

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

**Dean, Robert C. Vackar College of
Business and Entrepreneurship**

Leadership Profile

2023-24



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) seeks an experienced and innovative leader to serve as the next dean of the [Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship](#) (RCVCOBE).

On August 31, 2015, UTRGV opened its doors as one of the first major public universities of the 21st century and one of the largest Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the nation. UTRGV is a multi-campus institution with campuses and off-campus research and teaching sites throughout Rio Grande Valley, including in Boca Chica Beach, Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, McAllen, Port Isabel, Rio Grande City, and South Padre Island. The university educates more than 30,000 students.

The Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship was named in 2016 in honor of businessman [Robert C. Vackar](#)'s \$15 million gift to the college. The mission of the college is to serve as a catalyst for innovation, knowledge discovery, and economic development in South Texas, Northern Mexico, and beyond. The RCVCOBE is accredited by AACSB International, has an enrollment of over 4,000 students, and offers bachelor's degrees in the following disciplines: Accountancy (BBA), Economics (BA & BBA), Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BBA), Finance (BBA), Hospitality and Tourism Management (BS), Information Systems (BBA), International Business (BBA), Management (BBA), Marketing (BBA), and Materials Management and Logistics (BS). It offers master's degrees in Business Administration (MBA), Accountancy (MAcc), Business Analytics (MSBA), and Human Resources Management (launching spring 2024) and a Ph.D. in Business Administration with concentrations in Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, Management, and Marketing. In addition, the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship houses three centers: the [Business and Tourism Research Center](#), the [Center for Border Economic Studies](#), and the [Center for Innovation and Commercialization](#).

Reporting to the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, the dean is the chief academic and administrative leader for the RCVCOBE. The next dean will be expected to advance a strategic vision for the future of the college; facilitate growth in research and scholarship; recruit, develop, and retain talented faculty and staff; support a culture of student success; manage and generate new resources for the college; and further integrate the college and community.

The next dean of the RCVCOBE must be an experienced and innovative leader who appreciates the bilingual, binational, and bicultural nature of the university and has a demonstrated ability to lead efforts devoted to student success. Candidates must hold a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited institution and have a record of scholarship, teaching, and service that qualifies for a senior faculty appointment in one of the college's disciplines. Prior responsibility for budgets, personnel decisions, performance reviews, and decisions for promotion and tenure – ideally at the chair level or above - is also preferred.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy section at the end of this document.

Role of the Dean

The dean of the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship is the chief academic and administrative leader of the college. This person reports directly to the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs and works closely with deans, chairs, faculty, and staff from across the university.

Responsibilities

The chief purpose of this position is to provide innovative leadership for the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship and to ensure its continued development, operation, expansion, and enhancement. The dean's responsibilities include the following:

- Serve as chief academic and administrative leader for the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship
- Collaborate with university leaders, faculty, and staff to develop a shared vision as stated in the UTRGV strategic plan
- Facilitate efforts to implement the RCVCOBE strategic plan along with the university's shared vision
- Continue to advance the college according to its mission to be the agent of innovation, knowledge discovery, and economic development in Rio Grande Valley and beyond
- Oversee the college's academic and scholarly activities, working with faculty to articulate a shared vision of excellence, focusing on developing, expanding, and strengthening excellent undergraduate and graduate academic programs in the college, prioritizing student success
- Secure and promote collaborations with the greater Rio Grande Valley area business and industry to support research, spur economic growth, engage the community, inform curriculum, and sustain student success
- Build an organizational culture of collegial teamwork and cultivate faculty development
- Foster an organizational and educational climate that promotes and celebrates diversity
- Prepare and manage annual budgets for effective and efficient allocation within the college
- Establish academic or co-curricular programs that meet student career needs
- Pursue revenue growth through fundraising, grants and contracts, and professional development programs for the advancement of college resources
- Provide leadership in program assessment, external program review, and professional accreditation, such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business Accreditation (AACSB)
- Oversee college faculty in the development of policies governing its academic programs

- Expand and strengthen partnerships with domestic and international educational institutions to assess, develop, and manage innovative academic programs and curriculum development

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The following represent some of the immediate opportunities that the new dean will address during the first two to three years in office. They are presented here in no particular order.

Advance a strategic vision for the future of the college

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is one university spanning four counties and multiple locations, and the RCVCOBE operates on the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses and the Weslaco site. Each campus has its own strengths, and faculty within the RCVCOBE teach on the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses. The next dean will work to maximize opportunities for each campus and ensure that faculty, staff, and students at each campus have the support they need.

The next dean will join the college in the middle of its [strategic plan](#) - just prior to a reassessment of its strategic priorities. Working closely with faculty, staff, and other key stakeholders, the next dean will be charged with ensuring that the plan's strategic priorities are advanced and that the college's commitment to invest in student success remains at the core of that work.

Facilitate growth in research and scholarship

As UTRGV continues to move towards Tier I research university status, the next dean will be expected to help support faculty in the RCVCOBE in their scholarly endeavors and collectively enhance scholarly production in the college. This includes identifying external funding opportunities and grant-writing activities, providing resources to support faculty research, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, and recruiting research-active faculty. The dean will need to demonstrate an understanding of the differences across all the disciplines in the college and create an environment that supports a range of research and scholarly activity. The dean should value both teaching and research and will be expected to ensure continued excellence in teaching while working to enhance research productivity within the college.

Recruit, develop, and retain talented faculty and staff

In partnership with department chairs and school leaders, the next dean will be expected to help attract, retain, and support a diverse group of outstanding faculty and staff. It is important that the dean understands and champions UTRGV's commitment to research and seeks to enhance the scholarly reputation of the RCVCOBE. The dean's leadership is essential to supporting scholarship and investing in mentorship and professional development in order to ensure individual and collective success. As chief academic officer of the RCVCOBE, the next dean will lead by example to recruit, support, and inspire an exceptional faculty and staff.

Support a culture of student success across all programs

The next dean will be expected to prioritize student success and to support excellence in teaching through a student-centered curriculum. The college has the [Vackar Office of Involvement and Center for Engagement \(VOICE\)](#) which was created to help students within the college succeed in their programs

and connect them to other resources across the university. The RCVCOBE's faculty and staff have a reputation for being student-centered, and the dean will continue to promote that focus. The dean will collaborate with student success partners to co-design strategy and invest in both student support services and career services. The dean will support development of increasing numbers of meaningful internship opportunities for students, as well as opportunities for exposure to international business practices. The next dean must have the ability and desire to deepen business and community ties in ways that enhance career opportunities for RCVCOBE graduates.

Manage and generate new resources for the college

In 2016, the college was named the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship in honor of businessman Robert C. Vackar's \$15 million gift to the college. The next dean will be expected to increase resources to the RCVCOBE through additional undergraduate enrollment, including growing enrollment of students from Mexico and other countries, and post-graduate programming, and effectively align resources to support its goals and priorities. The dean will be a strong advocate for resources within the institution and will also be expected to develop new resources through grants, philanthropy, and other creative sources. The college collaborates with the Division of Institutional Advancement to support these efforts. The next dean must have the ability to be an energetic, successful fundraiser and demonstrate an eagerness to build strong relationships with existing and potential supporters – including donors, alumni, community members, and others domestically and internationally– to propel the RCVCOBE to even higher levels of excellence.

Further integrate the college and the community

UTRGV plays a vital role in the Rio Grande Valley, an area whose population is estimated to double over the next ten years. The university has played an important role in helping to expand educational opportunities in the region. The RCVCOBE has supported research, public policy, and economic development activities through the [Business and Tourism Research Center](#), the [Center for Border Economic Studies](#), and the [Center for Innovation and Commercialization](#). These centers provide a range of programming to support students, faculty, and the community. The dean will envision how the RCVCOBE further impacts existing and future industry in the region and will be expected to identify opportunities to support the local community through service. The next dean will need to leverage the relationships and partnerships in the community into opportunities for students (internships, service learning, etc.) and financial resources for the college through active fundraising efforts.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The next dean of the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship must be an experienced and innovative leader who appreciates the bilingual, binational, and bicultural nature of the university and has a demonstrated ability to lead efforts devoted to student success. Candidates must hold a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited institution and have a record of scholarship, teaching, and service that qualifies for a senior, tenured faculty appointment in one of the college's disciplines. Prior responsibility for budgets, personnel decisions, performance reviews, and decisions for promotion and tenure – ideally at the chair level or above - is also preferred.

In addition, the ideal candidate will possess a record of accomplishment in the following areas:

- Evidence of past effectiveness in working with and responding to the educational needs of a student population similar to that of UTRGV
- Ability to review and evaluate existing academic business programs and encourage the development of innovative curricula and learning experiences
- Ability to maintain, build, and promote business community partnerships; commitment to community engagement; and desire to make a positive impact on the region
- Record of securing external funding
- Administrative experience with AACSB standards and accreditation processes
- Demonstrated commitment to faculty excellence, supporting and promoting innovative and effective teaching, and impactful academic research
- Demonstrated commitment to staff excellence, supporting the professional development, promotion, and recognition of staff contributions
- Promotion of student success through dynamic curriculum development, participation in strategic student success initiatives, and active career planning and placement
- Demonstrated commitment to the university's core values of integrating scholarly research, teaching, and service to develop students' talents and prepare them for success in a dynamic, global society
- Ability to be an open and transparent communicator who embraces shared governance with the ability to make timely decisions
- Strong business acumen and experience in strategic planning, fiscal planning, and organizational budget and resource management
- Demonstrated ability to foster a positive work environment through mutual respect, collaboration, enthusiasm, and inclusion

About The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Overview

The purpose of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is to be a university for the entire Rio Grande Valley and beyond. The university is built around five core priorities and subsequent goals:

- **Student Success:** *As one of the largest Hispanic-serving institutions in the U.S., UTRGV is in a unique position to create models of higher education that best serve Hispanic students – an emerging dominant demographic group across the country – as well as non-Hispanic students. Student success is at the heart of UTRGV and the center of our core priorities; it is also one of UT System’s Quantum Leaps. Therefore, we strive to prepare and empower students to thrive in a rigorous academic environment who are prepared to contribute to a global economy and are inspired to become community, education, health, and industry leaders and innovators. We will accomplish this through a holistic approach that addresses the academic and affective needs of our students by providing high quality instruction, advising, and support services that foster resiliency and success through a welcoming and supportive community for students, including those who may require specialized services to reach their academic potential.*
- **Educational Opportunities:** *Affordable, geographically accessible, and culturally-relevant educational opportunities are critical to prepare a diverse workforce for the 21st century. UTRGV will expand such educational opportunities for residents of the Rio Grande Valley, spanning from pre-K to postdoctoral education, and directly addressing the UT System’s Quantum Leaps of Student Success, The American Leadership Program, and the Texas Prospect Initiative. Innovative new certificate, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs will be developed to prepare students for careers and life-long learning, boost the region’s economy, on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, and build environmental, health, and social resilience. New faculty will be recruited strategically to create new doctoral programs. Flexible faculty workload policies will be established to enable, facilitate, and incentivize the development and implementation of innovative pedagogies and technologies that address distance, language, culture, and class-scheduling barriers, ensuring access for a diverse student body. Support for graduate students and post-docs will be generated to position the university as an emerging research institution.*
- **Research Impacting the Rio Grande Valley and Beyond:** *UTRGV is positioned to be a model of a distributed research university with a broad base of excellent faculty; a community of primarily Hispanic and first-generation college students (a community that is representative of a significant and growing population in the U.S.); a network of facilities across the RGV; leadership in population health and community engagement; and characteristics of a land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant institution (although it is not officially designated as such). Consequently, UTRGV is structured to nurture and support its existing faculty and students and to strategically attract and retain scholars and artists who are ready to collaboratively address cultural, scientific, technological, and socioeconomic issues of the region and the world through research, innovations, discoveries, and creative works. This core priority serves as an important complement to several UT System Quantum Leaps, including those related to faculty recruitment and advancement (Winning the Talent War); student success (Student Success); diversity, access, and inclusion (Enhancing Fairness and*

Opportunity); and key state and national priorities (UT Health Enterprise and UT Network for National Security).

- **Health and Medical Education:** *Being healthy, meaning a state of physical, mental, and social well-being in addition to the absence of illness, is an essential part of human welfare on an individual and societal level. The RGV is home to a unique population that, historically, has had limited access to healthcare, contributing to health inequities and health outcomes below national and state norms. UTRGV is uniquely qualified to serve as a catalyst in transforming the landscape of health and medicine across the region by building a culture of health and well-being through education, research, and mutually beneficial partnerships with educational institutions, surrounding communities, healthcare providers, governmental agencies, and philanthropic organizations. These initiatives will create educational pathways, improve the health of the region, and develop models of healthcare collaboration in direct support of UT System's Quantum Leaps, including the Texas Prospect Initiative and UT Health Care Enterprise.*
- **Community Engagement:** *The distinct profile of UTRGV as a distributed university in a region of great economic vibrancy, but also great public need, demands that community engagement be embedded in the UTRGV culture. The UT System's Quantum Leaps clearly call for institutions of higher education to adhere to the highest standards of academic excellence while transforming the region they serve. Therefore, we seek to build a strong institutional infrastructure that supports more developed networks and sustainable partnerships. This will allow all units on campus to contribute significantly to a host of initiatives aligned with the Quantum Leaps, including: ensuring students successfully enter higher education (The Texas Prospect Initiative and Enhancing Fairness and Opportunity); preparing the future leaders of Texas (American Leadership Program); improving the health of Texas (UT Health Care Enterprise); and increasing college retention and graduation rates (Student Success). Community engagement knows no boundaries as it provides opportunities through local, state, federal, and global platforms via engaged scholarship, research, teaching, learning, and creative activities.*

Mission

To transform the Rio Grande Valley, the Americas, and the world through an innovative and accessible educational environment that promotes student success, research, creative works, health and well-being, community engagement, sustainable development, and commercialization of university discoveries.

Vision

To be one of the nation's leaders in higher education, its premier Hispanic-serving institution, and a highly engaged bilingual university, with exceptional educational, research, and creative opportunities that serve as catalysts for transformation in the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.

Values

Excellence

*Transforming Rio Grande Valley, the Americas, and the world requires **weaving excellence throughout the fabric of the university and into the core of everything we do.***

Diversity, Access, and Inclusion

*Establishing an accessible educational environment requires that we **cultivate and enhance the diverse, multicultural, and linguistic assets** of our university and Rio Grande Valley. UTRGV also promotes **access, inclusion, and lifelong learning** to ensure that all members of the university community have opportunities to succeed.*

Inquiry, Discovery, and Creativity

***Igniting, illuminating, and enhancing** the talents and passions of the university community **for open inquiry, discovery, and creativity** inspire generations of lifelong scholars and artists who impact the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.*

Engagement and Impact

*Seeking to be a catalyst for transformation, the university **integrates social justice, civic responsibility, innovation, and sustainable development** in its endeavors. Such change is best undertaken through **interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches** across the university and with **community, government, business, and non-profit partners.***

Shared Governance

Participating in decision-making processes** with **integrity, trust, and respect** is a responsibility of all UTRGV stakeholders. This requires an environment **of shared governance, academic freedom, accountability and transparency, and open and honest communication.

Leadership

Instilling a sense of value and empowerment** in all members of the university community is a fundamental responsibility of leaders at all levels and involves **facilitating professional, intellectual, cultural, and personal growth.

Health and Well-being

*Recognizing that our **success is integrally related to the condition of our community**, UTRGV strives to **promote the health and well-being** of its students, faculty, and staff, and **create a healthy, equitable, and resilient community.***

Accreditation

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees.

The Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship is an accredited member of AACSB International, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. AACSB's mission is to foster engagement, accelerate innovation, and amplify impact in business education. The college's accreditation was [reaffirmed in 2022](#). For more information, visit aacs.edu.



Academics

Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship

The mission of UTRGV's Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship is to be the agent of innovation, knowledge discovery, and economic development in South Texas, Northern Mexico, and beyond by offering a rigorous curriculum informed by experiential learning, high quality research, and community partnerships.

The college offers bachelor's degrees in the following disciplines: Accountancy (BBA), Economics (BA & BBA), Entrepreneurship and Innovation (BBA), Finance (BBA), Hospitality and Tourism Management (BS), Information Systems (BBA), International Business (BBA), Management (BBA), Marketing (BBA), and Materials Management and Logistics (BS). It offers master's degrees in Business Administration (MBA) Accountancy (MAcc), Business Analytics (MSBA), and Human Resources Management (launching spring 2024). It also offers a Ph.D. in Business Administration with concentrations in Accounting, Finance, Information Systems, Management, and Marketing. In addition, the College of Business & Entrepreneurship houses three centers:

- **The Business and Tourism Research Center** provides customized market and tourism-related research to provide valuable, actionable information to improve organizational and community success and well-being.
- **The Center for Border Economic Studies (CBEST)** is a public policy research unit dedicated to the study of problems and issues unique to the U.S./Mexico border economy and North Tamaulipas. CBEST conducts interdisciplinary research that supports economic development, trade, entrepreneurship, innovation, social mobility, and access. Among its technical reports, the center publishes the Border Business Brief (BBB), a newsletter on economic indicators and forecasts of the Rio Grande Valley, South Texas and North Tamaulipas. CBEST has strategic partnerships with private sectors, foundations, government agencies, research scholars, and non-profits to fulfill its mission.
- **The Center for Innovation and Commercialization** promotes economic growth in a region that has been historically underdeveloped. This is achieved by pursuing three key tasks: first, assisting regional entrepreneurs in the ideation, development, and acceleration of new business ventures; second, developing the next generation of RGV entrepreneurs by providing students with experiential

learning opportunities in new venture creation; and lastly, becoming the nexus of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem. In so doing, the Center for Innovation and Commercialization drives the creation of innovative, scalable enterprises.

Leadership



Luis H. Zayas, Ph.D.

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Luis H. Zayas, PhD, was appointed Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at UTRGV in June of 2023. Immediately prior to joining UTRGV, he was dean of the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin from 2012 to 2022.

Provost Zayas has held faculty appointments at Columbia University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Fordham University, and Washington University in St. Louis. His research has focused on the suicide attempts of young Latinas and on the plight of US-born children whose parents have been deported and immigrant children and families who have been held in detention centers.

A native of Puerto Rico, Zayas holds a bachelor's degree in economics and liberal arts from Manhattan College, and master's degree in social work and PhD in developmental psychology from Columbia University.

Guy H. Bailey, Ph.D. **President**

Guy Bailey, Ph.D., was named President of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in May 2014.

Prior to being named President of UTRGV, Bailey served as President of the University of Alabama and of Texas Tech University; Chancellor of the University of Missouri Kansas City; and Provost and Executive Vice President of The University of Texas San Antonio.

"I've done a lot of things that I'm proud of, but I've never done anything as significant as what is happening at UTRGV," Bailey said. "This is truly an exciting time for UTRGV and the entire Rio Grande Valley. Our purpose is to be a university for the entire Valley with new programs and expanded opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. We are going to change significantly as an institution as we move forward."

Under President Bailey's leadership, UTRGV has had tremendous success in multiple areas. Student retention, research expenditures and philanthropic gifts to the institution have increased dramatically. President Bailey said that is a direct result of the extraordinary work and commitment of UTRGV faculty and staff and the entire Rio Grande Valley community.



Rio Grande Valley

The Rio Grande Valley (RGV) or the Lower Rio Grande Valley (when referring to the four-county region), informally called "The Valley," is an area located in the southernmost tip of South Texas. It lies along the northern bank of the Rio Grande, which separates Mexico from the United States.

The Valley is one of the richest places in the country in history and tradition. Its culture and identity are based on adaptation to movement and change, perseverance, and resiliency. As a learner, the Valley is an ideal area in which to live, combining a modern infrastructure, multicultural population, rich history and cultural heritage, and a beautiful natural environment with an excellent quality of life, reasons why UTRGV is becoming a major international education destination. The Valley also enjoys a vigorous and growing economy with a high standard of living that has one of the lowest costs of living in the country.

The main region is made up of four counties: Starr County, Hidalgo County, Willacy County, and Cameron County. As of January 1, 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population of the Rio Grande Valley at 1,305,782. According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2008, 86% of Cameron County, 90% of Hidalgo County, 97% of Starr County, and 86% of Willacy County are Hispanic.

The largest city is Brownsville (Cameron County), followed by McAllen (Hidalgo County). Other major cities include Harlingen, Edinburg, Mission, Weslaco, Rio Grande City and Pharr.

Edinburg: Edinburg lies at the epicenter of one of the most dynamic regions in North America, a region that is keeping pace with the speed of change. Edinburg is the educational and technological capital of a Texas-Mexico border region. With a population of more than 2 million, this region has the highest concentration of people between the ages of 18 and 24 in North America. Edinburg is the county seat of Hidalgo, the seventh largest county in Texas. Centrally located within one of the largest trade corridors in the world, Edinburg is also the gateway to U.S. 281, which is being transformed into Interstate 69 or the NAFTA Highway. Edinburg is a pro-business community with an excellent quality of life, educational facilities, and strong civic pride. It has been recognized as an All-America City three times by the National Civic League, placing it among a handful of outstanding communities in the nation.

Brownsville: Today, Brownsville is the largest city in the Rio Grande Valley with a population greater than 175,000. It covers nearly 150 square miles and has some 350 miles of paved streets. With an assessed valuation of more than \$5 billion, the city has nearly quadrupled its wealth in the past 15 years. Brownsville is proud of its past and annually hosts thousands of tourists who not only take in the history, but the climate and proximity to Mexico as well. Brownsville's semi-tropical climate is recognized as one of the most delightful in the nation. The comfortable year-round climate provides for an abundance of recreational fun and activities. Residents regularly visit Matamoros and South Padre Island as both places are only minutes away. The sister city of Matamoros has a population in excess of 750,000. As the seat of Cameron County, Brownsville is a city rich in history and one of the fastest growing areas in the United States.

Harlingen: Harlingen is located in Cameron County. It is close to the popular South Padre Island Beach and is well known for tropical bird watching. Several of the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail locations are in Harlingen. The nearby Los Ebanos Preserve includes nature trails, gardens, a variety of birds and butterflies. The city boasts a rich art and history scene, iconic restaurants and food producers, and an active retirement community.

McAllen: McAllen is a vibrant metro area and a major center for retail, international trade, tourism, and manufacturing. A high quality of life, an abundance of medical facilities, and young, bicultural communities are additional draws. Every year, thousands of winter Texans arrive to the Rio Grande Valley to enjoy mild fall and winter seasons, injecting more than \$760 million into the local economy. The metro area is also a haven for those crossing the border from Mexico to Texas, and many Mexican Nationals come for the day to shop and enjoy McAllen.

South Padre Island: While South Padre Island is still a spring break destination for students, the area has seen a rebirth as a popular family vacation destination. It delivers wide sandy beaches, sparkling blue water, consistently warm weather, a mixture of funky hotels and bars, and deep-sea fishing, dolphin watching, and water sports. The island is just a day's drive from major Texas cities like Houston and Dallas.

Weslaco: Located about fifteen miles west of Harlingen in south central Hidalgo County, Weslaco is on U.S. Highway 83 and Farm Road 88. The site was part of the Llano Grande grant to Juan José Ynojosa de Ballí (1790). The city has approximately 37,601 residents and is the geographic center of the World Birding Center network.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is reliant on tourism, manufacturing, retail, and agribusiness. Cotton, grapefruit, sorghum, maize, and sugarcane are its leading crops, and the region is the center of citrus production and the most important area of vegetable production in Texas. Over the last several decades, the emergence of maquiladoras (factories or fabrication plants) has caused a surge of industrial development along the border; international bridges have allowed Mexican nationals to shop, sell, and conduct business in the border cities along the Rio Grande River. The geographic inclusion of South Padre Island also drives tourism, particularly during the spring break season, during which South Padre Island becomes reminiscent of New Orleans during Mardi Gras. Six semi-professional sports teams play in the Lower Rio Grande Valley: the Rio Grande Valley Whitewings (baseball), the Edinburg Roadrunners (baseball), the Rio Grande Valley Flash (indoor soccer), the Rio Grande Valley Vipers (basketball), the Rio Grande Valley Bravos (soccer), and the Rio Grande Valley Magic (indoor football).

The Lower Rio Grande Valley encompasses several landmarks that attract tourists. Popular destinations include Port Isabel Lighthouse, Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, and Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **February 16, 2024**.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Robin Mamlet, Christine J. Pendleton, and Natalie Song
UTRGV-Dean@wittkieffer.com

It is the policy of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to promote and ensure equal employment opportunities for all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or preferred veteran status. In accordance with the requirements of Title IX of the civil rights act of 1964, the title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the university is committed to comply with all government requirements and ensures non discrimination in tis education programs and activities, including employment.