

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™



Invites Applications and Nominations for the Position of:

Director of the
School of Earth, Environmental,
and Marine Sciences (SEEMS)

Greenwood/Asher
& ASSOCIATES, LLC

The Opportunity

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) invites nominations and applications for the position of director of the School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences (SEEMS). Reporting directly to the dean of the College of Sciences, the director will be responsible for setting strategic, operational, and financial direction for SEEMS. The college seeks a dynamic leader who will work in concert with faculty, staff, and students to promote a culture of excellence. The director shall create and carry out a vision that leads the school to greater prominence in the Valley and beyond.

UTRGV is the second largest Hispanic Serving Institution in the United States in a growing region on the border with Mexico, where the majority of the students are bilingual and bicultural, and their sights are set on the coveted R1 status “very high research activity” distinction by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. The mission of the School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences (SEEMS) is to provide students a unique integrative educational and training experience that prepares them to meet the challenges and opportunities in the multiple dimensions of contemporary earth, environmental and marine sciences. This experience includes providing cutting-edge research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students that generates new knowledge and formulates effective solutions for a



sustainable Rio Grande Valley and beyond. SEEMS promotes collaborative, multi-disciplinary research and seeks participation of other sciences and disciplines interested in applying interdisciplinary perspectives to understanding of earth-environmental systems and their interactions with society (i.e., integrating biological, chemical, physical, and geospatial sciences with engineering, social science, economics, policy).

“Integrated Science for an Integrated World”

UTRGV campuses, strategically located throughout the Valley, offer a unique opportunity to unify the SEEMS programs among the different locations - Edinburg, Brownsville, Port Isabel, and South Padre Island. The director is expected to establish a visionary process for program development and enhancement with an interdisciplinary focus.

The Role of the SEEMS Director

The director of SEEMS will oversee the School; faculty and student productivity and development; research; external relations; and multi-disciplinary collaborations within the university and with public communities. The SEEMS director will advocate for the School and will recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students. The director is expected to promote the regional visibility of the college’s programs, foster research and creativity, and work closely with college leaders to ensure that their graduates have the knowledge and skills to be successful after graduation.

SEEMS currently has 29 tenured/tenure-track faculty members and four lecturers distributed over its two main campuses in Brownsville and Edinburg, as well as Port Isabel and South Padre Island. Faculty research programs include earth science, ecosystems processes, marine and coastal sciences, agriculture and food systems,



environment and sustainability, conservation science, soil science, ecology, along with environmental social science and economics. The School is currently home to over 250 undergraduates and 76 graduate students pursuing B.S. degrees in Marine Biology, Environmental Science, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, and M.S. degrees in Ocean, Coastal, and Earth Science and Agricultural, Environmental, and Sustainability Science. An immediate priority of the School is to design and advance an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program.



The director is expected to inspire and support faculty, staff, and the predominantly Hispanic student population; foster an environment of collegiality, teamwork, respect, and diversity; interact with all stakeholders to determine the priorities and direction of the entire School; support the expansion of the research capabilities of the School; increase the national recognition of SEEMS; and advocate for the School within UTRGV.

The study and advancement of integrated science and sustainability is a critical part of the fabric of UTRGV and the success of our students. The School of Earth, Environmental, and Marine Sciences is seeking a director who is a skilled leader with a history of administrative experience and an established track record of interdisciplinary research. The ideal candidate will have a strong commitment to the Rio Grande Valley and to advancing sustainability through interdisciplinary science.

Qualifications

The successful candidate must possess an earned terminal degree (Ph.D.) in a discipline closely related to those represented in SEEMS and have demonstrated leadership abilities in administration, personnel management, and budgeting. Also, the successful candidate must meet the requirements for tenure and appointment at the rank of full Professor and have an excellent track record in research, teaching, and service.

The ideal candidate will also be able to demonstrate these preferred qualifications:

- Clear commitment to transparency and to enhancing cultural diversity among faculty, students, and staff.
- Ability to effectively communicate in a pragmatic and collegial way.
- Clear value of interdisciplinary approaches to environmental problem-solving and research
- Effective in encouraging, building, implementing, and sustaining undergraduate and graduate degree offerings.
- Demonstrated success in growing enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Experience working with and mentoring students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Proven ability to integrate and unify multiple programs.
- Commitment to embracing the Hispanic culture and biculturalism.

The next director will be a tireless advocate for integrated science and must be nimble and innovative in their approach to articulating the value and relevance of the SEEMS mission to a wide range of audiences.

The College of Sciences

The College of Sciences houses Biology, Chemistry and Physics departments, the School of the Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences, and the School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, with each offering a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs. The College is also home to several research, education and outreach centers including Advanced Radio Astronomy, Gravitational Wave Astronomy, STEM Education, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Advancement, and Urban Ecology, with facilities located in Brownsville, Edinburg, McAllen, Port Isabel, South Padre Island, and Boca Chica Beach. The College co-runs the Nation's largest UTeach program that prepares Math and Science majors for secondary education.

With over 210 faculty and 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students, it is one of the largest colleges in the university. The college takes pride in preparing students for diverse careers including medical and health professions (pre-med, pre-dental, pre-pharmacy) and graduate schools, emphasizes hands-on experiential learning, community-engaged research and learning, advancing the frontiers of science from electrons to ecosystems, and developing innovative solutions for local and global grand challenges. The college is on a growth trajectory with several new B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. programs forthcoming to better serve our constituents.

The mission of the College of Sciences is:

- To advance the frontiers of science from electrons to ecosystems through discovery in the life, mathematical, physical, and statistical sciences;
- To partner with the community to address local and global grand challenges through basic and applied research to improve the quality of life in the Rio Grande Valley and beyond;
- To prepare the next generation of educators, mathematicians, scientists, and statisticians who are academically competent, socially aware, globally engaged, and ethical leaders;
- To provide students with fundamental scientific, mathematical, and statistical literacy; and
- To enhance the quality of the region's mathematics, statistics, and science education.

The College of Sciences has a strong and diverse faculty – many of whom are leading experts in the fields of biology, chemistry, physical sciences, and mathematics. In addition to active research and dedication to student success, the College of Sciences has state-of-the-art facilities and research centers in the fields of gravitational wave astronomy, radio astronomy, and marine and coastal studies. These offer unique research experiences for students at all levels - undergraduate to post doctorate.

More than half of our students are first-generation college students with exceptionally diverse backgrounds. We understand the challenges of students who are traditionally underrepresented in the sciences and our goal is to successfully help them overcome these challenges and achieve their dreams.

SEEMS Highlights & Success

- SEEMS is the #1 in the College of Sciences in extramural funding and surpassed \$5M in FY 2019-20
- Leaders in Engaged Scholarship, Community Engagement and involving undergraduates in research with over 30 undergrads presenting at regional, state, and national conferences in 2019
- A 5-acre botanical preserve on South Padre Island surrounds the Coastal Studies Lab that houses over 3,000 specimens and has a floating classroom, R/V Ridley and an inshore & offshore vessel fleet.
- The Coastal Studies Lab serves ~3,000 public visitors, ~5,000 K12 students and trains volunteers for their Marine Mammal Response and Red Tide Ranger programs
- Hosts Annual Agroecology Professional Development Institute for Middle/High School STEM teachers
- USDA and NSF funded projects in Soil Science and Earth, Environmental, Ocean Sciences

About the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

UTRGV Fast Facts

(Fall 2021)

- Total Enrollment: 31,939
- 84% Undergraduate
- 91% Hispanic enrollment
- 55% First Generation
- Degrees Offered
 - Bachelor's: 68
 - Master's: 61
 - Doctoral: 10
 - Professional: 3
- Degrees Awarded: 7,083

UTRGV Accolades

- #2 in Texas and #36 nationally for social mobility
- #8 top national public university among Texas public universities (#144 nationally)
- #2 among national public universities for least student debt

by U.S. News & World Report (2021)

Innovation. Opportunity. Purpose. Careers. That's what the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is about. With campuses throughout the Valley, UTRGV empowers successful futures, enhances daily life, and lets our region shine as a global innovator in higher education, bilingual education, health education, biomedical research, and emerging technology that inspires positive change.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley was created by the Texas Legislature in 2013 as the first major public university of the 21st century in Texas. This transformative initiative provided the opportunity to expand educational opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley, including a new School of Medicine, and made it possible for residents of the region to benefit from the Permanent University Fund – a public endowment contributing support to the University of Texas System and other institutions.

UTRGV's mission is 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.

UTRGV's vision is to be one of the nation's leaders in higher education, it is 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. Our core priorities are Student Success; Educational Opportunities; Health and Medical Education; Research Impacting the Rio Grande Valley and Beyond; and Community Engagement.

UTRGV has campuses and off-campus research and teaching sites throughout the Rio Grande Valley including in Boca Chica Beach, Brownsville (formerly The University of Texas at Brownsville campus), Edinburg (formerly The University of Texas-Pan American campus), Harlingen, McAllen, Port Isabel, Rio Grande City, and South Padre Island. UTRGV, a comprehensive academic institution, enrolled its first class in the fall of 2015, and the School of Medicine welcomed its first class in the summer of 2016.



About the Rio Grande Valley

The Rio Grande Valley is located at the southernmost part of Texas. At the meeting point of Mexico and the USA, the 4-county region called *The Valley* is one of the fastest growing areas of the United States. The northernmost established city, Edinburg, is the region's "college town." It is home to one of the main



Edinburg City Hall

campuses belonging to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and is the site of the largest arena in the region. To locals, it is regarded as the Gateway City to the Rio Grande Valley. Brownsville is the southernmost port city of the continental U.S. It is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico along with three international bridges that connect Brownsville with its neighboring border town, Matamoros, Mexico. The two major languages you will find in the Valley are Spanish and English. Approximately 80% to 90% of the Valley's population is Mexican American, so a working knowledge of Spanish is helpful, but not necessary.

The Valley has some of the richest history and tradition found anywhere in the US. Its culture and identity are based on adaptation to movement and change, perseverance, and resiliency. 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. What Winter Texans, Spring Breakers, and families looking for fun in the sun most associate with our area is one of the best beaches anywhere in the USA: South Padre Island. The Rio Grande Valley encompasses many landmarks that attract tourists. Popular destinations include Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park, Brazos Island, a SpaceX launch site, and the Port Isabel Lighthouse.

The region offers a wonderful subtropical climate, with sunny weather and warm-to-hot temperatures prevailing all year long, including excellent facilities for sport, leisure and shopping, and a varied nightlife. Plus, the natural beauty of the Valley is one of a kind. Beyond our beautiful beaches and palm trees, there are wildlife preserves that are international hot spots for birders and others who enjoy watching the butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals inhabiting the area. The area supports one of the best sites for deep sea fishing and, for the past 77 years, has hosted the Texas International Fishing Tournament. The region features abundant historical and cultural sites, honoring traditions of military and public service as well as the shared ties with Mexico. The people of the Valley are famous for their warmth and friendly dispositions, making it a welcoming environment for all. Taken together, the hospitality, relaxed pace of life, safe neighborhoods, and emphasis on community involvement, inclusion and education make the Valley a place where life is to be enjoyed and lived to its fullest.



Brownsville Market Square

Nomination and Application Process

Salary

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

How to Apply

Greenwood/Asher & Associates, LLC is assisting the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. For a full application package, please submit a cover letter, CV, and list of five references. Confidential inquiries, nominations and application materials should be directed to Greenwood/Asher & Associates. Submission of application materials as PDF attachments is strongly encouraged. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. For best consideration, applications and nominations should be provided by September 6, 2022.

Please direct inquiries, nominations, and application materials to:

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Julie Schrodtt, Senior Executive Search Consultant
E-mail: julieschrodtt@greenwoodsearch.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 protected veteran status. In accordance with the requirements of Title VII 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, our University is committed to comply with all government requirements and ensures non-discrimination in its education programs and activities, including employment. We encourage women, minorities, and differently abled persons to apply for employment positions of interest.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.