

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies

2023-24 YEAR IN REVIEW





**Center for Latin American,
Caribbean, and Latinx Studies**

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Director's Corner



Colegas,

We are delighted to present the 2023-24 Year-in-Review, a collaborative effort of the CLACX team, driven and produced by Dr. Avery Dickins de Girón. We shared many joyful moments—from hosting a 12-person Colombian dance troupe, to launching new research and teaching initiatives, to celebrating the center's 75th anniversary and honoring the retirements of Marshall Eakin and Paula Covington. We acknowledge the unfailing support from the Dean's Office in the College of Arts & Science, Provost

Raver, and Chancellor Diermeier. The college continued its strong support of CLACX this year and enabled the hire of Dr. Jesús Ruiz as an assistant professor of the practice of Caribbean Studies (see story inside). The center is also excited to welcome a new NEH Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr. Jason Ahlenius, of NYU, whose work explores race and labor in the Mexican borderlands.

We completed the third year of the reconfigured CLACX in 2023-24, and, among other accomplishments, deepened our commitment to fostering research on the intersections of the fields of Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean studies. If in year two we organized symposia at Vanderbilt and at national conferences to call attention to these discussions, in year three we supported a new research seminar titled, "Latinidades," to collectively reflect upon and critically interrogate these possibilities. Co-led by Drs. Julie Gamble, Rebeca Gamez, and Hilario Lomelí, the seminar launched in Spring '24, and featured three lunchtime sessions around different works-in-progress.

With former ACLS postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Sara Kozameh, currently an assistant professor of history at the University of California, San Diego, I co-authored a **think piece** on how the projects of Latin American and Latino studies need to connect to the changing demographics of university students nationally, namely the increase of Latino students, as well as, the fast-expanding number of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, which amount to nearly 600 institutions. These are both structural changes in higher education that necessarily force us to reckon with the importance of the Latin American diaspora in the United States, with questions about power, knowledge production, and representation. The essay grew from seminars CLACX organized last year, which brought specialists from across the country to ponder these issues on the state of our fields.

This was an overall important year in deepening our efforts to shape the field through teaching and research. We're moving forward with new curricular programs and have strengthened our relationships with partner institutions in the greater region around expanding the scope and access of Latin American studies. I close in reiterating my appreciation for two wonderful colleagues, Marshall Eakin and Paula Covington, who in countless ways have shaped Latin American studies at Vanderbilt since the 1970s and 80s. On a more personal note, I will be on research leave next academic year, and am excited for the upcoming leadership of Dr. Edward Wright-Ríos, Mellon Foundation Chair in the Humanities.

Hasta pronto,
Celso Thomas Castilho, Director



El Palenque de Delia

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CLACX Celebrates 75 Years

Honoring more than 75 years of innovation and impact, CLACX hosted a celebration on April 11 to look at the past, present, and future

of Latin American and Latinx studies at Vanderbilt and beyond. The event featured a roundtable discussion with faculty, alumni, and current students and was followed by a reception. Historian

Marshall Eakin and CLACX Director **Celso Castilho** discussed

how both the founding of Vanderbilt's Institute for Brazilian Studies in 1949 and the later emphasis on developmental economics in the 1960s and 70s were embedded in the origins and early interests in Latin American Studies in general. Castilho addressed the increasing size of the Latinx population in the US and at Vanderbilt, and Eakin spoke about how those changing demographics have influenced teaching about Latin America. Following their conversation, a roundtable with alumni and students explored how campus culture has changed. Vanderbilt alumni **Adriana Laza Medina**, Associate Professor of Reading at UNC Charlotte, and **Rosalinda Méndez**, Founder and CEO of consulting firm NOA Research, shared fond memories of McTyeire Hall, described their study abroad experiences in Spain and Guatemala, and discussed the spaces in which they found Latinx community in the early 1990s. As one of the co-founders of the Vanderbilt Association for Hispanic Students (now the Association for Latin American Students/ALAS), Laza Medina spoke



about the establishment of the first Latinx student organization at Vanderbilt. Méndez, the current president of the Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic and Latinx Alumni (VAHLA), discussed challenges and strategies for recruiting Latinx students to Vanderbilt. Students **Carlos Caballero** and **Diana Zamparripa** shared their perspectives on the increasing number and diversity of Latinx student organizations and how the fields of LAS and Latinx studies intersect in their coursework. Caballero is a Chancellor's fellow, a double major in Latin American Studies and English, and studied Portuguese on a FLAS fellowship. Zamarripa is double majoring in Medicine, Health, and Society and Latinx Studies and serves on CLACX's student advisory board. The panel was moderated by **Gretchen Selcke** and **Avery Dickins de Girón**. A reception followed the roundtable discussion.

Save the Date April 10, 2025

CLACX will celebrate its Sesquicentennial Grant project, "Somos VU: Bringing Together Student Organizations, Alumni, and the Institutional History of CLACX." The day-long celebration will feature roundtable discussions, a presentation on the history of the Center, a digital photo exhibit, and a reception."

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in Medicine, Health, and Society and Latinx Studies and serves on CLACX's student advisory board. The panel was moderated by **Gretchen Selcke** and **Avery Dickins de Girón**. A reception followed the roundtable discussion.

For more on the history of the Center, see this article for the 75th Anniversary Celebration in the VU News: **CLACX: A legacy and future of leadership and evolution**.

Jesús Ruiz Appointed Professor of the Practice



CLACX is pleased to welcome Jesús Ruiz as Assistant Professor of the Practice and FLAS Coordinator. Ruiz is a historian who specializes in the study of Afro Latin America and the Haitian Revolution and has expertise in migration, law, and asylum. In this new position in CLACX, Ruiz will be charged

with overseeing the creation of a Caribbean Studies minor, engaging students in the study of Haitian Kreyòl, and administering FLAS fellowships. Courses Ruiz will teach include a new introductory course for Caribbean Studies and another on Haitian culture and politics.

Ruiz has been recognized for his excellence in research, writing, and teaching with several awards. He received the Edward H. Moseley Award from The Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies (SECOLAS) in 2014. At Tulane, he won the Richard E. Greenleaf Award for Best Graduate Paper in the Social Sciences Ruiz and the William J. Griffith Teaching Award. He was most recently recognized with the Maestrx Award at Vanderbilt (**see p. 56**).

Ruiz's book manuscript, *The Black Royalists: Haiti and A Politics of Freedom in the Atlantic World*, analyzes the political history of royalism in Haiti's revolutionary past. Ruiz argues that the Revolution should be interpreted as part of a broader wave of "popular royalist" movements in the Spanish Empire. This manuscript, and his scholarship in general, reorients Haitian revolutionary debates from French-, British-, and US centered interpretations to sketch a

broader framework that includes the Spanish Empire as well as the African Atlantic. The *Black Royalists* is under contract with Harvard University Press.

A first-generation citizen of the US, Ruiz was born in Los Angeles to parents from Sonora, Mexico. He was raised in Arizona and became the first person in his family to go to college. He received his BA in Spanish with honors from St. Lawrence University, an MA in Caribbean Studies from The University at Buffalo (SUNY), and a PhD, with distinction, from Tulane University in 2020. For the past two years, Ruiz has been at Vanderbilt as a National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow, housed in American Studies (now the Program for Culture, Advocacy, and Leadership).



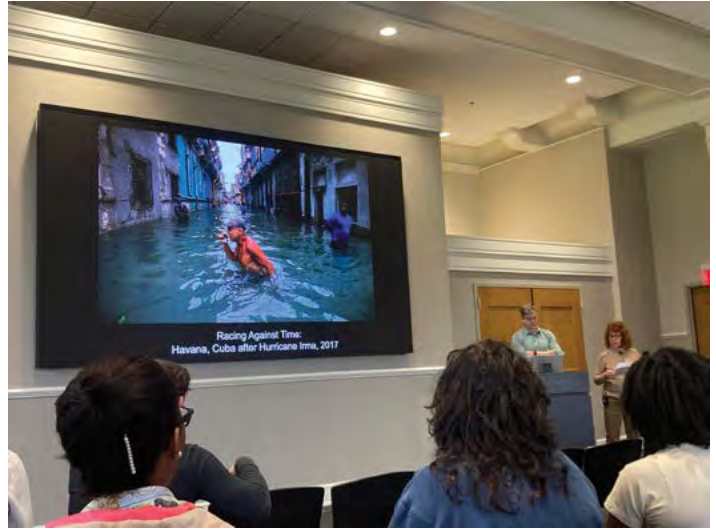


Javier Zamora and Stephanie Canizales Invited to Campus

In September, the Borders of Citizenship Grand Challenge Initiative hosted author **Javier Zamora** and scholar **Stephanie Canizales** with support from CLACX. Canizales, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of California-Merced gave a lecture, "Without Parents and Papers: Unaccompanied Migrant Youth Workers Coming of Age in the US." Zamora is author of The New York Times Bestseller *Solito: A Memoir* in which he recounts the story of his migration from El Salvador to the United States in 1999 when he was nine years old. Zamora gave several readings from the book to a full house of students, faculty, and community members. Following the readings, **Eddie Wright-Rios** (History), one of the lead researchers for the Borders of Citizenship group, and Canizales moderated a conversation with Zamora about his experience migrating to the US and the challenges he faced once in the US, which are not included in the book. Students from several Vanderbilt classes and members of the CLACX Educator Book Club attended the event, with many students expressing their gratitude for the book and sharing their own experiences as members of immigrant families.



CLACX Consortium of Latin American Studies in the South



Now in its second year, the CLACX Consortium for Latinx Studies in the South (CCLASS) continues to expand its scope and impact. The Center founded CCLASS in 2022 as part of our 2022-2026 National Resource Center grant. The MSI-centered consortium serves as a hub to discuss and reimagine the nature and future of Latin American Studies in the South. It includes Tuskegee University, University of Texas-Arlington, Tennessee State University (TSU), Jacksonville State University (JSU), and the University of Alabama (UA).

Our annual CCLASS meeting took place in February at the University of Alabama, hosted by **Sarah Moody**, Director of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies at UA and Associate Professor of Spanish. Attendees included **Xavier Medina Vidal**, Director of the UT-Arlington Center for Mexican American Studies and Associate Professor of Political Science; **Rhonda Collier**, Director of the Tuskegee University Global

Office and Chair of English and Modern Languages, and **Lance Ingwersen**, Associate Professor of History at Jacksonville State University. **Jared Hendrickson**, Instructor of Portuguese at UA, and **Micah McKay**, Assistant Professor of Spanish at UA, also attended the meeting. **Celso Castilho**, **Avery Dickins de Girón**, and **Luisa Mattos** represented CLACX. Participants

discussed our collaborative initiatives including study abroad programs, language instruction, and plans for the 2024-2025 academic year. Following the meeting, **Jane Landers** (Vanderbilt) and **David La Favor** (UT-Arlington) presented their work with the Slave Societies Digital Archive for UA faculty and students.

CLACX and Tuskegee have partnered to provide distance-learning Portuguese instruction for Tuskegee students since 2017. This year, we expanded the course to include students at JSU, which will contribute to JSU's new minor in Latin American Studies offered through the History and Foreign

Both talks February 16 in the Gorgas Library Camelia Room.
Refreshments will be served.

10:00 — Jane Landers (Vanderbilt University)
"Racing Against Time to Save Endangered History"

11:00 — David LaFavor (University of Texas, Arlington)
"Applying the Archive: The Narratives of African emancipados from the Slave Ship Cicerón"

EVENTS

Languages department. **Jared Hendrickson** taught the 2023-2024 courses, with six students enrolling in POR 101 in Fall 2023 and two students in POR 102 in Spring 2024.

Supported by NRC funds, Hendrickson will develop POR 201 over the summer and pilot it in Fall 2024 with one student from Tuskegee. Eight students are registered for POR 101 in Fall 2024, and Hendrickson has been working with **Benjamin Legg** (Vanderbilt) and Rhonda Collier to encourage students to continue their study through intermediate and advanced levels of Portuguese. Also new for Fall 2024 is the addition of Texas Women's University (TWU) to CCLASS. In collaboration with **Angela Moody**, Assistant Professor of English at TWU, we will pilot a Portuguese course for heritage speakers of Spanish at TWU, which is a Hispanic-serving institution.

Other CCLASS activities included a visit by **Julissa Arce** to UT-Arlington and a month-long residency by **Alexandra Lima da Silva** (Universidade Federal Rio de Janeiro). Best-selling author Julissa Arce delivered the 30th Anniversary Edition of the CMAS Distinguished Lecture April 17, which was attended by over 100. Prior to her talk, she met with faculty and students at UT-Arlington to discuss social justice, immigrant rights, and education.



Afro-Brazilian historian and author Lima da Silva led several educational programs for students, faculty and educators at Tuskegee and throughout the Southeast during Hispanic Heritage Month. She delivered two campus lectures at Tuskegee: “Slavery, Education, and Freedom in Rio de Janeiro” and “Ebony Flowers: Women, Education, and Slavery.” Lima da Silva led an educator workshop, “How Did I Become a Writer of Children’s Literature?” that was attended by six Macon County teachers, two education students, and three Tuskegee faculty. During the workshop, Lima da Silva discussed her historical research in Brazil for her books. Other activities included speaking with Tuskegee and JSU students enrolled in POR 101 and visiting Portuguese classes at Spelman College and UT Knoxville.

Lima da Silva also traveled to Nashville, where she met with Vanderbilt faculty and students, visited an ESL class at Tennessee State University, and saw a performance of “The Amazing Twins” at the Nashville Public Library (see p. 21). She also visited the Civil Rights Room and attended “The Latin Party” as a guest of CLACX at the annual Hispanic Heritage Month event hosted by Conexión Américas. The core of her visit was a discussion with the CLACX Educator Book Club, during which she presented *The Diary of Violeta*, which is available in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. She shared her historical research on education and Afro-Brazilian literature, as well as her pedagogical approaches



for teaching children’s literature. CLACX purchased book copies for the members of the book club, and the meeting took place over a catered dinner in Rothschild, hosted by the **Vanderbilt Center for Languages**. While in Nashville, Lima da Silva also visited Tennessee State University and Fisk as part of a research project on Black education in the Global South, which includes a focus on HBCUs. She presented this research at the College Language Association’s conference in Memphis in April 2024.

In February, CLACX Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow **Lidiana de Moraes** and **Luisa Mattos** traveled to Alabama to participate in Tuskegee’s Black History Month International Symposium.

For the upcoming academic year, CCLASS will develop a public-facing digital presence featuring student and faculty stories about what it means to study Latin America while living in the Southeastern US. Lance Ingwersen is taking the lead on this project.

CCLASS is coordinated by Avery Dickins de Girón.

CLACX Hosts Colombian Musical Troupe El Palenque de Delia



In March, CLACX hosted the acclaimed Colombian dance, music, and theater ensemble, **El Palenque de Delia**. The highlight of their three-day residency was a performance in the Blair School of Music's Ingram Hall on March 25. The program, "People of all Colors: Four Colombian Regions," showcased Colombian folkloric dances rooted in Indigenous, African, and Spanish traditions. The troupe's visit to Vanderbilt commemorated **Delia Zapata Olivella**, who founded the Fundación Delia Zapata Olivella Palenque in the 1940s. For over twenty years, the Fundación Delia Zapata Olivella and dance troupe have been directed by Delia's daughter, **Edelmira Massa Zapata**, who traveled to Nashville to lead the troupe through the residency.

Delia Zapata Olivella studied under Katherine Dunham in the US prior to founding El Palenque

de Delia. The troupe traveled the world visiting global centers such as Peking, Paris, and Moscow to share Colombia's African and Indigenous popular culture through its music and dance traditions. Her school of dance has been internationally recognized for researching and teaching these traditions in Colombia and the world. Vanderbilt Library is home to the archives of Delia Zapata Olivella which includes Delia's personal papers, scrapbooks of worldwide travels, manuscripts of dance steps, interviews, and audio-visual materials. These resources have served as a basis for the Foundation's creative works, costumes, and interpretations. See [page 39](#) for more on how these collections are used by researchers.

Over 280 members of the CLACX and Vanderbilt community attended the performance at Ingram Hall.



It was preceded by a reception, and the audience was treated to a rare cameo performance by Edelmira at the close of the show. This joyful moment became even more special in hindsight that Edelmira passed away in June.

While in Nashville, the troupe also led a dance workshop at the Global Education Center studio on Charlotte Avenue, and Edelmira gave a talk on the history of the dance troupe and the global legacy of Delia Zapata Olivella, which included comments by **William Luis** (Spanish and Portuguese). **Luisa Mattos** organized a tour of the National Museum of African

American Music for the group, Paula Covington hosted a barbeque for them at her house, and they visited Vanderbilt Library's Special Collections to view materials in the Delia Zapata Olivella collection. Following the visit at Vanderbilt, the troupe traveled to Indiana for another series of performances before returning to Colombia.

Edelmira was thrilled to have brought the 12-person ensemble to perform in the US and expressed her gratitude to **Paula Covington**, who took the lead on months of preparation to realize the visit. Doctoral student **Vivi Quintero** was also instrumental to the visit.

Vanderbilt Library is home to the archives of Delia Zapata Olivella which includes Delia's personal papers, scrapbooks of worldwide travels, manuscripts of dance steps, interviews, and audio-visual materials.



Edelmira Massa Zapata (1953–2024)



It is with great sorrow that we share the passing of Edelmira Massa Zapata on June 21, 2024. As Director of the Fundación Instituto Folclórico Colombiano Delia Zapata Olivella, she dedicated her life to preserving Colombia's popular folkloric tradition through choreography and dance. We are grateful to have met Edelmira and hosted her and the Palenque de Delia prior to her passing.

Vanderbilt's library is privileged to host the Delia Zapata Olivella archive as well as those of her siblings, acclaimed novelist, anthropologist, folklorist, and physician, Manuel Zapata Olivella, and Juan Zapata Olivella, writer, diplomat, and presidential candidate. The archives of Delia are fully digitized and accessible to

all on the Vanderbilt Library website and are among the library's most visited collections by researchers from Colombia and many other countries.

Edelmira's passing has shocked those who knew and admired her - at Vanderbilt and in Colombia. She was a person of seemingly boundless energy and infectious good humor, full of new dreams and artistic ideas. Her legacy is large and will be continued through her foundation and dance troupe, as well as through the family's archives at Vanderbilt. Those of us in the Library and the Center share the pain of this loss with her family and El Palenque. May she rest in peace.

-Thanks to Paula Covington for this tribute

Vanderbilt Hosts ReadWorks Staff Retreat

In February, CLACX, Owen and Peabody hosted a staff retreat for ReadWorks. Since 2017, CLACX has partnered with the nonprofit, which is dedicated to improving reading comprehension across the US. All staff for the ed-tech company work remotely, so twice-yearly retreats serve as an essential way to build and maintain relationships. Owen hosted the meeting in their new fourth floor conference rooms for the 2-day meeting, and CLACX helped the ReadWorks organizers plan logistics for their visit to Nashville.

Taking advantage of having ReadWorks on campus, CLACX organized a presentation that gave faculty, students, and administrators an overview of the partnership between ReadWorks and CLACX. The lunchtime event, organized in collaboration with **Shannon Daniel** (Associate Professor in Teaching and Learning), took place on Peabody's campus and was attended by students and faculty in Teaching and Learning, as well as **Kathleen Hritz** (Senior Director, Vanderbilt Community Relations), **Carolyn Floyd** (Senior Director, Vanderbilt Office of Experiential Learning and Immersion), **Molly Stovall** (Executive Director of English Learners in MNPS) and **Megan Trkca** (Coordinator for English Learner Curriculum in MNPS). **Nathalie Karminian** presented ReadWorks' mission and its national impact, **Avery Dickins de Girón** spoke about the establishment of the partnership and its importance in the context of national impact of CLACX's Title VI funding, and **Chalene Helmuth** shared the most recent collaborative project, which

involves students in her "Spanish Writing for Heritage Speakers" course. Later that evening, **Luisa Mattos da Costa, Helmuth** and **Dickins de Girón** attended a dinner hosted by ReadWorks.

Thanks to **Mario Avila** (Owen), Shannon Daniel, and Chalene Helmuth for helping to organize their visit.

CLACX has partnered with **ReadWorks** on several projects, including the creation of content for their "Article a Day" series and translations of English language texts to Spanish. The most recent



initiative involves undergraduates in Helmuth's SPAN 3891 course in the creation of Spanish language texts, which is part of ReadWorks' focus on K-8 schools with a large number of English Language Learners. ReadWorks, MNPS, and CLACX have been in conversation about piloting some of the new content in MNPS classrooms in the upcoming 2024-2025 academic year. Since the partnership began, more than 270,621 teachers in 66,984 schools nationwide have used content produced by CLACX, and over one million student have been given digital assignments using CLACX content.

Third Global Studies Symposium Takes Place in January 2024 at The Wolfsonian-Florida International University

In January, CLACX collaborated with Florida International University's Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC) to host the third Global Studies Symposium. The symposium brought together 55 faculty and administrators from minority-serving institutions and community colleges to share best practices for internationalizing curricula. The two-day event took place at the Wolfsonian-FIU museum, library and research institute. LACC Associate Director **Liesl Picard** welcomed participants and presented **Richard Blanco**. Blanco, who is the Presidential Inaugural Poet, and an author, engineer and Associate Professor in FIU's Department of English, gave the keynote address and symposium attendees received copies of his book, *Homeland of My Body*. Later that day, **Micah Oelze**, Assistant Professor of History at Adelphi University, energized participants with a special address, "#HashtagPedagogies" that encouraged ways to incorporate technologies into teaching strategies.

As in previous years, the core of the symposium were panel presentations by faculty attendees. This year's topics included:

- *Institutional Collaborations to Develop Global Strategies* featuring presenters from Madison Area Technical College, Central New Mexico Community College and University of New Mexico
- *Creative Pedagogies for Transformative Learning* with speakers from Northwest Vista College, Pima Community College,

- and Florida SouthWestern State College
- *Cultivating Global-Minded Students On and Off Campus*, with panelists from College of Menominee Nation, Northampton Community College, and Heartland Community College
- *Student Success Strategies at MSIs Across Regions* featuring panelists from Metropolitan State University of Denver, Nassau Community College, and San Jose City College
- *Diversifying International Learning Opportunities for Impact* with speakers from Miami Dade College, Santa Fe College, Fort Valley State University, and Tuskegee University
- *Digital Adaptations to Enhance Students' Global Competencies* with panelists from Borough of Manhattan Community College CUNY, Xavier University of Louisiana, Santa Fe College, and Green River College





The symposium also included ample time for participants to engage with each other over meals and a reception on Thursday evening. Feedback from participants during the closing remarks session was positive with attendees describing it as a “wonderful event” and expressing gratitude for being able to make new contacts for their global education programs.

The symposium was supported with funding from National Resource Centers from various world areas. NRC funds from CLACX supported attendees from Tuskegee University and Northampton Community College, as well as travel for invited speakers and copies of *Homeland of My Body* for attendees. The program was organized by **Liesl Picard** and **Avery Dickins de Girón**, with **Claudia Battistel** and **Lucila Roelly** coordinating invitations, accommodations, and event logistics at FIU. They received support from **Luisa Mattos**, who oversaw pre- and post-program assessment surveys, and **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel**. The next Global Studies Symposium is slated to take place at Vanderbilt in 2024-2025.

Following the January symposium, CLACX and FIU collaborated to bring back the Global Studies Hub, hiring **Salma Wehrmeyer Nawlo** (Polk College) as Communications Manager. The hub is intended as a platform for attendees of the three Global Studies Symposia to continue the exchange of ideas. Wehrmeyer Nawlo sends a monthly email-newsletter and is organizing virtual panels. The Global Studies Hub is supported with NRC funds from CLACX and FIU.

International Studies Consortium of Georgia and CLACX Host Seminar with Consul General of Colombia

CLACX continued our partnership with the International Studies Consortium of Georgia, co-sponsoring a virtual seminar in April with the Consul General of Colombia in Atlanta, **Adriana Arias**. She spoke about US policies in Colombia and Venezuela and the relationship between the two countries, as well as sustainability initiatives and manufacturing sectors. Thirty-four students and faculty from ten institutions attended the webinar, including several Minority-Serving Institutions and 2-year colleges: Dallas Community College, Georgia State University, Georgia Highlands College, and Alcorn State University. Other attendees came from Andrew College, Columbus State University, Georgia State University, Jacksonville State University, Reinhardt University, and the University of North Georgia, which is one of six senior military colleges in the nation. Feedback from participants was positive, with comments describing the presentation as “comprehensive,” “enlightening,” and “an invaluable educational experience.” Ongoing thanks to **Raj Shasti** (Reinhardt University) for organizing and hosting the webinar.



Over 100 Visit the Latin American Garden

Led by their Spanish teacher Katie Ann Buchanan Moore, students in Hazel Green High School's Spanish Club traveled nearly two hours from Alabama to visit the garden in October 2023. That same week, 45 juniors from Hunters Lane High School in Nashville visited the garden in three tour groups led by **Avery Dickins de Girón**: one tour in Spanish for students in Spanish Honors and two other tours for students in environmental science. Students enjoyed learning about plants in the garden and shared their own knowledge of many of the plants. The students had fun tasting fruits of the blue passionflower, smelling epazote and lemon verbena, and picnicking by the garden following the tours.

Working with teachers and kindergarten students in Vanderbilt's Acorn School, **Hilario Lomelí** developed a new set of curricular materials for the garden for young learners. The Owl classroom visited the garden in November, with Lomelí guiding them through several activities, including taking polaroid pictures, discussing how plants



communicate with each other and people, and what might be going on underground. Dickins de Girón led them on a sensory tour that encouraged them to touch and smell select plants in the garden. In April, Lomelí returned with the Owls to the garden to explore how it had changed.

The Latin American Garden was also featured as part of the 2024 K-16 Summer Institute with 20 educators visiting it in June. Dickins de Girón gave the teachers a tour and created a handout for teachers. The handout was used by **Laine Farber**, a New Orleans-based educator and podcast producer, in a session she led for the institute, “Teaching Latin American Nature Through Podcasting and Alternative Resources.”

In Fall 2024, Dickins de Girón will teach a new class (LAS 2106W) focused on plants in the garden.

Thanks to the Grounds team for its ongoing support maintaining the garden, especially **Laura Barker** and **Hall Whitaker**.



CLACX Seminar Series

CLACX supports three working groups that host speakers and discussions throughout the academic year:

Latinidades: Making and Unmaking Latinx/Latinidad Seminar Series

In Spring 2024, CLACX debuted a new seminar series, “Latinidades: Making and Unmaking Latinx/Latinidad.” Developed and led by **Julie Gamble** (Gender and Sexuality Studies), **Rebeca Gamez** (Anthropology), and **Hilario Lomelí** (CLACX), Latinidades is a monthly interdisciplinary series that brings together scholars on and off campus to examine an extensive range of topics across Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx studies. The series especially encourages new approaches relevant to the diasporic realities of the Americas and features diverse speakers’ reflections on intersections between Latinx/Latin American studies. Topics of focus include environmental justice, race and immigration, gender and labor, mobility, and urban and rural territories. In addition to serving as a discussion forum, other goals of the seminar series include building a supportive network for early career faculty and graduate students, providing a space to share research, and fostering academic networks. The series launched on January 24th with a discussion attended by over twenty faculty and graduate students. The Spring 2024 seminars featured book projects: Rebeca Gamez presented “A Discussion of Book Proposal: Latinx Youth Formations in Black Geographies” in February and Hilario Lomelí shared his project, “Dismantle the Warehouse: Statecraft, Valuation, and Precarious Youth” in April.



Brazilian Studies Group Organizes Brazil Week

Led by **Benjamin Legg** (Spanish and Portuguese), the Brazilian Studies group again organized a diverse and engaging array of activities for Brazil Week in September 2023. Brazilian trans-scholar, journalist, and activist **Sara Wagner York** shared her work with students and faculty in the Vanderbilt Center for Languages. **Lauren Miller Griffith** (Texas Tech University) gave a talk on capoeira, and **Gustavo Siqueira** presented a lecture, “A history of the act of judging Brazil: the experience of the city of Barra Mansa (1893–1980). Students participated in capoeira lessons led by **Gil Whiting** (African American and Diaspora Studies) and **Mestre Valu**. New this year was a panel presentation by Summer 2023 FLAS fellows. **Eli Apple, Michael Peck** and **Justin Jones** shared their personal perspectives on the Summer in Brazil program and the experiences that most impacted them. Their highlights included touring São Paulo’s street art and murals, excursions to Paraty and Rio, attending the biggest Pride festival in the world, living alongside Brazilian students, and learning about Brazil’s large Japanese population. Fellows reminisced about their favorite Brazilian foods, such as tacacá and acerola, and shared their favorite words in Portuguese (which included *tutto*, *voce*, and *gente*). They also spoke about the benefit of small language courses offered by the Summer in Brazil program in collaboration with CET ([see p. 65](#)). The week wrapped up with a celebratory karaoke party where students and faculty sampled Brazilian food and drinks while singing hits in Portuguese.



GuateLab: Miguel and Nela

GuateLab Hosts Filmmaker and Several Speakers

GuateLab (IximLab) is a student-led initiative to discuss social issues with implications in Guatemala (Iximulew), such as access to education, inequality, racism, violence, hunger, health issues, and migration. GuateLab respects and welcomes diverse points of

view, and is open to Guatemalan students across the university, as well as any student interested in Guatemala. Throughout the year, the group hosts **GuateSeminar**, which allows students to engage in discussion with invited speakers. In Fall 2023, **Lara Lookabaugh** (Gender Studies/ Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Program) presented her research, “*Mujeres Tejedoras del Conocimiento: Mam Maya women curating past and present to weave the future in Guatemala*” and Vanderbilt alumnus **Iyaxel Cojti Ren** (University of Texas, Austin) gave a talk via Zoom, “*Deidades protectoras, expansionismo k’iche’, y la integración de las comunidades políticas aliadas en las tierras altas mayas de Guatemala durante el Posclásico Tardío.*” In November, filmmaker **Erin Semine Kökdil** presented her documentary short, “*Since you arrived, my heart stopped belonging to me (Desde que llegaste, mi corazón dejó de pertenecerme)*” to students and faculty, and led a multimedia documentary workshop for graduate students the following day. In Spring 2024, GuateSeminar featured a talk by sociologist and Maya K’iche’ activist **Gladys Tzul Tzul**, “*Trabajo comunal: o de la fuerza material de la soberanía.*”



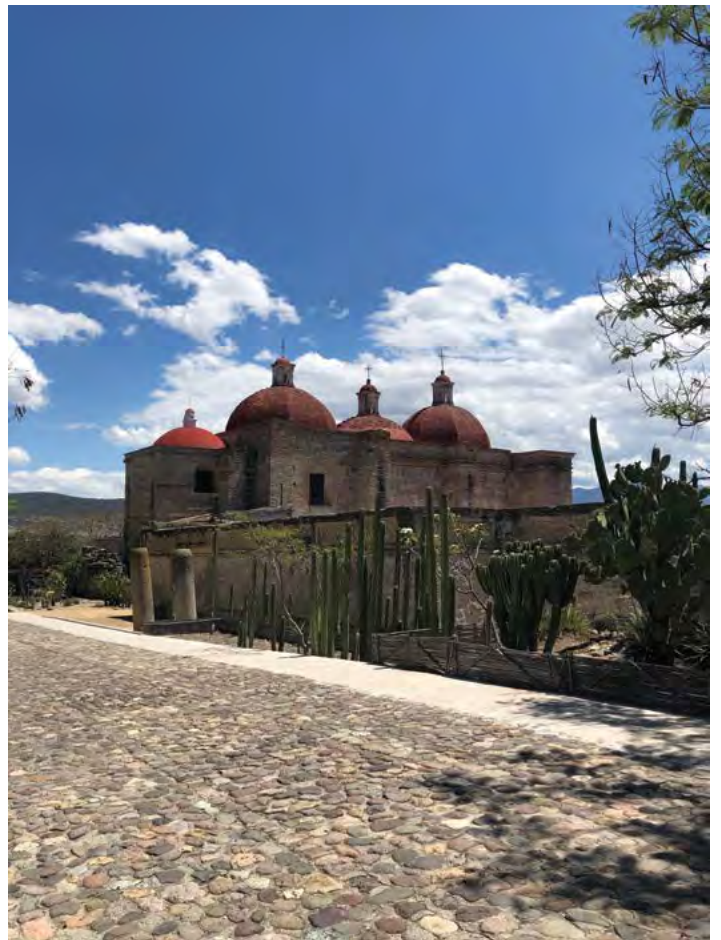
Latin American Images Photo Competition

CLACX hosted its annual Latin American Images Photo Competition in Spring 2024, inviting Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and visiting scholars to submit original photos taken from their travels in Latin America and the Caribbean. This year, CLACX received 29 photos representing 13 countries: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Sint Eustatius. Ten entries were chosen for display in the lobby of the Bryan Building during the month of January. This year's judges, **Julie Gamble** (Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies) and **Lidiana de Moraes dos Santos** (CHPP Fellow, CLACX), chose the winners and selected 10 photos to be displayed in the lobby of the Bryan Building during January.

Winners of the competition were announced at a reception hosted by CLACX in the Bryan Building

lobby on February 6. First Place was awarded to **Lara Lookabaugh** (CHPP Fellow, Gender and Sexuality Studies) for "Mujeres Tejedoras del Conocimiento" (above). Undergraduate student **Renato Albuquerque** won Second Place for "The Vastness of Peace" (above right) and Third Place went to **Michelle Young** (Anthropology) for "Un momento de respiro" (right). The People's Choice Award, based on the number of "likes" received on social media, was awarded to undergraduate student **Tamara Regalado Quiroz** who received over 350 likes for "Mitla, Oaxaca" (far right). Photos from previous LAIPC competitions will be part of the AmericasBarometer Report by LAPOP Lab.

Thank you to our judges and to **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel**, who has organized the competition, appointed the judges, and overseen the installation of the photos for the past 10 years.



Visiting Speakers and Local Events

In August, CLACX welcomed thirty incoming first-year and transfer students. CLACX Director **Celso Castillo** greeted students and introduced the CLACX staff and student organization leaders, who spoke about getting involved on campus and the Latinx community at Vanderbilt. Students then joined smaller breakout rooms where they had the opportunity to introduce themselves and ask questions.



CLACX hosted our annual *Bienvenida* in the Multicultural Community Center during the first week of classes. On September 21, we invited colleagues to see our new space in the Bryan Building for a lunchtime Open House. CLACX will be located in 106 Bryan Building until Fall 2025 while Garland Hall is remodeled.

In September, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese hosted a screening of “Zurbano and His Racial Consciousness” followed by a conversation with the film’s director, Professor **Juanamaría Cordones-Cook** and **Roberto Zurbano**, the Afro-Cuban anti-racist activist and intellectual who is the subject of the documentary. In the personal narrative, Zurbano reflects on the socio-historical and cultural contributions of Black individuals to Cuba’s development. He examines missed opportunities to address racism

effectively within the context of the 1959 Cuban revolution, contending that racism and neo-racism persist in Cuba but have largely been absent from public discourse. The event was organized by **Elvira Morelli** (Spanish and Portuguese/ Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Program) and **William Luis** (Spanish and Portuguese), and received support from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation.

On September 19, **Jesús Ruiz** (American Studies/ Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Program) presented “What Latinx Means to Asylum Seekers” for The Vanderbilt Project on Unity & American Democracy. Ruiz led a conversation about what the “X” in Latina/Latino signals to the communities to which it refers, and especially how it impacts asylum seekers. Also in September, Ruiz gave a talk for the **Black Worlds Seminar**, “Transatlantic Kingdoms: The Politics of Royalism in the Haitian Revolution, 1791–1795.” The Black Worlds Seminar is co-hosted by the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities and the Racial Justice Grand Challenge Initiative.

CLACX helped support *The Tennessean’s* storytelling series that features community members speaking about their life experiences. “Black Tennessee Voices Storytellers Live” took place at the National Museum of African American Music in September. The second annual “Latino Tennessee Voices Live” featured five speakers at Casa Azafrán on October 12: Jessie Garcia Knowles, Jonathan Low, Jessica Marquez,

CLACX collaborated on several events with the **Borders of Citizenship Initiative**. In October, **Katherine Jensen** (University of Wisconsin – Madison) was invited to campus for a lecture, “The Color of Asylum: The Racial Politics of Safe Haven in Brazil.” She shared her ethnographic research that addresses how Syrians, Congolese, and other immigrants learn about the Brazilian racial order as they go through the process of claiming asylum, discussing how racism and immigration are intertwined in today’s Brazil. In November, the Borders of Citizenship Initiative featured a talk by **Norbert Ross** (Anthropology), “Migrant as Playwrite: Playing Back Stories at the Border Wall.” In February, the Borders of Citizenship Initiative, CLACX, and the Department of Sociology presented a discussion on migration, racial formation, and the (re)making of the US South. The event featured **Jennifer Jones** (University of Illinois, Chicago) who spoke about “Making Race: Racial Politics and Possibilities in the 21st Century” and **Cecilia Márquez**, (Duke University) who presented “Making the Latino South: A History of Racial Formation.”

Luis Mata and Eva Angelina Romero. **David Plazas**, Director of Opinion and Engagement at *USA TODAY NETWORK*, Tennessee – *The Tennessean*, hosted and helped organize the events.



In October, Chemistry, Anthropology, and CLACX supported **Marcela Sepulveda** as a *Vanderbilt Global Scholar in Residence*. An Associate Researcher of Social Science Department of the Universidad de Tarapacá in Chile, she specializes in the archaeology of the pre-Hispanic Andes and of the Atacama Desert in northern Chile. Her interdisciplinary research examines pre-Hispanic rock art in hunter-gatherer societies and includes a strong archaeometric component. She led a brown bag lunch

conversation on October 17, gave a lecture for Anthropology, “Archeology of the Andes seen through the prism of a materiality of color,” and met with several faculty and students while at Vanderbilt.

CLACX and LAPOP organized a virtual discussion on October 23 featuring **Germán Feierherd** (U. de San Andrés) and **Alejandro Bonvecchi** (U. Torcuato Di Tella) in conversation with **Noam Lupu** (LAPOP) and **Virginia Oliveros** (Tulane) about the upcoming election in Argentina, entitled “Argentina’s 2023 Election: Political and Economic Scenarios.”



The Nashville Public Library (NPL) celebrated the 10th anniversary of the creation of ***The Amazing Twins: Ancient Maya Tales from the Popol Wuj*** with several performances during Hispanic Heritage Month. The marionette show was created through a collaboration between NPL’s award-winning puppet troupe, Wishing Chair Productions, and CLACX (then the Center for Latin American Studies). The story of the *Amazing Twins* is adapted from the *Popol Wuj*, one of the most important texts in the culture of the K’iche’ Maya. The marionette show recounts the creation of the world and the adventures of Junajpu and Ixb’alanke, twin brothers who can talk to animals. Approximately 1500 people attended the performances at NPL’s Main Library in September 2023, with up to 9000 people attending performances at through school visits or the traveling puppet bus. Educators and visiting colleagues had the opportunity to see the show through trips organized by CLACX.

Also in October, CLACX partnered with The Vanderbilt Project on Unity & American Democracy to host a conversation with Former US Ambassador to Panama, **John Feeley**. The lunch talk, “Slouching Toward Oblivion? The State of Democracy in the Western Hemisphere (And that means us too!)” was attended by 40 students and faculty, and took place in the Vanderbilt Library’s Special Collections.

With funding from CLACX and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, **Elvira Morelli** (Spanish and Portuguese/ Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Program) hosted a virtual talk in November by **Kenya Cuevas** for her class, SPAN 3304-01 “Contemporary Issues in the Spanish-Speaking World.” Cuevas is the most influential LGBTQIA+ rights activist in Mexico, known for her remarkable efforts in supporting transgender individuals and those involved in sex work within the country. She has been a driving force behind the establishment of Mexico’s first shelter exclusively for transgender women, making a profound impact on the lives of many. The Spanish-language talk was open to the Vanderbilt community.

Elizabeth Swanson Andi, Ecuadorian Indigenous activist and digital influencer presented “Reforestation of Minds: Amazonian Indigenous Youth and the use of social media to protect their home” in November. While on campus, Swanson Andi visited CLACX and met with students.

Vanderbilt’s Open Dialogue Visiting Fellows Program featured acclaimed journalist **Maria Hinojosa** in November as part of its Fall 2023 series on campus safety. Hinojosa is the anchor and executive producer of the Peabody Award-winning public radio show, *Latino USA*. She founded Futuro Media, which received a Pulitzer Prize in 2022 for the podcast series *Suave* and recently directed a new film entitled, *After Uvalde: Guns, Grief, & Texas Politics*. Her November talk on campus, “A Dialogue about Latino/a Power and the Future of US Education” included a panel discussion with **Terry Maroney** (Law), **Gretchen Selcke** (CLACX), and **Consuelo Wilkins** (VUMC) that was moderated by **Jonathan Metzl** (Medicine, Health, and Society); a reception followed the panel.

Organized through the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, the Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar focuses on the themes of Atlantic slavery, colonialism, and/or post colonialism and hosts a talk each February as part of the Black Atlantic History Speaker series. On November 17, the seminar featured a talk by **Aldair Rodrigues** (University of Campinas/UNICAMP), “African Body Markings and the Construction of Blackness in Colonial Brazil (18th Century).” In February, **Joseph Clark** (University of Kentucky) spoke about “The First Black Atlantic: Captivity and Mobility in the Early Modern Caribbean” for the annual Black Atlantic Speakers Series.

With support from CLACX, **Lori Catanzaro** invited Vanderbilt alumnus **Al López** (International Executive MBA, 1999) to campus on February 21. A Honduran-American coffee farmer, López established **Finca Terrerito**, a coffee farm dedicated to improving lives, sustainability, and the production of extraordinary coffee. He presented a talk in the Owen School of Management, “Revitalizing the Coffee Industry: A Strategic Call to Action,” which was followed by a cafecito. He also spoke with students in Catanzaro’s class, “Mercado de Maravillas: Foods of Spain and Hispanic America in Today’s Global Marketplace” about issues concerning coffee production and direct trade.

In February, **Slave Societies Digital Archive** Fellows presented research supported by a Digital Justice Grant from the American Council of Learned Societies in a panel, “Digital Approaches for the Study of the African Diaspora.”



The Anthropology Speakers Series featured a book talk in March by **Christopher Loperena**, *The Ends of Paradise: Race, Extraction, and the Struggle for Black Life in Honduras*.

Selcke, Hinojosa, and Maroney



Also in March, **Manuela Tahay Tzaj** visited campus to meet with students and give a talk, “Linguistic and Indigenous Sovereignty: K’iche’ Maya (Guatemala)” in the Vanderbilt Center for Languages Satellite. Tahay has worked with **Mareike Sattler** for over a decade to lead K’iche’ conversational practice with Vanderbilt students, and she is the Resident Director for the Mayan Language Institute (see p. 63). Her visit to Vanderbilt was part of a larger tour to several universities in the US, including Yale University, Duke University, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and University of Texas-Austin. The trip culminated with a **workshop** hosted by Stanford University, “Indigenous Languages of Latin America Workshop: Pedagogy & Technology.” Tahay’s participation in the workshop was supported by CLACX.

The Urban Humanities Seminar Series invited **Brodwyn Fischer** (University of Chicago) to give a talk, “Freedom in Slavery’s City: Informality as Afterlife in Recife, Brazil.” She addressed the urban legacies of slavery in the northeastern city of Brazil and explored how radically unequal relational networks persisted after abolition and structured urban racial and spatial injustice to the present day. The Urban Humanities Seminar Series is organized through the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities; Fischer’s visit was co-sponsored with CLACX.



In late March, **Vesna Pavlović** hosted the IMS Solidarity Workshop Open House in the E. Bronson Studio Art Center. The workshop was a two-day meeting of a team of architects, curators and artists to present and workshop the outcomes of their research on the trajectory of the Yugoslav prefabricated construction systems (IMS) through the network of the Non-Aligned Movement, which found wide adoption in Cuba in the 1970s. The workshop served as an opportunity to garner feedback on campus from faculty and students.



In April, Vanderbilt's Department of Theatre presented *Love is the Greater Labyrinth/El Amor es mas Laberinto*, a farce comedy by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz that was directed by **René Millán** (Theatre).




**LOVE IS THE
GREATER
LABYRINTH**
 BY JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ
 DIRECTED BY RENÉ MILLÁN

DINNER AND A SHOW
 FOOD 5-7PM | TICKETS FREE FOR
 SHOW 7:30 - 9PM | VU STUDENTS!
APRIL 12 | NEELY AUDITORIUM


Vanderbilt Hosts Interdisciplinary Caribbean Studies Symposium

The Racial Justice Grand Challenge Initiative hosted “Refashioning: Postcolonial Pasts, Decolonial Futures—A Caribbean Studies Symposium” in the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center in March. The two-day symposium examined interconnected demands for reparation for slavery in anticipation of havoc wreaked by climate change. It included scholars from a range of disciplines and who work across the Caribbean, particularly those who put the Hispanophone and Francophone in conversation with the Anglophone.

Vice-Provost for Arts, Libraries, and Global Engagement **Tracy Denean Sharpley-Whiting** welcomed participants to Vanderbilt, followed by opening remarks from **Kimberly D. McKinson** (Anthropology). Panels included “Rethinking Sovereignty” moderated by **Brandon Byrd** (History), “Remapping Ecological Futures” moderated by **Ajay Batra** (English), and “Refusing Disaster” moderated by **Paul B. Miller** (French and Italian). On the second day, **Anthony Reed** (English) gave opening remarks and moderated a plenary session to close the symposium.

The symposium included presentations by several Vanderbilt faculty:

- **Matthew Plishka** (CLACX): “Bananas, Bauxite, and the Transformation of Smallholder Food Production in Late-Colonial Jamaica, 1950–1960”
- **Kimberley D. McKinson** (Anthropology): “The Ecological Lives of Metal or, On the Forging of Decolonial Metallurgical Futures”



- **Candice Amich** (English): “Undoing Puerto Rico’s Neoliberal Weather”
- **Gabriel Torres Colón** (Anthropology): “The Colobó People of Loíza, Puerto Rico: Defending the Mangroves and Building Diaspora through Bomba”

The symposium was organized by **Anthony Reed**, Norman L. and Roselea J. Goldberg Professor of Fine Arts and Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of English. Reed is Lead Research for Vanderbilt’s Grand Challenge Initiative on Racial Justice, which is an interdisciplinary research effort that explores the legacies of racial slavery and its connections to our modern world and institutions. The symposium was sponsored by the Racial Justice Grand Challenge Initiative, the BCC, CLACX, the Department of English, and the Department of Anthropology.



CLACX Collaborations Bring Films to Campus and Nashville in 2024

Aнна Marra (Spanish and Portuguese) organized a two-day film festival in February that drew over 300 people as part of *Il Cinema Ritrovato on Tour*. Marra received a Faculty Curriculum Development Award in 2023 (see p. 49) to attend the *Il Cinema Ritrovato* in Venice and bring films to campus. “The Rediscovered Cinema” is an annual film festival that takes place in Bologna, Italy. It screens classics and showcases the latest films restored by the Cineteca di Bologna. The *Il Cinema Ritrovato on Tour* was created in 1995 to bring the festival to cities worldwide.

Marra worked with colleagues in Spanish and Portuguese, **Anna Castillo** and **Benjamin Legg**, to present the films and integrate the films into classes (SPAN 3375, “Film and Culture in Latin America” and PORT 1111, “Brazilian Cinema.”). The series began with *Vicenta*, which was followed by a Q&A with Castillo. The next day, Legg presented two Brazilian shorts, *Mātānāg*, *a Encantada* and *Recife*



Frio to a student audience. The series wrapped up with a screening of *Inferno* in Sarratt Cinema, which featured a live concert performance by **Furion Di Castri** (bass) and **Stefano Maccagno** (piano) and an introduction by Marra and **Luca di Vito**, director of the Italian Cultural Institute. The Vanderbilt series was a collaboration with faculty in Italian Studies, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and the Department of Cinema & Media Arts.



CLACX hosted a special screening of *Nhakpoti* (Stargirl) on February 28. The film won “Best Short Film” at the 2023 Montreal First Peoples’ Film Festival and won “Best Short Indigenous Film” at the fifth International Ethnographic Film Festival of Pará, Brazil. The film’s directors, **Pat-i Kayapó** and **Paul Chilsen**, participated in a panel discussion following the screening, along with **Kaket Bepuneiti**, **Airyti Kayapó**, and CLACX Regional Faculty Affiliate **Richard Pace**. The Q&A centered on the filmmaking process, which was a collaborative effort with the A’Ukre community. Cacique Kaket explained to the audience that the telling of this story is done by elders throughout an entire day. Pat-i discussed challenges the community faced in making the film, such as selecting the most essential parts of the narrative and which members of the community would enact the story. Pace, an anthropologist based at Middle Tennessee State University, contrasted Indigenous

media production processes with commercial film productions. CLACX has collaborated with Pace and members of the A’Ukre community for several years through the **InDigital Conference**, which we host in collaboration with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Thanks to **Pat-i Kayapó**, **Ana Luiza Moraes Soares**, and **Benjamin Legg** for translating the conversation, which took place in Mêbêngôkre, Portuguese, and English.

In collaboration with the **Engine for Art, Democracy, and Justice** (EADJ), CLACX supported the screening of *Un Nuevo Pasado* (*Someday Soon*) at Begonia Labs. **Jose Luis Benavides** (Art) hosted the evening of dialogue, which featured a dinner, film screening, and discussion with filmmaker **Pablo Mazariegos**, as part of EADJ’s Open House for the Spring 2024 semester. The documentary by Chattanooga-based

Mazariegos traces his journey back to his homeland of Guatemala threading his own migration story with those of the Latinx people he serves in the community. The film poignantly untangles themes of family separation, struggles with self-identity, and highlights the resiliency of Latinx women and immigrant children in public education. Following the screening, Benavides moderated a conversation with Mazariegos and sociologist **Giovanni Romn-Torres** (University of Michigan) about Latin American and Latinx inclusion and identities.



Through *Nhakpoti*, Mêbêngôkre-Kayapó youth and elders reenact the story of how agriculture was brought from the heavens to their community. The Mêbêngôkre-Kayapó people live along the Xingu River in northwest Brazil, amid more than 27 million acres of rainforest. The film is the first narrative video project by the community of A’Ukre, created in collaboration with elders and the Mêbêngôkre filmmaking collective. In Mêbêngôkre with English subtitles.



Cynthia Paschal Invited as Commencement Speaker at Universidad del Valle

Cynthia Paschal, Senior Associate Dean for Engineering and Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, Radiology and Radiological Sciences, was invited as the commencement speaker at the Universidad del Valle (UVG) in May. Paschal celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of the biomedical engineering major, which she helped establish with colleagues at UVG in 2019.

Paschal delivered her graduation speech in Spanish and presented a letter from Chancellor Diermeier to UVG Rector Roberto Moreno Godoy. She congratulated the first class of biomedical engineering graduates and expressed her honor for being a small part of starting the new degree program. Paschal called upon the graduates to enact change to better the planet through their knowledge and skills as engineers. In addition to recognizing graduates in biomedical engineering, the ceremony included graduates of civil engineering, mechatronic engineering, and electronic engineering. Paschal thanked CLACX for supporting her work in Guatemala, which she has carried out for more than a decade.

In 2019, Carlos Esquit, Director of Electronic, Mechatronic and Biomedical Engineering at UVG, launched the new

biomedical degree program at del Valle with support from Paschal. The degree program is the first of its kind in Guatemala and trains students to repair biomedical equipment used in hospitals throughout Guatemala. Paschal and Esquit have collaborated for several years and orchestrated exchanges between Vanderbilt and del Valle students and faculty, including a 100,000 Strong in the Americas grant. Paschal teaches BME 3890: Special Topics: Service Learning in Guatemala, in which students learn about medical equipment testing and repair, and then travel to Guatemala during Spring Break to put their skills and knowledge to use, working alongside engineering students at UVG.

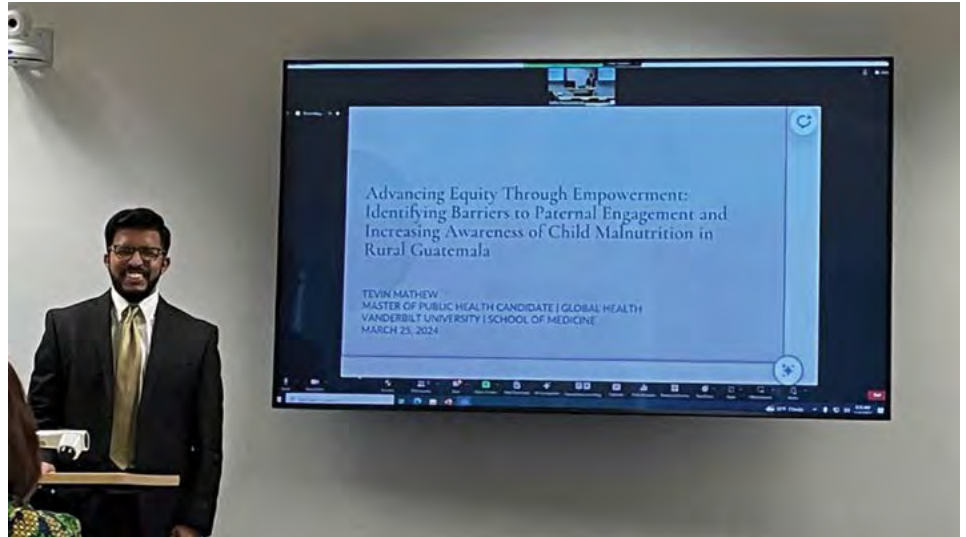


While she was in Guatemala, Paschal was interviewed about her career teaching biomedical engineering and her work with UVG: https://drive.google.com/file/d/13f_9mRDmuujxZkHbZprzfMlcEqTkDo1l/view?ts=66550b50

Advancing Equity Through Empowerment

Tevin Mathew Works with Primeros Pasos to Identify Barriers to Paternal Engagement and Increase Awareness of Child Malnutrition in Rural Guatemala

Master of Public Health students complete a culminating experience project to synthesize the skills they have learned during their two-year master's program. As part of this capstone experience, students partner with an organization to complete a project that benefits public health in the local community. Building on his summer 2023 practicum at the Primeros Pasos clinic in Guatemala, **Tevin Mathew** (MPH 2024) collaborated with the clinic's Development Director, Maria Jose Chajon, on a capacity strengthening project. They worked with officials in the Palajunoj Valley to establish an ethics review board and trained Primeros Pasos staff on the ethical conduct of research. The staff then interviewed fathers in the community to assess barriers to healthy nutrition and promote public health awareness. The clinic will use interview data to increase paternal participation in health education initiatives, with the goal of decreasing child malnutrition in the community.



Mathew studied K'iche' Mayan, the language spoken in the Palajunoj Valley, through a Summer 2023 FLAS Fellowship and a 2024-2024 Academic Year FLAS Fellowship awarded by CLACX. Mathew also received a Graduate Certificate in Latin American Studies from CLACX upon his graduation in May.

Mathew completed the Pathways to Practice Scholars program with the Tennessee Department of Health through the Region IV Public Health Training Center. He partnered with the Traumatic Brain Injury Program to design a mixed-methods evaluation plan that included a logic model, stakeholder analysis, and evaluation capacity assessment; surveys in English and Spanish with a focus group protocol; and data management, analysis and dissemination methodologies.



Medical Students Hone their Clinical Skills through Rotations in Latin America

Through the Integrated Science Course: Global Health, Vanderbilt medical students engage in month-long clinical rotations at hospitals around the world. Prior to the rotation, they complete a pre-departure training sequence on cultural humility, mindful engagement, and country- and language-specific resources. During the course, students learn about global health topics through online modules and complete a capstone project that benefits the hospital or community and supports their learning goals. Students who travel to Latin America and the Caribbean for their rotations learn vital medical skills and hone their medical Spanish skills. This year, seven students rotated in four countries in Latin America and the Caribbean:

- **Anne Altman-Merino** (MD, 2024): Guatemala at Primeros Pasos Clinic in Quetzaltenango
- **Natasha Belsky** (MD, 2024): Dominican Republic with AYUDA at Hospital Infantil in Santo Domingo
- **Hannah Chew** (MD, 2025): Argentina with Child Family Health International at Tránsito Cáceres de Allende
- **Juan Colazo** (MD/PhD, 2024): Argentina at Hospital Italiano de Buenos Aires
- **Kayla Buttafuoco** (MD, 2024), **Anna Henricks** (MD, 2024), and **Hannah Light-Olson** (MD, 2024): Peru with Medical Electives at various health centers and health fairs

Partnerships for Grant Writing to Improve Health Outcomes

Students in Essential Skills in Global Health, one of the core courses for public health students, partner with public health organizations in several countries to write a grant that addresses a pressing need of the organization that will help improve the community's health outcomes. Students start their work by conducting a needs assessment with the organization to gather background information and determine the grant's focus. Then, students spend three months working with the organization to develop project aims, a logic framework model, and a budget. This year, student groups collaborated with long-term partners of the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health in Guatemala and Peru. **Alie Basil** (MA 2025), **Leo Huang** (BA 2024), **Ariana Matos** (MPH 2025), **Sherissa Mohammed-Ali** (MPH 2025), and **Apeksha Phulgirkar** (MPH 2025) worked with Primeros Pasos in Guatemala. With guidance from **Raquel Castillo**, director of development and partnerships at Primeros Pasos, students wrote a grant that will help the organization build upon their mobile clinic model, which provide medical care in rural areas of the Palajunoj Valley. **Mimi Coffey** (MPH 2025), **Kevin Davis** (MA 2025), **Aarushi Dutt** (IEPM 2025), **Julia Landivar Donato** (MPH 2025), and **Sarah Monesmith** (MPH 2025) worked with **Dr. Claudio Lanata** at Instituto de Investigación Nutricional (IIN) in Lima. The IIN has little data on the mental health of the aging population in the community surrounding the IIN, which is an issue that it wants to address. Students collaborated with IIN to write a grant to conduct a needs assessment to gather information on elderly residents' physical and mental health, nutrition, medication and healthcare compliance, and socioeconomics/ demographics. This information will help IIN to identify any issues that may inform further research or intervention programs.

ENHANCING GLOBAL HEALTH OUTCOMES ACROSS BORDERS

As part of her MPH practicum experience, **Julia Landivar Donato** (MPH 2025)

spent five weeks in Colombia conducting a comprehensive analysis of a school feeding program in rural schools within the department of Caldas.

Her work involved collecting and evaluating data from five different schools, focusing on the quality, accessibility, and acceptability of the food products provided. Additionally, she assessed the extent to which the Colombian government supports the national programs in these remote and underserved areas by interviewing the mayor and Secretary of Education of Victoria, Caldas. This community engagement project was particularly significant as it amplified the voices of children in rural Colombian, a group often overlooked by the country's government. Through this initiative, Landivar Donato was able to identify key insights and formulate recommendations that could benefit school feeding programs in both Colombia and the US. She also found that the US could adopt successful practices from Colombia.

For Landivar Donato, this project epitomized the essence of global health. It was the convergence of health improvements without borders, unified by a shared goal of enhancing health outcomes for people worldwide. Landivar Donato was able to contribute to a cause that she is passionate about and enhance her professional Spanish skills. The practicum has solidified her belief in the importance of global health initiatives and the impact they can have on communities, no matter how remote. It was a deeply rewarding experience for Landivar Donato, both professionally and personally, and she looks forward to applying the knowledge and skills she has gained to future projects aimed at improving health and well-being globally.



Vanderbilt Global Scholars Program Supports Research Collaborations



Jonathan Davies (PhD 2024) conducted research at the Instituto de Investigación Nutricional (IIN) for eight weeks in Lima in through the new Vanderbilt Global Scholars program. Davies was the first participant in the Global Scholars program sponsored by the Vanderbilt Institute of Global Health (VIGH) and the Vanderbilt Institute of Infection, Immunology and Inflammation (VI4). His goals were to gain exposure to infectious disease research in a global health setting and to establish a collaboration between his graduate research lab at Vanderbilt (the lab of Dr. Lars Plate) and IIN, specifically with Dr. **Claudio Lanata**, **Ana Gil**, and members of the Bioequipo Lab. Previous and existing

with Instituto de Investigación Nutricional in Peru

collaborations between VIGH and IIN enabled him to rapidly onboard in Peru, particularly with the help of Drs. **Carlos Grijalva** and **Leigh Howard**.

Davies's research project focused on assessing Norovirus (NoV) proteins in pediatric stool samples as a complementing metric for assessing active NoV infection. NoV poses a high burden of public health and is a leading global cause of Acute Gastroenteritis (AGE) in children and older adults, including in Peru. IIN recently completed a cohort study on NoV prevalence in children under 5 years of age experiencing severe AGE. Davies's project built off this study by using these existing samples for proteomics analysis to measure NoV proteins and potential changes in human and microbiome proteins. With colleagues at IIN, the team optimized a protein isolation protocol and implemented new protein biology techniques in the Bioequipo Lab. Since then, they analyzed the samples by proteomics at Vanderbilt and are processing the data, with plans to submit their findings for publication. In addition, they co-wrote a review article promoting the use of proteomics for NoV studies that is in preparation for submission.

While in Lima, Davies also had the opportunity to interface with the clinical practice site of IIN, which does the hands-on work of cohort management and patient interfacing. This was a valuable experience for Davies to understand the process of obtaining patient samples and how important

cohort recruitment and management is in obtaining high quality study data. Davies also met with IIN collaborators, including Dr. **Mariana Leguía**, who runs a viral genomics lab at Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP), and representatives from the HelleVax Vaccine company.

Overall, the Global Scholars program enabled Davies to gain valuable exposure to infectious disease research in Peru, find ways to combine his systems biology background with clinical research applications, and start building collaborations between IIN and his thesis lab at Vanderbilt that will continue into the future.

Thanks to Elizabeth Rose for contributing this content on VUMC programs

Carlos Grijalva and Leigh Howard hosted their colleagues **Theresa Ochoa** (MD, PhD) who is the Director of the **Institute for Tropical Medicine at Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH)**, **Claudio Lanata** (MD, MPH) who is a Senior Researcher at **Instituto de Investigación Nutricional (IIN)** and **Ana Gil**, also a Senior Researcher at IIN. Drs. Lanata and Ochoa are VIGH's primary collaborators on the **Peru-Vanderbilt Prevention through Vaccination Training (PREVENT)** program. While at Vanderbilt, they met with faculty and students working on nutritional and infectious disease projects (see above), and CLACX hosted a lunch for Ochoa and Lanata to discuss continuing student exchanges.



Project Pyramid Students Work with Social Enterprises in Ecuador and Guatemala

Housed in the Owen School of Management and overseen by the Turner Family Center for Social Ventures, Project Pyramid (MGMT 6456) is a student-led program that combines classroom and hands-on learning to examine the causes and symptoms of global poverty. In existence since 2006, the course is currently taught by **Mario Avila** (Owen). Students in the course provide consultations for socially conscious organizations and gain experience in innovative and market-driven approaches for social enterprise. This year, students in the course consulted with organizations in Ecuador and Guatemala, with many traveling to visit their partners during Spring Break. Students presented their work to partner organizations via Zoom at the end of the semester.

Three teams of students worked with organizations in Ecuador, all of which are based in

Tena, a city in the Amazon.

- **UPINA:** an Indigenous-owned and operated social enterprise that sells reusable water containers and is dedicated to providing clean water access in rural communities, as well as addressing pollution and oil extraction that contaminate local water sources



- **Sinchi Warmi:** an adventure tourism lodge owned and run by a group of Indigenous Kichwa women, dedicated to sharing and preserving key parts of Kichwa culture
- **Amazon Learning:** a social enterprise that organizes study abroad and work abroad internships for students from across the world to come and live in local Kichwa communities.



Students making the trip to Tena gained an understanding of the mission and challenges facing each organization, which informed their consultancy work. While in Ecuador, they also had the opportunity to visit other social enterprises, including **Amupakin**, a Kichwa midwifery clinic; **Wiñak**, a chocolate collective owned and run by Kichwa families and dedicated to serving the needs of Indigenous women and communities; and **Chawar**, an Andean Agave company based in Quito that hires and supports Indigenous Kichwa women. Allie Reichert, doctoral student in Anthropology, served as Project Pyramid Co-Chair and organized the trip to Tena. Read more about the students' experiences in this post written by Reichert:

turnerfamilycenter.com/story/from-nashville-to-the-amazon-a-phd-students-journey-to-bring-project-pyramid-to-ecuador

Two other teams of students worked with organizations in Guatemala:

- **StoveTeam International:** an organization that installs low-smoke, fuel-efficient and safe cookstoves in collaboration with communities in Guatemala to improve health and reduce smoke emissions, fuel consumption, and deforestation.
- **Tierra y Lava:** a socially conscious enterprise that creates natural and locally sourced eco-friendly skincare products while economically

empowering local communities and environmental sustainability through preservation of natural resources. The students working with StoveTeam interviewed employees to determine strengths and areas of improvement for the organization with the goal of improving their



In February, **Shelby Kardas**, Executive Director of Stove Team International, and **Alex Eaton**, Central America Regional Director, were invited to campus by Avila to present the work of StoveTeam to students in Project Pyramid. **Avery Dickins de Girón** and Eaton led a seminar for the students working in Guatemala to discuss the country's history, culture, and contemporary issues.

human resources practices, boosting employee morale, and ultimately enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. In addition, the team built a Justa stove, and were invited to share a meal of pepían with a Guatemalan family. Students consulting with Tierra y Lava helped create a social impact survey to measure broader effects of the organization’s operations on the local community and took a trip to Tierra y Lava’s workshop to photograph the production process for the company’s social media, with the goal of increasing brand awareness. While in Guatemala, the students also participated in a coffee tour led by coffee growers from the community of San



Miguel Escobar on the outskirts of Antigua, which provided them with a greater understanding of coffee cultivation, production, and the local economy. **María Fernanda Alvarez-Carrascal** served as Co-Chair for Project Pyramid and led the teams working with Guatemalan organizations.

Many thanks to Allie Reichert and Brooke Timberlake for providing this content about Project Pyramid.

Vanderbilt Student-Athletes Travel to Guatemala

In May, sixteen Vanderbilt student-athletes traveled to Guatemala for an immersive educational experience. Student-athletes chose one of two tracks in which to participate: social impact and sustainability or healthcare. **Hiba Baroud**, Assistant Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Littlejohn Dean’s Faculty Fellow, led students





in the sustainability project, which is part of a larger collaborative research project that involves Vanderbilt engineering students and students from the Universidad del Valle in Guatemala City. **Shelza Rivas**, Director of Global Programs and an Assistant Professor in Nursing, along with **Manola McCain**, Assistant Professor in Nursing, led the healthcare track. That track centered on Primeros Pasos, a women-led clinic that provides comprehensive care for ten K'iche' Maya communities in the Palajunoj Valley. CLACX and Vanderbilt have had a longstanding partnership with the clinic involving scores of Vanderbilt students over the years (see p. 29–30). Both McCain and Rivas have previously taken Nursing students to Primeros Pasos to work on quality improvement projects through the Community Health course (NUS5105) for pre-specialty students pursuing an MSN.

Student-athletes in both tracks spent their first night in Antigua and traveled to the archaeological site of Iximché the next day, where they learned about Maya history, culture and language. Those participating in the healthcare track continued to Quetzaltenango, locally known as Xela, where

they spent the next several days. Working with Primeros Pasos, student-athletes visited a midwife, planted vegetables gardens in two communities, met with a local healer, visited the city dump, and played soccer with children.

The student-athletes in the social impact and sustainability track collaborated with Soles4Souls, a local nonprofit in Nashville with a hub in Guatemala. They distributed donated shoes and clothing to children and mothers in need. Under the leadership of Hiba Baroud, the student-athletes taught primary school students about environmental sustainability and

led them in a carbon capture experiment. They also worked with students from the Universidad del Valle to refurbish a patio overlooking the town of San Cristobal El Alto, which is part of the community's ecotourism attractions.

Director of the Ingram Center for Student-Athlete Success **Alison Wenzel**, along with **Katelen Watkins**, Assistant Director of Student-Athlete Development, and **Brandon Floyd**, Assistant Athletic Director of Student-Athlete Success, accompanied the student-athletes to Guatemala. **Allison Matarese**, Director of Housing at Vanderbilt and **Ashley Ladyman**, Associate Director of Housing, also traveled with the student-athletes. CLACX Executive Director **Avery Dickins de Girón** worked with Athletics staff in the Ingram Center for Student-Athlete Success and **Mario Avila** (Owen) to identify faculty to lead each track. Prior to travel, participants attended an orientation where Baroud, McCain, and Rivas prepared the students for the work they would be doing and Dickins de Girón presented a historical cultural overview of Guatemala.

Library News

The year has seen the realization of a long hoped for event. In 2018, Vanderbilt acquired the **Delia Zapata Olivella** dance and performance arts collection from her daughter, **Edelmira Massa Zapata**. Maestra Edelmira is a force in her own right, continuing the Afro-Colombian and Indigenous dance and music traditions so carefully researched and performed by Delia in the same place—La Candelaria, the oldest part of Bogotá. It has been my hope that Edelmira and her dance troupe, El Palenque de Delia, could come to Vanderbilt to see and use the archive in its now ordered and preserved state and perhaps perform for Vanderbilt and the larger Nashville community.

After many Zooms, phone conversations, and meetings with representatives from Colombia's Ministry of Culture, the Colombian embassy in Washington, and the US embassy in Bogotá, the visas were obtained. Voila! They performed in March at Blair's Ingram Hall in a program planned by "la Maestra" as a tribute to her mother that included folkloric traditions and artistic practices from all parts of Colombia, from the Pacific coast to the Andes.

In addition to lectures and a master class, they visited Vanderbilt library's new home for special collections where Delia's collection is housed. I do not believe anyone has had more fun in an archive than Edelmira and her troupe. They sang songs from Delia's collections, identified many photos



from the collections (including themselves!), learned how they can access and search the newly digitized collection for specific research on the performances and dance traditions. Following Edelmira's talk to the librarians and archivists they also taught a few of us dance steps based on Delia's archive. The head of Special Collections and the University Librarian caught on quickly!

CLACX received a university "sesquicentennial grant" in preparation for the university's 150th anniversary. **Paula Covington**, **Marshall Eakin**, and **Avery Dickins de Girón** have worked with **Estelle Shaya**, a former student hired to help create a written and digital history of Vanderbilt's Latin American center since its beginnings over 75 years ago. Shaya conducted interviews with retired faculty and staff, and former students. With support from Covington and **Kathy Smith** she explored the university's archives searching for correspondence, articles, yearbooks, and photos to round out the history for a special event in the spring of 2025.

Many researchers came this past academic year to use Vanderbilt's Colombian collections. Thanks to the support of CLACX's National Resource Center grant, CLACX was able to fund five researchers to visit the library's Colombian collections. Most applicants were engaged in the Manuel and Delia Zapata Olivella collections, especially the literary and

Afro-Hispanic sections. Others were working on early pre-Independence era Latin America and relied on the Helguera 19th century Colombian collection. See more on their research below.

It is rewarding to see their wide-ranging research interests, the ways in which these archives have enriched their work, and the discoveries they have made. We are now seeing the resulting books

Five researchers received grants to visit the Library's Colombian Collections to carry out the following projects:

Karol Cristina Alzate Londoño (doctoral student, Spanish, UC Berkeley): Project: Relationship between Black movements in the 20th century and the 19th century riverine "boga" in Colombia

Nicolás Aguía Betancourt (doctoral student, Ohio State, Spanish): Project: The play, *Rambao*, and the Zapata Olivella's Teatro Anónimo Identificador: triethnic cultural miscegenation or "ethnological theatre."

Angela Pérez-Villa (Assistant Professor, Western Michigan University): Project: Tracing Colombia's judicial archive to reconstruct a social landscape of the independence wars and the lives of the underrepresented.

Manuel Francisco Viveros (doctoral student, NYU, Spanish/Portuguese): Project: The relationship of Delia Zapata Olivella and her teachings to African American theatre.

Gabriel das Chagas (University of Miami, doctoral student, literary and cultural studies): Project: Transnational connections and Zapata Olivella's Black intellectual network

It was gratifying to see how well these collections meshed with their research projects. Several comments sent by e-mail about their experiences in the archives are included here, illustrating how well these collections meshed with their individual research projects:

- "On so many levels, I witnessed this archive come alive. And since then, I have been working on allowing this experience to shape my research."
- "I am so grateful to everyone at Vanderbilt who made this experience possible and who helped me in my journey...having the chance to be in conversation with Edelmira Zapata, seeing how Caribbean communities inserted their relationships into these projects, and finding my grandfather in the archive, allowed me to experience the archive as personal – personal to its creators, its communities, and even personal to me."
- "I ended up consulting private and official correspondence, broadsides, pamphlets, and educational programs. I also saw beautiful 19th century scrapbooks for the first time in my research years...providing an intimate view into the memories that people at that time wished to preserve and treasure."
- "I'm grateful for the opportunity to spend time at the library and for the support and encouragement I received from Paula Covington, Celso Castilho, and all the librarians who know the collection well and have taken care of it through the years. I hope to come back and continue to explore the collection as it truly is a wonderful, well-resourced place to advance Colombian scholarship."
- "I'm grateful for the opportunity to visit Vanderbilt and explore the Helguera collection. It was a wonderful experience! The collection provided a treasure trove of manuscripts, unpublished works, and personal correspondence that illuminated Zapata Olivella's intellectual journey and commitment to Afro-Latin American culture."
- "My research experience at Special Collections at Vanderbilt was profoundly enriching, and I am grateful for this opportunity to develop the fourth chapter of my dissertation. It was truly a remarkable experience!"

and articles from the researchers the Center has supported over the past five years. In June 2024, many of them presented their research findings at a *coloquio* organized by one of the prior visitors, Olga Martán Tamayo.

Two Latin American book buying trips helped to augment the library's research and special collections. Both trips were combined with international books fairs in Guadalajara and Bogotá. The focus of these trips is on acquiring material based on current student and faculty research and curricular needs and rare materials relating to Colombia.

The Zapata Olivella family has recently published an extensive biography of Juan Zapata Olivella, brother to Manuel. Juan was a journalist, diplomat, and also a presidential candidate. The five-volume publication was supported by CLACX and by research on Juan located in the library's archives; copies will be sent to Latin American Centers and libraries in the US. Jane Landers and Viviana Quintero Marquez traveled to Colombia to represent the Center and the Library in Colombia at the formal ceremonies for the book presentations.

We look forward to another dynamic year. There

will be new applicants for the travel to collections program in August. The Latin American special collections are now settled into a newly renovated building next to the library. We hope to collaborate with several libraries in Colombia and to make our Colombian collections more discoverable and digitally available. We will celebrate the Center's history this coming year and all those who have helped to make the Latin American Center, its programs, and resources such a vibrant international research center.

I will be retiring after 50 happy and fruitful years working with exceptional students and colleagues at Vanderbilt and in Latin America and building the Latin American collections ([see p. 42](#)). I am looking forward to traveling in Latin America, volunteering, hiking, and reading. However, it is not a complete *adios* since I will still be working several days a week on a project to make the Colombian special collections more accessible and discoverable—so, *hasta luego!*

—Contributed by Paula Covington, Latin American and Iberian Subject Librarian and Senior Lecturer in Latin American Studies



Consul General of Mexico in Atlanta Visits Vanderbilt



In June, Vanderbilt welcomed **Javier Díaz de León**, consul general of Mexico in Atlanta, to campus for a visit organized by the university's Division of Government and Community Relations. Díaz de León delivered a collection of books generously donated by the Mexican government to Vanderbilt's Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries. In 2021, Mexico's Economic Culture Fund published 100,000 copies of the twenty-one books in the collection to recognize the 700 years since the founding of Mexico-Tenochtitlán, 500 years since the Spanish invasion, and 200 years of Mexican independence. CLACX Assistant Director **Gretchen Selcke** and Administrative Specialist **Alma**

Paz-Sanmiguel met with Díaz de León, along with representatives from Nashville's Casa de la Cultura Latino Americana, Vice Provost for Arts, Libraries and Global Engagement **Tracey-Sharpley Whiting**, Vanderbilt University Librarian **Jon Shaw**, Director of Special Collections and University Archives **Tim Gollins**, Vanderbilt Community Impact Officer **Elizabeth Garza Bumpas**, and Local Government Relations Program Coordinator **Donovan Sheffield**. Read more here: news.vanderbilt.edu/2024/07/08/vanderbilt-welcomes-mexican-consul-general-celebrates-21-for-21-book-donation

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese began offering a new minor, "Spanish for the Professions," in Fall 2023. The 18-credit hour minor foregrounds language skills and courses focused on health, business, or law. Read more about the new minor in this article by the *Vanderbilt Hustler*: <https://vanderbilthustler.com/2023/04/10/vanderbilt-to-add-spanish-for-the-professions-minor-beginning-in-fall-2023/>

Fifty Grand Years at Vanderbilt's University Libraries

Paula Covington will retire from her role as Latin American and Iberian Librarian at the Vanderbilt University Libraries and a Senior Lecturer in Latin American Studies in Fall 2024. Covington has been instrumental to the growth of the Latin American collections at Vanderbilt. Over many years, Paula traveled to Latin America and Europe to obtain rare books and manuscripts, establish relationships with families, and sought grant funding to build and digitize

unique collections. Her efforts have resulted in a breadth of Colombian, Brazilian, and Mayan resources and the Library's acquisition of unique collections, including the **J. León**

Helguera Collection

of **Colombiana** and the papers of **Manuel Zapata Olivella** and **Delia Zapata Olivella**. In addition to her work in the Library, Paula developed the "Latin American Research Methods" course and co-taught it for more than three decades, and she authored an award-winning work, *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Research Guide*, which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. She is past president of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), an international organization focused on the development of research services and library collections of Latin Americana. She has been a central part of the Center's administrative council for years, participating in bi-weekly meetings

"Paula Covington kept my interests in the Río de la Plata in mind as she traveled the globe on book-buying trips; her research methodology seminar remains one of the more useful courses I have ever taken."

and building close partnerships between the Center and the Library.

Paula grew up in San Diego and Montana, before moving to New York to attend Syracuse University, where



she graduated with a BA in Latin American Studies in 1969. During her undergraduate studies, she attended the Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá through the Foreign Study Program, which inspired her lifelong love for Colombia. Following her graduation, she moved to Nashville to attend the George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, where she obtained a MA in Library Science. She began her career at Vanderbilt in 1973 as a Reference Librarian and Fine Arts Bibliographer. In 1979, she was also appointed Senior Lecturer in Latin American Studies, which she has held until the present. In the early 1990s while she was working as Bibliographer, she pursued another MA, this time in History at Vanderbilt, and wrote her thesis on women travelers

in 19th century Mexico. In her early career, she met her husband, Bob Covington, Professor of Law at Vanderbilt.

Part of Paula's job has been travelling to conferences and book fairs in Latin America to obtain rare books and publications for the library, keeping in mind student and faculty research projects. These trips often required her to use her curious and adventurous spirit: "My timing of travel hasn't always been the best—I was in Nicaragua in 1983 during the Sandinista transitions, and in Bogotá, Guatemala, and Havana during other key transitions." Other travels have been inspired by personal reasons, especially her twice yearly trip to Honduras, where she has been a dedicated sponsor and mentor for girls in Our Little Roses, an organization dedicated to the education and empowerment of girls.

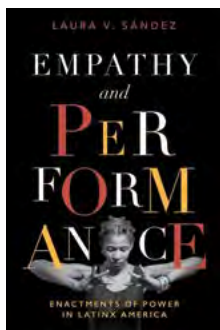
In 1979, Paula developed and co-taught "Research Methods in Latin American Studies" which was a core course for LAS majors, minors, and master's students through 2021. However, her impact extended beyond LAS students, through class sessions she led for graduate and undergraduate students on conducting Latin American research. For many, these were invaluable lessons, as noted in testimonials from alumni. Paula also mentored eleven Library Dean's Fellows between 2014–2017, overseeing their research and digitization projects on special collections, and has hosted over twenty visiting fellows to conduct research in the Library's Colombian collections (see p. 39).

Her research guide, *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Critical Guide to Research Sources*, won several awards including the José Toribio Medina Award in 1993, the RQ Best Bibliographies in History in 1994, and the *Library Journal* Best Reference Sources of 1992. Paula has edited and co-edited several publications over the years: *Index Guide to Latin American Journals: A Selection of Latin-American Serials* (1999), *Latin American Frontiers, Borders and Hinterlands: Research Needs and Resources* (1990), and *Indexed Journals: A Selection of Latin American Serials* (1983). She has

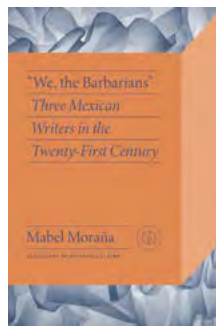
also curated several exhibits, including "Found in Cuba: The Ingenuity and Creativity of Ediciones Vigía" and "The Tango," which was part of Vanderbilt's *Out of the Vault* series. She has been recognized with The Library Leadership Award at Vanderbilt and the Heard Award for Distinguished Librarianship.

Paula has been especially dedicated to the acquisition and digitization of the Manuel Zapata Olivella and Delia Zapata Olivella papers, as well as materials for the Slave Societies Digital Archive. She has made many personal connections with the Zapata Olivella family which have been essential to the acquisition of their collections, co-hosted a **conference** in 2021 to celebrate the centenary of Manuel Zapata Olivella, and took the lead in bringing the dance troupe founded by Delia Zapata Olivella, El Palenque de Delia, to Vanderbilt in 2024 (see p. 3). Paula has also obtained grant funding for research and to support the digitization of Latin American collections at Vanderbilt, with the goal of preserving these important and unique documents and making them more openly accessible to people around the world. These include grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council on Library Information Resources (CLIR), Latin American Research Resources Project (LARRP), and the Delmas Foundation.

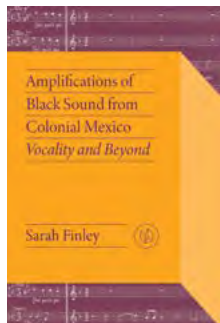
Reflecting on her long career at Vanderbilt, Paula says, "I have been fortunate to travel throughout Latin America and to meet with remarkable booksellers, writers, government officials, and friends at cultural institutions. I am very grateful that the library allowed me the flexibility to have such opportunities to grow and learn, and also saw that the position needed to evolve over time to better help researchers and to build a strong special collection that would attract scholars. I've had 50 years working at a place I have loved interacting with inspiring students and faculty, and many visiting researchers from Latin America and other parts of the world."



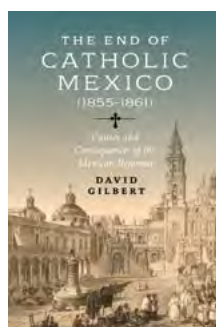
Empathy and Performance
Enactments of Power in Latinx America
 Laura V. Sánchez



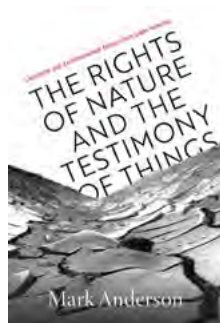
"We, the Barbarians"
Three Mexican Writers in the Twenty-First Century
 Mabel Moraña, translated by Stephanie Kirk



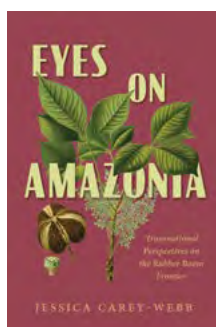
Amplifications of Black Sound from Colonial Mexico
Vocality and Beyond
 Sarah Finley



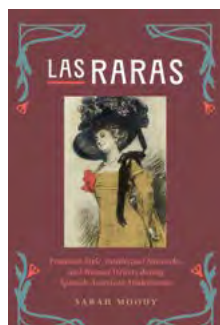
The End of Catholic Mexico
Causes and Consequences of the Mexican Reforma (1855-1861)
 David Gilbert



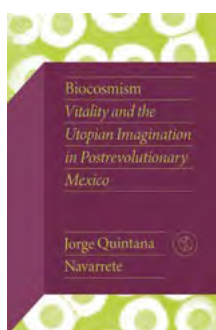
The Rights of Nature and the Testimony of Things
Literature and Environmental Ethics from Latin America
 Mark Anderson



Eyes on Amazonia
Transnational Perspectives on the Rubber Boom Frontier
 Jessica Carey-Webb



Las Raras
Feminine Style, Intellectual Networks, and Women Writers during Spanish-American Modernism
 Sarah Moody



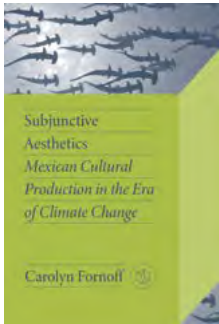
Biocosmism
Vitality and the Utopian Imagination in Postrevolutionary Mexico
 Jorge Quintana Navarrete



Fatefully, Faithfully Feminist
A Critical History of Women, Patriarchy, and Mexican National Discourse
 Carlos Monsiváis, edited and translated by Norma Klahn and Ilana Luna



Sonic Strategies
Performing Mexico's War on Drugs, Mourning, and Femicide
 Christina Baker



Subjunctive Aesthetics
Mexican Cultural Production in the Era of Climate Change
 Carolyn Fornoff



The End of the Future
Trauma, Memory, and Reconciliation in Peruvian Amazonia
 Bartholomew Dean



Latin America and the Transports of Opera
Fragments of a Transatlantic Discourse
 Roberto Ignacio Díaz

Faculty News



María Magdalena Campos-Pons (born Matanzas, Cuba, 1959). *Red Composition from Los Caminos (The Path)*, 1997. Triptych of Polacolor Pro 20" x 24" Polaroids, approximately 60" x 24" unframed.

María Magdalena Campos Pons (Art) was awarded with a 2023 MacArthur Fellowship in recognition of her groundbreaking multidisciplinary art, which explores collective and personal histories of the Caribbean from a feminist perspective. Born in Cuba, Campos-Pons integrates her African, European, and Asian heritage into her work. A retrospective exhibit covering three decades of her work, "María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold," opens at the Frist Art Museum in September 2024. Read more about her "genius grant" in this VU News feature: news.vanderbilt.edu/2023/10/09/maria-magdalena-campos-pons-wins-2023-macarthur-fellowship

The Slave Societies Digital Archive (SSDA), established by **Jane Landers** (History) in 2005, was featured in a documentary, "AI Unearths Untold Stories: Slave Societies Digital Archive" as part of the university's *Quantum Potential* series. Released in October 2023, the [video](#) won three awards at the *Association of Research Libraries Film Festival*, which took place at the Harvard Film Archive in May 2024. The entry won Best Collections-Focused Film, Best Production, and Best in Show. The documentary

showcases how Landers and **Daniel Ghenkins**, digital library architect and SSDA curator, are using AI and computer science technologies to expand the SSDA. **Jad Abumrad**, Distinguished Professor of Cinema and Media Arts and Community of Science and Technology, created *Quantum Potential* with the university's Communications and Marketing. The **SSDA** contains over 700,000 digital records and images that document the lives of 4-6 million people. It is the most extensive database of historical records of Africans in the Atlantic World, as well as Indigenous, European, and Asian populations in the region.

Jada Benn Torres (Anthropology) was selected as one of seven Vanderbilt faculty and 10 faculty in anthropology nationwide as a Fellow by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2023. Benn Torres was recognized for her research on the biocultural history of the Caribbean, which combines genetic anthropology and community-engaged anthropology. Read more here: news.vanderbilt.edu/2024/04/25/seven-vanderbilt-faculty-members-named-fellows-by-the-american-association-for-the-advancement-of-science%E2%80%AF

Ted Fischer (Anthropology) and **TS Harvey** (Anthropology) received a \$1 million, three-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their project, “Advancing a decolonizing agenda to address health inequities and help build global and local US solutions.” In collaboration with the World Health Organization and other international partners, the project will combine social science and humanities research to rethink public health challenges. Read more: news.vanderbilt.edu/2023/10/09/robert-wood-johnson-foundation-awards-1m-grant-to-vanderbilt-anthropologists-studying-cultural-factors-in-health-inequalities

The February issue of *Antiquity* featured **six articles** showcasing research produced through GeoPACHA (Geospatial Platform for Andean Culture, History, and Archaeology). Developed by **Steve Wernke** (Anthropology) and **Parker VanValkenburgh** (Brown University), GeoPACHA uses satellite imagery to map large areas of the Andes and allowing archaeologists to study settlement patterns, historical climate change, and population size. The tool also enables researchers to explore sparsely inhabited remote areas. Read more in this article in VU News: as.vanderbilt.edu/news/2024/01/19/the-big-picture-archaeology-of-the-andes-revealed-on-a-scale-not-previously-seen



Jardines de Hershey, Jibacoa, Cuba: Vesna Pavlović

Candice Amich (English) published two articles:

- “The Shadow Side: Coco Fusco and the Censored Word,” *The Latinx Project*, 27 February 2024. latinxproject.nyu.edu/interventions/coco-fusco-and-the-censored-word.
- “Digital *Testimonio*: (Re)Counting Femicide in Cuba.” *Bodies on the Front Lines: Performance, Gender, and Sexuality in Latin America and the Caribbean*, eds. Brenda Werth and Katherine Zien. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2024.

Adriana Bialostozky (Medicine) was recognized with the faculty award for her contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of the Levi Watkins Dr. Lecture which honors the first African American to graduate from the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

Lori Catanzaro (Spanish and Portuguese) received an Arts and Science Dean’s Distinguished Teaching Award (2023-2024) and a Vanderbilt

Sesquicentennial Grant (\$23,000) to create a **digital timeline**, “The History and Legacy of Study Abroad at Vanderbilt. Catanzaro launched the timeline in November 2023. She also received a Course Development Grant to create a new Spanish language course, “Mercado de Maravillas.” The course explores the history, commercialization, symbolism and impact of food products of Spain and Latin America, including olive oil, wine, corn, sugar, avocados, quinoa, soy, meats, fish, fruits and other foods.

Earl Fitz (Spanish and Portuguese) published two books:

- *The Literatures of Spanish America and Brazil: From Their Origins through the Nineteenth Century*. University of Virginia Press, 2023.
- *Clarice Lispector: From Brazil to the World*. Purdue University Press, 2024.

Fitz also published two journal essays: “The Latin American Roots of Sontag’s *Death Kit*: Borges, Machado, Cartazar, and Clarice,” in *The Comparatist* (2023)

and “Dom Casmuro and Riobaldo as Narrators: A Comparative Study” in *Brasil/Brazil: Revista de Literatura Brasileira*, Vol. 35, No. 70, 2023.

Maria Luisa Jorge (Biological Sciences) received a Seeding Success Grant for “From tapirs to microbes: effects of large herbivores on plant and soil properties in a Tropical Forest.” The grants are funded by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation and support new work or research that have potential for external funding and impact.

Jane Landers (History) was featured in a May 2024 *Washington Post* article about the reconstruction of Fort Mose, the first legal free African settlement in what is now the US: [washingtonpost.com/history/2024/05/12/fort-mose-reconstruction-black-settlement](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2024/05/12/fort-mose-reconstruction-black-settlement)

Landers is the Principal Investigator for the National Park Service and Association for the Study of African American Life and History Project, “Africans in the DeSoto Expedition.” She delivered the keynote lecture, “African Kingdoms, Black Republics and Free Black Towns in the Circum-Caribbean,” for the Association of Historians of Latin American and the Caribbean (ADHILAC) in Curaçao in June 2024. Other recent talks and publications include:

- “Francisco Menéndez and the Exiles of Mose in San Agustín de la Nueva Florida,” Ft. Mose Historical Society, St. Augustine History Festival, May 2023
- “Francisco Menéndez: Mandinga Captive, Yamasee Warrior, Atlantic Corsair and Cuban Homesteader,” Carl L. Becker Lectures, Cornell University, April 2023

The Caribbean Studies Association honored **Matthew Plishka** with the 2024 Best Dissertation Award for his thesis entitled, “Cycles of Crisis and Adaptation: A Multispecies Political Ecology of Late-Colonial Jamaica, 1870-1960.” Dr. Plishka defended his thesis in the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh in 2022 and has been a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Collaborative Humanities program at Vanderbilt for the last two years. Plishka was recognized for his innovative and effective research that demonstrates the importance of intersectional approaches to political ecology. He tells the “story of rural agriculture, of commodity extraction, the impacts of disease, and Imperialism all within the specific historical context of local, circum-Caribbean, and global events and processes.” Reviewers lauded Plishka for contributing to our understanding of the dynamics of crisis in the Caribbean region and for providing an excellent framework for future studies across the region. Read more about the award here: caribbeanstudiesassociation.org/awards-grants/best-dissertation-award/2024-csa-best-dissertation-award-winner/



CLACX welcomes **Jason Ahlenius** as a new postdoctoral fellow in the Collaborative Humanities program. Ahlenius completed his PhD in Spanish and Portuguese Language and Literature at New York University in May 2024. His dissertation examines colonial slavery in the borderland regions of Texas, Yucatán, and Chiapas in 19th-century Mexico. Ahlenius explores how planters, colonists and elites of Mexico's borderland regions revived colonial forces of forced labor of black and Indigenous persons to feed agricultural commodity production of cotton, sugar, and coffee. Based on archival research in Mexico City, Chiapas, Guatemala, Yucatán and Cuba, his research has been supported by fellowships from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (2022), Fulbright-Hays Program (2022), and the Social Science Research Council (2021-2022).

- “Spanish Corsairs in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World,” Lawrence F. Brewster Lecture, East Carolina University, February 2023
- “**Mães Fundadoras: Mulheres Rebeldes em Nova Granada e na Flórida Espanhola Coloniais,**” *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, v. 184, n. 492 (2023): 11–31.

Landers serves on the Metro Historical Commission, Historical Markers and Nominations Committee (2021-2023) and she was Chair of the Historical Markers and Nominations Committee in 2023. She is also a member of the Editorial Board for the *William & Mary Quarterly*, the Editorial Board for the *Cambridge History of the Caribbean*, and the **Omhundro Institute for Early American History & Culture** Council.

Noam Lupu (Political Science) received a Seeding Success Grant for “Extending Research on Democratic Attitudes at Vanderbilt by Securing the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Project.”

Carolina Palacios (Spanish and Portuguese) and **Michelle Murray** (Spanish and Portuguese) organized the Spanish and Portuguese Film Festival, which was sponsored by the Secretary of State for Culture of Spain, CLACX, Vanderbilt Center for Languages, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Palacios and Murray also received a Spanish Film Club Grant from the Secretary of State for Culture of Spain in Fall 2023. Palacios was awarded a Rapid-Advancement MicroGrant Program (RAMP) from Vanderbilt's Office of the Vice Provost for Research & Innovation in Fall 2023.

Vesna Pavlović (Art) received a \$40,000, 18-month grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for her project, “Woven Wind.” The collaborative project combines archival research, community engagement, and art to honor stories of enslaved men, women, and children in the American Deep South. Led by Pavlović, “Woven Wind” includes partners at the University of the South (Sewanee),

Tennessee State University, and other regional institutions and community advocates. Since its inception six years ago, the project has received grant funding from several sources; the NEA grant will support the project's completion. Read more about “Woven Wind” in the VU News: news.vanderbilt.edu/2024/05/23/woven-wind-stitching-together-history-and-healing-through-art

Shelza Rivas (Nursing) was appointed as the new Director of Global Partnerships at the Vanderbilt School of Nursing. Rivas holds a BA in Latin American Studies from Vanderbilt and has been longtime collaborator with CLACX; she looks forward to working more closely with the center and other entities across campus in her new position.

Norbert Ross (Anthropology) became an accredited Playback Theater Trainer at the Center for Playback Theater in August 2023. Playback Theater/Improvisation Theater has become an important part of Ross's academic work with children and adults, and his next book (under review) focuses on Playback Theater he conducted in refugee camps in Tijuana. Ross was also invited to deliver the inaugural lecture at the Foro Estudiantil Latinoamericano de Antropología y Arqueología, which is a biannual meeting of anthropology students from all over Latin America. The forum took place in Chile in 2023 and Ross shared his theater work in the lecture, “Enactuar fronteras: migración, violencia, e identidad: un acercamiento etnográfico a través del teatro espontáneo.”

Angela Sutton (Communication of Science & Technology) published *Pirates of the Slave Trade: The Battle of Cape Lopez and the Birth of an American Institution* in October 2023. She co-authored an article with Jessica Fletcher, “Black Civil War Veterans and the Records of Incarceration: Slavery, Race, and the Tennessee State Penitentiary, 1850-1870” in *The Journal of Slavery & Data Preservation*. Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2024. Sutton also received a Vanderbilt University Government & Community Relations Community Engagement Collaboration Fund

Grant for \$7000: “What Happened to Bass Street? Making a Documentary Film about Nashville’s Forgotten Neighborhood.”

Tiffany Tung (Anthropology) was selected as a Senior Fellow for Harvard University’s Pre-Columbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, 2023-25.

Michelle Young (Anthropology) published a book chapter and an article:

- Young, M., 2023, “Horizon, interaction sphere, cult? A view

of the ‘Chavín Phenomenon’ from Huancavelica.” In *Reconsidering the Chavín Phenomenon in the 21st Century*, Burger R. and Nesbitt, J. (eds). Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.: pp. 323–358.

- Young, M. and E. Kaplan, 2023, “Cinnabar traditions across the ancient Central Andes: Insights from the NMAI collections.” *Journal of Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*.

CLACX Faculty Curriculum Development Grants

The following faculty received curriculum development grants from CLACX to develop new courses or enhance current courses. The grants are funded through our National Resource Center award from the US Department of Education.

Tom Verrier and Ernesto Estigarribia received funding to travel to Asunción for a week-long residency to establish partnerships and team teach a course in ensemble musicianship for Paraguayan conductors and musicians. The residency culminated with a performance in collaboration with the national orchestra and national conservatory. While there, Estigarribia and Verrier selected four outstanding participants from the course to travel to Nashville for a residency at the Blair School of Music in Fall 2024. The Paraguayan musicians will be embedded in the Instrumental Ensemble course MUSE 1010 (Orchestra and Wind Symphony).



Verrier and Estigarribia note that the opportunity for students and the Paraguayan musicians to interact in both orchestra and wind symphony does not exist at other universities.

Vesna Pavlović received funds to support her project, “IMS Solidarity” that examines the wide-scale adoption of Yugoslav prefabricated construction systems in Cuba, Angola, and Yugoslavia in the 1970s. Pavlović and a team of artists and architectural historians traveled to Cuba in January

to carry out research for the project. Following the trip to Cuba, Pavlović and her team of collaborators—Jelica Jovanović, architectural historian and preservationist PhD student, University of Technology, Vienna, Austria; Vladimir Kulić, architectural historian and curator, professor, Iowa State University; and Fredo Rivera, art historian, Grinnell College – have been invited to present their work in the exhibition at the Museum of African Art in Belgrade, Serbia. They workshopped their research at Vanderbilt in March

towards the creation of the exhibit, which is planned to open in Belgrade in Spring 2025 and at Vanderbilt in August 2025 before traveling to museums internationally. Funding supported travel to Cuba and translations of interviews conducted in Cuba in 2024. Pavlović thanked CLACX and noted that the project would not have happened without the center’s support.

Lidiana de Moraes received funding to enhance her course, “Music is Power” (LAS 1111) by researching new archival materials for use in the course and utilizing realia as pedagogical material. Funding supported a research trip to São Paulo during the Summer of 2024 to visit the archives and exhibits at Museu Afro-Brasil, Museu da Imagem e Som, and the Instituto Moreira Salles. De Moraes is comparing exhibits at these museums with Nashville’s National Museum of African-American Music and the Frist Art Museum to interrogate the role of museums in either perpetuating



colonialism or becoming spaces that disrupt our understanding of cultural hierarchies. She will integrate this research into the Fall semester course.

Mario Avila received funding to enhance the Global Business Immersion course (MGT 6657). Funds supported travel to Panama to establish partnerships with entrepreneurs, start-ups, and other companies. Students in the course will apply theoretical frameworks to real-world business scenarios using these organizations as examples. Site visits to partners in Panama will further provide students with a deeper understanding of global business dynamics, enhance their problem-solving skills, and broaden their horizons as future business leaders. The course is particularly relevant for students in the new Hoogland Undergraduate Business Program.



Anna Marra (Spanish and Portuguese) received funding to bring the *Cinema Ritrovato on Tour* in Nashville in Spring 2024. *Il Cinema Ritrovato* (“Rediscovered Cinema”) is an annual film festival that takes place in Bologna, Italy. It screens classic films and retrospectives from countries worldwide and showcases the latest films restored by the Cineteca di Bologna. The first edition of Cinema Ritrovato on Tour at Vanderbilt took place in late February as a collaboration among professors from the Italian Studies Program, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and the Department of Cinema & Media Arts. Attended by over 300, the festival featured three films from Latin America and one from Italy with introductions and post-screening discussions led by Vanderbilt faculty. Read more on [p. 26](#).

FACULTY PROFILE

Marshall Eakin

This year, our Faculty Profile recognizes Marshall Eakin, Distinguished Professor of History, who announced his retirement in Spring 2024. In many ways, Marshall has been central to the development of Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt, where he has been on faculty since 1983. He developed and taught the foundational course, “Introduction to Latin American Studies,” beginning in 1991. Throughout his forty years at Vanderbilt, Marshall

was recognized as an extraordinary teacher dedicated to engaging students and seemingly effortlessly putting historical events into broader national and global contexts relevant to contemporary issues.

In 2009, his colleague Earl Fitz (Spanish and Portuguese) described him as “a major figure in the field. He’s a specialist in Brazil, but also a Latin Americanist by training, so he’s able to speak about Brazil while at the same time connecting Brazil with the rest of Latin America and the world. His book *The Once and Future Country* has become a real gateway for people who want to become involved with Brazil and issues pertinent to it.”

Marshall’s passion for Latin America began with a high school trip to Guatemala during the summer of 1970, where he engaged in public health work. His commitment to Latin American studies intensified after spending a year and a half as a student at the Universidad de Costa Rica (1973-74).

Marshall completed his PhD at the University



of California, Los Angeles in 1981, and then taught for two years at Loyola-Marymount University before taking the position at Vanderbilt. He served as the Associate Director of Vanderbilt’s Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies from 1989–1994 and again from 1997–2000. In addition, he served as Acting Director of the center in 1992 and 1994 and Interim Director in 2004-2005. Other administrative roles that enabled Marshall to impact Latin

Professor Eakin is well-read, smart, and an engaging lecturer. He is able to put the class material in a global and historical context that helps his students make sense of history....

Best teacher I’ve had here.

American studies at Vanderbilt include serving as Chair of the Department of History from 2000–2004 and again in 2018-2019. He co-directed several FIPSE/CAPES Student Exchange Programs from 2000–2014, through which

he, along with Jane Landers, brought more than fifty Brazilian students to Vanderbilt.

His numerous teaching awards are testament to his ability to teach across generations of students. They include the Jeffrey Nordhaus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (1991), the Chancellor’s Cup (1994), the Madison Sarratt Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (1994), and the Ernest A. Jones Faculty Adviser Award (1996). He received the Alumni Education Award twice, in 1999 and 2016, illustrating his ongoing impact on Vanderbilt alumni in their professional careers. He was a Chair of Teaching Excellence from 1998–2001 and held the Joe B. Wyatt Distinguished Professorship for 2004-2005. From 2009–2017, he served as the director of the prestigious Ingram

Scholarship Program.

Marshall taught entry level undergraduate courses in History and Latin American Studies seminars for doctoral students. These ranged from broad topics, such as “Colonial and Modern Latin America” and “Brazilian Civilization” to “Visions of Amazonia,” as well as methodology workshops for history and Latin America studies students. He also team-taught courses with faculty in the College of Arts & Science, Engineering, Divinity, and Peabody College.

Marshall was an early advocate study abroad and service-learning courses as powerful immersive experiences for students. He was the faculty adviser for Alternative Spring Break (ASB), which was started at Vanderbilt in 1987 and then took root on campuses across the country. In 2009 and 2010, he led students in a month-long service-learning course in Nicaragua

through the Vanderbilt Initiative for Scholarship and Global Engagement (VISAGE). In this course, Marshall worked alongside students to volunteer

at health clinics, tutor children at a community center, and organize youth sports activities in neighborhoods around Managua’s city dump through Manna Project International. He was inspired by the impact it had on students: “Their experience might be brief there, but the idea is to get them thinking about the world in new ways.... some change their major to Latin American studies, or consider social justice work for the first time. They are confronting issues in ways that will have impact on the choices they make later. They are changing the way they look at the world.” In 2004 and 2006, as Latin American immigrants began to reshape Nashville, he team-taught a course on Latin America, Latinos, and the United States with anthropologist Bill Patridge.

While his teaching and scholarship focus broadly on Latin America, Marshall specializes in the history of Brazil. His research on nationalism

and nation-building, economic and business history, and industrialization in Brazil span much of the country’s history. His first book, *British Enterprise in Brazil: The St. John d’el Rey Mining Company and the Morro Velho Gold Mine, 1830–1960* (Duke, 1989), traces the history of the most successful foreign enterprise in 19th- and 20th-century Brazil. *Tropical Capitalism: The Industrialization of Belo Horizonte, Brazil* (Palgrave, 2001) examines the industrialization of the second-largest industrial center in Brazil. *Becoming Brazilians: Race and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Brazil* was published in 2017. His most recent book, *What is Latin American History?* appeared in 2021. He has collaborated with other scholars to publish edited volumes in English and Portuguese, including *Envisioning Brazil: A Guide to Brazilian Studies in the United States*, co-edited with Paulo Roberto de Almeida (Madison: University

of Wisconsin Press, 2005). *O Brasil dos Brazilianistas: um guia aos estudos do Brasil nos Estados Unidos, 1945-2000*, co-edited with Paulo Roberto de Almeida (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra,

2002). *Homenagem a Alexandrino Severino: Essays on the Portuguese Speaking World*, coedited with Margo Milleret (Austin: Host Publications, 1993).

In addition to impacting countless students and scholars, Marshall’s teaching and writing speak to the general public. *Brazil: The Once and Future Country* (St. Martin’s, 1997) introduces beginners to Brazil, and *The History of Latin America: Collision of Cultures* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) provides a foundation for understanding the broader region and has been translated into Polish and Bulgarian. He developed two online courses, “The Conquest of the Americas” and “The Americas in a Revolutionary Era” for The Great Courses, a media production company that produces educational content for general audiences. On campus, he taught classes through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and Vanderbilt’s Masters in Liberal Arts program, and he has been

Professor Eakin was a wonderful professor. His lectures and course content were interesting and his passion for the subject was obvious.

I took Marshall’s “Introduction to Latin America Studies” course in 1991 and it sparked my lifelong curiosity about other cultures by humanizing otherwise factual events into impassioned storytelling. Those experiences had a positive and direct effect on my personal life and career journey after Vanderbilt.

a frequent speaker for community groups and local educators, often as part of the center’s Title VI public engagement programs. As a favorite professor of alumni, he taught Commodore Classrooms and led alumni to Macchu Picchu through the Vanderbilt Travel Program.

Beyond these contributions, Marshall served as the Executive Director of the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) for seven years. He has been awarded with the Order of Rio Branco (Officer) by the Brazilian Foreign Ministry in 2002 and was recognized as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching/CASE Tennessee Professor of the Year In 1999. His research has been supported by grants from Fulbright-Hays, Tinker Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the British Library, among others.

More than anything, we are grateful for Marshall as a dear colleague and genuine person who has shared his passion for Latin America with us.

Marshall is the invited speaker for the CLACX/VAHLA reception for Vanderbilt’s Reunion Weekend on November 9, 2024. We hope you can join us!

Obituaries

ENRIQUE PUPO-WALKER

passed away on September 25, 2023. A Centennial Emeritus Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, Pupo Walker directed the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies (CLAIS) from 1981 to 1993, fostering important conversations in teaching and research between Iberian and Latin American studies. Under his leadership, CLAIS was chosen as a training program for US military cultural attachés bound



for service in Latin America. Through the creation of international student exchange programs and hosting multi-disciplinary international conferences, Pupo-Walker reconnected the Center with Latin American scholars and gave the program global visibility. His co-editorship of the renowned *Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* series brought numerous writers and artists to Vanderbilt’s campus.

“In a sense you might say that I discovered Latin America in the Vanderbilt library.”

—*Enrique Pupo Walker, 1997*

I am fortunate to have learned about Enrique the scholar and person for many years through colleagues who esteemed him greatly, like Marshall Eakin, Jane Landers, and Paula Covington. His son-in-law, Edward Wright-Ríos, is a special connection to Enrique, and shares [this obituary](#) for more on his family, Cuban upbringing, and eclectic passions.

Despite coming to Vanderbilt about a decade after he retired, I had the honor of seeing Enrique in action at a memorable event related to the center, the retirement of [Norma Antillón](#). It was 2011, and he spoke beautifully of her, the administrative assistant whom he hired in the mid-1980s ([see p. 57](#)).

A 1997 feature published in the *Vanderbilt Hustler* captures nicely various aspects of Enrique's curiosity, collegiality, and deep ties to Vanderbilt. There is much celebration, of course, of the groundbreaking 4-volume *Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* that he co-edited with Roberto González Echevarría of Yale University. And yet, we also learn that Enrique was a devoted rose gardener, painter, and that he and his wife Bettye were the second couple to be married in Vanderbilt's Benton Chapel in 1960.

I draw inspiration from Dr. Pupo Walker's leadership of CLAIS, and we look forward to honoring his many contributions to the university.

—Thank you to CLACX Director Celso Castilho for contributing this memorial

MITCH SELIGSON passed away on June 2, 2024. In the world of public opinion and democratic governance, Mitch was a trailblazing pioneer. But most importantly, he was our colleague, our mentor, and our friend. He played an instrumental role in the rebuilding of Vanderbilt's Department of Political Science into what it is today: a strong, dynamic, visible, and collegial unit. Mitch joined Vanderbilt in 2004, bringing with him the Latin American Public Opinion Project (today: LAPOP Lab), which began with his research on democratic values in Costa Rica in the 1970s. He worked with Neal Tate, John Geer, and others to anchor LAPOP at Vanderbilt, while recruiting students and faculty to dive deeply into research on democracy through the lens of cutting-edge public opinion methods.

His impact on the broader profession has been tremendous—from how his innovations transformed survey research



in the Latin America and Caribbean region and beyond; to his landmark studies on corruption, legitimacy, populism, engagement, inequality, and more; to the copious amounts of data that he created and then disseminated for use by many thousands; to being a leader in bridging the academy-policy world gap, with significant impact on democratic governance programming; and much more.

Mitch worked tirelessly to raise standards and contribute high-quality research that is relevant to efforts to strengthen the quality of democratic governance. His impact has been made exponential by the widespread dissemination of datasets used by countless junior scholars as they started their careers analyzing AmericasBarometer data, by countless senior scholars who likewise have applied their skillsets to generate findings from hundreds of datasets, and—as well—by the legacy carried forward in his many students and colleagues who were trained in the LAPOP (aka, the Mitch) way. Mitch wanted to make a positive contribution, and he did. Thousands upon thousands of contributions.

In LAPOP Lab, Mitch led by example and left an indelible imprint on all that we do. We are better professionals, better collaborators, and better people because of Mitch. In the midst of a widespread and well-deserved reputation for keeping up a demanding work schedule, those paying attention were able to appreciate that Mitch took time to check in with colleagues, to mentor students, and to spend time with his beloved family.

In 2017 The Seligson Prize was created in Mitch's honor. It is awarded annually to the best scholarship (paper, book, dissertation or other scholarly work) using LAPOP's AmericasBarometer data published in the prior two calendar years.

He was remembered in services in early June New York, and through myriad messages and small acts of remembrance that have been circulating among so many of his former students and colleagues. A memorial to honor Mitch's legacy is being organized by his colleagues.

Thanks to Liz Zechmeister, Noam Lupu, and the "LAPOP" Central Family for this tribute

Congratulations Graduates!



CLACX hosted a reception on May 9 to honor our graduates.

Congratulations to our majors:

- **Carlos Caballero**, who graduated with a double major in Latin American Studies and English
- **Raquel Carrillo**, who graduated with a double major in Latino and Latina Studies and Psychology
- **Valerie Val**, who graduated with a major in Latino and Latina Studies in Fall 2023
- **Faith Viers**, who graduated with a major in Latino and Latina Studies and Music

Three students graduated with a minor in Latin American Studies: **Emily Char**, **Victoria McMillan**, and **Samuel Myrick**.

CLACX awarded Graduate Certificates in Latin American Studies to **Youree Kim**, who graduated with a Master's in International Education Policy and Management; **Margaret Kelly**, who will graduate with a PhD in Spanish and Portuguese in August 2024; and **Tevin Mathew**, who received a Master's in Public Health.



RAÍCES Y SUEÑOS: LATINX GRADUATION RECOGNITION CEREMONY

The Latinx Graduates Recognition Ceremony, “Raíces y Sueños,” celebrated the achievements of graduating Latinx students on May 9. Hosted by the Student Center for Social Justice and Identity, the ceremony serves as a space for students to pay homenaje to family, friends, faculty, staff, and administrators who have supported their academic journeys at Vanderbilt. Graduates were celebrated with food, music, graduation stoles, guest speakers, student awards, and photo opportunities. The Latinx Graduates Recognition Ceremony was founded by **Gretchen Selcke**, who spoke at the event and congratulated the graduates. This year, **Jesús Ruiz** was honored with the Maestrx Award for his excellence in teaching.

NORMA ANTILLÓN AWARD

Carlos Caballero received the 2024 Norma Antillón Award, which is given to a student that exemplifies the traits most admired in Norma, the center's administrator from 1986-2011: her character, collegiality, and concern for others. Carlos was recognized as an engaged student, a generous peer mentor, and for "his passion for Latin American studies, both academic and personal" and his eagerness "to share his cultural background from growing up in Venezuela and Miami."



Caballero graduated in May 2024 with a double major in Latin American Studies and English. While at Vanderbilt, Carlos was a College Honors Scholar, a Chancellor's Scholar, a fellow in the Center for Languages, and Head Resident for Vanderbilt Housing. **Gretchen Selcke** served as the adviser for Carlos' Honors Thesis. He received a FLAS fellowship from CLACX to study Portuguese in Summer 2023 and, upon his return, enthusiastically encouraged other students to study Portuguese. Carlos will spend the next year in Spain as a Fulbright Fellow.

Since it was established in 2011, the Norma Antillón Award has been given to MA students in Latin American Studies. As the MA program is no longer active, majors and minors in Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies (LAS or LATS) are eligible to receive the award. Recipients of the award receive \$1000 and have their name engraved on a plaque that hangs in the center. The request for nominations is sent to CLACX students, faculty, and staff in March, with the winner announced at our graduation reception in May.

Nominees must be undergraduate students; both self-nominations and nominations from fellow students, faculty, or staff are welcomed. Nominations are limited to 250 words and should provide examples that demonstrate how the nominee engages with CLACX and how they embody a collegial and community-centered spirit.



CLACX is sad to share the news that the former administrator of the center, **Norma Antillón**, passed away in January 2024. Originally from Guatemala, Norma served as the Center's administrator for over 25 years and was described by faculty, staff, and students as the heart of the center. Norma loved her Vanderbilt family and continues to be remembered with

great fondness by those in our community who knew her. Upon her retirement in 2011, Marshall Eakin and others established an award in her honor to recognize a student who best exemplifies her character. A celebration of life service was held in May; her obituary is located here: williamsonmemorial.com/obituaries/norma-antillon

CLACX Awards \$164,000 to 20 Students for Research and Language Study in Summer 2024

Twenty students received CLACX funding to study languages or conduct research in Latin America during Summer 2024.

CLACX awarded 16 **SUMMER FLAS FELLOWSHIPS** for the study of Portuguese or K'iche' Mayan. Thirteen students received funding to study Portuguese in São Paulo through the Summer in Brazil program administered by Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and CLACX. Vanderbilt undergraduate students **Kenneth Krogh** (major undeclared), **Ethan McCoy** (major undeclared), **Andrew Rego** (majoring in Mechanical Engineering), and **Ethan Skinner** (majoring in Economics and Spanish and Portuguese), as well as **Julia Landivar Donato** (pursuing an MPH) received funding to study Portuguese. In line with our objective to support students at institutions that do not have FLAS funding, CLACX also awarded Summer

FLAS fellowships to the following non-Vanderbilt students: **Carly Titus** (pursuing a MBA at the U. of Alabama), **Perrin Larkin** (pursuing a MA in Public Administration at U. of Alabama), **Asher Maria** (pursuing a PhD in Comparative Literature and Theory at Pomona College), **Liam Rafaty** (majoring in History at U. Southern California), **Joaquin Hubbard-Dunn** (majoring in Computer Science at Tulane U.), **Yahoudi-Macner Andromeda** (majoring in Neuroscience at Tulane U.), **Olivia Shackelford** (majoring in LAS and Spanish and Portuguese at Tulane U.), and **Mali Weitzman** (majoring in Economics and Internatioal Development at Tulane U.).

Three Summer FLAS fellowships supported the study of K'iche' Mayan in Guatemala through the Mayan Language Institute administered by Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and CLACX: **Natalie Bruno** (doctoral student



in Anthropology at Vanderbilt), **Kathryn Gaylon** (doctoral student in Spanish and Portuguese at U. of Texas), and **Willie Hurst** (doctoral student in Hispanic Studies at Emory U.).

SIMON COLLIER TRAVEL GRANTS were awarded to four students to conduct research in 2024.



Jean-Paul Rojas (doctoral student in Anthropology) will travel to Nicaragua's southern Caribbean lowlands to conduct initial research and build relationships in preparation for his archaeological dissertation project. Rojas is interested in human migration, maritime mobility, long distance interaction, interregional exchange, and craft production across Central America. His research will be a community-based ethnographic archaeological project involving residents of the Corn Islands, including Afro-Caribbean Creoles, Afro-Amerindian Miskitos, and Nicaraguan mestizos.

Juan José Lopéz (doctoral student in Anthropology) will travel to Jacaltenango, a Maya Popti' town in Guatemala to carry out exploratory ethnographic research on the interaction of people with their environment, particularly their relationship with mountains. Research will take place in the coffee-growing region of the Cuchumatán highlands and will be focused on how farmers, spiritual guides, healers, landowners, and cofrades relate to other-than-human beings in their everyday lives. The

research will serve as a basis for Lopez's dissertation project which seeks to understand relationships between humans and nonhumans, questioning the divide between nature and culture.



Undergraduate student **Colin Vess**, an undergraduate student majoring in History and Cinema & Media Arts, will conduct research with Jacob Sauer (Anthropology) in Chile on risk management strategies of Mapuche communities around the Mocho Choshuenco Volcano in response to environmental disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Vess will conduct archaeological surveys of the area to find evidence of human occupation, analyzing samples of water and clay from the region to understand its environmental history. He also hopes to carry out ethnographic research with Mapuche communities and to identify a network of 19th century churches that were used for missionary outreach to facilitate forced conversion of the Mapuche.

Guilherme Fasolin (doctoral student in Political Science) will conduct pre-dissertation research on the political economy of environmental policies in the Brazilian Amazon. Fasolin argues that increased federal financial resources received by municipalities within Protected Areas of the Amazon due to limits on land use and fewer investment opportunities lead to a higher incidence of vote-buying, corruption, and co-optation of local elites, and ultimately negatively affects the quality of political representation.

Fasolin will interview federal authorities in Brasilia responsible for allocating resources to municipalities within Protected Areas, and then travel to cities in the Amazon to interview mayors and party leaders about how the Protected Areas designation influences political participation at the mayoral level.

ACADEMIC YEAR FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES FELLOWSHIPS

were awarded to five students for the study of Portuguese or K'iche' Mayan during the 2023-2024 academic year. For the first time, CLACX awarded Undergraduate AY FLAS fellowships. All three undergraduate fellows, **Eli Apple, Ethan McCoy, and Alexander Renkis**, continued their study of Portuguese. Graduate fellows were **Justin Jones** and **Tevin Mathew**. Jones, a doctoral student in History, studied Portuguese as part of his research to expand perspectives on migrations associated with the Haitian Revolution throughout the Atlantic World. Mathew studied K'iche' Mayan and completed an MPH degree in May 2024 (see p. 29 for more about Mathew's work).

Graduate students receive \$20,000 stipend and \$18,000 in tuition for the academic year FLAS. Undergraduate students are awarded with \$5000 stipend and \$10,000 in tuition; undergraduates are required to be at the intermediate level of proficiency. Applications for AY FLAS Fellowships open in December and recipients are announced in March.

Congratulations to **Natalie Bruno** (Anthropology), **Julia Landivar Donato** (Public Health), and **Shalini Thinakaran** (LACX and Computer Science) for receiving FLAS fellowships for the upcoming academic year. Bruno will continue her study of K'iche' Mayan and Landivar Donato and Thinakaran will study Portuguese.

Summer Funding Opportunities through CLACX

CLACX offers funding for summer language study and research through Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships and Simon Collier Travel Awards. CLACX issues a call for summer awards applications each December and announces award recipients by March. For more information on CLACX funding opportunities, visit as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/aid-and-awards.

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships

(FLAS): CLACX receives funding from the US Department of Education to support summer FLAS awards for intensive studies of Portuguese, Haitian Kreyòl, or indigenous Latin American languages. Fellowships provide up to \$5000 for tuition expenses and a stipend of \$3500, and may include a travel award up to \$1000. Any graduate or undergraduate student who is a US citizen or permanent US resident with interest in these languages is eligible to apply.

Simon Collier Travel Award: A historian of Chile with an expertise in Argentine tango, Simon Collier was director of Vanderbilt's Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies and Chair of the Department of History. Simon Collier Travel Awards preferentially fund research in Chile and Argentina but may also be used elsewhere in Latin America. These awards are available to both graduate and undergraduate students.

CLACX Creates New Student Advisory Board

In Fall 2023, CLACX established a Student Advisory Board to gain valuable insights and better serve the needs of its students. The board is composed of nine student leaders and will help inform future programming and initiatives.

CLACX Program Coordinator **Luisa Mattos da Costa** organized bi-semesterly meetings during which board members shared their experiences, goals, and academic challenges. This feedback will enable CLACX to:

- **Strengthen its campus presence:** By understanding student needs and preferences, CLACX can tailor its programming to ensure maximum impact on the student body.
- **Enhance academic support:** The board's insights will guide CLACX in developing resources and initiatives that effectively address student needs throughout their academic journey.
- **Foster a more supportive environment:** CLACX aims to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive space where students feel empowered to thrive academically.

Meet our 2023-2024 Student Advisory Board: CLACX thanks these students for sharing their valuable perspectives!

- **Areli Zuniga:** Human and Organizational Development major (BS) at Peabody College. Serves as PLASA Publicity Co-Chair.



- **Brittany Bretz Martinez:** Cognitive Studies major (BS). Holds the position of Cafe con Leche Co-Chair at the Association of Latin American Students.
- **Devashani Sharma:** Representative for the Caribbean Studies Association and Posse Scholar recipient at Vanderbilt.
- **Diana Zamarripa:** Majors in Medicine, Health and Society. Serves as Vice President, Treasurer, and Vice President of the Association of Latin American Students, Mexican American Student Association, and Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Vanderbilt.
- **Kenia Virgo:** Majors in Medicine, Health and Society with minors in Chemistry and Biology. Holds leadership positions on campus: Co-President of the Caribbean Students Association and EDI Chair for the National Eating Disorders Association.
- **Isabel Skerlec:** Actively involved in multiple organizations: MASA Special Events Co-Chair, Ballet Folklórico Secretary, and WRVU Radio Host.
- **Pedro Rosales-Diaz:** Majors in Latine Studies and Medicine, Health and Society. Minors in Biological Sciences and French. Holds positions as Publicity and Marketing Chair for ALAS and Treasurer for Baile Folklórico Mexicano de Vanderbilt.
- **Samuel D'Amico:** Music Performance major (BS) at Blair School of Music with a minor in Spanish and Business. Involved with Vanderbilt admissions and Tour Guides, serves on the Executive Board and Recruitment Committee of Spectrum A Capella, and holds the position of Performance Director.
- **Shalini Thinakaran:** Majors in Computer Science and Latin American Studies. Founder of LatinX, Dores Worker Solidarity Network, and Emeralds.
- **Yahir Brito:** Sophomore Representative for the Association of Latin American Students
- **Zacarias Negron:** Majors in Political Science (International Politics) and Law, History & Society. President of The Alexander Hamilton Society and Vice President of the Undergraduate Political Science Association.



Mayan Language Institute

Administered by Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin America and CLACX, the Mayan Language Institute took place in Guatemala from June 22-August 3, 2024. The program immerses students in the intensive study of K'iche' Mayan or Kaqchikel Mayan. **Telma Can Pixabaj**, Investigadora Asociada at CIMSUR-UNAM, and **Malcolm Miguel Botto**, who teaches K'iche' at Brigham Young University, directed the 2024 program. **Manuela (Nela) Tahay** served as Resident Director and coordinated the team of K'iche' instructors from Nahualá. CLACX and Tulane's Stone Center for Latin American Studies collaborated to support Tahay to attend a workshop (see p. 23) on pedagogy and technology for instructors of Indigenous languages of Latin America in March.

This year, the K'iche' program experienced record enrollment, with 10 students including Vanderbilt FLAS fellows **Natalie Bruno**, **Kathryn Gaylon**, and **Willie Hurst**. **Sydney Humphreys** (MA student in Spanish Linguistics at the University of Alabama) served as the Assistant Director of the program. Humphrey worked with Botto and Tahay to ensure that classes, programming, and logistics ran smoothly. She attended the 2023 MLI supported with FLAS funds from CLACX.

For the third year, the program has taken place in Quetzaltenango, in partnership with DESGUA

(Desarrollo Sostenible para Guatemala), which creates jobs and educational opportunities for Guatemalans. The K'iche' name for Quetzaltenango is Xe Laju' Noj (or Xela), which means "Below the Ten Spiritual Guides or Mountains." The city is home to both K'iche' and Mam Mayan speakers. During the 6-week course, students lived with local families, heard from experts advocating for K'iche' Maya Peoples, and took educational excursions to K'iche' speaking communities.

Thanks to Hannah Palmer at Tulane University for overseeing all aspects of the program, and to La Red staff members **Willy Barreno**, **Rosita Rabanales**, **Mildreth Barrios**, and **Ramona Guzmán**, President of DESGUA. Thanks also to **Ambrocia (Ixnal) Cuma Chavez** for organizing all in-country planning and administration. The Kaqchikel program hosted seven students this year in Ciudad Vieja, outside of Antigua. Once again, **Judie Maxwell** directed the program with the assistance of Cuma Chavez.

Students studying K'iche' at Vanderbilt and at other universities had the opportunity to participate in the K'iche' Maya language conversation group during the academic year. Led by Nela Tahay, the group met via Zoom on Thursdays at noon. The group accepts all levels of K'iche' speakers and is organized by Emily Taylor, PhD Candidate in History at the University of

Tahay Receives CLASP Excellence in Language Education Award

Manuela (Nela) Tahay was awarded the Excellence in Language Education Award from the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs for her longstanding passion and dedication to the promotion, preservation, and revitalization of K'iche' Maya. Tahay's commitment to language education and K'iche' Mayan is wide-ranging: she has mastered distance learning and classroom teaching to students while consistently immersing language learning in cultural context, she led K-16 educators in kite-building activities for Dia de Muertos workshops and voiced parts of *The Amazing Twins*, a marionette show that brings the *Popol Wuj* to life created in 2013 by Vanderbilt's Center for Latin American Studies with the Nashville Public Library; and she has contributed to the development of video tutorials, language texts, and other materials for the teaching of K'iche' Maya.

Student Organization News

The **Owen Latin Business Association** hosted a Hispanic Heritage event in September. Students enjoyed a mix of Mexican, Peruvian, and Brazilian food, Mexican drinks, and a Capoeira performance supported by the Global Education Center and CLACX.

The **Association of Latin American Students (ALAS)** team, performers, and choreographers presented their annual **Café con Leche Fall 2023** on October 28th. The event kicked off with a dinner in the Student Life Center Ballroom, featuring a vibrant selection of dishes from across Latin America. Following the meal, students showcased signature dances, with dazzling performances of bachata, salsa, Mexican folk dances, capoeira, Zouk and more.

In March, the **Mexican American Student Association (MASA)** invited the Vanderbilt community for a night of Cantaritos Painting in Sarratt. In April, MASA and the Black Student Association celebrated the end of the academic year with live mariachi performance in the Black Cultural Center Courtyard while indulging in mouthwatering Mexican snacks as they showcased the rich diversity of our communities.



The **Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Vanderbilt** performed twice in April: at inVUision 2024 at the Student Life Center Ballroom and at Carnival on Alumni Lawn. CLACX Administrator **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel** serves as the advisory for the organization.

The **Caribbean Students Association** hosted its annual Carnival on April 6 to recognize Caribbean heritage while celebrating this important cultural event. CLACX contributed to the event by supporting catering from local Caribbean-owned small businesses, entertainment, and costumes.



Semester and Maymester Study Abroad Programs in Latin America

This year, twenty-four Vanderbilt undergraduates spent a semester or the month of May abroad through these courses focused on contemporary issues in Latin America.

CIEE Open Campus: CIEE Open Campus allows students to design their own study abroad term by enrolling in up to three 6-week Open Campus Program Blocks. This year, four Vanderbilt students traveled to Buenos Aires or Merida with CIEE Open Campus.

IHP: Cities in the 21st Century: People, Planning and Politics: Through the prism of social justice, students examine how four global cities (New York, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, and Cape Town) work and operate within the global economy.

CASA Santiago: Students are fully immersed in Santiago, the political, cultural, and economic center of Chile, where they enroll in courses in top Chilean universities (Universidad de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and Universidad Diego Portales). This course is offered through the Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad, of which Vanderbilt is a member.

IHP: Health and Community: Globalization, Culture, and Care: Students in this International Honors Program within SIT compare strategies of health and community across four radically different country contexts (Washington, D.C., Delhi, India, Cape Town, South Africa and Buenos Aires, Argentina) and at global and local scale. Analysis of grassroots activism to top-down approaches and differing cultural understandings of health and well-being allows students to examine health realities at individual and population levels.

SIT Chile: Cultural Identity, Social Justice, and Community Development: This program explores how Chileans are creating a more equitable and culturally inclusive society. Students examine

challenges facing Chile's indigenous peoples and how Chileans use social, cultural, and political means to achieve representation, communication, and identification. Students live in homestays in Valparaíso and in Temuco with a Mapuche family. Students must have intermediate Spanish proficiency and have completed coursework in social sciences, sociology, anthropology, gender, and/or cultural studies.

SIT Mexico: Migration, Borders, and Transnational Communities: Students learn what undocumented migrants experience on their journey to the US and the strategies used to enforce border control, as well as the effects it has on the borderland, and transnational communities; the course begins in Tucson, takes students to Mexico City, and then to the program base in Oaxaca.

MAYMESTERS IN 2024 INCLUDED:

Above and Below the Surface: The Caribbean Between Climate Change and Tourism (ANTH 2114): this Maymester course took 12 students to the island of Utila in Honduras to learn about the ecological roles and endangerment of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, and related issues including tourism, colonialism and global warming. The course is taught by **Norbert Ross** (Anthropology).

Cultural Studies in the Andes (SPAN 3330) takes students to Peru to explore different forms of cultural production, including popular and elite artistic production, questions of gender and society, and the importance of festive culture in the region, especially the festival of Corpus Christi). Enrollment requires students to have an intermediate level of Spanish language proficiency. In May 2024, the course enrolled 13 students and was again led by **Heraldo Falconi** (Spanish and Portuguese).

Summer in Brazil

Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and CLACX collaborated again to host the "Summer in Brazil: Portuguese Language and Culture" program in São Paulo. The six-week intensive program is offered in partnership with CET Academic Programs. The program received 40 applicants and enrolled its maximum of 27 students from across the country.

Students in the program take advanced or intermediate Portuguese language courses, as well as "Contemporary Social Issues in Brazil" (PORT 6130). CET faculty, supervised by **Mariana Jansen** and **Giselda Pereira**, teach the courses. **Megwen Loveless** (Tulane) and **Benjamin Legg** (Vanderbilt) served as faculty co-directors of the program, providing students with support and guidance. Students lived in São Paulo's Perdizes neighborhood, with some students opting for homestays with local families and others sharing apartments with local Brazilian students. In addition to coursework, students participated in several excursions to historical and cultural sites in São Paulo, including the Museu Afro-Brazil, Museu de Arte São Paulo, Memorial da Resistência, Avenida Paulista, and the Soccer Museum. Students also traveled to the State of Rio de Janeiro to



spend a weekend in the colonial city of Paraty. CLACX awarded FLAS fellowships to thirteen students to attend the program (see p. 56).

Hannah Palmer, Assistant Director for Academic Projects and Programs in Tulane's Stone Center for Latin American Studies, worked closely with **Hector Cruz-Feliciano**, Director of Latin American Programs at CET to organize the six-week program. **Súlia Folli**, Resident Director at CET Brazil organized Brazilian faculty, designed orientation, and hosted extracurricular events with help from Resident Director **Vanessa Miranda** and Resident Coordinator **Leandro Tardin**.

Alumni News

Congratulations to **Kaira Brown**, who was awarded a scholarship of \$10,000 by the NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship Committee for part-time or full-time graduate study at a university or professional school. Brown will use the scholarship to support her studies at Georgetown University, where she is pursuing a MA in Public Policy. Brown graduated in May 2023 with a double major in Latino and Latina Studies and Human and Organizational Development; she received Highest Honors for her honors thesis. An accomplished track and field athlete, Brown earned a bronze medal in the 4×400-meter relay (3:33.23) at the SEC Championships and second-team All-SEC honors. Brown received the academic all-district honors while at Vanderbilt and was a 2023 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholar of the Year finalist.

The latest translation by **Nathan Dize** (PhD in French, 2021), *The Emperor* by Makenzy Orcel, was released in May 2024. The tragicomic novel invites readers to follow the narrator's life as he moves from the Haitian countryside to the sprawling city, learning about the corruptible nature of power in his quest

for freedom.

Katie (Angell) Fay is Lecturer in Latin American Politics and Society in the Department of Political Science at the University of Miami.

Demetrius Miles Murphy (MA, 2019)

published his second solo-authored article, "'Quem pode ser a dona?': Afro-Brazilian Women Entrepreneurs and Gendered Racism," in the journal *Gender, Work & Organization*. It received the 2022 Society for the Study of Social Problems Kauffman Foundation Best Student Paper Award in Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The article was based on his MA thesis data collected while he was a student at Vanderbilt. Demetrius is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Southern California and expects to complete his degree in 2025.

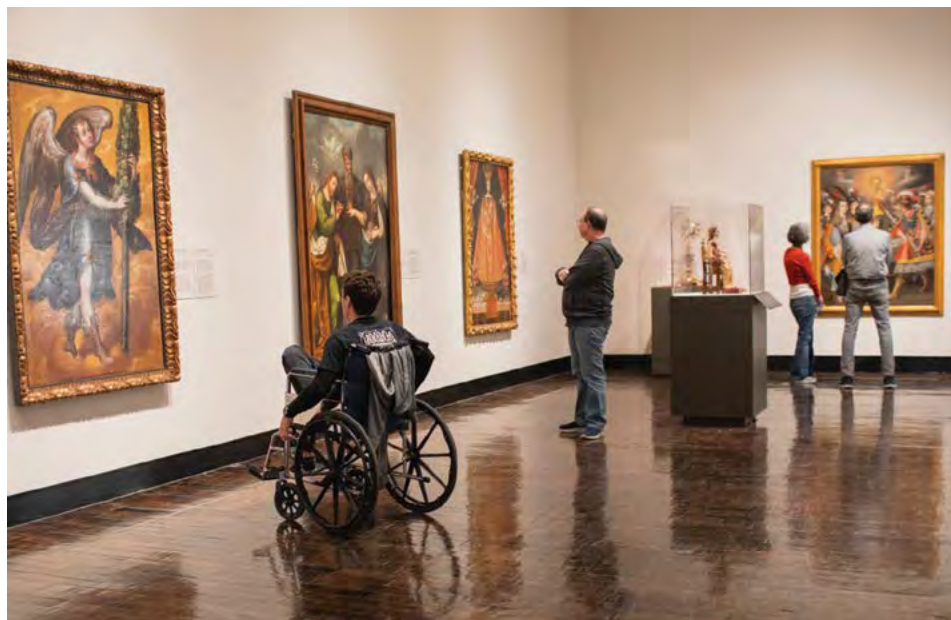
Andrea (Delgado) Galvez received her JD with high honors from the Emory University School of Law and is now Associate with Alston & Bird's Environment, Land Use & Natural Resources group.

CLACX Partners with Frist Art Museum on *Art and Imagination in Spanish America* and Spanish Language Translations

As part of our longstanding collaboration with the Frist Art Museum, CLACX was a Program Sponsor for *Art and Imagination in Spanish America, 1500-1800*, which ran from October 20, 2023 through January 28, 2024. The exhibit, visited by 38,841, featured works from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's collection of Spanish colonial art, including paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts. While acknowledging the profound violence that marked the process of conquest and colonization, the exhibition underscored the generative power of Spanish America and its central position as a global crossroads.

CLACX worked with the Frist to organize two educator workshops, identify faculty to provide commentary on the exhibit, and helped support a performance by Music City Baroque in January, "Music and Musicians in Spanish Latin America."

Educator workshops on December 7 and 9 featured CLACX Regional Faculty Affiliate **Michael LaRosa**, a historian based at Rhodes College.



Following a docent-led tour of the exhibit, LaRosa gave the teachers a brief review of the historic period covered by the exhibit and then narrowed his discussion to a few works. Fifty teachers attended the two workshops.

CLACX also worked with **Meagan Rust**, Interpretation Director at the Frist, to identify faculty to participate in the Community Response Audio Tour. **José Cardenas Bunsen** (Spanish and Portuguese), **Lidiana de Moraes** (CLACX/Collaborative Humanities Postdoctoral Program), and **André Ramos Chacón** (PhD Candidate, Spanish and Portuguese) chose a work in the exhibit and recorded a personal reflection for the audio tour available to attendees.

In addition to the collaborations around *Art and Imagination in Spanish America*, CLACX was the Spanish language sponsor for four exhibits in 2023-2024: *Lee Alexander McQueen* and *Ann*



Ray: *Rendez-Vous* (May 30–August 29); *Printing the Revolution! The Rise and Impact of Chicano Graphics, 1965 to Now* (June 28–September 29); *María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold* (September 27–January 5); and *Journey through Japan: Myths to Manga* (October 25–February 16). For the upcoming academic year, CLACX will serve as Program Sponsor and collaborate on several activities for *Printing the Revolution!* and *Behold*.

Printing the Revolution! opened June 28 and runs through September 29. The exhibit examines how graphic arts have been used to build community, engage the public around social concerns, and wrestle with shifting notions of the term Chicano, which Mexican Americans defiantly adopted in the 1960s and 1970s as a sign of a new political and cultural identity. It includes 119 works ranging from traditional screen prints to digital graphics and augmented reality works, to site-specific installations by more than 74 artists of Mexican descent and their cross-cultural collaborators. **Hilario Lomelí** (CLACX) gave a presentation for an educator workshop on the exhibit along with a local art teacher who led a hands-on activity. CLACX supported members of our Teacher Advisory Board to attend the workshop, and Vanderbilt students in selected LACX classes will have the opportunity to attend a tour of the exhibit in September led by Chief Curator **Mark Scala**.

Behold features three decades of work created by **María Magdalena Campos-Pons**, who is the Cornelius Vanderbilt Endowed Chair Professor of Fine Arts at Vanderbilt. Hauntingly beautiful and emotionally charged, *Behold* evokes the history of diaspora and present-day realities of cultural displacement, labor and race, and motherhood and spirituality through Campos-Pons’s layered identity as a Cuban woman with ancestral roots in the Yoruba culture of West Africa, as well as Spain and China (see p. 46).



PRINTING THE REVOLUTION!

The Rise and Impact of Chicano Graphics, 1965 to Now



CLACX faculty and staff attend a preview of Art and Imagination in Spanish America at Frist Art Museum



Nashville Parthenon Gets New Spanish Language Signage with Support from CLACX

CLACX began a new partnership with Metro Parks to translate signage in the Parthenon into Spanish to make its exhibits more accessible to more members of the Nashville community. The first phase of this initiative focused on signage in the Naos, where the statue of Athena is located. **Brayan Serratos**, doctoral student in Spanish and Portuguese, took the lead on the translations. **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel** and **Pat Bashir** (Nashville Public Library) provided final edits.

The Parthenon hosted an open house with CLACX in January for affiliated students, faculty, staff, and community members to see the new signage and tour the Parthenon free of charge. Parthenon Director **Lauren Bufferd** welcomed CLACX and **Avery Dickins de Girón** gave remarks.

Feedback on the new signage has been positive, with Curator **Jennifer Richardson** noting that “our visitors have LOVED having the Spanish translations.” The collaboration between CLACX and the Parthenon will continue, with current plans to translate signage for an art exhibit and other signage in the coming months.

Spanish Language Classes at Hillsboro High School Receive Book Sets through CLACX Title VI Funds

As part of our ongoing partnerships with Metro Nashville Public School classrooms, CLACX has offered teachers books and book sets through our Lending Library for several years. We are now bringing the library to the classroom by purchasing class sets for educators with NRC funds. This year, funds supported **Kendall Headley**, who teaches Spanish at Hillsboro High School. Headley purchased thirty-five copies of two novels, *La puerta secreta* and *De cómo tía Lola vino a quedarse* for her Spanish I junior and IB Spanish II senior classes. Headley created assessments for each chapter to prepare the students for the IB exams in May and plans to add more activities next year. Headley was named Hillsboro’s Teacher of the Year for 2023-2024 and is also a member of the CLACX Teacher Advisory Board.

Teachers interested in receiving funding for class sets should submit a request to CLACX Program Coordinator **Luisa Mattos**, detailing how the books will be used in their classroom. Recipients are also required to create lesson plans or other activities to be used with the books and share those with other educators through a professional development workshop with CLACX or within their schools.



CLACX Partners with MNPS on Several Professional Development Programs for Educators

CLACX continues our professional development programming with MNPS in partnership with the Office of English Learners (OEL) and the Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) program, housed within the OEL. Our work responds to teachers who seek to increase their understanding of their students' backgrounds and the reasons for growing immigration to the Southeast.

For the 2023-2024 school year, MNPS identified 20,523 students as English Learners, which represents 26% of students in the district. Over 33% of MNPS students identify as Latinx, and many students new to the district are from Central America. Several languages spoken by students in the SIFE program are Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala, including Q'eqchi, Achi, Chuj, K'iche', and Popti'. As a further indication of the growing Central American population, Guatemala opened a Consulate in Nashville in November 2023 to serve the estimated 72,000 Guatemalan nationals in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky. **Megan Trcka**, EL Coordinator in the Office of English Learners, notes that "students, mostly from Guatemala and Honduras, are only in the SIFE program a year or less. So, these students and those from last year are in classrooms throughout the district. Thus, another reason why the [CLACX] content is so important!"

The OEL invited **Avery Dickins de Girón** to speak at the



Multilingual Learner Winter Forum in January and again at Overton High School in March. Her talks addressed the education system in Central America, motivations for emigration, and contemporary social, political, and economic issues. **Amy Gaetano**, a SIFE teacher at Glenclyff High School, presented her work on engaging newcomer students through innovative curricula and activities for students across the high school. The Multilingual Learner Winter Forum is a full

day virtual professional learning conference for MNPS teachers that focuses on EL policy, practices, stakeholders and advocacy; the two presentations were attended by 173 educators.

In order to provide a more substantive examination of immigrant experiences, Trcka and Dickins de Girón planned a book study on *Solito* (see p. 4) following the Winter Forum. **Hilario Lomelí** led the study, which consisted of four sessions during March and April 2024 and attended by nine teachers (pictured above).



MNPS Teachers Travel to Guatemala

During the 2021-2022 school year, MNPS's SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) program was awarded a grant from Education First's SEL in Action initiative, which gave SIFE teachers resources to create bidirectional family partnerships by establishing a district-wide **Family Leadership Team** (FLT). Rather than considering families as individuals in need of resources and information about school programming, the FLT positions families as experts who are encouraged to take leadership positions within the school. To establish the FLT, SIFE teachers engaged in professional development with Laura Gardner from Immigrant Connections, and then invited families to join the FLT, to offer feedback about the SIFE program, and to plan an event in partnership with their child's teacher.

As part of the Tech Goes Home program, the Nashville Public Education Foundation provided funding, training, and resources, including a laptop and year-long hotspot for each participating family. As a culminating project of the FLT, families used their laptops to create a proposal for an event that they could host at their student's school.

The Primero-Rosales family was passionate about the opportunity to share their Achi culture with others. They worked with SIFE teachers at Margaret Allen Middle School to plan an event for teachers to learn about food, clothing, and dances of the Achi Maya. The family gave a presentation about an annual festival held in their hometown of Cubulco, Guatemala. The festival combines Catholic and indigenous Maya religious beliefs and culminates in the *Baile del Palo Volador*, in which men climb a tower constructed for the occasion and swing around the pole while suspended high in the air above the crowds gathered below. Following the presentation by the Primero-Rosales family, a group of SIFE teachers researched options for traveling to Cubulco's



festival during the summer of 2024. After consulting with the family, the teachers selected dates to visit Cubulco that aligned with the family's favorite parts of the festival, including a procession to honor a patron saint, and, of course, the Flying Pole Dances. The family connected the teachers with an educator in Cubulco who invited the SIFE teachers to stay with him and to tour the local school. The family also provided a list of school supplies needed at Cubulco's primary school, which the SIFE teachers collected and presented as a gift.

Four teachers traveled to Guatemala in July 2024: **Addison Barrack** (Antioch High School), who is a member of the CLACX Educator Book Club; **Suzanne Diaz** (Glenclyff High School); **Aly Tucker** (Antioch High School), and **Katrina Fernandez** (Margaret Allen Middle School). While in Guatemala, the teachers also visited a school in Antigua. Following the trip, the teachers hope to share their experiences with other educators, learn from their students' funds of knowledge, and inspire other educators. The educators thanked Avery Dickins de Girón for consulting with them as they planned the trip.

Thanks to Addison Barrack for contributing this content.

TEACHER ADVISORY BOARD

The Teacher Advisory Board is a diverse assembly of five dedicated educators hailing from different institutions in Middle Tennessee. Led by **Luisa Mattos da Costa**, the board convenes every two months throughout the academic year to engage in meaningful dialogues pertaining to subjects and experiences of utmost significance to educators. Discussions encompass a wide spectrum of topics, including curriculum development, strategies for enhancing student engagement, institutional support mechanisms, and other relevant matters. Through these collaborative sessions, the Teacher Advisory Board works to generate innovative solutions and practical outcomes to enhance the quality of education in their schools and schools across middle Tennessee, while also and furthering the cause of diversity in public education.

Thank you to the members of the 2023-2024 Teacher Advisory Board:

Raeanne Carella – Lebanon High School in Wilson County

Lyndell Edmondson – John Early Museum Magnet Middle School

Kendall Headley – Hillsboro High School

Julia E. Podesta – Smyrna High School

Kendra Standberry – Edmondson Elementary

CLACX Fosters Latin American and Caribbean Diversity in the Classroom through the Educator Book Club

Founded in 2019, the CLACX Educator Book Club provides a platform for educators to critically examine the portrayal of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx cultures in children's and young adult literature. Monthly gatherings throughout the school year offer teachers a space to discuss strategies for incorporating diverse books into their K-12 curriculums.



For 2023-2024, the Educator Book Club had 13 members, each representing a different school across four counties in Middle Tennessee. Members represent a variety of subjects including English, Spanish, Math, English Language Learning, Counseling, and Elementary Education. **Luisa Mattos** leads the club.

Beyond book discussions, the Educator Book Club provides the opportunity for teachers to engage directly with authors, taking advantage of visiting speakers and other events hosted by CLACX. This year, members participated in webinars and virtual professional development workshops with **Yasmin Ramirez** (*Andale Prieta!*) and Cuban author **Alexis Castellanos** (*Isla to Isla*). They had the exciting opportunity to attend a talk and meet-and-greet with **Javier Zamora**, author of *Solito* (see p. 4 and above photo).

As a festive twist for the December meeting, the club held a year-end reading competition centered on *Never Look Back* by **Lilium Rivera**. The top three winners were awarded a selection of Américas Award-winning titles. The annual Américas Award recognizes exceptional U.S.-published children's and young adult literature that offers authentic and engaging portrayals of Latin America, the Caribbean, or the Latino experience in the United States since 1993.

CLACX Hosts Meeting for Outreach Coordinators Prior to National Council on Social Studies Conference



The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) conference was held in Nashville from December 1-3 at the Music City Center. Prior to the conference, CLACX hosted a meeting in collaboration with the Consortium for Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) for Outreach Coordinators at Title VI institutions.

The meeting, “Enhancing Institutional Impact,” was held on November 30 and focused on equipping participants with strategies to strengthen their institutional outreach efforts. The agenda featured presentations on a variety of topics, including:

- MSI/CC Collaborations*: **Liesl Picard**, Associate Director Florida of International University’s Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center, and **Avery Dickins de Girón**, Executive Director of CLACX, shared insights on building partnerships between Minority Serving Institutions and Community Colleges.
- Teaching the World Consortium & Website*: **Carla Ruffer**, Outreach Coordinator at the University of Florida’s Center for European Studies, presented a collaborative effort to provide educators with resources for global education.
- Evaluation and Educator Certification*: a panel discussion led by **Veronica Dristas**, Associate Director of the University of Pittsburgh’s Global Studies Center, addressed assessment strategies and educator certification programs. The discussion also featured presentations from the CLASP “Evaluation Working Group,” which includes **Katrina Dillon**, Assistant Director for Outreach Programs for the University of Arizona Center for Latin American Studies, and **Shane Carter**, Program Coordinator at the University of California Berkeley for the Office of Resources for International and Area Studies.

- *World Area Book Awards & Global Reads Webinar*: **Katrina Dillon** and **Cynthia Garza**, Senior Program Manager for Public Engagement at Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies, discussed initiatives promoting global literacy, including book awards and online webinars.
- *Best Practices in a Post-COVID Era*: through interactive group activities, participants explored communication strategies, platforms, and creating sustainable partnerships with K-12 educators.
- *Lightning Rounds*: CLACX Program Coordinator **Luisa Mattos da Costa** discussed the establishment and value of teacher advisory boards; **Molly Aufdermauer**, Public Engagement Coordinator at Stanford University's Center for Latin American Studies, shared her experience in organizing successful summer institutes; and **Valerie McGinley**, Associate Director at Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies, offered guidance on creating and maintaining impactful non-traditional Outreach Collaborations.

CLACX Director **Celso Castilho** welcomed participants and recognized the collaborative spirit of the meeting as a "valuable platform for outreach professionals to share experiences and brainstorm innovative approaches to maximize the impact of outreach activities."

Luisa Mattos da Costa organized the program and led the meeting, with support from **Katrina Dillon**, chair of the Outreach Committee for CLASP, and from CLACX Administrative Specialist **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel**. Many thanks to **Mario Avila** and the Owen Graduate School of Management for hosting the meeting in Owen's new fourth floor conference room.

As a member of the CLASP Outreach Committee, **Luisa Mattos da Costa** helped host a booth at the NCSS conference. The booth, a collaborative effort with other academic centers, served as a central hub for educators seeking resources to enhance their teaching of Latin American Studies content in K-12 classrooms. More than 200 educators stopped by the booth, which offered a comprehensive selection of materials, including:



- **Lending Libraries** through which educators can directly access and borrow resources from Latin American Studies centers across the country
- **Curriculum Materials** designed to integrate Latin American Studies into classroom instruction.
- Representatives from CLASP institutions provided details about upcoming **Professional Development Workshops** geared towards K-12 educators.
- **Américas Award** titles: the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature recognizes exceptional books that bring the cultures and experiences of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the U.S. to life. By promoting these award-winning titles, CLASP equips educators with engaging and culturally rich literature for their students.

About CLASP and NCSS: CLASP serves as a national champion for Latin American Studies, promoting global competency, language fluency, and a deeper understanding of the region. NCSS, the leading organization dedicated to social studies education, brings together educators from across the United States.

Vanderbilt CLACX's participation in the CLASP booth reflects the institution's commitment to supporting educators and fostering a greater appreciation for Latin American Studies in K-12 classrooms.

2024 Summer Educator Institute: Towards a More Equitable and Inclusive Digital World in Latin America

CLACX, Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies, and the University of Arizona's Center for Latin American Studies collaborated to host a K-12 summer educator institute on Vanderbilt's campus in June. The program, "Towards a More Equitable and Inclusive Digital World in Latin America" was the second in the series of institutes focused on Indigenous peoples and cultures of the Americas." The week-long program, held from June 24th to 28th, brought 20 educators from across the country together to integrate technology and social justice themes into their classrooms.

Throughout the week, educators participated in workshops led by renowned Latin Americanist scholars, educators, and activists. The institute focused on equipping educators with practical skills, providing them with a diverse range of resources, giving them hands-on exploration of digital tools, and supporting them in the creation of new curricular materials. Vanderbilt's **Jane Landers** introduced the Slave Society Digital Archive and spoke about the importance of the use of AI in historical research and Colombian-Honduran author



Kat Fajardo led educators through a digital illustration session. **Laine Farber, Jonathan Peraza Campos, Lidiana de Mores, Ana Luiza Soares, Kae Guajajara** and **Pablo Mazariegos** led sessions on enhancing student engagement in learning through podcasts, documentary films, and other educational technologies. Award-winning graphic novels like the Pura Belpré Honor-winning *Miss Quince* served as springboards for bringing Latin American stories and cultures to life, and other sessions addressed how to incorporate social justice movements and digital activism in Latin America into the classroom. Content delivered through the institute was enriched through tours of the National Museum of African American Music, Nashville

Public Library, and the Frist Art Museum, where educators attended the opening night of "*Printing the Revolution!*" (see p. 64).

Educators walked away from the institute better understanding how to utilize digital resources effectively to design engaging learning experiences. In post-institute surveys, 72% of respondents indicated they were "very satisfied" with the



“The sessions of this institute were phenomenal. I am so excited to bring the content and teaching strategies back to my classroom and continue evolving my practices.”

applicability of content to their curriculum. Several participants commented that they were inspired to use more technology in the classroom, and many noted plans to integrate films, books, and archival materials introduced through the institute into their teaching.

The institute was organized and hosted by **Luisa Mattos da Costa** (CLACX), **Cynthia Garza** (Tulane), and **Katrina Dillon** (University of Arizona). In 2025, educators will travel to Guatemala for the third institute of the 2023-2026 series.

Thank You to Our Evaluation Team

CLACX thanks our Evaluation team for providing assessment and ongoing feedback for our programs. **Xiu Cravens**, Associate Dean for International Students and Affairs and Professor of the Practice in the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organizations in Vanderbilt’s Peabody College of Education, has served as the center’s Evaluator for over a decade. In 2023, CLACX expanded our assessment team to include an External Evaluator for our Title VI grant projects. **Amanda Wolfe**, Assistant Dean of Global Programs at University of Arizona Law serves as the External Evaluator. Both Cravens and Wolfe work with CLACX Executive Director **Avery Dickins de Girón** to develop feasible and meaningful assessment protocols to measure the impact of CLACX programs on the university, the Nashville community, the Southeast region, and the nation. **Luisa Mattos**, CLACX Program Coordinator, implements assessments and oversees summary reports with guidance from Cravens and support from the Evaluation Intern, who is a graduate student in the International Education Policy and Management Program. This year, **Youree Kim** served as our Evaluation Intern.

The team met in December 2023 to streamline our evaluation protocols and design new summary briefs that would be relevant to our diverse stakeholders. Thanks to Youree Kim for taking the lead on developing the briefs.

Check out the briefs here: **University Impact**, **K-16 Impact**, and **Public Engagement Impact**.



Global Education Center and CLACX Host Appalatin in Nashville

CLACX partnered with the Global Education Center to bring the music of Appalatin to Nashville in early December. Based in Louisville, the band is comprised of musicians from Kentucky and émigrés from Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Their music fuses Latin American rhythms from the Andes and Central America with bluegrass and features traditional, as well as handmade, instruments from Latin America. Their musical influences range from Jimi Hendrix and Santana to trova and cumbia.



While in Nashville, they performed at the Darkhorse Theater. The following day, students in LAS 1111 (Music is Power), were treated to a demonstration and discussion led by the musicians. Following the class visit, Appalatin performed in the Commons lobby.

Engine for Art, Democracy, and Justice and CLACX Collaborate on Educational Programming

In Spring 2024, the Engine for Art, Democracy, and Justice opened its new experimental space, **Begonia Labs**, located on Charlotte Avenue in the space that was previously home to the Scarlet Begonia store. EADJ hosted a series of events, “Art and Radical Love,” including video screenings and conversations on February 29 supported in part by CLACX. Pablo Mazariegos presented his recent film, *Un Pasado Nuevo (Someday Soon)* and participated in a conversation with **Jose Luis Benavides** (Art) and Latino immigration scholar **Giovanni Román-Torres**.

CLACX also collaborated with the EADJ in the Black History Month “Art and Radical Love” intervention at the Nashville Black Market. **Luisa Mattos da Costa** curated a selection of children’s and young adult literature by Afro-Latinx authors from CLACX’s lending library. The collection featured themes and countries of the African diaspora, such as Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, and Cuba, and was available for public browsing.

In Summer 2024, the EADJ generously provided the Begonia Labs space for our K-12 Summer Institute webinar sessions. These sessions featured Vanderbilt post-doctoral fellow **Ana Luiza Soares**, Brazilian Urban Indigenous artist Kae Guajajara, Guatemalan filmmaker **Pablo Mazariegos**, and Latin Americanist educator **Jonathan Peraza Campos**. The institute included a video screening, storytelling workshop, and a workshop on “Teaching Central America using digital resources” by Peraza Campos. This collaboration allowed local and out-of-state educators to engage in meaningful discussions and use EADJ resources.

Founded by **María Magdalena Campos-Pons**, Cornelius Vanderbilt Endowed Chair Professor of Fine Arts, EADJ is a trans-institutional initiative and collaboration between Fisk University, the Frist Art Museum, Millions of Conversations, and Vanderbilt University that explores creative approaches to living together in the South(s).



CELEBRATE NASHVILLE

As in previous years, CLACX hosted a booth for the annual “Celebrate Nashville Cultural Festival” that recognizes the city’s growing diversity. This year CLACX featured Brazil, with faculty and students sharing their knowledge about the country with attendees. CLACX Administrator **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel** organized the CLACX booth and serves on the Advisory Board for Celebrate Nashville.

LAPOP Lab Announces Key Findings from the 2023 AmericasBarometer

Completion of the 2023 AmericasBarometer and Release of the Pulse of Democracy Report

- LAPOP Lab completed data collection for the 2023 AmericasBarometer in October 2023. The round included 26 countries of the Americas and 64,353 interviews. This is the 10th round of the AmericasBarometer.
- The lab published its regional report, the **Pulse of Democracy**, with key findings from the 2023 AmericasBarometer on November 29, 2023, in a public event at the Inter-American Dialogue. The report underscores the importance of investing in good governance and inclusive growth for democracy and migration trends in the Western Hemisphere. Despite mixed progress in government transparency and responsiveness, and challenges like economic pessimism and food insecurity, there is room for optimism. Support for democracy among younger generations is growing, along with increasing demand for sustainable development and social inclusion.

LAPOP Lab Generates New Discoveries in Public Opinion Research

- LAPOP Lab has advanced innovations in the understanding and measurement of gender identity in Latin America and the Caribbean, as featured in **VU news**. In a LAPOP Insights report, **“Measuring Gender Identity in Latin America and the Caribbean,”** Oscar Castorena and Valerie Schweizer-Robinson, both statisticians at LAPOP Lab, tackle the complexities of capturing

gender identity in social science surveys within a context of widespread discrimination and violence against gender minorities in the region. To address these challenges, LAPOP developed an inclusive method for measuring gender identity, which includes cognitive pretesting and online survey experiments in Guatemala to refine their approach. The lab’s key recommendation advocates for using a single open-ended question in surveys, allowing respondents to freely express their gender while maintaining privacy and safety.

- The Spanish version of this research article can be found **here** and related work was presented by Schweizer-Robinson at the 2024 AAPOR Conference in May 2024. LAPOP also has disseminated this research in its Workshop on International Survey Methods (**WISM**) series and in briefings to USAID and the Department of State.

The Public and Democracy in the Americas Annual Conference

- LAPOP Lab hosted its annual academic conference in a hybrid format in partnership with Participación Ciudadana. The conference took place in Quito, Ecuador on November 10, 2023. Panels on migration, elections, citizen security, democracy, and survey research methodology featured 50 presenters and 118 participants were in attendance.
- The conference included a special round table on security and democracy in Ecuador, with presentations from local scholars and experts.

Summer School in International Survey Methods

- In 2023, LAPOP Lab inaugurated a 9-day intensive training program in survey methods, with a particular focus on applications outside the US. Instruction is geared toward graduate students, faculty, or research practitioners in the social sciences, though advanced undergraduates may also apply. The final session will offer an opportunity for interested participants to present their own in-progress research involving survey data.

In its first year, the summer school hosted 23 students from across the Latin America and Caribbean region. A recap of the 2023 session can be found [here](#).

LAPOP Lab will be hosting its second cohort of students in summer 2024. More information can be found [here](#).

International Survey Methods Workshop Series

- This workshop series features experts from around the world who deliver presentations on cutting-edge survey methodology, with a focus on research in international contexts. The series is trans-institutional, engaging multiple disciplines. In Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, LAPOP hosted 7 workshops that covered district-level racially polarized voting surveys, representation in CATI surveys in low- and middle-income countries, a qualitative approach to food security in Uganda and Kenya, semantic clustering of democratic ideals in Chile, gender identity questions comparison, mobile-phone survey evolution, and using fuzzy cognitive maps for hyperlocal knowledge. Learn more about upcoming workshops and watch videos of past workshops [here](#).

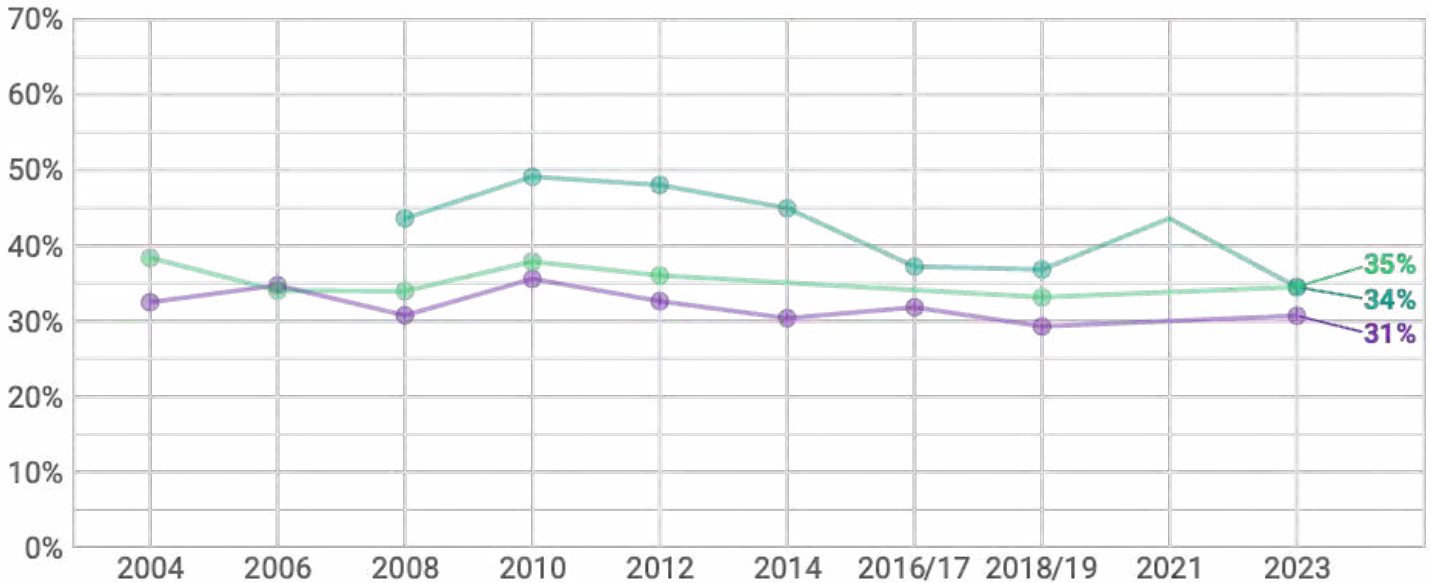
Trust in executives has declined to a level similar to other political institutions

% who trust...

Legislature

High Court

President/Prime Minister



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2004-2023

The Pulse of Democracy in 2023

What can data from the 2023 AmericasBarometer tell us about the pulse of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean? LAPOP Lab’s director, Liz Zechmeister, and associate director, Noam Lupu, provide answers in this [regional report](#).

Reflecting on the 10th round of the AmericasBarometer, Lupu and Zechmeister underscore the importance of good governance and inclusive growth for sustaining democracy and reducing emigration in the Western Hemisphere. Good governance, characterized by effective, responsive, and transparent institutions, has seen mixed results. While street-level corruption, such as bribe solicitation, has decreased to pre-pandemic levels, concerns about high-level political corruption and electoral integrity persist, notably in countries like Nicaragua, Peru, and Suriname.

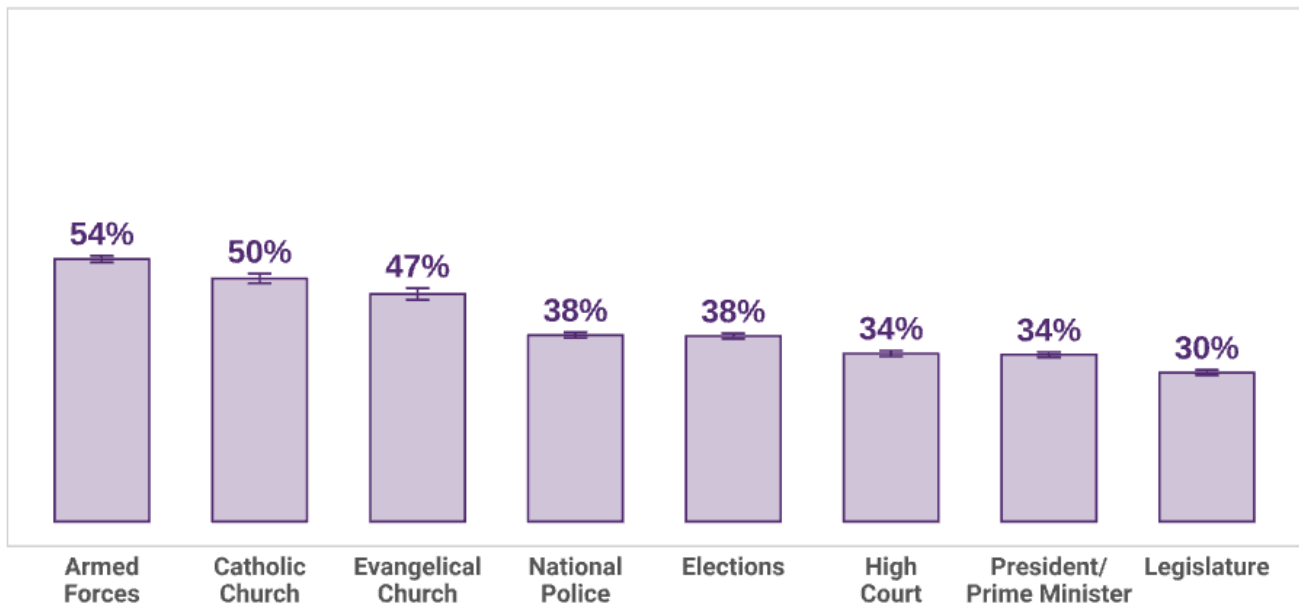
- Inclusive growth, which ensures broad economic benefits, is lacking in the region. Economic pessimism and household food insecurity are at record highs, with one in three adults reporting

recent food shortages. This has contributed to increased emigration intentions, particularly in countries like Haiti, where a significant portion of the population faces severe food insecurity.

- Younger generations show greater commitment to democracy, and there is a rising demand for sustainable development and social inclusion. Support for same-sex marriage is increasing alongside progressive legal changes. The report highlights that achieving the potential for a stable democracy requires both domestic and international efforts to ensure clean governance and the capacity of institutions to provide quality public services.
- Overall, the data from the AmericasBarometer emphasize the necessity of good governance and inclusive growth to foster trust in democratic institutions and reduce the inclination to emigrate.
- Read the [2023 Pulse of Democracy](#) to discover what the AmericasBarometer reveals about the health of democracy in the LAC region.

In the LAC region, more than half trust their armed forces while few trust their legislature

■ % who trust... |—| 95% confidence interval



Source: LAPOP Lab, AmericasBarometer 2023

LAPOP'S NEWEST DOCTORS

Facundo E. Salles Kobilanski – On July 27, 2023, Facundo E. Salles Kobilanski defended his dissertation on candidate entry process for LGBTQ+ individuals in Brazil. This dissertation offers new insights into the LGBTQ+ candidate entry process in Brazil in a four-paper format. The first considers whether individuating information affects approval of gay people's right to run. Results show that positive individuating information does not increase approval of a gay candidate's right to run relative to the level of approval expressed for gay people as a group in general. The second paper uses semi-open interviews to show that LGBTQ+ candidates share some common barriers with other non-traditional candidates, but other barriers are more specific to the LGBTQ+ electoral experience. The third paper uses the 2020 local elections in Brazil to investigate whether party elites withhold non-financial support from LGBTQ+ candidates. Using the mnemonic quality of candidate-specific ballot codes as a proxy for support and drawing from a micro-census of LGBTQ+ candidates, the paper reveals that LGBTQ+ candidates compete with less memorable and idiosyncratically derogatory ballot codes, with the least memorable codes being assigned to transgender candidates. The fourth paper assesses faith-based homophily's effect on married and unmarried gay candidates' electability. A conjoint-experiment shows that voters generally penalize gay candidate and suggests that faith-based homophily does not increase religion-branded gay candidates' electability relative to non-religious gay candidates. Facundo's dissertation committee was chaired by Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, with committee members Cindy D. Kam, Noam Lupu, and Amy Erica Smith (Iowa State University).

Mariana V. Ramírez Bustamante – On May 16, 2024, Mariana V. Ramírez Bustamante defended her dissertation on the effects of organized crime on political behavior in Latin America. Her work includes four empirical chapters that explore why and when some citizens support politicians involved in drug trafficking—both candidates and incumbents. It also examines how the illegal context influences popular attitudes, such as trust in local government and democratic values. Drawing on theories of voting behavior and accountability, as well as research on organized crime, Mariana's dissertation suggests that voters often support narco-linked politicians because they see the benefits of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) as outweighing the costs. In Chapter 2, she presents experimental evidence from Peru showing that the security benefits from this illicit economy play a significant role, along with a direct effect of tolerance towards these activities. Chapter 3 focuses on a case study of a coca-production area in Peru, the Monzón Valley in Upper Huallaga. This chapter highlights how economic benefits from the drug trade can lead to popular tolerance and strong support for a mayor allegedly involved in the drug trade. Using data from the AmericasBarometer, along with observational data on coca prices, production, and eradication, her cross-country analysis of coca-producing countries in the Andes (Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia) provides more evidence of the narco-economy's impact on local authority support, though this is particularly evident in Bolivia. Chapter 5 shows that the need for clear structures, chains of command, and secrecy in criminal organizations makes citizens in DTO-dominated areas more accustomed to vertical authority structures. Evidence from focus groups in two districts in Lima, combined with survey data from the LAPOP Lab in Peru, indicates that awareness of DTOs' presence in individuals' neighborhoods correlates with lower democratic perceptions. Mariana's dissertation committee was chaired by Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, with committee members Noam Lupu, Cassy Dorff, and Mollie Cohen (Purdue University).



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