Dear Faculty, Students, Staff, Alumni, and Friends,

As we wrap up an unexpected spring semester, still in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, I think it's important for us to pause and reflect on all the good that we accomplished this year.

In the past year, we danced and shared memories as we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the construction of the Latino Center and honored retired director Dr. Michael Gonzáles. We welcomed to our campus four distinguished Latin American and Latinx Studies scholars who shared their research with our community of faculty, staff, and students. We learned from one another as we gathered for our second annual conference - Treinta y tres - which featured the research of CLLAS faculty associates and graduate students and the music of Mexican jazz pianist Alex Mercado. We engaged and secured funding for undergraduate students involved in the Latinx Oral History Project. We transitioned to working - teaching, learning, and collaborating - online, all while dealing with new routines and the anxiety and losses brought on by the coronavirus. And still, we finished the semester strong. Earlier this month, we graduated 11 minors in Latino and Latin American Studies and awarded our first-ever Graduate Certificate in Latin American Studies. There is much to be proud of in just these few highlights.

While there are many unknowns ahead of us, I am grateful to the extraordinary efforts of our faculty, students, and staff during his challenging time. Though we may not be together in person, know that you can count on the CLLAS community for support.

Todo lo mejor,

[Signature]

May 2020
Laura Johnson (Educational Technology, Research, and Assessment) was featured on the Service-Learning and Experiential Education podcast discussing her scholarship centered on projects in Puerto Rico, Taiwan, and Chicago. These projects rely on participatory and/or collaborative research processes and premise local knowledge (and grassroots organizations) as a way of addressing specific issues and problems in diverse contexts.

Listen to Dr. Johnson's episode 25 podcast by clicking here.

Beatrix Hoffman (History) was named the recipient of the Wilma Strickland Award. This award is given to someone who has demonstrated exemplary leadership and service resulting in a more favorable campus climate for women, provided continual leadership/service over an extended period of time, and expanded efforts beyond expectations and work responsibilities.

Dr. Hoffman also published an important op-ed on how Americans are made vulnerable in crisis because of the U.S. health insurance system.

Read Dr. Hoffman's Newsweek article here.

Rodrigo Villanueva (Music, Jazz Studies) received a Fulbright award to Brazil where he will spend four months researching Afro-Brazilian rhythms and teaching jazz at two major music programs: the Institute of Art at Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) and the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE). Professor Villanueva shared his teaching expertise at UNICAMP and UFPE previously as an artist in residence, offering graduate-level jazz drum set lessons and jazz arranging master classes and directing large jazz ensembles.

Simón Weffer (Sociology/CLLAS) became a member of the Working Group on Social Movements during COVID-19 at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado. He will be studying Latinx immigration rights groups in Illinois. You can also re-watch Dr. Weffer during his WGN SuperTuesday broadcasting spot as he discussed the impact of Latinx voters on the Super Tuesday Primary.

Click here to watch the WGN newsclip featuring Dr. Weffer.
LATS minors Dulce Hernández and Sheila Martínez worked with Dr. Abreu this past year to create a podcast on the origins of the NIU Latinx Oral History Project. They also conducted interviews with Latinx individuals involved in higher education and social justice activism. Their work was funded through an NIU Research, Engagement, and Academic Diversity (READ) Grant.

Click the link to take a listen to their podcast.

Contact Dr. Abreu if you want to get involved in the Latinx Oral History Project!

LATS minor Antonio Torres participated in the Research Rookies program under the direction of Dr. Simón Weffer. Antonio presented his research on the history of Latino Medal of Honor recipients at this year's Virtual Undergraduate Research and Artistry Day (URAD). Antonio was drawn to this project for two overlapping reasons: first, he has an interest in Latinx history; second, he is in ROTC. He hopes his research will make more visible the presence and experiences of Latinxs in the U.S. military.

LATS Minor Cristina Bravo won both the Robert Marcelin Award and the CLLAS Undergraduate Scholarship this year. Each scholarship is in the amount of $500. Cristina was also the recipient of a 2020 Forward, Together Forward Scholarship. Congratulations!
CLLAS GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

**Elisa Flores** worked as a graduate assistant for CLLAS for the past two years. This spring, she graduated with her M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling. In March, Elisa passed her National Exam to become a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), and her future plans include pursuing a PhD in Disability Studies with a focus on medical aspects and psychosocial aspects of disability on minority groups and their families.

**Alexander Lundberg** worked as a graduate assistant for CLLAS for the past year while earning his M.A. in History and Graduate Certificate in Latin American Studies. Alexander plans to pursue a PhD in History at NIU starting in the fall. His research will focus on urban slavery in nineteenth-century Brazil.

In the fall, CLLAS will welcome three new graduate assistants: **Brisa Martínez** (Law), **Lia Sánchez** (Digital Marketing), and **Anthony Villanueva** (History).

RESEARCH NEWS

CLLAS has been invited to participate in Voces of a Pandemic, an oral history mini-project led by Maggie Rivas-Rodríguez of the Voces Oral History Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The Latinx community has been disproportionately affected by the novel coronavirus, largely because so many Latinxs work in “essential” jobs that involve contact which may lead to infection. As this crisis unfolds, the Voces Oral History Center and its partner institutions seek to record, archive and disseminate interviews with the larger Latinx community. Please be in touch with Dr. Christina Abreu, if you are interested in telling your story or participating in the project as an interviewer.
LATS 100: Introduction to Latin American Studies is one of two required courses for the minor in Latino and Latin American Studies. This course, which also fulfills General Education and Human Diversity requirements, is being offered ONLINE this summer and fall. Dr. Simón Weffer will be teaching the course this summer, and Dr. Anne Hanley will offer the course when classes resume in the fall.

**RESEARCH NEWS**

In collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, CLLAS has been awarded $7,500 from the Inter-University Program for Latino Research to support research on how the COVID-19 crisis has affected Latinx communities. Dr. Christina Abreu and Dr. Simón Weffer will be working with Dr. Cristián Doña-Reveco (UNO) on a project titled "Crisis and Culture of Fear among Latino Communities in the Midwest."

**A LOOK AHEAD AT FALL 2020**

**Two Guest Lectures to be Held in Virtual Formats**

CLLAS looks forward to hosting two guest lectures next semester. On the schedule is Dr. Marisol LeBrón, Assistant Professor in the Department of Mexican American and Latina/o Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. LeBrón was scheduled to visit campus in March, but her talk was postponed because of the COVID-19 crisis. She'll be giving a talk and participating in a discussion centered on her book *Policing Life and Death: Race, Violence, and Resistance in Puerto Rico.*

Our other guest speaker will help kick off our conversations focused on our **Annual Research Theme for 2020-2021: Public Health and Inequality.** CLLAS is excited to welcome **Dr. Mariola Espinosa,** Associate Professor of History and Director of Global Public Health at the University of Iowa. Dr. Espinosa will be giving a talk that draws on her research on public health in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**TEACHING NEWS: LATS GOES ONLINE for SUMMER and FALL 2020**

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SING 2020 GRADUATES
¡FELICIDADES!

- Raul Arroyo
- Fiorella "Alejandra" Cordova
- Julie Flores
- Diana Galvan
- Ainsley Galvez
- Gilda Juncal
- Vivian Meade
- Adriana Aguilera Pérez
- Alondra Rodríguez
- Stephanie Salazar
- Berenice Villagómez

WISHING ALL THE BEST TO OUR 2020 LATINO AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATING SENIORS