



RGV Link

Partnering to Engage Students in College-and-Career Focused Learning Opportunities



RGV LEAD - Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic & Academic Development

RGV LEAD Regional Ambassador Fall Leadership Workshop

Fall is in the air; and with a change in the season, high school students from across the Rio Grande Valley are ready to shift gears and learn new leadership skills. Enter the RGV LEAD Regional Ambassador program! Approximately three hundred students participated in the RGV LEAD Regional Ambassador Fall Training Workshop on Thursday, October 24th at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Showgrounds conference center. Dr. Norma Salaiz, RGV LEAD board member and RGV LEAD consultant, led the conference by discussing the Ambassador Roles & Responsibilities, gave students ideas on projects they can do at their schools to engage their peers in leadership development, and shared creative ways for Ambassadors to meet without having to break the bank. Dr. Salaiz, then, had the Ambassadors create a calendar of events they will utilize during the school year. In addition, Ambassadors volunteered to present what they have been doing at their high schools to the RGV LEAD Annual Superintendents' Meeting. Others volunteered to participate in the RGV LEAD Regional Conference at South Padre Island on December 5th and 6th, and senior Ambassadors volunteered to serve as judges for future Ambassadors. (see Regional Ambassadors pg.6)



Above: Students create business cards and practice networking skills

P- 16 Council Fall Meeting Huge Success!



Sergio Contreras, President/CEO, RGV Partnership



Barbara Garza, Weslaco Chamber of Commerce

The Regional P-16 Council is a large regional collaborative created to promote communication and cross-sector collaboration of leaders from education at all levels, to create a seamless system of education for the four-county region. With higher education partners as co-hosts, RGV LEAD partners with higher education to coordinate the P-16 Council quarterly meetings. RGV LEAD hosted the P-16 Council and P-16 Leadership team meeting on October 16th at the Weslaco Chamber of Commerce Conference room. Guest speaker David Gutierrez, Workforce Solutions McAllen, spoke to the group about the career resources available to Rio Grande Valley school districts through Workforce Solutions. Sergio Contreras, RGV Partnership, also shared with the group the Young Entrepreneur Challenge results. Sharyland ISD high school students walked away with the \$1,000 top prize for their innovative business proposal! (see related story on page 5) Barbara Garza, President/CEO, Weslaco Chamber of Commerce, shared partnership opportunities with community chambers of commerce and encouraged educators to utilize the resources with their respective school districts. The next P-16 Council will be on February 19, 2020 at the UTRGV, CESS Building in Edinburg, followed by a year-end final meeting on May 13, 2020 at South Texas College Cafeteria, Bldg. F in Weslaco. Use the QR code to register...Save the dates!



David Gutierrez, Education Relations Supervisor, Workforce Solutions



RGV LEAD Board members: Dr. Alda Benavides, Naomi Perales (President), and Dr. Norma Salaiz



Sharyland ISD Executes RGV LEAD Ambassador Training

Great things are happening at Sharyland ISD! The RGV LEAD Regional Ambassadors are busy at work training local Ambassadors in the area of public speaking and the importance it plays in delivering a message. The Ambassadors met at the Mission CEED building on October 11th to conduct this unique training on presentation skills. Guest speaker for the event was Ernesto Villarreal, College 1st CEO, who enriched the training by informing the students about the necessary skills for success. The RGV LEAD Regional Ambassadors are planning to present the activities they have been doing to the Sharyland School Board.



RGV LEAD Hosts Regional Counselors' Network Quarterly Meeting



Rudy Moya and Joe Castillo



RGV LEAD coordinated the first quarterly Regional Counselors' Network meeting for the 2019 – 2020 school year at the Weslaco Business Visitor & Event Center Conference Room on October 16th at 11:00 am. The Counselors' Network is a collaborative effort created to provide a forum in which counselors from public schools, colleges, and universities can come together to discuss issues that students and families experience and then, develop solutions. These groups, comprised of representatives from school districts, institutions of higher education, workforce development boards, and other organizations, support implementation of Texas' 60x30 plan.

Dr. Norma Salaiz, RGV LEAD board member, welcomed the attendees. Opening remarks were received from Maricruz Hinojosa of South Texas College, Dulce Martinez-Texas Southmost College, and Norma Salazar-Texas State Technical College.

The South Texas Area Recruitment Network (STARN) addressed regional counselors on the recruiting process and the opportunities available to RGV students. Leading the conversation was Luisa Ramirez, STARN Vice President and The University of San Antonio Senior Undergraduate Admissions Counselor. Also speaking was Rudy R. Moya, STARN V-P and UT Austin Valley Admissions Center. They focused on the importance of sharing information, discussing barriers, and developing resources to help students transition successfully from high school to college, succeed in higher education, and ultimately transition successfully to the workforce.

Joe Castillo from Region One Service Center mentioned that there will be changes to the TSI, Texas Success Initiative assessment. The TSI is a program which determines the appropriate level of college course work for an incoming student.

Concluding the meeting was an update on the RGV LEAD Scholars qualifications. Dr. Salaiz mentioned that notice of requirements to become RGV LEAD Scholars will be sent to as soon as the RGV LEAD Board approves changes.

Plans Underway for Regional Conference



P-16 and Counseling Leadership Team: Petra Lopez Vaquera UTRGV, Sonia Del Angel-UTRGV, Janie Johnston Lopez-RGV LEAD, Barbara Garza-Weslaco Chamber, Joe Castillo-Region I, Dr. Norma Salaiz-RGV LEAD, Eliza Groff-RGV LEAD, and Norma Salazar-TSTC

Members of the P-16 Leadership team met to discuss the Annual Regional Conference which will be held on December 5th & 6th at the Hilton Garden Inn-South Padre Island. Breakout sessions were discussed and approved. The committee was reminded that breakfast, lunch, and door prizes are added bonuses for the annual event.

Keynote speakers will be Dr. Lisa Pena, author of "Waiting for the Light Bulb" on December 5th, and on December 6th, Jonathan Medina, former Georgetown football player and author of Mighty Migrant Mindset & Effective Goals Playbook and soon to be released Student Leadership Playbook and Educational Leadership Playbook.

Highlighting the conference will be the presentation of Counselor and Administrator of the Year, as well as Employer of the Year. New to the awards will be the presentation of "Regional Ambassador Team of the Year."

To register for the Regional Conference, contact RGV LEAD at 956-405-3091 or email rgvlead@rgvlead.org



Greetings from Texas A& M International in Laredo, Texas!



RGV LEAD continues to train students in leadership development throughout South Texas through the GEAR UP Ambassador program. However, the boundaries are extending beyond the Rio Grande Valley corridor and are now reaching Laredo United ISD. Eighth grade Regional Ambassadors were actively engaged in learning, not only leadership skills, but targeted occupations and the importance of networking with other middle school students within United ISD.

Pictured with Ambassadors are far left: Janie J. Lopez and Dr. Norma Salaiz, RGV LEAD; and far right: Rosie Franco and Lee Lopez, Region I.

La Joya ISD Implements RGV Mentor Program



La Joya ISD implemented the RGV Mentors program at the three comprehensive high schools. The mentor orientation took place on October 9th and the "Meet & Greet" with students, parents, and mentors occurred on October 16th. The "Meet & Greet" gave mentors and mentees an opportunity to get to know each other and to strategically plan future meetings during the school year. The goal is for mentors to share career experiences during the monthly meetings and talk about subjects such as soft skills, college research, study habits, and other skills necessary to be successful in college and beyond.

Pictured above are mentors and La Joya ISD Career & Technical Education coordinators.



Spotlight on RGV LEAD GEAR UP Ambassadors



RGV LEAD, in conjunction with Region One, conducted a leadership training for 8th grade GEAR UP students in McAllen, Laredo, and Zapata . Eighth grade Ambassador students from 55 middle schools attended the training. The focus on the training was to teach the young Ambassadors how to reach out to their peers, educators, and community about the Targeted Occupations in the Rio Grande Valley. The Ambassadors learned how to use the RGV LEAD Labor Market report to access information about the education level needed for each career, the entry level pay, the experienced level pay, and RGV higher ed institutions that offer training in each career. In addition, the Ambassadors practiced networking by creating their own business card. Time was set aside for Ambassadors to mingle with other Ambassadors from different school districts so that they could exchange business contact cards. The Ambassadors will meet again in February, which will give them an opportunity to continue networking with fellow Ambassadors.



(left) 8th grade Regional Ambassadors display their career boards; (r) Dr. Salaiz with Ambassador during Ambassador Spotlight



Continued from page 1 Regional Ambassadors

Dr. Salaiz also discussed the RGV Targeted Occupations and informed the Ambassadors how to research the occupations through the RGV LEAD website. Ambassadors concluded this part of the presentation by creating targeted occupation posters, sharing their findings with each other.

Ambassador activities continued with Janie Johnston Lopez, RGV LEAD consultant, discussing the importance of networking and the impact it can have on their future career and social connections. The students networked by exchanging business cards they created during the workshop. Each Ambassador was challenged to meet five new Ambassadors from other school districts.

Highlighting the workshop was the "Financial Literacy" activity presented by PSJA... The goal was to help the Ambassadors gain an idea on the need to be responsible with their money. Each team was given fake money, a different lifestyle scenario, and the need to use budgeting in solving a financial problem. Students were heavily engaged in this activity!

It goes without saying, the Ambassador Fall Training Workshop was a huge success! Ambassadors are looking forward to a great leadership school year and to the next workshop, Young Leaders' Summit in January



2019 Young Entrepreneurs Challenge Winners!

Drawing quite a bit of attention across the Rio Grande Valley was the Young Entrepreneur Challenge, sponsored by the RGV Partnership Foundation, RGV LEAD, UTRGV Center for Innovation and Commercialization, and other partners. Students were encouraged to develop a product or business that would be unique to this area. The concept worked much like the famed TV show “Shark Tank.” Winners for the event received funding to help bring their ideas to fruition. Cash awards were sponsored by BBVA Compass Bank and the RGV Partnership Foundation. Taking first place was the Sharyland High School team whose business plan was called “CajetititMx”, a low sugar, vegan cajeta. Sharyland High School also took 2nd place with the Sticker Device Tracking business plan. RGV LEAD newcomers, Vanguard Academy, Rembrandt Secondary earned third place honors with the “Furever Friends Pet App” business plan. Congratulations to the 2019 – 2020 winners!



Young Entrepreneurship Committee presenting cash awards to Young Entrepreneurship Challenge winners: Arlene Garza; Gulf Aviation, Larry Gonzalez; Plains Capital Bank, Anabel Cardona; CEO Valley Grande Institute, Atanacio “Tachi” Hinojosa; Western Division Manager at Magic Valley Electric Cooperative, Naomi Perales; Texas Gas Services, Sergio Contreras; President & CEO - RGV Partnership Foundation, and Dr. Norma Salaiz; RGV LEAD Board Member

What’s Your Big Idea?

The 2nd Annual Young Entrepreneurs of the RGV Challenge is underway for high school Career & Technical Education students from the 9th thru the 12th grades who are interested in developing an innovative business idea for potential prize money. Students should generate business ideas aligned with the team’s or individual’s CTE training program. Mentoring will be provided for team finalists by successful RGV entrepreneurs and college instructors. School districts interested in finding out more about the Young Entrepreneurs of the RGV Challenge are encouraged to attend the kickoff seminar on Wednesday, November 13th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Center for Innovation and Commercialization located at 307 E. Railroad Street in Weslaco. Contact rgvlead@rgvlead.org for more information.

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS OF THE RGV CHALLENGE

WHAT'S YOUR BIG IDEA?

You Might Have the Winning Ideal!





Award Sponsors:




Prize money for top three Entrepreneurs!

EVENT #1 - Kickoff Entrepreneurship Seminar: Learn all the details of the 2019-20 Entrepreneurship Challenge. Register for the Kickoff Seminar by October 30, 2019.

Seminar Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Center for Innovation and Commercialization
Address: 307 E. Railroad Street, Weslaco, Texas

DEADLINE - Submit your intent to compete by:
 Due Date: December 6, 2019 by 4:00 p.m.
 Email to: [RGV LEAD @rgvlead.org](mailto:RGVLEAD@rgvlead.org)

DEADLINE - Submit your Pitch Video for Preliminary Judging:
 Due Date: December 13, 2019 by 4:00 p.m.
 Email to: [RGV LEAD](mailto:RGVLEAD@rgvlead.org) Your video link will be sent to all registered teams.

VIDEO JUDGING - Preliminary Judging of Pitch Videos:
 Date: January 9, 2020
 Teams do not attend this judging.
 Notification of top 20 teams finalists by January 14th

EVENT #2 - Business Development Workshop: Guidance and mentorship for finalist teams. Register for the Workshop by January 21, 2020.

Workshop Date: February 6, 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Center for Innovation and Commercialization
Address: 307 E. Railroad Street, Weslaco, Texas

EVENT #3 - Young Entrepreneurs of the RGV Summit: RGV Entrepreneurs present on strategies for successful business development. Finalist present their business plans. Register for the Summit by April 10, 2020.

Summit Date: April 30, 2020

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Location: Center for Innovation and Commercialization
Address: 307 E. Railroad Street, Weslaco, Texas

A-L-A ● Academic Leadership Alliance Going Strong!

Members of the Academic Leadership Alliance committee met to discuss the Summer 2020 teacher externship opportunities. The program is supported by McAllen EDC, RGV LEAD, Region One Education Service Center, Workforce Solutions and RGV school districts. It was with much enthusiasm that the committee announced that there will be plenty of opportunities for Rio Grande Valley teachers to participate in the unique program which exposes the educators to the world-of-work outside the regular classroom setting. Teachers will be able to create lesson plans from the experiences and, then, share the lesson plans with students and fellow educators. Members of the committee in attendance were: Adrian Dorsett - BISD, Sebastian Duque, - LJISD, Mary Alanis - McAllen ISD, Belinda Vargas - PSJA, Juan Gazca - Workforce Solutions, Sandra Guerrero - Sharyland ISD, Ed Garcia - Region One Service Center, Dr. Norma Salaiz and Eliza Groff - RGV LEAD. Contact rgvlead@rgvlead.org for more information.

RGV LEAD Staff & Support

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Lilia Perez - Administrative Assistant
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More About RGV LEAD...

Upcoming Events

November 7, 2019 – RGV LEAD Annual Meeting
November 19, 2019 - RGV LEAD Board Meeting
November 28th, 29th, 2019 - RGV LEAD Holiday
December 5th & 6th - Regional Conference
December 24th and 25th - RGV LEAD Holidays
January 1, 2020 - RGV LEAD Holiday



*Note: School districts and businesses will be notified of upcoming events.
Follow us on Facebook and the RGV LEAD website!*

**Visit our website!
www.rgvlead.org**

***“Networking is not about just connecting people.
It’s about connecting people with people,
people with ideas, and people with opportunities.”***

— Michele Jennae (author of The Connectworker)

RGV LEAD Board Members Attend Quarterly Meetings



RGV LEAD Mission Statement

RGV LEAD builds the intellectual capital of the region by facilitating collaboration between employers, community leaders, and educators from public schools, colleges, and universities to assist students in acquiring the academic and career skill-sets necessary for success in higher education, careers, and life.