

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

### Meeting Agenda

Thursday, November 9, 2023

9:00am-11:00am

In Person: Edinburg, ESTUN 1.102, Student Union Theater  
and

Online: via Zoom Meeting

#### I. Call to Order

*Kelli Quin, Parliamentarian*

#### II. Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum

*David Guerra, Secretary*

*Roll call was taken with 25 staff senators present and 5 absent.*

#### III. Welcome & Introduction

*Veronica Villarreal, Staff Senate President*

#### IV. New Business

- a. October 2023 General Meeting Minutes

A Staff Senator moves to approve October 2023 General Meeting Minutes

Staff Senator Lesly Orozco seconds the motion to approve.

Call for all those in favor, please state AYE in the Zoom chat. The meeting minutes for October 2023 have been approved.

#### V. Guest Speakers

- ✓ *Mr. Ronnie Rios, UTRGV Marching Band Director*
- ✓ *Jennifer McGehee-Valdez, Director of Public Relations*  
*(see Appendix C for presentation material)*
- ✓ *Richard Sanchez, Assoc. Vice President, Office of Governmental Relations*  
*(see Appendix D for presentation material)*

VI. Committee Reports

Communications Committee	Constitution & Elections Committee	Business Processes & Staff Support	Staff Success Committee
<div><div>Chair:</div><div>Jake Gonzalez</div><div>Co-Chair:</div><div>Cristina Rodriguez</div><div>Members:</div><div>Jeremy San Miguel</div><div>Cristina De Leon</div><div>Kayla Buentello</div><div>Dina Lopez</div><div>Melanie Garza</div><div>Rolando Segovia</div></div>	<div><div>Chair:</div><div>Yesenia Carter</div><div>Co-Chair:</div><div>Krystal Chappell</div><div>Members:</div><div>Melanie Garza</div><div>Monica Granado</div><div>David Guerra</div><div>Veronica Villarreal</div></div>	<div><div>Chair:</div><div>Omar Nedzelsky Jr.</div><div>Co-Chair:</div><div>Kelli Quinn</div><div>Melba Cantu</div><div>Members:</div><div>Travis McAlpine</div><div>James Martinez</div><div>Jaime Miranda</div><div>Dr. Mirayda Torres-Avila</div><div>Van Slusser</div></div>	<div><div>Chair:</div><div>Aliver Lozano</div><div>Co-Chair:</div><div>Lesly Orozco</div><div>Members:</div><div>Tim Odoms</div><div>Claudia Garcia</div><div>Mayra Garcia</div><div>Jeannette Garcia</div><div>Dina Guerra</div><div>Marivel Mata</div><div>Jose Amieva</div></div>

VII. Public Comments & Questions

Kelli Quin, Parliamentarian

Floor was opened to Public Comments with no submissions from audience and online.

VIII. Adjourn

Rolando Segovia moved to adjourn the meeting

Lesly Orozco second the motion to adjourn

All in favor of adjourning passes by vote of AYE in Zoom chat.

Staff Senator Kelli Quinn adjourns session at 10:20 am

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

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### APPENDIX A – Web links mention in this session

UTRGV.edu

<http://utrgv.edu>

UTRGV Staff Senate

<http://utrgv.edu/staffsenate>

UTRGV Marching Band

<https://www.utrgv.edu/marchingforward/index.htm>

UTRGV Rankings

<https://www.utrgv.edu/rankings/>

UTRGV I am Thankful for...

<https://www.utrgv.edu/umc/feature/thankful-for/index.htm>

Division of Governmental & Community Relations

<https://www.utrgv.edu/gcr/>

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APPENDIX B – Presentation Materials –

Mr. Ronnie Rios, UTRGV Marching Band Director: This presentation had Ronnie Rios on camera with no presentation material.

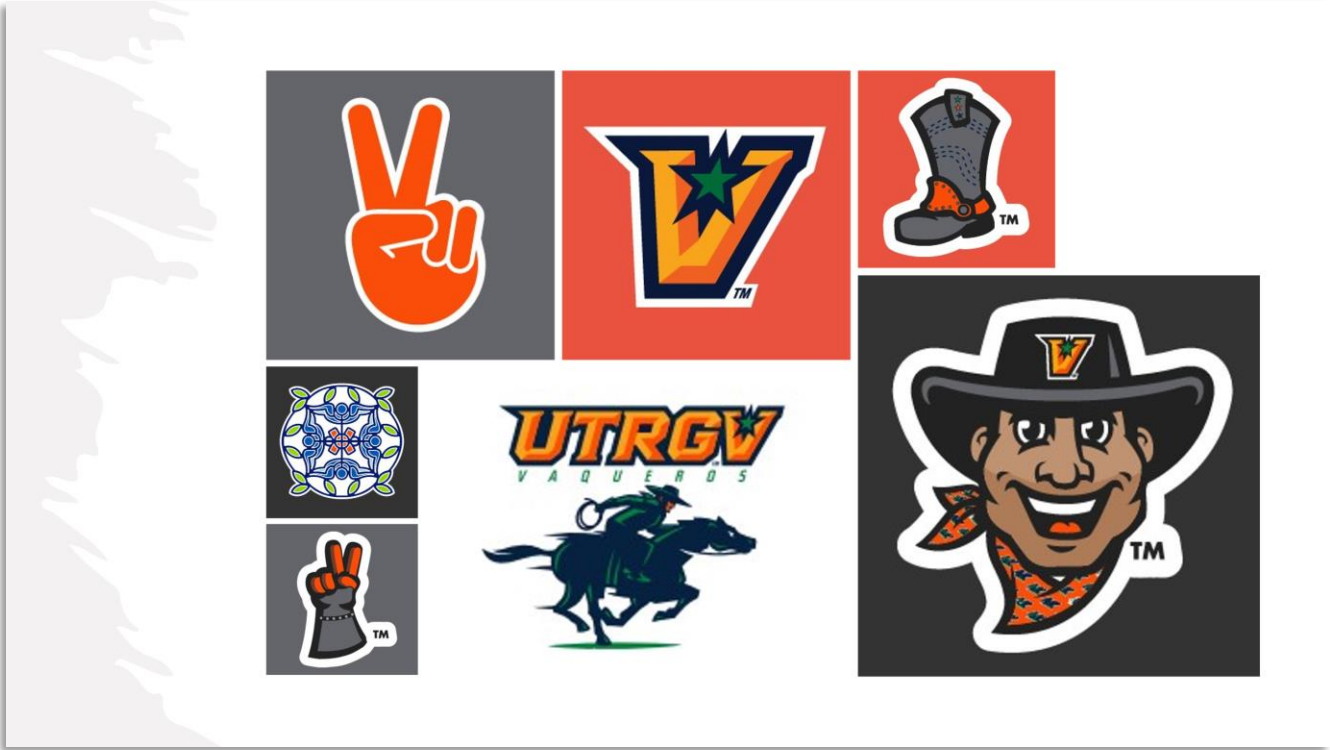
Jennifer McGehee-Valdez, Director of Public Relations: This presentation had Jennifer McGehee-Valdez on camera with other media presented directly from the UTRGV Rankings webpage at <http://utrgv.edu/rankings>.

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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## Staff Senate

APPENDIX C - Presentation Materials - Richard Sanchez, Assoc. Vice President, Office of Governmental Relations



UTRGV

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

... OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS



UT Health  
Rio Grande Valley

STAFF SENATE - 9 NOV 2023...

OGR Legislative Update

88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature

Regular & Special Sessions 1-4

November 2023



# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

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## Staff Senate

### OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS - CONTACT INFORMATION...

#### Veronica Gonzales

*Sr. Vice President of Governmental & Community Relations*  
*Veronica.Gonzales@utrgv.edu*  
956-665-2128



#### Richard P. Sanchez

*Associate Vice President for Governmental Relations*  
*Richard.Sanchez@utrgv.edu*  
956-665-3668



#### Veronica De La Garza

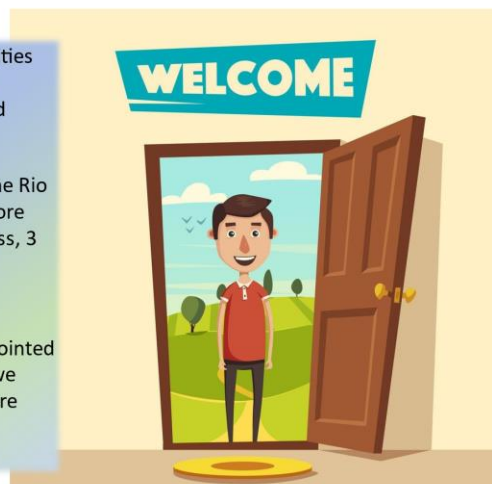
*Director of Governmental Relations*  
*Veronica.DeLaGarza@utrgv.edu*  
956-665-7373



### WHAT WE DO IN OGR...

**The Office of Governmental Relations (OGR) is the official “front door” for political activity and government affairs at UTRGV.**

- We are a distributed campus with a presence in many cities throughout the region; collectively we are frequently in contact with various local, state, and federal elected and appointed officials.
  - UTRGV’s service region spans some 120 miles... the Rio Grande Valley is a 4-county area encompassing more than 40 local governments, 3 Members of Congress, 3 State Senators, and 8 State Representatives.
- OGR leads the effort to assure that our priorities are effectively communicated and that our elected and appointed officials are given appropriate and timely information; we must also assure that requests made to or from them are given thoughtful and timely consideration.



# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

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## Staff Senate

### WHAT WE DO IN OGR (cont)...

**OGR is the official “front door” for political activity and government affairs at UTRGV:**

- ✓ OGR builds and promotes positive relationships with our federal, state and local policymakers, working with governmental partners and agencies across the country.
- ✓ OGR leads the effort to request and advocate for funding and policy changes at the State Legislative and Congressional levels.
- ✓ OGR is the gateway for faculty and staff to request contact or collaboration with elected officials.
- ✓ OGR helps administer the *Valley Legislative Internship Program (VLIP)*.
- ✓ OGR helps administer Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote programs on campus through *Vaqueros Vote*.
- ✓ OGR is the university's liaison to County Election offices and prepares voting polls on campus.
- ✓ OGR serves on (Bd. of Directors) or collaborates with a variety of community and government stakeholders ( i.e. COG, chambers, EDCs)
- ✓ OGR monitors local government meetings and intervenes when the university is impacted.



**PROTOCOL & DIRECTIVE = All departments should notify OGR prior to contacting elected officials or bring OGR into the fold as soon as possible once you have a matter in front of an elected official or elected body.**

### LINKS TO DOCUMENTS WITH MORE DETAIL ...

[2022: Chancellor's Memo on Political Activity on Campus](#)

[UTRGV Campus Political Activity Guidance](#)

#### STATE LAW:

❖ Chapter 556, Government Code (Political Activities by Certain Public Entities and Individuals):  
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/pdf/GV.556.pdf>

❖ Section 2203.004, Government Code (Requirement to Use State Property for State Purposes):  
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/pdf/GV.2203.pdf>

❖ Section 39.02, Penal Code (Abuse of Official Capacity):  
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/PE/pdf/PE.39.pdf>



# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

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## Staff Senate

### TODAY'S CHECKLIST...

- ✓ **Who We Are, What We Do** – This is done!
- ✓ **The Texas Legislature / 88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session** – How does it work? / Why does it matter?
- ✓ **Regular Session** – Have Q's ready; Research; Stay on point
- ✓ **The Budget** – Be respectful of your EO's time
- ✓ **Bills of Interest** – Stay within parameters of the "office holder" as opposed to the "candidate"
- ✓ **Special Sessions** – Always starting with a thank you note, then with substance.

### THE 88<sup>th</sup> TEXAS LEGISLATURE BASICS...

8,535 BILLS FILED / 866 PASSED / BUDGET / 76 VETOES

- The 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature headed into its Regular session with a \$32 BILLION surplus and legislators were able to pass a number of significant pieces of higher ed legislation by the time it adjourned in late May:
  - **HB 1595 / Texas University Fund** Contingent on constitutional amendment; creates the TUF and the National Research Support Fund (NRSF).
  - **SB 25 / Nursing Education Support** Scholarships, loan repayment assistance, and grants.
  - **Student Affairs** Assistance for student parents (HB 1361); Hazing (SB 37); Discrimination (HB 567); Protections for pregnant and parenting students (SB 412); Addressing issues of students with Autism/ASD (SB 55); and Mental health (SB 532).
  - **Financial Aid** Assistance for Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (HB 1211); Tx Leadership Scholars Program (HB 1590); Loan repayment assistance for certain mental health professionals (HB 2100); Texas Competency-Based Education grant program (HB 4005); Future Texas Teachers Scholarship program (HB 4363); Texas First programs (SB 2294); Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (SB 371); and the Lone Star Workforce of the Future Fund.
  - **And More**– Bills related to Enrollment; Research; Law Enforcement; Campus Business Operations; Audit/Compliance; Legal; Technology; Accounting; Athletics; Health-related issues, and more.
- OTHER:
  - **The Texas Jobs & Security Act**’s top priority included school district property tax abatement agreements with incentive periods for large scale manufacturing projects.
  - **Public Junior College State Finance Program** revamp to outcomes-based funding.
  - **The Broadband Bill** Contingent on passage of the constitutional amendment... \$1.5 billion



**FACT /** The Texas Legislature meets for no longer than 140 days starting at noon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in January of every odd-numbered year.

Visit OGR's website for additional bills, summaries, and details...

[Office of Governmental Relations / Legislative Updates](#)



# STATE BUDGET/APPROPRIATIONS...

## HB 1 / The General Appropriations Bill

HB 1 appropriates (to all state agencies) \$321.3 billion in All Funds and \$144.1 billion in General Revenue Funds for the 2024-25 biennium. This represents a 10.5 percent increase in General Revenue funds compared to the previous biennium.

In higher education, the legislature focused on student *Affordability Funding* for general academic institutions and a revamped public jr. college state finance program. HB 1 provides \$9.9 billion to higher education formulas, a \$1.1 billion increase from the previous biennium, including \$4.8 billion to general academic institutions; and provides \$1.54 billion for higher education financial aid programs, including nearly \$1 billion for the TEXAS Grant program.

For general academic institutions, the most significant action was funding the higher education Affordability Funding proposal, a request for additional funding across several major areas in exchange for institutions holding tuition and academic fees flat during the 2024-25 biennium. Hence, the legislature provided an additional \$263.8 million for general academic formulas, \$18.7 million for research funds, \$71.5 million to support at-risk students at comprehensive regional universities, \$184.9 million for reimbursements of institutional Hazelwood costs (costs associated with exempting veterans and their legacies from tuition and fees), and \$159.7 million for Higher Education Group Insurance.

# STATE BUDGET/UTRGV...

## HB 1 / Highlights of UTRGV Appropriations

For UTRGV's General Academic Unit (GAU), it was the new Affordability Funding that kept the university from falling behind in a few funding categories such as the Operations Support and Teaching Experience formula-funded line items; the culprit here is the dip in post-pandemic enrollment. In the end, the Affordability Funding package kept most budget lines whole or nearly so and provided additional funding in other areas to create an overall level of funding that surpassed current 2022-2023 appropriations.

Key components of 2024-2025 state appropriations for UTRGV's GAU included the following items tied to the Affordability Funding package:

- An increase of \$6.3 million for Comprehensive Regional University (CRU) funding – up 310%
- An increase of \$1.6 million in research funding – up 115%
- An estimated increase of \$2.99 million in Hazelwood funding – up 670%
- An increase of \$8.7 million in Higher Education Group Insurance funding – up 36.8%

## School of Medicine / School of Podiatric Medicine

The SOM saw a very modest increase of about 0.6%. Nonetheless, the SOM's ability to hold on to full funding of current Non-Formula Support line items (the bulk of the school's funding), is significant.

New appropriations for the SOPM include \$12 million in Non-Formula Support funding and \$2.5 million in instruction and operations formula funding.

# DEI...

## SB 17 / Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Bans DEI offices, DEI programs and DEI training at public universities. In a nutshell, SB 17 provides that all hiring practices must be “color blind and sex neutral.” The bill also prohibits universities from asking job candidates to provide written answers about how they consider diversity in their work or sharing how they would work with diverse populations, commonly known as diversity statements. The legislation specifically exempts the following from the DEI ban:

- Academic course instruction
  - Scholarly research
  - Activities of registered student organizations
  - Policies, Practices, Procedures, Programs or Activities to enhance academic achievement that are designed and implemented without regard to race, color, sex or ethnicity .
- Data Collection
  - Student recruitment and the student admissions process
  - Guest speakers and performers on short -term engagements

The new law also requires discipline for those who violate the new provisions, certification of compliance with the new law, a compliance audit, allows a student or employee to bring an action for violations, and requires the Coordinating Board to conduct an impact study on SB 17.

UT System’s *SB 17 FAQs Part 1* can be found at right and as noted in the document’s introduction, we expect UT System guidance to evolve and expand- Supplemental FAQs are said to be in progress.



# TENURE...

## SB 18 / Tenure

The new law defines tenure as “the entitlement of a faculty member of an institution of higher education to continue in the faculty member’s academic position unless dismissed by the institution for good cause in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by the institution.” Good cause for dismissal includes:

- Professional incompetence
- Repeatedly failing to perform duties
- Failing to complete a post-tenure review program
- Conduct involving moral turpitude
- Violating laws that affect the faculty member’s performance
- Being convicted of a crime affecting the ability to teach or conduct research
- Engaging in unprofessional conduct
- Falsifying academic credentials
- Financial exigency or program elimination and
- Other good cause as defined by an institution’s policies

The legislation allows for summary dismissal of a tenured faculty member based on a finding of serious misconduct, as defined by the institution’s policies and after holding due process proceedings.

The legislation also expands a faculty member’s property interest in tenure to continuous employment, including regular annual salary and other privileges that come with the status as a tenured professor.

## SPECIAL SESSION #1...

### 1<sup>st</sup> Called Session

- The legislature adjourned its regular session on May 29 (Sine Die) only to be called back into Special Session by Gov. Abbott the same evening. The Governor placed two items on the call having to do with **property tax relief** and **border security**
- In an interesting move the House passed two bills on the aforementioned subjects then adjourned Sine Die and went home – meanwhile the Senate remains at the Capitol, but without the “Lower Chamber” to pass legislation it has adopted, no bills can be finally passed and sent to the Governor.
- No new laws were enacted as a result of the 1<sup>st</sup> Overtime Session.

**FACT** / Article 4 of the Texas Constitution authorizes the Governor, on extraordinary occasions, to convene the Legislature at the seat of Government or at a different place in certain circumstances. These *Special Sessions* can last up to 30 days and may consider only those items designated by the Governor in his proclamation calling for the special session.

**FACTOID** / A special session of the legislature amounts to “legislative overtime.”



## SPECIAL SESSION #2...

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Called Session

The legislature adjourned its 1<sup>st</sup> Special session in late June without passing any sort of property tax relief (the reason they were called back to the Capitol) – largely because the House adjourned early; Gov. Abbott wasted no time in calling a 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Session beginning on 27 June. This 2<sup>nd</sup> Special concluded with both chambers adjourning after passing bills placed on the Call by the Governor.

**Property Tax Relief** was again the subject of the call, and after a week or so of negotiating, the Lt. Governor and Speaker came to an agreement on a package that includes a multi-billion-dollar property tax break and a separate bill to reduce Franchise taxes and reporting requirements for small businesses.

#### Highlights of the legislation

- ✓ Reduce the maximum compressed tax rate for all school districts;
- ✓ Increase the amount of the general school district residence homestead exemption to \$100,000;
- ✓ Impose a limitation of 20% on the annual appraised value increase for nonhomestead real property valued at not more than \$5 million;
- ✓ For counties with a population of 75,000 or more:
  - Increase the membership of the appraisal district's board of directors by three members, to be elected in nonpartisan elections;
  - Provide for the appointment of members of the appraisal review board by the appraisal district's board of directors.

The legislation was contingent upon passage of Prop. 4 on the Nov. 7 ballot it passed. The relief provided amounts to **\$18 billion**.



# SPECIAL SESSION #3...

Gov. Abbott called legislators back to the Texas Capitol October 9 for their 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Session. This one included school vouchers and the possibility of K-12 school funding and teacher pay raises, border security issues, and COVID 19 vaccine mandate prohibitions

Overtime #3 ended on November 7 with the adoption of two of the items on the Call:

1.

SB 4 – Increases the offense for the operation of a stash house from a class A misdemeanor to a third-degree felony which merits 2 to 10 years in prison and an optional fine of up to \$10,000 with a minimum term of imprisonment of five years. The offense would be considered a second-degree felony (2 to 20 years in prison and an optional fine of up to \$10,000) with a minimum term of imprisonment of five years under certain circumstances including if the property involved was used for continuous trafficking of persons and if an individual became a victim of sexual assault or suffered serious bodily harm as a result of the commission of the offense. Other offences were also increased if connected to illegal immigration
2.

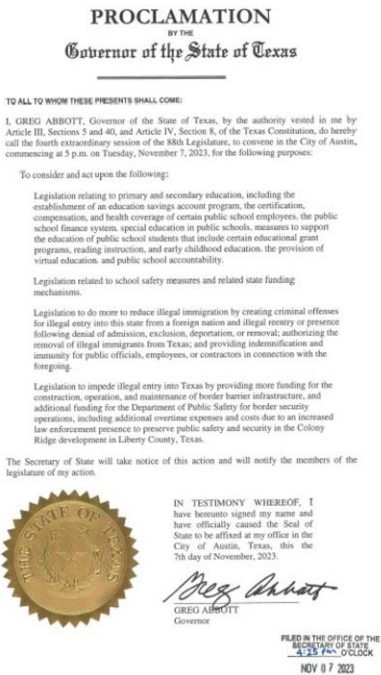
SB 7 – Prohibiting an employer from adopting or enforcing a mandate requiring an employee, contractor, or applicant or employment or a contract position to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment or contract position. The bill provides more leeway to health care facilities, health care providers, and physicians as they would be allowed to establish reasonable policies including the required use of protective medical equipment for employees who are not vaccinated for COVID-19, depending on the level of risk the individual presents to patients.

IMPORTANTLY the school voucher bill did not pass which was the Governor’s prime goal for the 3<sup>rd</sup> CS.

# SPECIAL SESSION #4...

Just as soon as the 3<sup>rd</sup> CS adjourned, Gov. Abbott called legislators back to start the 4<sup>th</sup> on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>.

The focus here again will be **school vouchers** with the addition of **K-12 school funding, teacher compensation, school safety, and other K-12 issues**, and the **border security** issues that did not pass during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Overtime.





SPECIAL  
SESSION...

Looking Out – 1 Good / 1 Bad

There are two issues that we have continued to track that could impact higher education generally and UTRGV particularly.

- I. **TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAMS**- Our hope is that if HB 1 passes, it will retain the provisions favorable to universities; as it stands, the filed version of the bill includes the Teacher Residency Programs.
- II. **PEACE OFFICER IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT**– We hope not to see these provisions as they would require any peace officer, including UTRGV PD officers, to enforce immigration laws up to deportation.



CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSITIONS...

Proposition 1- HJR 126 "The constitutional amendment protecting the right to engage in farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture, and wildlife management."	
Proposition 2- SJR 64 "The constitutional amendment authorizing a local option exemption from ad valorem taxation by a county or municipality of all or part of the appraised value of real property used to operate a child-care facility."	
Proposition 3- HJR 132 "The constitutional amendment prohibiting the imposition of an individual wealth or net worth tax, including a tax on the difference between the assets and liabilities of an individual or family."	
Proposition 4- HJR 2 from the second special session "The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to establish a temporary limit on the maximum appraised value of real property other than a residence homestead for ad valorem tax purposes; to increase the amount of the exemption from ad valorem taxation by a school district applicable to residence homesteads from \$40,000 to \$100,000; to adjust the amount of the limitation on school district ad valorem taxes imposed on the residence homesteads of the elderly or disabled to reflect increases in certain exemption amounts; to except certain appropriations to pay for ad valorem tax relief from the constitutional limitation on the rate of growth of appropriations; and to authorize the legislature to provide for a four-year term of office for a member of the board of directors of certain appraisal districts."	
Proposition 5- HJR 3 "The constitutional amendment relating to the Texas University Fund, which provides funding to certain institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities and drive the state economy."	
Proposition 6- SJR 75 "The constitutional amendment creating the Texas water fund to assist in financing water projects in this state."	
Proposition 7- SJR 93 "The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the Texas energy fund to support the construction, maintenance, modernization, and operation of electric generating facilities."	
Proposition 8- HJR 125 "The constitutional amendment creating the broadband infrastructure fund to expand high-speed broadband access and assist in the financing of connectivity projects."	
Proposition 9- HJR 2, regular session "The constitutional amendment authorizing the 88th Legislature to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to certain annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas."	
Proposition 10- SJR 87 "The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation equipment or inventory held by a manufacturer of medical or biomedical products to protect the Texas healthcare network and strengthen our medical supply chain."	
Proposition 11- SJR 32 "The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County to issue bonds supported by ad valorem taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities."	
Proposition 12- HJR 134 "The constitutional amendment providing for the abolition of the office of county treasurer in Galveston County."	
Proposition 13- HJR 107 "The constitutional amendment to increase the mandatory age of retirement for state justices and judges."	
Proposition 14- SJR 74 "The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the centennial parks conservation fund to be used for the creation and improvement of state parks."	

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™

## Staff Senate

TRUST...

TAKES YEARS

TO BUILD

SECONDS

TO BREAK

AND FOREVER

TO REPAIR



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APPENDIX D – Zoom Transcript

09:05 - 09:09:26

The opening of session was not recorded. During this time welcome to attendees and roll call of staff senators was taken.

Additionally, move to approve, second, and vote to approve October 2023 General Meeting Minutes took place and were approved.

This is where the transcript begins. Please note, Melanie Garza was the Staff Senator signed in to the session which included the stage microphone that was used by Staff Senator presenting, that is why Staff Senator Melanie Garza's name appears throughout the transcript.

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[Melanie Garza] 09:09:27

All those in favor, please state I in the zoom chat. Or say I in person.

[Melanie Garza] 09:09:28

All opposed? Any abstentions?

[Melanie Garza] 09:09:36

The October 2023 meeting minutes have been approved. To our first guest speaker today. Is Mr. Ronnie Rios, the UTRGV.

[Melanie Garza] 09:09:49

Marching Band Director. To present us a little bit about the program.

[Melanie Garza] 09:09:54

Mr. You may begin your presentation.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:09:57

Good morning everybody and welcome to today's session and I'm honored to be one of the voices.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:05

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

That will be heard here today. My name is Ronnie Dios. I'm the director of athletic bands here at the University of Texas.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:13

Real Grand Valley. It's a brand new position. I'm also the jazz director here.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:17

At UTRGV and I'm very very honored to join the Vocado community.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:27

Most of my experience is public schools. That I have been doing for the past many years here was in the public schools.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:32

I'm originally from Alice, Texas. I just want to give you a little background so so you know where I'm coming from.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:39

I actually am. Just nobody from nowhere, Texas. I grew up very very poor humble, humble beginnings.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:10:51

I remember that in the wintertime It was very, very cold inside my house. In Alice, Texas in the summertime it was very very hot inside we had no heat we had no A/C I grew up in the middle of the eighties so back in the day, you know, I'm not ashamed of those humble beginnings.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:11:13

I, my family was on welfare my whole life until you know I left the house at 17 when I graduated from high school.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:11:21

My mother always wanted me to be a fifth grade, teacher for some strange reason. I guess she She just had a fancy with that.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:11:32

She said, I want you to be a coach. And you know to teach you know little kids PE and and so forth.



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## Staff Senate

[Ronnie Rios] 09:11:39

She's she's she and my dad both died when they were young so they really never got to see me in a professional setting.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:11:47

You know, they saw me growing up. But that is kind of my background. And I, the only thing that really got me to the position where I'm at today is I made a decision with the help of my older brother when I was 11.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:12:03

And I joined the school band program in our <inaudible> and I joined because He joined. He's older than me and he was in it and I joined.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:12:13

But none of my immediate friends or neighbors or all the little kids I hung out with. Join, but my brother did so it was like siblings do what siblings do.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:12:22

I don't know about you and your family, but that's how it kind of works and and and in ours and most families that I've come to know.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:12:29

So I joined the group and I want to give you a little bit of background of what music does for the human for humanity.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:12:37

And number one. Everybody. Music is so wonderful for us because it's the only activity. Where you exercise the left side of your brain and the right side of your brain at the exact same time.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:12:53

The right side of the brain is more of the creativity part of your brain. The left side is the logic, the organizational skills you have or maybe you're still trying to build.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:05

Also the language side, you put those 2 together, music exercises both sides the brain at the exact same time.

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:13

It's the only activity that does that. So that really, really helped me in my you know, formative years growing up.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:20

In our sexes and beyond and even today just being involved in music also what it does group activity is it encourages maybe even forces people sometimes to step it up.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:33

You've got to step it up when you're part of a group, you're part of a band, you're part of a choir, an orchestra, anything music?

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:39

You know, elementary music, choir or whatnot. A church choir, a band, a community group.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:45

It forces you to step it up because There are everybody in the room and what I should tell my students and what I still tell them today is everybody in the room, everybody in the group has to get a hundred.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:13:58

Everybody has to get an A plus if you want a quality championship. Organization that just speaks to the world in a beautiful way is everybody has to be great.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:14:11

It's not like another class and there's no disrespect to any other classes. These students take here on campus or anywhere in the world.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:14:19

Or any organizations that you are a part of, those of you listening. But music, what it does is everybody around you in front of you, beside you, behind you.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:14:28

Has to be great. You've got to get a hundred. They gotta get a hundred. She's got to get a hundred. He's got it.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:14:35

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

Everybody's got to be great. It's not like another class where your success is you. And the person next to you over there behind you here.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:14:43

If they get a C plus or a D minus or a B minus or an A minus or a Whatever great, it doesn't affect you whatsoever.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:14:52

But this, this ensemble, the music, ensembles. Everybody's gotta be great and it forces you to step it up because you're looking around and you feel the sy in the room and there's people that are hustling around you and you got to step it up to match them and hopefully the leader in the group You know, the conductor, the director, the person in charge is

[Ronnie Rios] 09:15:15

motivating the the students accordingly so that everybody has the environment to want to step it up and is encouraging people to step it up because it makes everybody better.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:15:26

And that's one thing that music really did for me is that encouraged me to step up my game because I wanted to be like.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:15:32

That senior over there when I was a sophomore where I wanted to be like that eighth grader when I was a sixth grader.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:15:37

You know, it encourages you to step it up in a beautiful way. Also, holistically, music.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:15:43

Develops the child holistically. It encourages creatives thinking and of course creativity, social awareness and of course moral values and that's what develops the child holistically.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:16:00

Music does that for for for humanity and that's a beautiful thing and of course did it for me and then I wanted just When you get a chance, if you can go to Google.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:16:10

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And Google Lancaster Pennsylvania Pianos. This city in the middle of Pennsylvania. In the summertime takes 19 pianos.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:16:20

This is a crazy story. They take 19 piano. So think about Edinburgh, Texas or McAllen, Texas or Brownsville, Texas or Harlingen, wherever you're at West Locke.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:16:29

San Benito and they spread 19 pianos around your town that you live in in the summertime and people just ran away go play them.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:16:38

And, there's no vandalism. I think they have maybe one issue one time, but there's Pianos everywhere and what music does is it brings people together because in the world we live in now and especially post post post COVID.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:16:52

Is it really gave us where we started to separate from humanity. And what those pianos do and landcast on what music does around the world is it brings us together and we need that.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:05

That we gotta work together. We gotta smile together. We gotta be together. And that's what music does.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:11

Because COVID was encouraging us to do the opposite. Stay away from each other. You know, where you didn't, you were trying, you were developing a world, be included.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:20

Where we didn't rely on anyone. We didn't need anybody to, we could go and park our card outside HB and somebody would put groceries in our trunk.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:30

We can walk into Chipotle and grab an order that was already on a shelf already made.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:33



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We could pay our bills online. We could order stuff on Amazon. We never had to talk to people.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:39

We didn't need anybody. Music does the opposite. It brings people together in a beautiful way.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:44

And on top of that, it's fun. Music is awesome. Those of you that may be involved in music, maybe have You're in your church group or you have a group.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:17:55

Maybe you participate in a professional group or community band or choir orchestra or you just play for fun.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:18:02

It's awesome. I wanted to point that out to everybody because that's a personal group or community band or choir orchestra or you just play for fun. It's awesome. Music is fun.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:18:08

So took me from my little town in Alice, Texas. And and the neighbors that I grew up with.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:18:13

Warn in Musical and I saw the direction, you know, here in hindsight, 2030 years later, I see what direction they went in and the direction I went in and I would not trade it for a moment.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:18:24

Let's help me to travel the whole world. I've been to Europe twice. Most times I was in a band.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:18:31

So I play drums in a band and I also got to conduct abandon. We went on a European tour and it wasn't mean it's not because You know, I, this famous, you know, organization, it was just, I linked up with a certain group and they said, Hey, we're gonna go to Europe.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:18:47

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Want to go to Europe? And I'm yeah, so as a matter of fact, next month I've taken a group that I have a big band here in Cameron County, Brownsville, Harlingen area and we're doing a concert up in Chicago, December of next month.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:19:01

So it's something that we're working on right now. So it's just a lot of fun.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:19:06

It just creates so many opportunities for people. I've had a chance to perform with a Grammy award-winning artists and meet artists here locally and you know from throughout the country.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:19:15

I have some of my music now and I would have never imagined this me from Alice Texas this little kid from nowhere have music on Spotify and iTunes where I can go and I'm like hey that's us and we're actually on Spotify and on item so I would have never ever imagined that in 1,996 I moved to Harlingen.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:19:32

Texas. And I was the director of the Harlem High School Band. And that's where I spent most of my career before I came to Baketo country.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:19:40

And we had a lot of fun, a lot of success there with that program. We got a chance to go to the state marching band championships every single time from 1996, 1998 all the way to 2018 and that whole span there.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:19:53

Right before COVID kicked in. And, but now I'm a Vaquero. I'm here. I'm proud.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:20:02

I'm honored to be a part of everybody on this meeting and I'm so proud that I was invited today.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:20:06

What we have done here with our first ever Vaquero marching band is we have actually already performed out in the community.

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[Jeremy San Miguel, MSSW MPA] 09:20:15

Yeah.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:20:16

Several times on pigskin weekend back in mid October we performed at 2 different pigskins one in Headogo County, one in Cameron County.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:20:26

And we loved it. It was so much fun and that was actually our first performance ever since then we performed at the Harlingen CSD band night a few weeks back December the second we are performing at the mallon Christmas parade where we're gonna do our field show on the field there in the McCallum Stadium and then we're gonna kick off the parade will be the first band I think we're the we're in the

[Ronnie Rios] 09:20:50

front, afraid right behind the hosts. And we're gonna be playing a Christmas song throughout the parade down bicentennial and so forth.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:20:57

And then we're also going to be performing in Brownsville, Chotto days with our Vaquero marching band.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:21:03

We're so honored and we look forward to that. To be invited to perform at Charro days in February.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:21:08

Also on the radio, there's a big parade, a bison, a Washington, bicentennial, pray that we are hoping to be a part of.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:21:15

And then of course all the football events everybody that's right around the corner. Of course all the football events everybody that's right around the corner pep rallies and football games and just you know tellgate events and we're just so excited to be a part.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:21:29

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Of the Vaquero family, the bucketo events that are right around the corner. I think that we are having something actually in 2024 there's some exhibition games so I'm not sure what What role we're gonna play in that, but we're excited to be a part.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:21:42

Of all the Vaquero games. Any of you on this meeting that want to volunteer to be a part of, marching band and some capacity to help.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:21:52

With equipment help sound equipment you have some special skills you want to lend them to us for for a bit you want to help Dress the group, feed the group.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:01

Help travel the group, organize the group. We're always looking for volunteers that you can do part-time, spare time, whatever time you have to offer.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:09

Or just behind the scenes, help create agendas, help organize restaurant, you know, when we go eat at restaurants or catered food, whatever you could do to help if you want to volunteer, we'd love to have you participate with us and be a part of Vaquero marching band Nation.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:27

And, those are some of the highlights that we look forward to, here, at UT RGV.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:35

I'm excited to, be a part of your, your meeting today. And again, I You know, I just got here, so I'm still learning everybody.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:43

So forgive me if I don't know everybody's name yet, but I look forward to meeting you in person through time.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:50

And I'm just so honored that I was invited to be able to share a little bit of my background and what music does for for humanity.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:22:57



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And what the UTRGV Vaquero marching band. Has done so far and what we're looking forward to get to do in the future.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:23:06

One of them includes not only performing at our football events and pigskin jubilies here down in the valley but we also wanna make our way up north and do a tour in the San Antonio area, hopefully performing at the Almodome at the state marching ban.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:23:21

Championships as an exhibition group here in the very near future. So we'll keep you posted with that.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:23:26

Thank you again very, very, very much. And if anybody has any questions, I guess you're more than welcome to maybe a mute.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:23:33

I'm not sure how they're gonna handle that. Here she comes back to the podium.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:23:36

So I'm gonna turn it back over to our speaker here and again, thank you very much. I'll entertain any questions if anybody has anything.

[Melanie Garza] 09:23:45

Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Ronnie Rios?

[Esmeralda Lozano] 09:23:51

No, I put it in the chat, but I might as well tell you, Ronnie. I, heard you mentioned several times that you're nobody you grew up.

[Esmeralda Lozano] 09:23:59

Nobody, you're your parent's son. And you grew up in Alice High School, Cleo, you are somebody.

[Esmeralda Lozano] 09:24:06

So just remember that. I grew up port same way as you, but we've always been somebody and now you're even more.

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[Esmeralda Lozano] 09:24:15

So thanks for sharing your love of music with everybody.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:24:16

Thank you.

[Melanie Garza] 09:24:35

We do have a couple of questions. Does UTRGV have a fight song?

[Ronnie Rios] 09:24:42

I am so glad you asked that. The answer is yes. And the answer is no. So.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:24:49

I'm gonna explain that. So we're on revision number 8. Everybody, we have had.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:24:56

8 versions so far that I don't think anyone on this meeting maybe has heard yet. But, we have, gone back to the drawing board a few times.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:25:07

We're on revision 8. The the committee that I'm working with is is aware of where we're at.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:25:15

We should have something hopefully here in the next. Week or weeks or months. But you know, 2024 is absolutely going to be the rollout of our fight song.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:25:27

We just want to make sure we get it right. It was it had Spanish flavors and 9 5 6 flavors throughout but it wasn't something that you could just clap to right away, you know, with a great enthusiasm.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:25:41

So I had to add that piece to it. So we're making sure the recipe is including all of the the punch list that we want.

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[Ronnie Rios] 09:25:49

So it's almost done. So, I don't have it available at this moment to, for everyone to, hear, but as soon as we get that finalized, we'll share it with the entire UTRG nation.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:26:00

And we're so very excited to. So I feel very honored to be part of that committee that's that's able to kind of get this rolled out for everybody here at the university.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:26:13

And then we have another. Tier that we're going to go to where we're going to involve the community, the students here at UTRGV to help put lyrics to that.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:26:20

So it's gonna exciting times are right around the corner. Thank you for asking that.

[Melanie Garza] 09:26:24

No thank you and just let us know so that way we can go and view it and I think we're all excited here in attendance.

[Melanie Garza] 09:26:32

We have a question on the chat. What can you tell us about the bank uniforms and what they look like?

[Ronnie Rios] 09:26:40

So we're gonna have 2 uniforms right now we have a temporary uniform. They just has kinda UTRGV here on on top with the school colors for the parades and dark black pants.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:26:52

Those are temporary because it takes about 6 months to get. You know, real uniforms made. We're gonna have 2 uniforms.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:26:59

One is going to be like an informal uniform. That has our UTRTV logo.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:27:06

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It's gonna have like a Stetson black cowboy hat. Kind of thing real fancy looking beautiful with dark trousers.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:27:13

The other one is going to be more of a traditional banana form with orange and gray and some black in there with you know like a contemporary marching band top that they called a shako and on top not a cowboy hat where it's it looks real militaristic where you would see like just a modern day marching band use and we're gonna have both so that we can use one for maybe like

[Ronnie Rios] 09:27:37

showcase performances at pig scans or area competitions maybe even state that I talked about earlier and then one for football games and one for you know just local events that and we say informal but we don't mean like it's not important it's very important too but it's got it's not more of it's not the traditional marching uniform it's more of a relaxed slope with a count like I

[Ronnie Rios] 09:27:59

said, the cowboy hat the bucketo hat and a lot of kids really like that.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:28:03

So they are being processed by a company. We chose a company that went on with. And they should be, they're in production now.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:28:10

So it takes about 5 to 6 months, so hopefully we'll be able to roll those out for next year's marching season.

[Ronnie Rios] 09:28:17

Thank you for asking that question.

[Melanie Garza] 09:28:20

Any other questions for Mr. Reels?

[Melanie Garza] 09:28:27

Alrighty, thank you so very much, Ronnie, for your presentation today. It was a pleasure having you.



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[Melanie Garza] 09:28:32

Up next, we have Jennifer McGee, Vallis, director of public relations from UMC.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:28:43

Hi, everyone. Can you hear me okay? Yes, okay. I wish I was there. I'm so sorry.

[Melanie Garza] 09:28:48

Yes, we can hear you.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:28:51

Couldn't make it up today. But I am going to share with you all today. Our rankings and reputation.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:01

Website I'll just share and kinda go through it all. I think you might have seen it before.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:07

It was sent out after the convocations where Dr. Bailey had presented on our rankings, most importantly the Washington Monthly number one.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:15

Public university in Texas huge deal so I know that that was that was highlighted amongst other rankings as well.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:24

So after the conversation we had developed a website. Let me. Let me share that with you guys. So I'm not used to using Zoom.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:33

I'm always on. Always on Teams.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:36

Just give me 1 s.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:40

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Okay.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:44

Okay, so if you can find it under the short URL rankings or the short URL reputation.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:29:53

So it's our rankings and we're reputation website and the reason that I wanted to jump on thank you so much you guys for having me today thank you staff Senate for allowing me to present to everybody is that we just wanted this to be like a reminder right that we have this resource.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:30:07

For you guys and reputation is one of our big initiatives enhancing our reputation both internally and externally because our staff, faculty, students, you guys are our biggest marketing tool really.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:30:22

So we just want to make sure that you have the information, ways to share it. And you know where to gather this stuff, right?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:30:30

So we put everything together on a website. And you can, I'll just kind of scroll through it if anybody has any questions.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:30:37

It looks like Veronica's kind of shouting them out. And if there's anything also.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:30:41

After this or something you want to bring up to me directly just send me an email or send me a message on team whichever you like whatever is easiest call me.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:30:52

So we have on the site, rankings reputation, right? And then of course the big breaking news of the number one university in Texas from Washington Monthly, that's based on performance.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:31:03

So that was a pretty big deal. And what we wanted to do is make sure that there was resources that you guys have access to so I won't click on it but you go to the site and click on it there it's just a documents folder that has fliers it's just a documents folder that has fliers it has a PowerPoint the PowerPoint presentation that was actually used it has email

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:31:23

signatures. Posters. Just items and resources that you can share internally and externally too.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:31:30

And so we also mentioned all the rankings and this is just kind of your one-stop for all the rankings in our achievements, right?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:31:42

And something that was stressed before and I also want to stress. Again, is that this is everybody's achievement, right?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:31:50

It's not just you know, UTRV or Dr. Bill. I mean, this is everybody has played a huge role in this and it's and it's Quite, achievement right to be break number one from Washington monthly amongst all these other rankings too.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:05

So you can kind of scroll through, see where we fall, could do a little research on your own too, but we can do a little research on your own too, but we tried to put everything on your own too, but we tried to put everything on here so you have easy access to that.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:17

Lots of number one which is amazing right tons of number one and then we have other rankings too, right?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:26

Not necessarily number one, but pretty high up there. So different rankings and different areas. I know with Hispanic Outlook we have the cover.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:33

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This year, which is pretty cool. I know we got our hands on some of the physical. Hispanic Outlook, magazines.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:43

But, you can find it online as well. And then we have the archived, breaking.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:47

So if there's for any reason you want to backtrack a little bit and see where where we ranked in previous years, you have the opportunity to do that.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:32:57

And then we also have awards and recognitions. So

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:01

That is a lot of these link to our use room. So you can go directly to the newsroom.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:07

You might have already seen these stories that go out. I know if you subscribe to our our newsroom that's with the marketing communications then you will get those emails.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:21

We also have them posted on our announcements team, which I'll post a bunch of links when I'm done with the presentation.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:27

Just so you can.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:34

Have access to these things that I'm mentioning the website. I'll done the announcements team. And a couple other things I'm to mention too, but, and the newsroom too.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:41

I'll send a link to that, but, these are just stories, university as a whole, university as a whole, faculty, staff, students.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:50



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Just remarkable stories.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:52

About.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:33:53

Our UTG community. And then do you have access to those? And then impact and influence. Same idea, just just the amazing stories we have about our areas of excellence, right?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:02

Health and medical education, community engagement, research. Educational opportunities so you can find stories linked in all of these different categories.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:15

You have access to all of that. We try to make it like a one-stop shop like easy access.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:17

Everything is there for you. Don't have to dig around too much. An academic role. This is pretty cool.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:23

So this showcases the new degrees.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:30

Program since 2,015 since we first started right since we opened our door. So, you'll see some numbers here and then the breakdown.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:39

They're linked if applicable, but it will show you the breakdown and what, what new degree programs have that we implemented since we started.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:44

So if that's something that you're interested in knowing more about, you can find that here.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:50

And it goes all the way back.

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[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:53

And then some upcoming degrees, which is exciting too. So that's all that's all here too.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:34:58

This all of these different categories all help. And enhance her reputation. I know rankings was a big focus, but.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:35:04

As a whole, we wanted this to be a page that you can find information, have those resources, share as you see fit, just to help boost and enhance our reputation.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:35:16

And then alumni success, that's always huge too. So there's links to, stories that the newsroom.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:35:24

Has put out So you can have access to those as well, just kind of dig around, see what our alumni are up to, really incredible stories of what our alumni are doing where they're at, how they're impacting.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:35:37

You know wives and either here in the valley or outside of the valley because of you TRGB.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:35:45

And so that is the website. I know I kind of went through that pretty fast, but it's and it is pretty much self-explanatory because it is broken down and all those different categories and like I said just wanted to stress to all of you that you are like a huge marketing tool like we do our best you know I'm in PR so I do that we do our best to shine the brightest light on

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:36:06

UTRGV that's that's that's our job right but it's kind of everybody's job too.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:36:12

So we just wanted to give you resources, some talking points, some stories, and some things that you can you can share and just be knowledgeable.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:36:21

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That we have all of this, this here to help. You know, boost and enhance our, reputation.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:36:29

So are there any any questions? That I could answer and if I if I don't know the exact answer right now I will I will you can email me or send a message in the chat and I'll I'll get back to you and get you get you an answer.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:36:50

I wanted to plug one other thing if you don't mind since I knew this wouldn't take a ton of time.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:36:56

We have that I'm thankful for campaign and I think Veronica I think you shared it with Senate but we also had that last year I'll put the links in here once once I jump off camera but we have that I'm thankful for campaign doesn't have to be super personal it could just be something you know professional related, it could be person, you know, it's up to you and up to your

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:37:18

discretion. But, we have a website that we put all of the photos and the little blurb about what you're thankful for and we're also driving all of that to our announcements team.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:37:31

I am thankful for channel and we use that last year. And we're starting to get some, you know, some, some folks joining us on what they're thankful for this year.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:37:41

So I'll share that in the chat so if you feel comfortable to do so, just you know send us what you're thankful for this year could be could be anything, right? The simple things.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:37:51

And, we'll make sure that we, we grab those. We post those on our, I'm thankful for site and then they're also highlighted on that Teams channel as well.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:01

So I just wanted to, since I had a couple minutes and had your attention, just wanted to throw that out there too.

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[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:10

Any questions or?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:15

Concerns?

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:20

No, I'll take that as a good thing. But like I said, if, if you do come across any questions you have, anything.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:30

That you think I could. The help find an answer to if it's not me, somebody else in working communications just reach out.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:39

I'm happy to help wherever I can.

[Melanie Garza] 09:38:42

Alrighty, thank you so very much Jennifer for your presentation. It's extremely rewarding to hear all the accomplishment UTRGB has.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:43

Okay, thank you.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:49

Yeah, yeah.

[Jennifer McGehee-Valdez] 09:38:52

Definitely. Well, thank you.

[Melanie Garza] 09:38:53

Up next. Alright, thank you so much, Denver.

[Melanie Garza] 09:38:58



# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley<sup>TM</sup>

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## Staff Senate

Up next we have Mr. Richard Sanchez, the Associate VP for Government Relations from the Division of Institutional Advancement.

[Melanie Garza] 09:39:21

Thank you. Good morning. Thanks for having us. I've got Veronica Delagarza, our director.

[Melanie Garza] 09:39:27

Of governmental relations with us here in person. I love Ronnie's story, by the way.

[Melanie Garza] 09:39:34

A great story and a lot of great energy. And I'll apologize ahead of time for. This presentation being a little bit dry compared to those.

[Melanie Garza] 09:39:43

So. How much time do I have?

[Melanie Garza] 09:39:49

Gotcha. Okay. So then, cause I've got a few slides here. They'll take a little bit of time to get through but the ones that aren't

[Melanie Garza] 09:39:58

2 in depth, I'll try to get through pretty quickly. So we're over here.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:04

You ready? No, not ready yet.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:09

Well, meanwhile, let me

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:12

Let me talk about our office a little bit because the first couple of slides talk to our office. And the protocols that we have in place.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:20

There we go. So, Stefan, that's today. It's a legislative update. Here's our office.

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.....

## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:25

We're a small team. Veronica Gonzalez is the is our VP, senior VP.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:30

Governmental and community relations. There I am in the middle and then Veronica Delagasa is our director.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:38

We handle all of the governmental relations for the entire campus. Across all all the campuses and the medical school and the school podiatry and everything else.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:49

So, it's a lot of work, a lot to keep up with. We're talking about local, state, and federal government.

[Melanie Garza] 09:40:55

And go to the next slide. So what do we do in OGR?

[Melanie Garza] 09:41:06

Waiting on the next slide.

[Melanie Garza] 09:41:10

So what are the official? For government of work and contact with elected officials and and appointed governmental officials.

[Melanie Garza] 09:41:21

Anytime you have a purpose. To be in front of or request something from them or if a request comes from them to us, we should be in that loop, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:41:32

We're happy to make that contact for you. If you have a say a letter recommendation or some sort of request, a policy change, a funding request, whether it's grant money, something at the local level.

[Melanie Garza] 09:41:45

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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## Staff Senate

From a state agency. Through our office and at least get us in that loop, okay? More times and not were able to help you initiate that process.

[Melanie Garza] 09:41:56

On the next slide, talk a little bit more about the different things we do in in governmental relations.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:03

We, we with that advocate for the university.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:12

I'm sorry, I'm waiting on the slides again.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:16

Okay. We have a legislative internship program. We have 11 interns to go to the capital in Austin.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:24

And, and we're a primary on that internship. So we're proud of it.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:31

It's a, it's a great experience for the students. Actually, go for the entire session.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:33

Of the legislature. It's 140 days in Austin. And we place one each in the 11 legislators that we consider from our service.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:43

Region, right? So the 4 county region.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:47

We also help with a Vaquero vote effort that's you know whether it's voting. Voter registration, getting out to vote, and also the polling locations you see on campus.

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:57

We do a lot of that stuff.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:42:59

There in the bottom that bottom block had read Just to reiterate again, all departments should notify OGR prior to contacting elected officials or bring OGR into the fold as soon as possible once you have a matter in front of an elected official.

[Melanie Garza] 09:43:15

Or elected body. You have to remember that as a state employee, which we all are, you cannot, on, university time or with university resources go out in politics and Go campaign.

[Melanie Garza] 09:43:31

You can't go and lobby for or against a measure, right? A candidate or a measure in front of a body.

[Melanie Garza] 09:43:39

So. If you take off at, 2 o'clock to go catch the. Edinburgh City Council meeting.

[Melanie Garza] 09:43:46

In opposition to some ordinance they want to pass. That's a no-go. You got to take time off.

[Melanie Garza] 09:43:52

And you take your university hat off and then you can do it. So you got to remember it's real hard to separate yourself from the university sometimes.

[Melanie Garza] 09:43:59

So you got to be real careful. If you need guidance for that, just come to us. These links here kind of in in policy at the UT system level in our hop and in the government code is where most of this stuff is.

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:14

So. Let's get on to what we're here for today.

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:23

Wanna let you know who we are, what we do that's done. The Texas legislature, we talk about some of the basics.

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:25



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## Staff Senate

The regular session, which finished in May. The budget, it's always a big question.

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:34

Builds of interest.

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:37

And special sessions. So the 88 Texas legislature. That's where we're at, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:44

They this little box up here, it's a it's a little bit hard to read. Well, no, not on the big screen.

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:53

The text for no

[Melanie Garza] 09:44:58

Within a hundred 40 days starting. At noon on the second Tuesday. In January of odd numbered years, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:00

That's per our state constitution. So basically every other year for a hundred 40 days, that's when they meet.

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:05

What does that mean? It means it's a citizen legislature.

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:18

But it also means that they don't have much time to do all the stuff they need to do, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:20

They have a 2 year budget that they have to comprise. And then all the policy chains in all the bills that they do.

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:22

Compressed into those 140 days. So it gets very stressful. Very

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.....

## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:37

And if you're not ready for the session. Before session starts, you're behind and you're not going to get what you want.

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:40

So that's a lot of the things that are in preparation for that. There were 8,535 bills 5

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:48

During the regular session.

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:51

106

[Melanie Garza] 09:45:54

Yes, that tells you that that system. Our legislative system is set up to.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:01

To kill bills rather than pass them. So it's really an art to get a bill passed.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:03

And then you gotta worry about the vetoes too. So.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:17

Habit veto 76 bills this time around. 3 had to do with higher ed, none really, impacted UTRGV. So let me get into some of the bills, right? Listed here, HB.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:20

1595 it was contingent on a constitutional amendment which we'll talk about a little bit at the end

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:29

At the

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:31

The.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:34

It created the

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:38

Texas University Fund and the National Research Support Fund.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:39

Those are 2 things that were great for So we're glad to see that pass. Sp. 25 had to do with nursing education support under student affairs. There were.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:49

Bills having to do with everything from hazing to discrimination protections for print and parenting. So Students addressing issues of.

[Melanie Garza] 09:46:54

Students with autism, mental health. There was. A lot of financial aid stuff. You know, in most of it's just tweaks here and there.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:01

Not a major overhaul in any of these in

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:07

Areas.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:15

Bills related to enrollment, research, law enforcement, campus business operations, and more. This, these links here and I made this PowerPoint available to everybody, in, in staff said it, I send it to Kelly yesterday, so I'm not sure if she.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:26

But but contact me or reach out to Kelly and and y'all are welcome to this PowerPoint.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:31

You can also go to our website right here that's listed down here in blue and we have summaries.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:37

Of all of these bills in that document. There's also a summary of the budget too.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:43

I'll talk a little bit about the budget. There are some other bills, you know, big stuff that passed it.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:46

Aren't necessarily higher in. The Texas Job Security Act, public junior college state finance program and the broadband build are examples.

[Melanie Garza] 09:47:57

The next slide. We get into the budget, right? So. You know, big state, big budget.

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:05

Big surplus this time around. That's not always the case. We had a 32 billion dollar surplus.

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:12

Going into the session this time around. What that creates is a lot of hands out, right? Everybody wants a piece of it.

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:20

Including us, right? So. We're asking for, certain things. I'll get to that in a minute.

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:26

But there were some big things that happened. In, at the legislature for, the the broadband bill, the university funds.

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:37

Parks. Healthcare, education, property tax cuts. That was probably the biggest ticket item. I'll get a little more into that in a minute.

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:46

For higher ed on a statewide view, something called the affordability funding. Took center stage for this time around.



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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:48:56

What that said was The legislature wanted to throw about a billion dollars at higher end. Statewide. In exchange for higher ed holding the line on tuition and mandatory fees.

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:09

That agreement was reached. So, those items you see down here, that's, that's what it funded.

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:17

Right, including Hazelwood, it's a Hazelwood funding that that had been a big issue for universities statewide.

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:24

Research funding. The higher ed group insurance. And, increasing the format of funding. So all of that got funded.

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:36

But that meant it was hard to do much else in terms of. Individual institution funding. So you really had to fight for the scraps after that.

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:45

Let's go to the next slide, I think. Okay, yeah, so, what do we get out of it?

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:52

That first paragraph, it's, it's a little disheartening.

[Melanie Garza] 09:49:56

But the reason being is because of our post pandemic dip in enrollment. When we dip in enrollment, it hurts.

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:07

So it's really all of our jobs. To drive enrollment to get get more folks here because enrollment drives a formula the formula funding.

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:16

So if we take a dip there, you're gonna see at the next biennium.

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.....

## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:21

In our funding in the form of the funding. All that said, between the affordability. Of affordability funding.

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:30

And a couple of pieces that we got on the side. We came out okay we came out a little over current budget so that explains it there to a degree.

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:39

And if you go to that website, you'll see more of it. School medicine. School medicine got there.

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:46

Our highest priority request for them was to keep. Our startup funding. That's the biggest part of their their budget, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:50:55

State budget. They have they have other revenue sources and included in their built what called a bill pattern, and included in their built what called a bill pattern is for the new school pediatric medicine we needed to get them, what called a bill pattern, is for the new school paediatric medicine.

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:08

We needed to get them some startup money. And that was our big single biggest. New funding request and that was at 12 million dollars and we actually got the 12 million dollars so we're very happy about that.

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:18

They actually had some students already enrolled, so they got 2.5 million in instruction and operations form in a fund as well.

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:25

So. You thought I was gonna leave out the 2 big things that happened.

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:32

Doing the regular session in.

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:36

This is more of a. Faculty side of the house issue, DEI and tenure. But I think it touches everybody, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:48

The DEI build did pass. It was SP. 17. It bans the right programs and AI training and public universities.

[Melanie Garza] 09:51:58

There are exceptions, right? And that's what is bulleted there. So with those exceptions, we're able to do some of the things kind of packaged a little bit differently.

[Melanie Garza] 09:52:07

On DEI type things. The UT system. Couple of different offices that UT system have come up with a FAQs.

[Melanie Garza] 09:52:19

And that's the document here on the right. If you, if you have the PowerPoint.

[Melanie Garza] 09:52:26

That is clickable and it'll take you to the entire document. And it's got a lot of good.

[Melanie Garza] 09:52:32

Good questions and answers in there for you. 10 year that was SB 18. That passed, it started out really bad banning tenure for new professors.

[Melanie Garza] 09:52:47

And everybody was. Concerned to say the least about that one. But in the end, the The initial bill started out in the Senate and that's the one that that really

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:02

Band and did some other things to tenure. That people were so concerned about. In the house, I filed a different version of the bill.

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:12

Which was much more palatable. At the very end, that's that's the version of past.

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:19

It had. Lot of what was already in policy for UT system schools and A and M system schools.

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:27

In it, what they added and what, what the legislature and some of those and let's say, what really wanted to see was tenure not being a blank check for some, some professors, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:40

They wanted, more accountability and more review, right? So instead of the six-year review, becomes an annual review, right?

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:49

More stringent annual review. Than what it used to be. So little more checks and balances for 10 year now.

[Melanie Garza] 09:53:56

So. 100 and 40 days that took us to May 20 ninth of this year. And.

[Melanie Garza] 09:54:06

There were some things on the agenda. Between the governor, the 10 governor, speaker that did not pass.

[Melanie Garza] 09:54:14

And, and when that happens, the governor has the option to call a special session, a special session, what they call here in this box.

[Melanie Garza] 09:54:20

An extraordinary session of the legislature. He can call them back for 30 days at a time. And the luxury can only consider those things.

[Melanie Garza] 09:54:30

That on his call. Via proclamation. During the session. Anything, anything beyond that.

[Melanie Garza] 09:54:39



Is not considered valid for that special session. So what what was one of the things that did not pass because during the regular session they couldn't agree between the house and Senate, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker.

[Melanie Garza] 09:54:52

How to forward. The money set aside for property tax. Relief, right? So that was that was the main issue in the first special session.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:06

They also had some border security stuff. The house showed up. And by the way, on the last day of the regular session called Signy Die.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:16

. meaning without it or Meaning the end basically in Latin.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:22

The governor called them back into special session on the same day. So they finished around early afternoon. They were back that same evening.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:29

For a special session. The house. Within the next couple of days. Passed 2 bills their version of what the governor what they they think the governor wanted And then they went home.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:44

They adjourned. And the, the bills that they passed were not palatable. To the Senate nor the governor.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:50

So nothing happened. They.

[Melanie Garza] 09:55:53

Try and they kept trying to get the house back they never came back. And this, the Senate finish and the special session finished.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:03

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## Staff Senate

And nothing happened. So. Governor, Abbott called him ride back in. For a special session number 2. Okay.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:10

People like just caught over time, right? So second over time.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:19

This time around, they got some sort of an agreement for property tax relief between the governor, lieutenant governor and speaker the real rift is between the speaker and lieutenant governor and that had been brewing since last session.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:33

It got a lot worse this, session. I'll get into that a little more in a minute.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:37

None the less they were able to get together. They passed the property. Property tax relief bill.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:44

Altogether, between that and some franchise tax stuff. I came out to 18 billion dollars so it's it's a big number.

[Melanie Garza] 09:56:52

So you see where a lot of that that surplus that we had. Was eaten up here over half of it.

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:00

That's something that we all voted for if I'm assuming everybody went to vote on November seventh, 2 days ago.

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:06

For the property tax. I'm sorry the propositions that were on the ballot that was one of them.

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:12

So let's go. That not everything pass though. Not everything pass. So here we go back into session for session 3, but in between.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:23

Between August And October, there's a timeframe we're in now. Something happened with our attorney general.

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:32

The house at the end. Of the regular session impeached. Our sitting attorney general. Good.

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:41

How many of you all knew about that?

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:44

Yeah, it's not always in the news, but. So that created. More of a divide between the speaker and lieutenant governor in the house in the Senate.

[Melanie Garza] 09:57:56

So, Attorney General gets impeached. He has to sit on the sideline, Supreme Court decided.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:03

Until his trial was over. The trial happened in September. It took about 3 weeks. Is there's a lot of drama.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:10

In the Senate, right? So the Senate and Senators. Or the, the jurors and the lieutenant governor presided over the, the impeachment trial.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:21

You might remember we did that. With the president not too long ago. Same sort of process.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:28

It happened here in our Texas Senate. And in the end, they they acquitted the attorney general. So he got a job back and there's some sour grapes over that.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:39

So. That further, you know. The divide between the chambers and lieutenant governor and speaker.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:46

So that that drama will continue. Anyway, we get back into special session, special session number 3.

[Melanie Garza] 09:58:55

Because one of the governor's main campaign promises, and pushes. Doing K 12 vouchers school vouchers where you take some public money and you set it aside.

[Melanie Garza] 09:59:10

For folks to take that voucher to a school of their choice, right? So that is is number one priority on the governor's list.

[Melanie Garza] 09:59:21

There was also some border security stuff. And COVID-19 mandate prohibitions. On this call for overtime number 3.

[Melanie Garza] 09:59:32

2 bills passed during this last special. Which just ended on this on the seventh 2 days ago. They got 2 bills out of it, some, border security stuff.

[Melanie Garza] 09:59:42

And the COVID-19 stuff that passed. But the vouchers did not, or what they like to call.

[Melanie Garza] 09:59:51

Schools, something savings accounts. I'm sorry, I can't remember the name of it. So that didn't pass.

[Melanie Garza] 09:59:57

The special session finished and the governor called him right back on the same day on the seventh. Unlike today, they finished 3, started 4, and that's where we're at, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:08

There's a proclamation. I thought I'd throw that in there so you can see what a the governor's proclamation.



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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:13

To call legislators back to the capital. To do more work. So we're in the middle of it.

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:20

They got a pretty short window. You know, holidays coming up.

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:25

There are a couple of things on this call, but really it's all about the the school voucher program.

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:33

Next slide. There are 2 things that we're looking out for. There's some border security stuff on the.

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:39

On this call as well. On if a a education

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:45

Oh

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:47

We would like to see as we saw in a couple of versions of Bill's earlier during the regular session and this last special.

[Melanie Garza] 10:00:56

There was talk of including teacher residency programs, the way some universities like ours do that type of training, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:01:04

It's very immersive and it's a it's a much better way to train teachers.

[Melanie Garza] 10:01:08

Then the traditional. The way most everybody else does it, but it costs more money. So there's they there's a there's language in the current bill, it's HB one that that would put it in state law.

[Melanie Garza] 10:01:23

And provide some funding. So if the bill passes, we'd love to see that in there. Again, I'm not saying before it or against it because I'm not allowed to but we can say that something would benefit us or it might hurt us.

[Melanie Garza] 10:01:39

There's nothing wrong with saying that. You can talk about the impact of legislation. And then on, some of the border security stuff we've seen.

[Melanie Garza] 10:01:48

Where

[Melanie Garza] 10:01:51

There's a provision that. That'll allows peace officers that's any peace officer local state or federal to have immigration enforcement.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:02

Including up to deportation. So we would rather not have our PD officers dealing with immigration. We have enough to do.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:13

They're not trained for it. And we think that better off leaving the trained federal officers to do that.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:20

So we're keeping an eye out for that stuff. Oh my own time. Good. Good.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:26

Okay, any questions at this point? I'm almost done. Okay, well the next slide is the propositions that were on the ballot 2 days ago.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:36

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## Staff Senate

So you'll see one there towards the very bottom, second or last. That's the only one that didn't pass.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:41

There were 14 amendments, right? On the, on the ballot. Each of these amendments cannot make it onto the ballot without the legislature first.

[Melanie Garza] 10:02:53

Approving a bill. By 3 quarters vote in each chamber, right, before they can send a constitutional amendment proposition.

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:03

To your ballot. So that's what all of these represent something that passed the legislature prior. Only one failed and then that was Hey, a proposal.

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:13

To take the mandatory retirement age for state. Judges and Justices from 75 to 79. For some reason, most of us thought that was a bad idea and it failed.

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:25

Everything else passed. So, prop 4 up there with a with a lot of the text. That was the, the property tax relief.

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:30

Oh

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:36

Prop that we talked about a little while ago. So that one passed. There were 2 other property tax type relief bills.

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:43

Our propositions that also passed the very bottom one here that's probably my favorite personal favor is for parks the 1 billion dollars that's going to go to state parks.

[Melanie Garza] 10:03:55

And You know, advocates say that they need a lot of, renovation and more parkland.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:02

So that's that's what that money is going to be used for. Other stuff is on there too.

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:08

The, teacher retirement.

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:12

Money was in there too. And some other stuff. So, but let me let me stop there.

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:19

Guess we can look at the last slide. I like to include this because This speaks to.

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:26

What we do as an office and

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:30

How difficult it could be. If we were to lose the trust of those stakeholders that that we deal with our elected officials, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:40

You know, our credibility, our reputation, and the trust that we build, it takes years, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:46

We've got to a great level to where there very responsive to us and and we are very responsive to them.

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:51

It's an open communication. We have relationships up and down the region and statewide and even at the federal level.

[Melanie Garza] 10:04:58

But it takes seconds to break. If you if you don't do it right. That's why we always ask you all keep us in the loop.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 10:05:05

We need to know what one side of the campus is doing compared to the other so we can keep that trust because it takes forever to repair that.

[Melanie Garza] 10:05:13

Questions? Comments, concerns.

[Melanie Garza] 10:05:36

Okay. Yeah.

[Melanie Garza] 10:05:44

Yeah, The only ones that I'm aware of that in terms of a process, right, are.

[Melanie Garza] 10:05:53

State or federal holidays, right? So it's up to the state, the state, state legislature could do it.

[Melanie Garza] 10:06:00

They could just. Put it in law. If they wanted to maximize or having a floor a minimum number of days off they could do it via a new state law.

[Melanie Garza] 10:06:11

I've never seen that. I've never seen a bill proposed to do that. I have seen bills to.

[Melanie Garza] 10:06:19

Make it mandatory to give employees off for certain days. Martin Luther King is is one example. So that could happen with any day or they could make up a new.

[Melanie Garza] 10:06:30

Holiday if they'd like. They holiday, whatever.

[Melanie Garza] 10:06:47

Off I'm sorry, repeat that one.

[Melanie Garza] 10:06:56



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## Staff Senate

I guess like a peak 3 12 and higher ed were 2 different. Groups. So when it comes to like right now, you know, TA has passed.

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:05

Maybe like more holiday breaks or the timeframe for TA regulations. Compared to higher education. We get state levels obviously so we're part of employees.

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:15

So we, if teachers get pay increases, higher rate does not. Cause we were broken off of that since like.

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:22

1990 or 2,000 timeframe. So I'm just gonna curious has there been much more advocacy for I curiosity, I love what I do, but, and you know, maybe.

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:32

Increases as teachers get maybe higher pays or they're fighting for higher pay through teachers. Higher ed staff.

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:41

Is there a chance for that? I know we get our merits every year, but. What would be the voice or has there been something?

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:48

A call out for maybe for us staff. As an interest to tell our lawmakers, hey, higher rate is also important.

[Melanie Garza] 10:07:56

So. Will we increase salary? We increase more days off and so on. Yeah, the legal points.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:02

I'm just kinda curious. Yeah, so I mean, it's certainly not my level of expertise there, but what I do know is that the the statute, the education code.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:11

There's a public ed, K 12. Sections or chapters to deal with public head.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:20

And then there are chapters to deal with higher ed.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:25

Separate from that, there's a general appropriations act, right? So without the money.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:31

You can't do much, right? Even, if the law said. Salaries should be at some point for a certain type of employee.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:42

You still have to fund it through the general Appropriations Act. Again, dividing the 2 public ed.

[Melanie Garza] 10:08:50

This school board has more to do with what the salary ranges are. And then the revenue mostly through property taxes it would would drives any increase they can see in salary or facilities or whatever.

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:06

Or on universities for, higher ed. It's mostly by institution because you have different revenue sources here, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:15

Tuition is considered even though we send it up to Austin, then it comes back to us. It's called, that's institutional money, a portion of it.

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:25

Portion of it is used for used by the state. So you have you have a university that that had might have some flexibility.

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:36

In institutional money. Right? And what they decide to do with the money is up to them, right?

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:43

Now we have to go through our board to do it. System board, but it's at the institution level.

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:50

I don't I don't know that the education code has a salary table in it.

[Melanie Garza] 10:09:57

I know it doesn't for each institution. I'm not sure what it might have as an umbrella.

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:02

I don't think they want their is one exist in the education code. The appropriations bill.

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:12

Might have some breakdowns, I'd have to look. If you want to send me an email, I'm happy to take a look.

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:19

Yeah. This is a little complicated and when it comes down to it There's some autonomy, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:26

The money's got to be there in the first place, then an institution or a school board has some discretion there.

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:31

And what to do with it.

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:34

There is a question in the chat says some of these propositions can be wordy and confusing to understand.

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:41

What is the best way to have this laid out in layman's terms? Sorry. What is the best way to have the propositions be more understandable?

[Melanie Garza] 10:10:54

So if I understand the question, right. So. The propositions get on the ballot from Passing a piece of legislation, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:03

That piece of legislation. We'll dictate. We'll have the verbiage that ends up on the ballot, right?

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:11

So sometimes it's hard to know. When you read that proposition language on the ballot, what does it mean?

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:20

I think that's the good. Yeah, it's very difficult. I also sent to Kelly, which, which, all, welcome to it, some summaries of each.

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:27

Proposition, right? And it kinda, it's up to us as voters to do a little homework.

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:33

Prior to the election, there are resources out there. We looked at the League of Hispanic, you know, League of women voters of Texas and the Texas Tribune.

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:47

And the Secretary of State's office. Those are 3 we use. There are others. And they're on that document that I shared.

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:52

And it gives a summary of each proposition. And then it gives a little breakdown.

[Melanie Garza] 10:11:59

Those in favor, what they think of it and those oppose what they think of it. So you get both perspectives.

[Melanie Garza] 10:12:04

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## Staff Senate

So really it takes some some research but if you really wanted to Dictate the language of the proposition.

[Melanie Garza] 10:12:13

You go to your state legislator, a house member, a state rep or a state senator and You work with them during the legislative process, those 140 days.

[Melanie Garza] 10:12:24

You could work with that author, the bill. And make it to where Every day Texan can understand it once it makes it to the ballot.

[Melanie Garza] 10:12:34

Thank you. Is there any other questions in the chat?

[Melanie Garza] 10:12:47

Good. No, I think that's it. Thank you so very much. The next part of our agenda is going to be the committee.

[Melanie Garza] 10:13:06

I will hand it over to the communications committee chair, Mr. Jay Gonzalez.

[Melanie Garza] 10:13:20

Thank you, Madam President. First, before I get my report, I would like to say thank you to the staff who participated in the Halloween costume contest.

[Melanie Garza] 10:13:30

We truly appreciate your spirit and participation and we hope to do it again next year. For our report, I want to add with website updates, we added a committees tab and sub- that list the internal and external committees and their members.

[Melanie Garza] 10:13:41

We also changed the intro paragraph on the homepage. We also added a 2020, 2022 staff Senate officers to the previous year's section of Meet Your Senators.

[Melanie Garza] 10:13:51



# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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## Staff Senate

Other news we encourage all staff to attend the UTRGB volleyball game today and Eddie Burke for faculty and staff appreciation night.

[Melanie Garza] 10:13:58

Faculty and staff are able to redeem 5 free tickets for today's match. Also, this Friday and Saturday, athletics will be paying tribute to our veterans free admission to our veterans as well as \$6 specifically price tickets for their family and friends at the ticket window.

[Melanie Garza] 10:14:13

For more information on that I do know that you tier Gb athletic sent out an email to all faculty and staff so there's more information on that.

[Melanie Garza] 10:14:21

For those staff for staff who are looking for a yummy Thanksgiving meal there will be a Thanksgiving lunch happening at the avocado dining hall and L Mesa in Brownsville on November fourteenth from 11 a. M.

[Melanie Garza] 10:14:32

To 2 PM. Lastly, we would like to recognize that the employee tuition assistance waver for the spring, 2,024 semester is available from November, 2,024 semester is available from November, the twentieth to December first.

[Melanie Garza] 10:14:42

And lastly, for a reference, we want to remind staff that you are able to view general staff meetings on our YouTube channel at you tier Gb Staff Senate and that is if for the Communications Committee report I would like to turn it over to the Constitution's and Elections Committee Chair, Yassenya Carter.

[Melanie Garza] 10:15:43

So I'm assuming that your thing is not on the call.

[Melanie Garza] 10:15:50

But for our committee, we are.

[Melanie Garza] 10:15:58

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## Staff Senate

In the process of. Of. Placing amendments in our constitution and summing that. And we're also.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:09

Working with or.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:11

Next step is working.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:14

Of collecting information.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:19

For the nominations.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:47

Good morning, everyone. I'm Warren, Zowski with the business processes and staff, staff support committee.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:53

Since our last meeting, we have received 2 new staff feedback submissions. Our first submission is from a staff member in the College Education and P.

[Melanie Garza] 10:16:57

16. Their feedback.

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:05

Is a suggestion to improve. Protocol during a weather event or power outage and the communication. Our recommendation is to share the feedback with environmental health and safety.

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:14

Risk management and also human resources. Our last

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:21

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## Staff Senate

Is from a staff member with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and their feedback is a recommendation to create.

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:29

A new leave option at UTRGV, similar to UT systems. Wellness leave?

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:33

Work at the UT system office to use 30 min.

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:40

Size up to 3 times a week.

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:45

Our recommendation is to

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:54

The. Momentation with our human resources benefits. And that is it. I will go ahead and pass it over to.

[Melanie Garza] 10:17:59

Los Angeles with the staff support steps success committee.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:00

Well, good morning. It's a lovely place, right? I only just give a big huge.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:01

Thanks to all staff that was able to attend.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:02

Excuse me. I want to say there was at least from a hundred to 200 staff members that went to at least 5 the locations we had. I don't know if they have the pictures on the PowerPoint slide, but I thought it was a very nice activity.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:03

It was not this was not possible without the eboard to approve of this activity. Along with our staff members or staff centers who were able to assist.

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## Staff Senate

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:04

Many of the staff members found activity to be very nice, very stressful leaving and I guess a little bit rewarding because they got to see us face to face and now secondly we see each other here most of us face to face so I want to thank all staff who joined us and I also want to thank Jake and his team for Promoter events, so, own at some point, if the park one does go

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:24

up, you'll always see us smiling with our little visa up. So now I'm gonna turn it over.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:28

Oh, and also get prepared for March. We're gonna do a staff appreciation. Our staff success committee.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:34

We're gonna start working. Start planning. How well we could execute. This coming up semester for staff appreciation.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:40

So we want to thank you. On behalf of staff success. Now I'll get back over to.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:46

Kelly.

[Melanie Garza] 10:18:55

Alright, thank you everybody. So now we will. Proceed with opening it for public comments and questions.

[Melanie Garza] 10:19:04

If we have any announcements or comments in the chat.

[Melanie Garza] 10:19:08

Or the audience.

[Melanie Garza] 10:19:18

Crickets.

[Melanie Garza] 10:19:23

Is there anything in chat? No. Alright, everyone's quiet today. I think it's because it's cloudy outside.

[Melanie Garza] 10:19:30

Alright, Madam President. I'll turn it back over to you.

[Melanie Garza] 10:19:41

If they aren't any further public comments or questions, we will now move. To make a motion to adjourn.

[Melanie Garza] 10:20:00

Is there a second? I second.

[Melanie Garza] 10:20:06

Is there any debate or discussion? Debate or discussion? Debate or discussion. All those in favor, please state I in zoom or at present.

[Melanie Garza] 10:20:18

Okay. All opposed? Any abstentions?

[Melanie Garza] 10:20:25

Alright, then we will close this meeting at 1020 am. Thank you.