement. The origins of academic dress date back to the 12th and 13th centuries, when universities were taking form. The ordinary dress of the scholar, whether student or teacher, was the dress of a cleric. Though the custom of wearing academic dress was brought to America in colonial times, it was not until 1895 that a standardized code of academic dress was established and followed by most colleges and universities. The gown, hood, cap and additional ornaments are the main categories of academic regalia and are distinctive for each degree.

CAPS

Headwear is an important component of the cap and gown, and the academic costume is not complete without it. The standard commencement headwear is the Oxford cap, a skullcap topped by a square cloth-covered board, the reason for its “mortarboard” nickname. Some faculty members wear a softer Cambridge version of the cap that is a velvet tam with four, six or eight corners. Usually, the color of the cap matches the color of the gown. Caps are worn throughout the ceremony except for men during the singing of the national anthem.



TASSEL

The tassel is attached to a button on the top of the cap and hangs down to the right for bachelor's candidates until their degree is conferred. Many universities ceremoniously have graduates move their tassel from the right to the left. Both master's and doctoral candidates tassels often begin and remain on the left.

GOWNS

The doctoral degree gown is the most elaborate of academic regalia. The doctoral degree gown is faced down the front and usually black. Three bars of velvet are used across the sleeves. These facings and crossbars may be of the color distinctive for the degree, or the institution's colors. The color associated with the medical discipline is green. In addition, the hood worn for the doctoral degree should only have panels at the sides.



HOODS

The hood is derived from the cowls worn by clerics in the Middle Ages for warmth. Today they are worn symbolically, hanging down the back. Master's hoods are 3 1/2 feet in length and have a velvet trim along the edge. Doctoral hoods are 4 feet in length and have a wider velvet trim. The satin lining of the hood, worn so that it can be seen, reflects the colors of the degree-granting institution. The color of the velvet trim signifies the academic discipline of the wearer's degree. As codified by the American Council on Education, some of the official colors associated with the various degrees and disciplines are:

White: Arts and Letters
 Drab: Business/Accounting
 Light Blue: Education
 Orange: Engineering
 Purple: Law
 Lemon: Library Science
 Green: Medicine
 Pink: Music
 Brown: Fine Arts
 Apricot: Nursing
 Olive Green: Pharmacy
 Dark Blue: Philosophy
 Sage Green: Physical Education
 Salmon Pink: Public Health
 Golden Yellow: Science
 Citron: Social Work
 Peacock Blue: Public Administration



In the case of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree, the dark blue color represents the mastery of learning and scholarship in any field, not just the field of philosophy.

ADDITIONAL ORNAMENTS

Some participants in the commencement ceremony will wear additional ornaments such as colored cords, medallions, stoles, or sashes. These ornaments signify the wearer's membership in an honor society or special group.

CHAIN OF OFFICE AND PRESIDENTIAL MEDALLION

The presidential medallion is the official insignia of the university president and is worn at commencement and other ceremonial occasions. Like many academic traditions, the display of a heavy “chain of office” comes from medieval regalia and represents the weight of responsibility for the wearer.

The UTRGV medallion and chain was designed in 2015 and executed by the jewelry students, jewelry faculty, and craftsman Lino Guiza in the UTRGV School of Art. The medallion is made up of two parts – the seal of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley surrounded by an abstract sunburst created with a brick and mortar design. The cactus flowers on the outer edges of the seal are placed at the four cardinal points with the largest flower pointing south. The counter weight to the medallion is a representation of the native sabal palm. The Chain of Office is a circllet of art deco-inspired links representing the past, while revealing an infrastructure of bridges, aqueducts and gears that speak to the importance of our solid foundation, water, and movement into the future. The chain features many aspects of the Rio Grande Valley that aid our growth and commitment to higher education:

Arches
Water
Turbine
Neuron Tree
Circuit Board

Abacus
Bone
Binary Code
Leaves/Quills
Butterfly

Tortoise
Finger Print
Road Junction
Satellite



BELL

Our stately bronze bell, circa 1850, lives on the Brownsville campus. It is rung during commencement to symbolize a rite of passage and proclaims that a worthy and well-qualified individual has passed from one station in their life to a loftier one. Our bell is also the icon for the Bell Scholarship Endowment. One outstanding student is selected to ring the bell at commencement.



CEREMONIAL MACE

In Medieval Times, the mace was a symbol of authority and carried before or set near a high official when ceremonies or sessions were being conducted. Today, the mace symbolizes the university's governing authority and signifies the proceedings are officially sanctioned. Traditionally, the chair of the Faculty Senate acting as the Grand Marshal carries the mace to lead the academic procession at commencement and other special ceremonies.

The UTRGV 47" ceremonial mace was designed in 2016 by students in the School of Art and a committee of faculty from anthropology, archeology, geology, history, communication and art. The head and seals of the mace were 3D printed and cast at the UTRGV School of Art. The mace is intricately imbued with historical, cultural and architectural meaning.

The handles of the mace are made of mesquite wood locally sourced in the Rio Grande Valley and engraved with a decorative pattern of the state's official turtle, the Ridley, and wind turbines.

The helix, between the handles, represents the coming together of the legacy institutions. The helix is made of petrified palm, the official stone of Texas.

The base is crafted from mesquite and inlaid with blue selenite, thought to be associated with mental clarity, truth and honesty, and to represent the Rio Grande River.

The tip of the mace is made of El Sauz Chert excavated and donated by Dr. Juan L. Gonzalez.



MEMORY STOLE

When students graduate from UTRGV they know they did not make the journey alone. The Memory Stole, a symbol of appreciation, is worn by graduates during the commencement ceremony. Following the ceremony they are encouraged to present the stole to a special family member, professor, or friend as a symbol of gratitude and appreciation for their support, inspiration or mentorship.



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School of Medicine