Reflexiones de la directora

Ya estuvo. The 2009-2010 year has come to a close in a combination of excitement over new initiatives and student achievements, and concern over the struggles of our gente in Arizona. Let’s begin with good news about two of our graduating seniors.

Luis Alfredo Garcia graduated with his B.S. in Electrical Engineering and has accepted a job with the federal government in Virginia. More details are below. Crystal Stoll Alvarez graduated with a B.S. in Global and Area Studies, with additional specializations in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and International Development. She begins the M.A. program in Student Affairs Administration at MSU this fall.

News of Latina/o student success is welcome indeed at this particular moment, as the US collects census data on our growing population and as the Governor of Arizona signs legislation to target vulnerable im/migrant Latinas and Latinos and to dismantle Raza Studies curricula. The 2000 census revealed that 22.1% of the US Hispanic population graduated from high school, 19.9% had some college and 10.4% had a bachelor’s degree or higher (Hispanics in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands: 2000). Our population increases, yet we remain undereducated. Forces gather to reproduce the Arizona legislation in our own state, and the tragedy of public education continues to unfold.

Chicano/Latino Studies has a unique responsibility. Our legacy is one of rigorous and relevant programs of study that place community engagement and social action at their center. We must be attentive to the need to support our students through the crucial transition to university life, understanding the vital mentoring role that CLS faculty, staff, and students must fulfill. As faculty and staff, we are charged with developing in students the analytical, methodological and communication skills needed to navigate complex professional and institutional worlds. As a community of scholars, we strive to model an agile interdisciplinarity coupled with a deep institutional knowledge.

Much work remains, and I look forward to another year of meeting the challenges we must face together. In the meantime, I wish everyone a summer of rest and good writing.

Con paz,
Sheila Marie Contreras

CLS Student Helps Improve Internet Access in Africa

Electrical engineering and CLS graduate Luis Garcia travels to Africa this summer to help bring the internet to rural parts of Tanzania as part of an engineering class. This project is part of an ongoing project by the Department of Electrical Engineering to provide internet access to Tanzanian schools. Currently two schools share a satellite connection located at a primary school in Baraka; a second school is connected via WiFi; a third school with WiMAX technology. Since the satellite connection is powered by solar panels, it is desirable for the satellite link and links to other schools to be on only when needed.

Students will design a control system that shuts down the satellite antenna automatically when not needed. When no one accesses the internet for a certain amount of time, the satellite link will shut down. When someone does try to access the internet, the satellite link will power up again. To conserve energy, the satellite link will shut down when the battery power drops to 40% of the maximum capacity. Garcia will help work on a system that renews a battery power system for internet connections. He believes it is important to address these issues for the future of Africa and the world.

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CLS Welcomes New Faculty Members

**Eric Gonzalez Juenke**

Eric comes to MSU from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He earned his PhD in Political Science from Texas A&M in 2005. He specializes in Latino politics, minority politics, U.S. electoral institutions, state and local elections, legislative and bureaucratic minority representation, black politics, and democratic theory. Eric has a joint appointment between Political Science and the Chicano and Latino Studies Program.

**Isabel Ayala**

Isabel has a Ph.D in Sociology from Texas A&M with a focus on demography and race, class, and gender. Her research interests include social inequality, Latina/o sociology, immigration, racial and ethnic relations, fertility, gender, and demography. Ayala was an Assistant Professor at the University of Albany in the Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies Department. She has researched the relationship between migration, fertility, and minority status among Mexican-origin women in the United States. She has presented at several national conferences, workshops and summer training programs including the Census Workshop sponsored by the Inter-University Program for Latino Research at University of Notre Dame and the Gender Studies Summer Program at El Colegio de Mexico.

**Fall 2010 Latino and Chicano Politics Class Offered**

The topic for the CLS program’s CLS 896 class for Fall 2010, taught by Eric Juenke, will be Latino and Chicano Politics in the United States. The course is for graduate students from various fields interested in Chicano and Latino political history, the study of current political events, and the methods used to study these populations. It will cover immigration, pan-ethnicity, social movements, elections and representation, institutional obstacles to minority influence on policy, and elite and mass attitudes and behavior.

The class will discuss current events, historical analysis, the study of political science, and other social science research. Topics include Latino participation in politics, institutional barriers hindering political participation, and the non-political factors such as economics, social class, language and housing patterns affect political participation. Questions include: What factors, if any, help differentiate Chicano/Latino politics? Do many of these differences pertain to the study of Chicano/Latino politics by scholars?

**Spring 2011 Class Focuses on Migration and Transnationalism**

Dr. Ayala will teach CLS 896 in Spring 2011 with the topic U.S. Latinos-International Migration and Transnationalism. The class will address the central topics of international migration and transnationalism focusing on Chicanos/Latinos. It will draw from interdisciplinary research to develop a critical and thoughtful understanding of migration. Students will be presented with concepts of theoretical perspectives and substantial and methodological issues associated with migration and transnationalism.

The course will be divided in three sections. The first part will concentrate on distinguishing among the different types, causes, and consequences of international migration and transnationalism. The second is an understanding of issues of integration and examine economic and social implications of migration. The third section addresses the political experience of Latino migrants and the redefinition of boundaries paying particular attention to the role of the State.
New CLS Scholars Program Unveiled; Scholars wanted

The Chicano/Latino Studies Program is pleased to announce a recently revitalized Chicano/Latino Studies Scholars Program for the 2010-2011 academic year. The Scholars program was formerly known as the Chicano/Latino Studies Fellows Program.

The goals of the Scholars program are to strengthen academic performance, develop leadership skills, encourage study abroad, internships, and guided research, and to promote interdisciplinary research in Chicano/Latino Studies.

Scholars will have the opportunity to work with a faculty mentor and, in turn, mentor first-year students in a classroom environment. Other opportunities for Scholars include volunteering in Lansing-area high schools and participation in workshops designed to help students prepare for graduate school or entry into the professional world. Scholars will also be able to contribute to programming initiatives for the Chicano/Latino Studies Program.

The Scholars program is accepting applications for the 2010-2011 academic year. Chicano/Latino Studies Scholars applicants must be in good academic standing and enrolled in the Chicano/Latino Studies Specialization, have an interest in mentorship, demonstrate a strong desire to grow personally and academically, and to support the growth of others. Applicants must be available for Fall 2010 and Spring 2011. Students interested in being part of the Chicano/Latino Studies Scholars Program should contact the office for an application.

First Steps Taken for Latina/o Cultural Center

This spring, representatives from the Chicano/Latino Studies Program participated in site visits to three cultural centers in Michigan: the Charles Wright African-American Museum in Detroit, the Ziibiwing Cultural Center in Mount Pleasant, and the Arab-American National Museum in Dearborn. These visits are part of a year-long collaborative research effort between community and university partners to investigate the founding of a Latina/o Cultural Center in Detroit.

Generated by the longstanding community interest in creating a museum of Latin-American culture in Southwest Detroit and with funding from the Arts of Citizenship Program at the University of Michigan, the Latina/o Museum and Cultural Center Project brings together community leaders to explore the role of the museum, identify the community's needs, and visit other museums to explore models to help visualize a similar project in Detroit. Many thanks to all our wonderful hosts, and to Latino Studies at U-M for organizing the visits. For more info go to www.imccproject.weebly.com.

Event Explores Tejano Music in Michigan

“Schooling: Tejano Style” was held in September 2009 as part of a month-long series celebrating the sesquicentennial of Lansing’s Old Town. Organized by Chicano/Latino Studies and the graduate program in American Studies, the event brought three conjunto musicians, Juve Aldaco of El Grupo Aldaco, René Meave of Los Bandits and Kookie Hernandez, together to talk about the history of Tejano music in Michigan and to “school” the audience in the role of the accordion in the development of the genre. Lori Somers, a folklorist with expertise in the area of conjunto music, facilitated the panel, which was attended by the public, MSU students, faculty and staff. A blend of lecture, discussion, Q&A and musical performance, the event emphasized the Mexican contribution to Michigan arts and culture, reminded us of the depth of Chican/o history in Michigan, and launched CLS’ 2009-2010 commitment to community engagement. It was an invigorating evening and we anticipate more events of this kind in the future! A special thanks to local artist Jesse González for photographing the performances.
Diana Rivera participated in the Latino Museum Studies Program at the Smithsonian Institution July-August 2009. Rivera was one of 15 selected to participate in the four-week program. The MSU-CLS PhD program has had two of its students in its three years of existence participate in LMSP.


Alumni


Angelita (Navarro) Valdez, ’05 MSW ’06, is the supervisor of the Behavioral Health Unit, Immigration Program and Transitional Housing for women and children at Catholic Charities of West Michigan.

Stephanie Rios, ’95, is the Business Development Associate for Constellation NewEnergy. She was involved in the effort to create CLS.

Esmeralda Pérez, ’03, is the new Chicano/Latino Studies Undergraduate Coordinator. Welcome, Esme!