FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE?
DISCOVER YOUR OPTIONS AT UTRGV

By Jennifer L. Bergham

For Gabrielle Menendez, a junior at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, getting financial aid allows her more time to focus on her studies and provides her with a part-time job where she can assist fellow students fill out paperwork to receive help paying for school.

Menendez, who is studying education with a minor in special education, works in UTRGV’s financial aid office and gets a federal work-study grant that provides money for school and helps her employer pay for her work in the office.

“I’m a work-study employee, so they have always worked around my class schedule,” said Menendez, who also receives other grants and financial assistance. “Although I cannot do more than 20 hours a week, it can help me not ask my parents for money. I’m actually able to share an apartment with somebody and pay my bills reasonably.”

About 72 percent of students at UTRGV receive financial assistance in the form of loans, grants, scholarships, and/or work-study.

The different types of financial aid available are grants, scholarships, and loans.

Even before finding out what assistance is available, students need to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSFA) or the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) to determine which types of aid for which they qualify.

“The only way to know is to apply,” Garcia said.

Students who are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents should fill out the FAFSA. Students who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents, but who are classified as Texas residents under state law, should fill out the TASFA.

Students and their families can get free help filling out financial assistance forms, Garcia said, so she warns families against offers to assist with applying for aid for a fee.

She encourages students to contact their high school Go Center, which provides help with the college and financial aid application processes.

“Even though the process seems complicated, there is help available and we encourage students and their families to seek help and answers to their questions,” Garcia said. “Everything having to do with the whole process is completely free.”

MARCH 5, 2016, 9 A.M.-2 P.M.

UTRGV Brownsville Campus
Main Building, One West University Blvd

UTRGV Edinburg Campus
Visitors Center, 1201 W. University Drive

The one-day event, in conjunction with RGV Focus, offers one-on-one assistance with filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). Free tax preparation and notary services will be offered at the Edinburg Campus only.

For more information, call UTRGV P-16 Outreach at (956) 665-7597.

Your journey toward your future begins soon!

Visit us at utrgv.edu/Discover to reserve your seat. Space is limited.