

MATH & SCIENCE ACADEMY offers a head start on college

By Cheryl Taylor

The Mathematics and Science Academy (MSA) at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has developed a reputation as a two-year university/high school program that transforms potential into achievement – at no financial cost to the student.

Yes, MSA is FREE. UTRGV and the Foundation School Fund cover the student's tuition, fees and books per semester.

Originally located on the Brownsville campus of UTRGV, the award-winning MSA recently expanded to the Upper Valley and provides a path for high school juniors and seniors who are gifted in math and science to develop their talents through outstanding learning opportunities.

"Now in our first semester on the Edinburg Campus, our awesome inaugural cohort of 48 juniors will graduate in May 2018," said Dr. Wilma Smetter, MSA principal.

Students in MSA take classes from UTRGV's exceptional faculty, alongside UTRGV students – with the boost of extra supervision and guidance not received by traditional university students. And, MSA alumni and graduate students from the university tutor MSA students.

"The goal of MSA is to develop the whole person, in an environment where students enhance their knowledge, develop their imaginations, explore new ideas, and make enduring friendships," Smetter said.

The MSA is a program under the UTRGV College of Sciences.

"We are very excited about opening the doors of the Math and Science Academy on the Edinburg Campus as it will provide an exceptional opportunity and a challenging learning environment for the gifted and talented students in this region," said Dr. Parwinder Grewal, College of Sciences dean.

At UTRGV Commencement, MSA graduates typically walk across the graduation stage with 60-68 completed college credit hours as they also receive their high school diplomas from Smetter and Dr. Guy Bailey, UTRGV president. Graduates of MSA have gone on to complete their bachelor's degrees at some of the best colleges and universities throughout Texas and beyond.

Learn more about UTRGV's Mathematics and Science Academy: (956) 665-2345 • utrgv.edu/msa • msa@utrgv.edu



Joshua Mathew



Hometown:
McAllen, Texas

Classification:
First-year student

Age: 16

MSA is extremely competitive, why did you choose this program?

At MSA, I am surrounded by highly intelligent classmates who were also at the top of their class. Being in such an intense environment pushes me to work harder and smarter to compete and succeed with my fellow peers. I chose MSA to further my intellectual capacities and grow as an individual, as I am certain that it is the right choice for anyone ready to embrace the arduous and rigorous curriculum ahead of them.

What is your career plan?

My career plan is to major in biology at UTRGV as well as apply to early acceptance programs at UTSA and UT Houston for dentistry. MSA provides me with the insight and knowledge to achieve and accomplish my goals.

How much time do you devote to studying a day? What do you do for fun?

I devote the necessary amount of time for studying depending on which subjects I may have a test or quiz on, maybe 3 hours for a biology test or an hour for an art quiz, alongside studying for the ACT and SAT. The ample time that I have at MSA is more than enough for homework and studying. Volunteering at a hospital is quite fun and has its perks. I often watch surgeries or even help children who need a bit of joy to spruce up their day. Video games, reading, and walking my dog are other ways that I relieve stress and get my mind off of college.

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FAST FACTS

Since 2007, **329** students have graduated

Only **50-60** students are accepted per year

First UTRGV MSA class graduated **49** students

3.0 gpa is needed while on MSA scholarship

8 school districts are represented in MSA

MSA scholarship provides **\$500** per semester for books & supplies

MSA Academy is **FREE** for outstanding students

I am UTRGV

TOGETHER WE WILL

My name is

Juan Garcia

My major is:

Kinesiology

I'm from:

Brownsville, Tx.

I love UTRGV because:

It gives students the opportunity to build a future all while providing the full fun college experience.

My Top 5 Faves are:

- Soccer
- Being with Family & Friends
- Singing in the Shower
- Eating chick-fil-a
- Watching Football (Dallas Cowboys)

