75 Years Looking Toward Latin America: Institutions for Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt from the Institute for Brazilian Studies to the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies

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"We have decided here at Vanderbilt that our major overseas contribution should be made in the direction of Latin America."

Chancellor Harvie Branscomb, 1961

In 1949, the Institute for Brazilian Studies opened its doors at Vanderbilt University and, only a month after its official inauguration, welcomed the president of Brazil to the small, regional university. 75 years later, in 2025, the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies (CLACX) is leading a conversation on how the fields of Latin American studies and Latinx studies can exist in dialogue at one of the nation's most recognized research institutions. Over these eight decades, the study of Latin America and the Latin America diaspora at Vanderbilt has unfolded under a changing set of institutional umbrellas combined with ever evolving social and political conditions in the U.S. and Latin America. This institutional history asks how the center (understanding these many iterations as part of one larger institutional project) transformed from the Institute for Brazilian Studies in 1949 into CLACX today. What factors, internal and external, influenced the goals and structures of the center? How did the center work within the academic sphere of the university and what roles did it play in the lives of students, the larger academic understanding of Latin America, and in Latin America itself? How in turn did these relationships shape the character of the center?

This is the first project to consider the entirety of the center's institutional history. Some of this history has been documented on the center's website and in other short accounts of its past. Heather Ewing and Katherine Diaz examined some of the archives on the Institute for Brazilian Studies and its later forms, and their work provided a starting point for this project. I also draw heavily on the work of Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak and Ramón García Fernández on the Vanderbilt Department of Economics and its partnership with the United States Agency for International Development to develop graduate economics education in Brazil. However, this project is unique in that it considers the full length of the center's history, up to the present moment.

In writing this history, I draw from archives, grant documents, newsletters, promotional materials, and interviews. The composition of these sources varies greatly over the period of study. From the 1940s through the 1970s, most information comes from the Vanderbilt University Archives. These archives include correspondence, grant documents, fliers, reception programs, newspaper clippings, and more. The university archives for the center mostly taper off in the 1980s, so much of the account of the 1980s and 1990s is based on interviews with faculty and alumni and several grant documents and internal reviews, often coming from the personal papers of faculty members rather than from the archives. I continue to rely heavily on interviews with current faculty members in my account of the 2000s through the present, but in this period National Resource Center grant documents play a larger role. These documents, required every year from 2006 on, provide an account of the center's activities and goals. Although it occasionally existed for short periods of time before, the center's newsletter runs consistently from the late 1990s to the present and provides another source on the center's activities and affiliated projects.

These sources raise interesting questions. Although grant documents (such as for the NRC grants) provide good overviews of the center's activities, they often skew towards representing how the center fulfills its grant objectives and quantifiable metrics of its accomplishments, and do not present an account of day-to-day experiences of the center for students or faculty. Some of the archives on the other hand, especially around the Institute for Brazilian Studies, provide details on the minutiae of organizing events or the back and forth of correspondence with students or affiliated faculty over the center's work at one moment in time, but contain less quantifiable or overarching information. Faculty and student interviews provide an interesting addition to these sources, giving the perspective of how the center has changed over the decades and the specific projects that were important to it at different moments. However, these interviews can only extend so far back. I have done my best to integrate these sources to highlight both the larger administrative objectives and projects of the center and faculty and student experiences.

The many institutional identities for Latin American and Latinx studies at Vanderbilt raise the question of what it means to be a "center" and how to unite a group of people interested in a similar area of study. The means through which the center united faculty and created its academic project adapted throughout its history to differences in funding and institutional support. At times, the center supported its faculty and projects as a mostly self-contained institution, and at others, the center existed as an institution supporting and uniting disparate projects across the university and in Latin America. With time, the center moved

towards this second role. The Institute for Brazilian Studies and Graduate Center for Latin American Studies, the first two iterations of the center, set aside faculty positions in several departments to create a more concentrated institutional faculty that worked together to create research. As the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies and while receiving NRC funding, especially as the number of faculty affiliated with the center grew and spread through different schools and departments at Vanderbilt, the center instead became a central base from which to unite many projects and create connections between faculty, but with most of these projects and faculty housed outside the center itself.

The existence of the center, and its goals, is largely dependent on interest and investment, both at the university and national levels. At times, the center disappeared, as between the Institute for Brazilian Studies and the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies, or was significantly reduced, waiting for a reinvestment of interest and support, as in the late 1970s. The initial suspension of the institute was a result of waning national interest in Latin American studies, which later resurged in the late 50s with the Cold War and Cuban Revolution. In the interim between the Graduate Center and the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies around 1980, internal factors played a larger role, with the center needing new leadership. In more recent years, the center also shifted from a primarily research and graduate study focused institution to one that combined these goals with community and university outreach and partnership. Much of this shift came with the attainment of NRC status, fundamentally changing the mission of the center. This Department of Education funding reshaped the center by pushing it to balance research with outreach to meet the goals of the grant.

Throughout this period, the context in which the center existed shifted immensely, both nationally and with a diversifying Vanderbilt student population and significant Latin American immigration to Nashville, Tennessee. Starting in the early 1990s, Vanderbilt's campus began to shift significantly with an increased Latinx and international student population. In the late 1990s, Nashville shifted as well as Latinos from other areas of the country, and later immigrants from Latin America, moved to the city. This context in turn expanded the center's goals. The creation of the Latino and Latina studies program in 2013 and the center's newest form as CLACX speak to the increased presence of Latino populations in the U.S. and on Vanderbilt's campus, with students desiring representation in academic courses of study and faculty increasingly considering how diaspora impacts the understanding of Latin America and vice versa.

If anything, this history shows the importance of concentrations of interest in shaping an institution, as the strengths of the center varied with changing groups of faculty focused on different disciplines—economics, anthropology, political science—and areas—Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru. The goals and strengths of the center were defined less by its changing names or stated goals, and more by the interests of the faculty contributing to its project. Brazil, in large part due to its central importance in the first incarnation of the center and the continued strength of faculty interest in the country, played a major role in all iterations of the center. Disciplinary interests changed greatly over time—in the 1960s and 1970s, due to partnerships with USAID, the economics department grew in faculty interested in Latin America, becoming a major focus of the center. Starting in the 1980s and 1990s and continuing into the present, Vanderbilt's expanding anthropology department focused almost exclusively on Latin America. And especially with the arrival of the Latin American Public Opinion Project in the early 2000s, another group of Latin America focused faculty concentrated in the political science department. Under the new CLACX project, these faculty concentrations will likely continue to change and exert influence as the center works to attract more faculty interested in the Caribbean and the intersection of Latin American studies with Latinx studies.

This history also considers the center today, in a significant period of transition. The aspirations for the new version of the center are clear, but exactly how they will manifest and how CLACX's project will continue remain to be seen. As in the past, the center's plans and ambitious project will likely continue to be influenced by the concentrations of interest among its faculty, the university's larger goals, and the effect of the larger political context on trends in higher education and area studies funding. Below is an overview of each of the major stages in the center's history. The longer history of the center that follows is divided into these same periods.

SUMMARY

The Institute for Brazilian Studies

The center began as an Institute for Brazilian Studies. Chancellor Harvie Branscomb arrived at Vanderbilt in the late 1940s with interest in increasing Vanderbilt's international presence, specifically in the direction of Brazil. The Carnegie Corporation supported the creation of an Institute for Brazilian Studies at Vanderbilt as part of a consortium of four southern universities, each covering a different area of Latin America. The five-year Carnegie grant was consistent with support for area studies by many philanthropic institutions following WWII. Although its official activities began earlier, the institute was formally inaugurated in April 1949 and visited by Brazilian President Eurico Dutra a month later. While the undergraduate curriculum of the institute focused on Latin America as a whole, graduate study concentrated on Brazil. This presented problems for enrollments at the institute due to a lack of students interested in Brazil who had knowledge of Portuguese. Additionally, the institute did not have funds to support graduate study and many departments at Vanderbilt preferred to use their funds to support students in more established areas, rather than those working on Latin America. Under the institute, some production of research on Latin America began, but most energy and funds were used to establish a program of study as Vanderbilt had little prior focus on Latin American studies. The institute's faculty pressed Vanderbilt to cover more basic items so Carnegie funds could be used to support research and publication. Ultimately, Vanderbilt suspended the institute in 1952, only one year after the end of the initial Carnegie grant. The institute lacked the funding, graduate students, and steady leadership needed to continue, and also suffered from the country-wide trend of waning support for area studies and research on Latin America.

In Between the Centers

The center was not reinstated until ten years later, in 1962. However, Vanderbilt continued to build its connections to Brazil. The economics department established a summer institute for economics training for students from developing countries in 1954 with support from the Foreign Operations Administration, a predecessor of the United States Agency for International Development. This summer institute grew into the Graduate Program in

Economic Development (GPED) in 1956, an 11-month program for an MA degree. One third of the students in the program were from Latin America, growing Vanderbilt's connections to the region. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) also passed in 1958 as part of an accelerating educational race between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. and increasing interest in studying other languages and regions of the world with globalization and fears of the spread of communism. Vanderbilt received fellowships to support graduate study in Latin American studies under Title IV of the NDEA in 1958 and would go on to benefit from Title VI in later years, receiving what would later be called Foreign Language Area Studies fellowships starting in the 1960s and National Resource Center status in the 2000s.

The Graduate Center for Latin American Studies

With renewed national interest in area studies in the early 1960s came the impetus to restart the center. Branscomb continued to hope the center could increase Vanderbilt's international presence and focus on Brazil. However, due to difficulties in attracting graduate students under the institute, Branscomb decided to have the center expand to cover the whole of Latin America, consistent with national trends. In 1962, The Carnegie Corporation and Danforth Foundation provided five-year grants to establish the Graduate Center in Latin American Studies. The graduate center primarily focused on research and support for graduate study. The center initially offered a PhD in Latin American studies with five participating departments, then expanded to offer a MA in 1963. Brazil and economics remained the main strengths of the center, reflecting Vanderbilt's prior work in Latin America, but the center saw a growing focus on Colombia and Chile, eventually also expanding to Peru, Cuba, and the Caribbean. Both of the directors of the graduate center, first Eric Baklanoff then William Nicholls, were economists, further focusing the center's work on the discipline. The center received significant Ford Foundation support starting in 1967 and National Defense Foreign Language fellowships, the precursor to Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships that the center still receives today, starting in 1968.

With the concentration of economics faculty studying Latin America and the Graduate center's increasing economics disciplinary focus, it was well positioned to direct a graduate economics development program for Brazil. In the early 1960s, several Vanderbilt economists visited Brazil to consult with the University of São Paulo on the development of graduate education in economics. Following this collaboration, USAID offered the Vanderbilt Department of Economics a contract to develop graduate economics education in Brazil, with

the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies overseeing and administering this partnership. Vanderbilt sent economics faculty to help develop graduate programs in economics at the University of São Paulo and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation starting in 1966, and eventually at other institutions. This program lasted until 1973 when USAID deemed the graduate programs were strong enough to be funded on their own.

The center underwent significant growth during this period. Enrollments and participating faculty grew. As philanthropic foundation interest in area studies dried up in the early 1970s, Vanderbilt provided a significant internal investment into the center. Although the center would not become a NDEA National Resource Center until the 2000s, it applied for area center status twice in the 1970s and was highly ranked among the competing institutions. In 1973, the center added an undergraduate concentration to its existing MA program and dropped the graduate designation in its name. The center retained a strong Portuguese program and began to offer indigenous language teaching at Vanderbilt with Nahuatl courses. At the end of this period in the late 1970s, the center began to decline as it looked for new leadership.

The Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies

The center reemerged in a new form in 1982 as the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies (CLAIS). Institutionally, CLAIS was very bare bones, initially only supporting a director and an administrative assistant. Its activities remained focused on graduate students, but with many undergraduate majors in Latin American studies. Brazil remained the main strength of CLAIS, with a growing focus on Colombia. In the 1980s, anthropology became a significant strength in Latin American studies at Vanderbilt with the creation of a stand-alone department and hiring almost exclusively of faculty interested in Latin America, especially in Guatemalan archaeology. Brazilian studies remained strong into the 1990s, but the Portuguese program dwindled to a single person and lost FLAS funding for one cycle in 1997. Vanderbilt reinvested in Portuguese, strengthening the program into the 2000s. Political science became another strength of center faculty as the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) arrived at Vanderbilt in the early 2000s and faculty interested in Latin America subsequently concentrated in the political science department.

CLAIS began partnerships with other schools at Vanderbilt and community outreach, and several projects connected to the center but not housed under it further developed ties to Latin America. In the mid-1990s, CLAIS established a joint MA/MBA with the Owen School

of Management and created joint programs with the Law School and GPED in the early 2000s. The center began supplying faculty for guest lectures at Nashville public schools under the beginning of the K-12 outreach program in the early 2000s. LAPOP, FIPSE-CAPES grants for consortia with Brazilian universities, the Slave Societies Digital Archive, the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, and the Brazilian Studies Association, all housed at Vanderbilt and at times working in connection with CLAIS, further built Vanderbilt's Latin American connections.

In this period, the center revamped the undergraduate major and gained more undergraduate student enrollments, and Vanderbilt's demographics changed significantly to become more diverse. Undergraduate enrollments in Latin American studies bounced back in the early 1980s with the reemergence of the center, and CLAIS introduced the Latin American research methods class, LAS 290, around this time. At the beginning of the 1990s, the center began the Introduction to Latin American Studies course. The early 1990s saw a major demographic shift at Vanderbilt, with more Latino and international students arriving on campus. Reflecting this shift, students founded the Vanderbilt Association for Hispanic Students in 1990, which by 1998 was the second largest multicultural organization on campus. The McTyeire international dorm provided a center for Latino students and Spanish speakers to meet and organize. Nashville more broadly began to experience a demographic shift in the late 1990s with the rise in the city's Latino population. By the early 2000s, the center began recognizing these demographic changes and how they could impact its work.

The Center as a National Resource Center

In 2006, the center became a National Resource Center (NRC) for the first time, and in 2008 shortened its name to the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS). At first an undergraduate NRC, CLAS later attained comprehensive NRC status in 2010. The center has maintained this status to the present. From when it first received NRC funding through its combination with the Latino and Latina studies program in the early 2020s, CLAS significantly expanded its community and university outreach activities, in large part due to the goals of NRC grants. The Department of Education (DOE) pushed for NRCs to conduct community outreach, leading to a major expansion of the center's K-12 outreach program and relationships with community cultural organizations; provide indigenous language education, which the center did through summer programs and an expanding academic year K'iche' Mayan program; partner with other NRCs, which CLAS most significantly accomplished

through the Mayan Language Institute and Summer in Brazil Program; and work with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Minority Serving Institutions, reflected in language offerings by CLAS at partner universities and collaborations on educator professional development workshops. Another major initiative not pushed for by the DOE, but instead by Vanderbilt's administration, was trans-institutional partnerships. The center had already built up many such partnerships prior to the university-wide push that began in the early 2010s, but CLAS continued to lean into joint degree programs and research efforts with other schools and departments at Vanderbilt, incorporating projects in education, medicine, law, and business. Overall, the center became significantly larger in this period, with millions of dollars in NRC funding supporting a larger staff and expansive outreach and collaboration efforts.

Brazil remained the strongest regional focus of the center, with CLAS beginning to offer a Brazilian studies minor in the early 2010s. However, the center's interests and strengths grew significantly. By the mid-2010s, Central America and Mesoamerican studies, the Andes, and Afro-Latin populations had become significant regional foci, and the anthropology department continued its historic strength on Latin America. Guatemala was the center of many of CLAS's collaborations with other Vanderbilt schools and research projects, especially through the One Vanderbilt in Guatemala project started in the early 2010s. In this period, the center played a greater role in graduate student life, supplying major sources of graduate summer research support through the Tinker and Simon Collier research grants and providing an inter-disciplinary space for graduate students to connect.

The Latino and Latina Studies Program

The Latino and Latina studies program, created in 2013, resulted from longstanding interest in and efforts to create an official Latino studies curriculum at Vanderbilt. By the time the program was created, following some administrative resistance, Vanderbilt was behind its peer institutions. In the early 2010s it became increasingly obvious that Vanderbilt needed such a program to remain competitive in research in the field and to support the diversifying student body and its interests. The program balanced academic objectives and support for Latino students on campus, hosting an undergraduate major and minor but also student events like a Latinx graduation ceremony and Bienvenida to welcome Latino students onto campus. The program created a Graduate Certificate in Latino and Latina Studies, supporting increasing graduate interest in the field as well.

The Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies

The Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies (CLACX), created in 2021, is the current designation of the center. Although CLACX resulted from a consolidation of the Center for Latin American Studies and the Latino and Latina studies program pushed for by the Vanderbilt administration, the center's new leadership have used this shift to explore the intersections of Latin American and Latinx studies and how they can connect as a single field of study. There is little precedent for this combination: Latin American studies and Latinx studies have been historically and politically separated fields. However, CLACX is now at the forefront of a shift to consider the two in tandem, especially in a contemporary context of a historically high Latin American diaspora. In its academic program, CLACX is exploring the intersection of the fields through the soon-to-be-introduced combined major LACX: Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean studies. The new undergraduate major is at the heart of CLACX's exploration of the intersection of Latinx and Latin American studies disciplines. At the larger level of academia, CLACX partnered with five other institutions to form the CLACX Consortium for Latin American Studies in the South (CCLASS) in 2022, a group of southeastern universities considering how Latin American studies curriculum can recognize and engage with Latin American diaspora, especially in the South.

CLACX continues to hold NRC status and has carried over many of the projects that defined it during the previous NRC period. In part due to university-wide cuts to graduate programs, CLACX increasingly focuses on undergraduate students and courses. Additionally, with its combination with the Latino and Latina studies program, which has worked to engage with Latino undergraduate students, the center has taken on more of this role of support to Latino students and student organizations. However, its faculty recognize that, ultimately, the center is an academic institution and cannot take on the role of a cultural center, and many hope that such a center will someday be created to provide that student support.

The Latin American Library Collection

A final piece connected to the center is the Latin American library collection. At the creation of the Institute for Brazilian Studies, this collection included 18th and 19th century travel accounts and Spanish American literature, but little else. Under the institute, the library created partnerships with several Brazilian institutions and ministries for exchange of

materials and began to build up a Brazilian collection. The collection continued to grow in a haphazard manner into the 1970s, focusing primarily on Brazil and Colombia, until the hiring of Paula Covington as the Latin American bibliographer in 1976. Covington directed the Latin American collection until 2024. Although there was never significant funding for the collection, it grew through book buying trips, contacts established with booksellers, the network of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials, and special collections acquisitions. The expansion of the collection into new areas often came with new faculty concentrations and interests. In the 2000s and 2010s, the library acquired three major Colombiana special collections: the J. León Helguera collection, Manuel Zapata Olivella collection, and Delia Zapata Olivella collection. A recent project of the library has been the organization and digitization of these Colombian collections and increasing accessibility to researchers. With the aid of NRC funding, the center has helped to support the library with book purchase trips, acquisition funds, increased open access to collections, and a travel to collections program to support visiting researchers.

IN-DEPTH HISTORY

THE INSTITUTE FOR BRAZILIAN STUDIES

Beginnings of the Institute

Before 1946, Vanderbilt had little interest in Brazil. Prior to the founding of the Institute for Brazilian Studies, Vanderbilt had some investments in Spanish literature and the study of Latin America, but little of it focused on Brazil. The university housed a Spanish department that offered one introductory Portuguese course and a Latin American library collection almost exclusively composed of Spanish American literature.[1] The library collection had received several Latin American collections in the early 20th century, including 18th and 19th century travel accounts.[2] The impetus for the creation of the Brazil institute did not come from within the institution, but rather with the arrival of a new chancellor interested in the creation of a Brazilian studies program.

Harvie Branscomb took over Vanderbilt's chancellorship from O.C. Carmichael in 1946,[3] bringing with him a new interest in Brazil that would fundamentally change Vanderbilt's international presence. Branscomb's vision for the institute arose from a belief in the need for international education following WWII, a desire to increase Vanderbilt's international presence, and a specific interest in Brazil.[4] Before arriving at Vanderbilt, Branscomb travelled to Brazil with the American Library Association in 1945 as part of a project to catalog damaged books in the National Library.[5] Branscomb returned with a belief that U.S. universities should invest more heavily in Brazilian studies, especially due to the already large and growing role Brazil played in Latin America.[6] Branscomb tried to create a special program for Brazilian studies at Duke University, where he taught at the time, but his idea was shot down.[7] As chancellor of Vanderbilt, Branscomb had a new opportunity to promote Brazilian studies in the U.S.

A five-year grant from the Carnegie Corporation supported the establishment of the institute and brought Vanderbilt together with three other institutions for a consortium of Latin American studies. Branscomb reached out to the Carnegie Corporation for a grant to establish an Institute of South American Studies with special attention to Brazil developed jointly by Vanderbilt, Peabody, and Scarritt in 1946, using his connections to Carmichael, the former Vanderbilt chancellor who had gone on to be President of the Carnegie Foundation for

the Advancement of Teaching.[8] In line with many other philanthropic institutions after WWII,[9] the Carnegie Corporation was interested in developing area studies programs. The Corporation saw Vanderbilt and other southern institutions as especially suited for research on Latin America due to geographic proximity to the region. After initial discussions, the Carnegie Corporation suggested opening Vanderbilt's proposal to include several other institutions, and specifically inviting the University of North Carolina, Tulane University, and the University of Texas to apply with Vanderbilt in a joint proposal.[10] The Carnegie Corporation believed that no one institution could cover all of Latin America, and that it was therefore better to split study of the region among several universities. With the new proposal complete, the Carnegie Corporation granted each institution $56,000 to be paid out over five years, the first sum for the 1946–47 academic year.[11]

Brought together by the Carnegie Corporation, the four institutions divided their research centers between different regional areas and built a network of support and academic exchange that lasted through the duration of the grant. The University of North Carolina focused on Spanish-speaking South America, Tulane on Mesoamerica, the University of Texas on Mexico, and Vanderbilt on Brazil.[12] Although Branscomb's interest in Brazil decided Vanderbilt's regional focus, the other institutions chose regions that aligned with their existing research interests. All three of the other institutions had more experience with Latin American studies than Vanderbilt, one of the reasons Vanderbilt's institute would struggle to achieve as much as the other universities funded by the grant.[13] The University of North Carolina created a Latin American studies program in 1943 after decades of undergraduate and graduate offerings on Latin America, Tulane established its Middle American Research Institute in 1924 and created a larger Middle America program in 1938, and The University of Texas organized its Institute of Latin American Studies before the grant proposal, with most students concentrating on Mexico.[14] In contrast, Vanderbilt began its program from scratch at the beginning of the Carnegie grant.

Institute Faculty

Branscomb hired four key members as the initial staff of the Institute for Brazilian Studies, with much of this hiring taking place along an old boys' network of prior connections. T. Lynn Smith, formerly a professor of sociology at Louisiana State University, arrived at Vanderbilt in the fall of 1947 as the director of the nascent institute and head of the sociology and anthropology department.[15] Earl Thomas joined the institute in the 1947 fall

semester, as an Assistant Professor of Romance Languages, and Alexander Marchant in January 1948 as an Associate Professor of History.[16] The final primary professor at the institute, Reynold Carlson, joined Vanderbilt in 1949 as an Associate Professor of Economics.[17] The last key member of the original staff, the bilingual secretary of the institute, was Gilka Pimentel, born in Natal, Brazil.[18]

All four of the institute's professors had spent significant amounts of time working or conducting research in Brazil prior to coming to Vanderbilt. From 1942 to 1943, then again in 1945, Smith worked as a Senior Agricultural Analyst at the U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, then taught as a visiting professor at the University of Brazil in 1946.[19] Thomas spent two years in Brazil in 1941 and 1942 studying dialects in Minas Gerais.[20] Marchant was born in Rio de Janeiro and worked at the U.S. Embassy from 1945 to 1947 as a Publications Officer prior to joining the institute.[21] And Carlson served in Brazil with the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1945 before going on to work in the position of Economic Consultant on Latin America for the United Nations Economic and Social Council from 1946 to 1949.[22]

The Institute's Inauguration and President Dutra's Visit

Although its first activities began earlier, the institute held its official inauguration on April 14 and 15, 1949.[23] Brazilian ambassador Mauricio Nabuco gave the address at the inaugural dinner and the Brazilian press quickly recognized and praised the institute following this inauguration.[24] Cruz Costa, a professor at the University of São Paulo, visited Vanderbilt during a larger trip to the U.S. and wrote about his experiences with the institute. He described it as the best possible international representation of Brazil and argued that the Brazilian government should provide support for the center and others like it.[25] The Department of Culture and Social Action at the University of São Paulo also described the institute in a bulletin in which the department celebrated the institute for familiarizing students in the U.S. with Latin America and Brazil.[26] Branscomb later described the reception of the institute as a new level of international recognition that Vanderbilt had never before received.[27]

The reception of the institute continued to be overwhelmingly positive and bolstered Vanderbilt's international presence with the visit of the President of Brazil, Eurico Gaspar Dutra. In May 1949, President Dutra was the first in-office Brazilian president to visit the U.S. After visiting Washington, D.C. to discuss economic cooperation and address Congress, Dutra visited New York City, Chattanooga, and Nashville.[28] Dutra originally planned to visit

Tennessee to see the Tennessee Valley Authority, and due to the recent inauguration of the Institute for Brazilian Studies, added Vanderbilt to his itinerary.

On May 26, 1949, the institute received President Dutra. Branscomb allowed all interested citizens to come to campus to watch Dutra's visit. Before the visit, the Ambassador of Brazil asked that Vanderbilt present Dutra with an honorary degree, but since Vanderbilt had a policy of not giving such degrees, Branscomb suggested to the ambassador that Dutra be made an honorary professor of the institute. The institute's professors in turn rejected this proposal as Dutra was not a scholar, but proposed he be given the honorary chairmanship of the institute instead.[29] On the day of the reception, Vice Chancellor Madison Sarratt and Dean Philip Davidson welcomed Dutra at Kirkland Hall, where Branscomb presented the president with the honorary chairmanship and Dutra placed a wreath on the monument to Cornelius Vanderbilt.[30] Vanderbilt gave Dutra a silver tray to commemorate this honorary position.[31]

The reception then moved to Wesley Hall, the home of the Institute for Brazilian Studies.[32] At the steps of the building, seven-year-old Lucille Smith gave the president a bouquet of red roses and said "Welcome Mr. President, long live Brazil" in Portuguese.[33] Marchant prepared Brazilian *cafezinhos* and Thomas spoke briefly in Portuguese before the group left for a lunch reception at the Belle Meade Country Club.[34] Dutra spoke highly of Vanderbilt's institute during the visit, stating: "The friendship between our two countries can only gain by the light that is shed by such institutions as this on the problems confronting Brazil on the way to realization of her historic destinies."[35] At the luncheon, Brazilian Senator Jose Ferreira de Souza and U.S. Ambassador Herschel Johnson addressed Vanderbilt faculty, Nashville political and judicial leaders, and Dutra's entourage on hopes for continued U.S.-Brazil friendship and cooperation.[36]

The warm reception of President Dutra went beyond the university gates. Nashville residents turned out en masse to welcome Dutra as he drove from the airport, and Brazilian and American flags lined the streets of Nashville's business district.[37] For three days, the *Nashville Tennessean* published news articles in Portuguese. These included special articles cabled in from the *Correio da Manhã* in Rio de Janeiro on national news in Brazil and local news reports on Dutra's visit written by Anita Sarmento Thomas, wife of institute professor Earl Thomas and a native of Rio.[38] Copies of these special *Nashville Tennessean* issues were flown to Rio de Janeiro.[39]

Following this visit, both the U.S. government and Brazilian government recognized the institute for its reception of President Dutra. The U.S. Secretary of State gave the institute a silver replica of the gold medal President Truman presented to Dutra during the reception in

Washington.[40] Dutra, in turn, awarded the Order of the Southern Cross to several people involved in his reception in Tennessee, among them Vanderbilt's Chancellor Branscomb.[41] One notable gift to President Dutra was a Tennessee walking horse, which was later flown to Brazil on a Navy transport plane.[42]

Institute Curriculum and Activities

The first activity of Vanderbilt's institute was a summer session held from June 11 to July 17, 1948, before the official inauguration of the institute a year later.[43] The Carnegie Corporation grant provided money for all four of the partnered institutions to hold summer sessions, with the universities often exchanging faculty members to support one another's summer programs. Vanderbilt's summer session was the first of these and hosted 31 students enrolled exclusively in institute courses while offering a total of 14 courses taught by eight professors.[44]

At the graduate level, the majority of the institute's activities and curriculum originally focused on Brazil and required knowledge of Portuguese. Undergraduate curriculum at the institute instead focused on Latin America as a whole.[45] Graduate students were required to have two years of Portuguese or one year of Portuguese with knowledge of Spanish either before their enrollment or completed during the program.[46] The original curriculum of the institute covered language and literature, history, economics, government, demography, and social institutions. The institute's faculty hoped to expand this curriculum to add anthropology, geography, and political science in future years.[47]

Several organizations and events that increased student and community engagement with Latin America were created under the institute. The Brazilian Club of Nashville, advised by Thomas, was founded in 1950 and hosted lectures and conferred honorary titles.[48] The institute also hosted a lecture series.[49] From October 18–21, 1950, Vanderbilt co-hosted the International Colloquium of Luso-Brazilian Studies with the Library of Congress, celebrating both the 150th anniversary of the library and the 75th anniversary of Vanderbilt.[50] Branscomb was one of the key speakers at the inaugural session of the colloquium, and Marchant organized the history portion.[51]

Although the institute did not publish a large body of work, in part due to the majority of its funding going to basic operational budget items like salaries rather than research, it oversaw the publication of some texts in its final years. Smith and Marchant published *Brazil: Portrait of Half a Continent* in 1951 and the institute published a collection *Four*

Papers the same year. The members of the institute produced several other works during its lifespan that were published after the suspension of the institute: these included *Buzios Island (São Paulo, Brazil): An Anthropological Study* by Willems, *The Economy of Latin America* by Carlson, *United States and Brazil* by Marchant, *Latin American Institutions* by Willems and Leonard, and *Brazil: Three Papers* by the institute.[52]

The Decline and Suspension of the Institute

Vanderbilt's Institute for Brazilian Studies was suspended in 1952, lasting only one year after the initial five-year duration of the Carnegie grant. When Branscomb founded the institute, he and its faculty members believed it would be a long-term endeavor. The institute's members hoped that at the end of the Carnegie grant's term the university would further step in to support the institute.[53] However, three problems combined to cause a temporary suspension of the institute after six years: a lack of university funding to replace the Carnegie Corporation's support, a lack of graduate students to build up the program, and a lack of steady leadership.

Funding was a fundamental concern throughout the entire life of the institute. Members of the institute constantly looked for other sources of funding that could replace the Carnegie Corporation grant after its five-year duration.[54] Chancellor Branscomb reflected this concern, recognizing in 1950 that the institute was still not "firmly established" and did not have adequate funds to support its work.[55]

Members of the institute expressed frustration that Vanderbilt did not provide more direct university support to supplement the Carnegie grant, especially in comparison to its other partner universities. Much of this frustration came from the fact that the institute had to use a large part of the Carnegie Corporation grant for budget items they believed the university should pay. In 1950, Marchant wrote that the Carnegie Corporation funds went entirely to basic items—faculty salaries, secretary Pimental's salary, the library collection—rather than research.[56] Although the university's contribution to the institute had increased slightly by this point, Marchant did not believe it was enough for the institute to expand. In contrast, at all of the other institutes supported by the Carnegie grant a greater proportion of grant funds each year went to research while their host institutions covered more of their basic expenses.[57] In correspondence with the dean, the institute's members pointed to these other centers and the support they received for staff salaries, and asked Vanderbilt to do the same to allow more grant funds to go to research and publication activities.[58] This lack of

university support, combined with the fact that Vanderbilt's institute was built from the ground up rather than on top of an existing program, limited the reach of the Carnegie Corporation funds in developing the institute's activities.

The center hoped that the Carnegie Corporation would renew the grant. In 1950, the Corporation approved funding for an institute research project in Brazil, and based on this success the institute hoped the Corporation would continue to support its work and renew the grant.[59] Originally, the four partnered universities planned to apply jointly for a renewal.[60] However, Carmichael informed Vanderbilt that the Corporation would not be interested in a joint application, thus Vanderbilt applied on its own for a five year grant of $50,000 each year.[61] In its grant application, the institute emphasized the study of Latin America as part of a larger U.S. political mission to promote democracy and combat communism.[62] However, the Carnegie Corporation decided not to renew Vanderbilt's grant, as part of a larger decision to reduce support for area studies programs.[63]

Despite fears that Vanderbilt would not continue to support the institute after the Carnegie funds ran out, the university did take over full financial support for the year following the end of the Carnegie Corporation grant.[64] However, the institute still suffered from not having sufficiently established itself during the grant years.

The second major problem for the institute came from low enrollment numbers and a failure to build up a significant program. When the Carnegie Corporation declined to renew the institute's grant, Chancellor Branscomb wrote to the Corporation and expressed concern that the institute had not received grant renewal because of its focus on Brazilian studies, and that perhaps this specialization was a mistake.[65] The focus on Brazil presented a problem for the institute's enrollment of graduate students, and faculty of the institute tried to emphasize that graduate study could cover other areas of Latin America.[66] The institute generally had difficulties recruiting enough graduate students, especially those with a focus on Brazil.[67] Additionally, many students considering Vanderbilt's program required either fellowships or another form of subsidy to be able to attend the graduate program, which the institute did not have.[68] Departments at Vanderbilt preferred to limit their graduate student funds to more established fields, rather than supporting work in Latin America.[69] Marchant described continuing problems with graduate work at the institute in 1950, stating that the institute lacked the faculty, courses, and fellowships to provide a rigorous PhD program, exacerbated by Vanderbilt generally lacking advanced graduate work.[70] Indeed, the institute was founded around the same time that Vanderbilt began investing more largely in graduate education, thus Vanderbilt as an institution was only beginning to be known for its graduate studies.[71]

The final problem facing the institute was a lack of steady leadership. Three months after the official inauguration of the institute, on July 15, 1949, T. Lynn Smith resigned his position as director to take a new position at the University of Florida, Gainesville.[72] This resignation may have come from Smith's differences with Branscomb and being overlooked during President Dutra's visit less than two months before. When Smith resigned, he informed Branscomb that it was in part due to not wanting to take on the administrative duties of the institute's director. In correspondence with Lewis Hanke, the director of the Library of Congress, Branscomb said he would have worked something out to allow Smith to stay without working on administration, but that Smith "had shown here that he was neither very successful nor very happy with administrative responsibilities."[73] In addition to tensions between Branscomb and Smith, Smith was overlooked during President Dutra's reception. During the evening banquet, despite being director of the institute, Smith was not seated at the speaker's table with Dutra and, unlike Chancellor Branscomb, Dutra did not present Smith with the Order of the Southern Cross after his visit. In Marchant's correspondence, the Southern Cross is described as a sore issue for Smith, Marchant writing that "I shall be indiscreet for your ear only and say that his comments on the Cruzeiro do sul, as expressed to me by letter, have been a wee bit acid."[74] The Brazilian press even considered Smith to have been overlooked, with a letter in the *Correio da Manhã* describing Smith as the "Forgotten Man of Tennessee," passed over during Dutra's honors.[75]

After Smith's sudden resignation, Branscomb asked the three other faculty members to form a committee to direct the institute, chaired by Marchant, until a new director could be found.[76] Marchant was not particularly happy chairing this committee, expressing distaste for the amount of time he now had to spend on administration.[77] This interim committee ran the institute for its first year after its 1949 inauguration, until Branscomb appointed Carlson as the institute's director, beginning June 1, 1950.[78]

However, Carlson was soon called away from the institute. While he was still director, the Department of State asked Carlson to work with the Joint Brazil-U.S. Economic Development Commission from April to September of 1952.[79] This appointment then extended into the fall, and Carlson remained in Brazil until the end of December.[80] With Carlson absent and Dr. Emílio Willems also on sabbatical for the 1952–53 academic year, Vanderbilt temporarily suspended the institute in 1952. After Carlson resigned from Vanderbilt in March 1953 to work as a senior economist with the Western Hemisphere Division of the International Bank,[81] Vanderbilt chose not to reinstate the institute after this temporary suspension.[82] Carlson described the unfortunate position of the institute as part of

the reason for his resignation, stating that there was a general "drying up of interest" in Latin America and a reduction of the resources of the institute itself.[83]

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES BETWEEN THE CENTERS

The Institute for Brazilian Studies would be reinstated as the Graduate Center for South American Studies in 1962, ten years after its temporary suspension. However, during this interim period, Latin American studies at Vanderbilt continued to grow, and Vanderbilt established one of several economics projects further connecting the institution to Latin America, and specifically, to Brazil. Throughout this interim period, the beginnings of Latin American studies and connections established with Brazil under the institute were important to building new programs with the region. Economics began to emerge as the major disciplinary force in Vanderbilt's Latin American studies, with Vanderbilt economists in Brazil later taking on a role akin to the Chicago Department of Economics in the Southern Cone.

The Graduate Program in Economic Development

In 1954, with support from USAID's predecessor, the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), Vanderbilt established a summer institute to teach economics to students from developing countries.[84] These special summer training programs were not limited to students from Latin America but rather brought around 200 FOA participants from around the world.[85] The program was a resounding success. Two years later, the FOA signed a new contract with Vanderbilt's economics department for an 11-month program leading to an MA degree, officially establishing the Graduate Program in Economic Development (GPED) in the fall of 1956.[86] William Nicholls, a professor in the economics department who would go on to head the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies a decade later, directed the program.[87] The program trained 30–35 students a year on economics and public administration relevant to the needs of their countries.[88] As one third of these students came from Latin America, the GPED generated a growing alumni network of Latin American economists who would go on to play important roles in the higher education institutions and governments of their countries. By the 1970s, around 100 Latin American alumni of the program held relatively high governmental positions, expanding the contact network of the then-reestablished Center for Latin American Studies.[89]

Initially, all financial support for the program came from the FOA. The FOA gave the program a seven-year grant of $300,000 from 1956 to 1963. Other agencies and philanthropic foundations, including the Institute for International Education (IIE), Organization of American States (OAS), UNESCO, the Ford Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation provided additional funding to the program.[90] The Ford Foundation's 1958 grant to the GPED of $250,000 supported fellowships for economists to come to Vanderbilt's program from countries where the FOA was not supporting economics training and from non-governmental fields like academia that were not supported by the FOA grant.[91] Six years later in 1964, the Foundation gave a second grant to the program of $300,000 to support another seven years of work.[92] The Rockefeller Foundation supported the program with an overseas professorship grant from 1958 to 1965, providing support for Vanderbilt professors to teach and conduct research in developing countries for 12–18 months. Of the professors supported by this Rockefeller grant, four taught in Latin America, including Nicholls.[93]

By 1973, the GPED had become a self-supporting program in the economics department.[94] The program remains a master's program of the department today and has taught nearly 2000 students from 137 countries.[95] The program became especially important to the training of Brazilian economists when Vanderbilt's economics department entered into another partnership with USAID in 1965 to build graduate economics education in Brazil. Former Institute for Brazilian Studies member Reynold Carlson, who left Vanderbilt at the end of the institute but later returned to the university, listed 30 Vanderbilt-trained Brazilian economists who were professors in economics across Brazil in 1975.[96] By that time, the Center for Latin American Studies had been reestablished, further cementing the relationship between Vanderbilt and Latin America.

Passage of the National Defense Education Act

Although the center was suspended, Latin American studies remained at Vanderbilt. One governmental act that would go on to shape Vanderbilt's center and Latin American studies program until the present was enacted during this interim: The National Defense Education Act (NDEA). In 1958, the NDEA passed in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik and an accelerating educational and space race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.[97] Study of lesser-taught languages and the politics, culture, and economic systems of developing nations became increasingly important as power shifted away from Europe and these nations gained greater international significance in the globalizing economy.[98] Title VI

of the act established language and area centers for the study of modern foreign languages and their cultural contexts and National Defense Foreign Language (NDFL) fellowships, the predecessor to Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships, supported students in the advanced study of modern foreign languages.[99]

Vanderbilt received fellowships to support Latin American studies under Title IV of the NDEA in 1958.[100] Title IV of the act allowed graduate programs to apply for fellowships to support graduate students planning to remain and teach in academia.[101] Vanderbilt received 28 Title IV fellowships, with five going to support three years of study in Latin American studies.[102] The university did not immediately participate in Title VI of the NDEA, although the soon-to-be reestablished center would go on to receive NDFL fellowships beginning in the 1960s and eventually become a National Resource Center in the 2000s.

THE GRADUATE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Reestablishing the Center

Although Vanderbilt indefinitely suspended the Institute for Brazilian Studies in 1953, interest in Latin America and Brazil remained. Through the GPED and NDEA Title IV fellowships, Vanderbilt continued to support graduate students from and interested in Latin America throughout the 1950s. However, by the end of the decade, Chancellor Branscomb, Dean Leonard Beach, and former members of the center like Alexander Marchant began to discuss the reestablishment of the institute.[103] The NDEA helped spur these talks as Branscomb considered the possibility of government funding with renewed interest in area studies.[104]

Branscomb's hopes for a new center reflected those from when the Institute for Brazilian Studies was initially founded: continuing to increase Vanderbilt's international presence and provide a special focus on Brazil. In communications with the Rockefeller Foundation, Branscomb wrote that: "We have decided here at Vanderbilt that our major overseas contribution should be made in the direction of Latin America."[105] However, Branscomb recognized that several of the growth problems of the original institute arose from its focus on Brazil, specifically difficulties in recruiting graduate students due to the center's narrow focus and Portuguese requirements. Thus, Branscomb concluded that a new center should consider Latin America as a whole, but with a special interest in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.[106]

In the early 1960s, Branscomb began reaching out to philanthropic organizations for funding for the proposed center and contacting potential directors. Vanderbilt approached the Danforth, Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations for support for the center, proposing a three-pronged program of doctoral area and language studies, an overseas school for undergraduates, and support for visiting scholars from Latin America.[107] Four of the original members the institute—Alexander Marchant, Earl Thomas, Reynold Carlson, and Emílio Willems—were joined by Avery Leiserson to develop a Latin American studies program in February 1961.[108] As talks of a new center began, Vanderbilt planned a new interdepartmental PhD program in Latin American studies. The proposed program was an interdepartmental project directed by the chair of the history department, where PhD candidates could concentrate in history, languages, politics, economics, anthropology, or sociology.[109] Vanderbilt hired Eric Baklanoff, the director of Latin American studies at Louisiana State University, as the center's director and an Associate Professor of Economics. He came to Vanderbilt in February 1962.[110] By the time Branscomb left the Chancellorship in 1963, the program was set up and Chancellor Alexander Heard affirmed continued interest in the program.[111]

The Carnegie Corporation and Danforth Foundation provided five-year grants to establish the Graduate Center for South American Studies in 1962. This name was quickly changed to the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies by 1963.[112] The center received a $150,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation, split into $30,000 a year from 1962 to the 1966–67 academic year.[113] Although the Carnegie grant was more general, the Danforth Foundation grant's restrictions allowed the center to build a strong faculty base. The Danforth Foundation five-year grant of $180,000 was limited to paying the initial salaries of new faculty members specializing in Latin America, and Vanderbilt agreed to continue these positions and absorb the faculty salaries after the grant ended.[114] Through this grant, the center established six faculty positions in history, Portuguese, political science, geography, sociology, and anthropology.[115] The center did not have an official position in economics despite the growing connections between the economics department and Latin America through the GPED, but Vanderbilt used NDEA funds to support Baklanoff's position in economics and as director of the center.[116] Vanderbilt continued to receive Title IV NDEA fellowships for graduate students, which helped support the center's reestablishment—by 1963, eight of the students studying at the graduate center had NDEA support, six in history and two in economics.[117]

Graduate Studies in the First Years of the Center

The initial activities of the graduate center revolved around the offerings of its graduate programs. At its start, the graduate center offered a PhD degree in Latin American studies with five participating departments—history, economics and business administration, sociology and anthropology, Spanish and Portuguese, and political science.[118] The initial strengths of the center were its regional focus on Brazil and disciplinary focus on economics, but its regional coverage of Latin America was greater than that of the former Brazilian institute, with a special focus on Chile and Colombia.[119] Graduate coursework included required study of both Spanish and Portuguese and an interdisciplinary capstone seminar, and the center provided additional opportunities for fieldwork in Latin America and a Latin American lecture series.[120] One year after the center's reestablishment, in September 1963, it began offering a master's degree in Latin American studies in addition to the PhD program.[121] As of that year, 17 students studied in connection with the Graduate Center—seven in economics, eight in history, one in sociology, and one major in comparative education at Peabody who also minored in Latin American studies. In the 1962–63 academic year, four students conducted research in Brazil, Venezuela, and Chile.[122]

However, several internal political problems arose during the first four years of the center's existence under Baklanoff's directorship. A number of faculty members opposed the center's programs due to concerns within several departments over building an interdisciplinary program. The impact of this faculty opposition on the center grew due to a lack of strong university backing for its work. In 1964, Roland Chardon wrote to Dean Leonard Beach that: "A matter of grave concern to me has been the apparent lack of University backing, both morally and physically, for the graduate center. This has led to what probably has been the most serious problem facing this center during the past year – the effectiveness with which certain elements of the faculty has opposed its programs."[123] In the same letter, Chardon criticized the administration for blaming Baklanoff's political and economic views for faculty opposition to the center, stating that this opposition was an obviously more complex issue than the views of its director and that these views should not be the basis on which to evaluate Baklanoff's performance.[124] In 1965, Baklanoff resigned as director to return to LSU.[125]

William Nicholls, another economist, stepped in as director of the graduate center in 1965 and under his leadership the center would further focus on Brazil and economics.[126] Nicholls decided to focus his own research on Brazil after taking the position and to push for

a general Brazilian direction in the center's research.[127] Nicholls's description of his predecessor's leadership was disparaging, stating that the center under Baklanoff had been an "ineffective, isolated, and amorphous entity" and adding that the university "might have been warranted in letting it die as faculty vacancies occurred."[128] Nicholls would remain the director of the graduate center for over a decade, from 1965 to 1978.

From 1965 to 1970, the graduate center increased its faculty and graduate and undergraduate enrollments with the help of two major grants. In 1967, the Ford Foundation gave the center a $375,000 grant for five years (later extended to seven) to support faculty and graduate-student research in Latin America, visiting professorships by Latin American scholars, and the center's library collection.[129] With the support of the grant, five Latin American scholars visited the center from 1967–71, specializing in Brazilian politics, Portuguese literature, Colombian history, Latin American economics, and Latin American politics. These visiting scholars stayed for a semester, offering a semester long seminar and a public lecture.[130]

The other major grant received by the center was National Defense Foreign Language (NDFL) fellowships for the study of Portuguese, the precursor to Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships. The U.S. government established NDFL fellowships under Title VI of the NDEA. Although Vanderbilt had received NDEA Title IV fellowships to support graduate study starting in 1958, the center first received NDFL fellowships under Title VI in 1968.[131] NDFL fellowships supported advanced training in modern foreign languages and for cultural context of said languages.[132] Vanderbilt's share of NDFL fellowships quickly grew, from 17th place among recipient universities in the 1968–69 academic year to 8th in 1972–73.[133]

Due in part to these grants and in part to consistent leadership and increased interest, enrollments in the Furman Hall based graduate center grew.[134] The faculty of the center were not limited to the positions established by the Danforth Foundation and included many members in participating departments. In 1965, the center had a Latin American bibliographer and 15 faculty members, spread across the Spanish and Portuguese, geography, history, anthropology and sociology, political science, and economics departments.[135] From the 1965–66 academic year to the 1970–71 academic year, graduate enrollment in specialized Latin American courses grew from 72 to 135 students and undergraduate enrollments from 144 to 485.[136] By 1968, 18 graduate theses under the center were either complete or underway. The largest areas of graduate interest were in Brazil and Colombia (seven and six theses respectively), with another three theses related to Chile and one each on Uruguay and

Argentina.[137] This reflected the graduate center's continued strength in Brazil but expansion to other areas of Latin America.

Vanderbilt-USAID Contract for Developing Graduate Economics in Brazil

Economics was the main disciplinary strength of the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies during its first decade of existence. This strength came in part from a concentration of faculty studying Latin America in the economics department, the directors of the center (both Baklanoff and Nicholls) being economists, and the earlier establishment of the Graduate Program in Economic Development drawing Latin American students to Vanderbilt for graduate economics. In 1966, the graduate center further leaned into this strength in economics when it agreed to administer a partnership program between USAID and the Vanderbilt economics department to build graduate economics education in Brazil.

After leaving the Institute for Brazilian Studies and working as a senior economist with the International Bank, Reynold Carlson returned to Vanderbilt in 1958 but was then asked to work with the Ford Foundation in Brazil in 1959.[138] From 1961 to 1965, Carlson served as the head of the Ford Foundation office in Rio de Janeiro, where he laid the groundwork for a Ford Foundation grant to support professor exchanges with Vanderbilt.[139] In 1964, the Ford Foundation invited another Vanderbilt economist, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, to consult with economists at the University of São Paulo on developing the graduate economics program.[140] Georgescu-Roegen reported back to Vanderbilt that a collaboration with the University of São Paulo could provide more students for the GPED and more opportunities for graduate research in Brazil.[141] After the visit, the Ford Foundation gave the University of São Paulo a five year grant to establish the Institute for Economic Research. USAID contributed an additional two-year grant to the program.[142]

After USAID's initial grant to the University of São Paulo, it began a search for a U.S. university to "provide technical assistance to develop the first complete and comprehensive graduate program in economics in the university system in Brazil."[143] The agency's interest came from the fact that Brazilian higher education in economics did not surpass four-year undergraduate study, limiting economics teaching and research. This in turn limited the contributions of USAID programs that worked with Brazilian universities.[144] By February 1965, USAID narrowed its institutional search to Vanderbilt and Northwestern.[145] Vanderbilt emphasized its long-term interest in Latin America and Brazil with the Institute for Brazilian Studies and the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies, as well as its

experience with economics teaching through the Graduate Program in Economic Development.[146] By the fall of 1965, USAID had decided on a partnership with Vanderbilt.

Before officially signing the contract in February 1966, Vanderbilt and USAID engaged in a number of exploratory activities and discussions over program administration.[147] A team of Vanderbilt faculty, including then-director of the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies Nicholls, took an exploratory trip to the University of São Paulo and the Rio de Janeiro based Getúlio Vargas Foundation in October 1965 to begin assessment and recommendations.[148] Following this assessment, the economics department discussed administration of the contract. The department did not feel it had the resources to oversee the contract and pushed for the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies to direct it instead.[149] Nicholls agreed, and the program fell under the purview of the graduate center with Nicholls as program director.[150]

Under the USAID contract, Vanderbilt agreed to send three professors to Brazil and an additional Ford Foundation supported professor to develop graduate programs in economics at the University of São Paulo and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation.[151] Two Vanderbilt professors and the Ford Foundation professor (a position that was not tied to Vanderbilt but was still essentially decided by the university) went to São Paulo and one to Rio de Janeiro.[152] To make up for drain on faculty, Vanderbilt's administration agreed to add two tenured positions to the economics department with preference given to Brazil or Latin American specialists, further strengthening Vanderbilt's regional specialty in Latin American economics.[153] Over the course of the contract, 13 of 21 tenured professors in Vanderbilt's economics department participated in the program, with one third of the department spending at least two years in Brazil.[154] [1]

The initial project of the Vanderbilt professors consisted of organizing and structuring graduate studies and creating a national recruitment program. Vanderbilt hoped to emphasize collaboration between the two participating research institutions: prior to the program the University of São Paulo and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation had very little contact.[155] The universities created a joint examination for student recruitment, first administered in 15 major cities in October 1966.[156] By 1967, nearly 400 candidates had applied for 40 openings divided between the two economics programs.[157] The two institutes began to exchange lecturers and collaborate on research activities, and the research director at the Getúlio Vargas

[1] Paula Covington remembers a joke made about Sam Morley, one of the economics professors who taught in Brazil, injuring his shoulder while surfing in Rio. Clearly the program was not all work and no play for the Vanderbilt faculty participating!

Foundation became a permanent consultant at the University of São Paulo's economics program.[158]

USAID held high expectations for the program, hoping that the work developing graduate education in two institutions would trickle down to strengthen undergraduate economics training throughout Brazil.[159] Through initiatives to prepare students to apply for graduate studies, the program did begin to have far reaching effects. Undergraduate economics departments across the country requested guest lectures and reading lists to prepare their students for the national exams.[160] Other institutions already engaged in creating graduate programs or improving their undergraduate programs requested short term intensive courses from USAID supported faculty.[161] Vanderbilt signed agreements with five additional institutions, in Recife, Fortaleza, Belo Horizonte, Vitoria, and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation's business school, for two-to-three-week intensive courses, during which the visiting professors also worked to develop existing research programs.[162]

Satisfied with the initial successes of the program, USAID asked Vanderbilt to expand the contract in late 1967.[163] In mid-1968, Vanderbilt faculty began working with the economics program at the Institute of the Sciences of Man at the University of Pernambuco in Recife.[164] The Recife project brought in another Vanderbilt professor and a second Ford Foundation professor in sociology or anthropology.[165]

Despite a general environment of Brazilian backlash towards U.S. educational programs in Brazil, the Vanderbilt-USAID program was widely praised in both the U.S. and Brazil. During this period, student rallies protested U.S. aid to higher education, specifically an agreement between USAID and the Ministry of Education and Culture for higher education planning.[166] However, during a 1968 speech generally denouncing U.S. educational programs, a philosophy professor at the University of São Paulo mentioned Vanderbilt as a counterexample of successful collaboration.[167] In a magazine article, the director of the economics faculty at the university praised the program and USAID viewed the Vanderbilt program as a model for other cooperative international education agreements.[168] Despite international recognition and recognition in D.C., the program's accomplishments and Vanderbilt's overall connections to Latin America remained relatively unknown in Nashville.[169]

The Vanderbilt-USAID contract was intended to establish and develop graduate economic education in Brazil from 1966 to 1972, not as an indefinite exchange of professors. By the 1970–71 academic year, USAID phased out Vanderbilt's work with the Getúlio Vargas Foundation as it was no longer deemed necessary.[170] However, USAID extended the program

at the University of São Paulo one more year to 1973, then transitioned to provide all funding directly to the Brazilian university in January 1974.[171] Although Vanderbilt would no longer be contracted by USAID to supply professors to the program, the University of São Paulo could continue to involve Vanderbilt professors with USAID funds if it chose to do so.[172] Over the eight years of the program, USAID and the Ford Foundation invested $4,300,000 toward graduate education in economics, with $1,950,000 of this amount going to Vanderbilt.[173]

Increased Internal Funding and Interest in Becoming a NDEA Area Center in the 1970s

In the early 1970s, members of the graduate center worried that funds to support Latin American studies were drying up. The Ford Foundation grant would soon end, leaving the center searching for new funds to replace its support.[174] The Ford Foundation's interest in regional area studies declined in the early 1970s as it expected federal support would begin to replace its contributions from the 1960s.[175] However, Vanderbilt began to step in to provide more financial support for the graduate center. In the 1971–72 academic year, the university appointed another faculty member in Latin American sociology and provided additional funds for center publications.[176] In 1974, as the Ford Foundation grant ran out, Vanderbilt provided a three-year bridging grant of $201,000 to support graduate fellowships, faculty research and travel, and overseas dissertation research. The grant was intended to keep the same level of financial support for the center as had been provided by the Ford Foundation.[177] The university also agreed to match outside funds found by the center, and in 1974 matched a two-year grant of $20,000 from the Tinker Foundation almost two to one.[178]

The center additionally received a $5,000 seed grant from the Exxon Corporation in 1974 to explore opportunities for collaboration with Brazilian universities.[179] The grant paid for a team of Vanderbilt professors and administrators to visit seven Brazilian universities in 1975.[180] During this trip, the center considered establishing a multi-disciplinary research center in Brazil, but decided to hold off due to problems at some of the universities and a lack of trained faculty.[181] Following the visit, the center applied to the Exxon Corporation for a $513,000 grant to support a program to train professors and graduate students from Brazilian universities at Vanderbilt in anticipation of bilateral cooperation agreements with Brazilian universities.[182]

Although the center had received graduate fellowships under the National Defense Education Act since 1968, it began seeking status as a NDEA Language and Area Center in

1973. Before 1973, the U.S. government invited specific universities to apply as Language and Area Centers, allowing existing centers to receive consistent support for over a decade.[183] These area centers received substantial federal funds for libraries, lectures, faculty research and travel, and faculty salaries.[184] In 1973, the selection process changed to an open competition, held every two to three years. As of 1972, the federal government recognized Vanderbilt's center as "one of the strongest U.S. centers in terms of expertise on Brazil and on Portuguese (Brazilian) language and literature,"[185] leading Nicholls to apply for NDEA area center funding in 1973. Despite a high rating by the selection committee (4.0 out of 5.0), Vanderbilt's center was not selected: the review committee concluded that the center, although high-quality, was comparatively small.[186] The center applied again in 1976, but also failed to receive funding. In the larger context of NDEA funding, these were especially difficult cycles to become an area center, with the government having cut the total number of centers (in all regions) from 107 in the 1970–72 period down to 66 in 1973–75 period, and the number of Latin American centers down to six.[187]

Undergraduate Studies, New Directions in Research, and Center Activities in the 1970s

At the same time that the center began applying for NDEA area center funding in 1973, it added a concentration in Latin American studies for undergraduates.[188] Prior to this addition, undergraduates could enroll in Latin American studies courses but not concentrate in the field. This new undergraduate major required at least two years of course work in Spanish or Portuguese, and 48 hours of major course work in Latin American studies divided over at least three participating departments.[189] With the addition of the undergraduate concentration, the center officially changed its name to the Center for Latin American Studies, dropping the "Graduate," in 1973.[190]

The center remained strong in Brazilian studies into the mid-1970s but continued to expand out from this historic concentration. In 1967, the center hosted an Invitational Institute on High School Portuguese with the Brazilian Ambassador to the U.S. in attendance to discuss the teaching of Portuguese in secondary education.[191] Later in 1972, the center published a collection on Brazil titled *Brazil in the Sixties*, contributed to by nine center faculty members.[192] In line with its support for Brazilian higher education through the USAID contract, Vanderbilt participated in a Brazilian government conference on improving higher education in 1976.[193] However, while the center continued to recognize Brazil as its first area of strength, it pointed to Colombia and Peru as a second area and Mexico, Cuba,

and the Caribbean as a third by the mid-70s.[194] From 1970 to 1976, 40 percent of graduate students focused on Brazil for their dissertation, while 37.5 percent studied Colombia, Venezuela, or Ecuador. The remaining 22.5 percent wrote dissertations on Chile, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, and Nicaragua, demonstrating the growing geographic scope of the center.[195]

Language studies remained strong at the center, in part due to the continued support for Portuguese study provided by NDEA fellowships. Two senior faculty members specialized in Brazilian Portuguese in the 70s—Earl Thomas and Alexandrino Severino—supporting a robust Portuguese program.[196] The center additionally offered Nahuatl courses taught by Richard Andrews, beginning a long-history of indigenous Latin American language teaching at Vanderbilt.[197]

Beyond research and teaching, the center offered a number of cultural and academic programs and supported the creation of student associations in the 1970s. In 1974, the center hosted regular lectures on Tuesday nights, drawing audiences of 40–60 people.[198] Starting in 1972, the center organized an annual film festival. The first film festival showed Brazilian films, and the following year Argentine and Mexican films.[199] On the student side, the center's graduate students organized a Graduate Student Association in 1971. The Association suggested changes to curriculum and degree requirements, including pushing for a graduate interdisciplinary seminar, organized center parties and picnics, helped with the film festival, and hosted an annual Carnaval party.[200] Several years later, graduate and undergraduate students created the Luso-Brazilian club in the 1974–75 academic year, hosting lectures and a weekly Mesa Portuguesa conversation table in the dining hall.[201]

During this period, the center began to look for new leadership. In 1972, Director Nicholls took a 12-month research leave to work in Brazil. He suggested that Vanderbilt find a new permanent replacement for him as director starting that year.[202] However, Nicholls agreed to stay on as director for another three years until the end of the 1974–75 academic year if Vanderbilt created an associate director position to reduce his administrative load.[203] Riordan Roett stepped in as acting director during Nicholls's sabbatical, then stayed on as the associate director for the next two years.[204] Vanderbilt asked Roett to direct the center starting in 1975, but he rejected the offer and took a position at the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins. However, in this rejection Roett reiterated the center's need for a full-time director.[205] Nicholls remained director of the center until his death in 1978, when the center was temporarily left without leadership. Charles Vance took over as director of the

center in the 1978–79 academic year.[206] However, the center declined in presence for the next few years until the leadership of Enrique Pupo-Walker.

THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN AND IBERIAN STUDIES

Reinvestment in the Center in the 1980s

After languishing for several years, the center reemerged under Enrique Pupo-Walker in 1982. Pupo-Walker already had a close relationship with Dean Jacque Voegeli, and Voegeli made Pupo-Walker director with hopes of reviving the center.[207] Coming from the Spanish department, Pupo-Walker decided to rename the center as the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies (CLAIS), hoping to pull in more of the Spanish faculty, although the Spanish department continued to exist at a distance from the center.[208] This refocusing of the center added a quirk when applying for federal funding on Latin America, as all content concerning the Iberian Peninsula had to be eliminated when counting hours and faculty.[209] However, the center would retain this new Latin American and Iberian label for the next three decades.

From the 1970s on, the center was located in the back corner of the bottom floor of Furman Hall, and supported a director and an administrative assistant, whose salary was the center's greatest expense.[210] Compared with both former and later iterations of the center, CLAIS was very bare bones in the 1980s. There was an office next to Pupo-Walker's personal office where the two secretaries for European studies and Latin American studies sat.[211]

Norma Antillón joined as the center's secretary in 1986 and quickly became the heart of the center. At her retirement in 2011, 25 years after she came to Vanderbilt, Pupo-Walker described how: "In a matter of months, Antillón was a source of counseling for undergraduate and graduate students. They learned to trust her honesty. Other individuals who came to our office and had nothing to do with the center also sought out her advice!"[212] Over her time as the center's secretary, Antillón came to hold much of the institutional knowledge on how to run the center and build networks across Vanderbilt.[213] Jane Landers, a later director of the center, stated that everyone loved Antillón and described her as a grandma-like figure at the center who was good to everyone.[214]

In its newest form, Brazil remained the main strength of the center with a growing focus on Colombia, and anthropology quickly became another focal point of the center. Many of the center's members continued to work on Brazil, but several faculty members, including

Jonathan Hartlyn and J. León Helguera, worked on Colombia.[215] At the time, there was almost no scholarship on Mexico or the Caribbean.[216] In 1984, Arthur Demarest came to Vanderbilt as a significant figure in archaeology. At the time of his arrival, anthropology was combined with sociology as a joint department and there were only four anthropologists at Vanderbilt.[217] As the administration worked to keep Demarest at Vanderbilt, he successfully negotiated the creation of a separate anthropology department, which quickly became a department focused on Latin American anthropology.[218] Vanderbilt saw a sudden influx of people working on Central America, including Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala, split between cultural anthropology and archaeology. One of the first major Latin American acquisitions made by Latin American Bibliographer Paula Covington in this period was Robert Wauchope's, a noted Mesoamerican archaeologist/anthropologist, personal collection. This collection helped strengthen the case for a PhD program in anthropology.[219] By the 1990s, a strong group of people working on Mesoamerica and the Maya developed alongside the group working on Brazil.[220]

Another significant development of the center in the early 1980s was the creation of LAS 290, the Latin American research methods class, as a core course for Latin American studies. Covington created this research class with the hope of introducing more students to the Vanderbilt library collections and teaching them how to make use of them, especially for their thesis research.[221] She based the original class on a course taught by a colleague at Princeton University who used case studies as a structural framework.[222] In 1983, when Marshall Eakin arrived at Vanderbilt as a Latin American historian, he began co-teaching the course with Covington.[223] The class continued with this dual instructor framework, Covington teaching it at different times with Landers, Bill Fowler, Jim Lang, Larry Jensen, Keith Davies, Frank Robinson, Avery Dickins de Girón, and other faculty members.[224] The class became a requirement for both undergraduate majors and graduate students, providing research methods for their thesis requirement.[225]

Covington and the co-professor based the class around cases that required students to make use of the library's resources. One class considered a fictional company, Vandy Jeans, looking to open a manufacturing plant in the Caribbean or northern part of South America and had students consider which country would be the most logical place to set up the production plant. In another case, students considered when in Latin America an oversupply of Jack Daniels liquor should be sent to be sold.[226] Over the course of the semester, students became familiar with the range of resources available through the library, including a grounding in business, statistical, historical, and other resources.[227] In the 1980s, before

databases, much of this research was hunt and peck, and students relied heavily on the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* every year to find sources.[228]

After basing the class around a case for students to research, the semester culminated in a simulation. Covington described how in some of the classes, the big final project was a roleplay of an international congress where each student represented their country. She described one year where one student showed up to play Fidel Castro wearing fatigues and with a big cigar. One of Covington's co-professors, Simon Collier, played a role with a Texas drawl, overlain by his Oxbridge accent, and came in to the final simulation wearing a ten-gallon hat.[229] In reviews of the center's classes and activities, students expressed high enthusiasm for the course, describing it as demanding but worthwhile.[230] One alumnus of the Latin American studies program in the late 1980s described the class as challenging but wonderful, and recalled how several days before the final scenario the professors would throw a wrench into the situation that students had to suddenly recalibrate to.[231]

LAS 290 (or 4901-5901) continued to be team taught through 2021, most recently with Avery Dickins de Girón. Covington described how it changed in the database age. In later years, the class became more about methods and readings as not all students wrote a thesis due to changing degree requirements. While the readings were engaging, compared with the original case and roleplay format, Covington found the discussion of databases to be less fun.[232]

Student enrollments and center events quickly bounced back with the renewed investment in the center. Between 1980 and 1984, undergraduate enrollments increased from five majors to 28 and graduate student enrollment increased from four to nine.[233] The center continued to receive FLAS fellowships to support the study of Portuguese, and hosted a number of international conferences, including a symposium on "Models of Political and Economic Change in Latin America" in 1983 and a conference on the Church in Latin America in 1985.[234]

Another program begun in the 1980s that would continue to play a part in the center for decades was the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program, started in 1987. The FAO program trained members of the U.S. Army (usually captains) with area knowledge on Latin America to prepare them for domestic and abroad posts. Between 1987 and 2009, the Latin American studies program trained over 20 Foreign Area Officers who filled posts as military attachés at foreign embassies, country experts to military commands, and geopolitical analysts at the Pentagon, among other positions.[235] Army officers trained by the center went on to hold critical intelligence, embassy, and consular posts in Washington, D.C., Miami, Argentina,

Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Venezuela, Panama, and Paraguay.[236] Todd Newell, a Latin American studies alumnus (class of '90), described how the FAO program brought an interesting perspective to classes and a greater range of opinions in the classroom.[237] The FAO program continued into the 2010s, although it no longer exists at Vanderbilt today.[238]

After becoming associate director of the center in the mid-80s, Jonathon Hartlyn, an assistant professor in political science, worked with Pupo-Walker to establish a partnership with the University of the Andes in Colombia.[239] In 1986, Pupo-Walker visited Bogotá to explore the possibility of an exchange with the university and, soon after, Hartlyn and Pupo-Walker secured a grant from USAID.[240] The center arranged for a back and forth exchange of faculty between the two institutions. Vanderbilt faculty participated in a program at the University of the Andes on narco-traffickers and extradition with presenters Pupo-Walker, Hartlyn, Kavass, and Covington. Visitors to Vanderbilt included the Colombian representative Fernando Cepeda Ulloa to Vanderbilt's law school to research negotiations, the poet Montserrat Ordoñez, and the historian Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, among others.[241] Pupo-Walker returned to Bogotá in 1989 to explore further areas of cooperation with the University of the Andes, with Vanderbilt requesting a three-year extension of the USAID grant to continue the faculty exchange.[242]

In the early 1990s, the center introduced its second core course: Introduction to Latin American Studies. After becoming associate director of CLAIS in 1989, Eakin oversaw undergraduate and minor advising and worked on revamping the major and minor and creating a core course.[243] The point of the Introduction to Latin American Studies course was to draw students to Latin American studies and give a broad overview of Latin America in addition to exposure to specific disciplines within the field.[244] Eakin began teaching the class in 1991, structuring it around six or seven guest speakers who taught classes on their specific areas and acting as the glue to tie the separate portions together. He continued to teach the class for the next decade and in later years the class shifted among faculty members.[245]

The center revamped the undergraduate major, modelling it after other majors in interdisciplinary studies. A Latin American studies major had to take 48 credit hours, including the intro course and research course, an area concentration of 12–15 hours, and electives. The major required language proficiency in both Spanish and Portuguese, which helped boost enrollments for Portuguese.[246] In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Rodolfo Franconi taught Portuguese, aided by several graduate students. Todd Newell (class of '90) recalled that Portuguese classes focused more on culture than grammar compared to the Spanish department and really made students fall in love with Brazilian culture. His course

followed a soap opera about Brazil developed by Rede Globo, and students learned about Música Popular Brasileira (MPB), Caetano Veloso, and other great Brazilian musicians.[247]

Undergraduate Experiences with Latin American Studies

Latin American studies alumni from the late 1980s and early 1990s described a fabulous faculty who drew students to the major through their passion for the subject area. Newell came into the major after taking a freshman seminar on the Mexican Revolution with León Helguera. Walking back from Carmichael Towers (where the class was held in the basement), Newell told Helguera he loved the courses and asked if there were others like it. Helguera responded that there was an entire major! Newell decided on the anthropology concentration in the major, and remembered several courses with Duncan Earle, whose research focused on Guatemala. He also recalled a Brazilian perspective on anthropology brought in by a professor who worked with the Mehinaku indigenous tribe, Tom Gregor.[248] Franconi, the Portuguese professor, made a major impact on Newell and years after graduating he ran into him in the São Paulo airport. The two realized they were on the same flight from São Paulo to Bahia, and in Bahia, Newell introduced Franconi to several of his business partners as his Portuguese professor. They said he had done a good job but Newell still could not pronounce "milhão." Franconi joked that he had only taught numbers up to one hundred.[249]

Allen Kilgore (class of '94) similarly did not come into college planning to be a Latin American studies major but decided on it after very positive experiences with the professors and classes. Freshman year, Kilgore took a Latin American history course with Eakin and was blown away, then took the second part and a Latin American political science class with Wendy Hunter the next semester. He said he became an LAS major because every time he touched a class on Latin America, the professor was fabulous. He remembered being especially impacted by Eakin, Hunter, and Landers.[250]

Neither Kilgore nor Newell remembered the Center for Latin American Studies as an institution they engaged with and pointed instead toward the international dorm, McTyeire, as a meeting place for students.[251] At the time, McTyeire also served as a gathering place for the Latino community on campus and the beginnings of the Vanderbilt Association for Hispanic Students (VAHS). The lack of student knowledge of the center may have come from the greater emphasis on graduate education in the center and Vanderbilt as a whole at the time, with the center focusing more heavily on the undergraduate program later in the 1990s.[252] It

may also have come from the fact that the center at this time did not have a physical space outside of one administrative office, and undergraduate students often went to the associate director's office for advising rather than the center itself.[253] Newell remembered McTyeire as a meeting place for Portuguese classes and several Latin American events hosted by the dorm, including a Día de los Muertos event and a feijoada night. He said that McTyeire was really the only place on campus to get together with people who spoke Spanish and who were culturally interested in Latin America, an experience reflected by the founders of VAHS (described below).[254]

There were no Vanderbilt study abroad programs in Latin America at this time, so for Spanish learners the main study abroad program was Vanderbilt-in-Spain. Newell described going to Madrid his junior year on the Vanderbilt-in-Spain program. A Vanderbilt professor accompanied the students and taught a language class, and students took their other literature, art, and history classes with professors at the Complutense University of Madrid. Although the Vanderbilt students were taught separately rather than joining the official university classes, the courses were still taught in Spanish. The students lived with families in the city, where Newell described the majority of language learning occurring as his host family did not speak any English.[255] Kilgore studied abroad at the University of Costa Rica, but not through a Vanderbilt program. He also said that there were no Vanderbilt programs available in Latin America at the time, so Eakin recommended a program through the University of Kansas to him and to his friend.[256]

Alternative Spring Break (ASB), a relatively new program at the time, also gave students access to Latin America. Vanderbilt's ASB, one of the oldest in the country, held its first trips in March 1987.[257] The program brought small groups of students to volunteer in different community projects for a week over spring break. Both Newell and Kilgore participated in ASB. Newell travelled to Monterrey, Mexico where students worked with a healthcare organization called Caritas. The group worked at a hospice on a trash dump in Monterrey, helping to build and maintain it. The trip was Newell's first real experience in Latin America. He remembered many of the students on his trip as LAS or Spanish majors and ASB as a magnet for students in the major.[258] Kilgore participated in ASB his sophomore, junior, and senior years, and in his senior year he co-led a trip to Guatemala. The group went to northern Guatemala to support an environmental organization funded by Conservation International and USAID. Kilgore did not remember LAS majors being more involved in ASB than other students during his time.[259]

Both Newell and Kilgore ended up using their degrees and experiences in Latin America in their careers, even when they did not expect to. Newell graduated from college and went to work for a year in Paraguay and has worked in sales in Latin America ever since.[260] Kilgore worked with the environmental project in Guatemala he volunteered at during ASB for a year after college then practiced law in the U.S. for a long time. Eventually, after moving to another company, he moved with his family to Guatemala for three years to help oversee the construction of the new U.S. embassy in Guatemala City.[261]

The Vanderbilt Association for Hispanic Students

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Vanderbilt was not a diverse school. Few Latino students attended the university. Adriana Medina (class of ’92) arrived at Vanderbilt in the 1988–89 academic year. She said she cannot remember finding anyone else her first semester who was Hispanic, who spoke Spanish, or even was from Miami. She recalls there being no mentorship for first-generation students and no one like her at the higher levels of education.[262] Another Latina student, Shirley Collado (class of ’94), described that when she came to Vanderbilt, it was a much more southern and conservative school.[263] Pablo Collabasi (class of ’95), a Mexican international student, was the only Mexican student at Vanderbilt when he arrived as a freshman in 1991. In the School of Engineering, he said he was often the only Latin American or Hispanic student in any of his classes, and that none of his professors were from Latin America or Hispanic.[264]

However, in the early 1990s, a critical mass of international students and students of color began to arrive at Vanderbilt, helping to pave the way for or support cultural organizations like the Vanderbilt Association for Hispanic Students. In 1990, the POSSE program began at Vanderbilt, bringing five students (not all of whom were Latino) from New York City to study at Peabody. Collado was one of these students.[265] The program was intended to help diversify Vanderbilt racially, although it underscores the lack of diversity at the school at the time in that five students was considered an effort toward diversification. Although POSSE started only at Peabody, it would go on to become a national program sending cohorts to schools across the nation.[266] A year after the first POSSE cohort, a critical mass of international students came to Vanderbilt in 1991. Collabasi, a member of this group, described arriving with a group of ten other international students, which felt to him like a fairly large group at the time.[267] In the following years, other significant groups of international students arrived at Vanderbilt. Collado commented that many of the POSSE

scholars and international students arriving in the early 1990s came ready and wanting to engage with issues of culture, race, and class.[268]

The Vanderbilt Association for Hispanic Students (VAHS) had its roots in the international dorm, McTyeire. As Newell and Kilgore described, McTyeire was the only gathering place for Spanish speakers on campus. Collado said that McTyeire existed as a place for people who enjoyed language, culture, and food, but it was not a distinctly Latino space.[269] Medina lived in McTyeire in the 1989–90 and 1990–91 academic years and remembers at least two to three native speakers on the Spanish floor, with the rest of the residents being students seeking language immersion. The chef at the dorm let students cook in the kitchen or give him recipes to make, allowing students to share some of their cuisine.[270] The dorm created a space for students to meet and organize, leading to the formation of VAHS.

VAHS formed as a student organization in the 1990–91 academic year. Rebecca Gordon began organizing the group in 1990, guided by Keith Davies.[271] In 1991, Medina took over as the association's president. During these first few years, Medina remembers everyone in the organization being connected to McTyeire.[272] VAHS threw parties at the international dorm, cooked in the kitchen, taught dance classes, and generally hung out in the dorm. With the creation of the association, McTyeire became even more of a hub for Spanish speaking students on campus.[273] In these first years, VAHS was mostly cultural organization. Collado and Medina described the organization as mainly based around language and culture and said that it provided a social space for Latino and Latin American students.[274]

In the next few years of the organization, VAHS began to take on a larger political engagement role on campus and move away from McTyeire. This move from McTyeire allowed the organization to become broader, as more Latino and Latin American students arrived on campus with the shift in the early 1990s.[275] After Medina graduated in 1992, Collado then Coballasi led the organization, with an increasing focus on larger campus engagement. Collado said she came into Vanderbilt wanting to engage with issues of race on campus and supported by a group of POSSE students who wanted to do the same. The association had members who wanted to educate the community, host parties, and share food, but also ones who wanted to use VAHS as a means for social change and community service.[276] As the organization grew, it was invited to the table for larger conversations happening on campus. VAHS participated with Student Government and other organizations to try to integrate diversity into the college student life experience.[277] Medina said that the

original intention was not for VAHS to be political but based on the changing university and larger political landscape of the time, it was inevitable.[278]

One of the association's early events was Hispanic Student Weekend, where the organization invited accepted Latino and Hispanic prospective students to campus to get to know Vanderbilt.[279] The goal of the weekend was to encourage more Latino students to come to Vanderbilt and build a larger Latin American and Latino community. VAHS brought over 100 students to campus to experience Vanderbilt and make an informed decision. Collabasi said that the event was a success and the Latino population on campus immediately grew in the following years: he remembered a group of 30 Latin American and Latino students when he came to campus as a freshman, and this group exceeding 200 by the time he was a senior.[280]

Other events hosted by the association ranged from social to cultural to political. Collabasi remembers a big cultural celebration his junior year, where VAHS partnered with a fraternity and sorority, shut down Greek Row, and invited the Dave Matthews Band to perform. He said: "You would see fraternity members dancing salsa with girls from a sorority or VAHS or from the Black Student Association, all of us being one student body celebrating our ethnicities and having a good time, which is one example of how things had changed over three very short years."[281] The association held other dances and cultural events to try to share Latin American culture with the community at large. In 1994, in a more political event, VAHS hosted a debate on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), inviting people from the private sector, financial institutions, and professors to debate its potential impacts.[282] VAHS also hosted an hour a week on Sundays on the university radio station.[283]

VAHS existed alongside and sometimes partnered with other identity-based organizations, like Lambda and the Bishop Johnson Black Cultural Center (BCC), especially with the increasingly political focus of the group. In another mark of the time, Collado described Lambda, the LGBTQ+ student identity group, as an underground organization in the early 1990s that held secret meetings in K.C. Potter's house.[284] She described how there was a lot of fear, especially around AIDS, on campus at the time.[285] Several members of VAHS attended Lambda meetings, as participants or as allies, and the association worked alongside the organization. The BCC was also becoming increasingly intersectional at the time and provided a home for many members of VAHS, especially Afro-Latino students. Collado remembers students referring to the BCC as "The House" and it operating as another central space, like McTyeire, for students.[286]

The founders of VAHS appreciated the ability to have a voice and seek change at Vanderbilt in the early 1990s, especially through the association. Reflecting on her time at Vanderbilt, Medina said it was a wonderful time to be at the university and help in the growth and transformation of the institution and those who attended it.[287] Collado reflected that she had a love-hate relationship with Vanderbilt for two years and then stepped into her own voice and fell in love with the school and became a part of the moment.[288] Collabasi said there were some positives to being the only Latin American student in his classes—it gave him an opportunity to be a voice in his class and on campus and talk about his culture and country. For him, it also came with a responsibility to uphold certain standards and be part of the change occurring at Vanderbilt.[289] The early 1990s was a significant moment of diversification in Vanderbilt's history, and the members of VAHS recognized their role in the moment.

By the late 1990s, Vanderbilt's, and Nashville's, Hispanic population had changed significantly. Collabasi recalls the members of VAHS growing from between 20 to 30 his freshman year to 250 to 300 his senior year, although not all members were Latin American or Latino.[290] By 1998, the association was the second largest multicultural organization on campus and the number of Hispanic identifying Vanderbilt undergraduates grew from 63 to 180 between 1990 and 1998, and 36 to 107 in the College of Arts and Science.[291] Nashville had an extremely small foreign-born population prior to the mid-1990s. Apart from small numbers of Hmong and Kurdish refugee groups, Nashville was almost entirely black or white, divided between black neighborhoods in east and north Nashville, working-class white neighborhoods in the southeast, and wealthy white neighborhoods in the west. However, the city began to see an increase in Latino workers starting in the late 1990s, originally from other U.S. cities due to the lower cost of living and later from Mexico and other Central and South American countries.[292] Nashville's demographic shift continues to the present.

The Center in the 1990s

In 1992, Pupo-Walker stepped down as director of the center and Simon Collier became the new director from 1992 to 1997.[293] Collier recognized the work that had been done to build the center back up under the 12 years of Pupo-Walker's leadership.[294] By the mid-90s, the center had set up a joint MA/MBA with the Owen Graduate School of Management, one of many professional school collaborations to come.[295] Around this time, the center moved to a small suite of offices on the bottom floor of Calhoun Hall, with

European studies on one side and Latin American studies on the other. This new suite included space for both the director and the associate director, moving the center into a more well-defined space.[296] However, student advising still often occurred in other faculty offices, so students remained unaware of the center as a physical space.

Under Collier, anthropology continued to be one of the primary strengths of the center.[297] In an outside evaluation of the center in 1995, Thomas Skidmore stated the center had a truly outstanding strength in anthropology, especially Mesoamerican anthropology, and was very strong in Spanish, history, and political science. Brazilian studies remained strong across departments as well.[298] However, Skidmore said this Brazilian studies expertise was crippled by the state of the Portuguese program and lack of research funds.[299]

Indeed, the center's Portuguese program fell off in the mid-90s due to a sudden decrease in faculty. Although Vanderbilt had someone teaching Portuguese since at least WWII, Portuguese had always been a challenge due to the low enrollments.[300] For a long time, the Portuguese department had several people teaching Portuguese full time, which is unusually large for any school as Portuguese rarely generates many students.[301] However, in the 1990s, the Portuguese program dwindled down to one person. Alex Severino, who had taught Portuguese since the 1960s, passed away and another assistant professor did not receive tenure.[302] In 1995, when Skidmore evaluated the center, there was only one faculty member teaching Portuguese and they had just asked not to be considered for tenure.[303]

At this time, the center also lost its traditional strength in economics. Vanderbilt's economics department turned away from regional economics, in line with many institutions across the country, despite Vanderbilt's traditional strength in Latin American economics.[304] After Sam Morley left, the economics department no longer had any faculty focusing on Latin America.[305]

One significant accomplishment in Latin American studies at Vanderbilt in the mid-1990s was the publication of the Cambridge History of Latin America. The three volumes, edited by Enrique Pupo Walker and Roberto Gonzalez Echevarría of Yale and published in 1996, covered the full history of Latin American literature, including Brazilian literature.[306] The history included writings from scholars across the U.S., U.K., and Latin America and was widely heralded as a major contribution to the field, bringing positive attention to Vanderbilt's Spanish department and center.[307]

In 1997, just as Jim Lang stepped in as the new director of CLAIS, the center lost its FLAS funding for Portuguese fellowships for the first time since 1968, reflecting the decline of the Portuguese program. After becoming chair of the history department in Fall 1996,

Collier stepped down as director of CLAIS and Dean Voegeli chose Lang as the new director.[308] Evaluating the Portuguese program for the 1997 FLAS cycle, the Department of Education stated that the language program was "too thin and unstable to justify the award."[309] However, the center felt the longer-term prospects of the program were promising as the center began to undertake a rebuilding of Portuguese.

Vanderbilt hired Earl Fitz of Pennsylvania State University, starting in the 1998–99 academic year, to help rebuild the Portuguese program.[310] Although Fitz was hired in Comparative Literature, he worked on Brazil.[311] After the death of Severino, the administration wanted to reinvigorate the Portuguese program as quickly as possible, and thus recruited Fitz to rebuild the combined Portuguese and Spanish PhD program and Portuguese as a whole.[312] The department finished rebuilding the program with the hiring of Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte for a tenure track position in Portuguese in Fall 2002. Within five years of Fitz's hiring, the combined Portuguese-Spanish PhD was a success, with a quarter of doctoral students in the department pursing this combined degree.[313]

As the center rebuilt its Portuguese program, faculty members began to push for CLAIS to once again apply as a Department of Education National Resource Center (NRC). In 1998, Dean Ettore Infante set up an internal task force to review CLAIS.[314] The task force concluded that the center should reapply for FLAS funding in the fall of 1999 and apply to be an undergraduate National Resource Center in the fall of 2002, with the goal of becoming a comprehensive NRC in 2005.[315] However, some of the center's leadership felt that the center still needed to strengthen Latin American studies offerings across schools, otherwise it was unlikely an NRC application would be funded.[316]

The internal task force and discussions of the future of the center also present a snapshot of the growing center at the time. By the late 1990s, the center's faculty taught a total of 45 undergraduate courses, in which total undergraduate enrollments exceeded 1,000. Enrollments in the Latin American studies program remained small, with only 13 undergraduate majors and 8 minors. Nonetheless, the Princeton Review's *Gourman Report of Undergraduate Programs* ranked Vanderbilt's LAS program 8th in the country.[317] The center did not have a separate PhD program, but participating departments (including anthropology, economics, Spanish and Portuguese, history, and political science) could offer a PhD degree with a concentration in Latin American studies.[318] Members of the center described its strength as a collaborative enterprise, where members did not have control over the hiring or tenure decisions of faculty outside their own department.[319]

Although the center did not apply for NRC funding in 2002 as recommended by the internal review, it did reapply for FLAS funding in 1999 and the Department of Education once again awarded CLAIS Portuguese fellowships in 2000. Leading up to the 1999 application, the center's leadership debated reapplication, mentioning the change from FLAS fellowships being completely covered by federal funds prior to the 1996 competition to the requirement that they be matched by the College of Arts and Science and the time-consuming task of the application.[320] However, with the new application, the center successfully secured three Portuguese fellowships and three summer FLAS awards for three years.[321] Apart from the one lost funding cycle between 1997 and 2000, Vanderbilt has received FLAS fellowships for Portuguese from 1968 to the present day.

The Center in the 2000s

In 2000, Lang stepped down as director and Jane Landers, the only female director in the history of the center, took over from 2000 to 2002.[322] While serving as director of the center, Landers was also tapped to be Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Science, starting in the fall of 2001. She credited the help of Norma Antillón and the new associate director, Ted Fischer, for allowing her be able to hold both positions at once.[323] Landers highlighted Antillón's role at the center and her institutional knowledge, and said Antillón guided her through everything while she was director.[324] Landers also convinced the Dean to give more funding to the center, elevating Antillón's position and investing more in the physical space of the center.[325] In July 2002 Landers decided to step down as director due to the demands of the Associate Dean position, with Fischer becoming the new director.[326] However, in these three years the center furthered its ties with Brazil, among other things through the start of the FIPSE/CAPES program, increased its strength in political science, and began the K-12 outreach program that grew into larger community engagement over the next several decades.

One of the first events the center hosted during this time was a visit and reception for the Mexican Ambassador to the U.S., Jesús Reyes-Heroles. Landers described how, after hearing the ambassador would be in Nashville, she started planning an event without permission from the administration and ran into trouble with one of the deans. However, Collier helped her get access to space in the University Club and Antillón helped to organize, so the event ended up going smoothly.[327] In October 2000, the center hosted Reyes-Heroles at the University Club, where he spoke on the "Future of U.S.-Mexican Relations" to the

Chancellor, Provost, and other invited guests from Vanderbilt and the Nashville community.[328]

During Landers's time as director, the center created a Brazilian studies concentration and Vanderbilt began collaborations with Brazilian universities through FIPSE/CAPES grants (a longer history of FIPSE/CAPES is below).[329] Vanderbilt applied for its first FIPSE/CAPES grant in 2001 with the Latin American Center at Emory University, the University of São Paulo, and the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro.[330] It did not receive this first grant but received funding for another application in 2002. Vanderbilt began bringing Brazilian students and faculty to campus for conferences on African history as Brazilian legislation required its teaching and few people in Brazil were trained in the area.[331] In 2001, the center hosted a Brazil Week, which became a yearly event, and Paula Covington displayed parts of the Brazilian collections in the Central Library and Special Collections.[332] Landers said Brazil was the center's main focus during her time, in large part due to the center's historic connections with Brazil.[333]

At this time, political science became another source of strength for the center. In the early 2000s, Vanderbilt rebuilt its political science department, hiring Mitch Seligson, the founder of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP).[334] Seligson worked in quantitative political science, and brought in other faculty members interested in LAPOP's work. Elizabeth Zechmeister said that in rebuilding the department, there was an intentional focus on bringing in scholars focused on Latin America, and for a while, three of the four to five faculty members in comparative politics focused on Latin America.[335] The arrival of the project, combined with increased hiring to rebuild the department, brought in a new cohort of faculty interested in Latin America and created another strength for the center (a longer history of LAPOP is below).[336] The department now has a strong reputation for training students interested in the Latin American and Caribbean region, especially students interested in studying public opinion.[337]

The center also began its K-12 outreach program in the early 2000s. In the fall of 2001, the center worked to build a database of speakers available to talk at Nashville K-12 schools on Latin American and Iberian topics. Teachers were able to schedule a classroom talk by Vanderbilt faculty or graduate students on many different countries, regions, and topics.[338] CLAIS started distributing community outreach brochures offering the services of faculty as speakers in the spring of 2002. The center also recognized the growing connection of Latin America to the Nashville community with the increase in Latin American immigrants in Nashville.[339] The first speakers, Annabeth Headrick (art and art history), John Janusek, and

Francisco Estrada-Belli (anthropology), talked to Sue William's 5th grade class at McKissack Middle School on the art and archaeology of the ancient Americas in the fall of 2002.[340] This outreach program later grew as the center gained increased support for community outreach as an NRC.

In Fall 2002, Dean McCarty appointed Fischer as the new director of the center.[341] As he stepped into the position, Fischer recognized several of the recent and ongoing activities of the center, including a new consortium of Brazilian studies, a new relationship with the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico for a study abroad program, the ongoing finalization of new joint degree programs with the Law School and the Graduate Program in Economic Development, and the Center for the Americas.[342] In 2003, the center reactivated its Certificate in Latin American Studies program for graduate students, allowing students in any discipline to take 15 hours of coursework for an LAS certification.[343] The CLAIS-created Vanderbilt-in-Mexico program started in the summer of 2004, and created a bilateral student exchange with the University of the Americas.[344] Finally, in 2005, the center moved from Calhoun Hall, where it had been for the past decade, to a new space in Buttrick Hall.[345] The shift to Buttrick Hall, where the center would remain for the next decade and a half, was part of an effort to bring all of the area studies programs together, with European studies, Asian studies, Latin American studies, and African American studies all moving to the second floor of the building.[346]

The Center for the Americas

The Center for the Americas was a short-lived project to create a more comprehensive center, combining all scholarship on the Americas under one entity. In the late 1990s, Vanderbilt created an internal competition to distribute internal funding for interdisciplinary centers. The idea was to create trans-institutional programs that brought people and departments together in new ways.[347] After several years, center faculty members put forth a proposal for a Center for the Americas. The idea was that this new center would create comparative, interdisciplinary, and cross-regional study of the Americas, existing as an umbrella for Latin American studies, American and Southern studies, African American studies, and comparative literature.[348] The faculty proposing the project hoped it would bring people together to produce research, conferences, and books collaboratively, and inspire interdisciplinary work.[349] Other proposed initiatives included endowed chairs, a special conference series, seminars, post-doctoral fellowships, graduate fellowships, an internal

grants program, summer research funds, retraining grants for faculty, and a visiting scholar's program.[350] The Center for the Americas received final approval in 2003 and initial funding of over $3 million for five years, with a plan to raise a permanent endowment of $10 million.[351]

Although there were high hopes for the center, it was unable to achieve its collaborative mission and shut down after only a few years.[352] Had the center succeeded, it likely would have reimagined American studies at Vanderbilt and possibly supplanted the Center for Latin American Studies. As interim director of CLAIS in 2004–2005, Eakin wrote that the new Center for the Americas provided an opportunity for a new era of collaboration, although each interdisciplinary program would remain an autonomous entity.[353] Indeed, there was some fear that some departments would be diminished or overlooked in the larger umbrella of the Center for the Americas.[354] However, the project ended before creating a successful cross-departmental center.[355]

Despite its short life, the center did have several major contributions to research across the Americas. The Center for the Americas funded research projects carried out by faculty and graduate students and created a structure to bring graduate students of different disciplines together, accomplished through graduate fellowships that included support for research and a semester long seminar that functioned as a working group to share research. Dickins de Girón was a fellow of the Center for the Americas and received research funding from the institution. She highlighted that the research seminar allowed her to develop relationships with other PhD students outside of her discipline. When Dickins de Girón moved into her position at CLAIS, her experiences with the Center for the Americas as a PhD student informed her work on uniting graduate students from different disciplines, which eventually took the form of graduate student roundtables of students awarded with summer research and Tinker funds where students could present their research and develop similar cross-disciplinary relationships.[356]

FIPSE/CAPES

One of the significant developments at CLAIS in the early 2000s was the beginning of collaborations with Brazilian universities through the FIPSE/CAPES program. Jane Landers, director of the center from 2000 to 2002, spearheaded this effort. FIPSE/CAPES grants were collaborative grants from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education in the U.S. and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education

Personnel Foundation in Brazil. The program provided grants for a consortium of at least two universities in the U.S. and two universities in Brazil to jointly engage in an academic project. Landers said that when she applied for the program, she and Vanderbilt's partner universities wrote proposals based on race and inequality—in healthcare, education, or other areas. She said the FIPSE/CAPES program allowed CLAIS to significantly rebuild its past connections to Brazil. Although the FIPSE/CAPES program was eventually discontinued in 2013, Vanderbilt received several consortia grants from 2002 through the early-2010s.

Vanderbilt received its first FIPSE/CAPES grant in October 2002 for the project "Race, Development, and Social Inequality" with Howard University, the University of São Paulo, and the Federal University of Bahia.[357] While Landers was director of the center, she received support from Dean Richard McCarty to apply for the FIPSE/CAPES program. Landers took McCarty and the Graduate Dean Russell Hamilton to Brazil to establish partnerships with universities.[358] For the 2002–2006 grant, FIPSE/CAPES provided the consortium with nearly $430,000, which Vanderbilt supplemented with an additional $215,000.[359] At Vanderbilt, Landers and Marshall Eakin co-directed the grant. In the spring of 2003, Chancellor Gordon Gee met with administrators at the FIPSE/CAPES Brazilian partner institutions during a larger trip to Brazil accompanied by Eakin.[360] Landers emphasized the Chancellor's support for the collaboration and said it was significant to the Brazilian partner universities that he chose to visit while in Brazil.[361]

The four universities used funding to support faculty and student exchanges, curriculum development, and collaborative initiatives organized around race, economic development, and social inequality. The program's student exchanges began in the 2003–2004 academic year and Vanderbilt offered a Certificate in Brazilian Studies to students who completed a number of courses and studied abroad.[362] Brazilian undergraduate participants in the program spent one semester at Vanderbilt as full-time students. They received a stipend from the Brazilian government and airfare, and Vanderbilt waived their tuition and fees, as well as their housing costs. The first Brazilian FIPSE/CAPES exchange student, Daniel Amaro da Silva, an anthropology student from the Federal University of Bahia, arrived at Vanderbilt for the 2004 Spring Semester.[363] Amaro da Silva lived in the McTyeire international dorm, as did many other future FIPSE/CAPES students.[364] Landers said that when former FIPSE/CAPES students return to visit Vanderbilt, they always want to go back and see the international dorm as it was an important space in their experience.[365]

In the late 2000s, FIPSE/CAPES awarded two more grants to Vanderbilt consortia. Vanderbilt received a second FIPSE/CAPES grant from 2007 to 2009, "Multicultural

Diversity, Social Inequality, and the Pursuit of Health in Brazil and the United States."[366] This grant was a consortium with Fisk University, the University of São Paulo, and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul.[367] Then in 2008, Vanderbilt partnered with Howard University, the University of São Paulo, and the Federal University of Bahia for a four-year grant of $220,000 on the theme "Race, Development and Social Inequality: Access and Equity in Higher Education in Brazil and the United States."[368] Landers was again the Vanderbilt lead for the grant.[369] FIPSE granted the consortium a no-cost extension to this third grant in August of 2013, with which the consortium hired one of the graduate students who participated in the exchange, Max Pendergraph, to edit a book of FIPSE student essays.[2] The Brazilian partner universities also created a Portuguese language edition.[370]

Vanderbilt received its fourth FIPSE/CAPES grant in 2010. Vanderbilt was the principal U.S. institute for the grant, led by Landers and Celso Castilho, partnering with the University of Florida, Gainesville,[371] the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, and the Federal University of Pernambuco.[372] FIPSE/CAPES provided $253,872 to support the consortium and Vanderbilt an additional $126,436 from 2010–2013.[373] The consortium applied to send 16 students to Brazil and receive 16 students in the U.S. over the four years of the grant.[374] It also proposed developing an online community for students and faculty researching racial, ethnic, gender, and religious difference in Brazil and the U.S.; producing a volume of research by consortia participants; hosting panels with the Brazilian Studies Association; creating more comparative courses; and supporting faculty exchanges.[375] Connected to the grant, Vanderbilt developed the "Introduction to Brazilian Studies" course and the Brazilian studies minor.[376]

Landers spoke to the lasting connections created by the FIPSE/CAPES program. In addition to further building Vanderbilt and the center's connections to Brazil, she said she, Eakin, and other faculty have since remained in contact with their FIPSE/CAPES students and helped them find jobs and post-doc opportunities in the U.S.[377] The FIPSE/CAPES program built a significant network of Brazilian students connected to Vanderbilt and allowed more Vanderbilt students to engage with Brazil.

[2] The book of student essays is titled *Pictures and Mirrors: Race and Ethnicity in Brazil and the United States.*

LAPOP

Although the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) is institutionally separate from CLACX and currently housed under the new Center for Global Democracy (established in 2024), the project helped build a concentration of Latin American focused political scientists at Vanderbilt and has coordinated with the center in its academic and outreach programs. Mitchell A. Seligson created LAPOP, a survey research program, in the 1970s. Seligson conducted the first survey of what would grow to become a decades long-project in Costa Rica in 1973, during his PhD research.[378] Over the next several decades, LAPOP ran surveys in Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Colombia.[379] Then in 2004, as Vanderbilt rebuilt its political science department, the university recruited Seligson, and LAPOP, previously at the University of Pittsburgh, was established under the umbrella of the Center for the Americas.[380]

In the early 2000s, Seligson began to discuss creating a harmonized public opinion instrument across the Latin American region to make comparisons across countries and entered into a cooperative agreement with USAID. Elizabeth Zechmeister, the current director of LAPOP, said the grant contract was different from standard USAID grants as it gave LAPOP the ability to codevelop the project and its priorities in conversation with USAID, rather than just carrying out USAID's vision.[381] With this grant, as Seligson was bringing LAPOP to Vanderbilt, the AmericasBarometer survey launched in the 2004–2005 academic year.[382] Zechmeister said the project was intended to collect high-quality data on citizens' experiences of democracy, and disseminate research and reports based on the collected data.[383] LAPOP exists in dialogue with local organizations in Latin America, depending on local partners to administer surveys and ensure that the phrasing and content of questions work in each specific country context.

The AmericasBarometer survey has grown since then, starting with 11 countries and growing to 34.[384] LAPOP has received a number of governmental and international organization grants to support its work and expand the number of countries surveyed, including from the United Nations Development Programme and continued support from USAID.[385] In 2008, Zechmeister joined the LAPOP lab, going on to direct it after Seligson. LAPOP presents its research widely to governmental and international partners, including the State Department, Organization of American States, World Bank, USAID, and Inter-American Development Bank.[386] Zechmeister said the project is widely known and respected in the Latin American and Caribbean region, akin to how Gallup is known in the U.S. Its

results are often referenced in regional news and used by journalists.[387] Additionally, around the end of the 2000s, LAPOP decided to make all its data publicly available on its website. This included the creation of an interactive data playground to make the data more accessible.[388]

Although LAPOP does not fall under CLACX today, Zechmeister said that one of the most important roles of the center is that it has always acted as a central node for people interested in Latin America, making introductions, conducting outreach, and allowing people to find and connect with other researchers with similar interests. In the past, LAPOP has consulted with CLACX about reaching out to indigenous populations, and the center provides a community to consult when the project needs additional experts.[389] Likewise, the center plays a role helping to disseminate LAPOP's news, often featuring its work in its newsletter. The center has at times hosted events to disseminate LAPOP's data to faculty and graduate students.[390] A member of LAPOP is often on the center's steering committee, further connecting the two organizations.

The Slave Societies Digital Archive

Another project institutionally separate from, yet connected to, is the center is the Slave Societies Digital Archive (SSDA). Although the archive is independent from the center, the center has always supported projects and events with the SSDA, and supports it with information, training, and outreach.[391] This archive, originally named the Ecclesiastical and Secular Sources for Slave Societies (ESSSS), launched in 2003 with a National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative Research Grant to Jane Landers (Vanderbilt), Mariza de Carvalho Soares (Fluminense Federal University), and Paul Lovejoy (York University, Canada).[392] The project worked to digitize ecclesiastic records, originally in Brazil and Cuba. Landers said the project's team was one of the few groups able to get into Cuba in the early 2000s, requiring special permission from the Treasury Department for travel.[393] The collections later expanded to cover Brazil, Cuba, Colombia, Florida, and Mexico, at many points expanding with the interests of incoming graduate students or affiliated faculty. Landers said the project often grew by getting graduate students involved, then eventually having them write their own applications and get their own grants for future related projects.[394]

The project continues to digitize and preserve records on African populations in the colonial Americas. Ecclesiastical sources provide a unique means to study slavery in Latin

America as the Catholic Church mandated the baptism of slaves. Baptismal records and Christian marriage and burial records, therefore, provide some of the most complete data on Africans in the Atlantic World.[395] Landers said at each site, Vanderbilt researchers trained local students, archivists, or librarians, bought necessary equipment, got the project started, and then let the local researchers finish and upload the documents. She emphasized that the project tried to create a collaborative model rather than an extractive one, and gave local researchers copies of all data.[396]

In 2012, the ESSSS digital archive launched its website, holding an international conference to promote the project.[397] All digitized data is now publicly accessible on the website. Throughout the 2010s, the project received additional grants to fund the digitization effort, including from the Historic St. Augustine Research Institute, the American Council of Learned Societies, the British Library Endangered Archives Programme, the Mellon Faculty Fellowship in Digital Humanities, and again from the National Endowment for the Humanities.[398] In February 2023, the Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries announced that the SSDA would be permanently housed in the library.[399] One of Landers' former graduate students, Daniel Genkins, was hired as the new executive director of the project.[400] The archive continues to work with the center for conferences and other activities.

BRASA

The Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) was established in 1992. However, by the early 2000s, without a home, budget, or material assistance, the association was languishing. When Marshall Eakin stepped down as history department chair, he asked the dean to create a space for the association at Vanderbilt to help rebuild it. In 2004, BRASA came to Vanderbilt and Eakin headed the association as executive director from 2004 to 2011. Eakin noted that BRASA brought a huge amount of publicity to Vanderbilt in Brazilian studies. Hundreds of people were on the yearly digest list for the organization.[401] Eakin helped organize a conference for the association every other year, with every third conference held in Brazil. In 2006, Vanderbilt hosted this annual conference, bringing 500 participants to the university for a week in October for the Eighth International Congress of the Brazilian Studies Association.[402] BRASA was yet another initiative through which Vanderbilt maintained its historic connections to Brazil.

Becoming a DOE National Resource Center

Members of the center pushed for it to apply for National Resource Center (NRC) funding in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but it was not until the 2005 NRC cycle that the center finally applied. After applying for and failing to get NDEA Area Center status in 1973 and 1976 when the grants switched to an open competition, Vanderbilt stopped applying in the 1980s and 1990s. Under Collier and Lang's leadership in the 1990s, a large number of faculty members began pushing for the center to once again apply for the funding.[403] In applying for FLAS funding, the center already fulfilled the majority of the requirements for the NRC application. However, after Dean Jacque Voegeli stepped down in the 1990s, the College of Arts and Science experienced high turnover in deans until the 2000s; this instability made it especially hard to get long-term support for an NRC application from the administration.[404] In this period, one of the deans requested the center put together a self-evaluation: in the evaluation, the faculty argued that the center should be applying for NRC funding starting in the fall of 2002.[405] Finally, while Eakin was interim director of the center in 2004–2005, he had a good relationship with the dean and pushed the administration to support an application for NRC funding that year.[406]

The center first applied as an undergraduate NRC, meaning it only had to make the case for how it would affect undergraduate students. There was a lower barrier to entry as an undergraduate center, and some faculty worried that Vanderbilt, as a medium-sized research institution, could not compete with larger national centers supported by large schools like UCLA.[407] In the fall semester of 2006, CLAIS received National Resource Center funding for the first time as an undergraduate NRC. The four-year federal grant from the Department of Education supported both the academic program of the center and expanded outreach to local public schools and the Nashville community, fundamentally reshaping the center over the next two decades.[408]

THE CENTER AS A NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

From 2006 to 2021, the next significant period of the center's history was heavily influenced by its status as a Department of Education National Resource Center (NRC) for Latin America. Although the center maintained its NRC funding past this period, it took on a new form in 2021 through its merger with the Latino and Latina Studies Program (developed during the 2010s) as CLACX. As an NRC, the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies

(CLAIS), then the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), suddenly had access to much greater levels of funding for academic activities and community outreach. In this period, while it continued to maintain its academic strengths in Brazil and Portuguese and expand into new areas of research and instruction, the goals of center shifted greatly with the DOE and Vanderbilt administration's goals to provide greater outreach to K-12 teachers, Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and community cultural organizations; provide more indigenous and Portuguese language teaching, especially in collaboration with other universities; and collaborate with other schools and academic programs at Vanderbilt to offer joint degrees and interdisciplinary research.

Due to the large number of center activities during this period, this section is divided into seven sub-sections, each providing a picture of a different aspect of the center's activities. The first section, on the center's institutional activities, provides a larger administrative picture of the center as an NRC: DOE grants and the center's changing goals, the larger administrative landscape at Vanderbilt, graduate student awards, administrative changes, etc. The second looks specifically at the center's academic activities on Vanderbilt's campus: academic and research foci of the center, academic events, and visiting resource professors. The next five sub-sections delve more deeply into collaborative initiatives of the center: trans-institutional programs at Vanderbilt, collaborations with other universities, less commonly taught language (LCTL) instruction, K-12 outreach, and partnerships with community cultural organizations. In practice, many of these initiatives overlapped and the center often provided programming that fell into multiple categories. Thus, although these sections are divided here, the lines between them often blur and many common goals are clear across the different initiatives.

The Institutional Framework of the Center

In 2006, the center (at this time still CLAIS) received its first National Resource Center grant from the Department of Education as a Latin American undergraduate resource center.[409] The $1.5 million grant provided funds to both assist the center's academic program and expand outreach to local schools and the Nashville community, efforts the center had begun in the early 2000s but had yet to expand significantly.[410] Earl Fitz pointed to the emphasis on community outreach as one of the significant changes of the grant, saying that although the center had conducted community outreach before, it now needed to do so in a much more structured and verifiable way.[411] The grant provided the center with the

administrative staff necessary to make this shift, bringing in money for an associate director for undergraduate studies, an associate director for graduate studies, and an outreach coordinator.[412] The grant also supported graduate studies and the library collection, providing $670,000 for graduate tuition and stipends and $138,900 to expand the Latin American library collection over the first four-year period.[413]

The shift in priorities with the NRC funding created some tensions with faculty and the administration. Fitz said the larger emphasis on community outreach was debated by faculty members, with the perception that the grant was determining some of the center's mission rather than existing to further it.[414] Fitz also said that since the NRC grant gave control of the money and objectives of the funding to the federal government, it created tension with the College of Arts and Science administration. While it was a major success for the center to gain this funding and position, the administration lost some control over the center's activities.[415]

In 2008, in part due to the recommendation of the center's DOE consultant, the center changed its name to the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS), dropping the "Iberian" that had been part of the center since the early 1980s.[416] The DOE consultant said that the inclusion of "Iberian" diluted the center's Latin American identity when it applied as an NRC and required the center to keep two sets of books, divided between faculty who worked on Latin America and faculty who worked on the Iberian Peninsula, since only LAS faculty and programming could be counted toward the grant.[417] As the center shortened its name, it defined Latin America to include the Caribbean, although the region was not recognized in the center's name itself.[418] The Caribbean would be later recognized more formally in the next iteration of the center as CLACX in the 2020s.

The center created an assistant director position in 2007. Although this position was not supported by NRC funds, it was related to the NRC designation. Lori Catanzaro first held the position, then stepped down in 2008. The center hired Avery Dickins de Girón later that year to fill the position.[419] Dickins de Girón said she started working with the center after finishing her doctorate at Vanderbilt. Much of her work was tied to the NRC: overseeing the implementation of the grant and helping write proposals for new grants. Dickins de Girón said that her position evolved into one of both grant writing and administration and relationship building, within Vanderbilt, with cultural arts organizations in Nashville, and with partner institutions across the country.[420]

Although interdisciplinary collaborations between programs at Vanderbilt would become a university-wide administrative priority in the early 2010s, the center saw building

these collaborations as one of its priorities in the initial 2006 to 2010 NRC grant.[421] Marshall Eakin pointed out the importance of the NRC grant in allowing the center to develop these collaborations. He said that the positions provided for in the NRC grant—associate directors of undergraduate and graduate studies and an outreach coordinator—freed up time for Fischer and Dickins de Girón to reach out to other schools and organize joint programs, something that earlier versions of the center had fewer resources to do.[422] Eakin said there were positives and negatives to the shift to working more with other schools: to really expand as a center, CLAS needed to include these other schools. However, the core of area studies remained in the humanities and social sciences. While faculty outside this core might be interested in Latin America for a specific project, they did not necessarily think of themselves as Brazilianists or Latin Americanists.[423]

The center first won Tinker Field Research Grant funding in 2009, applied to by Dickins de Girón and Fischer in 2008, and continued to receive this funding over the next decade, helping to provide support for graduate student research. The Tinker grants supported pre-dissertation graduate student and summer research and came at an especially necessary time as the Center for the Americas shut down, taking with it other graduate support. The funding replaced and expanded on the prior summer research program, the Center for Latin American Studies/Center for the Americas Summer Research Award.[424] Vanderbilt made a matching investment, doubling the money available under the grant to $20,000 a year to support graduate research in Latin America.[425] Although the center lost Tinker funding in the 2020 cycle, its previous cycle funding lasted through the summer of 2023 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Tinker funding was part of a larger step into the role of supporting graduate students that the center took in the late 2000s. Dickins de Girón highlighted the importance of this funding to both support graduate students and build a graduate student community. Having received funding from the Center for the Americas (CFA) as a graduate student, Dickins de Girón described how CFA provided support and an inter-disciplinary community for graduate students. She said that part of the reason CLAS became more dedicated to supporting graduate students may have been due to the loss of CFA, and the need for something to fill that role.[426] CLAS decided that it was in part its role as an interdisciplinary center to foster a community and serve as a hub for graduate students. At the same time, the Simon Collier fund was set up to provide research funds for undergraduate and graduate students and the center continued to receive FLAS fellowships, five graduate fellowships as of 2009.[427] Dickins de Girón said the center really created a community for graduate students

across disciplines. Some of this came from bringing together all research awardees to present on their research and get to know one another. The center, as the CFA had been before, became a hub where graduate students in different disciplines, who may not have ever met otherwise, were able to interact.[428]

The second time the center applied for NRC funding, it applied as a "comprehensive resource center," a further step up from an undergraduate center. Dickins de Girón said that the center may have originally applied as an undergraduate NRC with the thought that there was a lower barrier to entry, a sentiment shared in several other faculty interviews. However, with the graduate certificate program, Tinker funding, and other efforts to enhance graduate education, the center believed it could be a strong comprehensive center and Director Ted Fischer decided to apply as one.[429] In 2010, the center received comprehensive NRC designation, becoming one of only 13 stand-alone Latin America NRCs and receiving $2 million for research, teaching, and community outreach.[430] At the end of the 2010 to 2014 grant period, Fischer recognized the accomplishments of the center in its main priorities of this next period: graduate education, outreach and links to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, strengthening of Portuguese and K'iche' instruction, trans-institutional relationships and programs at Vanderbilt, and further investment in the library's specialized LAS holdings.[431]

In this second grant period, the goals of the center included increasing the number of affiliated students and faculty; extending area studies and language to new areas like law, medicine, and engineering; and growing the K-12 and community outreach programs.[432] As before, the DOE's priorities influenced the center's activities, these priorities including K-16 outreach, with particular emphasis on HBCUs and regional colleges, and LCTL instruction and evaluation.[433] The center's strategic plan for 2010 to 2015 covered this myriad of institutional and governmental initiatives. The center planned to invest more into Portuguese, Brazilian studies, and indigenous language programs; establish more collaborations with the schools of Medicine, Nursing, Engineering, and Law; establish a Guatemala field station; add an interdisciplinary research seminar for graduate students and more graduate summer research awards; expand the K-12 outreach program and work with more regional colleges; and generally recruit more students and faculty from Latin America.[434]

The early 2010s also saw a shift in Vanderbilt's larger goals, with a resulting impact on the center's activities. Vanderbilt began pushing for increased collaboration between schools and integration of programs in this period as part of Chancellor Zeppos's "One University" vision for Vanderbilt. Dickins de Girón said that the new administrative push was

part of the university leaning into the idea of breaking out of academic silos and creating collaborative units.[435] The center was already ahead on this front, one of the few, or even the only, programs on campus to have an ongoing project with every school and college.[436] The center invested even more heavily in these programs with the university-wide shift, initially through the One Vanderbilt in Guatemala initiative. This initiative brought together faculty working on Guatemala in medicine, nursing, engineering, education, business, and anthropology, and used collaborations between these faculty as a basis for other center programming, like K-12 and other community outreach events.[437] Although the center had a larger One Vanderbilt in Latin America initiative, it specially focused on two regions, first One Vanderbilt in Guatemala and then later One Vanderbilt in Brazil.[438]

As a similar program to bring faculty from across Vanderbilt's schools together, the center began supporting interdisciplinary area studies groups in the early 2010s. As of 2012, CLAS hosted three area studies groups, for Mexican, Brazilian, and Andean studies.[439] These groups partnered with the center for its program planning, helping the center to bring speakers relevant to faculty and graduate student interests. By 2014, these area studies groups also included a Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar.[440]

In July 2011, after working for the center for 25 years, Norma Antillón retired.[441] The center celebrated Antillón's contributions with the establishment of the Norma Antillón award. Eakin had first begun reaching out to faculty to create an endowed scholarship in Antillón's name back in 2005.[442] The Norma Antillón award honored a first-year graduate student who best exemplified Antillón's spirit and energy. The first award was given in May 2013, several years after Antillón's retirement.[443] It is now given to a deserving undergraduate student in Latin American studies.

Following Antillón's retirement in 2011, Alma Paz-Sanmiguel joined the center as the administrative specialist and has now been part of the center for 14 years. Her administrative duties include coordinating a range of logistical aspects for visiting speakers and events hosted by the center; ensuring faculty, student, and vendor payments are processed; and serving as the center liaison for the broader A&S administrative team. However, Dickins de Girón emphasized that her work goes far beyond her job description, and that Paz-Sanmiguel welcomes warmly visitors to the center, gets to know the center's students, and is an active member in the planning and execution of center events. For years, Paz-Sanmiguel has hosted the center's booth at Celebrate Nashville in Centennial Park, created the center's alter at the Cheekwood Día de los Muertos celebration, and organized the Latin American Images Photo Competition. Dickins de Girón also emphasized Paz-Sanmiguel's engagement with the

intellectual mission of the center: attending almost all lectures and events hosted by the center, taking Portuguese classes, and supporting the Guatemala Scholars' Network biennial conference.[444]

For the 2011–2012 academic year, Landers came back as the acting director of the center while Fischer was on sabbatical.[445] During this year, the DOE cut the center's NRC budget by 47 percent, resulting in severe cuts in scheduled programing.[446] The center focused on its key priorities of the time: HBCU outreach, K-12 outreach, Portuguese and K'iche' Maya programs, and academic programming.[447] It in turn cancelled several of its planned activities, including not inviting a visiting resource professor, eliminating funding for a Latin American economist position, and holding off on the development of a Quechua program and a planned Portuguese instructor exchange with Tulane.[448]

The center applied for a third round of NRC funding in the spring of 2014, receiving its third grant of $1.8 million, from 2015 to 2018, the following year.[449] In the 2015 grant year, the DOE cut the number of comprehensive stand-alone Latin American NRCs down to nine, further demonstrating the excellence of Vanderbilt's center as it remained an NRC.[450] During this third grant cycle, the center planned to expand its collaborations with other institutions, especially MSIs; expand teacher training and K-12 outreach through partnerships with higher education institutions; establish a program with Peabody School of Education for area studies and language training for future teachers; create virtual classrooms to expand LCTL offerings to MSIs; and scale up the One Vanderbilt in Guatemala model to Brazil and other regions of Latin America.[451] The center also intended to create a visiting resource professor program and create more study abroad opportunities, while also contending with the challenges of keeping enough professional staff to keep up with the center's growth and continuing to support indigenous language teaching with the possibility that anthropology would pull away from supporting it.[452] Further professional school collaborations were a large goal in this period, including the expansion of the graduate certificate program to law and medicine, the creation of a joint MA in Latin American studies and Masters of Public Health, and collaboration with Peabody.[453] The center at this point had particular strengths in Brazil, Central America, the Andes, and the Black Atlantic.[454]

In 2017, the center broke ground for the Latin American Garden. Dickins de Girón was the driving force behind the garden's creation and its continued existence. Dickins de Girón wrote the original proposal to obtain the land for the garden in 2017 following conversations with colleagues at the University of Georgia, who offered to donate plants from their Latin American Ethnobotanical Garden.[455] The ethnobotanical garden originally hosted

49 culturally significant plants from the Latin American and Caribbean region, reflecting areas where the center was especially strong. The center invited students, faculty, staff, and the community to take part in the planting on May 10, 2017.[456] UGA's Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute's ethnobotanical garden donated the majority of the plants, brought to campus by Dickins de Girón. These plants include important food crops, sages, agaves, cassava, and others.[457]

The garden has since served as a teaching tool for the center, both with university students and K-12 educators and their students. The center hosts professional development workshops featuring the garden, including one in 2017 for educators that discussed the use of plants in pre-Colombian and colonial periods, and holds tours of the garden for student groups and Vanderbilt courses.[458] In 2020, the garden received an improvement grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, also applied to by Dickins de Girón, supporting construction of a fence around the garden and the purchase of permanent name plates for the plants, each with a QR code linked to a CLAS database.[459] Dickins de Girón gives several tours of the garden each fall, and in Fall 2025 created a new course centered around the garden, LACX 2016: Cultivating the Americas, that examines the history and cultures of the Americas through the lens of plants.[460]

The center received its fourth NRC grant in 2018, the last grant as the Center for Latin American Studies.[461] Although the center continued to receive NRC funding after this grant, it did so as the newly minted CLACX, the current era of the center's history. The center's strategic plan for this fourth grant, from 2018 to 2022, focused on building capacity in Latin American studies on campus and at partner institutions and increasing access to knowledge produced on campus. The center proposed expanding on collaborations with Tuskegee and Meharry Medical College to provide access to language training and Latin American field sites, and to include Tennessee State University in these collaborations; offering Haitian Creole language instruction and piloting Quechua language instruction; starting a joint degree program and teacher training initiatives with Peabody; and introducing LAS language and area studies content in nontraditional areas under the One Vanderbilt in Latin America model.[462] The center put these objectives simply in the last NRC report of this period: partnering with MSIs, expanding critical languages, collaborating with colleges of education and providing teacher training, and collaborating with professional schools.[463]

In 2020, with the rest of the world, the center's activities were seriously reduced with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. During this period, the center shifted much of its programing to virtual platforms, including virtual professional development workshops and a

book club for educators.[464] Several other planned conferences, research grants, and awards were pushed back to the 2022 to 2023 academic year, and the center carried over significant amounts of NRC funds between years due to pauses in programming.[465] Also in 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, the center moved from Buttrick Hall, where it had been for over 15 years, to its new home in 220 Garland.[466] The same academic year, in the spring of 2021, Celso Castilho became the new director of the center. This followed nearly two decades of successful leadership under Fischer, who advanced the center through a series of successful NRC grants and a vibrant program that brought together entities across campus in collaboration.[467] In the fall of 2021, the center combined with the Latino and Latina Studies Program (next section) and took on its current form as Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies (CLACX).

The Center's Academic Activities

The center's enrollments in the undergraduate Latin American studies major and minor grew greatly over the first years of the NRC period, although later in this period students increasingly gravitated toward the Latino and Latina studies Program.[468] Especially with the rise of dual degree programs throughout this era and the opening of the graduate certificate program to all schools, the number of graduate students affiliated with the center rose substantially. From 2009 to 2014, the center awarded 66 certificates to graduate students, and by 2014, the number of doctoral and professional students with an LAS focus was over 200.[469] Throughout the entirety of this period, the number of faculty affiliated with the center rose. In Spring 2011, the center had over 100 affiliated faculty members in 11 departments and 9 schools.[470] By 2014, the number of faculty working on Latin America had grown by 25 percent.[471] In 2019, 16 percent of College of Arts and Science faculty were affiliated with the center, a huge academic concentration on Latin America.[472]

Early in the center's time as an NRC, the faculty considered whether the language requirement was a hurdle to enrollments. In 2007, noting that the center only had three minors, the steering committee pointed to the two-language requirement for the minor and proposed changing it to a single language. The committee also proposed including Mayan languages, a nod at the increasing offerings for indigenous language study.[473] However, by the Spring of 2009, the center had increased its number of minors to 11.[474]

By the end of the 2000s, the core departments of the center were anthropology, history, political science, and Spanish and Portuguese, continuing to reflect the investments in

anthropology, political science, and Portuguese over the past decades. The strongest regional focuses were in Brazil, Mayan Central America, the Andes, and Afro-Latin populations.[475] Vanderbilt's anthropology department continued to focus mostly on Latin America.[476] Tom Dillehay joined the anthropology department as a very visible figure in Andean archaeology, and he shifted the department's hiring focus to the Andean world.[477] In 2010, the center noted that it was a national leader in Portuguese and indigenous language instruction, and had faculty expertise in Brazil, the Maya, the Andes, and Afro-descendent populations.[478]

The center began offering a Brazilian studies minor in the fall of 2013. The minor was approved in Spring 2011 alongside a new course, Introduction to Brazil.[479] The new minor required 15 hours in coursework with Brazilian content, including intermediate Portuguese and Introduction to Brazil.[480] In another continued commitment to Brazil, the center continued to host Brazil Week throughout this period (and up to the present). In the 2012 Brazil Week, an interdisciplinary delegation from the University of São Paulo came to Vanderbilt. CLAS organized a capoeira demonstration, soccer tournament, and a night of Portuguese poetry, with 422 people attending events over the course of the week.[481] In June 2011, Vanderbilt hosted the Pre-Departure Orientation for Fulbright English Teaching Assistants, directed by Eakin.[482]

Several other academic programs and student organizations started in the mid-2010s. In 2015, students founded a new cultural association, the Latin American and Caribbean Vanderbilt Student Association.[483] Two years later in 2017, partially as a part of increased attention to the country through new offerings of Haitian Creole, the center began hosting Haiti Week.[484] Vanderbilt also joined the Consortium of Advanced Studies Abroad (CASA) in this period, a study abroad consortium with several other leading research universities. In 2016, Vanderbilt was a founding member for the Havana, Cuba program for CASA, which opened in the fall of that year.[485]

Despite its importance for introducing undergraduate students to the Latin American studies major, there were some challenges to the core Introduction to Latin America course. Eakin said it was an ongoing difficulty to find someone to teach the class because generally faculty prefer to teach in their own disciplinary field. He also pointed to one of the larger challenges of a program compared to a department: that there was no faculty specifically in Latin American studies and the center instead had to draw on faculty from other departments. This required the center to work closely with departments and faculty to persuade them to release a professor to teach the course. Eakin said Frank Robinson taught the intro course for much of this period, but when he was not teaching it, it remained an ongoing problem of how

to staff the class. The history department generally supplied many faculty members to the center and the LAS program, often one person to co-teach the research seminar with Paula Covington, one to teach the intro course, and a third for another LAS course.[486]

The center hosted a number of academic events on campus throughout this period, too many to list in entirety. Among some of the notable speakers were a visit from the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú in 2008, a visit from the former president of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, in 2009, and a talk on "Poetry, Politics, and the First Latin American Pope" by Nicaraguan poet and priest Ernesto Cardenal in 2015.[487] Starting in the 2010–2011 academic year, the center introduced yearlong themes around which to organize its visiting speakers and events. These themes included "Liberation Theology in Latin America" and "Afro-Latin America: Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Representations."[488] These yearlong themes were only a temporary addition to the center's programming. The center also hosted a number of conferences and policy series, among them the 43rd Annual Midwest Conference on Andean and Amazonian Archaeology and Ethnohistory in 2015, a Third Wave Coffee Symposium in 2016, and a policy series on Central America beginning in 2017.[489]

The center also began a visiting resource professor program during the second NRC grant. In Fall 2011, the Frist Art Museum and the center co-hosted María Magdalena Campos-Pons, a Cuban-born artist whose work looked at the history of the slave trade with photographs, multi-media installations, and performance pieces and who later took a permanent position in Vanderbilt's Art Department.[490] Her exhibits were featured both at the Frist and in the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery.[491] The center temporarily paused the visiting resource professor program with funding cuts in the second half of the second NRC grant, then reinaugurated it in Fall 2015, hosting Luis Paulo Rosenberg.[492] In October 2018, the center hosted Mexican experimental composer/performer/visual artist Guillermo Galindo for a month in partnership with the Art, Music, and Media program.[493] The center changed the program in 2020 to the CLAS Distinguished Lectureship, where departments could nominate and then invite a leader in their discipline.[494]

Trans-Institutional Collaborations at Vanderbilt

One of the center's main initiatives during this period was collaboration with other schools and programs at Vanderbilt. Some of these collaborations began while the center was still an undergraduate NRC (or even in the years before), including with Peabody, the Business School, Nursing, Medicine, and Law.[495] However, the Vanderbilt-wide

administrative shift in the early 2010s to push for more cross-college programming further opened the door to these opportunities. Vanderbilt instituted grants to support trans-institutional program building, which many center faculty received. The administration's hope was to push for interdisciplinary approaches to prepare students to go out into the world with more than one perspective and to help address the siloing of knowledge in the university.[496] Dickins de Girón said that the trans-institutional programs came much more from the university mandate than the Title VI world but went over very well with the NRC grant. Many of the center's evaluators commented that the professional school collaborations were unique to Vanderbilt's NRC, particularly with the Medical and Nursing schools.

The center's graduate certificate program was one significant means to engage with graduate students in other schools. The center had reactivated the program in 2003, and throughout the NRC period the center expanded it to include more schools. By 2017, the program was open to graduate students in all schools.[497] Dickins de Girón said that the strongest collaborations were with the Owen Graduate School of Management, LAPOP, and the Vanderbilt Medical Center.[498] Several other programs, including joint degree programs with the Masters of Public Health program, started in this period but ended with the end of the LAS MA program in Fall 2023.[499] Outside of the main school collaborations, several organizations were additionally housed under the center. In 2007, the Institute for Coffee Studies, founded in 1999 and directed by Peter Martin, was moved to CLAS.[500] The center also housed the secretariat of the Brazilian Studies Association, the InterAmerican Health Alliance, Voices from Our America, ConexiónGuatemala, and the Guatemala Scholars Network.[501]

The School of Medicine, School of Nursing, and Institute for Global Health

By 2007, the center had growing partnerships with the School of Medicine, leading to the establishment of a joint facility in Guatemala. The center sponsored Spanish language and cultural competency training for medical students and began working with the School of Medicine to include medical students in research projects in Latin America.[502] In the summer of 2007, the center sponsored a panel discussion on the Costa Rican health care system for medical personnel and the public.[503] In 2012, the center first implemented a new course in VUMC's curriculum on Spanish language and cultural competency training for third and fourth year medical students. Another program also placed medical students in rural clinical sites in Guatemala with Francisco Marroquín University.[504] Additionally, the Central

American Immersion in Science course for third- and fourth-year medical students gave students the opportunity to conduct research in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.[505] The course combined clinical experience on infectious diseases with social science curriculum on Central America.[506]

The center also began working with the Vanderbilt Children's Hospital and the Shalom Foundation to establish a permanent facility in Guatemala City.[507] CLAS, Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, and the Shalom Foundation jointly purchased a surgery center in Guatemala City and renovated it, with the first group of biomedical engineering students going to work on the center in spring of 2009.[508] The Moore Pediatric Surgery Center opened in 2011. In the spring of 2013, Vanderbilt opened a field station at the surgery center. The field station supported 13 projects, including programs on pediatric surgery, the study of Mayan languages, and small-scale coffee production.

In the spring of 2008, the center began working with the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health and the InterAmerican Health Alliance (IAHA) as the IAHA raised funds to support a pediatric clinic in rural Guatemala, Primeros Pasos.[509] IAHA was founded by a Vanderbilt alumnus and medical student, Brent Savoie. By 2009, CLAS provided facilities and support for IAHA to officially make Vanderbilt its home base.[510] In 2010, in collaboration with Primeros Pasos, the Shalom Foundation, and the HARP Foundation, the center worked on the Mani+ Project, a project to provide a locally sourced, peanut-based product to combat childhood malnutrition in Guatemala founded by the center's director Edward Fischer.[511] Primeros Pasos continues to serve as the base for service-learning trips with the Institute for Global Health and opportunities for School of Nursing students to work with local midwives.[512]

The center's collaboration with the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health grew out of the collaboration on projects in Guatemala to the offering of a joint degree program. The center began developing a joint Master's in Latin American studies/Master's in Public Health (MA/MPH) in the early 2010s.[513] Dickins de Girón said she worked with Marie Martin in the Institute for Global Health to draft the dual degree program.[514] The center introduced the three-year dual degree program in Fall 2014, which required students to write a thesis and conduct a practicum in a Latin American country.[515] The goal of the program was to prepare students for a career in global health and give them the social and cultural knowledge to best use that global health knowledge among Latin American populations in the U.S. and abroad.[516]

Starting in 2016, the center provided Spanish language instruction for students in Nursing carrying out projects in Latin American countries, part of a larger effort to provide language training to graduate students in other schools.[517] The course started as only medical Spanish but introduced a cultural component in 2017 to become the Central America Seminar. Chalene Helmuth and Dickins de Girón co-taught the class, respectively teaching the medical Spanish component and the cultural component.[518] This medical Spanish instruction was also expanded to include students at Meharry Medical College starting in the fall of 2018. The course included faculty from the School of Nursing, who provided a nursing perspective and oversight for the qualitative improvement project that Nursing students participated in; these faculty included Natasha McClure, Shelza Rivas, and Manola McCain.

The Owen School of Management

The center began offering a joint degree with the Owen Graduate School of Management (an MA/MBA) in the mid-1990s. At the time of application for the second NRC grant, the center was in the process of establishing a joint degree program with the Graduate Program in Economic Development.[519] In 2012, Owen also began to offer the Americas MBA program. In this two-year program, students studied management issues at Vanderbilt, the University of São Paulo Business School, and the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico. In the first year of the program, Eakin travelled with students to Brazil.[520]

The center worked with Bart Victor at Owen to develop the Project Pyramid course in Guatemala in 2010. The course, which originally enrolled students from the Divinity, Law, Education, and Business professional schools, had students work on economic development projects on campus and then put these projects into practice during a week-long trip to Guatemala over spring break.[521] Some of the projects in the first iteration of the course included a microfinance housing program, sustainable production of a nutritional supplement in Guatemala (Mani+), and public relations development for a nonprofit clinic serving a rural indigenous population.[522] Later, in December 2019, Owen began offering an accelerator course in Guatemala. The development of the course was fully funded by Owen, which chose Guatemala as the site due to Vanderbilt's substantive connections in the country.[523]

The center also supported language instructions for Owen students, as it did for many of the graduate schools. In 2015, although it was not through a formal course, the center supported Portuguese language instructions for students in the Business School with NRC funds.[524] Then in 2016, the center began providing Spanish language instruction for students

in Business carrying out projects in Latin American countries, also supported by NRC funds.[525]

Peabody School of Education

The center's main collaboration with the Peabody School of Education was a dual-degree program started in the mid-2010s. In 2010, the center began a Certificate in Latin American Studies for Peabody students. It additionally provided training for Peabody faculty to incorporate more LAS content into courses, and co-sponsored workshops and events with the education school.[526] Then in the mid-2010s, the center saw an increase in education graduate students focusing on Latin America. Thus, in the 2016–2017 academic year, the center worked toward developing a dual degree with the International Education and Policy Management program.[527] The center and Peabody piloted the three-year dual degree (MA/MEd) on educational policy with knowledge of historical and contemporary perspectives on Latin America in Fall 2017.[528] Additionally, by 2016, the center offered degree programs in public policy and leadership with Peabody and worked to find internships and careers for students with expertise in Latin America.[529]

The Blair School of Music

The center began organizing several collaborations with the Blair School of Music in the late 2010s. In 2017, the center supported faculty from Blair for travel to Costa Rica and Cuba. At the time, the center had three faculty in music with strong ties to Latin America who were introducing regional content into courses and performances.[530] That year the center additionally helped develop a Maymester course in Cuba for music students.[531] In the Spring of 2021, Tom Verrier, the director of Vanderbilt's Wind Ensembles, organized a virtual international concert. The concert included bands from Colombia, Costa Rica, and Argentina.[532] Several other faculty supported programming and classes connected to Latin America at Blair during this period as the number of center affiliated faculty at the school grew and the center and Blair collaborated to create ¡BLAIR!, Blair's Latin American Initiatives and Resources program.

Collaborations with Other Universities

Especially from the second NRC grant cycle on, encouraged by the priorities outlined by the NRC funding and as something center members felt passionate about, collaborations with other universities became one of the center's priorities, with a focus on HBCUs and other MSIs. Dickins de Girón said that these MSI collaborations fell under her responsibilities as executive director.[533] Starting in 2011, CLAS made a larger effort to establish partnerships with regional HBCUs. By 2012, CLAS had reached out to Fisk University, Spelman College, and Tuskegee University.[534]

The center's first main collaboration with an HBCU was with Fisk University. During the first grant period starting in 2006, the center taught several courses at Fisk as part of outreach to local colleges without Latin American studies programs.[535] Later, CLAS staff and faculty worked with faculty and students at Fisk to organize a Festa Junina, a holiday tradition in the northeast of Brazil. It was first held in March 2013 to celebrate Brazilian language and culture.[536] The Festa Junina became an annual collaboration, where students prepared dances in advance and students, faculty, and community members were in attendance.[537] In 2017, the universities held the Festa Junina at the Nashville Farmer's Market, further bringing the celebration into the community.[538] Vanderbilt also began offering Portuguese at Fisk, especially with the arrival of Diogo Oliveira do Espiritu Santo, Vanderbilt's Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant in the 2015–2016 academic year.[539] These language collaborations are discussed in further detail in the LCTL section below.

In 2012, CLAS began collaborating with Tuskegee. This collaboration (and those with other regional HBCUs) lay the groundwork for the center to later begin its CLACX Consortium for Latin American Studies in the South (CCLASS). Dickins de Girón said Vanderbilt's partnership with Tuskegee was one of the first MSI partnerships, and much of it began as outreach to K-12 educators who lived in Macon Country, where Tuskegee is located. Relationship building lay the groundwork for this collaboration. Dickins de Girón pointed to her main colleague at Tuskegee, Rhonda Collier, an alum of Vanderbilt who maintained strong relationships with Landers and Fitz. In 2012, Landers went to Tuskegee to present on her research with the SSDA and on Brazil. The center later showed the *Maestra* film at Tuskegee. Dickins de Girón said the film, about literacy campaigns in Cuba, was especially impactful for educators in Macon County as there had been a literacy campaign at Tuskegee. She said one of the interesting parts of doing the same workshops in both

Nashville and Tuskegee has been seeing the different impacts on the community that resulted from different contexts.[540]

From 2012 to 2016, the main focus of the Vanderbilt-Tuskegee collaboration was hosting professional development workshops for educators at Tuskegee.[541] In 2013, Vanderbilt collaborated with Tuskegee and Meharry Medical College to organize a panel on similarities between syphilis studies in the U.S. and Guatemala. A speaker from Tuskegee talked about failures in bioethics in the Alabama syphilis experiments and a speaker from the Vanderbilt School of Medicine talked about similar failures in Guatemala. 55 people attended the panel, including Meharry and Vanderbilt medical students.[542] In November 2016, CLAS and Tuskegee hosted a workshop called "Zora Neale Hurston in Latin America," led by Collier (Tuskegee) and Tiffany Ruby Patterson (Vanderbilt).[543] Later, the Vanderbilt-Tuskegee collaboration grew into Portuguese offerings, discussed in the LCTL section below.

The center began collaborating with Tennessee State University in 2012. In October of that year, Vanderbilt and TSU collaborated to bring the Colombian musical group Explosión Negra to Nashville, where it performed at TSU and visited Vanderbilt classrooms.[544] Several years later the universities jointly hosted a photography exhibit and a teacher workshop on Cuba.[545] In 2017, Vanderbilt, TSU, Belmont, and the Centro Colombo-Americano in Medellín co-hosted an international summit with 40 representatives from institutions in Colombia and the U.S. to develop academic ties and strengthen existing partnerships.[546] The Global Pathways Summit, held in February of that year, intended to both develop institutional partnerships and increase international opportunities for MSI and regional college students. In November 2020, CLAS co-hosted a virtual symposium with the International Studies Consortium of Georgia at UGA, "Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching About Diversity in the Caribbean Basin." Nearly 50 educators attended the symposium, from nine MSIs and several other higher education institutions.[547]

One important recent expansion of these MSI collaborations is the Global Studies Symposium. In January 2020, CLAS and Florida International University's Kimberly Green Latin America and Caribbean Center hosted the first Global Studies Symposium, with 40 MSI and community college faculty and administrators. The symposium provided a space to discuss internationalizing curriculum.[548] Dickins de Girón, who organized the symposium together with Liesl Picard, associate director FIU's center, said the symposium brings together faculty and administrators from MSIs, community colleges, and tribal colleges and provides a space for them to share pedagogical practices. The funding for the symposium comes from NRCs from all different world regions and they support faculty from the

different institutions to attend.[549] Members of the Global Studies Symposium in the past have said it is a unique space to have peer-to-peer conversations and share challenges, institutional barriers, and solutions as faculty at MSIs and community colleges.[550] The symposium is held every other year, with the third hosted at FIU in January 2024.

The center has also had several collaborations with non-MSI universities. Vanderbilt has worked with Tulane to coordinate the selection process and award ceremony for the Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature.[551] CLAS also created the InDigital Latin American Conference with Middle Tennessee State University, first held in 2015. The conference explored the engagement of Latin American indigenous people with digital media.[552] The two universities held a second conference in 2017, then partnered with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage to host the third in 2019.[553] That partnership has continued with the 2023 and 2025 InDigital conferences held in D.C.

Language Instruction

With NRC funds, the center built up its language programs in Portuguese and indigenous languages, often in collaboration with other universities. The center also worked to make Portuguese and Spanish language instruction available to more professional students at Vanderbilt.[554] Earl Fitz said that one of the requirements of the NRC grants was that indigenous America was not left out per the Title VI (FLAS) emphasis on Less and Least Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs), which pushed Vanderbilt to offer more indigenous language instruction.[555] As part of one of the NRC priorities in the 2010s, collaboration with other NRCs, Vanderbilt's center joined the Consortium for Latin American Studies Programs, which helped CLAS to network and develop more institutional collaborations, especially in language instruction. Dickins de Girón pointed to two major language programs at the center during this period—the Mayan Language Institute, founded in 2014 by CLAS and the Tulane Stone Center, which brought together the University of Chicago's K'iche' program and Tulane's Kaqchikel program, and the Summer in Brazil Portuguese language program, started by CLAS and the Tulane Stone Center in the 2011–2012 academic year.[556] These programs, in addition to academic year offerings and virtual language collaborations with other universities, are discussed below.

Academic Year Language Programs

While receiving NRC funding, the center further built up the Portuguese program after the hirings of Fitz and Emanuelle Oliveira-Monte in the late 1990s and early 2000s to rebuild the program. In Fall 2007, the center used NRC funds to pay for part of the hiring of a new senior lecturer in Portuguese, Marcio Bahia.[557] Eakin emphasized the importance of this senior lecturer position, as the person who teaches the intro classes, organizes the film festival, and helps to initially bring students into the program.[558] Enrollments in Portuguese continued to grow, especially with the introduction of the Brazilian studies minor in 2013.[559] Benjamin Legg joined the Portuguese department as the new lecturer in 2017 and took over organization of the Brazil Week and Festa Junina events.[560] Although the center originally paid for part of Legg's salary with the NRC grant, Vanderbilt took over full support within a year as part of a continued commitment to the Portuguese program.[561]

Fitz stated that throughout this time, Brazil remained at the forefront of the center's work, especially as it grew in importance hemispherically and globally. Fitz said that new courses were called for in Portuguese, and undergraduate and graduate students generally desired a shift from literature courses to courses focused on language proficiency. The Portuguese department developed the Composition and Conversation course, which was specifically designed to create a serious level of fluency in reading, speaking, and writing among students. Oliveira-Monte developed a class on Brazilian film and pop culture after culture classes were identified as one area for growth in the program, with students desiring a class that would tell them what they would be met with getting off the plane in Brazil. This course, Portuguese through Pop Culture, was first offered in the fall of 2008.[562] Fitz also spoke to how, due to the size of the department, Portuguese often combines undergraduate and graduate students in the same class, providing graduate students with additional reading lists tailored to their particular interests. Fitz said that combining these levels creates a challenge of giving undergraduates the attention they need even while doctoral students have more specific questions about content and texts. However, he said undergraduates reflect very positively on the experience, saying they learn immensely through being in the same classes as graduate students.[563]

Vanderbilt's main indigenous language offering throughout this period was K'iche' Mayan. The center introduced the academic year K'iche' Mayan program in 2006, led by a Maya linguistics professor (Sergio Romero, in anthropology). The center used NRC funding to bring a native K'iche' speaker from Guatemala, Manuel Tahay, to Vanderbilt for the spring

semesters.[564] The courses gave student three hours of class time and two one-hour one-on-one sessions a week to practice conversation skills.[565] The center originally planned to offer courses in Yucatec Mayan starting in the 2008–2009 academic year, but the instructor Pierre Robert Colas was tragically murdered.[566] In 2011, Vanderbilt introduced a complete two-year sequence in K'iche' Mayan instruction. It went on to expand this instruction with other universities through a distance learning collaborative.

The center piloted virtual classroom technologies in Spring 2014, and during the third NRC grant period it planned to use these technologies to expand academic year LCTL offerings at the professional schools and for students at MSI partner institutions.[567] Vanderbilt first piloted a distance learning collaborative in K'iche' Mayan with the University of Texas.[568] The center hoped to expand virtual collaborations to eventually provide access to Haitian Creole, Quechua, and Nahuatl.[569] While Vanderbilt had planned to develop curriculum and offer Quechua during the second NRC grant, due to a reduction in NRC funding it was unable to do so.[570] The center also offered a summer program in Classical and Modern Nahuatl in partnership with the Yale University Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies for a time. Vanderbilt hosted the program in the summer of 2011, which offered beginning, intermediate, and advanced Nahuatl.[571]

Vanderbilt next entered into a partnership with Duke, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Virginia to offer K'iche' Mayan. The introductory course in Fall 2015 had 17 students in virtual classrooms.[572] Vanderbilt constructed a classroom from which to teach these virtual partnerships in Calhoun 335.[573] Mareike Sattler taught the K'iche' classes and adapted her teaching to this hybrid environment, where some students were in the classroom and others at a distance, long before the Covid-19 era of Zoom. In the first year of instruction, 17 students enrolled in Elementary K'iche' I and 11 students in Elementary K'iche' II, significant enrollment numbers for indigenous language study.[574] Starting in Fall 2015, Vanderbilt students could study Haitian Creole with Jacques Pierre at Duke through the virtual classroom collaboration.[575] In the 2019–2020 academic year, to complement this virtual Haitian Creole instruction, the center used NRC funds to support an in-person teaching assistant.[576]

Portuguese Instruction at Fisk and Tuskegee

As mentioned in the section on university collaborations above, the center offered language instruction at several regional universities. In 2015, the center began working with

Fisk University to offer intermediate Portuguese instruction. This collaboration later extended to Tuskegee. In the 2015–2016 academic year, Vanderbilt received a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, Diogo Oliveira do Espiritu Santo, who taught Portuguese at Fisk and developed online Portuguese modules.[577] Vanderbilt applied to Fulbright specifically to support Portuguese language teaching at Fisk.[578] Then in 2016, Rhonda Collier (the center's main connecting faculty point at Tuskegee) and Dickins de Girón discussed offering Portuguese at Tuskegee with a focus on Afro-Brazilian literature and culture and the goal of getting students to an intermediate level so they could apply for FLAS fellowships and spend a summer abroad in Brazil. In the summer of 2019, NRC funds provided support for Portuguese lecturer Legg to develop an online learning Portuguese course with Tuskegee.[579] In the first online course taught by Legg in Fall 2019, eight students enrolled.[580] In 2020, Vanderbilt expanded the offerings to both Portuguese 101 and 102, with Angela Rodriguez Mooney teaching both.[581]

The Mayan Language Institute

The Mayan Language Institute grew out of the center's collaboration with the University of Chicago for a K'iche' Mayan summer field school. During the first NRC grant, the center originally proposed a summer field school in Ecuador but then pivoted to support a summer intensive K'iche' Mayan program co-organized with the University of Chicago in 2008.[582] The first session of this field school was held in the summer of that year.[583] Starting in 2011, the University of New Mexico was also involved with planning and hosting the summer institute. In Summer 2012, the institute was held in Nahualá, Guatemala, and taught by faculty from Vanderbilt, the University of Kentucky, the University of New Mexico, and the University of Texas.[584] During the first and second NRC grant periods, the K'iche' Mayan program was held every other year.[585]

Dickins de Girón and Valerie McGinley, the associate director at the Tulane Stone Center for Latin American Studies, eventually discussed combining the two programs into the Mayan Language Institute. Dickins de Girón highlighted how combining the programs and the efforts of many universities helped to share resources, because enrollments in indigenous languages often waxed and waned.[586] The center at the time noted that this combination was a strategic effort to pool resources and allowed the universities to meet the NRC priority of working with other NRCs. It also allowed the NRCs to offer K'iche' Mayan every year rather than every other year.[587]

Thus, in the summer of 2014, the center debuted the Mayan Language Institute, a six-week intensive language program for the study of K'iche' or Kaqchikel Mayan. The institute was a joint endeavor by Vanderbilt, Tulane, the University of New Mexico, the University of Texas, and the University of Chicago, and combined the University of Chicago's K'iche' program with Tulane's decades-long Kaqchikel program.[588] In the original program, students first spent three weeks in Antigua, Guatemala, attending morning classes at the University of Texas' Casa Herrera. Then, for the second three weeks the program went to a K'iche' speaking community in the western highlands, Nahualá, and students lived with host families where they were immersed in the daily life of the community.[589] Mareike Sattler, in Vanderbilt's anthropology department, was instrumental to the development and success of the K'iche' program, serving as its director for several years.[590] The institute remains strong today: Dickins de Girón said that in 2024 there were twelve students signed up to study K'iche', a significant number for the program.[591]

The Summer in Brazil Program

The center founded its second significant summer language program, the Summer in Brazil Portuguese program, in 2011. Dickins de Girón said she and McGinley flew to São Paulo together in 2011 to meet with faculty at Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) to explore the idea of developing the Summer in Brazil program.[592] The six-week immersion FLAS-approved program was set up so faculty from PUC-SP taught Portuguese language and Tulane and Vanderbilt faculty, alternating years, taught a course on Brazilian culture.[593] Although PUC-SP was the original partner of the program, it now partners with CET Academic Programs.[594] In the summer of 2011, Vanderbilt and Tulane began offering the program. It initially had 19 graduate and undergraduate students from Vanderbilt, Tulane, Duke, Columbia, Rutgers and the University of New Mexico.[595] Emory began collaborating with Tulane and Vanderbilt on the Brazilian Language and Culture program in 2013.[596]

Enrollments only grew with time and the program became highly recognized for Portuguese study for FLAS recipients. Dickins de Girón said the program started with a cap at 20 students and has expanded to now have over 30 people attending each year, with the number of applications requiring the program to turn away some applicants each year, indicating the positive reputation the program has developed since its establishment. Faculty in Portuguese at Vanderbilt and Tulane, the program's Brazilian partners, and its smooth administration are to credit for the success of the program.[597]

K-12 Outreach

Although the K-12 outreach program existed before the center received NRC funding, CLAS leaned into it much more after gaining NRC status. The NRC grants provided the center with the funds to hire an outreach coordinator, starting in the 2006–2007 academic year, which allowed it to expand this outreach program to educators.[598] The DOE emphasis on outreach by NRCs also explains the increased push for this program. Dickins de Girón said she believes the outreach and work with K-12 teachers was the biggest thing that shifted at the center with the new NRC status. The center first hired Sarah Birdwell as its outreach coordinator, who set up many of the first professional development workshops. She was succeeded by Claire González, who held the position from 2009 to 2014. González had previously taught Spanish at Father Ryan High School and Dickins de Girón said she came in with the experience and perspective of having been a teacher, which helped in growing the center's presence within Metro Nashville Public Schools.[599]

Following González, the outreach coordinator position was held by Jamie Lee Marks for a year, and then by Lisa Finelli. In 2017, Colleen McCoy was hired as the outreach coordinator and held the position until 2022. McCoy had just graduated with a MA from Peabody's program in International Education and Policy Management and was well-poised to evolve relationships in MNPS and beyond. McCoy was instrumental in developing a social media presence for the center and established the Educator Book Club that has remained an important way to connect with local educators and provide ongoing continuing education for them. She also deepened the center's outreach partnership with Tulane through her work as co-coordinator of the Américas Award (which was co-coordinated with Denise Woltering, Outreach Coordinator at Tulane) as well as summer professional development institutes for educators hosted in partnership with Tulane. In 2023, Luisa Mattos was hired as CLACX Program Coordinator, which included overseeing the center's educational outreach programs. Mattos brought a degree in education and a specialization in multicultural studies from the University of Brasilia, as well as a degree in business administration from Middle Tennessee State University, to the position. In the past two years, she has continued to expand and evolve the center's social media engagement and teacher education programs and has taken an active role in integrating Vanderbilt students and student organizations into K-12 outreach programming.[600]

Professional Development Workshops

Prior to the NRC grant, K-12 outreach mostly focused on providing speakers to K-12 schools. With the NRC grant, the focus shifted to teacher training and professional development workshops.[601] The center regularly hosted five to ten teacher workshops each academic year, ranging from workshops on foreign language teaching to cultural topics that teachers could bring into the classroom. In 2007, the center organized a week-long Mexico field school for teachers that took a group to Mexico City and Oaxaca to improve language skills, provide cultural experience, and work on lesson plan development.[602] This international institute lasted until 2009, when the center shifted its support to a local week-long archeoastronomy institute.[603] Teacher workshops were often integrated into other CLAS programs, like a conference on "LAS Maras: Street Gangs and Security in Central America and the United States" hosted by CLAS and the Washington Office on Latin America for teachers and law enforcement in 2008 and a workshop with the Frist Art Museum, "Connecting Cultures at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts," held in 2011.[604] LAPOP also partnered with the center for this outreach. In July 2016, four Hillsboro High School teachers collaborated with LAPOP on a unit where students worked with LAPOP data in math, history, and language classes. In February 2017, students used the LAPOP data to study social justice issues in Latin America and then presented their final projects at a CLAS event at Vanderbilt.[605]

CLAS expanded the reach of these K-12 workshops in the mid-2010s by hosting collaborative workshops at other institutions, like Tuskegee and Tulane.[606] The center also supported teacher travel to professional development workshops and institutes, both at Vanderbilt and other institutions, giving priority to MSI, public school, and disadvantaged school district teachers.[607] In the summer of 2015, Vanderbilt, Tulane, and the University of Georgia began hosting a four-year collaborative summer K-12 institute on Brazil. The first institute was held by Tulane from June 14–18, 2015.[608]

The center began hosting a professional development workshop for pre-service teachers with Peabody to prepare these teachers to work with diverse classrooms.[609] The first workshop, hosted in 2019, included presentations on contemporary issues in Central America, a panel led by the English Language Learning Coordinator of MNPS, and classroom strategies and resources. The workshop was the first of a series of workshops to prepare future teachers in regional education schools.[610] Due to Covid-19, the center suspended the program in 2020 but targeted pre-service teachers for other events.[611] With the

pandemic, the center's outreach programming moved online. In the summer of 2020, Vanderbilt, UGA, and Tulane hosted a virtual Summer Institute on Central America for educators across the country and in 2019 Colleen McCoy started an Educator Book Club, which shifted to a virtual format in 2020.[612]

ReadWorks

The center began a related educational partnership with ReadWorks in 2017. Dickins de Girón described ReadWorks as an educational technology non-profit that focuses on reading comprehension for K-8 students. The center reached out to ReadWorks and its staff and graduate students began to produce articles for their article-a-day series. All ReadWorks articles are offered online, open access to teachers, and come with a set of related reading comprehension questions. Dickins de Girón said that ReadWorks has been one of several activities that allows the center to have a strong national level impact.[613] Between 2017 and 2020, the center produced 80 articles for the organization.[614]

Beginning in 2023, ReadWorks has been interested in having the center produce authentic Spanish language texts, rather than translated ones. The idea is to create two related texts in English and Spanish, with some of the same words carrying over between the two, so that English learners can first read a text in Spanish, then carry over some of the related vocabulary to the text in English.[615] Chalene Helmuth in the Spanish department has been creating some of this content through her classes. Vanderbilt undergraduates, from Spring 2023 on, have created ReadWorks content in her classes, which allows students to have a real-world project while learning Spanish.[616]

Mayan Language Education

In recent years, the center and the Nashville community have recognized the increased need for Mayan language education in Middle Tennessee. In the late 2010s and 2020s, the center noted that it was often contacted by individuals and organizations in Tennessee and other states looking for Mayan language translators and interpreters.[617] The Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Office of English Learners first reached out to CLAS in 2018 for help with the rising number of Mayan speaking students, specifically to get more information on the culture and language of students.[618] By 2020, 25 percent of MNPS students were classified as English Learners, with a significant increase in students

speaking Mayan languages from 2018 forward.[619] CLAS began hosting a teacher workshop series on Central American and Mayan languages.[620] In 2021, MNPS and educators and community resource officers in the Metro Nashville Police Department consulted CLAS as the number of Mayan language speakers in Nashville grew.[621] The recognition of this need in Nashville, combined with the center's experience in providing Mayan language instruction over the past two decades, indicates one possible future direction of the center.

Outreach to Local Organizations

In addition to the center's other outreach efforts, CLAS built partnerships with community organizations throughout this period. Dickins de Girón said one other significant change that came with NRC funding was the increase in partnerships between the center and local cultural organizations, among them the Frist Art Museum, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens, Nashville Public Library, OZ Arts, Nashville Opera, and Nashville Children's Theater. She said the center is well respected in the Nashville community and that Vanderbilt is increasingly recognizing the center's role outside of the university.[622] Many of these community relationships were created through personal relationship building over years to establish a stronger presence by the center in the Nashville community.

In 2013, the center's strongest partnerships were with Cheekwood Botanical Gardens, the Frist Art Museum, and the Nashville Public Library.[623] The center went on to establish new relationships with the Symphony, Metro Parks, and Nashville Opera the following year.[624] Starting in the first NRC grant period, the center partnered with Cheekwood to host a Día de los Muertos celebration.[625] The center continues to partner with Cheekwood for this celebration. Around 2011, the center began a collaboration with the Nashville Public Library to support the creation of a puppet show based on the K'iche' Maya text, the *Popol Vuh*.[626] This marionette show, titled "The Amazing Twins: Ancient Maya Tales from the *Popol Wuj*," debuted in the fall of 2013.[627] It first performed on Vanderbilt's campus, then ran at the public library and visited local schools.[628] At the Frist Art Museum, the center partnered to organize lectures, talks, and teacher workshops in conjunction with exhibits connected to Latin America, including the 2012 exhibit "Exploring Art of the Ancient Americas: The John Bourne Collection" and the 2019 exhibit "Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera and Mexican Modernism."[629] When the Nashville Opera performed its first Spanish-language opera in 2015, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, CLAS worked with the opera to offer community events around the production.[630] In 2018, the center began a project with the Nashville Children's

Theatre to commission the development of a play adaptation of *Return to Sender*, one of the Américas Award book winners.[631] The play debuted in September 2019 and the center provided a curriculum guide for educators and participated in a talk back panel after an evening performance.[632]

The center supported many other cultural collaborations with community organizations, further building out its relationship to the Nashville community. The center cosponsored a performance of Ariel Dorfman's play "Death and the Maiden" with the People's Branch Theater in 2008.[633] It supported the production of the documentary *La Camioneta: The Journey of One American School Bus*, produced by LAS alumnus Mark Kendall, about a decommissioned school bus taken from the U.S. to Guatemala in 2013.[634] This documentary was later shown at teacher workshops and collaborations with other institutions and won several awards. Also in 2013, Helena Simonett, associate director of CLAS, and the Tennessee Arts Commission collaborated to invite a group of indigenous Yoreme dancers from Sinaloa, Mexico, for two performances of the ancient deer dance in Nashville.[635] During the 2014–2015 academic year, the center organized an interactive art exhibit with Notre Dame, the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery, and Western Kentucky University: "Art in Motion: Guayasamín's Ecuador Unframed." The exhibit included movable panels to represent conflicts and racial diversity in Ecuador.[636] The center collaborated with OZ Arts Nashville and the Global Education Center to bring the Companhia Urbana de Dança to Nashville during the 2019–2020 academic year. The dance troupe blended contemporary dance, hip hop, and Afro-Brazilian dance.[637] These and other community partnerships by the center were part of a larger effort to collaborate with the community and support the local arts during the NRC period.

THE LATINO AND LATINA STUDIES PROGRAM

The Latino and Latina studies (LATS) program was created by William Luis and Lorraine López following longstanding interest in developing a Latinx focused curriculum. Luis arrived at Vanderbilt in 1991 after directing the Latin American studies program at Binghamton University, and hoped to create a program that further included the Latino experience.[638] He said that over the next two decades, he tried to broaden Vanderbilt's curriculum by creating courses on slavery, Afro-Hispanics, and Latinx experiences.[639] These included a class jointly taught to Vanderbilt and Fisk University students on Afro-Hispanic literature and a Maymester on Latin American writers where students visited Puerto Rico, the

Dominican Republic, and Peru. During this period, Luis discussed establishing a Latino and Latina studies program with López, who also had a longstanding interest in the area. López and Luis submitted the program proposal in 2012.[640]

In this build-up toward the creation of the program, Luis brought the *Afro-Hispanic Review* to Vanderbilt in 2004. The *Review* would remain connected to the LATS program in the future as faculty and graduate students worked with both and the two cooperated on programming to bring the Nashville community onto campus. Luis partnered with the Bishop Johnson Black Cultural Center (BCC) to host the *Review*, further connecting the BCC to the Latino experience (the BCC had already begun to serve as a center for Afro-Hispanic students in the early 1990s).[641]

The program took a long time to develop and be approved, in part due to changing requirements and administrative leadership.[642] Luis explained that there was some administrative resistance to the creation of the LATS program, and the expansion of Latinx coursework overall. He pointed to the importance of the administrative landscape to the creation of new programs, and that it often depended on the current group of administrators and their support to create a new course of study.[643] By the time the program was established in the early 2010s, Gretchen Selcke said that it was clear there needed to be an academic program in Latino studies if Vanderbilt was going to serve its student population and also remain competitive as a top research institution in the field. She said by this point Vanderbilt was about ten years behind peer institutions, despite the booming Latino population in Middle Tennessee.[644]

In 2013, Vanderbilt approved the Latino and Latina studies program.[645] The mission statement of the new program stated that Latinos and Hispanics were an integral part of U.S. culture and history and the program intended to consider their experience, mainly in the U.S., but also in conversation across geographic boundaries and other disciplines.[646] It intended to consider Latino culture and identity through offerings in the history, English, Spanish and Portuguese, sociology, religious studies, American studies, Latin American studies, African American and diaspora studies, and women's and gender studies departments and programs.[647] In its proposal, the new program highlighted the difference between Latino studies and Latin American studies, recognizing that the two are often misconceived of as being the same but that the programs diverge linguistically, geographically, and ideologically.[648] Latin American studies focuses on histories and cultures outside the U.S. while Latino studies looks at people within the U.S. The program recognized that LAS was often better endowed than LATS, having historically received funding in the mid-20th century

during a period of increased interest in area studies and a turn outward to study other world regions (a period that the Institute for Brazilian Studies fell into), while LATS often did not have access to the same support as it came out of social movements and a push for better student and demographic representation in the late 20th century. The program recognized these ideological and historical differences between the creation of these two fields of study in its proposal to highlight the need for a space specifically for Latino studies on campus.[649]

In its proposal, LATS also recognized the increasing importance of Latino studies in the U.S., and especially at Vanderbilt. It stated that as of 2009, the U.S. had the second largest Hispanic population of any country (48.4 million), outranked only by Mexico, and noted the specific growth of Hispanic populations in the southeastern U.S., making scholarship on this population especially relevant to Vanderbilt.[650] The program also pointed to changing demographics at the school. From 2000 to 2009, Hispanic and Latino undergraduate students increased from 2.3 percent to 8.1 percent of the student body and graduate students increased from 1.5 to 3.9 percent. In 2006, only 2.5 percent of faculty members identified as Latino or Hispanic.[651]

The co-founders set up the program with Luis directing it for the first three years with assistance from López, then López directing it for the next three years with assistance from Luis.[652] Recognizing the diversity of departments contributing to its mission, the program had an advisory council made up of professors in sociology, history, Spanish, African-American and diaspora studies, Spanish and Portuguese, English, French, and Italian.[653] Two of Luis's graduate students, Gretchen Selcke and Elsa Mercado, helped organize the program and also served as assistant editors on the *Afro-Hispanic Review*.[654] Selcke joined the Vanderbilt faculty in 2015 and went on to take over as director of the program after López in 2019 until the merger of the program with the Center for Latin American Studies as CLACX.[655]

The new LATS major required 36 credit hours, among them LATS 201, Introduction to Latino and Latina Studies; SPAN 203, Introduction to Spanish and Spanish American Literature; ENGL 275, Latin-American Literature; and LATS 280, a senior seminar. Of the eight elective courses, or remaining 24 hours, the major required at least two from a Latino culture course group and two but no more than four from a historical context course group.[656] The program also introduced a minor with 18 credit hours of study.[657]

The goals of the program balanced academic objectives with a desire to provide more support for Latino students on campus. At the time of the program's founding, its short-term goals included implementation of the major and minor, promotion of the program through community partnerships and outreach to Latino and Hispanic students, establishment of

mentoring services for Latino and Hispanic students in all schools, development of a service-learning component for the program, development of graduate level seminars, and acquisition of office space and administrative support.[658] In the longer-term, the program hoped to create partnerships with departments to acquire faculty lines through joint appointments, inaugurate a student cultural space, attain distinction for the program, and create a permanent director position if funding became available.[659] One of the main difficulties of the program was the lack of faculty lines. As a program rather than a department, LATS had no dedicated faculty and had to pull professors from English, Spanish, Portuguese, and history. However, Selcke said that there were never any problems with course enrollments and students quickly became very loyal to professors in the program.[660]

One of the program's first goals was to initiate a graduate certificate in Latina and Latino studies.[661] The program did so in 2015. Selcke said it became increasingly important for graduate students in the humanities to show competency in Latino studies and that recently jobs in several fields for new faculty have indicated that this is an area they would ideally show knowledge in. The graduate certificate became a significant way for graduate students to show competency and become more successful in the academic job market.[662]

The program held many events with very little funding. LATS never had a dedicated administrative assistant or the same kind of budget that other programs did at their inception, but the program still supported a robust number of activities outside academics.[663] LATS brought Latino writers and scholars to campus, as well as many early career artists. The program took over the acknowledgement of Día de la Raza instead of Columbus Day at Vanderbilt. Selcke said this acknowledgement started around 2005, and in early iterations invited community leaders like the mayor of Nashville and various non-profit leaders.[664] She added that LATS was the first program to use local Latinx vendors for Latinx events, hire local musicians, and really think about the intersection of the community with the campus. As one marker of this intersection, Selcke said that very early on in the program community members started auditing classes in Latino and Latina studies.[665]

Much like the center, the LATS program worked to create partnerships with other programs and schools at Vanderbilt. Luis said that partnership was one of the major goals of the program in order to create a truly interdisciplinary experience.[666] The program approached the School of Medicine for a partnership, for a time proposed having members of the Law School teach classes, and brought the Owen School of Management into the program. LATS continued its collaborations with the BCC to center Afro-Latinx voices.[667] Luis stated that although the vision was to make a truly unique university-wide program,

LATS only got so far due to time constraints and the effort necessary to bring in other schools and departments before the program was joined with Latin American studies.[668]

From its outset, the LATS program also worked to serve Latino students on campus. LATS established a special graduation ceremony for undergraduate and graduate Latino students.[669] Selcke, who first organized the Latinx graduation ceremony in 2017 with Mercado, said they organized it after a student approached them hoping to have an event similar to the graduation ceremony that existed for Black students. The program also began hosting a Bienvenida to welcome Latinx students onto campus.[670] Selcke said that LATS was a place where students could always find an advisor for a Latinx student organization, and that it supported Café con Leche and Sabor Latino, two undergraduate Latinx student events, financially and through advising capacities. LATS also hosted post docs and incoming graduate students searching for connection both with people who might share their research interests and who shared their identity.[671]

The Latino and Latina studies program had little connection to the Center for Latin American Studies throughout this period, and at times this separation could be problematic. Selcke said the two programs shared a few events, but in general faculty were confused as to why events were not being shared. She commented that the programs were often run in a sort of siloed model of academia where they were kept separate.[672] Dickins de Girón echoed the idea that there was not much collaboration between the program and the center, and faculty in both entities were surprised when the university administration decided to merge the two programs. However, she added that despite the fact that they had not worked together much previously, they quickly worked to integrate degree programs, outreach activities, and student engagement under the new umbrella of CLACX.[673]

THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN, CARIBBEAN, AND LATINX STUDIES

The Creation of the CLACX Project

The current stage of the center's history is as the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies (CLACX). This new iteration of the center comes from the merger of the Center for Latin American Studies with the Latino and Latina studies program in the summer of 2021.[674] After directing the center for two decades since 2002, Ted Fischer stepped down as director and Celso Castilho stepped in as the new director of the center, bringing with him a new academic project.[675] Castilho said that in his perspective, the

creation of CLACX was a combination of happenstance and administrative changes pushed for by the Dean's Office.[676] Earl Fitz reflected this perspective, stating that the Dean's Office exerted pressure for the two entities to combine and consolidate.[677] However, as the new director, Castilho said his hope was to take what was broadly an administrative shift and use it to pose an intellectual question and project through a new course of study.[678]

The new project of CLACX considers the intersection of Latin American studies with Latino and Latina studies. Part of the reason Castilho took over as the new director of the center was his interest in exploring the intersection of these fields. Castilho said that when he applied for a university Chancellor's Fellowship, he highlighted that the development of new courses that created a greater conversation between Latino and Latin American studies was important to him. Following this, the Dean's Office discussed with Castilho how he would envision a combined program of the center and the Latino and Latina studies program, with consideration of how the two fields of study could be connected.[679] On becoming director, in his first "Director's Corner" in the *CLACX Year in Review*, Castilho wrote that for too long Latin American studies had not considered the U.S. Latino population, despite its exceeding the population of all Latin American countries except Brazil and Mexico. He hoped CLACX could lead new conversations on the relationships between Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean studies, and create a new course of study that combined the fields.[680]

As detailed above, Latin American studies, under the center, and Latinx studies, under the Latino and Latina studies program, had historically remained separate at Vanderbilt, so one of the first major projects of the center bringing together entities that had been separate for the past decade. There was some surprise at combining the programs from faculty in both entities. And in addition to this surprise, the programs did not have experience working with one another. Both Fitz and Marshall Eakin spoke to one of the biggest challenges of creating CLACX—getting separate entities to see themselves as a single connected community.[681] Castilho highlighted that much of the first undertaking of creating CLACX, especially in the summer of 2021, involved teambuilding to bring together two historically separate units. He emphasized the necessity of building up a culture of trust and relationships to make the center a single unified institution.[682] Castilho also highlighted the amount of institutional expertise and experience brought into CLACX when the two programs were combined. He pointed specifically to Gretchen Selcke and Avery Dickins de Girón, director and executive director of the two programs before the merger, and the experience and connections the two of them brought to the new merged center.[683] Fitz reiterated that CLACX is committed to integrating the fields of study, not homogenizing them, and creating an environment where people can

truly collaborate. But he highlighted the difficulty of having a large enough body of faculty that both want to undertake the project of a new course of study and have the tools to do so.[684]

There was no existing intellectual playbook of how to combine these two areas of study and part of the project of CLACX has been to consider how two historically separate fields can connect. Castilho said that Latino studies and Latin American studies, at the larger level of academia, have traditionally been separate areas of study in terms of their politics, origin, and focus. He emphasized that fields of study are historical and reflect particular moments and geopolitical situations.[685] In taking over leadership of CLACX, Castilho said he wanted to create a course of study that was more than just tacking U.S. Latinos onto Latin American studies curriculum. Rather, he hoped CLACX's new ideological project would consider Latin America and Latino studies in the 21st century context, with a historically high diaspora. Castilho added that part of CLACX's new project is recognition that a new combined course of study can be the basis for a larger conversation in higher education about how to study these topics.[686]

Several other faculty members highlighted the intersections of these fields and how their consideration in tandem allows for deeper understanding of both Latin American and Latinx experiences. Selcke said that it is increasingly indefensible to keep these fields separate because it is impossible to fully understand one without understanding the other. Crossing into the U.S. mainland does not make a person suddenly lose the entire historical trajectory of their nationality. Likewise, because of the extent of fluid migration, it is impossible to fully understand Latin America without understanding what is happening among people who identify as Latinx in the United States. Selcke added that rigidly defining territories and who studies what and how loses the huge opportunities available for collaboration between Latin American studies, Latinx studies, and Caribbean studies.[687] Dickins de Girón agreed that it is hard to consider Latinx studies without considering Latin America, and hard to consider Latin America without understanding Latinx populations in the U.S. She pointed to communities in Latin America that have a continued back-and-forth flow with the U.S., either of money or people. She said the new project of CLACX is not a loss of depth or content, but an integration and recognition of how intertwined these two fields are.[688]

The center's shift into CLACX reflects some ongoing changes occurring in the fields of Latin American studies and Latinx studies, despite the historic differences between them. Academia historically kept Latin American studies and Latinx Studies separate. Latin

American studies in part grew out of U.S. business and diplomatic interests, later scaled up with the Cold War and Cuban Revolution: overall, the field reflected U.S. geopolitical interests. On the other hand, Latino and Latina studies rose from social movements and students pushing for better representation. The field, born out of Chicano/a studies and Puerto Rican studies, has historically fallen much more into the realm of U.S. history than area studies.[689] However, in the last two years, a third of the job ads in Latin American history for tenured and tenure-track positions called for related teaching and research expertise in Latinx history. This shift may be in part related to demographic shifts on college campuses. Latinos now make up nearly 20 percent of the U.S. undergraduate student population. The number of Hispanic Serving Institutions has also risen dramatically, from 311 in 2011 to 571 in 2021. A Latin American diaspora of over 75 million worldwide presents another impetus for shifts in how these fields are considered.[690] Castilho pointed to several other programs engaging with these conversations—in the past five years, UCLA expanded its historic Latino studies department to become Latino and Central American studies, recognizing the new connections and conversations inherent in today's demographics. Rice, Emory, and Duke are considering similar questions at the program level.[691]

However, CLACX was not created solely in response to these higher education trends but is rather pursing a new intellectual idea and its implementation through classes and conversations. Part of the hope for CLACX is that it can be at the center of a growing conversation on the future of these fields of study.[692] Selcke said that the fields are increasingly in conversation and there is more institutional buy-in recognizing that academic siloing does not work. She perceives the future goals of CLACX as more aligned with where the fields are going and a more interdisciplinary approach to Latin American and Latino studies. She also said that CLACX is truly leading this shift, which is exciting. The center is considering these questions on academic fields in ways that acknowledge the contemporary context of social, racial, economic, and linguistic realities, both in Latin America and in the U.S.[693] Dickins de Girón said that there are not that many programs that are taking this leap yet, and CLACX is one of the only ones to try to create a real intellectual project out of the integration of the fields. She said that often when Latin American and Latinx studies programs combine under one entity, they remain separate at the major or certificate level. However, the center is trying to integrate these fields at the point of the degree.[694] At the degree level, the main focal point to explore the connection of these two fields is the new joint undergraduate major.

As the center works on the intellectual project of combining Latinx and Latin American studies, one focus has been to hire new faculty who are ready to engage with this project. Castilho said that when he became director of the center, he made it clear to the administration that what CLACX needed most was investment in teaching and research. CLACX has worked to hire faculty interested in the intersection of these disciplines and the academic project of how to create a new combined field of study.[695] The Dean's Office has supported CLACX with several hiring opportunities, specifically for three-year professorships. This included the hiring of Hilario Lomelí as a Mellon Assistant Professor of Latinx Studies (2022–2025) and of Sara Kozameh as an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Emerging Voices postdoctoral fellow.[696] CLACX has also reached out to other departments to encourage them to hire connected faculty who can contribute to its new academic project.[697] As evidenced throughout this history, part of creating a larger disciplinary shift requires having a concentration of people interested in a new academic project and willing to engage with it—thus CLACX has worked to build up this concentration of faculty.

NRC Grants as CLACX

As CLACX, the center has continued to receive NRC funding. In its 2022 NRC proposal, CLACX retained some of its former major initiatives while expanding into new areas that could promote its new institutional project. CLACX received a no-cost extension of the previous NRC grant, then in 2022 received its fifth NRC grant, remaining a comprehensive National Resource Center for Latin America.[698] The grant, combined with DOE FLAS funding, totaled $1.7 million for four years.[699] In the 2022 NRC grant application, CLACX laid out its plans to continue with previous initiatives and to expand its work with the CLACX Consortium for Latin American Studies in the South (CCLASS). The grant proposal focused around four main initiatives: the creation of CCLASS, expanded access to Afro-Latin American studies digital humanities, more K-12 outreach, and institutional partnerships between the Schools of Medicine and Music at Vanderbilt and universities in Peru and Colombia.[700] Additionally, CLACX aimed to expand training and curriculum at Vanderbilt through the creation of a Caribbean studies minor and increased offerings in Haitian Creole.[701] CLACX will apply for the next NRC grant in 2026.[702]

Part of the resistance to engagement with Latino studies before the joint project under CLACX was the idea that Latinx studies could not be part of the center's project while

applying to be a Latin American studies NRC. Castilho said that maintaining the NRC designation as CLACX in this most recent grant cycle illustrated that the center could expand its project while remaining a DOE center for Latin America. He emphasized that for him, what is most important is establishing a vision for the center and then finding funding mechanisms to enhance that vision, not creating a vision around grant priorities.[703]

Over the past decades, NRC funding has become more centered around students and outreach, and less geared toward research. This can create a difficulty in convincing university administration that the NRC designation is worth spending the time and energy to apply to. Eakin said that in the 1970s and 1980s, Vanderbilt shifted from being a mainly teaching institution to becoming a high-powered research institution that brings in outside funding. Deans are not always interested in the outreach efforts that come with NRC status; the focus is instead on increasing the quality of research and number of faculty publications. Thus, from the point of view of the administration, there can be some resistance to reapplying for NRC funding as most of the money is aimed at outreach and students and non-research initiatives. Eakin said the NRC funding in turn is the lifeblood of the center: it is what supports the center's staff and many of its events.[704] Part of the center's challenge is to continually demonstrate the benefit and prestige in Vanderbilt retaining the center's NRC status.

In 2023, the center relocated again while Garland Hall underwent renovation. CLACX temporarily moved to a suite in the Bryan Building, with plans to move back to Garland Hall in 2025.[705] CLACX was also awarded an internal Vanderbilt sesquicentennial grant in 2023, supporting the creation of this institutional history.[706]

The CLACX Academic and Curricular Project

The Combined Major

CLACX will soon introduce the new combined major on which the center's project is based. Castilho emphasized that it would have been easier to keep the two majors from before the merger and simply have CLACX exist as an umbrella organization, but that is not the academic project of the center.[707] A new major, LACX, will replace the two existing majors in LAS and LATS—the major has currently been in the works for several years and simply awaits a final vote by the curriculum committee.[708] Castilho said part of the delay in creating the new major is that the College of Arts and Science is rolling out a new curriculum

to be put in place by the 2025–26 academic year.[709] Selcke added that the fact that the major was developed during this larger curriculum shift allowed CLACX to plan all its courses based upon the new curriculum requirements, making it ready for rollout in the new context.[710]

The new LACX major will be based around two or three substantive courses that consider the intersection of Latin American and Latinx studies, and the rest of the major will draw from electives in many departments, similar to how the separate majors were previously structured.[711] Instead of first-year seminars, CLACX is considering creating 2000 level courses that begin to specialize on thematic areas like migration or identity.[712] The introductory course will now be an introduction to Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx studies, a much broader project than before. Selcke said is already teaching this course, although it is not yet labelled under LACX. In taking on the challenge of creating an introduction to so much diverse material, she said she has found the course works best framed around specific defining historical moments and considering these moments from many different disciplines.[713] For many courses, Dickins de Girón said that the foundational pieces to consider the fields together were already in place. CLACX has been more explicit about the interdisciplinarity of courses in its newest form, bringing together history, English, Spanish literature, and other fields within single courses.[714]

Castilho pointed to one of his new classes as demonstrative of the curricular move of CLACX under its new project—"Futbol/Soccer, Latinx Culture, Gender, and Diaspora." Castilho said the idea of the course is that through a course about soccer, a class can talk about politics, gender, identity, etc. and alternate between Latino experiences and Latin America. Castilho added that the course has been yet another way to consider questions around the intersections of the fields, and that there has been a lot of energy and interest from students in these intersectional classes.[715]

Caribbean studies is another major addition to the center under CLACX. Castilho said that as of right now, it is still aspirational for CLACX to include more coursework in Caribbean studies, but he hopes the center can take the lead in consolidating the faculty interested in the geographic area. Although the center emphasized Caribbean studies as part of its new project under the fifth NRC grant, its implementation is a slower shift as it again requires a concentration of interested faculty, which in turn requires hiring.[716] Jesús Ruiz was hired in 2024 as Professor of the Practice and tasked with developing the Caribbean studies minor as laid out in the 2022 NRC proposal.

A Turn Towards Undergraduate Students

In part due to university-wide cuts in graduate programming, the mission of CLACX has shifted to focus more on undergraduate students. Vanderbilt is not large enough to compete with many of the other top 10 and top 15 schools in all graduate studies. There are fewer tenure-track jobs available in which to place graduate students, and the majority of those are filled with PhDs from larger and more financially well-off programs. In response to this, Fitz said the Graduate School decided to invest only in graduate programs in specific departments rather than splitting available funds over many. The result is that graduate studies in the humanities have been broadly eliminated, with the exception of a few departments.[717] Castilho said that across the board, Vanderbilt has cut all non-revenue generating master's programs. When he came on as director of CLACX, Celse said there was some discussion about using the LAS MA program as a recruitment pipeline to the PhD program, but that was tabled with the graduate cuts. However, it may be on the table in the future.[718] Similarly, Dickins de Girón said that CLACX lost its Tinker funding around 2020, so it no longer offers as much graduate student support. It still offers the Simon Collier funds, which can be used by graduate or undergraduate students for research.[719]

However, the cuts to graduate education create space for CLACX to further invest in undergraduate education. Fitz said that the upside to this shift is that the administration is pushing both CLACX and the Spanish and Portuguese department to be innovative in their undergraduate programming.[720] He added that across the country, many Latin American studies centers are having the same problem of a loss of graduate students. There is an increased push to modify programs to center undergraduates and create undergraduate students who are prepared to engage across disciplines and speak both Spanish and Portuguese.[721]

As director, one of Castilho's goals for CLACX is to increase its presence in the undergraduate student experience. Castilho said that as a faculty head-of-house on the Commons, really immersed in the first-year world, he thought about how CLACX could become a meaningful part of the undergraduate experience. Castilho said that CLACX is now trying to be even more intentional with undergraduate student engagement, which is something the Latino and Latina studies program did very well and that is now being brought into the center's mission. Dickins de Girón said that part of the increased undergraduate focus of CLACX is a recognition of the changing demographics at Vanderbilt and efforts to further represent Latino students in an academic program of study.[722]

CLACX has also introduced a few administrative and institutional changes to make the center more undergraduate focused. The outreach coordinator position, which is funded by the NRC grant, was changed to become more internally focused on students and curriculum. CLACX also created an undergraduate student advisory board in Spring 2024 to give undergraduates a greater voice in curriculum and programming.[723] The center continues to host the Latinx student welcome, a Bienvenida, at the start of the year and other programming created by the Latino and Latina studies program to engage with undergraduates.[724] CLACX is also working to make undergraduate curriculum more visible and more robust, and have faculty teach these classes in ways that reflect new ideas and the fluidity of the field. Castilho pointed out that part of undergraduate engagement is having good, robust, interesting classes that impact students and make them want to continue to engage with CLACX curriculum.[725]

However, CLACX also recognizes that it cannot take on the role of a cultural center like the Bishop Johnson Black Cultural Center (BCC) and something else should fill that position.[726] Castilho said he recognizes the slippery slope of the undergraduate focus of CLACX and worries that the administration might see the center as the Latino catch-all on campus. He emphasized that there is nothing comparable to the BCC for Latino students and that there is a difference between an academic unit and a student affairs unit.[727] Dickins de Girón said that with the huge rise of Latinx-identifying students on campus, there has been a rise in the founding of student organizations and engagement and excitement among students. CLACX wants to engage with students but must balance this with recognition that the center is an academic entity and not a student identity center. Dickins de Girón said that since a Latinx student center does not exist, students sometimes want to see CLACX as one.[728] Both Dickins de Girón and Selcke said that for a Latinx cultural center to be created, it will take students demanding it. Selcke said that she thinks such a center is not only doable, but necessary.[729]

With the shift in focus to undergraduates, there is now some discussion of whether CLACX should apply as an undergraduate NRC. Dickins de Girón said that she and Castilho have talked about applying as an undergraduate NRC rather than comprehensive but have not yet decided on the current path forward. She said that it is still possible for CLACX to apply as a graduate center as the center still has the graduate certificate program, other robust graduate programs focused on Latin America exist in other departments, and the center supports and funds students across the university for Portuguese and K'iche' study, but the center is also in a moment of flux both with the new project of CLACX, adding Caribbean

and Latinx studies, and the removal of the MA program.[730] CLACX will decide which route to take when it applies for the next NRC cycle in 2026, if a Title VI competition is held.

Language Instruction

CLACX continues to offer programming in Portuguese, K'iche' Mayan, and Haitian Creole built up under the past decades as an NRC. In 2021, Vanderbilt took over full support for the K'iche' instructor and Portuguese instructors' salaries. CLACX continued to use NRC funds to support weekly conversation practice for K'iche' and Haitian Creole and to develop a second semester course of Portuguese for Tuskegee.[731] Academic year enrollments for Portuguese at Vanderbilt grew into the 2020s. From 2018 to 2022, 243 students enrolled in academic year Portuguese courses. In this period, Vanderbilt enrollments for K'iche' Mayan and Haitian Creole totaled 74 students.[732] CLACX continues to host the Mayan Language Institute and Summer in Brazil programs, shifting to a virtual format in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The center has considered introducing Quechua courses in the future.[733]

Among the faculty interviewed for this project, there were mixed outlooks on the future of Portuguese at Vanderbilt. The Portuguese program, due to its low enrollments, is always fragile, as evidenced by its near disappearance in the 1990s with the loss of several professors. Eakin expressed that he did not know if the Portuguese program will survive the retirements of Fitz and Oliveira-Monte because to remain a strong program, it requires at least two to three members. He also underscored the importance of senior lecturer Benjamin Legg in bringing students into the program. The loss or diminishment of the Portuguese program would be a major blow to CLACX, as Portuguese is key to both NRC and FLAS funding.[734]

Fitz, on the other hand, is very hopeful about the future of Portuguese at Vanderbilt, and CLACX in general. Fitz said that Brazil is at the center of global environmental issues and that CLACX's historic focus on Brazil makes it especially prepared to support students who want to study environmental issues on the Amazon. He believes that because of Brazil's huge global presence, it will remain at the heart of the center, and the place of Brazilian Portuguese will only continue to grow.[735] Fitz added that a huge plus for CLACX is that Brazil is beginning to get recognition for how important it is in the context of Latin America and Latin American studies. Vanderbilt's center's longstanding interest in Brazil prepares it to remain at the heart of the conversation around Brazil.[736]

Other Academic Collaborations

CLACX remains the center of many academic collaborations, both ones started under the Center for Latin American Studies and new. CLACX is home to several regional working groups supported by NRC funds. GuateLab was founded in Fall 2021 and is an informal space led by graduate students to discuss issues affecting Guatemala with monthly seminars. CLACX continues to host the Brazilian studies group, led by Benjamin Legg, which organizes visiting speakers.[737] The center partners with LAPOP for lectures on public opinion in Latin America.[738] In 2021, CLACX hosted the exhibit "Hostile Terrain," an interactive exhibit on the U.S./Mexico border and migration crisis that involved students and community members.[739] And in 2023, the center began a partnership with the Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy. Two speakers, Thiago Krause, a Brazilian historian and journalist, and Michael McKinley, the former U.S. ambassador to Brazil, discussed similarities between the January insurrections in Brazil and the U.S. in a conversation moderated by Castilho.[740] CLACX continued its partnership with the Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy in Fall 2023.[741]

New Projects Under CLACX

The CLACX Consortium for Latin American Studies in the South (CCLASS), founded in 2022, is at the heart of CLACX's new NRC initiatives. CCLASS is a partnership with six other institutions: Tuskegee University, Tennessee State University, the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Women's University, University of Alabama, and Jacksonville State University.[742] It held its first annual meeting in January 2023.[743] The partnership's main purpose is to expand Latin American studies curriculum as "a foundation for thinking about links between the region and the fast-growing Latin American diaspora in the South."[744] Castilho said that the consortium is tied both to expanding curricula and questions around the field of study, the same larger question that CLACX is engaging with.[745] He emphasized that the idea behind the partnership is that through funding Vanderbilt as an NRC, the Department of Education can make an investment in the entire southern region. The consortium widens the intellectual commitment of the center and the reach of its discissions around the intersection of the Latin American studies and Latinx studies fields, especially in a region with a huge Latino population and increasing number of Hispanic Serving Institutions.[746] Castilho added that part of the idea of the consortium is to continue with the center's past

engagements with other institutions, especially the relationship the center built with Tuskegee, but to focus the nature of the partnership around conversation with other members of the consortium.[747]

Initiatives under CCLASS include workshops, expanded Portuguese instruction, an annual undergraduate research conference, and support for community-based arts.[748] CLACX expanded its Portuguese offerings to Jacksonville State University, introducing classes in the fall of 2023.[749] The consortium held its first workshop on March 31, 2023, where Jane Landers presented her work on the Slave Societies Digital Archive to 54 students and David LaFevor of UT-Arlington led a discussion on preserving endangered archives with 16 faculty at Tuskegee.[750]

In the 2022–2023 academic year, CLACX hosted three meetings as part of a symposium series on the state of the field of Latin American studies.[751] Castilho said that as CLACX has worked on organizing panels at academic conferences around the question of Latino studies and how to approach it today, there has been an impetus for the center to make use of these meetings to raise the visibility of these questions, debate them, and generate research around them.[752] The three roundtable discussions included one at Vanderbilt in September 2022, one at the Southern Historical Association meeting in Baltimore in November 2022, and a third at Vanderbilt in January 2023. CLACX supported several visiting speakers to take part in these discussions. The discussions centered on intersections between Latin American studies and Latinx studies in the southeastern U.S.[753] The three seminars were "Institutional Projects in the U.S. and Mexico," "On Research and Research Centers across Historiographical Fields: A Roundtable on Latin American and Latinx Studies," and "The 'New Latinx South,' Educational Spaces, and the (Un/Re)Knotting of Latinidad."[754] The symposium series provided yet another way to engage with the question of the future of these fields, and have discussion of this question reach beyond Vanderbilt.

Another project proposed under the fifth NRC grant was to increase use of Vanderbilt's Afro-Latin American Digital Archives. This initiative seeks to increase use of the Slave Societies Digital Archive and the Manuel and Delia Zapata Olivella collections (discussed in the Latin American Library Collection section) with classroom workshops and further online publication of both translated and unedited documents.[755] CLACX is collaborating with Vanderbilt's library and the Vanderbilt University Press to expand access to these archives.[756]

Projects Continued From Past NRC Grants

Many projects started under the past NRC grants continue to play a significant role in CLACX. The center maintains its trans-institutional partnerships at Vanderbilt, increasingly leaning into its partnership with the Blair School of Music. In 2021, the center's affiliated faculty at Blair hosted the Festival Internacional de Bandas as part of ¡BLAIR! (Blair's Latin American Initiatives and Resources) program.[757] As part of the fifth NRC grant, CLACX planned to create training sites in the Caribbean and Colombia for Blair School of Music students and a clinical research site in Peru for School of Medicine students.[758] The center continued to offer Medical Spanish for professional students in the Master of Public Health Program and Nursing School.

Although the main project of partnership with other universities is now the CCLASS consortium, the center continued several other collaborations such as the Global Studies Symposium and the InDigital conference. The center held the second Global Studies Symposium with FIU at Vanderbilt in December 2023. The two-day symposium hosted almost 40 faculty and administrators from community colleges, tribal colleges and universities, and minority serving institutions to discuss internationalizing curriculum.[759] In February 2023, CLACX collaborated with Middle Tennessee State University and the center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institute to organize and host the fourth InDigital conference on indigenous peoples' engagement with digital and electronic media.[760] The summer of the same year, CLACX jointly hosted the Virtual Visiting Diplomat program with the International Studies Consortium of Georgia, discussing Chile's economic interactions with the U.S., especially in the southeastern U.S.[761]

K-12 outreach to teachers and Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) continues, with increasing recognition of local demographic changes that make the center's outreach even more necessary. In 2021, the center hosted three professional development workshops with Tulane, Cheekwood, and MNPS; created a virtual book club for educators; and continued its partnership with ReadWorks.[762] With the fifth NRC grant, CLACX recognized the changing urban context in which it conducts K-12 outreach. One in three MNPS students are of Latin American and Caribbean origin. CLACX recognized that the Latino population of Nashville had grown 65 percent in the past decade.[763] As part of this current NRC grant, K-12 outreach plans include a series on contemporary issues in Latin America, curricular resource development, and educator book clubs.[764] CLACX again collaborated with Tulane to organize a K-16 Summer Institute, held in July 2023, 2024, and 2025.[765]

Finally, many of the important community partnerships developed by the center over the past decades with local cultural organizations remain. In 2021, the center used NRC funds to support a virtual production by the Nashville Children's Theater, "Around the World in 80 Stories."[766] Under the fifth NRC grant, CLACX continued its community collaborations with the Frist Art Museum, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens, and the Global Education Center, among others.[767] CLACX has supported several Frist exhibits, including "On the Horizon: Contemporary Cuban Art from the Pérez Art Museum Miami" in 2022 and an exhibit on colonial Spanish American Art in 2023.[768]

THE LATIN AMERICAN LIBRARY COLLECTION

The Institute for Brazilian Studies

At the founding of the Institute for Brazilian Studies, Vanderbilt's library had a sparse collection of Latin Americana, made up almost exclusively of Spanish American literature and essentially no Brazilian materials.[769] Before the 1947–48 academic year, the Joint University Libraries had no book funds available for Latin American studies.[770] The institute's faculty identified the library collection as one of the initial challenges of its program, and the need to build up sufficient library materials for research on Brazil and Latin America as one of its primary goals. In the first three years of its existence, the institute spent nearly $15,000 to begin building a Brazilian library collection.[771] By 1950, the library had developed its Brazilian holdings, but the Latin American collection as a whole remained very small. And although several of the partner universities under the Carnegie Corporation grant suggested a program of exchange of duplicate materials to develop library collections, the Joint University Libraries (JUL) were too understaffed to check these lists of duplicates with their own materials, preventing the institute from participating in this exchange.[772]

The Graduate Center for Latin American Studies

After the expansion of the center's interests from Brazil to include the rest of Latin America with the founding of the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies in 1962, most center library funds went toward building collections on Colombia, Mexico, and Chile. In the first decade of the graduate center, the library received around $80,000 from the Carnegie, Danforth, and Ford grants. By the early 1970s, the Colombiana collection became the

library's strongest, with the Brazilian collection falling behind.[773] In 1971, members of the center pushed for Vanderbilt to acquire a Brazilian colonial history collection called the Mendonça collection.[774] Werner Baer informed the center of the estate and collection, which included Brazilian colonial manuscripts, deeds, royal grants, colonial art, and other documents.[775]

Around this time, the center began to push for a more organized method of book purchasing to build a more complete library collection, specifically indicating a need for dedicated staff for acquisitions. In 1972, Riordan Roett, then the associate director of the center, said that one of the weakest parts of the Latin American studies program was its library collection, in part due to a lack of JUL staff. He said that the collection had grown in a haphazard manner rather than a planned one, and that the university needed to make a real commitment to a well-developed collection. Roett further said that Vanderbilt was the only major university with a Latin American program that did not have a Latin American bibliographer or support staff.[776] The same year, Stechert-Hafner Co. decided to phase out the LCAP book purchasing program, which before had automatically purchased some Latin American materials for the library. Roett pointed to this change as a further argument that the center needed library staff who could deal with acquisitions, or some other means of purchasing Latin American materials.[777]

Vanderbilt's 1973 bridging grant for the center set aside funds for Latin American library acquisitions, and the center used this time to evaluate the collection and define areas of interest for future acquisitions. Before this grant, there were concerns in the center about lack of funding for the library collection.[778] In the 1973 fall semester, the center created a Center Library Improvement Committee directed by Eul-soo Pang, professor of history, to assess the library's Latin American collection. The committee concluded that while the Colombian collection was excellent, the Brazilian collection was weak and should be a top priority over the next few years. The center decided to define special areas of interest for in-depth specialization in the library. They chose three areas: Brazil, the historic Gran Colombian republics (Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Bolivia), and Mexico, asking the library to invest in these collections in 1976. The interest in the Gran Columbia region was more focused on Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador than Peru and Bolivia.[779]

In response to the assessment of the Center Library Improvement Committee, the VLEF Faculty Committee gave the center $50,193 for retroactive purchases over the next three years. The center additionally received a library grant of $20,000 from the Tinker

Foundation in December 1974, which was matched with $36,320 from the Vanderbilt administration. By 1976, the center had an annual library budget of $46,500 or more.[780] Additionally, in 1973, the Chancellor set aside the unrestricted $1,000,000 Mellon Foundation grant as the Vanderbilt Library Excellence Fund.[781] This Mellon Million allowed for the creation of a full Latin American librarian position.[782]

In response to the need for acquisitions staff, Paula Covington was hired from the Central Library reference staff to work on Latin American collections, library instruction, and cataloging.[783] In 1977, her position changed to focus full time on collections and library instruction.[784] Before Covington, a professor in the Spanish department, William Jackson, worked half time on the library collection. Covington joined the Central Library staff with a background in Latin American studies but without much knowledge of the library acquisitions side. Knowing the Latin American librarian position would become open, she took a leave to intern with a Latin American librarian at the University of London who went regularly to Latin America to buy books.[785]

Covington said that when she started in the reference staff, the acquisitions process gave librarians little freedom which led to a haphazard collection. There was little in the way of approval plans, and no librarian could really order books without talking to someone on the faculty. Thus the strength of a collection depended on how engaged professors were and how many books they requested, meaning one area could have a huge amount of material while another was neglected.[786]

The library collection has also never been flush with money, despite the many areas that need to be covered. Covington said this was especially so when she began. When Covington began her position, she said the strengths of the collection were its Brazilian materials and it had the beginnings of a Colombiana collection. Due to the connections with Brazil in the 1940s, the library had arrangements with ministries and governmental agencies in Brazil that sent materials in return for Vanderbilt publications. J. León Helguera's (professor of history) interest in Colombia mainly drove the increase in the Colombian collection. Due to the little money available to spend, Covington said there were always divisions among Latin American studies faculty on the disciplines and geographic areas that should be focused on, especially between the Brazilianists and Colombianists. However, the library early on received money to invest into the anthropology, archaeology, and history collections.[787]

At the beginning of Covington's time as Latin American bibliographer, there was (some but little) money to spend on the Latin American collection but little experience in

getting materials from Latin America. Covington began book trips to Latin America to buy materials. She pointed to two experiences that helped her initially set up networks through which to buy books. One was her work with Pat Noble at the University of London, who took book buying field trips to Nicaragua and other places. Covington used Noble's field notes and tips on where to go when arriving in a city and who sold rare materials. One other valuable experience was attending the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). Covington recalls the first program with representatives from the Library of Congress and the University of Texas Latin America Library where one person talked about establishing contacts and book buying trips and the other about teaching and research. Covington also met Alfredo Montavo at the conference, a Bolivian with a degree in library science from Peabody School of Education. Montavo acquired Bolivian materials for the Library of Congress and ultimately supplied Vanderbilt's Andean acquisitions.[788]

Generally, at this time, Covington said it was difficult to find vendors and acquire materials from Latin America. Many librarians either took book buying trips or tried to get materials through SALALM. Covington took some early book buying trips at this time, mostly to Colombia, but also used contacts with people she met at the conference to acquire books.[789]

The Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies

Under the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies (CLAIS), the Latin American library collection at Vanderbilt continued to grow significantly. This period saw the addition of several smaller collections, many book buying trips to Latin American conducted by Covington, and several projects that increased the national presence of the Latin American collection, including Covington's *Critical Guide to Research Sources on Latin America and the Caribbean* and time as president of SALALM. As the center's research interests continued to expand, especially into the field of anthropology, so too did the library collection.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the library received funds from Ford, Tinker, and the Vanderbilt Library Excellence Fund. These allowed for the purchase of several private research collections, including Robert Wauchope's personal library of Middle American anthropology and archaeology, and collections in Brazilian history and Guatemalan anthropology.[790] By the early 1990s, the Latin American collection had approximately 100,000 titles and 2,300 serials.[791] The collection was especially strong on 19th century Brazil

and Colombia. Its other significant special collections included Mesoamerican anthropology and Latin American travel accounts.[792]

The library collections expanded outwards into the Southern Cone and Central American anthropology with new faculty interest. When Simon Collier agreed to come to Vanderbilt, he negotiated increased investment into the Argentine history collection. Collier told Dean Voegeli that the library needed more materials on the Southern Cone, especially Chile and Argentina.[793] Voegeli authorized $15,000 for purchase of books and materials.[794] In 1996 and 1997, Friends of the Library awarded over $10,000 to strengthen collections in colonial Mexico, Central America, and Brazilian literature. The Vanderbilt Library Excellence Fund gave anthropology and Latin American studies an additional $4,000 in 1997 to buy Mayan texts and material on Guatemalan anthropology, archaeology, and colonial history.[795] Covington said the anthropology department later developed an Andean focus on Peru, and she began travelling there to try to build up older 19th century materials.[796]

The library continued to expand its Colombiana collection, which would later become one of its most prominent areas with the acquisition of several special collections. In 2004, Helguera donated part of his personal collection of Colombiana to the library. This collection included 19th century broadsides, periodicals, and pamphlets and books and journals on Colombian political and social life, agricultural and military history, church affairs, and more.[797] The library would acquire the rest of Helguera's collection in later years.

Covington's Book Buying Trips

In a 2005 article for the *Vanderbilt Magazine*, Covington underscored the importance of book-buying trips to acquire materials, especially in the context of Latin America. She wrote that book-buying trips allow librarians to find older materials unlisted by booksellers and find potential library collections for sale. These trips also allow for the establishment of contacts with universities, government agencies, and local research institutions to set up publication exchanges. In the context of recent revolutions, book trips allow for the collection of poetry, fiction, treatises, political propaganda, memoirs, and other revolutionary literature that would be otherwise inaccessible. Covington emphasized the importance of university collections on Latin America, stating that books sometimes do not end up in national libraries in Latin American and U.S. universities can often have more extensive collections in some fields than can be found in some Latin American countries.[798]

Covington has many wild stories of book trips to Latin America, illustrating the unexpected discoveries and experiences that accompany on the ground book buying. In 1983, the Sandinista government in Nicaragua invited Covington and other librarians to advise young Sandinista librarians who were building up literacy libraries. Covington said that right before the trip, Reagan accused someone in the Sandinista government of a poisoning, so all the U.S. embassies were closed. However, Comandante Tomás Borge said to forget the visa and come to the country. While Covington and the other librarians were in Nicaragua, fighting was still going on. In addition to helping with the literacy libraries, each day during the trip one of the librarians would sneak off to try to find political party pamphlets, opposition literature, and whatever other revolutionary materials they could find. On the last night in the country, Borge invited all the librarians over and kept them up until three a.m. talking about the Sandinista platform and U.S.-Nicaraguan relations because he did not think they had sufficiently converted to his position.[799]

In 1997, Covington began travelling to Guatemala for book trips and continued to do so annually for the next two decades. The impetus for these trips came from new money in the anthropology department to support a collection on the Maya in Guatemala. Covington recalled arriving in Guatemala in January, right after the end of the Guatemalan Civil War in 1996 and a month before the arrival of UN peacekeeping troops. When she arrived in Antigua, there were still young kids wandering around with used machine guns. In Guatemala, Covington developed a long relationship with a book dealer in Antigua. Over the decades of her book trips to the country, she would take empty duffels, spend several days in the country, and buy what books were available. Covington said someone once told her to send the duffels back by DHL rather than lugging them on the plane, but she saw the money that shipping would cost as more money that could be used for book buying.[800]

Covington also began book buying trips to Cuba in the early 2000s. One of the few exceptions for travel to Cuba was for librarians who could make the case that their institutions had scholars who needed Cuban materials. However, nothing could be directly shipped back to the U.S., having to instead go through Canada first.[801] In May 2004, Covington accompanied Jane Landers and a Vanderbilt Maymester course to Cuba. As U.S. banks could not do business in the country and U.S. credit cards were not accepted, she stepped off the plane with $4,000 in cash.[802] Covington worked some with Landers on digitizing church archives, then went to book fairs and conducted book buying on the side.[803] A Vanderbilt graduate student put Covington in contact with a professor of Cuban literature who helped her to find new writers' works.[804] When it came time to ship the books back from

Cuba, Covington recalled waiting in the sweltering heat of a loading dock next to pallets of hundreds of squawking paraquets for a military officer to look through the books. After the guard went through every page of every book, he asked Covington if she thought she would be able to get the books back into the U.S. He told her, "someday, you'll have your revolution."[805]

Covington conducted many other book buying trips during this time. In the mid-80s, she went to Germany to acquire early codices and other materials on Latin American archaeology.[806] At other times she traveled to Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica, often with many other exciting moments along the way. In Bogotá, a riot occurred while she was in a bookstore. In Costa Rica, a bomb went off in front of her hotel.[807] During a personal trip, Covington found a Benedictine monk's collection of 19th century Mexican materials in the Welsh countryside.[808] Throughout this time, the Latin American collection grew to include older, rare materials, and further breadth with faculty interest in new areas.

Other Library Activities

Several other of Covington's activities raised Vanderbilt's presence in Latin American library collections. In 1986, Covington received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to create *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Critical Guide to Research Sources (Bibliographies and Indexes in Latin American and Caribbean Sources)*. Covington said that the idea for the guide was that in every discipline, a faculty member or scholar would write an essay about understudied topics and evolutions of the field. A group of librarians would then provide a guide to all the sources they decided were key to the field and the key bibliographies for finding documents. The other component of the guide was a survey of special collections, the archives held by each university, and a subject guide to index them. Covington said Enrique Pupo-Walker, then director of CLAIS, was a great help in creating the *Critical Guide*. The book was published in 1992, and for a long time remained the standard resource to find materials and check which university had what.[809]

At the same time Covington applied for the NEH grant, she was asked to consider running for president of SALALM. She ended up getting both the grant and the position, and for a time was directing SALALM while also organizing the *Critical Guide*.[810] Vanderbilt remained connected to SALALM through the Latin American collection, hosting the annual SALALM conference in 1999.[811]

The Center for Latin American Studies as an NRC

While receiving NRC funding in the 2000s and 2010s, the major project of the Latin American library collection was the acquisition, organization, and digitization of significant Colombian special collections. The library acquired the remainder of the Helguera collection and both the Manuel Zapata Olivella and Delia Zapata Olivella collections during this period. Several programs and grants supported the digitization and dissemination of these collections. Covington said the collections were acquired prior to the post-custodial movement, which pushes for collaboration to preserve and digitize a collection while having it remain in a country. As they were acquired before this movement, both the Zapata Olivella collections are housed at Vanderbilt.[812] Covington continued to conduct book buying trips to increase the library's collections, including to Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala, and Cuba.[813]

The Zapata Olivella Collections

In 2008, the library acquired the Manuel Zapata Olivella (MZO) collection.[814] Zapata Olivella was an Afro-Colombian novelist and anthropologist. His collection includes manuscripts, personal correspondence, videos, journals, photographs, and transcriptions and recordings of Afro-Colombian descendants of slaves.[815] Covington said the MZO collection is one of the few Afro-Colombian, Afro-Hispanic collections—it includes oral histories, ethnographies, literary themes, musical traditions, and street theater, among many other things.[816] Covington's primary goal of the past decade has been to organize, preserve, and make accessible this collection and the Delia Zapata Olivella collection.[817]

The MZO collection is currently digitally available and viewable at Vanderbilt, however, scholars cannot yet view the entirety of the collection remotely due to continued discussions with the Zapata Olivella family on constraints on unpublished materials.[818] Covington said the collection arrived in hundreds of unorganized boxes, and much of the library's project over the past decade and a half has been putting back together the puzzle of the material. Over ten years or so, many graduate students in Latin American studies have worked on organizing and digitizing the collection.[819] The Dean's Fellows, and later Buchanan Fellows, program supported the organization and work with the materials. In 2013, before the establishment of the program, the library began digitizing the Voz de los Abuelos Project in the MZO collection. This project includes interviews with Afro-Colombian

descendants of slaves on Colombian traditions, beliefs, and folklore. The library completely scanned the project and worked on making a database of its content available.[820]

The library then inaugurated the Dean's Fellows program in 2014. The 2015 project of the program was to review, select, and digitize part of the correspondence in the MZO collection and exhibit it online. The first fellowships were awarded to two doctoral students, Grechen Selcke in the Spanish and Portuguese department and Fernanda Bretones Lane in the History department.[821] In the spring of 2015, selected correspondence and essays related to novels, Afro-Colombian identity, and Congresses on Black Culture were made available digitally open access.[822] The Dean's Fellows program significantly increased engagement with the collection through increased online availability. Four PhD students and graduates came to visit the collection in the summer of 2015.[823]

Selcke recalled working on the collection as a Dean's Fellow. She and Bretones Lane looked at the first four linear feet of the raw papers of the collection. Selcke said they started with Zapata Olivella's writings with Antonio Tillis and an unpublished novel and his work on creating a Congress on Black Culture. The goal was to make some of the material accessible, and also to organize and provide context for it. Selcke said: "For me, I heard about all of these works, his work with Jonathon Tittler and Lawrence Prescott and actually seeing the writing was absolutely fascinating, he was friends with Langston Hughes, you could look through and see it all, it was amazing."[824] Through the Fellows program, over ten students have worked on the collection or other Colombian materials.[825] Covington said many students felt that through working on these collections and creating a project, they were better prepared to apply to fellowships or university teaching positions.[826]

The library acquired the Delia Zapata Olivella (DZO) collection in 2019. Covington and Landers submitted a proposal to the Provost and Chancellor's Library Collections Initiative to fund the acquisition.[827] Delia was Manuel's sister and collaborator, and focused on the performance arts, specifically among marginalized Afro-Colombians.[828] The DZO collection is largely made up of dance music, African traditions, indigenous Afro-Colombian materials, and more. The Delmas Foundation provided funding to organize the collection—the foundation, which is largely for the performing arts, provided the library with funds to support the hiring of Sarah Lee Burd, who worked on organizing the collection for about half a year.[829] Covington hopes at some point to add some of the archival photo and personal things that belonged to Delia's daughter to make the collection more complete.[830]

Around 2020, the library received a $46,000+ grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) for "Opening Access to Afro-Colombia and Indigenous

Voices: Manuel Zapata Olivella's Recordings of Marginalized Cultures and Traditions." The grant followed a pilot project with a small grant from the Latin Americanist Research Resources Project (LARRP) and provided support to digitize and preserve the interviews conducted by Zapata Olivella and anthropologists and ethnographers on his team. Among the recordings were ethnographies from the 1960s and 1970s and recordings of the World Congresses of Black Culture.[831] Covington emphasized the role of the smaller LARRP grant in allowing the library to show it was ready to take on the larger digitization project and secure the CLIR grant.[832]

The MZO collection saw increased use during the Covid-19 pandemic. The website was visited by students and scholars in Colombia, the U.S., Brazil, Canada, France, Japan, and other countries. Covington also participated in publications, panels, and radio programming in Colombia to discuss the collection, especially as the Colombian government designated 2020 "The Year of Manuel."[833]

The library and the center hosted an international conference for the MZO collection in 2021 to increase awareness on the collection. The international conference, "Celebrando el Legado de Manuel Zapata Olivella en su Centenario," marked the centenary of Zapata Olivella's birth. Due to Covid-19, the conference was moved to an online event. However, this allowed over 150 people to attend from 12 countries and over 80 educational institutions.[834] Colombian and U.S. scholars presented on literary themes, black activist social movements, and more, as well as discussion of potential library collaborations.[835] The library committed to bring the Colombian conference participants to Vanderbilt to use the collection, and many of them have since come and given talks at Vanderbilt.[836]

The Helguera Colombiana Collection

After acquiring the first part of León Helguera's personal Colombiana collection in 2004, the library received two additional parts in 2015, the year Helguera passed away. The two collections received were correspondence to and from Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera during his presidency in the mid-nineteenth century and a collection of eighteenth and nineteenth-century publications and documents from Pasto, Colombia.[837] In the fall of 2016, the library acquired the remainder of the Helguera collection. In this final acquisition, the library received around 300 boxes of the rarest and earliest parts of Helguera's collection. The full collection includes documents on political, economic, and social history, including

secret military letters, proclamations by General Simon Bolívar, pamphlets, newspapers, broadsides, and more, covering the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.[838]

CLACX

The main library project under CLACX has been the digitization of and increased accessibility to the Zapata Olivella collections, and the organization and digitization of the Helguera collection. The library funded the digitization of the Delia and Manuel Zapata Olivella collections in 2021.[839] These collections are becoming increasingly available online—in the spring of 2024, Covington said that about 90 percent of the DZO collection is already up and openly accessible on JSTOR community access.[840] The library continues to increase awareness and use of the collections. In October 2021, the Colombian Ambassador to the U.S. visited the Colombian special collections.[841] Under the center's fifth NRC grant, there is a new program to give scholars small grants to visit and use the Zapata Olivella Collections: in 2023, the center funded six scholars to travel to campus.[842] Covington pointed to some possible future expansions to the Zapata Olivella collection. She said the library has had recent discussions with the children of Juan Zapata Olivella, the brother of Manuel and Delia, who was an Afro-Colombian diplomat who ran for president in Colombia, almost unheard of at the time.[843] The library wants to organize a collection that reflects the range of both the family and Colombian history, literature, and culture.[844]

The library still has Colombian collections to organize, principally the Helguera collection. The Helguera Colombiana includes manuscripts, pamphlets, broadsides, and journal collections that have not been processed. Covington said that there are scholars who want to work with the collection, and two of the scholars supported by CLACX in 2024 wanted to work with the 1820s section, but currently such research is only of a hunt and peck sort because there are thousands of pamphlets and many are not digitized.[845]

Covington hopes to see more engagement with the Colombiana collections in the future. She said one difficulty is that there is not much of a focus on Colombian history in the current Vanderbilt faculty, while many of the special collections revolve around Colombia. She hopes there will be faculty members who want to engage with Colombia in the future. Covington also said the library could do more to promote humanities research immersion to students and expose more of them to the option of research with original materials. The Colombiana collection contains many unique and exciting primary sources and manuscripts,

and Covington hopes that Vanderbilt students and faculty will use them more broadly as is the case of the many visiting scholars.[846]

CONCLUSION

The center today is at another moment of change and reconstruction. In 2021, the center took on its newest form as the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies (CLACX). Under this new project, the former Center for Latin American Studies combined with the Latino and Latina studies program to create a joint center for teaching and research. CLACX continues to adapt and grow into this new form. What does a course of study that combines the two fields look like? How do shifts in academic fields of study occur, and how can the center unite the faculty and interest necessary for such a change to take place? How should CLACX balance the grant objectives that come with National Resource Center funding, university pressures, and the objectives it has for its new academic project?

These questions align with the entire history of the center. As the center shifted through its many forms—the Institute for Brazilian Studies, the Graduate Center for Latin American Studies, the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies, the Center for Latin American Studies, and now CLACX—shifting priorities regarding fields of study, concentrations of faculty interests, and external university and funding pressures have always shaped the character of the center. With changes in national and Vanderbilt demographics, the academic and teaching project of the center shifted from the outward looking project of area studies following WWII and during the beginning of the Cold War to an increased emphasis on diaspora study and consideration of Latino populations. The center evolved in line with the rise and fall of concentrations of Latin Americanists in different departments—economics, history, anthropology, political science—and geographical specialties—Brazil, Colombia, the Andes, Central America.

University and funding pressures played an important role in shaping the center as well. Depending upon the amount of funding available and the extent to which it supported academic and administrative positions, the center was either a contained unit that worked together to produce research (e.g., the Institute for Brazilian Studies) or a focal point to which people from many schools and departments gathered to offer a joint program of study and host activities (e.g., the Center for Latin American and Iberian Studies). National Resource Center funding dramatically changed the center in the 2000s by giving it the monetary and administrative support to expand and include schools and programs across Vanderbilt.

Reflecting the priorities of the grant, the center also further expanded into the community in partnership with K-12 schools, other higher education institutions, and local arts organizations.

Now these same forces that shaped the center in the past are once again reshaping CLACX. Although CLACX is at the forefront of the shift, a larger national conversation is taking place regarding the direction of Latin American studies and Latinx studies and the relationship between the two. CLACX has chosen to take part in the conversation and explore what a combined field and course of study can look like. This shift has been partly allowed for by a concentration of faculty who are interested in studying this intersection. However, the center recognizes that to continue this project, and especially to expand it to certain areas like the Caribbean, it must continue to build a concentration of interested faculty as the center reflects the interests of its constituents. The center also has to consider the impact of NRC funding on its mission, especially as it engages with the intersection of fields and turns increasingly toward undergraduate students, as this funding is tied specifically to the study of Latin America and to expanding outreach activities. However, the funding in turn allows the center to exist as a larger institution and gives it the means for the administrative support necessary for expansive academic and community collaborations.

As the center continues to evolve, this institutional history project will hopefully be revisited in the next several decades, especially as the center approaches its centennial. Future research can evaluate this current period of change in the center's history and how it adapts to its new academic project as shifting concentrations of interest coalesce at Vanderbilt in the coming years. These future projects might also consider the rapidly changing political and demographic context of this time, especially as Latinos come to be the largest demographic group in the U.S. and the Latin American diaspora plays more and more of a role in the country. The center remains a constantly evolving institution, and how its goals and projects will adapt and change over time remains to be seen.

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Many of the center's past and present faculty and students kindly allowed me to interview them for this project and to include their voices throughout. These interviews include Paula Covington, Marshall Eakin, Avery Dickins de Girón, Jane Landers, Celso Castilho, Gretchen Selcke, Earl Fitz, William Luis, Jim Lang, Elizabeth Zechmeister, Adriana Medina, Shirley Collado, Allen Kilgore, Pablo Coballasi, and Todd Newell.[847] I am grateful for the time these persons took to sit down with me and tell me about their experiences with the center, and the additional directions they pointed me in for my research.

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