Curious about the hype surrounding the purported end of the world and the Maya calendar? If the turnout for Professor John Hoopes’ recent lecture at the Lawrence Public Library is any indication, northeast Kansas certainly is. Over 100 people showed up on November 7th to hear Dr. Hoopes, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kansas. Hoopes presented, “New Myths About Ancient Mayas: A History of the 2012 Phenomenon.”

Hoopes and others have shown that the ideas that are usually attributed to ancient Mayas can ultimately be traced to European belief systems such as medieval astrology and Christian eschatology. Fueled by academic and popular speculation, these notions evolved over time into a contemporary mythology that weaves together scholarly misinterpretations, Romantic assertions, metaphysical truths, and counterculture activism. When embellished by self-promoting occultists these have resulted in an outpouring of popular myth that reveals more about our own hopes and fears than it does about ancient Mayas.

Whether the world will end this December is anybody’s guess, but there is no indication that the ancient Maya thought it would. Hoopes noted in his lecture that one temple inscription predicted that a certain member of Maya royalty would still be remembered thousands of generations into the future. The projections in this passage imagine time extending well beyond this year. By some accounts December 21st, 2012 does still denote an extraordinary occurrence; it will mark the end of the Maya calendar’s grand cycle — almost 25,630 years! However the world will start again on Dec. 22nd, the first day of the new calendar.

Hoopes has had a longstanding interest in pseudoscience and pseudo-archaeology, and has been interviewed about the Maya calendar and 2012 for The New York Times, The People’s Daily (China), National Public Radio, and many other newspapers and magazines. Professor Hoopes has been featured in four television documentaries: Apocalypse 2012 (CBC & CNBC), Apocalipsis 2012 (Discovery Channel Latin America), 2012: The Mayan Apocalypse (Timeline Films, BBC) and the upcoming two-night television event, Evacuate Earth and The Mayan Apocalypse 2012 (National Geographic Channel), premiering on Sunday, December 2nd and Monday, December 3rd, 2012. If you missed the lecture, be sure to check out these programs when they air.
From the Director’s Desk, Fall 2012

W e’ve had lots of activities going on at the Center this summer and fall! You’ll find details throughout the newsletter, but I’ll call attention to some of these here. We said goodbye to Catherine Butel, our outreach coordinator of two years at the beginning of September, for she left her position here to be able to focus on her MA work in social welfare. During the summer, however, she organized a workshop at the Spencer Museum in the summer on Peru which was well-attended by teachers. In September we hosted a one-day symposium on Health Care in Latin America and brought together folks from many different Departments at KU and KU Med School to present their work on issues related to health in the region. In this month several faculty participated in the Latin America Cinema Festival of Kansas City and in the Joint Area Studies Environmental Film Festival.

In October we hosted visits from Uruguayan poet and performance artist, Luis Bravo, and from Second Language Acquisition specialist Jennifer Leeman. Danika Swanson has taken over Catherine’s position and hit the ground running as she was drawn into several Día de los muertos events in September and October, culminated by a day in which she gave six presentations at an area school. This gave her great insight into the teachers with whom she works, who teach this many classes back-to-back daily!

In November the Lied’s Center hosted a performance by David González and Sofrito, a combination of Latin music and storytelling and the Center hosted an informational event before the performance, for which Catherine obtained tickets at reduced prices. We also co-hosted an evening forum of Witness for Peace which featured Tomás Gómez-Membreño, an activist with the Honduran indigenous organization COPINH and a member of the Lenca ethnic group, who spoke about the effects of U.S. foreign policy on indigenous communities in Honduras in the wake of the 2009 golpe de estado. Mr. Gómez-Membreño also shared his ideas and experiences with Laura Herlihy’s “Language and Society in Latin America” class and Marike Janzen’s “Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies” class. John Hoopes also offered a wonderful Maya 2012 lecture at the Lawrence Public library in which he discussed the origins of the 2012 calendar predictions and connections with new age religions and other beliefs -- we had at least 100 people at this event. We had many intriguing meriendas this semester, culminating in the visit of Robert Hatch, who discussed the microfinance work of FINCA in Latin America and other regions; I hope Latin American Studies students will explore their website for internship opportunities with FINCA. The Latin American seminar at the Hall center continues with a focus on the environment throughout this year – look for its calendar!

Planned activities in the Spring semester include the Graduate student research symposium, a speaker on Brazil and China, a water conference and teachers’ outreach conference focused on the environment as well as a Central American Film festival in February coordinated by Hispano Durón.

Mil gracias otra vez for your interest in and on-going support of Center activities which appear throughout this newsletter!

Saludos cordiales,

Jill
New LAS Advisory Committee

Article III of the Bylaws of the Center calls for the establishment of an Advisory Board and specifies that the Board shall comprise alumni who have achieved distinction in international affairs, either in government service, the private sector, or non-profit endeavors, along with other prominent members of the academic, business, and civic communities whose accomplishments are similarly distinguished and who have demonstrated an interest in the mission of the Center. The Board will also serve as a strategic think-tank to advise the Center’s goals of becoming more regionally, nationally, and internationally prominent. The members meet twice a year (including possible conference call meetings) and work closely with the Executive Committee on communications and fundraising for LAS programs.

Advisory Board members, 2012-13
Charley Stansifer, Emeritus KU Professor, History & Director of LAS
Jody Edgerton, Director, KCMO International Affairs and Trade Office
Sam Sommerville, Professor, Johnson County Community College
Judith Reagan, recently retired, KUMC International Programs Office
Roger Hiatt, Attorney, Interest in International Law, Kansas City
Mario Ramos Reyes, Professor, Kansas City Community College
Jan Flora, Professor, Iowa State University
Marshall Eakin, Professor, Vanderbilt University

The Hall Center Latin American Seminar

The Latin American Seminar explores the regional, topical, and methodological research strengths and concerns of the KU Latin Americanist faculty and graduate students. The Seminar is a key integrating component of the Center’s NRC Grant (2010-2014) strategy to promote Latin Americanist Scholarship among KU faculty and graduate students.

The 2012-2013 series “Latin American and the Environment,” focuses on the environmental issues facing Latin America. Fall 2012’s distinguished presenters include:

* Friday, August 24th, 2012: J. Christopher Brown, Geography/Environmental Studies, "Illegal Soybeans and the Making of Brazil’s Cerrado Biome.”


* Friday, October 26th, 2012: Andy Hilburn, Geography, “Perceptions and Realities of Solid Waste Management in a Rural Mexican Municipality: The Case of Coxcapilán, Puebla.”

* Friday, November 30th, 2012: Julie Velásquez Runk, Anthropology, University of Georgia, “Land and Land Rights in Eastern Panama.”

Acceso: An Intercultural Portal

By: Jennifer Abercrombie
PhD Student in Spanish & Portuguese

For many teachers, one of the most rewarding phrases a student can utter after class is: “I’d never thought of that way.” As simple as the statement is, it can signal a “break-through” moment that reveals the successful achievement of one of the goals of the educational website Acceso: to gain perspectives and understandings of Hispanic culture, history and people. Acceso is an educational website that was designed and created by the Spanish Basic Language Program and the Ermal Garinger Academic Resource Center and has been funded in part by the Center for Latin American Studies. Amy Rosomondo, associate professor of Spanish and co-director of the Spanish Basic Language Program directs the website and recently she received a national award from CALICO honoring her efforts.

As a PhD student and a GTA for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, I have been fortunate enough to experience various “break-through” moments with students who have admitted to me that Acceso has helped them see the world in a way that they hadn’t imagined before taking a Spanish 212 or 216 class at KU. Because the website is organized into eight main sections, each centering on a Spanish-speaking geographic region, students are able to explore cultural issues and the histories of every Spanish-speaking country by completing Spanish 216.

Students are even able to explore regions they think they know, namely, the United States. In this first section of Acceso, students not only study cultural issues of Chicanos and other Latinos living in the United States, but they also analyze the controversial issue of undocumented immigration. In one particular lesson, the students watch an episode from Morgan Spurlock’s 30 Days, where a Minuteman vigilante must live with an undocumented family in Los Angeles for 30 days. After watching this emotional and highly effective episode, the students then must prepare for a debate in class, defending one of three assigned positions: pro-amnesty, pro-deportation, or pro-non-permanent worker’s program.

After concluding the debate, various students have commented on how they simply had not thought of the difficulties that many immigrants face, nor had they fully considered all the challenges or complexities of the immigration debate until participating in the class. Rather than creating simple solutions and answers for our students, this lesson is an example of how Acceso works as a portal into new experiences and ways of thinking. Rather than just learning the mechanics of language, our students are challenged to become intercultural ambassadors and to step past their comfort zones and explore all that lies beyond (and even within) the United States. As a teacher, I am so glad Acceso exists. It provides such a significant opportunity to broaden and enrich intercultural understandings, which I believe is an integral part of a college education.
The Associate Director oversees the M.A. program in Latin American Studies, serving as advisor to the current cohort of students and also as chair of the Graduate Studies Committee. I took on this position with three interrelated goals in mind: first, to reform the curriculum and change the local culture in ways that would make the program both more intellectually rigorous and more appealing to current and prospective students; second, to improve the quality of the final written projects, the thesis and the comparative research paper, through better skill development and early planning beginning in the first year; and third, to devote sustained effort to recruiting a larger pool of applicants for admission to the program so that it would become larger and more selective simultaneously.

Though we have encountered some unforeseen potholes along the way, my impression is that so far the drive is going well. Students have been responsive to the idea that they can best prepare themselves for conceptualizing and writing sophisticated research projects with coherent theory and feasible methodologies by consistently enrolling in high-level graduate seminars, and faculty have responded by designing new courses that are especially suited for graduate students or offering versions of existing courses reconfigured just for grad students. The former will become available for the first time next fall.

The Graduate Studies Committee has worked toward making the goals and expectations of the program more transparent by creating a set of criteria for the final oral exams and by proposing new curricular requirements that establish breadth, direction and improved quality in this interdisciplinary program. These will be discussed soon by the Executive Committee. The Grad Committee’s next task will be to re-examine the two core courses with the goal of establishing a set of guidelines for teaching them.

We have also redesigned the program brochure, thanks to Sydney’s facility with computer graphics, and have sent it out electronically to over 110 professors at liberal arts colleges and small universities in the 5-state region that surrounds Kansas in the hopes that they can identify undergraduate students with an interest in Latin American Studies and point them in our direction. Earlier this semester we asked our own faculty to identify colleagues across the country who could do the same. In a few weeks we will know if this has generated renewed interest in the M.A. program.

Coming up in the spring semester, I’m looking forward to resuscitating the Graduate Research Symposium which will be revamped to emphasize a collective critique of a limited number of student presentations, with the goal of encouraging revisions and possible publication (we’re moving away from the competitive aspect of previous symposia). It will be held Wednesday March 6 in the Big 12 Room of the student union and we would love to see a solid turnout of students, faculty and our friends in the Latin Americanist community for one or more of the three panels. If you have any suggestions for ways to improve the graduate program, please write to me at: surreal@ku.edu.

Faculty Updates

Giselle Anatol, Associate Professor of English – As the Fellow in Residence (May – June 2012) Anatol received a grant from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (New York Public Library) to access archival materials and work on her manuscript on images of black female vampires in literature of the African diaspora. She published, “Using Film to Enhance Cultural Understanding: Images of Jamaica in How Stella Got Her Groove Back and The Harder They Come,” in Teaching Anglophone Caribbean Literature. Ed. Supriya Nair. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2012. 183-98. Anatol was invited to speak at the University of Florida Health Sciences Center on September 13, 2012. She presented, “Representations of Race and Ethnicity in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Series.” In May 2012 Anatol also presented at the 13th International Conference of the Association of Caribbean Women Writers & Scholars in Paramaribo, Suriname. Her paper was titled, “Vampiric Memory in David Charindy’s Soucouyant.” She gave a similar talk during the Fall 2012 Merienda Series titled, “Caribbean Vampires in the Diaspora: a Critique of Canadian National Identity.”

Mara Aubel, Lecture in Spanish & Portuguese – Aubel traveled to the Association of Study of African-American Life and History for the 97th Annual ASALH Convention from September 26 -30 2012. At ASALH she presented a paper on the role of black women and affirmative action in higher education in Brazil. At the Eleventh International Congress of the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) during September 6-8, 2012, Aubel presented a paper focused on higher education and affirmative action and the disadvantaged population in Brazil- mostly black women, but also white and indigenous women.

Luis Corteguera, Associate Professor of History – Corteguera’s book, Death by Effigy: A Case from the Mexican Inquisition, was published in October by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Also, in November, Corteguera presented “The Abuse of Images: Dogma versus Practice in the Early Modern Spanish World,” at the Sixteenth Century Conference in Cincinnati.

Gregory Cushman, Associate Professor of History – Cushman published Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World, (Cambridge Univ. Press), a study rooted in the soils and waters of Peru that demonstrates Latin America’s profound connection to the Pacific region and influence on modern global history. He spent his spring sabbatical researching the environmental understanding of indigenous peoples based in Peru, Colombia, Chile, and Easter Island.
Brent Metz, Associate Professor of Anthropology - In January 2013 Brent Metz and Jodi Gentry (PhD student, Engineering) will be leading a multidisciplinary group of students to Guatemala on the 2nd applied field school on behalf of the Ch’ortí’ Maya. The first field school in 2011 focused on the Ch’ortí’ of Copán Ruinas, Honduras. This 3-credit field school will work directly with the Engineers Without Borders Professional Chapter and will be devoted to water procurement, purification, and management in the destitute community of Matazano, Jocotán. Students will receive training in surveys, participatory GIS mapping, and Photovoice, among other methods, as well as be exposed to the social and cultural challenges of undertaking development among historically disadvantaged populations.

James Moreno, Assistant Professor of Music - Prior to joining KU’s Dance Department as Assistant Professor in 2012, James Moreno was Visiting Professor of Dance at the University of Panamá in Panama City, Panamá. Moreno was awarded a Fulbright to Research Methods and Choreographic Analysis in the Masters program and modern technique and composition in the undergraduate program at U-Panamá.

Pete Haney, Assistant Director for Latin American Studies, traveled to the Fourth Annual Crime and Popular Culture Conference at Indiana State University in Terra Haute on September 19th to present “Murder in the Carpa Cubana: Racialized Reporting and the Execution of Chief Red Wing for the Murder of Evangelina Cavazo, 1930-1931.” November 17th, he presented “Genre, Heteroglossia, and Audience Participation In A Mexican Immigrant Nightclub Floorshow” at the American Anthropological Association’s annual meeting in San Francisco.


This summer Herlihy also lead another successful Study Abroad to Nicaragua in coordination with URACCAN (Nicaraguan University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast) —11 students; 4 funded by FLAS.

Vicky Unruh, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese – Unruh recently published two pieces: the book chapter “Modernity’s Labors in Latin America: The Cultural Workers of Havana’s Avant-Gardes” appeared in Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms. Ed. Mark Wollaeger (Oxford University Press, 2012. 341-366) and the article “Compañero, Respect Your Vocation! Improvisations for a Workaday Crisis” appeared in the October 2012 issue of PMLA (729-747). The latter was Unruh’s introductory piece to the special issue of PMLA on Work, for which she served as coordinator. Recently she gave two invited talks: one at the University of South Carolina in September 2012 (“The Allure of the Ephemeral: Tertulias and Community in Contemporary Cuba”) and one at UCL in October (“The Intimacy of the Impromptu: Tertulias and Sociability in Cuba”). Both talks are related to her book in progress on post-Soviet Cuba.

Merienda Brown-Bag Lectures

The center’s Merienda lectures, held most Thursdays during the fall and spring semesters, provide an opportunity for invited students, faculty, community members and visiting scholars to share their experiences and research in Latin America.

The speakers represent a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds. Presentations typically last 40-45 minutes and allow for audience questions at the end. A simple lunch of rice and beans is served. Meriendas take place in Bailey Hall, Room 318 from 12:00-1:00pm.

We would like to thank all of the Spring & Fall 2012 Merienda presenters listed below. Please visit our website the Merienda website under the News & Events section for more information and event photos. Thank you:

Spring 2012 Schedule:
February 2 Jill Kuhnheim
February 9 Bill Woods
February 16 Stacey Burton
February 23 Bart Dean
March 1 Andrew Hilburn
March 8 Arnobio Morelix
March 15 Michelle Johnson-Motoyama
March 29 Emilia Barbosa
April 5 Paul Sneed
April 12 Roberto Castillo
April 19 Peter Haney
April 26 Javier Valerio

Fall 2012 Schedule:
September 6 James Moreno
September 13 Andrew Bailey
September 20 Giselle Anatol
September 27 Jean Benito Mercier & Ann Harbin
October 4 Jake Rapp
October 18 Richard Spano
October 25 Gabriel Racca, Francisco Enciso, Jorge Soberon, & Sydney Stone
November 1 Christina Valdivia-Alcala & Denis Defebaugh
November 8 Robert Hatch

Denis Defebaugh presenting on November 1st along with Christina Valdivia-Alcala, of the Tonantzintzi Society. Defebaugh shared his experiences and his photography from Oaxaca, MX over the last ten years. Top: Defebaugh and partner Ward Albro’s book titled, “The Day of the Dead.”
News from Outreach

It has been a busy fall at the Center of Latin American Studies Outreach.

This past semester we hosted a number of workshops on a range of topics. The first was a one-day Symposium on Health in Latin America. Speakers from a variety of health professions shared how they have taken their career abroad, as well as spoke about the health care system of the countries where they have worked.

Our next workshop, hosted in collaboration with the Spencer Art Museum and the Watkins History Museum, was a Día de los Muertos workshop for educators. Following a talk by PhD student and Graduate Teaching Assistant Javier Barroso about the history and meaning of Día de los Muertos, the teachers were given a tour of the Watkins Museum’s Día de los Muertos exhibit and then participated in a classroom activity led by the Spencer. Artwork created by students based on the Spencer’s activity, is on display at the Watkins Museum until Dec. 21st.

Our final educator workshop of the semester, co-sponsored by the department of Spanish and Portuguese, was on “Reinvisioning Spanish Language Education: A Critical Pedagogical Approach.” Professor Jennifer Leeman joined us from George Mason University to examine the representations of Spanish and Spanish speakers common in Spanish as a Second Language and Spanish as a Heritage Language education. Following her talk, there was a brief Kansas ESOL resource presentation by the KU School of Ed.

In addition to our workshops, we also sponsored the screening of “Waste Land” as part of the International Environmental Film Festival at the Spencer Museum of Art. “Waste Land” follows renowned artist Vik Muniz as he journeys from his home base in Brooklyn to his native Brazil and the world’s largest garbage dump, Jardim Gramacho, located on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. There he photographs an eclectic band of “catadores”—self-designated pickers of recyclable materials.

LAS Outreach also had several programs and school visits around the popular Día de los Muertos holiday. We were pleased to partner with the Tonantzín Society of Topeka to bring a number of wonderful programs to Topeka and the surrounding community in celebration of the holiday.

Most recently we were thrilled to partner with the Lied Center for ¡Sofrito! -- A comprehensive entertainment combining music, storytelling, and theater drawing from Caribbean Hispanic culture and music. We were joined by teachers and students for our pre-performance meeting with David Gonzales, the creator and star of ¡Sofrito!, and a presentation by Dr. Mirna Cabrera about the cultural and musical traditions from which ¡Sofrito! draws.

Additionally, Outreach continues to offer a variety of online material and resources for educators, free of cost, including El LASO digital Newsletter – featuring topical and timely field reports, lesson plans, articles, and interviews. Stay tuned for the next newsletter, which will come in the beginning of the Spring Semester. Outreach also has 10 cultural trunks that are wonderful learning tools that can be checked out and/or viewed online.

And finally, in September we said goodbye to our previous Outreach Coordinator, Catherine Butel and welcomed Danika Swanson. Danika has spent several years in Central & South America, in both Suriname and Guatemala. She is looking forward to continuing to support the mission of Outreach to promote learning about Latin America to K-12 educators and community colleges and hopes to build upon the resources of the Center to serve the needs of our constituents.

We would love to work more with KU students and faculty to promote learning opportunities about Latin America. If you are interested in sharing your personal experience and expertise on Latin America and the Caribbean with students and teachers at area schools, please consider joining our Speaker’s Bureau. We are looking for more students to present on a variety of topics. You can contact us at lasoutreach@ku.edu. We’d love to hear from you!
The Waggoner Research Colloquium is an annual meeting held every fall to celebrate the ongoing creation of scholarship about Latin America by KU faculty. It was inaugurated in 1992 by Elizabeth Kuznesof, and the tradition has continued over the last twenty years. Faculty and graduate students affiliated with the Center gather to hear LAS faculty discuss current issues and topics related to the study of Latin America. The fellowship among colleagues and graduate students is seen as a central part of the event along with the scholarly program. The interdisciplinary sponsorship is a testimony to KU’s continuing commitment to international education and its promotion of international consciousness among students and faculty. It also celebrates and carries on the legacy left by George Waggoner, in whose honor this Colloquium was founded.

Dr. Waggoner was Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences from 1954 until 1975, when he became the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. During his tenure, Dr. Waggoner founded the College Honors Program and established educational ties with universities in the Caribbean and in Central and South America. Concerned with international programs and development, he was instrumental in bringing many of the key Latin Americanists to KU. Our Center owes much of its strength to his vision, energy, and prescience.

The conference, held on Friday November 16th, 2012 included an interdisciplinary panel on the theme of “Alternative Images of a Nation,” followed by a reception with wine and hors d’oeuvres.

This year brought together the talents of a wide range of interdisciplinary KU faculty with presentations from Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History, who presented, “Rethinking the Genesis of Mexico’s Mestizo Nation.” Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music presented, “New Phenomenon of Música Nacional”: Constructing an Alternative Image of the Ecuadorian Mestizo Nation, and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish & Portuguese presented, “Travel Narratives and the Construction of an Alternative Argentine Identity.”

The 2012 Waggoner Research Colloquium panel from left: Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History; Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music; and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese. The panel presented on “Images of a Nation.”

The conference included an interdisciplinary panel on the theme of “Alternative Images of a Nation,” followed by a reception with wine and hors d’oeuvres.

This year brought together the talents of a wide range of interdisciplinary KU faculty with presentations from Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History, who presented, “Rethinking the Genesis of Mexico’s Mestizo Nation.” Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music presented, “New Phenomenon of Música Nacional”: Constructing an Alternative Image of the Ecuadorian Mestizo Nation, and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish & Portuguese presented, “Travel Narratives and the Construction of an Alternative Argentine Identity.”

The conference included an interdisciplinary panel on the theme of “Alternative Images of a Nation,” followed by a reception with wine and hors d’oeuvres.

This year brought together the talents of a wide range of interdisciplinary KU faculty with presentations from Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History, who presented, “Rethinking the Genesis of Mexico’s Mestizo Nation.” Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music presented, “New Phenomenon of Música Nacional”: Constructing an Alternative Image of the Ecuadorian Mestizo Nation, and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish & Portuguese presented, “Travel Narratives and the Construction of an Alternative Argentine Identity.”

The conference included an interdisciplinary panel on the theme of “Alternative Images of a Nation,” followed by a reception with wine and hors d’oeuvres.

This year brought together the talents of a wide range of interdisciplinary KU faculty with presentations from Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History, who presented, “Rethinking the Genesis of Mexico’s Mestizo Nation.” Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music presented, “New Phenomenon of Música Nacional”: Constructing an Alternative Image of the Ecuadorian Mestizo Nation, and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish & Portuguese presented, “Travel Narratives and the Construction of an Alternative Argentine Identity.”

The conference included an interdisciplinary panel on the theme of “Alternative Images of a Nation,” followed by a reception with wine and hors d’oeuvres.

This year brought together the talents of a wide range of interdisciplinary KU faculty with presentations from Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History, who presented, “Rethinking the Genesis of Mexico’s Mestizo Nation.” Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music presented, “New Phenomenon of Música Nacional”: Constructing an Alternative Image of the Ecuadorian Mestizo Nation, and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish & Portuguese presented, “Travel Narratives and the Construction of an Alternative Argentine Identity.”

The conference included an interdisciplinary panel on the theme of “Alternative Images of a Nation,” followed by a reception with wine and hors d’oeuvres.

This year brought together the talents of a wide range of interdisciplinary KU faculty with presentations from Robert Schwaller, Assistant Professor of History, who presented, “Rethinking the Genesis of Mexico’s Mestizo Nation.” Ketty Wong, Associate Professor of Music presented, “New Phenomenon of Música Nacional”: Constructing an Alternative Image of the Ecuadorian Mestizo Nation, and Verónica Garibotto, Assistant Professor of Spanish & Portuguese presented, “Travel Narratives and the Construction of an Alternative Argentine Identity.”
The Honduran Coup, Indigenous Rights, & the U.S.

Since the military coup in 2009, Honduras has been in a human rights crisis. The overthrow of President Manuel Zelaya, labeled a military coup, occurred when the Honduran Army on orders from the Honduran Supreme Court ousted the president and sent him into exile on June 28th, 2009. The United States was instrumental in legitimizing the Honduran administration that came to power after the coup. National security, the Honduran military and police, responsible for egregious human rights violations, have received millions from the United States in arms and training. In recent months violence associated with the drug war has also raised tensions between Indigenous communities and the government.

Tomás Gómez-Membreño, a member of the Lenca people, an indigenous community in southwestern Honduras, has been part of a vibrant nationwide network of organizations representing small farmers, women, Afro-descendants and members of the LGBTQ community. He has long been an active member of COPINH, using adult education and community radio as tools for mobilizing indigenous communities. Gómez-Membreño came to Lawrence on Tuesday, October 23rd, and spoke to students, faculty and members of the community about the issues facing the least represented groups in Honduras. He spoke in the Ecumenical Campus Ministries building at 7pm. The talk was sponsored by Latin American Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies at KU.
Student Updates

Lindsay Dudley, MA Student in Latin American Studies – Dudley traveled to Ecuador this past summer to conduct her master’s thesis fieldwork in the city of Quito. She interviewed Ecuadorian women who have returned to Ecuador after working abroad as migrants in Spain. Dudley’s interviews analyzed how these women are reconciling their return and how they are renegotiating their understanding of gender, with respect to expectations and performed responsibilities – within the household and within broader social networks. Dudley will also travel to Costa Rica during Spring Break 2013 as a staff member and translator in the “Preparing for International Careers” course taking place for the first time in Latin America.

Gena Pollack, Latin American Studies major and Jorge Soberón, MA Latin American Studies Student – Travelled to Waco, Texas to observe Baylor University’s Model Organization of American States in October 2012.

Gabriel Racca, MA Student in Latin American Studies – The Center of Latin American Studies is proud to welcome Gabriel as the newest member to the LAS staff! Racca will serve as the Outreach Assistant working on implementing a KU run Model Organization of American States with local colleges and high schools. Gabriel is also the co-founder of the Paraguay Student Associate (PSA), a student organization that has been on campus for the last two years. Racca helped to write the PSA charter and served as the treasurer and later as President of the organization.

Jorge Soberón, MA Student in Latin American Studies – After a tough battle for the Secretary General position, Jorge Soberón won out over four other candidates to be chosen as the 2012-2013 Secretary General for the Model Organization of American States. The model will take place in Washington, D.C. March 26 - 30, 2013. Soberón also completed an internship at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C. this summer and will again return to Waco in the Spring to do his OPT (optional practice training at Organization of American States (OAS) in the Department of International Affairs of the Secretariat for External Relations. Soberón also travelled to Waco, Texas to observe Baylor University’s Model Organization of American States in October 2012, he is pictured to the left with LAS major, Gena Pollack.

Sarah Stern, Latin American Studies & Journalism major – Twenty-four current students, faculty members and KU alumnae are among this year’s honorees in the 2012-13 KU Women of Distinction. Stern is featured on the calendar in the advocating for international students and cultures category. She is a KU Global Scholar and was named a Glamour Magazine Top Ten College Woman of 2012. Sarah has also been recognized for her international photography.

Undergraduate Snapshot:

Trent Boultinghouse, Latin American Studies, 2012 Graduate

Trent Boultinghouse, a Spring 2012 graduate in Latin American Studies, was awarded a prestigious internship with the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) in Washington, D.C. Trent has been working as a research associate for the popular independent research and information organization since this Fall. COHA’s interests focus on increasing the importance of the inter-American relationship, as well as encouraging the formulation of rational and constructive U.S. policies towards Latin America.

Trent’s first research article, “Fallout from reactionary Costa Rican Road Construction Project: the Latest in Chinchilla Corruption Allegations,” was published on September 19th, 2012 and focused on Costa Rica, corruption, and the future of the Laura Chinchilla administration. Boultinghouse also recently wrote on the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections and the outlook for U.S. policy toward Latin America in, “For Obama, Four More Years Requires Willingness to Look South.”

Boultinghouse’s first research article, “Fallout from reactionary Costa Rican Road Construction Project: the Latest in Chinchilla Corruption Allegations,” was published on September 19th, 2012 and focused on Costa Rica, corruption, and the future of the Laura Chinchilla administration. Boultinghouse also recently wrote on the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections and the outlook for U.S. policy toward Latin America in, “For Obama, Four More Years Requires Willingness to Look South.”

Trent has also been featured in a TV interview with Press TV, alongside COHA stalwart Kate Hayden.

Pictured above is Trent Boultinghouse with his sister Darcy in Washington, D.C. during his internship.
Undergraduate Highlights

By Peter Haney
Asst. Director & Undergraduate Advisor

It is hard to believe I have already been at KU for a year as Assistant Director and undergraduate coordinator. Over the past year it has often seemed like everything was coming at me all at once. Still, while struggling to meet deadlines and learn old systems while new systems are being phased in, I have had the privilege of getting to know wonderful colleagues and working with some genuinely inspiring students. When I was an undergraduate, my engagement with Latin America was what gave me the motivation to finish college, and it has been wonderful to meet thoughtful and accomplished students who share my fascination with the region’s history and cultures.

Having taught for ten years in multiple settings and a variety of disciplines, I can say with confidence that KU Latin American Studies majors match the very best students I have taught. I arrived at KU just as the new requirements for the major in Latin American Studies were approved. Today we move forward with a streamlined and well-integrated major that maintains the rigor and choice that Latin American Studies students have always enjoyed. As new generations of students move through our new core courses, I am confident that they will learn from each other as much as they learn from their professors.

In the Spring I was fortunate enough to teach the first incarnation of our Capstone Seminar (LAA 450), and this Fall I am near-ly finished with the first “Interdisciplinary Themes in Latin American Studies” (LAA 300). I am pleased to feel that the students are highly engaged and motivated to share ideas and challenge each other. I look forward to many more rewarding semesters. Right now the effort to recruit new majors and minors is our key priority.

We are particularly proud of seven majors and two minors who graduated this past May. One of these, Trent Boultinghouse, has spent the summer and fall as a Research Associate with the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, D.C. In this capacity he has contributed to reports on the re-election of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and a recent summary of prospects for the second Obama administration’s policy toward Latin America. Further reports will be available at www.coha.org. Another graduate, summer FLAS fellow Jordan Sparrow has been teaching English, Portuguese, and SAT preparation classes in Costa Rica while living in Heredia, Costa Rica. Right now Jordan is also interning with Education USA, a non-profit organization run by the U.S. State Department that advises international students on study in the United States. Check out the jack-o-lantern he carved from a watermelon for Halloween at http://jordansparrow.wordpress.com/ where he blogs every so often about his “Vida Tica.”

Latin American Studies alum Sam Sparlock, for her part, has traveled to Scandinavia after her summer FLAS fellowship to study Miskitu with Prof. Laura Herlihy in Nicaragua. She continues to blog about life and travel at http://samsparlock.wordpress.com/.

Some 2012 graduates have stayed closer to home. Caroline Dickinson, is in Lawrence working for General Dynamics Information Technology/Vangent, and James Baker is working with the Shawnee Mission School District’s Middle School ESL Centers as an ESL/Spanish aide while applying to graduate programs. After graduating with honors, serving as student representative on the Latin American Studies Undergraduate Committee, 2011-2012 FLAS fellow Mary Grace Felton has been working as a server in the Kansas City area while saving up and applying to law schools. Mary Grace hopes to use her Spanish and her background in Latin American Studies to work in the immigration field. Andrew Smith, who graduated with a business major and Latin American Studies minor, is an assistant manager at QuikTrip, where he has set his sights on moving up the ranks and anticipates starting a new position soon that will involve training other assistant managers. In his spare time, he plans to travel—in Latin America of course!

Meanwhile back at the Center there are lots of comings and goings. Jeff Miller is back on campus after spending the previous academic year at the University of Costa Rica where he studied Portuguese with FLAS support. Is this “Portuguese in Costa Rica” thing a trend? Among other things, Jeff is serving as this year’s student representative on the Latin American Studies Undergraduate Committee. After spending the summer in Guatemala studying Kaqchikel Maya on a summer FLAS fellowship, Alex O’Nello has decided to stay abroad for the fall. He
returns in the Spring to finish up the Business side of his Business/Latin American Studies double major.

Another FLAS fellow, Zach O’Bea, has begun a year abroad in Brazil at the Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado’s Global Connection Program. He will be returning in Fall 2013. Also coming back after a semester off campus is LAS/Environmental Studies major Emily Carpenter, who as of this writing has just finished an internship with the Student Conservation Association. Over the last sixteen weeks, Emily has been doing environmental education at the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge near Bonners Ferry, Idaho. After a great trip to Washington last semester with Melissa Birch’s Model Organization of American States class, Gena Pollack and graduate student Jorge Sobrón-Hernández travelled to Texas to view the Model Organization of American States at Baylor University. Jayhawk fans will forgive them this foray into enemy territory. Back here in Lawrence, Sarah Stern and photographer Gary Mark Smith recently celebrated the publication of Rocinha the Book, which features photographs the pair took of the famous favela of Rio de Janeiro. Readers can check out a preview of the images at www.rocinhathebook.com/.

For the most part, announcements about graduations will have to wait until May, but we do have one December graduate to announce. Congratulations to Danielle Olson who will finish her BA with a double major in Business and Latin American Studies. Congratulations are also due to Ashley Cotton, who has been accepted to a graduate program in Political Science at Texas A&M Commerce.

Several of us got together early in the Fall semester for an undergraduate bienvenida in which several students who had returned from semesters or summers abroad shared their experiences and advice with others. Latin American Studies majors Jeff Miller, Sarah Stern, Theodore Pommerenke, shared the floor with our ever-cheerful front desk assistant Lauren Lottino, discussing their study in Costa Rica, Paraguay, Perú, and Nicaragua. We’ve got some wonderful people here in the program, and I will be sorry to see so many of you go in May. So here’s wishing every-body a restful break and the strength to keep moving forward next semester. The Center of Latin American Studies accomplished a lot this past year.

Congratulations 2011-2012 Graduates!

Latin American Studies Majors:

James Baker, LAS & Spanish
Trent Boultinghouse, LAS & History (Pre-Law)
Caroline Dickinson, LAS
Molly Hartz, LAS & Spanish (Fall 2011)
Mary Grace Felton, LAS & Linguistics
Diana Hess, LAS & Spanish (Pre-Law)
Molly McGonigle, LAS & Spanish (Fall 2011)
Scott Montana, LAS
Danielle Olson, LAS & Business (Fall 2012)
Jordan Sparrow, LAS & Co-Major Global & International Studies, Minor Brazilian Studies

Latin American Studies Minors:

Andrew Smith, Marketing (Business)
Devin Gerling, Anthropology (Fall 2012)
Samantha Spurlock, French & Linguistics

Masters of Latin American Studies:

Andrew Bailey, Masters of Latin American Studies & Masters of Business Administration. Fall 2011
Molly Martin, Masters of Latin American Studies & Masters of Business Administration. Summer 2012
Fernando Yaluk, Masters of Latin American Studies. Spring 2012
Giving to Latin American Studies

Last year was the fiftieth anniversary of the Center, and the academic year end also marked the retirement of our esteemed colleague, Anita Herzfeld. We thought we would use these two events to begin recognizing annual financial contributors to our activities. Below are those who have donated money to the Center for Latin American Studies from 10/2011-10/2012; there are some long-time backers and many new ones. We take this space to thank them all publicly for their support!!

We hope that more people will consider pitching in to further Center activities and sponsor students’ accomplishments in a range of venues!

Donations Fund Student Travel

The Center of Latin American Studies strives to provide a diverse range of opportunities and programs for its students, the University and the greater community, but it cannot sustain these activities on state funding alone. By giving to the Center, you contribute to our outreach efforts and our students’ academic success.

Through donations, students such as Melanie Wetzel, pictured above, are able to travel to Latin America to complete pioneering research on interdisciplinary subjects. Wetzel traveled to Nicaragua to study Miskito Language and Culture with the Center’s faculty-led study abroad program. Working with Professor Laura Herlihy of Latin American Studies, Wetzel was able to obtain a FLAS fellowship to intensively study the Miskito language spoken on the Eastern coast of Nicaragua and Honduras.

Your continued support of the Center of Latin American Studies is greatly appreciated.

$15-$74 – amigo/a:
Dan and Susan Cary
Jaime A. Díaz
Hilda L. Enoch
Jan and Cornelia Flora
Amanda M. Heter
Vallie Portugalz Hogan and
Thomas F. Hogan Jr.
Veronica Silvany Kinney
Robert & Elizabeth Lichtwardt
Patricia A. May
Antonio Simões
Emily Tummons

$75-$124 — companheiro/a
Tamara Falicov and Stephen Steigman
Stephen Fawcett and Kathleen McCluskey Fawcett
Viron and Martha Feagan

$125-$249 — admirador/a
John Hoopes and
Lauren Mattleman Hoopes
Justin Hunt
John S. Miller and
Rachel Buckwalter Miller
Rhonda L. Neugebauer and
Shahrokh Azedi
Carol and Delbert Shankel
Marinos & Thelma Sophodeous
Diane and Bruce Yost
Elisa and Rodrigo Zogbi

$250-$499 — patrón/a
G. Wayne Burge
Tony Rosenthal

$500-$999 — fanático/a
Elaine McColm Darst
Gunda Georg
Jill Kuhnheim

$1,000-$2,499 — devoto/a
Melissa Birch

$2,500-$4,999 — shaman
Charles L. Stansifer

$5,000-$25,000—ánge
Marshal C. Eakin and Michelle Beatty-Eakin

$25,000 + — ótimo!

You may give online by visiting the “Giving” page on The Latin American Studies website (http://latamst.ku.edu/about/giving/index.shtml). Online giving is secure, speedy and simple. Click the area you would like to support and you will be redirected to the website of KU Endowment, the non-profit fundraising organization that supports KU.

Latin American Studies Contingency Fund: Donations help fund undergraduate or graduate study abroad scholarships, research or conference travel for students and faculty, public programs such as conferences, lectures, exhibits and performances, and the Kansas Latin Americanist newsletter.

Stansifer Fund: Initially endowed by Professor Emeritus Charles Stansifer, this 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.

In honor of Anita Herzfeld: Donations help to build a scholarship fund which will help sponsor undergraduate students who wish to study abroad.

If you wish to send a donation by mail, please contact us at:

Center of Latin American Studies
The University of Kansas
Bailey Hall, 1440 Jayhawk Blvd., Suite 320
Lawrence, KS 66045-7574

Thank you for your support!