Part 1
Our Global Reach

Faculty and students engage in thought-provoking and impactful projects across Latin America and the Caribbean

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Part 3
Rising Together

Faculty and students collaborate to disseminate knowledge, support local initiatives, and evolve together

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From the Director’s Desk

Many thanks to all of you for the warm welcome as I took on the role of Interim Director this spring semester. The semester was both challenging and invigorating, as I plunged into the details of administering the Center. When I stepped into the role I knew how vitally important—now more than ever—is the work that the Center does in producing and promoting knowledge and expertise about Latin American and the Caribbean. We have a crucial role to play in KU’s mission as an international research university to educate our students to be global citizens in an interconnected world. What I didn’t know when I took on the job was how much fun it would be!

That was largely thanks to the array of wonderful events and activities that had already been planned as part of our Big Read / Read Across Lawrence NEA Grant, which you will read more about in these pages. Here I will just say that it was an incredible honor to bring writer Julia Alvarez to campus and to be able to introduce her at the Lied Center. I have been teaching Alvarez’s novels for over 20 years, have written on her work, and over 20 years, have written on her work, and promoting knowledge and expertise about Latin American and the Caribbean. We have a crucial role to play in KU’s mission as an international research university to educate our students to be global citizens in an interconnected world. What I didn’t know when I took on the job was how much fun it would be!

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And speaking of the novel, one of the most meaningful aspects of my job this semester has been working with the phenomenal CLACS staff to support our own students hailing from Latin America and the Caribbean—whether the hailing took place generations ago or just recently. We have worked closely and cooperatively this semester with our KU student organizations HALO (Hispanic American Leadership Organization) and LAGO (Latin American Graduate Organization) to put on meaningful programming in support of our undocumented/DACA students, including a new #UndoKUmented on Campus workshop for faculty members and a “Know Your Rights And What Allies Can Do” panel and discussion—both events were attended to capacity. It is inspiring to see our KU community turning out to support our students and to create a safe educational environment which promotes learning for all. Events in the works for next year include a community forum on the meanings and history of “Sanctuary” and a symposium on “Latinx Mental Health.”

The ties that CLACS creates between the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the professional schools at KU are a crucial part of our history, and one that we urgently need to continue to cultivate. My deepest thanks go to Lua Yuille of the Law School for her involvement in the Know Your Rights panel, the search committee for the Director position, and the CLACS Executive Committee and Graduate Committee. In other Latin American / Caribbean doings around KU, Tim Hossler from the School of Architecture, Design, and Planning organized a stellar exhibition of documentary work by students this Spring, taken during a Study Abroad that he led to Cuba. In the coming fall, Melissa Birch from the Business School will be organizing and hosting our Paraguay conference. These are just a few examples of the many dedicated faculty across KU who make significant contributions to Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

And finally, a word of heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation to the Center staff, including Office Manager Chad O’Byrhim, Communications Specialist Aron Muci, and Outreach Coordinator Danika Swanson, as well as our Center’s Associate Director and Graduate Director Cécile Accilien from African and African American Studies and our Undergraduate Director Rob Schwaller from the History Department. The work of the Center could not happen without these incredible people. In my short time here I have already come to realize what a special asset our staff is. We are especially sad to say goodbye to Danika Swanson, who will be relocating to Canada this summer. She has been an inspirational force in CLACS, and we wish her all good things.
Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Development in Bolivia

Contributed by William J. Hentzler  
MA, Latin American & Caribbean Studies

High in the Bolivian Andes, the town of Independencia is eight hours by bus from Cochabamba, the capital of the department. Among Independencia’s almost 5,000 residents is a group of women dedicated to the preservation and revitalization of Quichua Andean textiles. Every week they gather to spin, weave, and dye wool in a space provided by a small, one-woman non-governmental organization (NGO). Their participation provides another source of income for their households. To this end, they have adopted new weaving patterns and experimented with new products that can be sold in Cochabamba - and beyond. One such product is the yoga mat strap which requires minimal inputs and can fetch a higher price at artesina markets frequented by tourists. These marketable products are designed with uniquely Andean patterns with cultural and religious significance despite being largely for consumption by non-Andeans. The yoga mat strap serves the purposes of maintaining the women’s indigenous culture and practices while simultaneously offering material gain to their families. In this way, there is a balance struck between the market forces and the cultural production involved in weaving.

This has been my experience with various development projects in Latin America. Another example of this balancing act comes from Torotoro, a small town of Quechua and Spanish speakers south of Cochabamba department. There the government and NGOs came to the community with plans to cultivate ecotourism. Several hotels, hiking trails, and lookouts were built to preserve the environment by attracting tourist dollars. By adding an overt monetary value to the community’s environment, the government and NGOs hoped there would be more economic incentive to conserve forests, water sources, and archeological sites scattered throughout the area. Similar to the women’s group in Independencia, the projects in Torotoro attempted to cater to the market and tastes of tourists.

Both of these projects provide insight into the delicate nature of indigenous development. When non-indigenous actors engage indigenous communities, it is impossible to operate divorced from centuries of colonization. Resources are distributed. It is highly political. Inevitably, “development operates as an arena for cultural contestation and identity construction (Escobar 1995). This reality begs the question: how development actors and their objectives shape these contestations and constructions? My thesis explores this process and how it may lead to unintended consequences for development. In this article, I will provide a context for the Bolivian political economy, attempt to outline a theoretical framework, and end with some preliminary quantitative analysis on the distribution of development projects and aid designated for indigenous peoples.

Bolivia is a landlocked country larger than twice the size of Spain. It encompasses diverse environments and climates ranging from the emblematic Andean mountains to tropical rainforest in the lowlands and the hot, semi-arid Chaco region. According to the Bolivian National Institute of Statistics (INE), the population is 11,145,770. 70% of Bolivians live in urban areas.
According to the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), at least 60% of Bolivians speak an indigenous language. 12% are monolingual, indigenous language speakers while 48% are bilingual. Today, 36 different indigenous groups live in Bolivia. Each has a unique culture and history, if not language. The Aymara and Quechua peoples primarily live in the Andean highlands and valleys. Together, they make up the majority of Bolivia’s population (25% and 31% respectively). Most other groups live in the eastern lowlands and Chaco region. The Guarani and Chiquitano, two of the largest lowland groups, occupy the southern lowlands bordering Paraguay and the Bolivian Amazon rainforest respectively (Gigler 2009). The development industry, from donors to technicians, has found engaging with this diversity challenging.

Starting in 1994 the globe celebrated two “UN International Decades of the World’s Indigenous Peoples” with mixed results. Indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere have since achieved notable political successes. Evo Morales, Bolivia’s first indigenous president, assumed office in 2006. Indigenous movements culminated in a new constitution which declares Bolivia a plurinational state. Despite these political successes, significant economic and social gains remain elusive. From 1994 to 2004, non-indigenous Bolivians experienced a 8% reduction in poverty. Indigenous Bolivians saw a change of less than 0.1% over the same period (Hall and Patrinos 2005). This trend continued into the second international decade for indigenous peoples (INE 2012). Moreover, inequality among indigenous groups exists. For example, Aymara and Quechua Bolivians experience different levels of infant mortality and female illiteracy (MacDonald 2012). This inequality among indigenous groups demonstrates the complexity in which Bolivians live and presents a challenge to development actors seeking to empower “the indians.”

Rising inequality and lack of significant material gain for indigenous Bolivians are symptoms of neoliberal reforms (Kohl 2002). Since the International Monetary Fund first introduced its structural adjustment programs in the 1980s, Bolivia has served as a “testing ground” for development theories. In the following decades, the international community hailed Bolivia as a paragon of neoliberalism (Kohl 2002). Economic liberalization and political decentralization, the tenets of neoliberalism, now “underlie all but the most peripheral of economic activities in the region” (Hale 2002). By shifting social responsibilities from the state to the private sector, these reforms elevated the importance of NGOs as service providers, indirectly connecting citizens to the nation in the absence of the state. The number of NGOs in the country exploded by 1500% between 1980 and 2000 (Galway et al. 2012). NGOs now provide services related to healthcare, agriculture, political advocacy, education, and more.

Neoliberalism’s economic, political, and social projects are inextricably linked. Beyond moving economies away from state involvement, the neoliberal project includes “social adjustment.” These adjustments transformed the role of civil society and proffered a new discourse on citizenship (Assies et al 2000; Yashar 2007). The NGO has been lauded as the best agent for improving developing countries (Hall and Patrinos 2005; Galway et al. 2012). Since occupying this preeminent position in development, NGOs have served as the quintessential agent to diffuse neoliberal doctrine (Hale 2002). For example, in the 1990s, numerous NGOs set out to explain the benefits of converting communal lands to private property; how to leverage those properties for capital; and, how to invest that capital into private enterprises. Decentralization and the retreat of the state also opened the door to indigenous organizing with NGOs. In this new landscape, indigenous identity transformed. Many Bolivians shifted their self-reported identity to indigenous, a regional phenomenon termed “re-indigenization” (Madrid 2012). Although indigenous people still experience egregious discrimination, the number of citizens who identified as indigenous on the national census rose more than 10% between 2000 and 2008 (INE 2012). For Bolivia and much of Latin America, coalescing around ethnic identity in the political sphere is a departure from the past configuration of class-based organizing. The politicization of ethnic identity demonstrates the constructed nature of indigeneity and how, in certain contexts, indigenous Bolivians can leverage their identity to achieve their agendas. The confluence of these seemingly paradoxical historic trends, “re-indigenization” and neoliberalism, produced, at best, a form of recognition politics constrained by inherent contradictions. At worst, neoliberal doctrine and state actors have co-opted multiculturalism.

At the end of two decades of neoliberal reform and international celebration of multiculturalism, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, reported that indigenous peoples present a “challenge to the dominant development paradigm” and thus require a diversification of said paradigm. Several scholars posit “neoliberal multiculturalism” is that dominant development paradigm. Advocates operating within the assumptions of neoliberal multiculturalism are inclined to espouse the rights of recognition of indigenous citizens as different from non-indigenous citizens. This is a change from previously dominant ideologies including mestizaje which held the nation and notions of citizenship were predicated on homogeneity. As the state retreated from its dominant role in society and the economy in the 1980s, it took these ideological projects with it. While recognition instead of total erasure seems like progress, neoliberal multiculturalism retains some of the racist logic inherent in mestizaje (Hale 2002; 2004). Moreover, the empowering effects of recognition become more ambiguous when the discussion turns to policy. Ultimately, neoliberal state actors determine the acceptable level of recognition and respect for indigenous peoples, cultures, and political agendas. This recognition politic relegates anti-market expressions of indigeneity to the extreme.

The systematic marginalization of certain expressions of indigeneity cannot pretend to empower indigenous communities. Hale (2004) argues for a reexamination of indigenous politics in the “Era of the Indio Permitido.” The concept of indio permitido encompasses the challenges faced by indigenous persons and groups and how they are pushed to operate within systems permeated by neoliberal multiculturalism. Inevitably this discussion veers into Gramsci’s discourse on hegemony and how subalterns resist different hegemons. For brevity’s sake, I will unpack indio permitido through example. In 2015, President Morales opened Bolivia’s national parks to fossil fuel extraction despite constitutional protections designating parks as ecological reserves (Achtenberg 2015). Half of these reserves overlap with previous concessions to transnational energy companies.
the indigenous peoples inhabiting it. Yet, without sufficient consultation, the government moved to construct the necessary infrastructure to begin exploitation. Despite resistance from the indigenous Bolivians of the TIPNIS and their appeals to Bolivian and international legal mechanisms to protect indigenous rights, the infrastructure project seems inevitable.

In the case of the TIPNIS infrastructure project, the state’s extractive interests outweighed its commitment to indigenous rights. The lowland indigenous people who inhabit the TIPNIS were encouraged, like all Bolivians, to celebrate their cultural heritage and distinct lifeways, their indigenous difference. When that difference informed their politics and rejection of energy projects in their lands, the state sought to marginalize them and their claims to indigenous rights. Although the Bolivian nation and state celebrate plurinational diversity and elevate indigenous cultures and histories when imagining the nation, indigenous peoples remain disproportionately disadvantaged in most spheres.

The phenomenon of the indio permitido is discernible in development. Ethnicity has been identified by the industry as a potential asset. The World Bank and other actors have posited ethnicity can building social capital (Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2001; McNeill 2014). For example, if indigenous groups hold land collectively and have strong traditions of reciprocity, these may strengthen development efforts in their communities. However, if this logic is extended to conclusion, there inevitably must be a potential for ethnicity to present challenges for development: “[While] the indio permitido has passed the test of modernity, substituted ‘protest’ with ‘proposal,’ and learned to be both authentic and fully conversant with the dominant milieu[,] its Other is unruly, vindictive and conflict prone” (Hale 2004). Some development actors undoubtedly see the protesters in the aforementioned TIPNIS case as this “Other.” Thus some expressions of indigeneity are considered positive for development; others become negative.

The concept of indio permitido adds the consideration of power to the process of constructing identity and is evident at the individual and communal level. Neighboring Independencia, the small community of Huancarani presents an interesting case. Hippert (2011) posits Huancarani residents construct and perform particular indigenous identities in order to obtain development resources. When the development industry prioritizes indigenous peoples, methods to identify, or target, indigenous people are designed. In order to direct funds toward communities they believe are most vulnerable, NGOs and others create criteria for indigeneity. These criteria or “sets of particular ethnic- and class-based characteristics” become what Hippert calls “development identities.” Development actors appropriate indigenous difference as a means to distribute resources. In response, savvy groups in Huancarani “constantingly appropriate and negotiate identities in different development contexts” (Hippert 2011). Their dynamic communal identity serves as a means to fulfill development actors’ criteria of indigeneity and to capture funds. Identity has essentially become a commodity to be bargained. The diversity of indigenous Bolivians and the complexity they live in everyday foreseeably complicate any attempt to target recipients. Moreover, largely non-indigenous actors are responsible for designing NGOs’ targeting criteria. With the explosion of NGOs, each with their own criterion, the issue becomes more complicated. In this way, neoliberal multiculturalism penalizes communities that fail to construct and perform identities aligned with the development industry’s perceptions. These perceptions usually resemble the benign indio permitido and not its “Other.” Thus NGOs reward expressions of indigeneity compatible with market logic. Questions of authenticity abound. Need is also abundant. The community in Huancarani! Almost three-quarters migrated from disparate parts of Bolivia. Aymara, Quechua, and Spanish-speakers come together to construct a community identity despite Huancarani’s heterogeneity.

The marketization of the NGO sector resulted in a complicated means for the distribution of development resources. Galway et al. (2012) examined the geographies of NGOs in Bolivia and several variables from the 2001 national census including poverty, health, education, size of indigenous population, urbanization, population size, and health system coverage. The analysis was conducted at the municipal level. The researchers found that NGO activity was distributed across Bolivia unevenly. Furthermore NGO activity was not concentrated in areas of high poverty levels. Instead the strongest relationships measured were between NGO activity and indigenous population and population size. These findings, one of the first to evaluate the distribution of NGOs in Bolivia, demonstrate “the marketization of the NGO sector [...] has had unfavorable side effects on the poorest regions” (Galway 2012). They may suggest the consequences of neoliberal multiculturalism for development.

Attempting to replicate these findings, I conducted a similar analysis of the larger development industry. Here I will present some preliminary results.

Figure 1 shows the spatial distribution of recent World Bank projects by municipality. The larger the circle, the more money flowing to the municipality. The largest circles represent >100 million dollar projects. The smallest represent projects with funds ranging from >0-29 million dollars. Each circle in a municipality is one project. Municipalities shaded dark green have larger indigenous populations. The darkest greens represent 80%-100% indigenous populations while the palest yellow represents 0%-20%. Figure 1 demonstrates the uneven distribution of World Bank projects in Bolivia. Unfortunately, I could not replicate Galway et al’s statistical analysis with my World Bank dataset. The Bolivian Ministry of Development Planning seems unwilling, or unable, to share an updated registry of NGOs. This fact is not lost on Bolivian citizens concerned with transparency in their country (Pascual Villegas 2016). No such analysis has been conducted since President Morales began his first term. My task now is to create a new dataset to capture as much development activity as possible.

More than ever, the world needs to reexamine development. In light of the many challenges facing the planet, the United Nations estimates an annual $5-7 trillion of investment is necessary to achieve the current Sustainable Development Goals. The international community committed to achieving meaningful change on climate, gender inequality, poverty, and more with the passage of these ambitious objectives. Without critical analysis of development practices and policies, imperfect development paradigms will continue to complicate these aspirations.
Dr. John Augelli, Founder of the KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Passes at 96

Please join us in expressing our deepest sympathies for the passing of Professor Emeritus John P. Augelli, 96, who died Monday, March 20, 2017 in Lawrence, KS.

He was born January 30, 1921 in Celenza Valfortore, in the Apulia region of Italy, and immigrated to the U.S. at age 8. He graduated class salutatorian from Crosby High School in Waterbury, CT, completed his bachelor’s degree from Clark University, and received his master’s and doctoral degrees from Harvard.

Dr. Augelli taught at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, the University of Illinois, the University of Kentucky, and completed his career as the Chair of the Department of Geography and the Dean of International Studies. He was a popular instructor and a consummate researcher. Dr. Augelli authored seven books, including two seminal texts on Central American and Caribbean geography as well as numerous journal articles. He was elected Secretary of the American Association of Geographers, was an invited lecturer at many colleges and universities, taught at the Pentagon, was a contributor and principle consultant on several projects with the National Geographic Society and served as a consultant to the Ford Foundation.

In 1961, Dr. Augelli was appointed the KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies’ first director, and he shepherded its growth as a nationally recognized program of interdisciplinary studies. His legacy at CLACS illustrates a career of commitment and passion for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, helping to establish a prolific history of KU relations with the region.

Survivors include his sons John (Gloria), Galveston, Tx and Bob, Lawrence; two granddaughters, Dianne Augelli, New York City and Jennifer Augelli Hunter (Tim), Edmund, OK; two great grandchildren, Max and Mila, Edmund, OK; and two sisters Marie, Waterbury, CT and Dianne, Naugatuck, CT. His parents, wife Conchita and brother Raymond preceded him in death.

The Center spoke with Dr. Bob Augelli, Program Director of the Multicultural Business Scholars Program at the KU School of Business and CLACS associated faculty member, about cherished memories of his father.

Dr. Augelli recalled: “My family arrived to Lawrence, Kansas in 1961 when my dad was brought in to establish what would become the KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. I was only 7 at the time. His work was a very significant part of his life. He was a dedicated researcher and an enthusiastic study of Latin America and all of its diversity.”

Among his many contributions to the fields of Geography and Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Dr. Bob Augelli stated, “his [father’s] wealth of understanding of Central America and the Caribbean, really the entirety of Middle America, was voluminous. He was the first to publish the Mainland/Rimland concept, which argued that coastal communities had more in common with Caribbean cultures than those commonly found in México or Central America.”

Dr. Bob Augelli also recounted a more personal story that illustrated his father’s sense of adventure:

“In 1964, I would have been 10 at the time, our father took the entire family to Central America, visiting México, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. I have a vivid memory of visiting San José, which at the time was blanketed in ash from the active Turrialba Volcano located near the city. My brother and I used to play outside in the ash as if it were sand.

One day we decided to take a trip up the volcano to get as close as we could safely. As we drove up the mountain side, and the landscape quickly became a moonscape, where everything was covered in ash. We finally arrived at what seemed to be a tourist spot of people gathering. My father and older brother traveled further to the top to see into the crater. As the rest of us awaited their return, my family and I spoke with people near us and came to find out that we were literally standing in the crater!

Life was never dull with him. He was fascinating and fascinated by so much.”

The Center also spoke with Anita Herzfeld, Professor Emerita of Latin American and Caribbean Studies and a long-time colleague of Dr. John Augelli, who had this to say about her dear friend:

“I especially remember Professor John Augelli from the days we both shared with George and Barbara Wagonner. George, the then Dean of the College, directed the Seminars on Higher Education in the Americas.

From 1964 on for the following 10 years, these sessions were attended yearly by selected representatives of (almost) all of the Latin American countries. John Augelli was a frequent guest speaker at the Seminar, where he delivered brainy (but never dull) talks sprinkled with good humor, lively anecdotes, and valuable information in his field, Geography.”

The Augelli family suggests that memorials be sent to the KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies in care of the KU Endowment Association.

We are honored and eternally grateful that the Augelli family would designate the Center for gifts in his name. Dr. Augelli’s influence and impact on the Center, in addition to his family’s generosity and graciousness, will continue to foster intellectual development, advanced language and area studies training, and research opportunities at home and abroad.

Information compiled from KU Communications and Lawrence Journal World. A full obituary for Dr. John Augelli can be found here.
Brent Metz Honored with George and Eleanor Woodyard International Educator Award

Brent Metz, Associate Professor and Associate Chair in the Department of Anthropology, received the 2016 George and Eleanor Woodyard International Educator Award. This is the second year in a row that a Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies affiliated faculty member has been honored for their work in the region.

The George and Eleanor Woodyard International Educator Award recognizes faculty members who have provided outstanding leadership in international education at the University of Kansas. Previously known as the Provost’s Award for Leadership in International Education, this award is now in its 16th year and supported by a generous endowment from Dr. George and Mrs. Eleanor Woodyard.

Faculty are selected for their creativity, leadership, collaboration, and mentorship that significantly contributes to international curricula and programs at KU. Dr. Metz has developed exceptional small-scale study abroad programs that improve the quality of life for people in Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. He has been a brilliant mentor and advocate to his students, and he has also been a stellar representative of the University of Kansas abroad. At the Center, it is commonplace to hear students praise Dr. Metz as an inspirational scholar and mentor.

J. Megan Greene, Director of Faculty Programs, International Programs, commented on Dr. Metz’s accomplishments as an educator: “[The committee] was deeply impressed by Professor Metz’s extensive work developing the field school in Guatemala and Honduras and in extending the learning opportunities it provides to KU students from a range of disciplines, his internationally focused teaching of both undergraduates and graduate students here on campus, his deep connectedness to the Ch’orti’ community and to a wide range of scholars, NGOs and others in Guatemala, and his commitment to international development and the connections he has made for both KU students and K-12 teachers in that regard. He exemplifies the ideals of the Woodyard Award.”

Charlie Bankart, Associate Vice Provost for International Programs, noted, “Past recipients reflect the depth and breadth of internationally committed talent across this great university and speak to a KU that is actively transforming itself through comprehensive internationalization. I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition than Dr. Brent Metz. Not only does he exemplify a lifetime of responsible and ethical engagement with the world through his teaching, research, and service endeavors, but he mentors students and peers alike to be deeply thoughtful, deliberate and responsible in the ways in which they engage the world around them. Dr. Metz’s work is about community building and is, at its core, the essence of community itself. I am deeply appreciative of all he has contributed to KU these years, and look forward to supporting his ongoing efforts.”

The University of Kansas honored Dr. Brent Metz at a ceremony held on May 8, 2017 at the Kansas Memorial Union. At the event, he spoke about his upbringing and about attending college as a first-generation student and studying abroad, experiences which led him to a radical shift in global perspective. The trajectory of Dr. Metz’s own life has driven him to teach and develop young minds through international education.

The Center is proud of Dr. Brent Metz, and we share in his passion to educate students about the cultures, languages, and communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Dr. Brent Metz’s caliber raises the standard of excellence of our program.
Menjívar Awarded Prestigious Andrew Carnegie Fellowship

For the second time, a faculty member affiliated with the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Kansas has been awarded a prestigious Andrew Carnegie Fellowship. Please join us in congratulating Cecilia Menjívar, Foundation Distinguished Professor of Sociology and CLACS faculty member.

Cecilia Menjívar is one of 35 scholars to be selected for an award from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The fellowship supports research in social sciences and humanities with up to $200,000 awarded to each fellow—the most generous stipend of its kind.

Menjívar is the second KU researcher in Latin American and Caribbean Studies in three years to be named a Carnegie Fellow. Gregory Cushman, Associate Professor of History and Environmental Studies, earned the honor in 2015 as part of its inaugural class.

Menjívar is co-director of the Center for Migration Research at KU with Victor Agjdanian, also Foundation Distinguished Professor of Sociology. Her research explores U.S.-bound migration from Central America from a variety of perspectives, including its legal, social and economic dynamics. The fellowship will allow Menjívar to expand research on immigrants living in between legal statuses.

For the past 15 years, Menjívar has been collecting data on immigrants who live in legal limbo, where they may have certain privileges due to a work permit or stay of deportation, but are denied some rights such as access to social benefits or long-term residence. With fellowship support, she will be able to write a book on this subject, tentatively called “The Temporariness of Legality.”

“Not only will this award allow me the time to dedicate myself to writing about the experiences of immigrants living in different legal statuses today, but the stature and renown of this award will permit me to reach broader audiences,” Menjívar said. “This is critical, especially given the conditions for immigrants today and the importance of disseminating evidence-based research about their lives that can dispel myths about who they are.”

The book project will build on previous studies authored or co-authored by Menjívar aimed at revealing what it means for immigrants to live for years, if not decades, in tenuous legal spaces created by gaps and inconsistencies in federal immigration law. It will also be one of the first studies to look at the effects of the new trend of integrating local-level enforcement into federal efforts to control immigration.

Each year as part of the fellows program, the Carnegie Corporation seeks nominations nationwide from more than 600 leaders representing a range of universities, think tanks, publishers, independent scholars, and nonprofit organizations. For the class of 2017, some 200 candidate proposals were reviewed and rated by one or more of the 33 prominent scholars, educators and intellectuals who serve as anonymous evaluators.

The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies is extremely proud of Professor Cecilia Menjívar’s achievements, which continue to place Latin America at the forefront of national and international conversations.

Information adapted from KU News and the Carnegie Corporation of New York

KU is Home to a Rising Star in Nicaragua

Laura Herlihy, a lecturer in the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, is an international celebrity. Herlihy, who has taught in the program since 1999, has worked extensively with indigenous Miskitu communities along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua. She has formed long-standing relationships with community leaders, written a book about gender roles and development on the Miskitu Coast, and most recently, has become a Miskitu lyricist and performer under the alias “Mairin Blu” (translated to English as Blue Woman).

She has garnered fame in Nicaragua over the years. Three days a week as Mairin Blu, Herlihy hosts, “Waikna Sangni/Mairin Blu,” a radio show based on her experiences with indigenous leader Brooklyn Rivera, an icon in the region.

Herlihy credits four things for the tremendous success that she sees performing as Mairin Blu. First, her co-performers are all incredibly talented Miskitu musicians, and the group benefits from municipal governmental support. Second, Herlihy’s status as a “gringa” gives a “novelty” value to her performances since it’s not everyday that people in Nicaragua can listen to an American on the radio, much less an American woman speaking their native language. Third, Herlihy cites the prominence of radio as a source of entertainment in Miskitu villages, which generally lack television or other technological amenities. Finally, Herlihy credits her involvement with Rivera and the fact that many Miskitu communities embrace her performances in good faith.

Herlihy will be back for a May 30th concert to coincide with Mother’s Day in Nicaragua and hopes to deepen her roots in the Miskitu community. For more on Laura Herlihy as Mairin Blu, check out Herlihy’s features in the Lawrence Journal-World, KU News, and on KCUR’s “Central Standard.” For information about how you can learn Miskitu, visit clacs.ku.edu.
Students Share Research at Spring Symposium

The Center, Institute of Haitian Studies, IHS, and Latin American Graduate Organization, LAGO, hosted a graduate symposium showcasing innovative interdisciplinary research from Latin America and the Caribbean at The Commons, which explored themes of culture, identity, art, economy, environment, politics, international aid, and more.

Through their research, graduate students make significant contributions to the field that support the Center’s efforts to be a leading resource center for people across Kansas, the region, and the nation in the study of the cultures, politics, and economies of Latin America and the Caribbean. Cécile Accilien, Director of Graduate Studies for CLACS, said, “in many ways they keep us on our toes and challenge us.”

Graduate students from programs as diverse as Psychology, Architecture, Linguistics, Psychology, Film & Media Studies, Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology, Geography and Atmospheric Science, and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies briskly presented their research in 5-7 minutes or less. Organized into panels where participants had a limited amount of time to present and answer questions about their research, they demonstrated their ability to distill months, if not years, of work into a succinct, intellectually stimulating format.

The Center wants to give a special thanks to Sara Estrada-Villalta, Doriane Andrade Meyer, Jonah Bates, Nadia Jessop, Courtney Sanchez, Matthew Fahrenbruch, Diana Restrepo-Osorio, João Batista Nascimento Gregoire, Rachel Denney, Ryan Daugherty, Silvia Sánchez, and Luis Gonzalez who all made this event a success with their research, bold ideas, and aspirations.

Our graduate students exemplify the Center’s tradition of producing interdisciplinary research that places this university in global conversations.

The Center is in the process of producing videos of the entire event as well as individual presentations to be made accessible on our website. Photos from the event can be found on our Facebook page.
Graduate and Undergraduate Students Receive Scholarships, Fellowships for Research

Please join the Center in congratulating six graduate and three undergraduate students at the University of Kansas who have received field grants, scholarships, and fellowships from the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies for research abroad.

“These students are doing important research in the region on crucial topics such as economic and political development and sustainability, migration, indigenous land use, public health, and more. The Center is very fortunate to have the funding to support their research,” said Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Director of CLACS.

In the 2016-2017 academic year, CLACS awarded two scholarships funded by the Anita Herzfeld Award and one scholarship funded by the Lawrence G. and Nanette Pascal Award. The $500 awards are open to KU degree-seeking undergraduate students who have applied to an academic year, semester or summer study abroad program in Latin America.

For graduate students, CLACS awarded four grants funded by the Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship, two scholarships funded by the Pierre A. Stouse Jr. Award, and two fellowships funded by the Stansifer Fellowship.

The students represent the KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Center for Global and International Studies, Department of Anthropology, Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Department of Sociology, Department of Speech, Language and Hearing, School of Business, and School of Medicine.

- The Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship was established for graduate students in History and Latin American & Caribbean Studies in memory of Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, former KU professor of Latin American history. CLACS awarded $2,600 to each recipient in 2017.

- The Pierre A. Stouse Jr. Memorial Award was established for graduate student research and primary fieldwork in Latin America. Recipients were selected by recommendation from a scholarship committee whose members represent the Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science and Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. The Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science awarded $1,500 to each recipient in 2017.

- The Stansifer Fellowship, endowed by Charles Stansifer, KU Professor Emeritus of History, supports graduate students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences planning to complete a doctorate in the study of Middle America (defined as Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean). CLACS awarded $5,000 to each recipient in 2017.

- The Herzfeld award honors Anita Herzfeld, Professor Emerita of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, former director of the Office of Study Abroad, and a beloved teacher and noted linguist, who retired in 2012 after working to expand international education for KU students during a distinguished career spanning more than fifty years.

- The Lawrence G. and Nanette Pascal Award is recently endowed by Larry Pascal in honor of his parents and their passion for learning new cultures and studying abroad. The award funds an undergraduate to travel to a Spanish-speaking country.

The KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies is proud of these six students and inspired by their interdisciplinary research abroad that places this university in global conversations.
Mackenzie Butcher, majoring in Speech Language and Hearing with a minor in Spanish, will use the Anita Herzfeld Award to travel to Guatemala to take classes and work as a speech therapy intern. She hopes that her time in Guatemala can help better prepare her for a career as a Speech Language Pathologist.

Samantha King, double majoring in Business and Spanish, will use the Anita Herzfeld Award to travel to Argentina and attend the Universidad de San Andres. She sees her trip as a learning experience that can further her career interests in international business.

Catherine Pham, majoring in pre-Medicine student with a minor in Spanish. She will use the Lawrence G. and Nanette Pascal Award to travel to Argentina and participate in the Language and Culture in Buenos Aires. She hopes that this experience will help her gain fluency in Spanish to better prepare her for a career in medicine.

João Batista Nascimento Gregoire, M.A. student in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and G.T.A. with the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, received Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship for his research project, “Two Great Brazilian Presidents: Getulio Vargas and Fernando Henrique Cardoso.” The funding will allow Nascimento Gregoire to conduct archival research that examines efforts of economic and political development in Brazil by two influential leaders.

Diana L. Restrepo-Osorio, PhD student in the Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science, received the Robert Oppenheimer Memorial Scholarship and the Pierre A. Stouse Jr. Memorial Award for her project, “Effects of Federal Policies on Water Resource Conservation Practices in Cattle Ranching Operations of Southern Uruguay.” The funding will build the pillars for Restrepo-Osorio to work with an international organization to provide water resource security to communities in Latin America.
Lawrence Community Learns About the Dominican Republic Through Literature, Cultural Programming

In 2017, in partnership with the Lawrence Public Library and KU Libraries, we received a $14,000 grant to host the NEA Big Read in Lawrence. An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. NEA Big Read annually supports more than 70 dynamic community reading programs, each designed around a single NEA Big Read selection. Together with our grant partners, we chose In the Time of the Butterflies, by Julia Alvarez for our NEA Big Read selection.

We combined the NEA Big Read funding and programs with Lawrence Public Library’s annual Read Across Lawrence, which uses literature as a springboard to launch community conversations about important issues of our times. This annual community-wide reading event encourages everyone in Lawrence to read and discuss the same book. Read Across Lawrence includes teens and children with books related thematically to the adult selection. To complement In the Time of the Butterflies, the teen selection for this year was Return to Sender, also by Julia Alvarez and the youth selection was Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer, by Kelly Jones.

Funding from the NEA Big Read and Read Across Lawrence allowed us, together with our grant partners, to host a robust month-long series of events throughout Lawrence including lectures, panels, discussion groups, and film screenings capped off by a keynote address and evening with Julia Alvarez. We were also able to give away over 1,000 free copies of the book selections to community members, educators and students.

Programs led by our Center featured our fabulous faculty and highlighted our regional resources.

The month of programming culminated in an evening with Julia Alvarez speaking at the Lied Center at the University of Kansas. She spoke about her books—in particular, Return to Sender and In the Time of the Butterflies—and what it means to be a citizen of the world as a woman, writer, and activist. As a lover of reading, she argued the importance of stories as they open our minds, enrich our imaginations, and allow for us to see the world differently. Alvarez concluded by encouraging everyone to read and share stories, as they are our most powerful tool for freedom, justice, and equity.

On behalf of our campus and community partners, we are very appreciative of everyone who was able to attend an event during the month of programming. We are particularly thankful for the Lawrence Public Library, KU Libraries, Ecumenical Campus Ministries, Student Union Activities, Cécile Accilien, Betsaida Reyes, Jennifer Abercrombie-Foster, Gibette Encarnacion, Ellie Anderson-Smith, Brandon Johnson, and Pamela Paulino. We hope to find more opportunities to work with you in the future!
A Night of Dominican Food, Culture, and Dance

As part of the Big Read/Read Across Lawrence programming, CLACS partnered with the Student Union Activities Cultural Programming Committee at KU to host “International Nights: The Dominican Republic.” Students and community members came to learn about the Dominican Republic and get a taste of Dominican culture. Several friends of the Center contributed to the evening.

First, Betsaida Reyes, Librarian for Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American and Caribbean Studies, was instrumental in curating the culturally inspired food menu, which was prepared by KU Catering. It included Pollo Guisado (Dominican braised chicken thighs in tomato sauce), Moror de Guandules con Coco (rice with pigeon peas and coconut), and flan.

Gibette Encarnacion, graduate student in the Department of English, spoke about Dominican culture and tradition, sharing personal stories that gave a sense of life in the country day-to-day.

In addition, Brandon Johnson, a pitcher for the University of Kansas Baseball Team, shared pictures and stories from the team’s trip to the D.R. in the fall.

After the presentations, a trio from the Kansas City band, Mundo Nouvo, including guitar, trumpet and vocalist, played a mix of boleros, mambo, cha cha and even a merengue at the event. Their music livened the atmosphere where friends gathered to chat, eat, and dance.

Those in attendance were also able to learn about the country through books and artifacts from the Center’s newly created Dominican Republic Culture Trunk and walk away with copies - in English or Spanish - of In the Time of the Butterflies courtesy of the Big Read/Read Across Lawrence.

Opportunities to partner with student organizations on campus always prove to be a fruitful way of encouraging knowledge about Latin America and the Caribbean to different audiences.
Lawrence Celebrates its Global Community at 2nd International Jayhawk Festival

The Center joined dozens of KU academic units and students organizations at the Second Annual International Jayhawk Festival. The event featured the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, international area studies centers, the international student community, internationally-focused student organizations, cross-cultural courses, and study abroad opportunities.

In collaboration with Student Union Activities and Haskell University Student Senate, the International Jayhawk Festival highlighted the diversity of students at each university, the importance of global citizenship, the value of international education, and the need for indigenous and global awareness. The event was attended by thousands of students, faculty, and staff throughout the evening, where they had the opportunities to socialize, eat, win prizes, and watch performances in celebration of our global community.

This year’s festival featured a Global Issues Teach-In, with presentations about recycling, LGBTQIA+ issues around the world, indigenous activism, supporting refugees, and ethical volunteerism; a Global Engagement Info Fair of study abroad opportunities and the benefits of studying foreign languages and intentional studies; an art engagement activity sponsored by the Spencer Museum of Art, in which Alexa Zepp, LACS minor student, displayed artworks inspired by her travels to Nicaragua; cultural performances, including a Capoeira workshop; and a film screening of Welcome To Shelbyville.

The Center had an amazing time at the festival, and met many students interested in deepening their knowledge of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Alexa Zepp Exhibits “Yulu Nani Dawanka: Keeper of the Trees,” Artworks Inspired by Miskitu Legend and Culture

Alexa Zepp, a senior in the Department of Visual Arts, who is also earning minors in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Art History, displayed artworks inspired by her experiences traveling abroad to Nicaragua and visiting indigenous Miskitu communities.

In the summer of 2016, Alexa Zepp traveled to the Nicaraguan coast as part of the “Language and Culture in Nicaragua” FLAS-eligible study abroad program led by CLACS lecturer Laura Herlihy. Students journeyed to Granada, Puerto Cabezas, and communities along Rio Coco and other coastal areas.

Reflecting on the experience, Zepp said, “The trip was the most challenging and rewarding thing I’ve ever done. Being in Latin America, but immersed in an indigenous culture, was confusing and challenging...I look forward to going back again in the future.”

Asked if she would recommend studying abroad in spite of it’s potential challenges, Zepp stated, “I encourage everyone to study abroad. The exposure and immersion in other cultures opens our minds and dares us to challenge our perceptions and realize that more exists outside of us.”

In the exhibition, “Yulu Nani Dawanka: Keeper of the Trees,” Alexa explores Miskitu identity and culture, particularly the significance and pride associated with the environmentally-conscious folklore, through her multi-media artwork.

Zepp articulated her artistic inspiration for the exhibition as coming from “the nature in and around Bilwi, [where] a lot of the area is rather untouched, so there are a lot of beautiful tropical plants and many animals running about.” As an artist, she was “intrigued by the Miskitu beliefs surrounding the mermaid. She is the queen of the sea and has power over many things in their culture. A lot of my art is about the mermaid, including a book that I made, telling the ‘legend of the mermaid’.

Supported by the Center, Department of Visual Arts, and KU Study Abroad, “Yulu Nani Dawanka: Keeper of the Trees” is part of Lawrence’s Final Friday schedule of events and includes traditional Nicaraguan cuisine and informal lectures by Alexa Zepp and Laura Herlihy. Zepp “hopes that people visiting the exhibition] take away a realization and appreciation for foreign and indigenous cultures.”

Alexa Zepp’s exhibition is a testament to the program’s ability to bridge global communities, encourage diverse perspectives, and inspire creative modes of expression.
New Program Imports Coffee and Knowledge from Latin America and the Caribbean

This spring, the Center piloted a new series in partnership with the Ecumenical Campus Ministries that centers around coffee. Our “Coffee Talk and Tasting” series hopes to educate about Latin American and Caribbean countries while providing a space for community building among students and staff interested in Latin America - all over a cup of coffee and Ladybird Diner doughnuts!

Each program features a different country from Latin America or the Caribbean, and include coffee from that country, as well as a brief overview of the history and culture as well as the local practices of coffee growing and exporting there, with an emphasis on sustainability and social justice.

For our inaugural program, we coordinated with the Big Read/Read Across Lawrence program and featured the Dominican Republic. Inspired by Julia Alvarez’s own experience running Alta Gracia, a sustainable coffee farm in the D.R., we featured her Cafecito Story as well as her recommended coffee, Café Dominicano.

During the program, Pamela Paulino, a Fulbright Scholar at KU from the D.R. gave a presentation about the history, culture, and geography of the Dominican Republic. Then Ellie Anderson-Smith, Undergraduate Representative for the Center offered a presentation on the flavors and tastes of Dominican coffee, while also addressing coffee growing practices and industry terms used to provide information about how the coffee we buy is processed and harvested. In addition, the KU Libraries had their MoColab display on the KU Collection of works relating to In the Time of the Butterflies on display in the ECM for the duration of the program.

Our second “Coffee Talk and Tasting” featured Mexico. Ellie Anderson-Smith, recently returned from Colima, México, provided the coffee grown near el Volcan de Fuego and spoke about small-scale coffee farms in México. She shared her knowledge from first-hand experiences with local and international markets, farming practices, and global competition issues predominantly affecting local farmers.

The third, and final, Coffee Talk & Tasting for the spring featured coffee from Monteverde, Costa Rica, including Café de Monteverde and Café Don Juan. Dr. Mary Klayder, a faculty member the KU Department of English, who has led a Study Abroad Program to Costa Rica’s central valley, Monteverde, Arenal, and the Pacific Coast each winter for the last decade, and Abby Fields, an alumni of the Study Abroad program, spoke about their experiences in Costa Rica and the history and culture of coffee growing and drinking there.

Learning about the process that gets coffee into our mugs throughout the day is a fun way to learn about the people, history, and cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean and become conscious consumers. The Center and ECM will continue to host this program and invite speakers to explore the intricacies of this long-standing industry.
Students Observe Cuba Through a Critical, Creative Lens

With President Obama’s December 2014 announcement of renewing relations with Cuba and with the reopening of the U.S. embassy after 54 years, a new era has dawned on the Caribbean island.

This small country that played a major role in the Cold War is a shell of its former glory. Everywhere are reminders of its former connections with the U.S. and later with the Soviet Union. Today’s post-Fidel Cuba is a country that wants to rebuild and reconnect with the outside world.

CLACS faculty member Tim Hossler, Assistant Professor of Design in the KU School of Architecture, Design & Planning, and Paul Stock, Assistant Professor of Sociology at KU, led students to Florida and Cuba in the 2016-2017 Winter Break for a Study Abroad Program in order to explore the history and changing culture of Cuba.

As students toured Cuban cities of Havana, Trinidad, and Santa Clara, and discovered the cultural influence of Cuban exile communities in Miami, Florida, they endeavored to find glimpses of uniqueness and character. While traveling, students captured beautiful photographs that show the people, unique qualities, and culture of Miami and Cuba in the exhibition, “¿What Time is it in Havana Cuba?” Displayed at The Commons in Spooner Hall at the University of Kansas, the exhibition was organized as a venue to encourage students to observe their experiences in the country critically.

Asked to reflect on the accomplishments of the students, Assistant Professor Tim Hossler commented said, “This last trip was the largest group I’ve led on a Study Abroad program. We had 22 people total. It was one of the most enjoyable. A great group of diverse students that really seemed to care about each other, were adventurous, and sought to understand and experience the Cuban culture.”

Participants researched how perceived ideas of Cuba, developed through media (news, books, films, TV, tourism advertising, and propaganda), compared with the reality of place. Students explored architecture, design and culture through city tours, an organic farm tour, museum visits, and adventures with locals in both Cuba and Miami.

Asked about what students gained from their observations, Hossler observed that even over the period since he has been leading the program, Cuba has undergone transformation: stated, “each year I’m amazed at the changes that are taking place in Cuba. We’ve been doing the program every year since Winter Break 2015. The lack of internet connection (although each trip we seem a little more connected) has forced us to be more aware of our surroundings and our interactions with others.”

The photographs included in the exhibition can be viewed at http://miamihavana.tumblr.com/. “Imagining Cuba: The City, Culture, and Environment in Havana” is an annual Winter Study Abroad Program, and details can be found at KU Study Abroad.
Exhibition of Afro-Cuban Artworks Curated by Students at the Spencer Museum of Art

The Spencer Museum of Art displayed “Art, Identity, and Revolution in Africa and Cuba,” a student-curated exhibition of African, Cuban, and American artworks, in the Study Room from March 21-April 24, 2017. This exhibition is the result of a collaborative, experiential learning project between two classes, “Modern and Contemporary African Art” and “Cuba in the Americas,” taught by Professor Jessica Gerschultz, Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies, and Cécile Accilien, respectively. In addition, students in the class “Critical Perspectives on Museums”, taught by Celka Straughn and Casey Mesick, reviewed the exhibition on its merits and intended purposes.

Professor Gerschultz and Professor Accilien welcomed their students to curate an exhibition as the conclusion to an interdisciplinary unit focused on art history, aesthetics, African Diasporas, Cuban culture, and more. Selecting from the Spencer Museum of Art’s large collection of artworks from Latin America and Africa, students chose works based upon their studies of the regions, cultures, and histories of Africa, with a focus on Yoruba and Kongo cultures, and Cuba.

Professor Cécile Accilien emphasized the importance of the opportunity for students to participate in real interdisciplinary dialogue and demonstrate their learning in new, creative ways. Asked to reflect on a favorite piece of art included in the exhibition, Ryan Connolly, co-curator recalled, “when we started the Spencer Museum project, I was very excited. Excited to take the knowledge I have acquired about Cuba and relate it to physical works of art. There were many pieces of art that caught my attention, but I decided on a piece that was incorporated in the “Declaracion de la Habana,” collection...I find the piece by Luis Peñalver Collazo to be my favorite because of the connection between power, capitalism, democracy, and racism.”

This project illustrates the Center’s long-standing tradition of teaching and researching Latin America and the Caribbean through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary prisms. The Center is excited for future opportunities to explore the politics, cultures, and economics of the region!
The Center strengthened relations with the Kansas University Medical Center (KUMC) and University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) as part of the spring 2017 Merienda Lecture Series.

Traditionally, the Center has built mutual relationships with regional and national institutions to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue between faculty, staff, and students. The spring 2017 Merienda Lecture Series showcased scholars researching and serving in Latin American countries and Latinx communities in the United States, helping to affirm our university and this region as a strong resource for the field.

The lineup of speakers this semester was a mix of veteran and new faces to the Center. We are grateful to have had such talented scholars engage with our university. Speakers and topics of the merienda talks included:

Laura Herlihy, lecturer of Latin American and Caribbean Studies at KU, examined indigenous resistance in response to the reelection of the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega. In addition, she shared stories about navigating the complicated political landscape, which illustrated some of the challenges for international educators/activists working in the country. The audience was fantastic and engaged in a spirited discussion about the impacts of the proposed Nicaraguan canal from sociological, political, and environmental perspectives.

Paula Cupertino, Associate Professor of Preventative Medicine and Public Health and Director of JUNTOS Center for Advancing Latino Health at KUMC, shared her work at KUMC for the past ten years designing culturally-targeted anti-cigarette smoking methods in the U.S., México, and Brazil. As a career social behavioral scientist, she spoke of the passions that drive her to work with underserved and understudied Latinx populations, whom she argues particularly benefit from community-based approaches. You can learn about all the work that Professor Cupertino and her team do for the state of Kansas and beyond at their website, http://juntosks.org.

Clara Irazábal-Zurita, Professor of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design and Director of the Latina/o Studies Program at UMKC, discussed the housing crisis that is gripping Brazil’s most vulnerable and invisible people living in urban areas. She defined the people that make up Brazil’s “precariat,” or the urban poor who chronically suffer from unemployment or underemployment and poor housing options. Based on an ethnographic study of several occupations in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo this year, she argued for an alternative paradigm for urban planners in reaction to movements predicated on equity and social justice reform. With over half a million people struggling to find viable housing, collective projects and socially conscious professionals are working to restore justice by seizing vacant buildings and land to create their own access to decent housing in light of the government’s and market’s failure to do so. Professor Irazábal-Zurita concluded by arguing that this new model can serve as a vehicle for more sustainable and equitable urban spaces.

Viviana Grieco, Associate Professor of History at UMKC, studies colonial Latin America and challenges widespread assumptions of the political economy of Spanish America. Her lecture analyzed the anonymous portrait of Francisco de Paula Sanz and explored the imagery and symbolism common of portraiture in Spain and the colonized West. She also discussed elements of the portrait that are unconventional, describing several theories about the intended social functions and political ramifications that resulted in the assassination of Francisco de Paula Sanz.

The Center is very appreciative of all of the speakers. We know that events and relationships such as these will only serve to bolster Latin American and Caribbean Studies locally and abroad. All Merienda lectures are recorded and posted on our website at clacs.ku.edu.
Due to widespread uncertainty surrounding recent executive orders and changes in immigration enforcement, the Center and several campus and community partners organized a panel and discussion intended to educate our community about basic rights granted to all individuals regardless of country of origin. In addition, the event served to gather and inform allies of what they can do to support DREAMers and DACA recipients at KU and in our communities. This program is a direct result of a suggestion from the Hispanic American Leadership Organization at KU.

The panel discussion brought together administrators, lawyers, scholars, and staff, engaged in the shifting landscape of immigration policy locally and nationally. Panelists included: Charlie Bankart, Associate Vice Provost of International Programs; Doug Bonney, Chief Counsel & Legal Director, ACLU Foundation of Kansas; Lua Kamal Yuille, Associate Professor of Law; Stacy Mendez, Director, Heartland College Assistance Migrant Program; and Alejandra Hernandez-Castro, Coordinator, Heartland College Assistance Migrant Program.

Panelists discussed basic rights and privileges that are meant to protect individuals and limit unlawful overreach of authority, including what should and should not be said to authority figures, how to react when presented with “official” documents or coerced to comply with orders that violate fundamental rights, and strategies that can help prevent or mitigate escalation.

“We are striving to be responsive to our students’ needs and to offer meaningful programming that addresses the consequences of the complex push-and-pull factors that lead to migration from Latin America and the Caribbean to the U.S.,” said Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Director of CLACS.

Furthermore, panelists told stories from undocumented immigrants that highlighted a lack of resources available to assist them as they journey through college. Panelists discussed the dilemma faced by many and emphasized the need for the KU community to listen, learn, and become active allies.

The Center is appreciative of the Latinx Studies Initiative, Hispanic American Leadership Organization, Office of the Vice Provost of Diversity and Equity, Office of the Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Kansas African Studies Center, Center for Migration Research, and Office of Multicultural Affairs, all of whom were partners in offering this discussion and workshop. Their engagement illustrates a strong interest to address concerns of inclusion and safety for students, faculty, and staff at KU.

Resources from the panel discussion can be found at latamst.ku.edu, and a broader range of resources for undocumented immigrants, including students, can be found at latinxinitiative.ku.edu.

The Center and the KU Latinx Studies Initiative hosted “#undoKUmented on Campus: Creating a Safe Space for Undocumented Students,” a workshop oriented towards faculty at KU.

“The Center is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all our students, including our most vulnerable. We are proud to have been able to partner with many other units on campus to offer the first workshop of this kind at KU geared specifically toward educators and those who work closely with students,” said Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Director of CLACS.

The workshop’s goals were to increase awareness about the challenges currently faced by undocumented, DREAMer, and DACA students at KU, to provide information about the broader context of these challenges, and to guide faculty in how to become advocates in developing a positive campus climate for these students.

Anacecilia Luna, who is affiliated with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Andrea Gomez Cervantes, a Sociology graduate student affiliated with the Center for Migration Research, have designed this workshop specifically for the KU community based on research about comparable trainings elsewhere in the country.

Asked about the intended effects of this workshop, Anacecilia Luna stated, “there are two key services that this workshop aims to provide: 1. share crucial information that has been missing from a campus wide conversation on educational equity; 2. Begin to establish vital networks of support by bringing community members together as visible allies.”

The need for specialized professional training and development has been a consistent demand of undergraduate and graduate student groups engaged in efforts to make KU inclusive and safe environment for all. As national political discourse surrounding policy, undocumented immigrants, and deportation threatens communities, we have a responsibility as allies to increase support for those that are vulnerable.
Graduating Seniors Look Back on Center with Fond Memories

This year, the Center recognized seven graduating seniors. Five earned a minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and two earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

The minor program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies provides students the flexibility to explore some of the facets of our field. Students can choose from a variety of tracks that correspond to their interests, such as business, biology, language, geography, anthropology, and more. Most importantly, the minor program provides students with a solid foundation of instruction on Latin American topics to supplement their primary field. Students emerge with excellent training to enter the professional world or continue in Graduate or professional study related to Latin America.

The Center is pleased to recognize William Fleming III, Emily P. Hoffman, Thomas A. Robinson, Scott R. Wellhausen, and Alexa Nicole Zepp for their completion of a minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American and Caribbean Studies provides a broad academic background and rigorous Latin American language development, with a deep regional and cultural focus, enabling students to lay a strong foundation of interdisciplinary work.

Some graduates go on for advanced degrees in business, education, or journalism where they use their knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese languages and cultures to develop a special career niche for themselves. Like many fields in the liberal arts, Latin American and Caribbean Studies helps students build a broad background of knowledge, strengthen writing and critical thinking skills, and develop the flexibility of thought that today’s constantly changing workplace requires.

The Center is proud to recognize Owen MacDonald and Bing Zhang for earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

We sat down to speak with our graduating seniors, and this is what they had to say:

“My favorite memory from CLACS was the spring 2016 Brazilian Carneval hosted by BRASA and CLACS. Helping to organize this giant party and cultural celebration was a unique challenge, and it made the payoff of a successful night even more rewarding. I was the MC of the event, and it was incredibly fun (even if I got boo’d offstage once for a poorly executed raffle). The other highlight of this party was seeing one of my CLACS mentors, Professor Luciano Tosta, don a Brazilian flag hat and dance to his favorite music. He was fun in class, but this symbolized the phenomenal opportunity within KU CLACS to form close relationships with world-class faculty inside and outside of the classroom,” said Owen MacDonald.

Asked what he would miss most about the Center, MacDonald replied, “I will miss the bevy of faculty and staff who are ready and willing to help their students in any way possible.”

“I think the most significant experience of my time at KU is having the class LAA 450 with Professor Luciano Tosta. I love his teaching style, and the way he presented the culture of South America was really attractive and easy to understand. He opened my mind to the ways to approach South American culture. I want to get his signature on one of his books that I own!,” said Bing Zhang.

Asked what he would miss most about the Center, Bing replied, “I love studying culture, and I will miss the time learning about Latin American culture with my classmates and professors together in CLACS. It was the most precious time I had in KU, and I sincerely will miss it a lot!”

We could not be more excited about the futures of these graduating students! We expect to hear great things about their achievements in the future!
Meeting the Demands of the Job Market

A common refrain among graduate students at KU is the need for professional development and training to meet the demands of a rapidly diversifying job market.

For our graduate students interested in careers in academia, industry, government, or non-governmental organizations, the Center has made a particular effort this spring to offer development workshops, in which more than twenty students learned about grant writing and academic presentation strategies.

The Grant Writing Workshop focused on an essential part of academic professionalization, which has increasingly become an expectation for faculty in the humanities and social sciences as well as a preferred skill in many other careers. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Cécile Accilien, and Bobbi Rahder, Hall Center for the Humanities Grant Development Officer, facilitated the workshop open to all graduate students. Attendees learned about the ins-and-outs of grant writing, and participated in hands-on activities and discussions of successful strategies and grant applications.

The presentation workshop emphasized strategies for presenting research in a compelling and enthusiastic manner—strategies which are applicable in several contexts. Marta Caminero-Santangelo, who facilitated the workshop, said “teaching our students how to present their work effectively gives them an edge when they are applying for jobs. It’s an important skill to have, but one that is sometimes overlooked.” The workshop also served as a pre-event training session, as Graduate Research Symposium participants prepared to present their work in a condensed format.

The Center will continue to offer programming that assists graduate students in meeting the demands of careers after graduation, giving them a head-start on professionalization skills.

New Certificate Offers an Interdisciplinary Option to Students

In recent years, students in several departments have inquired with the Center about a “graduate minor” or certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Many of our graduate students build their expertise by taking courses on Latin America and the Caribbean, although their degrees in their home departments do not necessarily reflect this content knowledge. Yet, graduate certificates in Latin American or Caribbean Studies are not currently offered at any nearby university.

The interdisciplinary nature of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, recently drawing students from Anthropology, History, Global Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Geography, and Spanish & Portuguese, etc., requires a broader graduate certificate for this very reason.

Beginning in spring 2017, the Center offers a graduate certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, which promotes interdisciplinary perspectives and provides greater flexibility to students.

The certificate is intended to: encourage current and future graduate students to deepen their training in the region; document and highlight the expertise of current graduate students who are already engaged in a course of study with substantial Latin American and Caribbean content; and allow non-matriculated students, who do not have the time or money to pursue a graduate degree, to earn a recognized credential demonstrating their expertise in the region for the purposes of employment or personal interests.

Graduate students interested in broad training on Latin America and the Caribbean or in a Latin American or Caribbean region other than Central America, Mexico, and Brazil are encouraged to contact the Center for more details.
The KU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies strives to advance knowledge, seek solutions to pressing questions, and influence global conversations. The Center is distinguished by its quality and long term stability. We are a leading research center linking faculty, students, and the community from across Kansas, the country and the world in the interdisciplinary study of the politics, cultures, and economies of Latin America and the Caribbean. Through coordinated efforts with campus and community partners, we serve as a resource in our region and a model in the country for excellence in research, education and outreach.

The Center has historically been awarded graduate fellowships by the US Department of Education (ED) since 1976 and was designated and funded as a Comprehensive National Resource Center (NRC) on Latin America and the Caribbean in 1983-1988; 1994-2006; and 2010-2014. We are currently gathering alumni information for the next cycle of NRC / Title VI grant applications; the updates and news given to us about your own career trajectory and the significance and relevance of your studies in Latin America and the Caribbean are invaluable to us.

This semester, the Center set out to engage with alumni, and we have had an amazing response! Alumni from the Center’s 50+ years of history reached out to tell us their thoughts and memories of their studies at KU, and we are sharing some of those with you.

We encourage alumni to connect with us and to give us your feedback! It is people like you that allow us to continue our commitment to our goals!

We hope you visit the Center’s website from time to time to keep up with our endeavors. We have a place on our website where you can submit your stories. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@KULatamst). If you are not currently receiving Weekly Update email announcements of our events and opportunities but would like to, please send us a message to latamst@kdu.edu, and we will make sure that your name is included in our contact list.

“I have found my Latin American Studies degree helpful in dealing with people of all backgrounds in my work, especially in social work and in court-related services.”
– Kristine M. Kaufman, legal secretary and former social worker with Child Protective Services, BA Class of 1969

“Because of the LA studies program, I took courses in a number of fields I would not otherwise have studied. The professors were so excited about their disciplines [and] their enthusiasm was contagious...I lived and studied more than ten years in Latin America, [and] in all these locations, because of LACS, I was well prepared to take advantage of wonderful opportunities to explore the art, history, archaeology, politics, and geography, and interact with experts in the field.”
– Judy Clinton, retired Executive Director of University Relations at Purdue, MA Class of 1970

Emphasis added by the Center

“My LACS degree benefited me in many ways, primarily through my knowledge of the Spanish language, but also through understanding and appreciating Latin American culture and history. Throughout my career in the Navy, I traveled extensively on official business. On occasion, that official business took me to Spanish-speaking countries, including Spain, México and Colombia. I always felt comfortable interacting and communicating with naval officers from Spain and from various South American countries, and was able to conduct some official business in Spanish.”
– Jane Dalton, RDML, JAGC, United States Navy, Retired, MA Class of 1974

Emphasis added by the Center

“I have been working as a diplomat in the Latin American region all my life, [and] the study I received at KU greatly contributed to my work.”
– Liwen Lo, Minister Counselor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), MA Class of 1989

“I often tell people who ask about my background that my studies of both the Spanish language and Latin American history and culture served me especially well as a journalist in the Midwest. I frequently covered immigration for 25 years, starting with a job as a reporter at the Garden City Telegram in the early 1990s. My education at KU helped give me background, perspective and appreciation for new immigrants from a variety of cultures arriving to work in southwest Kansas’ meat-packing industry. In 1991, I launched a bilingual weekly newspaper, La Semana, for the immigrant community of southwest Kansas that is still published by the Garden City Telegram today. Later I took a job as an editor at The Monitor, a daily newspaper in McAllen, Texas, on the U.S.-Mexico border. This was in the mid-1990s, just as NAFTA began to transform the border with major economic and population changes. Again, it was a fascinating experience made easier to understand through the education I’d gained in my graduate studies at KU. I wouldn’t trade that education for anything. In 1998, I was hired as a statehouse correspondent for Harris News Service, covering Kansas issues for the Harris group of newspapers (Hutchinson, Salina, Garden City, Hays, Ottawa). The newspapers sent me twice to Mexico to report on immigration from rural Zacatecas to rural Kansas. It was amazing and again the Latin American studies at KU gave me a better understanding of the wider issues surrounding the largest migration the U.S. and Mexico have ever seen. I also covered legislation in the Kansas Statehouse affecting immigrants living in Kansas. I now work in a small town in rural Kansas with a largely white population that has not changed much demographically in its 160-year history. I like to write about immigration in my editorials and

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columns, which are shared with other newspapers across Kansas. My goal is to promote understanding of a very complex issue that affects all of us. I apologize for the length of my reply. But it’s been a good career, buoyed in no small way by the teachings at KU’s Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. I hope along the way I’ve helped share some of that education and understanding with those who have read my news stories and opinion pieces.”
– Sarah R. Kessinger, journalist and newspaper owner, MA Class of 1989

Emphasis added by the Center

“My education was vital in working in Spanish language and Latin America advertising and marketing. I was more culturally aware of the Latin American (and US Spanish) markets. And I appreciated all the different subjects that I learned with Latin American & Caribbean Studies such as history, economics, and sociology because it helped me to understand people and that is who I reach out to and in essence work with.”
– Eduardo Garnica, career specialist in workforce development and economic development, former Spanish Language advertiser, BA Class of 1994

“My Latin American Studies degree has helped me immensely. My understanding of Latin American history and politics helps me understand my clients’ cases. I do a great deal of asylum work and understanding the history of the areas my clients are from has been critical for my work.”

“My LACS degree has helped me to provide cultural competent care to Latino clients from a variety of countries...LACS has helped me to be aware of a number of historical, cultural, linguistic, religious, and political factors when training interns how to provide effective services to clients of diverse backgrounds. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to double major with psychology and LACS.”

“I was employed by the Defense Department from 2008 - 2015...and I worked as a counter-narcotics and trafficking analyst focused on Colombia in Washington DC. During this time, I produced strategic intelligence products for U.S. policymakers and completed a 6-month rotation at the US Embassy in Bogota, Colombia. In September 2012, I transitioned into a position with the US Air Force (as a civilian) and worked as the USNORTHCOM Foreign Disclosure Officer at the US Embassy in Mexico City...As you can imagine, my degree and Spanish-language skills were very valuable in my analysis work and in being able to navigate living in a foreign country for two and a half years. I have always had a passion for learning about different cultures, and my degree assisted me in attaining a position that allowed me to travel extensively and focus on an area of the world that I love.”
– Callie L. Largent, former Defense Department and Air Force analyst, MA Class of 2008

Emphasis added by the Center

“My LAS degree was completed in 2010. The program has had a tremendous impact on me...My LAS degree from KU provided a solid foundation in understanding the context of migration through the southern border...I am currently working along the southern border of Mexico. My work is primarily to provide medical consultations at shelters where there are no health professionals and refer to a higher level of care when necessary. The patients are typically from the violent Northern Triangle and are seeking refugee status in Mexico. This degree will certainly aid in my understanding of these patients and further my ability to care for them in a more comprehensive manner. I look forward to all of the yet-unknown ways in which the KU LAS degree offers some advantage in my life and career.”
– Jeffrey A. Utter, M.D., BA Class of 2010
We are pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Marta Caminero-Santangelo as Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies!

Professor Caminero-Santangelo, Department of English, came to KU in 1997. Well regarded in her field for her research on U.S. Latina/o literature, and at KU for her teaching of courses in the Literature of Social Justice, Latino/a Literature, and Latino / Latin American Literature of Trauma and Testimony, she served as Chair of the Department of English from 2009-2012. She was awarded the Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence, a university-wide distinction, in 2008; she is currently the Frances L. Stiefel Professor in the English Department. Her most recent book, Documenting the Undocumented: Narrative, Nation, and Social Justice in the Gatekeeper Era, was published in June by University Press of Florida.

“It has been such a fun and exciting semester for me while I’ve been serving as Interim Director. The faculty and staff at CLACS are an absolute pleasure to work with. I’m looking forward to continuing in the role in a more permanent capacity as we continue to do the important work of creating knowledge and expertise on Latin America and the Caribbean. The role of CLACS is absolutely vital to KU’s mission, as an international research university, of developing global citizens,” said Marta Caminero-Santangelo.

We have a challenging road ahead as we prepare to apply for Title VI National Resource Center (NRC) federal funding, but we are confident in the leadership and direction that Professor Caminero-Santangelo will bring to the Center!
People of the Center

The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies is proud to share the next installment of “People of the Center,” a feature series where we profile students, faculty, alumni, and community allies of our program.

This feature series is meant to give you the inside scoop on contemporary, innovative research from our undergraduate and graduate students; to showcase the rigorous research and service work conducted by our diverse faculty; and to illustrate the invaluable support provided by alumni and community allies. Behind all of that are the people that bring unique passions and experiences to bear on the ways that they strengthen our program. In the end, we hope that this series demonstrates our appreciation for our large and diverse community.

We are so grateful that people agreed to speak with us and share their love for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. You can find more feature profiles on our website. If you, or someone you know, would like to participate in our feature series, please contact Aron Muci at clacs@ku.edu.

“Straight from the Borderland” an Interview with Gus Bova

It is our pleasure to introduce Gus Bova, CLACS alumnus (Class of 2015) and journalist at The Texas Observer. He reports on U.S.-Mexican border and grassroots movements. You can read his stories here.

Aron Muci, CLACS: Can you share some details about yourself?

Gus Bova: I was born and raised in Lawrence, Kansas by two public school teachers. I went to KU thinking I would study English. During the 2011 Occupy movement, I was politicized for the first time and started hanging with a different crowd – at that point I was a freshman. I went on an Alternative Break with the Ecumenical Campus Ministries to Chicago to work with the Mexico Solidarity Network, which inspired me to study Spanish. I met Pete Haney when I was doing campus agitation and running a mock campaign for student president with Occupy KU; he recruited me to the LAS major.

Muci: How did you find yourself writing for the Texas Observer?

Bova: I decided I wanted to be a journalist, then just had to make it happen. I was already in Austin, Texas working at a shelter for immigrants and refugees called Casa Marianella. I talked to Pete about it, and he recommended the Observer (he did his PhD at UT-Austin). I applied for an internship and basically got it because the hiring editor thought my current job at Casa was interesting. I'm a full-time reporter there now.

Muci: How did you find yourself writing for the Texas Observer?

Bova: I studied abroad in Ecuador for my junior year. I had taken Spanish classes before, but it was there that I really learned the language. It was hard, I dealt with a lot of ups and downs being in a strange country for so long. But in the end, it's made all the difference. I wouldn't have gotten either of my post-grad positions without that language immersion.

Muci: What was a highlight of your time at KU?

Bova: I was born and raised in Lawrence, Kansas by two public school teachers. I went to KU thinking I would study English. During the 2011 Occupy movement, I was politicized for the first time and started hanging with a different crowd – at that point I was a freshman. I went on an Alternative Break with the Ecumenical Campus Ministries to Chicago to work with the Mexico Solidarity Network, which inspired me to study Spanish. I met Pete Haney when I was doing campus agitation and running a mock campaign for student president with Occupy KU; he recruited me to the LAS major.

Muci: How did CLACS impact you?

Bova: CLACS funded my study abroad in Ecuador with a FLAS fellowship. I studied Ecuadorian Kichwa. That study abroad changed my life. I also did a senior research project on Kichwa speakers in the US immigration system. My supervisors were Pete Haney and Bart Dean. Nina Kinti-Moss provided me with multiple interviews. I didn't know it at the time, but that research experience would help prepare me to become a journalist. I liked being a CLACS major because it was a small crew of us. I felt like I could walk into the Bailey Hall office and people knew me and I felt very welcomed and appreciated. I got a lot of one-on-one attention, and the major was very flexible. My main disciplines were anthropology, literature and Spanish.

Muci: Anything else that you would like to say before we end?

Bova: Pete Haney was my number one influence: He recruited me to CLACS, was my undergrad advisor and advised my thesis. He has continued to help me post-graduation. He was never afraid to look at my work and tell me what I was doing wrong. Other influential people were Nina-Kinti Moss who taught me Kichwa, Bart Dean and Brent Metz who taught me Anthropology, and Tina Blue – my favorite English teacher. Then there was the Ecumenical Campus Ministries, which was the social heart of my college experience.
It is our pleasure to introduce Nina Kinti-Moss, CLACS lecturer who has taught Kichwa, the most widely-spoken indigenous language in the Americas, for 20 years at the University of Kansas.

Aron Muci, CLACS: Can you share some details about yourself?

Nina Kinti-Moss: I was born in 1952, in a high, sandy and dry, rural Andean valley, as a member of a Kichwa-speaking ethnic group, the Salasaca. Like many Kichwa-speaking communities, the Salasaca use a river, the Panchanica River, and the vertical rises that parallel it, to produce subsistence crops on the mountain steps, from cold and high crops, mostly grains, to lower and warmer, crops, like fresh alfalfa for livestock. My family too were subsistence farmers. We produced the food we ate and spun and wove the clothing we wore. I am the first child of 8 children. I don’t know what the population of our valley was then but now I would guess it is around 12,000, excluding those who have migrated out for work.

In my youth, the first of our people were beginning to go to schools. The first missionaries had arrived in about 1935, but at first, were largely shunned. I attended the Catholic Fisco-Misional Fray Bartolome de Las Casas elementary school with Colombian nuns in the central part of our valley, where the new highway cut through, dividing our territory.

At that time, most girls did not attend school. My father was unusual in that he insisted that I should attend even though there was much discrimination against girls. I was among the first group of Salasacas to graduate from elementary school. Likewise, I was among the first indigenous girls to attend a boarding high school in the capitol, Quito, Ecuador. I attend for 6 years. Boarding school was difficult—the few of us who were indigenous had to work as maids and cooks as well as students. Prejudice against indigenous people was still very raw and harsh then. I graduated with an elementary school teaching certificate and was among the first bilingual teachers to be sent into the rural, Kichwa-speaking areas.

From 1973 to 1979, I developed and taught a bilingual Kichwa-Spanish curriculum. In the evenings, I taught adult literacy classes. To teach the very large numbers of students—sometimes I had as many as 90 by myself—at many different levels, I used peer tutoring where I taught the students and enlisted the best students to help me teach. It was good work but many students faced the many difficulties of extreme poverty.

From 1975 to 1979, I worked with a visiting American scholar, Professor Louisa Stark, to develop more bilingual materials. In 1979, she invited me to come to the University of Wisconsin to teach Kichwa. From 1979 to 1985, I taught elementary and intermediate Kichwa. For a time, I worked with the eminent anthropologist Frank Salomon, but most of the time I worked independently. Most of my students were linguists, anthropology majors, and Andean researchers. While I taught Kichwa, I attend the University of Wisconsin as an undergraduate. I completed a degree in education in 1985, and in 1988, I earned a Master’s in Social Work. Since 1997 to the present, I have been teaching Kichwa at the University of Kansas.

Muci: What are two or three facts about the Kichwa language that people might not know about?

Kinti-Moss: Kichwa is the language the Incas spoke. It is the most widely spoken of the surviving indigenous languages in this hemisphere. Kichwas are producing music, radio and television programming, and even movies, and may succeed in keeping the language alive in the coming centuries.

Kichwa is an ancient language completely distinct from the Spanish, English, and Portuguese that came with the European invasion. It carries meanings, metaphors and styles of thinking that are deeply rooted in this hemisphere and a pre-industrial culture. It offers ideas that are truly distinctive. In a connected world, this uniqueness is increasingly rare.

Muci: Why do you think it is important for people to learn Kichwa?

Kinti-Moss: Some students recognize that to be deeply educated, including about themselves and their own culture, they need to enter into the idea-world of a distinctive language and people. In this increasingly interconnected world, ancient ideas, the unique knowledge and experience gained by minority peoples all around the world, is harder and harder to find and enter. Kichwa can give students that other world and that dual-cultural and language view that can prompt deeper thinking, new feeling, and understandings. It can also be a door to important experiences in the Andes or the Amazon, including practical ones in agriculture, international business and environmental studies.

Muci: What are your current projects, or what would you like to do next?

Kinti-Moss: Currently, I am developing an online course for Kichwa I. But I’m thinking about becoming involved in online Kichwa radio programming. Many Kichwa young people are using the internet to produce music and radio programs now.

Muci: What has been unique about your time at KU?

Kinti-Moss: I’ve had some very talented and interesting students. Many have surprised me with their exceptional language abilities. Some have mastered Kichwa and gone to Kichwa-speaking areas in the Peruvian or Ecuadorian Amazon, or the Bolivian or Ecuadorian highlands to do their graduate work. I have also had very interesting Mayan colleagues—though our languages are completely different, our circumstances as minority peoples were similar. We learned a lot from each other.
It is our pleasure to introduce Ellie Anderson-Smith, a third-year undergraduate student majoring in Latin American and Caribbean Studies with a minor in Environmental Studies. Ellie is also the CLACS Undergraduate Student Representative, assisting with programs, outreach, and more!

Muci: Why did you decide to study Latin American and Caribbean Studies?

Anderson-Smith: Declaring Latin American and Caribbean Studies was a layered decision. I felt (and continue to feel) responsibility as an Anglo-American to educate myself on the innately diverse aspects of U.S. culture, politics, and identity. Latin America is just one part of that, but I believe that awareness of the historical and contemporary relations between the U.S. and various Latin American countries has helped instill in me a responsibility to exercise my hemispheric citizenship. In that consideration, the knowledge I accumulate through Latin American and Caribbean Studies will always be relevant.

Latin American and Caribbean Studies is also an interdisciplinary major, and that has afforded me freedom to explore my interests related to Latin America that I wouldn’t have otherwise been able to under a different major. The flexible degree structure granted me the opportunity to take courses in anthropology, sociology, history, and literature. I think so far I’ve developed a fairly well-rounded knowledge of the region through those different dimensions of what constitutes cultural studies.

Muci: What are the topics, issues, themes, etc. that motivate your academic work?

Anderson-Smith: While I was a kid, my father was an anthropologist professor that explicitly focused on development and Mexico, so I grew up with a certain awareness of those issues. That influence has definitely played a hand in motivating my academic interests. For example, just this past Spring Break, I was in Colima, Mexico studying how small-scale coffee producers in the region are aiming to transform the coffee growing and processing phases, and how outside organizations may help them achieve their goals. It was a phenomenal trip—I got to see firsthand exactly where my coffee comes from and the complex social, cultural, economic, and political underpinnings of the entire process. Naturally, this experience neatly reconciles my interests in critical perspectives on development, local environments, community empowerment, cultural tradition and resiliency, and of course, Latin America. I am especially interested in how local agency is (or isn’t) maintained with the onset of developmental projects in Mesoamerica.

Muci: What are your current projects, or what would you like to do next?

Anderson-Smith: Currently, I’m designing a research project with Paul Stock from the Sociology and Environmental Studies departments that will take place in Tucson, Arizona over this summer. The research will take the form of an ethnographic study that examines the ways in which the Tucson basin has forged and strengthened its own food culture and explores how food has served as a mechanism for community empowerment and community-environment relations. My work will examine this community process by investigating how organizations, nonprofits, and local actors in Tucson reclaim the region’s food system not only in resistance to the industrialized food system that lacks cultural integrity, but to sustain life in the simplest of terms: to form community bonds around food, to fortify the local economy, and to nourish each another. This project is very exciting to me because it allows me to funnel my foundational knowledge that I accumulated in my Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Environmental Studies courses into a relevant, compelling project that will give me hands-on experience. I can’t wait to get started on the ground!

Muci: In your time at KU, what have you learned that might help other students succeed?

Anderson-Smith: This may be stale advice, but I found it very useful to just talk to professors. Building professional relationships will prove useful, especially when it comes to certain academic opportunities that need recommendation letters from faculty. I also learned to follow what sparks my interest. I had no idea that I would enjoy growing my own food until I got involved with the EARTH program. In fact, I think my involvement with the CCO has been one of the most rewarding, challenging, and engaging ventures I’ve ever assumed. But most importantly, I had to learn to treat myself well. It took me a long time to realize that I can’t spread myself too thin with classes, work, organizations, events, etc., or else I will burn out. I actually ended up taking a year off between my first and second years of college to get back to a healthier, more stable rhythm, and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Especially in today’s university climate I think it is critically important to prioritize psychological and physical well-being—learn your limits and respect them.

Muci: Anything else that you would like to say before we end?

Anderson-Smith: I would like to recognize the incredible faculty associated with CLACS—the diversity and creativity of LAA courses does not go unappreciated. I would also like to recognize Danika Swanson, the outreach coordinator for CLACS, for helping me channel my interests into real community projects. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be able to that.

Lastly, if you are interested in giving back to the KU and Lawrence community, consider volunteering with EARTH! We will need some steady volunteers over the summer months to help maintain the new on-campus community garden and harvest produce. Anyone who volunteers is welcome to harvest and take home whatever they want, free of charge. Please contact earth@ku.edu for more information.
DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS OF THE CENTER,

We are proud of the efforts and contributions made by the students, faculty, staff, campus units, and community organizations responsible for the content you have read about in this issue of the Kansas Latin Americanist. We hope you are, too!

The Center’s mission is to:

- Be a leading research center linking faculty, students, and the community from across Kansas, the country, and the world in the interdisciplinary study of the histories, cultures, and societies of Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Serve as the best resource in our region and a model in the country for excellence in research, education and outreach;
- Advance knowledge and seek solutions to pressing questions related to Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Position the region in a global conversation and promote multiculturalism on campus and in our community;
- Provide an environment for learning and working where differences are valued and each person is supported and offered an equitable opportunity to achieve their academic and professional goals.

As we continue to strive toward those goals, we ask you to keep us in mind for donations. Much of what you have read is the direct result of gifts made by colleagues and friends of the Center.

In other words, YOU help us to succeed in our mission. Your gift will assist the Center to maintain its academic prominence, better prepare its students, and initiate and expand research and training programs on a broad range of themes.

Here is how your gift to the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies can positively impact our mission:

- $100 funds educational resources for outreach to the public, regional K-12 schools, community colleges, and local organizations
- $200 funds public programs such as conferences, lectures, exhibits, and performances
- $300 funds in-country travel for a graduate student’s field work in Latin America or the Caribbean, or technology such as a digital recorder or camera for field work
- $500 funds an undergraduate scholarship to study abroad in Latin America or the Caribbean
- $1000 funds airfare for a graduate student to Latin America or the Caribbean to conduct research, or transcription and translation services for a graduate student’s ethnographic field work
- $1,300 funds room-and-board for a 4-5 week trip for a graduate student to do research or learn an indigenous language in Latin America and the Caribbean

In addition, please consider giving to the following general and award funds:

- Unrestricted gifts to the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Contingency Fund allow the Center to support all the activities for which State funding may be limited or not be used and to respond to special needs and opportunities.
- Initially endowed by Professor Emeritus Charles Stansifer, the Stansifer Fund awards support to graduate students planning to complete a doctorate in the study of Middle America (defined as Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean). Fellowships are granted on a competitive basis.
- The Anita Herzfeld Study Abroad Award for Latin America Fund was created to honor Professor Emerita Anita Herzfeld’s decades of service to the Center. It supports study abroad grants for undergraduate students. This purpose reflects her longstanding dedication to undergraduate education.

Support at all levels—from small annual gifts to the creation of endowed funds—is needed and welcome. If you would like to contribute to CLACS to fund a specific aspect of our mission, please designate in your gift (e.g. “student travel”).

Thank you for your continued support,

Marta Caminero-Santangelo, Director

Give online by visiting the “Giving” page on The Latin American and Caribbean Studies website at http://clacs.ku.edu/giving.

You will be redirected to the website of KU Endowment, the non-profit fundraising organization that supports KU.

If you wish to donate by mail, please address to:

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