The Office of Diversity and Inclusion publishes ¿Qué Pasa, Ohio State? each autumn and spring semester. ¿Qué Pasa, Ohio State? is proud to celebrate the achievements of Latinx in a variety of disciplines: art, politics, science, technology, literature, and more. Although not every discipline will be featured in each issue, each thematically organized issue will highlight the diversity of fields in which Latinx excel.

The Ohio State University is not responsible for the content and views of this publication. The publication does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the staff.

¿Qué Pasa, Ohio State? reserves the right to refuse any submission for publication. For questions and inquiries, please contact quepasa@osu.edu.

Note: We use the term “Latinx” to represent all Latino identities. Photos for each piece are provided by the author or interviewee unless otherwise noted.

On the Cover:
Los Guachos, Columbus, Ohio by Robert D. Lemon

Contact:
https://www.robert-lemon.com/
ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

Reyna Esquivel-King, Editor

The Latinx population in Columbus has been and continues to grow and become increasingly engaged in local happenings. Community engagement is important and can be enacted in many ways. This issue is entitled Engagement and Leadership and it highlights the wonderful, rich research and participation of the Latinx community, both on and off the Ohio State campus.

We provide a broad scope featuring student leadership programs, oral histories, and other Latinx groups that promote Latinx businesses and organizations within Columbus.

We open this issue discussing two leaders in Diversity and Inclusion. First, we celebrate the appointment of Dr. James L. Moore III as the Interim Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer. Second, Jacob Farr reviews the talk that author Richard Rodriguez gave at the Ohio State on Nov. 15, 2017, about diversity and the humanities as part of the “President and Provost’s Diversity Lecture and Cultural Arts Series.” Here Rodriguez explains why the humanities is so important for him as a self-identified queer, Native American, Mexican.

Both Rodriguez and Dr. Moore are committed to diversity and better representation for minority groups in higher education. Andrea Magaña Lewis, public policy officer with the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission (OCHLA) and Ohio State intern Caroline Filbrun prepared a report entitled “The State of Education for Latino Students in Ohio” examining the Latinx population and participation in education, both in secondary and higher institutions. One of the larger problems is the lack of Latinx teachers to create an appropriate “culturally responsive approach in the classroom.”

While Latinx students continue to fight the struggle of larger representation in the classroom, Latinx Studies proves beneficial to both Latinx and other minority students. Undergraduate Candace Pettiford, self-identifying as a Black American, wrote an essay about her first impressions and experience taking a Latinx Studies course. Pettiford explains how Latinx Studies opened her view into other forms of discrimination and how to better understand the political situation of immigration and violence against men of color. PhD Candidate in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Marie Lerma discusses her work as a research assistant for Dr. Theresa Delgadillo. The collaborative project entitled, “Building Worlds: Latinx Placemaking in the Midwest,” is interdisciplinary and Lerma’s specific examination was how the Latinx community in Ohio creates place through festivals.

In addition to written research and works, the Columbus Latinx population has a rich oral history tradition. A few projects here at the Ohio State examine these histories and attempt to have underrepresented voices heard for a larger audience. ¡Dimelo, Columbus!, produced by Dr. Leticia Wiggins who interviews several people within the Latinx community to document their experiences. This piece provides highlights from three different interviewees. Undergraduates Kelly DiLullo and Adriana Ponce de León explain the work they conducted for the Oral Narratives of Latin@s in Ohio (ONLO) project, under Dr. Elena Foulis. Dr. Foulis describes the ONLO project in her article on Ohio Habla. This project seeks to “collect, catalog, and preserve oral narratives of Latinos/as in Ohio.” ONLO is a rich source of material that allows for the Latinx experience in Ohio to be heard and recognized.

The centerfold included in this issue is artwork entitled, Unidad, by Tyrese Person, a powerful message to unify our community!

The second half of the issue focuses on student leadership at Ohio State. We chose to feature a select representation of groups that work with the larger community of Columbus. First is the Buckeye Leadership Program that Beth Johnson describes as “an interdisciplinary program focused on advancing leadership development and global impact.” A piece by Yolanda Zepeda discusses the wonderful post-college career of Emanual Torres, an OSU alumni and cheerleader who is now a prominent Latinx leader, working on the Ohio Latino Affairs Board of Commissioners. Undergraduates Jacob Farr and Rachel Bess explain the work of ENCompass: Empowering Neighborhoods of Columbus, a group which provides healthcare information and help to people in Columbus. Undergraduate Evelyn Nunez-Rodriguez encourages students and others in the community to “Stand up, Speak out” to help the situation of those in the Latinx community whose TPS (Temporary Protection status) is in danger.

We end the issue with a spotlight on OSU students and faculty, including Meilenys Peraza, an interview with Dr. Frederick Aldama, and a description of Dr. Jeffrey Cohen’s work on food trucks and the Latinx community in Columbus. The final article by Jennifer Cotto Maisonet recounts the horrors of Hurricane Maria and how the island of Puerto Rico is still in dire need of aid which is very short coming, illustrating that the Latinx community needs to come together to help one another.

The message for the Latinx community at OSU is simple: Engage!
James L. Moore III takes the helm in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion

James L. Moore III was appointed Ohio State Interim Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer on May 1, 2017. An internationally recognized scholar and seasoned administrative leader, Dr. Moore is EHE Distinguished Professor of Urban Education in the College of Education and Human Ecology and executive director of the Todd Anthony Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male. He previously served as associate provost for Diversity and Inclusion, leading the Morrill Scholarship Program, Young Scholars Program, and two Upward Bound programs among other pipeline and student support initiatives. Dr. Moore most recently completed a term as a program director for Broadening Participation in Engineering at the National Science Foundation.

Photo Credit: By AprilCharlie14 (Own work)

On the cover: Los Guachos, Columbus, Ohio by Robert D. Lemon

The image featured on the cover is by filmmaker and cultural and urban geographer Robert D. Lemon. Dr. Lemon investigates Latino social, cultural and economic practices around food production and consumption. His research has examined how “Mexican immigrants remake urban space from the bottom up,” focusing on taco truck spaces in Columbus, Ohio, among other places. In “The Spatial Practices of Food Trucks” (in Food Trucks, Cultural Identity and Social Justice: From Loncheras to Lobsta Love, 2017), Lemon brings attention to the vulnerability of taqueros in Columbus, and he contrasts the mobility of taco trucks to the promise of permanency that the food trucks hold for their operators.

Dr. Lemon’s passion for visual arts and storytelling and his commitments to social justice find expression in his photography and film. In Transfusión, Lemon’s award-winning documentary film set in Columbus, Lemon captures the social and economic impact of evolving taco truck spaces in the Greater Hilltop Area and in the King-Lincoln District. Visit his website www.robert-lemon.com to view a gallery of his artistic works and to learn more about his academic research.
Richard Rodriguez Speaks on Diversity and the Humanities

Jacob N. Farr, Undergraduate, Biomedical Science

No stranger to diversity, the award-winning author Richard Rodriguez identifies as a queer, Native American, Mexican. Yet despite this self-identity he comments that he doesn’t like the word diversity. It makes him nervous. On November 15, 2017 Rodriguez spoke at Ohio State as part of the “President and Provost’s Diversity Lecture and Cultural Arts Series.” He explained that the word “diversity” sounds unnervingly close to the word “divide;” and rather than separate himself from others, his natural impulse has been to see himself as a part of everyone. His goal is to come to the point that he could see black history, or American history as his own. For this reason, he loves the humanities.

He commented that the humanities teach him he has the world. By reading and learning, he can imagine and identify with varied experiences. For example, while reading the Iliad, he could feel genuine sadness at the death of Hector. Furthermore, the humanities were not about increasing diversity or division, but rather inviting others “into the joke”—inviting others to participate, engage, and fall in love with stories and groups different from your own.

Furthermore, he shared that the core of being learned is being compelled to reach out in curiosity to strangers. He recounted stories of ultra-orthodox Jews that were curious enough to attend his events. He also highlighted the need for brave communities to be open to visitors. For example, when he skipped his junior prom to attend a Malcom X rally, an African American bouncer had to decide to allow Rodriguez, the first nonblack man to attend, into the venue. Without both curious individuals and brave communities there is no assimilation of identity as we fall in love across cultural lines.

Rodriguez ended the meeting with a book signing for his new novel Darling: A Spiritual Autobiography which is a commentary on Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Rodriguez is also the author of Brown, Hunger of Memory, and Days of Obligation, for which he has received the highest honor a humanities text can earn, The National Humanities Medal. For those interested in reading more about Richard Rodriguez’ life and thoughts on diversity, Hunger of Memory is the coming of age memoir of his education and the intersection of identity and culture.

“Education requires an imagination of oneself, larger the self, larger than one’s difference from other people, but rather an inversion of self and an ability to see the self from another persons’ point of view.”

Richard Rodriguez,
November 15, 2017
The State of Education for Latino Students in Ohio

“Ohio’s graduating class of 2024 is predicted to be 51% more Hispanic than the class of 2014, yet less than 1% of teachers in Ohio identify as Hispanic.”

Andrea Magaña Lewis, public policy officer with the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission (OCHLA), noted this startling finding in a report that she and Ohio State intern Caroline Filbrun prepared on behalf of the Commission. The report, “The State of Education for Latino Students in Ohio,” examines Latino participation and performance in Ohio schools and their representation in higher education. It probes the teaching capacity in the state, particularly in response to the need for a culturally responsive approach in the classroom.

“Encouraging Hispanics to enter the field of education, and ensuring that all teachers have the cultural sensitivity to effectively engage Latino youth are important steps toward achieving education equality,” says Magaña Lewis. Yet, the report notes, among the nearly 15,000 students enrolled in Ohio’s approved teacher preparation programs in 2014, fewer than 500 were Latinx.

Addressing these challenges, OCHLA’s Ohio Latino Education Summit convenes educators, administrators, community leaders, and public officials to discuss the prevailing issues regarding the education of Ohio’s Latinx students. This year, the Latino Affairs Commission is partnering with The Ohio State University, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Ohio Department of Higher Education to host the Latino Education Summit in November 2018. The conference will focus on improving Latino teacher recruitment in Ohio and ensuring that teacher preparation programs are inclusive of the Latino perspective when devising culturally responsive teaching methods. Details and a copy of the report can be found at ochla.ohio.gov.

The Latinx student body at Ohio State is more than double the size of Latinx enrollments at any other Ohio college or university.
The educational attainment of US Hispanics lags behind other race and ethnic groups. Fewer than 10% of Hispanics hold college degrees, compared to 13% of African Americans, 20% of Whites and 30% of Asian Americans.
My Latinx Studies Experience

Candace Pettiford, Undergraduate, Business Marketing

I am a Black American. I understand what discrimination against Black people is and how it has affected my experience in the United States. What I did not understand were different forms of discrimination and how they affected others’ experiences in this country. It is not often that we have the time to look beyond ourselves to recognize the experiences of others, and unfortunately that lack of time has led to lack of understanding and that lack of understanding has led to fear and defensiveness of the unknown. That fear of the unknown is what has this world at a current impasse, and we have come to a point where it is easier to blame others for our own ignorance and to erect walls, literally and figuratively, to avoid having to deal with social issues head-on.

"Without this class I would have more than likely continued to wander in my obliviousness and that is what the world is doing at this very moment."

Personally, I had almost never considered the experiences of Latinx as they exist in the U.S. I was naive about the struggles of other populations and often unwilling to have conversations about said populations, although I was extremely curious about Latinx culture. I did not harbor a dislike of Latinx, but rather was unwilling to make the time to learn about Latinx, and this led to my reliance on preconceived notions, stereotyping, and just basic ignorance. I shielded myself from the dark side of what it truly meant to be Latinx. We are all guilty of this as students—we often attempt to save as much brain space as possible so we ignore things that may require that we invest and spend time trying to understand one another. For a long time, I always pondered, why is it that even at the college/university level we must take more classes that make us well-rounded? Now I know why. The current state of this country against immigrants, Latinx in particular, is quite scary. We assume stereotypes about Latinx and claim that they are stealing the opportunity for the American Dream from right beneath our feet, without taking accountability for own actions that keep us from acquiring more out of life.

Latinx make up quite a large proportion of the United States population currently and that should mean something positive, we should embrace this mixing pot, but this unfortunately is not the case. I learned about this by studying, for my Introduction to Latinx Studies class, the deaths of three men of color, one being Latinx, one Black American, and one Asian. I never really considered the syntax of news articles and public mourning ceremonies that surrounded death as it related to Latinx men (and other men of color) in this country. It was strange to see how just an implication of wrong-doing could have such harsh ramifications on how we view people of color. I read research that critically examined the media coverage of the death of a white male in comparison to the deaths of men of color. This study revealed how we often associate white men with being upstanding citizens, we regard them as being family men, and regardless of any actual wrong doing, we tend to highlight their positives. In the case of the men of color, however, we do not see their genuine affection for others and celebrations of their lives. We only see implications of wrong-doing that led to their death, even, sometimes, on news station broadcasts, omitting mentions of their names, which makes the loss of a human less important. This was only one of the many readings we studied that introduced us to thinking critically about Latinx experience in the U.S. Without this class I would have more than likely continued to wander in my obliviousness and that is what the world is doing at this very moment. Students need the opportunity to educate themselves about multiple cultures and experiences, and our university could allow people to overcome the gaps in their knowledge and reject the hatred and bigotry that is currently being televised in this country. The awareness that Latinx studies courses offer is of utmost importance at the moment. We are a major national, and international, university, and we need to fully live up to that role.
Latinx Placemaking in Ohio
Marie Lerma, PhD candidate, Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Starting last summer, I was one of three research assistants under Dr. Theresa Delgadillo for a research collaborative that involves several professors from different universities in the Midwest. The project is called “Building Sustainable Worlds: Latinx Placemaking in the Midwest”, and is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/Humanities Without Walls consortium, housed at the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The group is completely interdisciplinary, with scholars in history, performance studies, and more. One of the specific things I did as a research assistant, along with Leila Vieira and Laura Fernandez, was helped Dr. Delgadillo research how the Latinx community in Ohio creates place through festivals. Two SROP students, Genevieve Arce and Sofia DeLaCruz helped as well. Working collaboratively with Leila, Laura, Genevieve, Sofia and Dr. Delgadillo taught me the practical day-to-day aspects of collaborative research, such as sharing sun screen to processing interviews, participant observation, and the good music we heard on the drives back to Columbus.

I am originally from California, and I admit that my knowledge of Ohio was pretty bad when I came here. However, going to the various Latino festivals in summer and fall 2017 provided a specific understanding of this state. As I ate great food across the state, I saw the differences in the makeup and shape of Latinx communities in Ohio. For example, the Youngstown-Campbell’s Latino Heritage Festival has been around for seven years, and is the revival of an older festival that stopped for a while in the late 1990s. This festival featured large motorcycle groups who featured in the festival's parade. This festival was also mostly Puerto Rican, and I had my first taste of Puerto Rican food from PaPa's Puerto Rican cuisine and NY style Pizzeria in Campbell. Their bolillos and chocolate tres leche cake are amazing.

The Latino Festival of Springfield is very different. Instead of being at a park like Youngstown-Campbell, it was hosted at a Catholic church. This festival was only a few years old, too. The make up of booths skewed more Mexican, with different regions represented in regional dishes. However, there were a few Central American booths as well, such as a Guatemalan booth. The Springfield festival didn’t have a parade, but it featured a contest for a queen of the festival, chosen among local high school students.

The research that I, Dr. Delgadillo, and my fellow research assistants did in Ohio showed our communities here have both a long history and a more recent one. I look forward to continuing this research this spring and summer. Also, the research collaborative will have our symposium, where all the researchers in this collaborative will discuss their work so far. The symposium will be March 2 and 3. To check out more information, see our website at latinxmidwest.osu.edu

Photo: Festival Latino, DCS_9760, Festival Latino 2014 Columbus Ohio, taken August 10, 2014.
Ohio State SACNISTAS create a science community
Reyna Esquivel King, QP Editor and PhD Candidate, History

SACNAS is the professional society dedicated to the success of Chicano/Hispanic and Native American scientists – from college students to professionals – to attain advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in science. Its members are known as SACNISTAS. The Ohio State SACNAS Chapter supports a community of scientists of color, bringing together students, faculty and staff around research, mentoring and professional development activities, as well as social events.

This past autumn, 30 SACNISTAS represented Ohio State at SACNAS: The National Diversity in STEM Conference. The annual event is the “largest broadly multidisciplinary and multicultural conference in the country” and features more than 1,000 student research presentations. This year, Shaun Hampton took the prize for best oral presentation by a graduate student in Physics and Astronomy, locking in Ohio State’s four-year streak in the national awards ceremony.

The Ohio State team is supported by multiple units on campus. The SACNAS Bound Buckeyes travel scholarship, funded by the College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the Undergraduate Research office, paid the travel expenses for three undergraduate students to present their research. The College of Arts and Sciences Recruitment and Diversity Services (RDS) and the division of Natural and Mathematical Science also supported a team of students.

The Ohio State SACNAS Chapter also hosts campus visits from scientists who bring diverse perspectives to cutting edge research. Past speakers include Kim TallBear who spoke on indigenous bioscience and racial politics in science, and theoretical physicist and activist Chanda Prescod-Weinstein who spoke on cosmology and on equality in the world of science. This spring, the chapter will host Jesus Pando physicist and longtime advocate for underrepresented groups in the sciences. To get involved, visit http://u.osu.edu/sacnaschapterosu/

On the benefits of SACNAS membership

“To be able to meet fellow scientists who shared the love I feel for my culture, who have been through similar struggles as underrepresented minorities in the mainland, and who aspire to contribute to our community more than anything, was very inspiring, empowering and heartwarming.” Manuel Torres, undergraduate, Molecular Genetics

“One of the biggest highlights of my conference was being able to meet strong, female, Hispanic, geoscientists, a group I had never encountered before. We discussed strategies for increasing minority representation in earth and environmental sciences, but I was also able to hear about their stories and success in overcoming adversity.” Melisa Diaz, graduate student, Earth Sciences

“I am a 2nd year graduate student in Physics, and I rarely get to see faculty or postdocs who look like me and have the same passions as me. I attended the workshops and events from 8am to 8pm and got everything from networking tips to identity affirmation.” Mike Lopez, graduate student, Physics
¡Dímelo, Columbus!: Latinos Speak

Reyna Esquivel King, QP Editor and PhD Candidate, History

Latino involvement in Columbus, Ohio changes the community. This project highlights the Latino experience in Columbus, looking to the past, present, and future. You can visit the webpage at ¡Dímelo, Columbus!

Dímelo’s Mission

Ohio’s Latino population is increasing – with Franklin County experiencing the most significant growth during the past decade. While the Census Bureau documents this expanding community using the blanket term “Hispanic,” the word itself accounts for a myriad of identities such as Chicano, Colombian, Cuban, Mexican, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican. Merely recognizing this population as emergent does not account for the true diversity these individuals bring to their new homes. This growth is not happening in a vacuum; existing communities, families, and job opportunities all play into the expansion of a population. Furthermore, numbers are unable to account for the way these unique individuals are investing in their surrounding communities, engaging in policy making, pursuing education, organizing cultural events, and promoting activism. Latino involvement in Columbus changes the community. This project highlights the Latino experience in Columbus, looking to the past, present, and future.

Production

¡Dímelo, Columbus! is a collaboration between Ohio State’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion’s ¿Que Pasa OSU? and WOSU’s Columbus Neighborhoods produced by Leticia Rose Wiggins. Leticia received her PhD in History from Ohio State where she studied Latina/o activism in the Midwest during the 1970s.

Highlights from Interviews

Leticia conducted

Orlando Jose Ruiz, Dec. 8, 2017: Ruiz’s parents moved to the United States in the 1980s, escaping unrest in Nicaragua following the revolutionary overthrow of the Somoza regime. They settled in Miami, Florida where his mother attended Florida International University and gave birth to Ruiz. Her acceptance of a job in software engineering for AT&T brought the family to Reynoldsburg, Ohio. A proud Buckeye, Ruiz finished his degree in Security and Intelligence at Ohio State and works for the Department of Homeland Security’s Transportation Security Administration at John Glenn Columbus International Airport. “I don’t feel like I fit into a single category. Maybe straight up American, because it’s the melting pot of the world? That’s how I feel, I have friends in all sorts of cultures...They are all in different circles...”

Cristal Galloso, Sept. 20, 2017: Galloso’s parents moved to Columbus from a small town outside of Mexico City. Galloso became a business owner at 23, acquiring her own salon known by both Azul Violeta Salon and Cristal’s Beauty Salon. “I identify myself as an entrepreneur, a Latina entrepreneur.”

Andrea Magaña Lewis, Feb. 24, 2017: A native of Columbus, Ohio, Andrea Magaña Lewis serves as Public Policy Officer for the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission (OCHLA). In this position, she develops programming that promotes community engagement and civic education while introducing Hispanic leadership in the state to government and elected officials. She bridges the state government and Ohio’s Latin American community to advocate for the state’s New American community. “The populations [of Latinos] look very different from city to city, so one thing I always try to do when I meet with our legislators is to talk to them a little bit about their particular Latino constituency. And I think that goes a long way and helps to break down barriers.”
In the Fall semester of 2017, we had the opportunity to learn, work and listen to the Latinx community in Ohio. On our first day in the class “Spanish in Ohio,” taught by Dr. Foulis, we never imagined that our work in the community would impact us in the ways that it did. It allowed us to travel to different parts of the state, talk to people from different Latin American backgrounds and record their experiences of migration, growing up, identity, and how they positively affect other members of the Latinx community in their everyday lives.

Before this class, we had never used oral history as a primary text to learn about the Latinx community. We began the class by using Latin@ Stories Across Ohio, a book that uses oral history to teach us about the lives of Latinos, Latinas and Latinx. This book is part of the Oral Narratives of Latin@s in Ohio (ONLO) project, which we chose to participate in as part of our work in the community. While we listened and read oral histories in the classroom, it was a completely different experience being present and conducting our very own interviews: it was difficult, honoring and exciting.

Before we began working on this oral history project, we met with Dr. Foulis to practice interviewing techniques, note-taking, and really learning to actively listen. An oral historian has to be able to catch details provided by the narrator and ask them to explain further, to expand and reflect upon a topic, which can only be accomplished when we listen deeply. ¡Y teníamos que hacerlo todo en español! This was particularly important for us in our course, because the class pushed us to use Spanish candidly and comfortably with native speakers. We felt that our use of Spanish was recognized and appreciated because our narrators not only felt at ease, valued, and respected, but they also congratulated us on our bilingual abilities. We both love meeting and talking to new people, but engaging in their native language makes this encounter more natural and tangible; yet, our use of Spanish was not the most important part of this project. The most significant takeaway was the personal contact with people in their own environments.

In the interviews we conducted, we asked narrators to talk about their identity, language, culture, and how that impacted their experiences in Ohio. Our work in this project began by researching places such as Portsmouth and Cincinnati to understand more about the Latinx community in these cities. Certainly, the smaller and more rural areas of Appalachia do not have a notably large population of Latinx people, but we still made initial contact with two business owners, talked to them about the project (ONLO), and arranged a date to travel for the interviews. During our first interviews, we observed, listened and took pictures of the narrators’ environments.
Listening to first-person accounts of lived lives was only part of our learning experience. Traveling to and from places offered an opportunity for us and Dr. Foulis to continue important conversations such as how our work relates to our understanding of the Spanish-speaking community in our state. It also gave us the opportunity to debrief on what we witnessed in the previous interviews, and expand further on the impact of oral histories. Our participation in oral history gave us a unique understanding of the gift of storytelling and the importance of creating an archive of these stories that lives on after we are no longer here.

We believe the work of collecting narratives of the Latinx community in Ohio is truly valuable and crucial to our understanding of a community that is growing, thriving and has shaped the landscape of the Ohio for many decades. Sometimes, these narratives revealed instances of vulnerability and intimacy as we entered into narrators’ pasts and physical homes. In these moments of collective recognition, we realized that we will be forever indebted with our narrators for allowing us to listen and learn from their stories.

We feel this has been a learning experience unique to “Spanish in Ohio,” a course that emphasizes community engagement and diversity more than any other class we’ve taken. We have seen significant changes in ourselves, including how we see our professional dreams relate to our experiences collecting oral histories, and we attribute this personal growth to our interaction with the Latinx community in Ohio.
Ohio Habla: Oral Narratives of Latin@s in Ohio

Dr. Elena Foulis, Department Spanish and Portuguese, Director of Ohio Habla

The Oral Narratives of Latinos/as in Ohio is a statewide initiative to collect, catalog, and preserve oral narratives of Latinos/as in Ohio in collaboration with the Ohio Hispanic Heritage Project and the Center for Folklore Studies. When I started this project, I didn't know where it would lead me. I imagined I would encounter similar experiences as I had when I first moved to Ohio in 1992. I have now traveled to several cities in Ohio to interview Latinos/as and I have been humbled about the wide range of experiences, including a deep commitment to their community. In preparation for the collection of video-narratives, my student collaborators learned about the Latino population in Ohio and listened to various community leaders as they talked about the work they have done with and for Latinos in our state.

Latinos are more than restaurant owners or workers, migrant workers, or part of the labor force. Throughout this video-narrative collection it will be clear that they are fully invested in their community by way of activism, education, policy making, faith and cultural events meant to celebrate their heritage. The two larger Latino heritage communities in the state of Ohio are Mexican and Puerto Rican. Many migrant Mexican communities came to places like Celina, Defiance, Dayton, Toledo and other rural areas. Puerto Ricans settled primarily in the Northeast and in areas like Lorain and Cleveland, many of them are second or third generation immigrants. In areas such as Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati, meanwhile, we can find Latino heritage of Dominicans, Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and most recently many Central American students, professionals, activists, and other members of the middle and lower classes. This growth has fashioned, just in the past twenty years, an even richer cultural heritage that merits to be documented. Migration and immigration often initiates cultural mixing and change (adaptation), so this oral history project will document this process and the shaping of a culture that emerges out of this experience. Although many of the video-narratives in this collection show unique stories, it will also be evident that many share similar experiences and beliefs.

Through this experience, we have met wonderful people and listened to amazing stories that will have an impact in our lives, well beyond this project. I hope that through these stories we can facilitate and encourage a mutual understanding of other cultures. It is the beginning of a conversation that will last, change, and move beyond what we can imagine. This project is not finished; there is room for you to tell your story! It is my hope that the relationships and scholarship that comes out of this project will continue to document the past and the future of Latino life in the Midwest.

quepasa.osu.edu
You can view the introductory video along with several of the interviews at https://cfs.osu.edu/archives/collections/ONLO. You can also download the podcast episodes from iTunes.

The members of this project include:
Director- Dr. Elena Foulis, senior lecturer in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Project Archivist- Cassie Patterson, Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of English and the Assistant Director of the Center for Folklore Studies

Reviewer and Copyrights/Rights Management- Dr. José Díaz, Associate Curator for Special Collections and Latin American and Iberian Studies Librarian.

Student Collaborators:
Adriana Ponce de Leon (Fall 2017)
Kelly DiLullo (Fall 2017)
Leah Clarke (Fall 2014)
Carlos Martinez (Fall 2014)
Allie Mellinger (Fall 2014)
Guadalupe Medina (Spring 2014)
Samantha Quintell-Lenzi (Spring 2014)
Artwork by Tyrese Person
The Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program

By Beth Johnson, Assistant Director Buckeye Leadership Fellows

The Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program, commonly known as BLF, is the Office of Student Life’s signature leadership experience. BLF is an interdisciplinary program focused on advancing leadership development and global impact through an intensive cohort experience over two years. The program incorporates personal and professional development, mentorship and exposure to real world experiences through corporate and community partnerships. Launched in 2010, BLF is an alumni driven and sponsored initiative to better prepare Ohio State students for post-graduate pursuits and significant contributions to society.

The program focuses on four main developmental components: developing character, strengthening confidence, building capacity, and refining purpose. Our goal is to build a talented and connected network of empowered leaders within our community. 25 student leaders are selected during a rigorous interview process to represent the professional and various personal interests within the university student body. Upon acceptance into the program, fellows begin an extensive development program which includes weekly professional and personal development sessions,

The artwork on the preceding page, entitled “Unidad,” was created by LASER (Latinx Space for Enrichment and Research) students at Centennial High School. The artwork is by Tyrese Person and depicts Javier Deanna and Shaan Morales in a concept developed by the Centennial HS LASER team. LASER connects Ohio State mentors with high school students at mentoring hubs across central Ohio.

The Centennial LASER Mentoring Hub includes:

Tyrese, Javier, Shaan, Jesus, Juan, Diana, Areli, America, Araceli, Beyoncé, Harold, Joselyn, Kathy, Amanda, Bonnie, Cristina, Mark Hoff
leadership challenges with community and business partners, access to university and program alumni for mentoring and networking and an opportunity to develop a culminating capstone project that reflects their passion and impact on the community.

BLF boasts values of relationship building as Fellows learn to make connections with professionals and peers in various areas of interests and industry. A strong emphasis is placed on embracing failure and valuing discomfort as it provides the greatest moments for reflection, introspection and growth. We welcome not only diversity in backgrounds, interests, and career pursuit but also diversity of thought so Fellows can learn to challenge the way they view the world and each other. Finally, we focus on the importance of curiosity as we encourage Fellows to continue to inquire and ask questions that will lead them to discover their own personal why. All of these opportunities help shape the lens in which our Fellows approach the world within their post-graduate pursuits; and it also allows them to make intentional and informed decisions as they move through the world.

As of 2018, the program currently represents professional interests in business management, medicine, consulting, nursing, public policy and legal affairs, marketing, entrepreneurship, education, engineering, finance, technology, fashion and so much more. BLF is the home to over 100 program and OSU alumni across the country. Upwards of 15 successful and highly supportive OSU Alumni sit on our board providing coaching, guidance and insight into the significant skill sets required in a real world setting. The program is currently hosting the 2019 and 2020 Cohorts set to partner with organizations such as SAS, a data analytics company based in North Carolina and Team Buckeye as subset of Pelotonia. Former partners include Smart Columbus, Meredith Corporation, Dawson, Iridium and Abercrombie and Fitch.

Students interested in applying for the 2021 Cohort of the Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program can find more information on their website blf.osu.edu beginning in August 2018. Applications for the next cohort will be live in September 2018.

Juan Tramontin, 2nd year, Logistics.

“I truly knew I wanted to join BLF when I found out that BLF was meant to be a leadership advancement program for students from all over campus, and that it supported students from varying backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences…. So far, the Buckeye Leadership Fellows program has enabled me to connect with strong, intelligent, and passionate members of Ohio State, as well as begin learning more about who I am as a leader, and how I can most effectively use my skills to create change in my community. Through entrepreneurial mindset workshops, to learning about "why" I am and who I hope to be, I have truly begun to discover my purpose here on campus, and am thrilled to continue searching for the legacy that I can create through BLF.”

Kelly Noriega, Junior, Finance & International Business

“[BLF] has helped me more than I could've imagined in my own personal goals. I've been able to push myself to become a much stronger professional and leader and it has enabled me to be more confident in my internships and any projects that I work on in outside organizations... I have also made countless professional relationships and have found so many mentors through the program. I am currently interning at SpaceX this semester thanks to the founder of BLF, Matt Desch!... almost everything I have gotten out of the program is thanks to the leadership and opportunities the advisors, Beth and Rob, have provided for us. I'm just lucky to be a part of the program.”
From Cheerleader to Public Leader

Yolanda Zepeda, Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion

Franklin D. Roosevelt did it. So did Ike D. Eisenhower, George W. Bush, and Ronald Reagan. What do these US Presidents share with Ohio State alum Emanuel Torres (International Business/Statistics ’99)? They all honed their leadership skills as college cheerleaders.

Emanuel Torres was 17 years old when he left Puerto Rico with dreams of becoming a veterinarian. He arrived in central Pennsylvania with his mother and younger brother in the midst of a record-setting blizzard. Confronting the challenges of weather and the English language, Torres was not deterred from his educational aspirations. Before long, he made his way to Ohio State and contracted a serious case of Buckeye Fever.

When he wasn’t studying, Torres spent time at the French Fieldhouse. The Ohio State baseball team worked out there during the off season and maybe, he thought, he could land a chance to walk on the team. Also practicing nearby was the cheerleading squad. Torres’ athleticism caught the attention of the squad and they called him over. Before long, he was doing back flips and throwing a toss to hands as an Ohio State cheerleader. In addition to enhancing his strength and fitness, Torres’ cheerleading experience helped him cultivate the skills that would serve him in leadership roles to come: confidence, teamwork, discipline, and the ability to motivate and inspire others.

Meanwhile, Torres’ entrepreneurial impulses led him to the entertainment industry where he managed VIP event entertainment—hiring artists, directing choreography, and planning decorations. His business acumen, and Spanish language and culture skills led him to an international business/statistics degree. He went on to work in the mortgage brokerage industry and in employment and staffing services. Today, Torres is the Economic Development Manager for the City of Gahanna where he works to attract businesses and encourage the retention and expansion of businesses in the city.

Torres also uses his professional expertise and leadership strengths to advocate for Latino communities across the State of Ohio. Governor John Kasich appointed Torres to the Ohio Latino Affairs Board of Commissioners in 2013.

Reflecting on the journey from his arrival in the Pennsylvania blizzard to his successful career and public service, Torres acknowledges that he has had the good fortune of encountering mentors, sponsors, and chance opportunities to stretch and grow along the way. Equally important, is that he has had the wisdom to recognize and seize those opportunities, even--or perhaps especially--when it meant reaching beyond what he already knew.

Ohio State’s motto is Disciplina in Civitatem, or Education for Citizenship. The university seeks to cultivate citizens who will not only apply their practical learning to the betterment of society, but who will also contribute to social and political life of their communities. Emanuel Torres embodies what a genuine Ohio State education is all about.
Imagine you’re working full time to care for your family of four. Living paycheck to paycheck, one day you check your mail and catch sight of a utility cut off notice. You know this is the third one this month, so with a pained expression you walk inside and open the pantry, looking for something for dinner. Nothing but junk food looks back at you since the salty, sugary snacks were the cheapest the store had to offer. You grab a can of Chef Boyardee’s finest and limp over to the stove and start cooking. That’s when you remember you never bought your medication to help with your leg pain. But when you have to choose between paying your water bills or buying your medication, what would you choose?

Dedicated to bridging the gap between medical and social care, the Ohio State undergraduate student organization ENCompass hopes that no one will be forced to make such a decision. Poor health can be exacerbated by many factors, and by addressing needs indirectly related to medical care, it hopes to improve patients’ overall health and decrease readmission rates among its clients. ENCompass volunteers use online resource database systems, such as HandsOn Central Ohio, to connect clients to the many existing resources in Columbus that meet their needs. These services are widely varied, addressing issues ranging from food insecurity and homelessness to lack of supplemental medical care. ENCompass aims to address both short-term and long-term concerns for our patients by first connecting clients to the services that immediately diminish the issues at hand, then to more permanent solutions.

ENCompass aims not only to provide a comprehensive service to its clients, but also to its members as well. Weekly meetings consist of speakers, documentaries, and presentations on a variety of public health topics. Members are also able to join one of six committees to expand their involvement with the organization. ENCompass’s committees are constantly working on projects to improve the scope and function of its services. For example, a partnership with Nationwide

Children’s Hospital Westside Primary Care Clinic has allowed several general body members to take on leadership positions within the organization, pushed volunteers outside of their comfort zones by conducting consultations with a clientele that speaks limited English, and introduced ENCompass services to a previously untouched population. ENCompass is also in the process of establishing further partnerships with another Nationwide Children’s clinic and La Clinica Latina, a free, Spanish focused clinic.

However, in order to serve even more, ENCompass needs the support of passionate students. All undergraduates are welcome to apply for membership. Spanish and Somali language skills are also greatly needed. Students interested in learning more about ENCompass are welcome to visit www.encompassosu.org. If interested in joining, students are encouraged to apply during the early fall semester. Applications consist of submitting a brief written application and an informal interview process.
“I try to not get too political but...” this is how many statuses began throughout my timeline on Facebook. I have many friends all from different walks of life coming to terms about how the government’s decisions affected their everyday lives. The government shutdown caused so much chaos and left a lot of people in the dark. With benefits and pay frozen, people realized how awful it was not to be in control of their own lives. Why was it only when the government came for my friends directly that they decided to get “political?”

There is nothing wrong with being political. Every decision made by our governing body affects our lives on micro and macro levels. All my life I have kept a good eye on different policies. Some more than others, but truly the governments treatment of immigration policies has my life as I know it in a constant jeopardy. TPS to be exact.

TPS or Temporary Protection Status is granted to immigrants from a handful of countries, the majority coming from El Salvador, Haiti and Honduras, as a humanitarian effort on behalf of The United States of America. Or at least this is how the country is sold on the idea. TPS has been extended since its creation under the Bush Administration. There was nothing Temporary about its effects. This status gives hundreds of thousands of people the status to live, and work here in the United States. Many of these people were brought here as children and young teens. Now Trump and his administration have decided to end this program once and for all. Sending people back to countries they have no memory of ever being in.

My whole family lineage comes from El Salvador. At the age of twelve I have had knowledge of my family’s delicate status. Every year when the status has been extended I have watched my family pay thousands of dollars in renewal and legal fees for their work permits. Buying themselves about eighteen months until their next renewal date to pay thousands again. I, as a U.S citizen never really felt safe from the turbulence of the government. I always knew that I was living with my family on borrowed time. I know all too well what the definition of temporary really is. There is no pathway to citizenship through TPS. The government wants holders of such status to play pretend. They want holders to pay taxes, go to school, own homes but never give them a way of making their stay permanent. The government wants TPS holders to contribute to society while uninformed citizens want to always remind them that they are not American and this is not their home.

Currently there is one last extension for TPS holders from El Salvador to allowing them to stay until September 9, 2019. After September this will bring in more questions than answers: What is to happen to roughly 200,000 Salvadorians? What happens to their homes, cars, jobs and families? No one really knows. All I know is that I must hug my family close as my father, and older siblings are living in a legal limbo.

As the government reopens and negotiations continue to happen to save programs such as CHIP, Children’s Health Insurance Program, and a clean DREAM Act, we must demand that more is talked about. We must demand that our senators do not keep switching out some issues for others. We must remind them that there is a need to protect net neutrality, a need to fund CHIP, to protect Dreamers and TPS holders. It’s time we, as a nation, voice our opinions and worries. This is not the time to worry about being too political. It is a time to demand what’s best for this Nation and everyone, who calls The United States home.
Growing up in Columbus, I was aware of the diversity present in the city, but it wasn’t until I started studying at OSU that I decided I wanted to try to help with the refugee crisis. A simple Google search brought the organization US Together to my list and the office was within walking distance of my house. US Together is run by former refugees. It aims to meet the needs of the growing amount of refugees and immigrants in central Ohio. It’s now been expanded to work with populations in Toledo and Cleveland as well. US Together serves various populations ranging from the Former Soviet Union, Bhutan, Rwanda, Syria, and so many more. Programs like Citizenship classes, ESL classes, Women Empowerment, and Survivors of Torture just brush the list of resources available to refugees and immigrants.

Getting involved with US Together was surprisingly easy. After sending an email, I was welcomed in for an interview where we talked about my interests and availability and we set a flexible start date. After the background check, I was invited to teach ESL to a group of Syrian women who live in an area with limited ESL class opportunities. Upon meeting these women, I was immediately treated like family and any fears of my inability to speak Arabic impeding our work were immediately dismissed. Along with tutoring, I worked in resettlement and placement where I scheduled primary care appointments, enrolled children in school, and met with clients from a plethora of different cultures and languages. At some point, I just got adjusted to the fact that I wouldn’t be able to communicate with them and embraced the awkwardness that ensued.

After working in resettlement and placement, I wanted to stay on another semester and I was able to start working in the Survivors of Torture (S.O.T.) program. The managers of this program were specifically looking for someone who speaks Spanish because the majority of clients are are Spanish speaking. This program works with clients on legal, medical, and spiritual needs- while providing opportunities for these clients to thrive.

While S.O.T. can be heavy at times, working with these specific clients and the immensely talented case workers has really been one of the most amazing experiences I have ever had. While working with families from Venezuela and Guatemala, I have been able to learn so much about my own culture that was lost growing up in a mixed household while also being able to make their transitions into the United States just a little bit easier.
The good, the bad and the ugly: Challenges of Settlement and Latino Immigrants in Columbus

Jeffrey H. Cohen, Professor of Anthropology

There are perhaps 20 different taco trucks throughout greater Columbus, Ohio. These trucks are a wonderful sign of the growth of our city’s Latino population. Yet, for every positive that the taco trucks bring, challenges remain. Latinos in Columbus contend with physical challenges around health care, moral challenges around where best they belong in the city and perhaps most problematic the challenges that come with misconceptions, misunderstandings and most recently xenophobic hate crimes. And while the costs and benefits of working a taco truck can seem light years from hate crimes, they are in fact, part of a larger set of challenges that face ALL immigrants to Columbus and the state of Ohio.

The Good:

Taco trucks are a physical reminder that Columbus, Ohio is changing. The immigrant community in the state is small and represents less than 4% of the state; yet that community has increased quite quickly, growing by 93% since the year 2000. About 14% of working age Latinos who have settled in Ohio work in food service; and a portion are working in taco trucks. Taco trucks are great; they are a low cost alternative to owning a restaurant. Richard Myrick, writing for the website Mobile Cuisine.com notes that startup costs for a taco truck can be as low as $40,000. If an immigrant can organize her or his taco truck, the opportunity to engage with the community—serve a new clientele and introduce a new way of eating can be quite amazing. Robert Lemon’s work with Taco Trucks across Columbus documents how they become a part of their neighborhoods, how eating habits change and how friendships are created in the most unanticipated ways (www.robert-lemon.com).

Finally, taco trucks can serve as a gateway for entrepreneurs—a first step if you will on the way to opening a restaurant. And of course, every taco truck in the city pays taxes, fees and wages and support farmers, ranchers and more.

The Bad:

The growth of taco trucks carries costs as well as benefits. For immigrants looking to open a business, even $40,000 can be too much. Immigrants face serious challenges as they seek the loans they need to begin their work. Rejection is common and interest rates can be high. This is particularly the case when an immigrant turns to a bank alternative for their loans. It is also a challenge for those who work the taco trucks but are not the owners. For these men and women, wages are low, tips are difficult to come by and opportunities can be affected by weather, time of year and more. In addition, taco trucks can be a cover for human trafficking as non-citizens are trapped into working or driven into what Maria Godoy described as “modern day slavery” (npr.org, 2017).

Feeding a neighborhood, new friends and new clients is a wonderful opportunity to build bridges between cultures and make connections. Yet, for many Latinos, a taco truck comes with costs. Often Latino immigrants find themselves pigeonholed. They are expected to cook “Latino” and to do otherwise—particularly at a taco truck can be problematic at best. Even in a restaurant, a trained chef can find her or himself limited by ethnicity to cooking a limited range of foods.

The Ugly:

The challenges that face immigrants around taco trucks are amplified by increasingly xenophobic, anti-immigrant talk and rising hate crimes around the nation. For many in central Ohio’s Latino community, these challenges are translated into difficulties around health care and finding doctors; increasing stress; a rise in obesity; and harassment. In particular, the children of migrants, children who are typically bilingual Spanish and English speakers) find
themselves placed in remedial classrooms because they speak Spanish. Understanding these challenges are part of ongoing research project by Jeffrey H. Cohen and Douglas E. Crews, both professors in OSU’s department of anthropology. Our work seeks to understand and balance the stories Latino immigrants tell with biomarkers—or physiological evidence—and better understand the dynamics of settlement and integration. Our findings suggest that while most Latinos are very positive about their lives in Columbus, Ohio; they are at risk for stress and show signs of high blood pressure as well as obesity. These physical signs point toward real health risks for this population. See our paper: “The Importance of Culture and Biology in the Analysis of Contemporary Migration: Approaching stress among Latino immigrants to Columbus, Ohio.” For the invited poster symposium, Migration: An anthropological perspective. Annual meeting, American Association of Physical Anthropologist, April 15, 2016.

Columbus, Ohio has seen a rapid rise in its Latino community, taco trucks are a central and often positive part of that change. Our work suggests that while we should celebrate that growth and its manifestation around taco trucks—we also need to pay attention to challenges that remain.

**Student Spotlight: Meilenys Peraza**
Reyna Esquivel King, QP Editor, PhD Candidate, History

“English will always be the language of my country, Spanish the language of my heart, and Japanese the language of my soul.” From her award-winning speech, “The Language of my Soul.”

Meilenys Peraza always had an interest in Japanese. That interest grew into a full-blown passion after she took her first Japanese class in high school with a teacher who lived in Japan for over 40 years and spoke fluent Japanese. To fulfill her dream of becoming a translator and interpreter in both Japanese and Korean, Meilenys knew that only a few, select schools would offer both languages as majors. The Ohio State University was one such school.

She participated in the Young Scholars program, which prepared her for her academic career at OSU. In 2017, she traveled to Japan in May through the Office of International Affairs and to Korea from June to August through the U.S. Department of State.

Meilenys studied Japanese at OSU for 4 years and participated in the Kobe Study Abroad Program in the spring of 2017. The primary goal of the Kakehashi Project is to promote understanding and interest in Japan and to strengthen US-Japan relations. During her visit, Peraza will attend lectures on Japan from various academic perspectives and visit various education and research institutions, traditional industries, cultural heritage sites, and local government offices.

Meilenys hopes to graduate in May of 2018 and is in the process of applying for English teaching assistant positions in Japan and Korea. She should hear about the positions in the spring and could move to one of those countries to work. “My plan is to return to the United States after a few years to attend graduate school and receive a Master’s Degree in Translation and Interpretation for both languages.”
Frederick Luis Aldama is Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor in the Departments of English and of Spanish and Portuguese. He teaches courses on Latino and Latin American cultural phenomena, including literature, film, TV, music, sports, video games and comic books. He is founder and director of the Latinx Space for Enrichment and Research (LASER). He is founder and co-director of Humanities and Cognitive Sciences High School Summer Institute at Ohio State.

Carlos Kelly: Profe, you write scholarly nonfiction and fiction. What influenced you to become a writer?

Frederick Luis Aldama: I’ve been publishing on authors such as Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez, Junot Díaz, Ana María Shua, Elena Garro, Julia Alvarez, Salman Rushdie, among many others, since my undergrad days at UC Berkeley. I feasted on the maximalist writing of a Carlos Fuentes as much as on the minimalist writing of masters such as Augusto Monterroso and Jorge Luis Borges. I greatly enjoyed reading and writing on the poetry of Julia Alvarez and Rhina P. Espaillat, as well as Rafael Campo and C. Dale Young, among many other poets. I am mentioning now Latin American and Latino/a authors, but what would I be and what would my writing be without the precedents of Rabelais, Diderot, Goethe, Dostoyevsky, Flaubert, Céline, Brecht, or even the Swiss Max Frisch and the sublime Yasunari Kawabata? And the powerful insights and proclivities and wisdom of Aristotle?

In many ways, directly and indirectly, overtly or in allusive fashion, as a profe I have always loved sharing these authors with my students, for lyrical poetry and innovative prose have been my faithful companions all along. And as is quite evident, there is something about the concision of form in the work of Borges, Shua, and of course the great Tito Monterroso that fascinated me to the point that it triggered my own impulse to try my hand at fiction—flash fiction or microcuentos.

As a result of all this some years ago I outlined the totality of what would become Long Stories Cut Short: Flash Fictions from the Borderlands. From the very start I knew that this work would be a series of flash fictions (with the constraint of being no longer than 750 words) and would include comic book images.

Carlos: You weave into your fiction comic book visuals that expand in a multimedia way where the reader goes with their imagination.

Frederick: I have been reading and teaching comic books for quite a few years now, so I know well that the experience and imagination of the reader may expand in a multimedia way when exposed to comic book images. I also know well that fiction is made with the bricks (bits and pieces) of anything and everything in the universe. So from the very beginning I figured out the whole book’s shape and contents: I wanted my book to be a hybrid alphabetic/graphic narrative, and I wanted the stories to focus on the everyday lives of Latinos—from Latina infants...
who can read before they can speak to bordercrossing teens and romancing abuelitas—that I would metabolize and give new shape to modes of writing we traditionally think of as existing exclusively in disciplines such as philosophy, biology, psychology, journalism, history... nothing would be off limits in terms of where the stories might carry readers.

Carlos: You use your hybrid fiction to hit hard some heavy truths. I think of that vato who narrates from the grave after being shot dead by a Chicano cop or the abuelitas whose body begins to putrefy and smell. You end that story with the protagonist thinking the unthinkable: “hurry up and die”.

Frederick: I also make room for joy and wonder, Carlos. For instance, the story “Lexicon” begins: “I learned how to read before I could speak. I apprehended the world through its material manifestations, its signs. Later, black scratches and blankspaces will tell me of the absent world. Lexis: Greek for ‘word.’ And, also for ‘speech’.”

Carlos: You draw from Latinx realities as well as metaphysics, journalism, insights from neurobiology and so much more.

Frederick: My love for world literature of all times, for philosophy and for psychology, have marked me as a human being and as a scholar. But in a very specific way, it was my early love of Latin American authors and visual artists that inspired me to become a fiction author, seeking to explode the microcuento form in ways that would make visceral the lived experiences of Latino/as across the Americas. I’m thrilled now to be able to do contribute something to the active transformation of our culture at large.

Carlos: What’s next, Profe?

Frederick: As far as scholarly nonfiction books, I have seven due to go to press by year’s end, including World Comics: The Basics and Toward a Unified Theory of Aesthetics. I should mention, too, that I’m finishing up a documentary on Latinx superheroes that I’ll submit to film fests across the country.

As far as fiction goes, I’ve begun work on an interwoven flash fiction collection that can be read more like a novel; I’m working out how it can at once be read as a series of autonomous flash fictions and as a novel. And, an environment of incessant fear together with great juvenile expectations is the theme of a manuscript I have in a drawer, to hopefully become a maximalist, picaresque novel. I’ve got hundreds of pages written that now need some serious sculpting. On the other end of things.

Cuba Race, Revolution and Culture

Rachael Kusak will cap off her Ohio State career exploring race and culture in contemporary Cuba. She will join the Race, Revolution and Culture program heading to Havana, Cuba in May. The program will focus on the role of the arts – music, film, and literature – as a means of resistance to social injustice.

Rachael is a Young Scholar from Cleveland who will be completing her degree in public health this May. Throughout her time at Ohio State, Rachael has been an advocate for multicultural engagement. She is the President of Sigma Lambda Gamma, the largest, historically Latina-based national sorority with a multicultural membership. She also completed a study abroad program in Brazil that focused on higher education access, equity, and opportunity.

“I really want to go to a Spanish-speaking country. I’ve grown up talking Spanish with friends, so I’d really like to go a place where everyone speaks Spanish.”

-Rachel Kusak
Inside Hurricane Maria
by Jennifer Cotto Maisonet, Ph.D. Candidate, Health and Physical Activity Behavior

Thinking about the year 2017... it’s been a long year with great and other not so great events. Many natural disasters took place in 2017 with Hurricane Maria being the most personally touching to me. You see, I was raised in the "enchanted island" of Puerto Rico, where most of my friends and family still live. Yes, it has its kinks but I love that island, the people, the air, the sun and need I say its beaches; it’s my home. On September 20, 2017, my world was turned upside down. I woke up to see all the devastating and heart-breaking images of my beloved home. My heart sank, I felt sick to my stomach. With tears filling up my eyes I desperately tried to reach out to all my loved ones without any success. Still those of us who live outside of the island had to continue our normal day-to-day lives as if nothing had happened.

I couldn’t bear to have co-workers ask about my family or situation back home, it was impossible to hold back my tears and desperation. Still I called and called, even those outside the island, in hopes that someone had good news to share. I thought the worst had happened to my family. My cousins and I were ready to travel back home even if that meant we would need to hike or swim in order to get to our family and friends, we needed to know. Once we were ready to go and were searching for flights some news came in about our hometown, where our loved ones live. The dam had broken and they requested everyone from the town to evacuate immediately. In that moment our plans were useless. We could hike, swim, or fly it didn’t matter, we had absolutely no clue where our loves ones would be relocated to.

Hopes were disappearing as the days passed until one morning, about two weeks after the hurricane, my pregnant sister called. I could hear her desperation, but she was alive and still carrying my growing nephew Lucas. She was anxious to know about everyone else; she even tried driving back to our hometown a few days after the hurricane but was stopped by her husband’s family. The roads weren’t safe for transit and gas was scarce at that time. This would have meant that she might not be able to make it all the way there or back, regardless of the state of the roads. After much convincing, she decided to stay put, but if no news were received soon, she would have traveled no matter what that meant. Overall, even though knowing that my sister and her family were safe allowed me to breathe, I was still unable to sleep. Finally, a few days after I spoke with my sister I was able to reach my parents. I cried when I heard their voices even if they sounded muffled because of the terrible connection, but I knew they were alive and so were my other family members. I thanked God for his blessing and continued to pray for all the others that were impacted by these disasters. Although we were able to have contact, days could go by without any further communication because of the terrible connection. I kept wondering if they had enough food, water, supplies... Praying no one would harm them.

Months passed and the horror stories of Hurricane Maria just increased. Families had to swim out of their homes in order to survive the hurricane after losing everything. Homes were buried under the mud with individuals still inside who could only pray and hope...
for someone to dig them out. Supplies were very limited and people had to wait in lines a minimum of 6 hours to get basic supplies. Some woke to find individuals underneath their cars trying to pierce the gas tank because of the limited amount of gas available on the island. Medical supplies and attention was another major issue, with many dying because the machines helping them breath ran out of battery life. Hospitals smelled like morgues because the elevators weren’t working making it impossible to transport the deceased to the morgue. While others had to bury their loves ones in their back yards. Many are still living in shelters and others in homes where half the roof is gone.

Still today, many parts of the island don’t have running water or electricity and some areas of the island are still unable to be reached by car. Supplies are still scarce and help is limited. Although many believe the worst has passed, many are still living the horrors of Maria. Depression has drastically increased with suicidal rates higher than ever in the island. We were not ready for this, society did not prepare us for such devastation and the government has fallen short in their efforts.

What do you do when you wake up and find out you lost everything you ever worked for? That everything you knew and loved has changed forever...?

"Family sharing the only room they have left after Hurricane Maria destroyed their home in the mountains around Utuado, Puerto Rico, Oct. 12, 2017"

Photo credit: U.S. Department of Agriculture Master Sgt. Joshua DeMotts/1st Combat Camera Squadron
Graduates Autumn 2017

Associates Degrees
Jacqueline Brown, Associate of Arts
Amaria Gardner, Associate of Arts
Clorissa Mendez-Lance, Associate of Arts
Henry Moore, Associate of Arts
Richard Rodriguez, Associate of Arts
Anthony Tufo, Associate of Arts
Brian Stought, Applied Science

Bachelors Degrees
Ali Alfaour, Biology
Ferny Angeles Paz, Finance
Taylor Armstrong, Sociology
Joseph Baker, Architecture
Alivia Ball, Speech and Hearing Science
Alexia Barillas, Agriculture
Erika Barrios Manning, Marketing
Ty Bell, Civil Engineering
Cody Brodeur, Civil Engineering
Geovanna Caballero, Mechanical Engineering
Alexandre Cabello, Computer Science and Engineering
Emma Clark, Communication
Addison Coll, Consumer and Family Financial Services
Erika Cooper, Romance Studies
Yesenia Cortes, Exercise Science
Stephanie Costa, Political Science
Alyssa Cruz, Arabic
Alyssa Cruz, International Studies
Kaela Daglow, Agriculture
David Daza, Construction Systems Management
Rachel Decker, Marketing
Joshua Dempsey, Business Administration
Madison Dempsey, Health Sciences
Jennifer Downing, Finance
Gabriel Fidder, Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering
Donald Flagg, Chinese
Donald Flagg, Accounting
Taylor Flores, Finance
Marcelo Fracchia, Marketing
Ashley Fuentes, Communication
Monica Fuster, Sociology
Sebastian Gallegos, Spanish
Ronald Garcia, International Studies
Zachary Garcia, Marketing
Laura Garzon, Chinese
Michaella Gerlacher, Communication
Hallie Goldenstein, Psychology
Isabel Graham-Torrez, International Studies
Roberto Guevara, Mechanical Engineering
Frank Hall, City & Regional Planning
Victoria Heller, Early and Middle Childhood Studies
Kevin Hernandez, Computer Science and Engineering
Amanda Herrera, Pharmaceutical Sciences
David Hufnagel, Aviation
Savannah Huston, English
Henry Ip, Welding Engineering
Jasmine Johnson, Civil Engineering
Daniel Keck, Chemical Engineering
Phillip Krumm, Economics
Anna Leatherman, Linguistics
Valeria Leon, Communication
Eric Lopes, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Brandon Lopez, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Rafael Lopez, Consumer and Family Financial Services
Adrian Macias, Psychology
Justin Magana, Finance
Evan Maldonado, Agribusiness and Applied Economics
Stephen Maldonado, Atmospheric Sciences
Braden Martinez, Communication
William Martinez, Consumer and Family Financial Services
Kaitlyn Mathews, Environmental Science
Emily McGee, Human Nutrition
Sara McNeil, Psychology
Laura Monteso Esamel, Operations Management
Brandon Muschitz, Marketing
Wayne Odell, Political Science
Vincent Passarella, Psychology
Rafael Pena, Neuroscience
Natalie Perez, Psychology
Cassandra Perez, Early and Middle Childhood Studies
Michael Phipps, Health & Rehab Sciences
Andres Plazas, Marketing
Stephanie Portillo, Psychology
Jasmine Pulido, Hospitality Management
Miguel Radilla, International Studies
Jordan Ramer, Logistics Management

Masters Degrees
Luis Buenaventura, Business Operational Excellence
Orlando Carmana, Business Operational Excellence
Jorge Chang Cheng, Computer Science and Engineering
Robert Cintron, Business Operational Excellence
Rodrigo Colon, Business Operational Excellence
Nicole Crowe, Anatomy
Emily Dreyer, Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering
Alba Evans, Chemistry
Miguel Garza Casado, Political Science
Chelsea Garza, Anatomy
Horacio Garza, Meat Science
Matthew Grow, Welding Engineering
Esther Lattin, Environmental Science
Luis Leon, Statistics
Nicholas Mazzucca, Physics
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Doctoral Degrees

Andrew Amaya, Chemical Engineering
Carmelo Bazaco, Spanish & Portuguese
Ana Casado, Anthropology
Thalia Farietta, Public Health

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