

# The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley™



Invites Applications and Nominations for the Position of:

Founding Chair of the  
Department of Spanish

Greenwood/Asher  
& ASSOCIATES, LLC

## The Opportunity

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) invites nominations and applications for the position of founding Chair of the Department of Spanish. Reporting directly to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the chair will be responsible for setting strategic, operational, and financial direction for the Spanish department. The college seeks a dynamic leader who will work in concert with faculty, staff, and students to promote a culture of excellence. The chair shall create and carry out a vision that leads the department to greater prominence in the Valley and beyond.

We seek those who have ample administrative and budgetary management experience in an academic setting. Additionally, candidates are expected to have a distinguished record of scholarship and teaching excellence at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

UTRGV is the second largest Hispanic Serving Institution in the United States in a growing region on the border with Mexico, where 80% of a nearly 1.5 million population speaks Spanish and the majority of the students are bilingual and bicultural, and university sights are set on the coveted R1 status “very high research activity” distinction by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.

UTRGV campuses, strategically located throughout the Valley, offer a unique opportunity to lead the program on two main campuses – Edinburg and Brownsville. The chair is expected to establish a visionary process for program development and enhancement that utilizes the expertise and resources available on the two campuses.

## The Role of the Spanish Department Chair

The Spanish Department chair is expected to inspire and support faculty, staff, and the predominantly Hispanic student population; foster an environment of collegiality, transparency, teamwork, respect, inclusion, and diversity; interact with all stakeholders to determine the priorities and direction of the department; support the expansion of the research capabilities of the department while maintaining excellence in teaching; increase the regional recognition of the departmental programs; and advocate for the department within the College of Liberal Arts and UTRGV as a whole. The 16 full-time Spanish faculty serve 140 undergraduate and 30 graduate majors.

The chair will oversee the department; faculty and student productivity and development; research; external relations; and multi-disciplinary collaborations within the university. The Spanish chair will recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students. As a faculty member, the chair will also be expected to teach a reduced load and participate in research and service activities.

## Qualifications

The successful candidate must possess a doctorate in Spanish or a closely related field; must meet the institutional requirements for tenure and be eligible for the rank of Full Professor in the department; strong organizational, management, financial, and budgetary skills; a proven background in recruitment, mentoring, and development of outstanding academic and administrative leadership;

evidence of an ongoing research agenda with extensive publications; demonstrated excellence in teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels and native or near-native fluency of Spanish and English.

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

- A proven ability to build strong teams, as well as to work as a team member with one's colleagues in management and in team leadership positions with one's direct reports
- Knowledge and value of borderland language and culture
- Evidence of ability to secure grants and external funding
- Ability to build interdisciplinary connections across campus programs and disciplines
- Knowledge of distributed campus models

The next chair will be a tireless advocate for the Spanish department and must be nimble and innovative in their approach to articulating the value and relevance of the department's mission to a wide range of audiences.

### **Discipline Specific Required Roles**

- Forging and implementing long-term departmental goals
- Developing and implementing department mission and vision
- Recruiting students and faculty members
- Developing curriculum and fostering faculty development and leadership
- Teaching graduate and undergraduate courses as appropriate
- Maintaining an active research agenda
- Contributing to the university and community through service activities
- Representing the department to the college and the college and upper administration to the department

## **The College of Liberal Arts**

Built on the foundations of three colleges from our two legacy institutions, the UTRGV College of Liberal Arts embraces the notion that the great strengths of our traditional academic disciplines in the humanities and social sciences must be harnessed and organized so our students can enjoy the advantages of a strong liberal arts education, meet the challenges and opportunities embodied in UTRGV's guiding principles, and better serve the needs of the Rio Grande Valley, state, nation and global community.

The College of Liberal Arts houses 11 academic departments, two freestanding degree-conferring programs, over 300 faculty members, almost 8,000 students, and a multitude of service courses needed by every student enrolled at UTRGV. The College of Liberal Arts is, by far, the largest and most diverse college at UTRGV.



## Departments & Programs

- Anthropology
- Communications
- Criminal Justice
- History
- Literatures and Cultural Studies
- Military Science
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Affairs and Security Studies
- School of Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Engagement
- Sociology
- Writing and Language Studies

## About the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

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.

Our 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, 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. 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 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.

### **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)*

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.



*Edinburg City Hall*

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.



*Brownsville Market Square*



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.

## 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, 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.

#### **Please direct inquiries, nominations, and application materials to:**

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*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.*