

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

# Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies

2021-22 YEAR IN REVIEW





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

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## Director's Corner



Somos 62M+. The US Latinx population exceeds that of all but two Latin American countries (Brazil and Mexico), and yet for too long, this reality has remained beyond the purview of Latin American Studies. Why? How? While certainly a part of US history and culture, our experiences are also deeply about Latin America and the Caribbean. These diasporic realities and sensibilities animate my role in CLACX's academic and public-facing work. I want us leading conversations about the relationships between the fields of Latin America, Latinx, and Caribbean. We are taking such

steps through a new course of study, and a renewed emphasis on Latinx student engagement. We are also expanding institutional partnerships in the US South through a focus on Latin American-Caribbean-Latinx studies curriculum building. In Nashville, we are amplifying these conversations among K-12 educators, mindful that Latinx students now account for thirty percent of Metro Nashville Public Schools.

I am encouraged by the many steps taken by the new CLACX team. I love it that we have expanded our roles in student and public engagement, and are using these initiatives to create new courses and hire faculty that connect back to such efforts. CLACX faculty and staff, for example, now advise four Latinx undergraduate and graduate student groups; it also sets a tone that several of us hold leadership positions in national associations: Gretchen Selcke as president of the Latinx section of LASA, Avery Dickins de Girón with the Guatemalan Scholars Network, Colleen McCoy chairs an award competition of the Library of Congress, and I am in the president-elect of the Conference of Latin American History.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dean Geer and the dean's office of the College of Arts and Science for believing in this project, and supporting our ambitions. To Provost Raver for her commitment, and strong letters of support, and to Chancellor Diermeier for championing our public-facing work.

Hasta pronto,  
Celso Thomas Castilho, Director



FEATURE ARTICLE

# Hostile Terrain

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Phoenix

50 Miles



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# Vanderbilt CLACX awarded \$1.7 million to build Latin American curriculum, enhance language training

A pair of U.S. Department of Education grants totaling \$1.7 million awarded to Vanderbilt University's Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies will allow for innovation in curriculum and promotion of public awareness about Latin America. The four-year grants, announced this month, designate CLACX as a comprehensive National Resource Center for Latin America; the NRC designation is the highest recognition an academic center can receive. Nineteen institutions in the country were selected as National Resource Centers for Latin America for the next four years, and of these, Vanderbilt and Stanford University were the only stand-alone private institutions.

The grant will enable CLACX to launch the CLACX Southern Consortium, a regional partnership focused on curriculum building and language training related to Latin American studies. Members of the consortium include Tuskegee University (HBCU), Tennessee State University (HBCU), the University of Texas at Arlington (HSI) and Jacksonville State University. In addition to hosting a series of rotating workshops at collaborative institutions, the consortium will expand instruction in Portuguese, support community-based art projects, highlight the Vanderbilt University Press Critical Mexican Studies series and sponsor an annual research conference for undergraduates.

A second initiative seeks to broaden access to Afro Latin American Studies through working with unique archives at Vanderbilt, including the Slave Societies Digital Archive and the Manuel and Delia Zapata Olivella collections, through classroom-focused workshops and publishing online editions and translations of unedited documents.

A third initiative funded by the grant will expand training and curricular opportunities at Vanderbilt. The grant will accelerate the creation of an interdisciplinary minor in Caribbean Studies, building on current offerings in Haitian Kreyòl and growing student and faculty interest in the Caribbean. The efforts intersect with CLACX's work in Latinx Studies and diasporic formations. Funding will also create new training sites in the Caribbean and Colombia for Vanderbilt Blair School students and a new clinical research site in Peru for students in medicine, expanding upon the center's strong initiatives in the professional schools.

The fourth initiative focuses on public engagement. Over the next four years, CLACX will work with elementary and secondary educators through a series on contemporary issues in Latin America, the development of curricular resources and educator book clubs, with CLACX Outreach Coordinator Colleen McCoy leading these activities. CLACX will also collaborate with community partners, including the Frist Art Museum, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and the Global Education Center on educational programming for cultural arts events.

"This important grant will allow Vanderbilt to expand its already significant efforts in Latin American studies," said John Geer, Ginny and Conner Searcy Dean of the College of Arts and Science. "CLACX's valuable, interdisciplinary work has done so much to advance education, programming, and cultural awareness in this area. These efforts will be enhanced greatly by this federal funding."

The grant funding is crucial to CLACX's commitment to making public engagement a meaningful component of CLACX's mission at

Vanderbilt. The projects will strengthen the field of Latin American studies in the South, likely drawing new Latinx students to the institution. “We staked our application to a regional project, one where federal investment in Vanderbilt was directly linked to federal investments in the region. I want us shaping how the fast-growing Latinx student population at Vanderbilt and at our partner institutions in the South learn about Latin America,” Castilho said. He added that he wants students to “understand, as we promote at CLACX, that Latin American Studies are intricately bound up with Latinx and Caribbean studies. Our public engagement, including in K-12 programs, will have a direct bearing on the curriculum building we do here.”

Dickins de Girón continued: “Building off our initiative to support Portuguese language instruction at Tuskegee University over the past four years, the funding will enable us to introduce new language training and study abroad opportunities for students at other regional minority-serving institutions. On campus, we will continue working to reach undergraduate students interested in Portuguese, K’iche’ Mayan, and Haitian Kreyòl, while also maintaining our emphasis on training students in public health and other professional programs in these languages.”

Castilho and Dickins de Girón said CLACX was well positioned to receive the grants because of Vanderbilt’s historic investments in Latin American studies, as seen through faculty and student recruitment, the Latin American collections at the library and support for the center’s staff. CLACX has been designated as a National Resource Center since 2006. Vanderbilt University is home to approximately 140 faculty across the university with expertise in Latin America.

## CLACX Launches New Vision

The Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies was inaugurated in Fall 2021 following the merger of the Center for Latin American Studies with Latino and Latina Studies. CLACX had a busy first year building a new team, designing an integrated undergraduate curriculum, and engaging students, faculty, and educators through in-person and virtual events. As part of this new intellectual project, the center initiated discussions examining linkages between Latin American and Latinx Studies; these discussions will continue in the upcoming 2022-2023 year through a series of targeted conversations with Vanderbilt faculty and visiting scholars.

CLACX welcomed students back to campus with our **Bienvenida** on August 27 at the Commons. The **Bienvenida** provided a chance for first year students to meet other Latinx-identifying students and those with interests in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinx Studies. Leaders of the Association of Latin American Students (ALAS) participated in the back-to-school celebration. As the first in-person event hosted by the Center since the pandemic, sharing paletas was especially celebratory.

**Vanderbilt Provost Cybele Raver** and **Dean of Academic Affairs Bonnie Dow** formally recognized

the new center at the opening reception for the **Hostile Terrain** exhibit in September. They shared their excitement about the new mission for the center, and CLACX Director Celso Castilho presented his vision for CLACX and introduced its staff to faculty, students, and community members in attendance.



**Alma Paz-Sanmiguel**  
celebrating ten years with  
CLAS and CLACX.



# Hostile Terrain 94

In Fall 2021, CLACX hosted *Hostile Terrain 94*, a powerful exhibit that compelled participants to think critically about migration policies by directly involving them in the creation of the exhibit. *Hostile Terrain* focused attention on the “Prevention Through Deterrence” policy introduced by the US Border Patrol in 1994, which was designed to shift migrant travel towards “hostile” remote regions of Arizona’s Sonoran Desert rather than through urban corridors with the premise of discouraging migration. Prevention Through Deterrence remains the primary border enforcement strategy used on the US/Mexico border today, and in recent years, it has forced people towards Texas, where thousands have perished crossing through unpopulated wilderness.

The centerpiece of the exhibit was 3200 tags representing individuals who died crossing the Sonoran Desert since the 1990s. Nearly 800 members of the Vanderbilt and Nashville community transcribed data from the Maricopa County Coroner’s office onto the toe tags. Participants filled out information

including the person’s name, age, sex, reporting date, cause of death, condition of the body, and the latitude and longitude in which the remains were found. Migrants most frequently die due to weather conditions, including hypothermia, hyperthermia, and dehydration, as well as blunt force trauma. Yellow tags represented those whose identity is unknown, as many remains are so badly composed that they are unidentifiable. The tags were geolocated on a wall map of the Sonoran Desert producing a large-scale visual illustration of the death toll.

The exhibit opened on September 9 with a reception in Sarratt Gallery attended by 50 people. Later in the month, Vanderbilt’s International Lens screened an episode of *Immigration Nation* in conjunction with the exhibit; **Edward Wright-Rios** (History) introduced it and moderated a Q&A. Exhibit creator **Jason De León**, Professor of Anthropology at UCLA, traveled to Vanderbilt in late September to deliver a compelling talk that further humanized the migration crisis and challenged the audience of



*Prevention Through Deterrence* is still the primary border enforcement strategy being used on the US/Mexico border today, and in recent years, it has forced people towards Texas, where hundreds to thousands have perished crossing through unpopulated wilderness.

200 to bear witness to the results of US immigration policies. Prior to his talk, De León met with members of the CLACX Educator Book Club (see p. 47) to discuss his book, *The Land of Open Graves*, and interacted with members of the Vanderbilt and Nashville community attendees at a reception.

Throughout the exhibit, **Colleen McCoy, Avery Dickins de Girón, Sofia Ludwig** and **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel** organized and hosted tours for faculty-led classes, MNPS educators, student organizations, community organizations, Vanderbilt staff and others. The tours included guidance on filling out the toe tags, resources provided by the Undocumented Migration Project, and a discussion session following the experience of filling out the tags. A member of a Vanderbilt group said, “I want to reiterate my thanks for thinking of us to participate. It was unexpectedly

emotional, and I’m grateful to have had the chance to experience that.” Another student shared the new perspective they gained, stating “I thought of Arizona as a place to travel to, I was not aware of about humanitarian crisis but now I want to learn more about it.” Classes from Anthropology, Arts, Theater, Spanish and Portuguese, History, and MHS attended, as well as several student groups including Ingram Scholars, Latin America and Caribbean Student Association, and the Vanderbilt Association of Student Anthropologists. Staff in the Student Center for Social Justice and Identity and the VU Office of Federal Relations also participated, as well as several Nashville community groups, including Tennessee Justice for Our Neighbors, Nashville Mayor’s Office, Meharry Latino Medical Student Association, HIP Donelson Nonprofit, MNPS educators in the English Learners Office, and



the East Nashville Running Group.

*Hostile Terrain* was organized through the Undocumented Migration Project (UMP) and in collaboration with campus partners in Anthropology, the Sarratt Gallery, Kefi Collective, and the Borders and Citizenship Grand Challenge Group. The UMP is a non-profit research-art-education-media collective directed by Jason De León. Vanderbilt's installation was part of a network of over 100 institutions around the world hosting *Hostile Terrain* in 2021 and 2022.

CLACX supported the exhibit at the UMP's Global Sponsor level. Special thanks to those who worked for over two years to plan the exhibit: **Tiffany Tung, David Heustess, Edward Wright-Rios, Magda Campos-Pons, Avery Dickins de Girón, Colleen McCoy, Celso Castilho** and **Ted Fischer**. CLACX Graduate Assistants Sofia Ludwig and Kai Gardner helped coordinate group visits, and Danni Huang staffed the exhibit during weekend hours. Thanks also to Alma Paz-Sanmiguel, Colleen McCoy, Sofia Ludwig, **Danni Huang**, Celso Castilho, and **Gretchen Selcke** for mounting the tags on the wall map in Sarratt Gallery.





# SSMV Students Research Soil Quality in the Latin American Garden

Ninth grade high school students participating in the School for Science and Math at Vanderbilt (SSMV) visited the Latin American Garden in October and April. **Avery Dickins de Girón** gave the students a tour focused on biodiversity, medicinal plants, and global staple crops. The group included 27 students from at least nine different high schools in MNPS. A few students were especially interested in epazote, a pungent herb native to Central America and Mexico, as it is a familiar ingredient to them. In April, the students returned to the garden to conduct research on the quality of the garden's soil. Led by **Angela Eeds**, Director of SSMV, along with **Deweese Menton** and **Rebekah Stanton**, the students learned how to collect soil for analysis. Prior to the visit, Dickins de Girón assigned geographic areas representing the native habitat of plants housed in the garden, including northern Mexico, highland Guatemala, the Caribbean, and the Amazon. Students did research on ideal soil environments for these areas and presented it before collecting soil samples.

The students also buried two pairs of underwear in the garden as part of the "Soil Your Undies" Challenge led by Vanderbilt professor **Chris Vanags**.



The goal of the project is to learn about soil health, microbes, and different urban soil management practices. Students buried one pair alongside the western edge of the fence in a well-drained area near the berm. The other was buried in the lower half of the garden and had an amaranth plant grow through it by early summer.

SSMV provides high school students in MNPS with the opportunity to participate in a four-year interdisciplinary research experience at Vanderbilt. Students spend half a day each week on campus during the academic year and participate in a 3-week summer program. In addition to the SSMV students, the Vanderbilt Women's Club toured the garden in Fall 2021 and students enrolled in Vanderbilt's Programs for Talented Youth toured the garden in July 2022.

The Latin American Garden was featured on WPLN's *This is Nashville* on July 19. Dickins de Girón spoke about the role of the garden in the community and as an educational tool for MNPS teachers. You can listen here: [wpln.org/post/episodes/growing-your-own-food-in-nashville](https://wpln.org/post/episodes/growing-your-own-food-in-nashville)

# CLACX Hosts Second Global Studies Symposium



CLACX and Florida International University's Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center hosted the Global Studies Symposium for Best Practices in International Education at Vanderbilt December 2–3, 2021. The symposium was attended by nearly 40 faculty and administrators from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), Community Colleges (CCs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). They shared their experiences developing global studies curricula, study abroad, and language programs, as well as challenges posed in carrying such initiatives out at their institutions. The symposium was a follow-up to a similar event hosted at FIU in 2020. Supported by funds from the US Department of Education, the events were intended to provide a space for faculty at MSIs, CCs, and TCUs to exchange ideas and expand their networks.

CLACX Director **Celso Castilho** welcomed participants to the symposium, followed by introductory remarks from organizers, CLACX Executive Director **Avery Dickins de Girón** and **Liesl Picard**, Associate Director of LACC at FIU. **Stacey Johnson** from Vanderbilt's Center for Teaching led participants in a Goal Mapping session designed to identify clear and collective objective for the conference. Educators identified several goals, including "increasing global studies

(academic) programs in community colleges," "developing undergraduate research experiences," "identifying international institutions with which to create partnerships," and "facilitating professional development on infusing global learning into existing curriculum."

Through two days of panel presentations, participants discussed effective approaches to internationalizing curricula, navigating challenges in building global studies, designing impactful projects in indigenous and multilingual communities, and innovative adaptations to prepare students for careers in a global world, especially in situations where travel or study abroad is not an option. Presenters came from Central Piedmont Community College, Broward College, Huston-Tillotson University, Northampton Community College, Dalton State College, Tennessee State University, Alverno College, Austin Community College, College of the Menominee Nation, Nashville State Community College, Santa Fe College, and Bethune-Cookman University. Nashville State Community College's Patricia Armstrong presented recent work in Nashville's Kurdish community with Kurdish community leaders and colleagues from the University of Indiana's Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region. CLACX hosted a lunch

at Nada and a reception following the first day of presentations.

In a post-event assessment conducted by CLACX Outreach Coordinator **Colleen McCoy** and **Lindsay Dudley**, Public Affairs Manager at FIU's LACC, 94% of participants reported that the symposium content was "very useful" and over 80% responded that the symposium successfully connected them with faculty and administrators at other MSIs, CCs, and TCUs. Participants remarked, "This was one of the most productive symposiums I have attended" and "The symposium was just the right size." Outcomes of the symposium included the creation of a virtual community to keep attendees connected. It will be managed by **Jessica Surana**, based at Santa Fe College in Florida, and will include attendees of previous and future Global Studies Symposia.

Travel and lodging for participants was supported by National Resource Centers and Language Resource Centers representing various world regions, including University of Georgia, University of Florida,



University of Indiana-Bloomington, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Pittsburgh, University of Texas-Austin, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, as well as Vanderbilt and FIU. Avery Dickins de Girón and Liesl Picard organized the symposium, moderated panels, and matched participants with funding sources. Colleen McCoy and Lindsay Dudley oversaw publicity, participant communication, and program assessments. Alma Paz-Sanmiguel handled the logistics for the symposium and related social activities.

## “Indigenous People in the High Andes” Workshop for Post-Secondary Educators

CLACX again partnered with the International Studies Consortium of Georgia (ISCOG), led by **Raj Shasti**, to introduce diverse perspectives on the region for post-secondary educators. The 2021 workshop, “Indigenous People in the High Andes,” took place virtually on October 8. Vanderbilt’s **Carwil Bjork-James** (Anthropology) provided a historical overview of Andean culture and peoples and discussed prospects and challenges for indigenous people in the Andes. Other presenters addressed myths and stereotypes about Andeans, and indigenous organization and resistance in the region. The conference was attended by 45 post-secondary educators from the twelve member institutions represented in the consortium, as well as other institutions; ISCOG includes four MSIs.

CLACX, along with UGA’s Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute and FIU’s Kimberly Green

Latin American and Caribbean Center, contributed funding to the conference. Post conference surveys indicated that 95% of attendees gained new knowledge about the indigenous people in the high Andes.



# CLACX and Tuskegee University Collaborate on Virtual Lectures, Workshops, and Portuguese Instruction

CLACX continued Portuguese instruction at Tuskegee University, supporting **Angela Mooney** to teach Portuguese 101 at Tuskegee in 2021-2022. Mooney also worked with **Rhonda Collier**, Director of Tuskegee's Global Office, to develop curriculum for Portuguese 201 and 202 for the upcoming academic year. As part of her ongoing professional development, CLACX will support Mooney to present a book she edited at the American Portuguese Studies Association in October 2022.

CLACX and Tuskegee University collaborated to feature Vanderbilt's **T.S. Harvey** (Anthropology) for the One Health Symposium in October. Harvey was featured in a virtual panel, "**Ethical Issues and Vaccination**," moderated by **Dr. Reuben Warren**, Director of Tuskegee's National Center for Bioethics in Research and Healthcare. He discussed structural barriers to obtaining biomedical health care in Maya communities in Guatemala, including distrust of governmental providers resulting from the long history of discrimination and oppression. The panel was attended by over 40 people. In the Q&A, discussants and community stakeholders raised questions about disparate access to vaccines, and noted similar challenges regarding ethics, vaccinations, and vaccine hesitancy in marginalized communities in the United States and Guatemala.

CLACX, Vanderbilt's Black Cultural Center, and Tuskegee hosted a joint talk by historian **Carlos Silva** (Universidade Federal de Bahia) in February in recognition of Black History Month. Silva has written extensively on African history, African diaspora, and slavery in Brazil and is the current

President of the Associação Brasileira de Estudos Africanos (Brazilian Association of African Studies). In his talk, "**Slavery and Public Memory in Brazil: The Salvador Escravista Project**," Silva introduced the project founded in August 2020 by a group of historians seeking to recast memories of slavery and the slave trade in Salvador. The city is well known for its Afro-Brazilian population, as it was the second largest port of disembarkation of enslaved Africans and a major enslaving center for almost 350 years. Monuments and street names throughout the city honor slave traders, yet very few spaces recognize resistance of the enslaved. Silva led participants in a discussion of the importance of a "geography of memory" in Salvador and his work to effect change through the Salvador Escravista project. Following the program, Rhonda Collier noted the importance of such scholarship for Tuskegee students remarking, "We are growing our Portuguese program and international outreach, so this Black History and future activity is crucial."

In March, CLACX collaborated with Tuskegee and University of Tennessee at Knoxville to host **Maria Aparecida de Matos** (Universidade Federal do Tocantins). Aparecida visited both campuses, and gave a talk, "**Women on the Move: Afro-Brazilian Maroon Communities in the Amazon**," attended by 82. Using the writings of Beatriz Nascimento and Abdias do Nascimento as a focal point, she discussed the multiplicity of meanings of quilombo over time, and described the formation of different black community organizations throughout Brazil focused on political, cultural and social emancipation.



Students in Tuskegee's Portuguese 101 course attended the talk, and **Taylor Billingsley**, a student in the class, introduced Aparecida. **Dawn Duke**, Lindsay Young Professor of the Humanities and Chair of the Portuguese program at UT-Knoxville, worked with Rhonda Collier and CLACX to coordinate Aparecida's talk and visit.

CLACX and Tuskegee supported Collier to travel to Uruguay and Brazil in July 2022 to develop related curriculum for Tuskegee students and K-12 educators. In Brazil, she participated in a crosscultural exchange with the Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ/State University of Rio de Janeiro) in an event featuring Black women writers, "**Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning using Afro-Brazilian and African American Children's Literature.**" The presentation was attended by International Affairs Officer, Kalif Robinson. While there, Collier explored student exchange opportunities between UERJ and Tuskegee. In Uruguay, she met with Afro-Uruguayan authors and purchased books for the project on children's literature.



*CLACX Regional Faculty Affiliate, Dr. Rhonda Collier (left), with Dr. Alexandra Lima Da Silva, Kalif Robinson, Victoria Green, and Dr. Lia Vieira at UERJ*



# Frist Art Museum Brings Cuban Art to Nashville with *On the Horizon*

The Frist Art Museum hosted *On the Horizon: Contemporary Cuban Art from the Pérez Art Museum Miami* from January through May 2022. The exhibit featured approximately seventy works by fifty Cuban artists, including **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** (Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair of Fine Arts), Yoan Capote, Los Carpinteros, Teresita Fernández, and Zilia Sánchez. The concept of “horizon” was used by curator Tobias Ostrander as an organizing principle for the exhibit and a metaphor for aspirations of Cubans living in Cuba and in the diaspora. The paintings, photographs, sculptures, and videos came from one of the largest public collections of Cuban art in the United States, and presented diverse perspectives of the landscape of the island, political history, and the Cuban diaspora. Visitors were immediately drawn into the exhibit by Yuan Capote’s massive *Isla*. The work depicts a shimmering ocean, that upon closer inspection is composed of over 500,000 fishhooks below a pink sky colored by the blood of the artist and his team as

they created the piece.

The exhibit was attended by 33,794 people, and CLACX supported it at the Program Sponsor level. In addition, CLACX partnered with the Frist to provide educator workshops, a public discussion panel featuring Vanderbilt faculty, and Spanish language translation for the program, labels, and public tours.

In February, two K-12 educator workshops examined the main themes of the exhibition. Both workshops featured a tour of the exhibition with Frist Chief Curator **Mark Scala**, who highlighted the inspirations and conversations behind the artwork, as well as hand-on art activities led by **Shaun Giles** (Frist Art Museum) and academic lectures by Vanderbilt faculty. **W. Frank Robinson** (History) presented the political and social history of the island in “Reflections on Revolutionary Cuba.” The second workshop spotlighted **Jane Landers’** (Vanderbilt History) work on the Slave Society Digital Archives with her talk, “Historic Horizons between Cuba and Florida and their Afro and Indigenous Diasporas.”

Both workshops included educational resources for teachers to continue their study of Cuba. Twenty Vanderbilt students also had the opportunity to attend a special tour of the exhibition with Frist Chief Curator **Mark Scala** organized by CLACX.

In March, CLACX and the Frist hosted, *"Patria y Vida: Reflections on Art and Politics in Cuba,"* for their public lecture series. Attended by 66, the virtual conversation featured panelists **Campos-Pons**, Vanderbilt undergraduate student **Luis Martínez**, and **David Plazas**, opinion and engagement director, *USA Today/The Tennessean*. Their discussion centered on contemporary social and political issues in Cuba and was moderated by CLACX Director **Celso Castilho**.

**Elvira Aballi Morell** (doctoral student in Spanish and Portuguese) provided Spanish translations for the audio guide of the exhibition. In addition, she presented two gallery talks in Spanish, guiding attendees through the collection, highlighting selected works, and initiating conversations about immigration, US and Cuba relations, cultural and migratory policies, history, censorship, and cultural production in Cuba.



*Vanderbilt students in the "Growing Up Latinx FYWS" and the Honors seminar "College Honors Seminar in History and Culture of the United States: Latinx Literature in the United States" had the opportunity to tour the exhibit with Frist Art Museum's Chief Curator Mark Scala.*



# Latin American Images Photo Competition Incorporates New Partnership with Nashville Predators

**C**LACX held its annual Latin American Images Photo Competition in Spring 2022, inviting Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and visiting scholars to submit original photos taken from their travels in Latin America and the Caribbean. This year, CLACX received 31 submissions representing

11 countries: Aruba, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. Fifteen entries were chosen for display on the second floor of Garland during the month of January, with winners announced on January 20 via Zoom.

First place was awarded to **Jacob Gambrell** (Divinity) for *El Gaucho de Patagonia* (left). Second place went to undergraduate **Nicolás Prada-Rey** (MHS, Spanish and Portuguese) for *Las calles de Cartagena tienen historias* (top right). Prada-Rey's photo also won the People's Choice Award, which is based on the number of "likes" received on social media. **Kai Gardner** (International Education and Policy Management) won third place for *The Red Valley & Rainbow Mountain* (middle right).

CLACX thanks our 2022 judges **Norbert Ross** (Anthropology) and **Sandy Cherry** (A&S Administrative Manager) for selecting the winning photographs. Special recognition goes to **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel** for organizing the competition for the past 8 years.

For the first time, CLACX worked with the **Nashville Predators** to showcase winning photos from previous Latin American Images competitions as part of their Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration (bottom right). Photographs were exhibited in Bridgestone Arena during the first two home preseason games in early October. The photographs were auctioned, and all proceeds supported a local Latinx-focused philanthropic organization. Previous LAIPC photos will continue to be part of additional rounds of the AmericasBarometer Report put together by Latin American Public Opinion Project Lab.



# CLACX Faculty and Students Commemorate São Paulo Modern Art Week

Professor **Earl Fitz** and Senior Lecturer **Benjamin Legg** (Department of Spanish and Portuguese) organized a mini symposium in March 2022, “Modernismo à Brasileira: Commemorating 100 Years since the *Semana de Arte Moderna*” to recognize the São Paulo Modern Art Week. Held February of 1922, the event was a celebration of trends in the visual arts and literature organized by painters Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral and writers Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade (no relation), and Menotti del Picchia. Many see it as the starting point of the Brazilian Modernist movement. These artists, writers and thinkers all looked to break Brazil’s historic emulation of European high culture and celebrate Brazil’s diverse cultures. Furthermore, they encouraged experimentation in terms of style and content, breaking with a perceived stuffiness and lack of originality in earlier works. The event has since been celebrated as a milestone in Brazil’s artistic history, firmly placing São Paulo as not only an economic center, but also one of arts and culture. More contemporary scholars have questioned this mythic status by pointing out the elite background of the participants and the existence of other geographic centers of literary and artistic experimentation in Brazil during the same time, such as Rio de Janeiro, the Northeast and Rio Grande do Sul.

The Vanderbilt event, initially conceived by Professor Fitz and sponsored and co-organized by CLACX, addressed the significance of the historic event in São Paulo. Fitz detailed the public’s reactions to the literary experiments highlighted during that week, and even included a dramatic poetry recitation. Legg examined the ways Modernism employed the symbol of the cannibal and the ways this has been echoed in film and theater



over recent decades. The faculty were accompanied by presentations from two graduate students: **André Mello Botton** (above), a PhD candidate from PUC-RS in Porto Alegre, Brazil who spent the semester at Vanderbilt as a visiting scholar, and **Margaret Kelly**, a doctoral student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Botton presented on the more recent challenges to the legacy of the *Semana da Arte Moderna* by Sérgio Vaz, which involve the recognition of the elite background of the participants in the 1922 event, and the raising of historically marginalized literary and artistic voices. Kelly examined the way literary precursors to Modern Art Week engaged with Brazil’s geography and ecology during the Romantic era, examining the centrality of environment in works from the Modernists.

These presentations were followed by an animated Q&A session and accompanied by a shared lunch provided by CLACX. Participants also led a surprise rendition of “Happy Birthday” to honor CLACX’s administrator sem igual, **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel**. This was the first in-person CLACX event focusing on Brazil to be held since the start of the COVID pandemic in March of 2020, and as such, it was a joyful return to form. Attendees learned about essential trends in Brazilian arts and literature, and all were able to appreciate each other’s company.

Contributed by Ben Legg

## CLACX HOSTS SUSAN STOKES FOR THE DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORSHIP IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

In April 2022, CLACX hosted **Susan Stokes** as the CLACX Distinguished Lectureship in Political Science. Stokes is the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor and Director of the Chicago Center on Democracy. Her research interests include democratic theory and how democracy functions in developing countries, with a particular focus on Latin America. She has received best-book prizes from the American Political Science Association for her co-authored book, *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism* (Cambridge, 2013), and for *Mandates and Democracy: Neoliberalism by Surprise in Latin America* (Cambridge, 2001). Her visit was organized by **Noam Lupu**, Associate Professor of Political Science and Associate Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project.

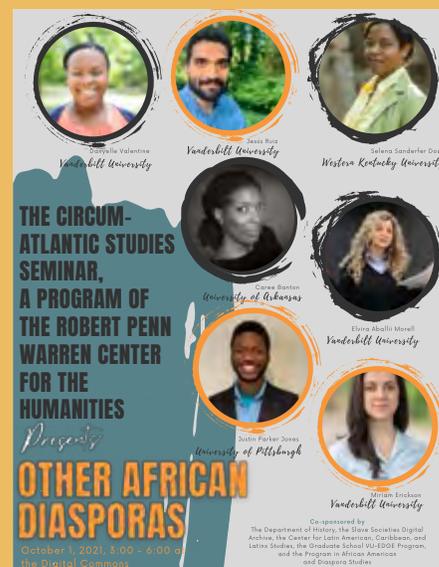
The center of Stokes’ visit was panel discussion, “Democratic Erosion and How to Prevent It,” featuring Stokes, Lupu and **Josh Clinton**, the Abby and Jon Winkelried Professor of Political Science. Stokes discussed vulnerable democracies and related risks to democracy in the United States. While she was on campus, CLACX hosted a Cafecito for graduate students to meet Stokes and a faculty dinner. The following week, Stokes participated in a virtual panel hosted by the Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy, available here: [news.vanderbilt.edu/2022/04/15/vanderbilt-unity-project-hosts-panel-on-risks-to-democracies](https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2022/04/15/vanderbilt-unity-project-hosts-panel-on-risks-to-democracies)

## Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar

The Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar hosted three talks this year. In October, **Jane Landers** presented “Other Black Diasporas” and historian **Joshua D. Rothman** (University of Alabama) spoke about his acclaimed new book, *The Ledger*

and the *Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America*. In Spring 2022, CASS invited **Marjoleine Kars** (University of Maryland) to discuss her 2020 book, *Blood on the River: A Chronicle of Mutiny and Freedom on the Wild Coast* (The New Press). In it, Kars relates the story of a nearly successful rebellion of enslaved African and indigenous people approximately 250 years ago in the Dutch colony of Berbice. Kars received the 2021 Cundill History Prize and the Frederick Douglass Book Prize for the book, which was based on a decade of archive research.

Led by **Jane Landers**, **Daniel Genkins**, and **Theron Course** (TSU), the Circum-Atlantic Studies Series (CASS) brings Vanderbilt faculty and graduate students together to participate in seminars on the Atlantic World with invited guests. The series is housed in the Robert Penn Warren Center and supported by CLACX, History, African American and Diaspora Studies, the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Culture Center, the Jean and Alexander Heard Library, and the Graduate School VU-EDGE Program.



## Campus Events

CLACX kicked off the semester with “**Se acabó...”: Responding to the Political Repression in Cuba,**” a discussion panel (right) that addressed the July 2021 protests and subsequent political crackdown in Cuba. The panel took place at the Black Cultural Center on August 26, and featured **María Magdalena Campos-Pons** (Vanderbilt Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor and Endowed Chair of Fine Arts), **Luis Armando Martínez** (Vanderbilt Class of 2022, History and Spanish and Portuguese major), and **David Plazas** (Director of Opinion and Engagement at *The Tennessean*). **Celso Castilho, Ruth Howard, and Gretchen Selcke** presented “Dores in Dialogue: A conversation about the history of Hispanic heritage month” on October 8 for the Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic and Latinx Alumni. CLACX Director **Celso Castilho** moderated the panel. The three panelists provided historical perspectives on Cuba as well as personal accounts of the social unrest and repression. The protests that swept Cuba in July 2021 were the largest anti-government demonstrations in decades and were a response to power outages and COVID-related restrictions that evolved into more general demands for greater freedom and liberty. Approximately 800 Cubans were charged for participating in the protests, with many of them imprisoned and threatened with lengthy prison sentences.

**Celso Castilho, Ruth Howard, and Gretchen Selcke** presented “Dores in Dialogue: A conversation about the history of Hispanic heritage month” on October 8 for the Vanderbilt Association of Hispanic and Latinx Alumni.



The Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy featured CLACX faculty in its November virtual panel, “**Immigration and Inclusion: Who Decides Who Belongs in America.**” **Karla McKanders** (Law), **Jesús Ruiz** (History), **Emily Ritter** (Political Science), and **Gabriel Torres-Colón** (Anthropology) shared their expertise, addressing how definitions of “citizen” have evolved over American history. The timely panel discussed the increase in Haitian refugees arriving at the US southern border and to Afghans fleeing their country in the face of renewed Taliban control. The Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy is a nonpartisan initiative that aims to elevate research and evidence-based reasoning into the national conversation.

On October 25, Vanderbilt’s **School of Divinity** hosted Christian social ethicist, **Miguel de la Torre** for a talk, “Intersectional Matters: To What Do We Hold onto When The World Hangs in the Balance? A Latinx Call and an Allied Response.” The panel featured responses by **Stacey Floyd-Thomas** (E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Chair and Associate Professor of Ethics and Society) and Joerg Rieger (Cal Turner Chancellor’s Chair in Wesleyan Studies and Distinguished Professor of Theology). The event was co-sponsored by The Black Religious

Scholars Group, The Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice, The Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership, and Kelly Miller Smith Program in Black Church Studies.

On November 9, the Department of Anthropology hosted a virtual forum with the Royal Ontario Museum, “**Formative Interactions in the Central Andes.**” The forum brought together researchers from around the world to discuss current understandings of local, regional and long-distance interactions in the Central Andes during the first millennium BCE, when monumental centers rose and fell.

CLACX supported a virtual reading and discussion by Pulitzer Prize winning poet, activist, and educator **Natalie Diaz** in November in recognition of Native American Heritage Month. In her engaging presentation, Diaz shared excerpts from her works, including “Postcolonial Love Poem,” for which she received the Pulitzer Prize in 2021. She is the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry Arizona State University and directs the Center for Imagination in the Borderlands. The event was organized by the Indigenous Studies Seminar through the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities. It was sponsored by CLACX; Vanderbilt’s Office of the Vice

Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Vanderbilt Athletics; LGBTQI Life; Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center; the Carpenter Program at Vanderbilt Divinity School; and the Vanderbilt Creative Writing Program.

**Carlos Alonso Nugent** (English) presented "Narrating Latinidad in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, 1848-1865" for The Novel Seminar on November 3. The seminar brings together Vanderbilt faculty and students and visiting scholars to engage with groundbreaking scholarship on the history, theory, and politics of the novel form, from its early modern provenance to its contemporary persistence in a hyper-mediated public sphere.

In December, CLACX welcomed **Erick Felinto**, Professor of Media Studies at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, and Chair of the CAPES-UERJ/Institute of Social Sciences. He gave a talk on "Bolsonaro's government and its politics for culture and science: the current situation" attended by faculty and students.

**Gretchen Selcke** (CLACX) presented a virtual talk in January, "Anti-Blackness and Ethnic Cleansing: The Legacies of 'El Corte' in the Dominican Republic and Haiti" for Truffle Time, an interdisciplinary series for management and investment leaders.

Renowned Peruvian artist **Nicario Jiménez Quispe** visited Vanderbilt in March to discuss his retablos focused on immigration with students, staff, and faculty. In his captivating presentation, Jiménez Quispe discussed a specific retablo, called "Crossing the Frontera," from 1990 (below), and which is his first piece on the subject. The artist presented the retablo in relation to contemporary political debates, and in terms of the Andean artistic tradition of which it is a part. It was a unique opportunity to learn about how the artist connected his family's own migration from the Central Andes to Lima to aspects about Latin American immigration to the US. CLACX affiliated professor, **Michael LaRosa** (Rhodes College) proposed the visit.

CLACX supported *Uncovered Spaces*, an exhibit and event series at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UT-RGV) in partnership with the exhibit curators, **Raheleh Filsoofi**, Assistant Professor of Ceramics at Vanderbilt, and **Katherine McAllen**, Director of the Center for the Latin America Arts at UT-RGV. *Uncovered Spaces* was on display from March to July 2022 and centered on female artists and LGBTQIA+ artists to explore the social structures that mediate everyday experiences. The project serves as space for women and female-identifying artists and scholars to discuss their art practice related to gender, identity, and social norms.

**María Magdalena Campos-Pons** (Art) moderated a panel discussion, "The Future of Unity: A Cuban Conversation" with **María de los Angeles Torres**, **William Luis**, **Sandra Ceballos**, and **Ruth Behar** as part of the Engine for Art, Democracy and Justice (EADJ) series *Artistic Activism and the Power of Collective Resistance*. The series focuses on art as an act of solidarity and resistance, and will continue through 2023. Campos-Pons conceived EADJ as an initiative to foster inclusive, meaningful dialogues and collaborations that will have a societal impact resonating beyond academia and the art world. Vanderbilt launched the trans-institutional partnership with Fisk University, the Frist Art Museum, and Millions of Conversations in 2018.



## CLACX Collaborates with Students to Launch New Organizations and Engage Latinx Issues



**GuateLab**, or IximLab, was established in October 2021 by a group of Guatemalan graduate students who wanted to create a dedicated space to foster community, share their culture, and discuss social issues in a nonacademic, yet intellectual, setting. **Miguel Cuj**, doctoral student Anthropology, led the effort to create the group, but recognizes the group's co-leaders as essential to its realization. Cuj explains that the idea for GuateLab emerged through discussions with Maya graduates of Vanderbilt, including **Alberto Squit Choy** (Maya Kaqchikel; PhD 2008), **Iyaxel Cotji** (Maya Kaqchikel; PhD 2019) **Carmelina Spantzay** (Maya Kaqchikel, PhD 2020), as well as several current Guatemalan students: **Maria Corado**, **Paola Torres**, **Juan Jose Lopez**, and Humphrey Fellow **Karen Legrand**.



The group gained significant momentum in its first year. In November, GuateLab members constructed a large barrilete (kite) in recognition of the Día de los Muertos holiday in Guatemala, during which large kites are flown as part of the celebration of ancestors. The group displayed kites and organized a photo exhibit in the Buttrick Alcove depicting the kite festivals in the towns of Santiago and Sumpango in the department of Sacatepéquez. Members of the group spoke about the holiday in a reception on November 3, followed by a talk by Maria Corado, doctoral student in Anthropology. She discussed her research in a colonial Maya Kaqchikel cemetery in her presentation, “The Bones of our Ancestors, Gone but Never Forgotten.” In Spring 2022, the group introduced a related initiative, GuateSeminar, for academic discussions of Guatemala (Iximulew). They hosted a virtual conversation with Guatemalan scholar **Marta Elena Casaús Arzú** titled “Racismo en Guatemala.” The group is supported by CLACX and the Robert Penn Warren Center, and welcomes undergraduate and graduate students and others interested in Guatemala.



A new chapter of **Alpha Psi Lambda**, the nation’s first co-ed Latinx fraternity, was established at Vanderbilt in April. Leaders of the fraternity, **César Palacios** and **Adrian Quintana**, organized “La Fiesta” with snacks, piñata, and festivities in celebration of the fraternity’s inauguration. The goal of the organization is to help connect members across the campus community and promote continued personal and collective growth of fraternity members, community service, and success and unity through education, leadership, and cultural awareness.



CLACX’s **Alma Paz-Sanmiguel** signed on as advisor for the new dance group, **Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Vanderbilt**.

CLACX held a series of **Cafecitos** for Latinx students and those with interests in Latin American and Latinx Studies throughout the year. Hosted in our suite in Garland, the events gave students the opportunity to informally interact with CLACX, affiliated faculty, and visiting scholars.

Hispanic Heritage Month, or Latinx Heritage Month, recognizes and honors the independence of several Central and South American countries, bringing together

people from diverse countries. At Vanderbilt, the month kicked off with an event organized by the Student Center for Social Justice and Identity (SCSJI) on Sept. 16. The theme of Vanderbilt’s 2021 Hispanic Heritage programming, **SomosVU**, translates to “We Are Vanderbilt” and was developed by CLACX Assistant Director **Gretchen Selcke**.

With support from CLACX, the **Latinx Seminar** in the School of Divinity organized an Afro-Latin Jazz concert in October that was attended by 60 people.

CLACX Director **Celso Castillo** participated in a discussion panel organized by the Student Center for Social Justice and Identity (SCSJI), “Latinidad and the Latinx Community at Vanderbilt,” in April. Castillo introduced a historical perspective and world view of Latin America, noting its inclusion of indigeneity and Blackness, and defined the term “Latinidad.” Attendees participated in an open dialogue on what Latinidad means to them and discussed current conversations regarding Latinidad on campus, including how best to navigate and address differing perspectives. Following the conversation, the SCSJI provided resources for attendees.

In addition to these events, CLACX supported **Café Con Leche**, hosted by the **Association of Latin American Students**, and **Carnival**, organized by the **Caribbean Student Association**.

# Haiti Week 2022



CLACX hosted its 6th annual Haiti Week February 22–24 to foster discussions about Haitian literature, culture, and immigration in historic and contemporary contexts. “This week was an opportunity to reflect on the global reach of Haitian history and culture. We want students to know more about studying Haitian Kreyòl at Vanderbilt, and the talks brought fresh light on current events around immigration and changing laws in the United States, as well as important new scholarship in Haitian studies” said CLACX Director **Celso Castilho**. “Learning more about Haiti and the Haitian diaspora is as crucial as ever to understanding the Americas.”

**Judith Clerjeune**, Campaigns and Advocacy Director of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), kicked off the week with a discussion of “Haiti, Law, and Immigration” moderated by **Jesús Ruiz** (National Academy of Sciences Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow). Clerjeune shared her personal immigration experience as a Haitian, and described her professional efforts leading TIRRC’s national, statewide, and local campaigns around issues that impact immigrants and refugee



communities. Castilho noted that “About 800,000 of the over 1.7 million Haitians who have migrated in the last two decades live in Latin America, mostly the Dominican Republic, Brazil, and Chile; the other 50% or so are in the US. The futures of Latinx, Latin American, and Haitian studies are inextricably linked.”

The following day, Keynote Speaker **Yveline Alexis** (Oberlin College) discussed her new book, *Haiti Fights Back: The Life and Legacy of Charlemagne Péralte*, which was recently selected for the Haitian Studies Association Book Prize and the Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year. The virtual talk was attended by a nationwide audience and moderated by **Gretchen Selcke**. Later that day, the Caribbean Students Association (CSA) hosted Rhythm n’ Bounce for the Vanderbilt community at the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center (BCC) celebrating Haitian music, dance, and food traditions.

Haiti Week concluded with *Kreyòl and Kremas*, led by Vanderbilt doctoral student **Danielle Dorvil** (Vanderbilt Spanish and Portuguese) at the Center for Second Language Studies



(CSLS). Dorvil led attendees in the preparation and tasting of the Haitian *krema*, a sweet beverage enjoyed during holidays. She also gave participants an introduction to Haitian culture, geography, and history, and a beginner’s conversation class in Haitian Kreyòl.

Haiti Week 2022 contributed to Vanderbilt’s Black History Month programming and was co-sponsored by the BCC, CSA, and CSLS, and organized by **Colleen McCoy**. Video recordings of the lectures are available on YouTube and accessible through the CLACX website. ([as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/videos](https://as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/videos))

## BLAIR

In recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, the Nashville Symphony performed *Latin Fire* in October which featured Vanderbilt's acclaimed trumpeter **José Sibaja**. CLACX invited our graduate students to attend the program celebrating Latin American orchestral music hits including *Tico-Tico no Fubá*, *Bésame Mucho*, *Carmen Suite*, and others.



**Ryan Middagh** led the Big Band in an energetic late afternoon concert April 14 on Alumni Lawn featuring Mambos, Cha-chas, Timba, Rumba, and Bolero on Alumni Lawn. The free concert showcased the talent of Vanderbilt students and include a solo by José Sibaja.



### Tom Verrier Conducts Masterclasses in Colombia, Receives Grant for Student Exchange, and Develops Survival Spanish Course for Musicians

With support from CLACX, **Tom Verrier** traveled to Colombia in November to participate in a music festival in Tocancipá, Cundinamarca, "*Toquemus 2021*." He also conducted the gala concert by the *Banda Sinfónica Especial de Tocancipá* and presented two masterclasses for over 40 conductors. Verrier reports that a highlight of his time in Tocancipá was "the opportunity to collaborate with two world-class musicians and teachers, hornist Gabriel Betancur and clarinetist Guillermo Marin." Verrier will return to Cundinamarca in June 2022 to conduct the *Banda Sinfónica Especial de Tocancipá* for a recording project with the Barcelona Clarinet Players and various Latin American ensembles. Given the success of the masterclasses, he was also invited to give a three-day workshop for regional directors.

In Bogotá, Verrier met with colleagues the *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana* to develop a "Survival Spanish" course for musicians and conductors. His collaborators include **Dr. Patricia Vanegas**, the Director of Bands at *La Javeriana*, and **Professor Hellen Rojas**, Director of *ILISA Instituto de Idiomas* in San Pedro, Costa Rica. The course will include virtual sessions and a week-long immersive practicum at *La Javeriana*, in which the musicians will teach and rehearse using their newly acquired Spanish vocabulary.

Verrier also traveled to Antioquia where he led workshops and rehearsed with the *Banda Sinfónica de Sabaneta* as well as the *Banda Sinfónica de la Red de Escuelas de Musica de Medellín*. He participated in organizational meetings for the upcoming *Orquesta VenezolanAmericana de Vientos*, a project for which he received a grant from the US State Department, which will include Blair student exchanges.

With support from CLACX, Verrier has invited percussionist Lina Velásquez to campus in November 2022. Velásquez is an expert in Colombia percussion from the Latin-Grammy-Award-winning *Orquesta Filarmónica de Medellín* and the percussion professor at the school of music in Sabaneta. Verrier describes her as "an extraordinary resource for learning traditional Colombian percussion instruments and rhythms." She will teach students in the Vanderbilt Wind Symphony in preparation for the Wind Symphony's important performance of Colombian music at the College Band Directors National Association's National Conference in February 2023.

## ENGINEERING

Students from Guatemala’s Universidad del Valle (UVG) spent a week at Vanderbilt in April through a 100,000 Strong in the Americas grant, which supports student and faculty exchanges between the two universities. **Hiba Baroud** (Civil and Environmental Engineering) hosted the group at Vanderbilt, which was led by Professor **Luis Núñez**; Baroud and Núñez co-authored the grant and collaborate on other projects. The focus of the grant project is to improve water and wastewater management in San Cristóbal El Alto, a community of approximately 400 people located near Antigua, Guatemala.

While in Nashville, the students toured a metro wastewater treatment plant, attended classes at Vanderbilt, and visited the Jack Daniel’s Distillery. CLACX welcomed the group with a Cafecito on Monday and hosted a lunch for them with Guatemalan students **Marielos Corado**, **Miguel Cuj**, and **Paola Torres**. Vanderbilt student members of Engineers Without Borders **Elizabeth Feng** and **Nick Lowe** accompanied the students.

This visit is a follow up to a week-long trip in March 2020 in which Baroud traveled to Guatemala with five Vanderbilt students to conduct initial research on water supply and treatment in San Cristóbal El Alto. The goal of 2022 trip was for the UVG students to gain new insights for the design of the water improvement plan, which they will implement in June in San Cristóbal.



The group consisted of ten students, from the fields of chemical engineering and biomedical technology. Given COVID-related travel restrictions, UVG’s visit to Vanderbilt was delayed by a year; however, three of the UVG students who hosted the Vanderbilt group in Guatemala participated in the trip to Nashville. Four of the ten students are among the first graduates of a new program at UVG developed by **Carlos Esquit**, Director of Electronic, Mechatronic, and Biomedical Engineering at UVG in collaboration with **Cynthia Paschal** (Biomedical Engineering). The program debuted in 2020 and is the first of its kind in the country to train student to repair biomedical equipment used in hospitals throughout Guatemala.

### Engineers Without Borders Plan Trips to Guatemala and Nicaragua for Fall 2022

Students in the Vanderbilt Chapter of Engineers Without Borders are planning two trips to Central America for Fall 2022. Students traveling to Guatemala in August include **Sam Leville**, **Ori Chalom**, **Alyssa Kerscher**, and **Danny Shade**. They will continue ongoing drainage improvement and erosion prevention projects in the communities of Paxoj and Txemuj, Mam-speaking aldeas located near Huitán along Quetzaltenango’s border with San Marcos. This is Leville’s second trip to the communities, and

the fourth group of Vanderbilt EWB students to work on the projects. The EWB chapter plans to implement a new project in Nicaragua in December to create a water supply system in the rural communities of Sabana Larga and Monte Verde. This system includes establishing a new, clean water source, constructing a pipeline to houses, and building a storage tank. This is EWB’s first trip to the community, but they have been assessing the project remotely during the pandemic. Avery Dickins de Girón met with EWB students to provide guidance from CLACX; students working on the project include **Hannah Stepp**, **Anna Berger-Romeu**, and **Nick Lowe**.



## GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Eleven students in the Graduate Program in Economic Development traveled to Costa Rica during Spring Break to experience development policy in a real-world context and apply this knowledge to their research. The trip is part of ECON 7930, Field Experience in Economic Development, taught by **Ana Regina Andrade**. In May, the students shared their research findings in a poster session for Economics faculty and students, and CLACX MA students. CLACX supported Andrade's travel for the course.

## MEDICINE AND NURSING

Three students in the school of medicine will travel to Guatemala in Summer 2022. Third-year medical student **Andres Frias** will spend the month of July at Primeros Pasos for a clinical rotation. **Lorely Chávez**, dual degree MA student in public health and Latin American studies, will

conduct research at Primeros Pasos, supported by a Simon Collier award. **Taylor Carty** will complete her public health practicum with Cureamericas, where she will work with Casa Materna in San Sebastián Coatán in the department of Huehuetenango. She will update their training protocol for comadronas and revise the reproductive health curriculum for adolescents.

**Chalene Helmuth** and **Avery Dickins de Girón** taught the Medical Spanish and Central America Seminar for the fifth year for students pursuing master's degrees in nursing and public health. Students learn medical vocabulary, practice intake exams and patient interviews, and examine issues of health and access to care for indigenous communities within the historical and political context of Central America. For VUSN students, the seminar is part of the mandatory Community Health course for pre-specialty students. Led by **Manola McCain** (Nursing), the group met virtually with Primeros Pasos staff to develop a needs assessment for communities in Guatemala's Palajunoj Valley. The students presented the results of their project in June 2022. **Gwyn Devin**, who took the seminar in 2020, graduated from Vanderbilt's nursing program in August 2022, and will spend three months at Primeros Pasos.

In June, **Dickins de Girón** presented a lecture for the Global Health Workshop to 141 first year pre-specialty students.

## LAW

CLACX supported Spanish language instruction for students in the Law School for 2021-2022. Vanderbilt student **Netra Rastogi** taught two levels of Spanish for 8 students.

# Library News



This has been a year of great successes both in terms of acquiring wonderful research treasures and in bringing to light and promoting the library's rich resources in the field of Latin America.

The fall was a busy one. Avery Dickins de Girón and I co-taught the Latin American research-oriented course, and the students were exposed to these special collections along with research methods and interdisciplinary readings. I was a mentor to two Library Buchanan fellows who immersed themselves in the Manuel Zapata Olivella collection with the end product of adding content to the library's Manuel Zapata Olivella website. Undergraduate Alejandra (Katya) Bradford undertook research on Manuel's travels in the United States in the sixties, experiences of racism, and his friendship with Langston Hughes. Doctoral student Elvira Aballi Morell conducted research on Manuel's time in Mexico discovering that Diego Rivera included Manuel's face on one of his murals! A special exhibit in the library opened

in May 2022 to honor 10 years of these Buchanan Fellows. We have been fortunate to have 12 fellows who have worked on Colombian collections—6 on Zapata Olivella and 6 on Helguera Colombiana. All of their efforts have led to more robust websites and a greater awareness of the content of these collections and more virtual and onsite researchers.

The Colombian Ambassador to the US, Juan Carlos Pinzón came to visit the library's special Colombian collections in October and to give a talk on US-Colombian relations. He was very interested in the early travel accounts from Helguera collection, and the more recent collections such as the Colombian Peace Corps, an Ambassador to Colombia's papers, and the Delia and Manuel Zapata Olivella collections. We have more recently provided them with materials from these collections for a book being prepared by the Embassy.

For the first time in several years a book purchase trip was possible! Colombia's book fair, FILBO, reopened in Bogotá after several years of COVID related closure. It was heralded as "the most important literary festival in America" and clearly book production was coming back! Celebratory occasions included the book fair's special exhibit on Zapata Olivella, a presentation of an art exhibit and website on him for which the library had helped provide the visuals from the collection, and several book presentations of new editions by Zapata Olivella. Several of my colleagues and I met a full day with directors of three major institutions (Biblioteca Nacional, Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, and the Instituto Caro y Cuervo) about ways in which we could begin to collaborate more intentionally. As a first effort Vanderbilt will digitize and share a newly purchased pre-independence Colombian periodical that appears not to be held in any library.

And the best news of all is the news that the University and the library have funded the digitization of both the Delia and Manuel Zapata Olivella collections. It would not have been possible without the work of the many graduate students who worked many years to help organize and create finding aids for these collections. Special thanks go to the most recent individuals, Erin Straight and Alex Allison, who worked on Manuel's collection throughout their tenure as graduate students, and to Sara Lee Burd who worked on Delia's collection, made possible through a grant from the Delmas Foundation. This has paved the way for digitization which is taking place over the summer. We hope Colombian researchers and others worldwide who cannot travel will have open access to these collections, especially significant for those engaged in Afro-Hispanic and indigenous research.

—Contributed by Paula Covington

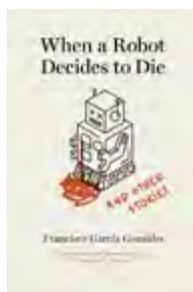


## Ambassador of Colombia Visits Special Collections

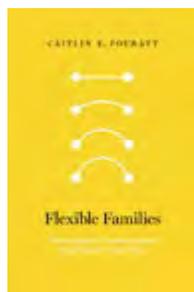
CLACX and the Vanderbilt Library welcomed the Ambassador of Colombia to the United States, **Juan Carlos Pinzón**, to campus October 6. Librarian **Paula Covington** shared several Colombian resources housed in Vanderbilt's Special Collections in support of the Colombian Embassy's project to commemorate 200 years of Colombian-US relations. Pinzón gave a public talk on this topic to an audience of 60 in the Library's Community Room with a welcome by **Dean John Geer** and **Felipe Barrera-Osorio** (Education) moderating. Following the talk, Pinzón interacted with students, faculty, and members of Nashville's Colombian community.



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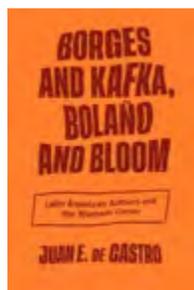
***When a Robot Decides to Die and Other Stories***  
 by Francisco García González  
 Translated by Bradley J. Nelson  
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 Pub Date: November 2021



***Flexible Families***  
 by Caitlin E. Fouratt  
 ISBN: 9780826504364  
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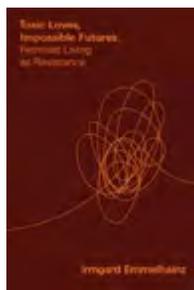
***Natural Consequences***  
 by Elia Barceló  
 Translated by Yolanda Molina-Gavilán  
 and Andrea Bell  
 ISBN: 9780826502339  
 Pub Date: November 2021



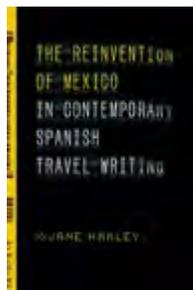
***Borges and Kafka, Bolaño and Bloom***  
 by Juan E. De Castro  
 ISBN: 9780826502483  
 Pub Date: February 2022



***Borges***  
 by Julio Premat  
 Translated by Amanda Murphy  
 ISBN: 9780826502254  
 Pub Date: October 2021



***Toxic Loves, Impossible Futures***  
 by Irmgard Emmelhainz  
 ISBN: 9780826502445  
 Pub Date: January 2022



***The Reinvention of Mexico in Contemporary Spanish Travel Writing***  
 by Jane Hanley  
 ISBN: 9780826502117  
 Pub Date: September 2021



***Centenary Subjects***  
 by Shawn McDaniel  
 ISBN: 9780826502292  
 Pub Date: December 2021

# New Faculty Affiliates

Four new faculty in Anthropology, English, Divinity, and Music joined Vanderbilt in Fall 2021 and are faculty affiliates in CLACX:



**Mariam Adam** is Assistant Professor of Clarinet in the Blair School of Music. Born in California to an Egyptian father and Mexican mother, a host of influences have shaped her

musicianship and collaborations worldwide. As a founding member of the Grammy-nominated woodwind quintet, Imani Winds, she maintained an active international touring schedule for more than 15 years. Adam recorded 7 albums with Imani Winds before being signed by EMI for their exciting wind quintet version of the *Rite of Spring*, which was selected in 2013's Best of iTunes. Her clarinet/piano duo TransAtlantic Ensemble, an official Steinway Ensemble, specializes in commissions of crossover styles, standard repertoire and presents their concerts in unique formats throughout Europe, South and Central America and the United States. TransAtlantic Ensemble's *Havana Moon* received Sirius XM's Symphony Hall listing as Best Recordings of 2016. Her latest album, *AdZel Duo* with Stephanie Zelnick, was released in 2018 and was featured on American Public Media's *Performance Today*. She currently lives between Nashville, New York, and Paris. At Vanderbilt, Adam looks forward to working with CLACX to engage non-music students in concerts and performances on campus.

**Yara González-Justiniano** is Assistant Professor of Religion, Culture, and Psychology with emphasis in Latinx



Studies in the School of Divinity. She holds a PhD in Theological Studies with concentration in church and society from Boston University's School of Theology, where she also received her Master of Divinity. At the University of Puerto Rico, González-Justiniano earned a B.A. in Audiovisual Communications with a concentration on film; she also double majored in theater and modern languages. Her educational journey of interdisciplinarity informs the ways in which she approaches theological studies. González-Justiniano has served as the national director of the Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute, where she oversaw leadership development programming and served as an academic adviser to participants. She also served as assistant director and Senior Program coordinator in the Office of Contextual Education and Community Partnerships at Boston University's School of Theology. Her research and teaching interests include Latinx theologies, Latin American Liberation theology, ecclesiology, memory studies, postcolonial and decolonial theory, popular culture and film, and popular religion and theologies of hope.

**Carlos Alonso Nugent** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English. He is a literary, cultural, and environmental historian of the US-Mexico borderlands, and, more broadly, the Americas. He comes to



Vanderbilt from Stanford, where he participated in the Mellon Fellowship of Scholars in the Humanities. He earned a PhD in English and a Graduate Certificate

in Environmental Humanities at Yale University. Nugent is currently completing a book project, *Imagined Environments: Mediating Race and Nature in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, which takes a multiethnic and multilingual approach to literary studies and reconstructs a range of "imagined environments"—a term Nugent uses for the frameworks through which human groups have represented, related to, and resided in their more-than-human worlds. Nugent's second book project is tentatively titled *Nuestra América: A Hemispheric History of Environmental Awareness and Activism*. In it, he traces a tradition of "Latinx ecomedia," casting new light on conflicts and commonalities that cut across the Spanish Empire and the Indigenous Americas, locating Latinx ecomedia at the very heart of the lands and waters currently claimed by the United States. In 2020, Nugent received the Norman Foerster Prize for best essay of the year in *American Literature* for "**Lost Archives, Lost Lands: Rereading New Mexico's Imagined Environments,**" the Johannes Gutenberg University's Obama Dissertation Prize, and the Yale English Department's Best Dissertation Prize. Nugent grew up in Tucson and taught high school in New York City and elementary school in Spain before beginning his academic career.



**Michelle E. Young** is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology who specializes in the archaeology of the pre-Hispanic Andes. Her interests center on the relationship between interregional interaction, the adoption of new ritual practices, and the emergence of new individual and communal social identities in the south-central Peruvian highlands in the early 1st millennium BC.

Her work combines analyses of visual and material culture with archaeometric techniques to illuminate the role of the material world in fomenting large-scale social change. Young directed the *Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica Atalla* from 2014 to 2017, which carried out mapping, surveys, excavations, and lab analyses of materials from Atalla, Peru, and included a multi-year program of community outreach and education based in the town of Yauli. Young currently leads the Cinnabar Roads Project, an archaeological survey and excavation project studying the ancient exchange routes between the highlands and the coast of southern Peru, and she directs the Pre-Columbian Pigments Project, a collections-based research project of identification and sourcing of pigments used by the pre-Hispanic inhabitants of the Central Andes.

## CLACX Welcomes Faculty in Fall 2022



Filmmaker **Jose Luis Benavides** will join Vanderbilt's Art Department. He holds an MFA in Studio Arts and brings experience as a teaching artist and an active contributor and project manager in Chicago's non-profit arts community. He directs **Sin Cinta Previa: Latinx & Queer Archive Video Series**, a project that examines video-art production

and experimentation through the lens of media histories, representation, and contemporary perspectives of diasporic Latinx, indigenous, Afro-descendent, feminist, and queer artists. In Fall 2022, he will teach "ARTS 3891-04: Experimental Latinx Video."

**Ari Caramanica** is Assistant Professor in Anthropology. Her research examines sociopolitical impacts of borderland occupation and the reconstruction of agricultural landscapes of pre-Hispanic coastal Peru using remote sensing

techniques and paleobotanical analysis. Since 2013,

she has conducted survey, excavation, and paleobotanical analysis in the Pampa de Mocan in the Chicama Valley in the North Coast of Peru. The extremely dry conditions of this desert region pose obstacles for modern-day habitation; however, the landscape was densely occupied and developed in the pre-Hispanic periods beginning in the Early Horizon (900-500 BC) and through the Late Intermediate Period (AD 1000-1476). Her research in the region includes high-risk agriculture, human-environment dynamics, and climate change resilience in ancient South America. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Harvard University and was Assistant Professor at Peru's Universidad del Pacífico prior to coming to Vanderbilt.



## Sara Kozameh and Hilario Lomelí Join CLACX

CLACX welcomes **Sara Kozameh** and **Hilario Lomelí** in Fall 2022. Kozameh was selected as an American Council of Learned Societies "Emerging Voices" scholar and will be housed in CLACX from 2022-2024. Kozameh is a historian with interests in revolutionary Cuba and the Americas more broadly; she will teach a course on Gender and Revolution in Mexico and Central America in Spring 2023. She will also work with CLACX to examine links across Latin American Studies and Latinx Studies, and produce a white paper on the institutional, pedagogical, and scholarly implications of bringing the fields together. Kozameh graduated from New York University and has held a postdoctoral position at Princeton for the past two years. Lomelí will be the Mellon Assistant Professor in Latinx Studies for 2022-2025. He conducts research on youth and education, with a focus on Latinx students and questions about race, power, and achievement. He holds a PhD in Education from Penn State University. His research in rural Texas has examined identity formation among Latinx students, and criminalization of students labeled "at risk." His work will contribute to the center's project to bridge research activities and community engagement.



**Julie Gamble** will join Gender and Sexuality Studies as Assistant Professor. Her research is engaged with transit infrastructure, social justice, and gendered politics in

Latin American cities. Gamble's work draws from multiple methods to study urban environments, paying special attention to how people and objects help create cities, and her pedagogy is informed by feminist and social justice theories. She holds a PhD and master's degree (MCP) in City and Regional Planning from the Department of City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley and a BA from Northwestern University. She has taught at Trinity College and the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador, where she still holds an affiliated position.

**Rebeca Gamez** joins the Department of Anthropology as Assistant Professor. Her research addresses relational and comparative race and ethnicity, space and place, immigration, and



educational inequality. Broadly interested in English Language Arts teaching and curriculum, teacher education and critical qualitative research methods,

Gamez has a specific focus on how Latinx and other racialized and minoritized youth navigate their schooling, learning, and ethnoracial identities. Gamez comes to Vanderbilt from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) where she was a Visiting Lecturer in the Language, Literacy, and Culture program. She obtained a PhD in Education at Johns Hopkins University, where she held an American Educational Research Association (AERA) Minority Dissertation fellowship; she also holds a BA from Princeton University, and EdM from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In addition to her university experience, Gamez has taught literacy at the middle school level in Trenton, New Jersey and has extensive experience

in grassroots community organizing around financial justice, immigrant rights, and educational equity issues.



Anthropology also welcomes **Monica Keith** as Assistant Professor. Her research integrates genetic, health, and ecological data to study longitudinal health and child

growth in diverse contexts, and she uses Bayesian models to assess predictors of growth and health outcomes. Keith participates in three ongoing field studies that research health, growth, and biodemography in rural and indigenous populations: the Dominica Longitudinal Health Study based in Saint David, the Shodagor Longitudinal Health and Demography Project based in Bangladesh, and the Chaco Area Reproductive Program in Argentina. Keith received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Missouri and was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Washington from 2020-2022.

## NEH Collaborative Humanities Post-Doctoral Fellows Will Join Vanderbilt in Fall 2022

The College of Arts and Science will welcome a cohort of ten post-doctoral fellows to campus for the next three years beginning in Fall 2022. Two of the fellows, **Lidiana de Moraes** and **Matt Plishka**, will be housed within CLACX. De Moraes graduated from the University of Miami's department of Modern Languages and Literatures. Her research examines contemporary African and Afro-Brazilian female writers, and particularly how they collectively construct a female perspective of the transatlantic world. More broadly, she is interested in social justice and cultural production, language, and decolonial theory. Plishka graduated from the University

of Pittsburgh with a PhD in History. His research is driven by his interest in how marginalized communities navigate ecological crises. His dissertation examined strategies employed by Afro-Jamaican banana growers in response to Panama Disease within the colonial political economy of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Atlantic World.

CLACX also looks forward to engaging with several other Collaborative Humanities postdocs with interests in Latin American and Latinx Studies: **Elvira Aballi Morell** (Spanish and Portuguese), **Ana Luisa Morais Soares** (Anthropology), and **Jesús Ruiz** (American Studies).

## Faculty News

**Candice Amich** (English) was promoted to the tenured position of Associate Professor.

**Robert Barsky** (French and Italian) received a 2022 Guggenheim Fellowship. His new book *Clamouring for Legal Protection: What the Great Books Teach Us About People Fleeing from Persecution* was published by Bloomsbury Publishing in 2021.

**Brandon Byrd** (History) was selected as one of thirteen faculty for the 2022 cohort of Chancellor Faculty Fellows. The program fosters the exchange of ideas on teaching and research, the construction of a broader intellectual community that advances collaborative scholarship, and engages fellows in academic leadership development events to increase their leadership capacity.

CLACX Regional Faculty Affiliate

**Stephen Morris** (Political Science, MTSU) published a new book: *The Corruption Debates: Left vs. Right – and Does It Matter – in the Americas*.

**Carwil Bjork-James** (Anthropology) received an NSF Research Grant for \$174,000 to support work on his database, *Ultimate Consequences: A Database of Deaths in Bolivian Political Conflict, 1982–present*. His book, *The Sovereign Street: Making Revolution in Urban Bolivia* was published by U. Arizona Press in 2020.

**Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons** (Art) was selected for the Latinx Artist Fellowship supported by the Ford Foundation and the Mellon Foundation. The fellowship will support 75 artists over a five-year period. Campos-Pons is a member of the second cohort of 15

artists and was chosen from over 200 nominations to receive the \$50,000 unrestricted grant.

**Markus Eberl** (Anthropology) received a Level 1 Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities for \$49,289 to create machine learning methods to identify microartifacts from archaeological sites, “Changing Communities of Ancient Builders: Machine Learning-based Analysis of Mortars from Caesarea Maritima.” He also published an article: Markus Eberl and William F. Doonan, “Realizing Potentiality. Donut Stones in Ancient Maya Society.” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 65:101394.

**Earl E. Fitz** (Spanish and Portuguese) was recently interviewed by BBC Brasil for an article on Brazilian author Clarice Lispector. He was also interviewed by the Brazilian journals *Veja* and *Hora do Povo* for articles about writer Machado de Assis. Interviews with *O Eixo e a Roda: revista de literatura brasileira* and *Revista brasileira de literatura comparada* focused on Professor Fitz and his career in comparative literature, Brazilian literature, and inter-American literature.

**Julie Gamble** (Gender and Sexuality Studies) published a public-facing article on “Gendered Cycling and COVID-19,” drawing on research done in Quito, Ecuador.

**T.S. Harvey** (Anthropology) was awarded a Ford Foundation Senior Fellowship for his environmental justice and public health work in Guatemala; he is the first faculty member at Vanderbilt to receive the fellowship.

**William Fowler** (Anthropology) published *A historical archaeology of early Spanish colonial urbanism in Central America* (University Press of Florida, 2022).

**Chalene Helmuth** (Spanish and Portuguese) was appointed Director of Vanderbilt Center for Languages following a national search and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of the Practice.

**Jane Landers** (History) received a grant from the ACLS Digital Justice Development Grant to support her project, “Recruiting and Training the Next Generation of Slave Societies Digital Archive (SSDA) Scholars” in the amount of \$99,600 for 2022–2023. Landers is serving as the Chair of the Committee on International Historical Activities for the American Historical Association from 2021–2024, is a member of Metro Nashville’s Historical Commission since 2021, and is serving on Southern Historical Association’s committee for the Charles S. Sydnor Award given in recognition of a distinguished book in southern history. Landers presented her work on digital history at the Taller de Estudios Afromexicanos with Harvard’s Afro-Latin American Research Institute and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City (April 2022), and at “The Missing Century of Black History in a Multicultural North America, Pre-1619,” for the United Nations Staff Union Discussion Series, Let’s Talk About Racism (February 2021). She will also present her work at the Universidad de Cartagena in August 2022. She currently sits on several advisory and editorial boards, including The Atlantic Language Archive, University of South

Carolina Press' Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World Series, and *PerspectivasAfro* for the Universidad de Cartagena.

**Carolina Palacios** (Spanish and Portuguese) received over \$5000 in grant funding, including a Travel Grant and a Professional Expenses Grant from the College of A&S, a Mid-Career Travel Grant from the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, and an Educational Advancement Fund from The Office of the Provost.

**Antonis Rokas** (Biological Sciences) and **Gustavo Goldman** (Universidade de São Paulo and CLACX Regional Faculty Affiliate) received a 5-year grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for \$3,723,728 for their project, "Deciphering the phenotypic and genomic traits that underlie the evolution of pathogenicity differences among *Aspergillus fumigatus* and its close relatives." Project collaborators include Nicholas Oberlies (UNC-Greensboro) and Qi Liu (VUMC). They have also recently published several articles on this topic.

**Mariano Sana** (Sociology) published "Public Opinion on Refugee Policy in the United States, 1938–2019: Increasing Support for Refugees and the Sympathy Effect." *International Migration Review* 55.2 (2021): 574–604. In the article, Sana examines eight decades of opinion polls on US refugee policies. His research shows that most Americans have historically opposed admitting refugees but the trend has been reversed in the twenty-first century. Findings also show some evidence of a *fait-accompl*i effect: The public tended to be

more supportive of refugees when welcoming policies were enacted and when refugees were already on US soil. Furthermore, the United States public reported more supportive attitudes toward refugees when asked about *any* type of policy — welcoming or restrictive — and when asked questions concerning the context of reception of admitted refugees. Sana labels this pattern a "sympathy effect," whereby respondents revealed more support for refugees when answering contextualized rather than abstract questions. This finding implies that pro-refugee policies might have more popular support than often assumed and that the extremely restrictive policies toward refugee admissions of the current US government are out-of-sync with both historical trends and current American public opinion.

**Gretchen Selcke** (LACX) was elected 2022–2023 President of the Latin Studies Section of the Latin American Studies Association. LASA is the largest professional association in the world for individuals and institutions engaged in the study of Latin America.

**Claudine Taaffe** (African American and Diaspora Studies) secured a grant from the Black Girl Freedom Fund sponsored by the Grantmakers for Girls of Color for her after-school programming at MLK Magnet High School in Nashville.

**Benigno Trigo** (Spanish and Portuguese) was invested with the Gertrude Conaway Humanities Chair at Vanderbilt University.

**Tom Verrier** (Blair) received a grant from the US State Department for \$20,000 to support the project Orquesta VenezolanAmerican de

Vientos– Encuentro Colombiano. The concert took place in Antioquia and featured 40 musicians, including Venezuelans who are currently displaced and living in Colombia, six students from the Blair School of Music, and Colombian musicians from the host region. In July of 2021, Verrier served as artistic director and conductor of the Banda Sinfónica Integrada de Las Americas in Antioquia. This project included 50 musicians from 8 different countries and has become an annual event. See page 22 for more.

**Steven A. Wernke** (Anthropology) received an NSF grant for the project: "Collaborative Research: IIS: Medium: Deep Generative Modeling for Urban and Archaeological Recovery." Wernke uses advanced geospatial modeling to understand the changing landscape of the Andes over time and identify archaeological sites and structures over a large area of land, from Peru to northern Chile and northern Bolivia. The project is a collaboration with researchers at Purdue University and Brown University to develop an AI-assisted imagery survey, and was featured in VUNews.

**Elizabeth Zechmeister**, (Political Science) Vanderbilt Professor of Political Science, was awarded the Madison Sarratt Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Students submitted more than 800 nominations for this and other teaching awards; the Faculty Senate Consultative Committee reviewed nominations and made recommendations to university leadership.

## FACULTY PROFILE:

## Shelza Rivas

Shelza Rivas is an Assistant Professor in Vanderbilt's School of Nursing and is a Women's Health and Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner at Vanderbilt Nurse Midwives and Primary Care at Melrose. Born in Lima, Rivas moved to Tennessee in 1995 with her family, eventually settling in Brentwood. She is a triple 'Dore; she graduated in 2012 with a dual BA in Latin American Studies and Psychology, obtained a Master of

about their health. She takes social determinants of health into consideration, working to ensure access to trustworthy healthcare for patients of color in Nashville, which she believes is especially important now more than ever. Rivas describes Nashville as a diverse city, especially with the number of young professionals moving here, but she notes that the majority of the Spanish-speaking communities she works with are located in pockets of Davidson

County. She explains that COVID further isolated many of these communities and made it harder for them to receive safe medical care and education about COVID and vaccination programs.

During the pandemic, Rivas worked as a vaccinator in the Vanderbilt Mobile Vaccine

Program. She found that many members of the Latinx community were willing to receive the vaccine, but had questions about the vaccine itself, how and where to receive it, along with some general mistrust

In her daily practice as a nurse practitioner, Rivas uses her Spanish language proficiency to advocate for and empower women as they make decisions about their health.

Nursing (MSN) from Vanderbilt's School in Nursing in Women's Health and Adult-Gerontology Primary Care in 2015, and completed a Doctorate in Nursing (DNP) in 2017. As an undergraduate, Rivas utilized her degree in Latin American Studies to re-connect with and expand her Latina roots, studying Portuguese and various Latin American courses through her coursework. She has worked closely with CLACX for a number of years, and is currently a member of the center's Steering Committee.

In her daily practice as a nurse practitioner, Rivas uses her Spanish language proficiency to advocate for and empower women as they make decisions





of healthcare. However, she saw that when clinicians and leaders worked alongside community leaders, they could create a space for a more holistic program of care that included patient education about vaccinations and a community accessible vaccine program. Rivas emphasized these community connections, the importance of making iterative decisions, and putting the needs of the community, as defined by the community, first. Based on this experience, she encourages other healthcare professionals to be more intentional and purposeful with their outreach programs.

Rivas is currently part of a grant to investigate and provide education on family and caregiver burnout. She will serve as the main Spanish-speaking provider to present this vital information for Latinx communities, some of which will be posted online for ease of access. She teaches courses in nursing and helped develop the “Global Health-Guatemala” group within the first year the Community Health course at VUSN, working with Natasha McClure and Avery Dickins de Girón. She served as the faculty lead for the group from 2018–2020, during which she took nursing students to Primeros Pasos and guided them through their required quality improvement project.

Three years ago, Rivas was assigned to be the faculty lead for the first ever Hispanic/Latinx Student Nurses Affinity group at VUSN, and still serves as the faculty lead. Over this time, the group has grown from five members to ten members per cohort. The group includes students from across the country, from different regions of Latin America, and from all levels of nursing, and provides a safe space for members to have voice and discuss issues facing Latinx students as they pursue their graduate nursing degrees. During Diversity Month, the group organizes a workshop for faculty and students; recent topics include “how to have difficult conversations about diversity and inclusion” and “how to care for undocumented patients.” Rivas is hoping that the group will expand and is hoping to collaborate across campus with other Latinx groups.

When asked about her most recent accomplishments, Rivas highlighted her recent promotion to Assistant Professor and the fact that both her brothers recently graduated from Vanderbilt University, making them a family of Commodores.

– interviewed by Sofia Ludwig

## CLACX Welcomes New MA Students



A native of Franklin, TN, **Madison Crow** attended the College of Charleston, where she earned a BA in International Studies and Spanish with a Linguistics minor. During her undergraduate studies, she studied abroad in Argentina, Chile, Peru and China. While living in Charleston, she developed her passion for working with migrant farmworkers

and their families through the local Migrant Education Program. This led to a research project dedicated to the identification and promotion of Latin American indigenous languages spoken in the Charleston area. Upon graduating, she moved to Valencia, Spain where she taught English. At Vanderbilt, she is studying K'iche' Mayan through a FLAS fellowship. She plans to continue exploring the realities of indigenous language speakers from Latin America in the U.S. and the diverse linguistic and cultural barriers they face. Accordingly, her thesis project will focus on the experiences of indigenous language speaking students from Central America in the Nashville area.



**Paola Torres** is from Guatemala, where she obtained a degree in Archaeology from the Universidad de San Carlos. An accomplished archaeologist, her fields of study include ceramic analysis, community archaeology, anthropology and statistical analysis. She has carried out fieldwork in Guatemala's lowlands and highlands, the Transversal del Norte

zone, and the Piedmont of Guatemala and Honduras. Torres was the Director of the Cancuen Regional Archaeological Project sponsored by Vanderbilt University and Laboratoire "Archéologie des Amériques." She has directed field and laboratory investigations in the sites of Cancuen, Sebol, La Linterna and Sesakkar. At Vanderbilt, she is interested in expanding her interdisciplinary understanding of the pre-Hispanic interaction and exchange networks in border areas in the Transversal del Norte region.

## Vanderbilt Hosts Brazilian Doctoral Student André Botton

**André Botton** spent the academic year in residence at Vanderbilt hosted by **Emmanuelle Oliveria-Monte** in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. A doctoral candidate at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS), Botton's research focuses on texts written by authors from the peripheries of Brazilian cities. His dissertation is tentatively titled "Dos becos e vielas: uma história da literatura marginal

periférica brasileira." He shared his research with faculty and students in the discussion panel on Modern Art Week in Brazil hosted by CLACX, which recognized the centenary of Brazil's Semana de Arte Moderna (see p 14). "This kind of literature is the best that has been produced in Brazil, and I want these writers to be recognized for their literary works through my research," said Botton.

While at Vanderbilt, Botton explored different theoretical perspectives

and how marginal literatures can be integrated into Latin American studies, since his research is relevant in other areas of Latin America. Over the past few decades, Vanderbilt has received scores of students through the CAPES program, which is housed within Brazil's Ministry of Education and supports training for doctoral students and post-doctoral researchers in research institutes around the world.

# Center for Second Language Studies Recognizes Students Studying Less and Least Commonly Taught Languages



**F**LAS Fellows and other students studying less and least commonly taught languages at Vanderbilt were honored on April 25 at a Recognition Ceremony organized by **Elliot McCarter** (Asian Studies) and the Center for Second Language Studies and with support from CLACX. The event recognized graduate and undergraduate students for special accomplishments including external awards for language study abroad and international internships employing their unique language skills.

**Benjamin Legg** presented awards to students studying Portuguese through FLAS fellowships: M.A. student **Erin Straight** (AY FLAS, 2020-2022), doctoral student in History **Claudia Monterroza** (AY FLAS, 2021-2022), and **Carlos Caballero** and **Faith Viers**, both of whom received fellowships to attend the Summer in Brazil program in 2022.

**Mareike Sattler** presented awards to **Genevieve Arnold** (AY FLAS, 2020-2022) and **Madison Crow** (AY FLAS, 2021-2023; Summer FLAS 2022) for the study of K'iche' Mayan. Other students were honored at the ceremony for receiving Critical Language Scholarships and/or special achievements in other world languages: Arabic (Catherine Delafield, Wisam Mustafa, Cecelia Quatch); Bangla (Victoria Stewart); Chinese (Morgan Elrod-Erickson, William Hemmond), Gujarati (Milani Naik), Hebrew (Daniel Ardity and Dale Weiford), Japanese (Amanda Nolan), Korean (Jahnai Garner, Wesley Wei), Russian (Hunter Johnson, Jasmine Ding, Courtney Ellis, Sasha Karamyshev), Sanskrit/Classics (Aaditi Lele, Poornachanda Deenadayalan, Dipanjan Mazumder), and Urdu (Riti Hegde, Maya Taylor, Abhi Nathan, Jaret Rushing).

## CLACX Awards over \$75,000 to 17 Students for Research and Language Study in Summer 2022

Seventeen students received CLACX funding to study languages or conduct research in Latin America during Summer 2022.

*CLACX awarded funding from the **Tinker Foundation** and Vanderbilt's School of Arts and Science to support seven students to carry out fieldwork in Latin America:*

**Lucas Borba de Miranda** (Political Science) will conduct interviews and focus groups in São Paulo, Brasília, and Recife for his project "The Impact of Election Rigging Messages on Voting Behavior," that will inform his dissertation prospectus and contribute to scholarship on the impacts of voter fraud allegations.

**Luis Caraval Osorio** (Economics) will travel to Bogotá to access restricted-use educational data for his project on the indirect effects of merit-based financial aid to low-income students in Colombia, "Spillover Effects of Financial Aid on the Educational Choices of Younger Siblings."

**María Corado** (Anthropology) will carry out archaeological investigations in

San Andrés Semetabaj, Guatemala as part of her preliminary dissertation research to determine absolute dates of archaeological settlements in the Lago de Atitlán region.

**Rebecca Estrada Aguila** (Anthropology) will conduct archaeological research at the Classic Maya site of Tzikin Tzakan near Melchor de Mencos in Guatemala; she will analyze soil samples for evidence of stone tool production and other human activity for her dissertation project.

**Allie Reichert** (Anthropology) will conduct research in the Napo Province of Ecuador on maternal mortality among Kichwa women in the Napo province of Ecuador as part of her

larger project examining Kichwa attitudes towards biomedical care and ancestral health systems.

**Paola Torres** (Latin American Studies) will conduct archaeological research in Guatemala for her project, "Systematic topographic and surface exploration at the site of La Linterna and its surrounding region in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala," which will provide data for her MA thesis.

**Alexander Tripp** (Political Science): will travel to Barranquilla, Colombia, where Venezuelan migrants make up 12% of the population, to carry out initial dissertation research on local governmental responses in high migration contexts and corresponding community attitudes.

***Simon Collier Travel Grants** supported five students to conduct research this summer:*

**Giovanni Bastiani Roggia** (Political Science) will travel to Rio to conduct research for his dissertation prospectus on how victimization by the state affects civilian's social identities in impoverished and marginalized urban communities for his project, "Victimization Identity and Support for Police and Local Organized Crime in Brazilian Favelas."

**Lorely Chávez** (Latin American Studies and Public Health) will travel to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala where she will conduct research with staff at the Primeros Pasos clinic to collect data on

community health care gaps and needs in the Palajunoj Valley, which will inform her MA thesis.

**Mariana Ramirez Bustamante** (Political Science) will conduct interviews in Peru's Monzón Valley, in the department of Huánuco, to obtain qualitative data on why voters support political candidates with ties to drug trafficking organizations to ground her dissertation hypotheses.

**Brayan Serratos** (Spanish and Portuguese) will travel to the Archivo General in Mexico City to identify

primary sources and authors supporting his dissertation research on narratives and cartographic representations of Mexico, Manila, and Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries.

**Estelle Shaya** (undergraduate major in Latin American Studies and Earth and Environmental Sciences) will spend her summer in Bolivia conducting research with the University Network for Human Rights. The research will inform her senior thesis addressing abuses against indigenous populations.

# 2022 Mayan Language Institute

Back after two years of virtual programs, both the Mayan Language Institute and Summer in Brazil took place in person in 2022. **Telma Can Pixabaj** and **Malcolm Miguel Botto** directed the K'iche' program for the Mayan Language Institute, which ran from June 18 to July 29. Can is an affiliated faculty at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico's Centro de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias sobre Chiapas y la Frontera Sur (CIMSUR-UNAM) and Botto teaches K'iche' at Brigham Young University. Both have previously co-directed the K'iche' summer intensive program. **Nela Tahay**, who provides weekly conversational practice for Vanderbilt students studying K'iche' on campus during the academic year, served as the program's in-country lead and will coordinate the team of teachers from Nahualá. Five students enrolled in K'iche' this summer, including Vanderbilt MA student Madison Crow. During the course, students lived with K'iche'-speaking families, heard from experts advocating for K'iche' Maya Peoples in a variety of sectors, and had the opportunity to take educational excursions to nearby K'iche' speaking communities.

Students enrolled K'iche' met in Antigua and traveled Quetzaltenango, where they spent the duration of the six-week program. This is the first in several years that the program has taken place in Guatemala's second largest city, locally known as Xela, or Xe Laju' Noj, which means "Below the Ten Spiritual Guides,



or Mountains" in K'iche'. The city is home to both K'iche' and Mam Mayan speakers. Classes took place at La Red, a social enterprise café and cultural center run by

DESGUA (Desarrollo Sostenible para Guatemala), an organization dedicated to creating educational and job opportunities for Guatemalans.

Thanks to Hannah Palmer at Tulane University for establishing a new partnership with local partner, DESGUA and staff members Willy Barreno, Ubaldo Ramírez, and Rosita Rabanales. Thanks also to Ambrocía "Ixnal" Cuma Chávez for organizing all in-country planning and administration.

The Kaqchikel program hosted 6 students this year in Ciudad Vieja, outside of Antigua. Once again, Judie Maxwell will direct the program with the assistance of Ambrocía "Ixnal" Cuma Chávez.

## STUDENTS RECEIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES FELLOWSHIPS TO STUDY ABROAD

**Carlos Caballero** (English and Latin American Studies major), **Faith Viers** (Latin American Studies major), **Max Garcia** (Neuroscience and Spanish major), **Safi Chalfin-Smith** (Tufts University; Political Science and International Relations major), and **Emily Warwick** (University of Virginia; doctoral student in Foreign Affairs) received summer FLAS funding to study Portuguese through the Summer in Brazil program in São Paulo hosted by Tulane and CLACX. **Madison Crow** (MA in Latin American Studies) received summer FLAS funding to study K'iche' through the Mayan Language Institute in Guatemala.

## IN MEMORIAM: Manuel de Jesus Tahay Gomes

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Manuel de Jesus Tahay Gomes. Known as Tat Wel to many, he was an extraordinary person, respected leader in his community, and a beloved teacher. Born on April 19, 1960 into a K'iche' family in Nahualá, Guatemala, he attended the renowned Instituto Santiago in Guatemala City, and after graduation worked as a primary school teacher for many years in the greater Nahualá area. After retiring, a collaboration with the University of Chicago led to his associations with other universities in the United States, including Vanderbilt, University of Kentucky-Lexington, and UT Austin. Tat Wel passed away on August 15, 2021 from complications due to COVID.



Tat Wel was fondly remembered by his students:

Miguel Cuj -Kel Xik': *I knew Tat Wel at Summer Language Institute in 2017, his passion and nobility for the K'iche' Nahuleño were some of his characteristics as a human being. His peaceful gaze, his humility to hear students, and his tremendous knowledge about the K'iche' language leave a heritage to students and Maya-Guatemalan Scholars. As a Maya student, I will remember his history about union movements, Nahualá*

*history, and that he always allowed me to take pictures of food consumption practices.*

*Sib'alaj malyox tat Wel kaki'kot le wanima, rumal le eta'mab'al xya' la chwe. Sib'alaj malyox xya' la ri eta'mab'al pa le komon K'iche', are ri Ajaw katewchi'n la, jun q'alunik.*

Tat Wel began teaching K'iche' at Vanderbilt in 2007 and continued until 2012 when he was called to run for mayor of Nahualá, where he served from 2012-2016. Always looking out for the good of his community, his proudest accomplishment of his administration was to be able to plan and finish a public works project, such as road construction or access to potable water, in every one of the smaller villages and hamlets associated with the township of Nahualá.

For many years before and after his mayorship, and up until his death, Tat Wel served as the head teacher and local coordinator for the Mayan Language Institute K'iche' program in Nahualá. Without his involvement and support the summer program would not have been possible.

He was beloved as a deeply knowledgeable and patient teacher of K'iche', and the study of its linguistic and cultural facets was very close to his heart. Tat Wel was instrumental in creating the national Bilingual Education program in Guatemala and was involved in developing the new alphabet for K'iche'. He was a founding member of the Instituto Mixto "Oxlajuj No'j for bilingual teachers. Most scholars, researchers, and students working in and on K'iche' today can trace their own expertise back to him. Manuel and his wife Nan Xe'p (Isabel), welcomed everyone with open arms and frequently opened their house to students and friends. Over the years, they hosted many groups from Vanderbilt for a traditional lunch, followed by a tour of the town.

“Tat Wel, thank you for all your Maya wisdom that you shared with me in each meal that I had the privilege to eat with you.”

–Miguel Cuj – Kel Xik’

Matthew Calderwood: *“Learning K'iche' from Tat Wel was an experience that I will never forget, and one that was formative in my career path. The immersion program in Guatemala was a life changing experience. Tat Wel had great pride in what he was teaching, and great love for his students. Even though I moved into computational linguistics and natural language processing for my career, I never stopped using K'iche' as my linguistic touchstone. The first computerized sentence parser that I wrote was for K'iche', and my first (failed) attempt at a speech recognition system was for K'iche' as well. I would not have the love for linguistics that I have today were it not for learning K'iche' and having Tat Wel as a teacher.”*

# 2022 Summer in Brazil

Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and CLACX collaborated again to host the "Summer in Brazil: Portuguese Language and Culture" program in São Paulo. The six-week intensive program is offered in partnership with CET Academic Programs. After two years of virtual coursework, the program took place in-person this year, enrolling 24 students from across the country.

All students enroll in advanced or intermediate Portuguese language courses and PORT 6130 Contemporary Social Issues in Brazil. CET faculty, supervised by **Mariana Jansen** and **Giselda Pereira**, teach the courses and **Megwen Loveless** served

as the Tulane faculty representative. Students live in housing organized by CET, some opting for homestays with local families and others sharing apartments with local Brazilian students. CLACX awarded FLAS fellowships to five students to attend the program: Carlos Caballero, Faith Viers, Max Garcia, Safi Chalfin-Smith, Emily Warwick.

Hannah Palmer, Assistant Director for Academic Projects and Programs in Tulane's Stone Center for Latin American Studies, worked closely with Hector Cruz-Feliciano, Director of Latin American Programs at CET. Súlía Folli, Resident Director at CET Brazil organized Brazilian faculty, designed orientation, and hosted extracurricular events.

## Summer Funding Opportunities through CLACX

CLACX offers the following sources of funding for summer language study or research: Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships, Graduate Summer Research Awards, and Simon Collier Travel Awards. CLACX issues a call for applications each December and announces award recipients in February. For more information on CLACX funding opportunities, visit [as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/aid-and-awards](https://as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/aid-and-awards).

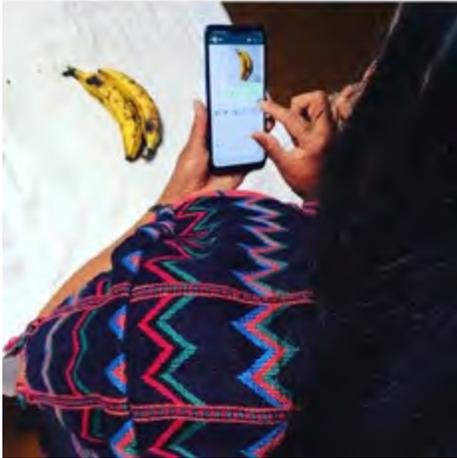
**Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships (FLAS):** CLACX receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education to support summer FLAS awards for intensive studies of Portuguese or indigenous Latin American languages. Fellowships provide up to \$5000 for tuition expenses and a stipend of \$2500. Any graduate or undergraduate student who is a U.S. citizen or permanent U.S. resident with interest in these languages is eligible to apply.

**Graduate Student Summer Research Awards:** Awards support graduate students conducting pre-dissertation or master's thesis research in the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of Latin America. Awards are for approximately \$2500 each and are intended to support travel expenses related to summer research. Since 2009, CLACX has supported nearly 100 students with Tinker funding.

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

## Student Research 2021

After delaying their fieldwork due to the COVID-19 pandemic, four students were able to realize research projects in 2021. Their research was supported with Tinker Research Field Grants, matched by the College of Arts and Science and administered through CLACX.



**Miguel Cuj** (Anthropology) conducted virtual fieldwork in Guatemala in Summer 2021 for his dissertation project on K'iche' Mayan foodways. Cuj provided electronic devices and internet access to 5 K'iche' women used to create a preliminary pictorial dataset of meals, a record of food consumption, and voice notes of K'iche' names of food. He is analyzing the data to identify qualitative food patterns and will follow up this research with additional fieldwork and interviews to document the availability of food, sources of food (gardens, markets, stores), how it is prepared, and sites of food consumption. Cuj shared his results in a virtual presentation, "From Remote Fieldwork to Digital Exhibits: A Case Study of Food Issues" on April 22 hosted by Vanderbilt's Center for Digital Humanities.

**Michaela Peterson** (Earth and Environmental Sciences) conducted fieldwork in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil in November and December 2021 for her project examining the thermoregulatory behavior and temporal activity patterns of white-lipped peccaries and other frugivorous mammals. Her research took place in the Pantanal biome, located in a matrix of agricultural lands in a rural area. She deployed wildlife cameras and weather data-loggers at sites where there were fruiting trees of species known to be consumed by white-lipped peccaries. These cameras and data-loggers will be left in place until June 2022, so that she can collect data to analyze temporal activity shifts and microclimate selection by peccaries and other species.

**Lilly Quach** (Earth and Environmental Sciences) carried out research in Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil for her project "Quantifying the Effects of Habitat and



Matrix Quality on Tropical Mammal Biodiversity." The goal of her research is to understand how human impacts on fragments of forest habitats affect biodiversity. For this project, she mapped the Bodoquena-Bonito region to study how environmental factors motivate or deter mammals from moving between different patches of habitat. This included categorizing regions of the forest to determine quality of the habitat (e.g., water availability, vegetation productivity), and placing cameras to capture mammal activity to gauge biodiversity in different gradients of habitat quality.

**Ricky Sakamoto-Pugh** (History) traveled to Northern Mexico to conduct archival research for his project on public security in the region. Sakamoto-Pugh first traveled to Coahuila's Municipal Archive of Torreón seeking documentation on how police administrators engaged and responded to efforts to modernize their departments during the 1920s and 1930s. He then traveled to Monterrey to visit the State Archive of Nuevo León, the Municipal Archive of Monterrey, the Judicial Archive of Nuevo León, the private archive of business mogul Eugenio Garza Sada, and the libraries at the Autonomous University of Nuevo León. While he experienced some restrictions due to the rising cases of COVID, he was able to meet with archivists and access digital collections that furthered his research and create a network of contacts and sites as he continues his dissertation research.

# Congratulations!

**Miguel Cuj** (Anthropology) received a Wenner-Gren Foundation Dissertation Fieldwork Grant: “Maya Foodways and Cultures of Nutrition.” Miguel will spend the next year in Guatemala conducting research.

LAS MA student **Erin Straight** contributed to an article published by the COVID Border Accountability Project (COBAP) titled “Did border closures slow SARS-CoV-2?.” [nature.com/articles/s41598-022-05482-7](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-05482-7)



For the Southern Anthropological Society’s 55th Annual Meeting in Raleigh, NC, CLACX MA student **Madison Crow** presented her research, “Beyond King Street”: Identifying and Promoting Immigrant Indigenous Languages in Charleston, South Carolina under the conference’s theme of “Public Interest and Professional Anthropology in the South.” The presentation illustrated a community-based, linguistic project that could be replicated in other U.S. cities to bring awareness to the growing number of Latin American indigenous languages spoken here. She said, “This conference—my first ever—was a fantastic opportunity to gain connections with anthropologists across the South and see the fascinating work that is happening all across our region. It has left me excited and equipped to step into my thesis research!” In Fall 2022, Madison intends to begin a new, community-based project in Nashville dedicated to indigenous language speaking students from Central America building off this previous work in Charleston and her research through the Latin American Studies Research Seminar. In our effort to foster student research, CLACX issued a call for travel support in Spring 2022, and was able to fund Madison’s registration fees and travel to the conference.

# 2022 Graduates

*Congratulations to our 2022 Graduates! CLACX hosted a Cafecito for our graduating majors and minors, MA students and Graduate Certificate students the day prior to graduation. Students and their families were invited to attend the celebration.*



## GRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS

**Erin Straight** and **Genevieve Arnold** graduated with a MA in LAS in May 2022. In Fall 2022, Straight will pursue a MA in Public Policy at the



University of Chicago. **Isaac Schlotterbeck** graduated with a dual MA in LAS and MPH. His thesis was titled, “Disparities in Loss to Follow-Up/Mortality Before vs. After Registry Linkage in Brazil, Mexico, and Peru.” Isaac has accepted a position as a Senior Analyst in Health Services Research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. **Megan Skaggs** graduated with a dual MA in LAS and MEd in International Policy and Education Management. She is a Program Associate at the Financial Health Network.

CLACX Awarded Graduate Certificates in Latin American Studies to **Jacob Brown** (Spanish and Portuguese), **Chelsey Dyer** (Anthropology), **Phyllis Johnson** (Anthropology), **Abraham Liddell** (History) **Abigail Peterson** (Anthropology), and **Gloria Perez Rivera** (Anthropology) in 2021-2022. **Joryán Hernández** (MDiv) earned a Graduate Certificate in Latino and Latina Studies.

## UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS

**Laura Cardona** graduated with a major in Human and Organizational Development, and a minor in Latino and Latina Studies. She accepted a position as an account manager and analyst at Made In Network in Miami, Florida. While at Vanderbilt, she served as the Association of Latin American and Latinx Students (ALAS) first year representative, Café con leche cultural showcase co-chair, and president.

**Lily Chuck** graduated with majors in Law, History, and Society and Spanish, and a minor in Latino and Latina Studies. She is headed to Harvard Law school in Fall 2022. While at Vanderbilt, she interned with TN Justice for our Neighbors, jumping headfirst into responding to refugee crises from around the world. She worked primarily for humanitarian parolees from Afghanistan and unaccompanied minors from Central America to facilitate detailed and accurate visa applications. She looks forward to carrying this passion for immigrant justice in her legal career.

**Jenna Fassinger** graduated with a BA in Latin American Studies in December 2021 and is working in Nashville.

**Jessica Kaplan** graduated with majors in Latino and Latina Studies and Human and Organizational Development. She accepted a position as a strategy analyst at Deloitte in New York City. While at Vanderbilt, she co-founded “ready dress go,” a clothing company to help women feel empowered in the business world.



**Mikayla Alsopp** graduated with majors in Medicine, Health and Society and Public Policy and a minor in Latin American Studies, and **Ailish Bennett** graduated with majors in Medicine, Health and Society and Economics and a minor in Latin American Studies.

## “RAÍCES Y SUEÑOS” RECOGNIZES LATINX GRADUATES

The Latinx Graduates Recognition Ceremony, “Raíces y Sueños,” celebrated the achievements and successes of all graduating Latinx students. The ceremony serves as a unique space for students to pay homenaje to family, friends, faculty, staff, and administrators who have supported their journeys. Graduates were celebrated with food, music, graduation stoles, guest speakers, student awards, and photo opportunities. “Raíces y Sueños” was hosted by the Student Center for Social Justice and Inclusion this year; it was started in 2017 by **Gretchen Selcke** in her role as LATS Director. This year she received the faculty MaestrX Award for her support of Latinx students at Vanderbilt.



# Students Travel to Guatemala and Puerto Rico through Project Pyramid



During Spring Break 2022, students enrolled in Owen's Project Pyramid course traveled to Guatemala and Puerto Rico during Spring Break as part of their work on projects in Central America and the Caribbean. Housed in the Turner Family Center for Social Ventures, Project Pyramid is an interdisciplinary course that focuses on applying business principles and social enterprise to developing economies around the world. Student cohorts on the trip worked with the following social enterprises, focusing on entrepreneurship and client deliverables: De la Gente Coffee, Pomona Agtech, Conocado, Yspaniola, and Nudge.

- **De la Gente Coffee** helps local farmers earn comfortable incomes and manage their economic lifestyles. Students used digital market analysis to research the industry and improve sales.
- **Pomona Agtech** focuses on robust agtech development throughout Central America: a region in which more than 30% of GDP relies on agriculture. Students offered consulting services to promote renewable income.

- **Conocado** is the leading exporter of organic cacao in the world and top producer of cacao in the Dominican Republic. Although Owen students were not able to travel to the Dominican Republic (due to COVID-19 restrictions), their time in Puerto Rico offered an experiential glimpse into the Caribbean economy. They introduced data visualization into supply chain studies and community engagement efforts.
- **Yspaniola** promotes quality education to individuals throughout the Dominican Republic. Students worked with the non-profit to introduce technology into the classroom.
- **Nudge** works with large economic markets with attention to environmental sustainability and impact investing. Students helped this investment fund with their social enterprise pursuits.



In May 2022, **Vanderbilt Student-Athletes** had the opportunity to experience the **Impact Business Immersion** trip to Antigua. A unique collaboration between Soles4Souls, Vanderbilt Athletics, and Owen, student athletes gained experience in international social impact programs. While in Guatemala, the student-athletes distributed shoes to 500 children and families, met with local entrepreneurs creating sustainable social enterprises, and toured Lago de Atitlán.

## Alumni News

**Isabel Acosta** (BA LAS and Neuroscience, 2021) attended Vanderbilt as a National Merit Semi-Finalist and National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholar. She is a Research Assistant at the New York City based social policy research organization MDRC, where she works to improve early childcare and education policies and programs for underserved and disadvantaged students.

**Angelika Albaladejo** (MA LAS, 2014) is an award-winning investigative journalist. Her reporting on immigration and criminal justice has been published by *USA TODAY*, *The Guardian*, *Univision*, *CNN* and *Miami Herald*.

**Heather Ewing Ogle** (MPH/MA LAS, 2018) is a Health Communications Specialist at Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

**Sarah Foss** (MA LAS, 2012) won the 2022 Sturgis Leavitt Award for her article "Rumors of Insurgency and Assassination in the Ixcán, Guatemala" published in the *Journal of Social History* in 2021. Foss is an Assistant Professor of History at Oklahoma State University.

**Andrea (Delgado) Galvez** (MA LAS, 2018) graduated from Emory University School of Law with high honors in May 2022. She is an associate at Alston & Bird in Atlanta.

**Sophia Guzzo** (BA LATS and Political Science, 2018) entered her third year at Harvard Law School where she is a student mentor through the Board

of Student Advisers and an active member of La Alianza, the law school's Latinx organization. Upon graduating, she will return to Miami to work for the Miami-Dade County Attorney's Office.

**Joryán Hernández** (MDiv, May 2022) will continue his studies at the University of Notre Dame, where he will pursue a Ph.D. in Peace Studies and Theology. At Notre Dame, his research will be at the intersection of trauma, displacement, theologies of hope, and pastoral care.

**John T. Maddox, IV** (PhD Spanish and Portuguese, 2014) is an Associate Professor of Spanish and African American Studies at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Through the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, he won University Teacher of the Year (2021) and the Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award (2015). He is author of *Challenging the Black Atlantic: The New World Novels of Zapata Olivella and Gonçalves* (2021) and co-author of the *Dictionary of Latin American Identities* with Thomas Stephens (2021). He has published widely on the African diaspora in Brazil and the Hispanic Caribbean.

**Demetrius Murphy** (MA LAS, 2019) published his first solo-authored article, "Aquilombamento, Entrepreneurial Black Placemaking in an Anti-Black City," in *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. The article is based on his MA thesis at Vanderbilt. Murphy is currently a doctoral student in Sociology at the University of Southern California.

**Megan Jeanette Myers** (PhD Spanish and Portuguese; Graduate Certificate in LATS, 2016) is Associate Professor of Spanish at Iowa State University. In 2019, Myers published *Mapping Hispaniola: Third Space in Dominican and Haitian Literature* (University of Virginia Press), and she co-edited an anthology, *The Border of Lights Reader: Bearing Witness to Genocide in the Dominican Republic*, published in 2021 by Amherst College Press. She has also recently published articles in several journals, including *Confluencia*, *Chiricú*, *Chasqui: revisita de literatura latinoamericana*, *Children's Literature*, and *Latino Studies*. Myers is a Fulbright Scholar to the Dominican Republic for the 2021-2022 academic year and serves various editorial capacities on several academic journals including *Hispania*, *The International Journal on Research of Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, and *The Afro-Hispanic Review*.

**Lori A O'Hollaren** (MA LAS, 1995) is the Assistant Vice Provost in the Division of Global Engagement at the University of Oregon promoting international engagements.

**Gloria Clemencia Pérez-Rivera** (PhD Anthropology, 2022) accepted an Assistant Professor position in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Mount Royal University in Calgary beginning Fall 2022. Her research examines socio-economic reconfigurations that peasant households experience when they are internally displaced due to violent conflict, focusing on internally

## Student Organizations

CLACX partners with a wide diversity of student organizations on campus to bring visiting speakers, support events, and develop networks on and off campus. Take some time to check them out!

displaced people who are relocated to the urban area of Cartagena.

**Rebeca Ramón** (BA LATS and Human and Organizational Development, 2021) is a consultant at Boston Consulting Group's San Diego offices. She is founder of Mi Horchatería, a dairy-free organic version of horchata, a business she began at Vanderbilt.

**Avi Richman** (M.Ed, 2012) began a position as a Foreign Service Officer in Education at USAID in 2021, after retiring from his position as Education Program Officer at the Tinker Foundation. In his new role, he works at U.S. missions abroad to support foreign assistance activities in education and development, and coordinate and implement country-specific education strategies.

**Elsa Sánchez Mercado** (PhD Spanish; Graduate Certificate in LATS, 2021) accepted a position at Nike as their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Education Lead.

**Steven Taylor** (MA LAS, 2011) teaches AP Human Geography, AP European History, and Spanish at Beech High School in Hendersonville, TN.

**Latin American and Caribbean Student Organization (LACS)** is the first school-wide organization that aims to bring together people from the geographical and historical areas of Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean Islands, and South America, as well as those who are interested or passionate about the region. We are a pluralistic and inclusive organization seeking to build community and cultural awareness among Vanderbilt graduate students and Nashville at large. We want to serve as a gathering point for people of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be a support for international students from the region who are already in Nashville or are coming next year, and to make ourselves present on the Vanderbilt campus and in Nashville in diverse ways.

**GuateLab (IximLab)** is a students' initiative to discuss social problems that have implications in Guatemala (Iximulew). The group meets on Fridays to discuss, propose, critique, and offer solutions to social problems such as access to education, inequalities, racism, violence, hunger, health issues, and migration. GuateLab respects and welcomes diverse points of view. It is open to Guatemalan students across the university, as well as any student interested in Guatemala and speakers of English, Spanish, and/or Mayan languages.

**Peabody Latinx Alumni and Student Association (PLASA)** was formed out of a love and commitment to education. The goal is educating all but with a special focus on Latinx students in and outside the classroom and our unique experiences. Our executive board is currently comprised of four students pursuing an M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration, and a fifth student pursuing a Master's in Public Policy. All Latinx-identifying.

**Alpha Psi Lambda** is the nation's first co-ed Latinx fraternity. The goal of the fraternity is to help connect members across the campus community and promote continued personal and collective growth of fraternity members, community service, and success and unity through education, leadership, and cultural awareness.

Other student organizations CLACX collaborates with include Association of Latin American Students (ALAS), Latinx Seminarians, Indigenous Scholars Organization (ISO), Mexican American Student Association (MSA), Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Vanderbilt (BFMV), and Caribbean Students Association (CSA).



# Américas Award

The 2021 Américas Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature was awarded to *Digging for Words*, José Alberto Gutiérrez and the *Library He Built*, written by **Angela Burke Kunkel** and illustrated by **Paola Escobar** (Schwartz & Wade, 2020) and *Land of the Cranes* written by **Aida Salazar** (Scholastic Press, 2020). Three titles received honorable mention: *Furia*, written by **Yamile Saied Méndez** (Algonquin Young Readers, 2020); *If Dominican Were a Color* written by **Sili Recio** and illustrated by **Brianna McCarthy** (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2020); and *¡Vamos! Let’s Go Eat*, written and illustrated by **Raúl The Third**, with colors by **Elaine Bay** (Versify, 2020).

The awards were presented October 11 by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) and the Latin American, Caribbean and European Division (LAC&E) of the Library of Congress. The virtual program included opening remarks by **Suzanne Schadt**, Director and Chief of LAC&E at the Library of Congress, and the co-coordinators of the Américas Award, **Colleen McCoy** (Vanderbilt University) and **Denise**

**Woltering-Vargas** (Tulane University). A panel discussion, “Celebration of Children’s and YA Latin American and Latinx Literature,” featured Burke Kunkel, Salazar, Raúl The Third, and Yamile Saied Méndez, and was moderated by **Ruth Quiroa**, Associate Professor of Reading, Language, and Literature at National Louis University. More than 100 K-12 teachers, students, and community members attended the live event, and nearly 2,500 have viewed the recording online.

CLASP thanks the 2021 Américas Award Review Committee for their efforts selecting titles; members included **Melinda Gándara** (Santa Barbara City College), **Marleen Linares-González** (University of New Mexico), **Vicky Lowe** (Madeleine Choir School, UT), **María Thurber**, Committee Chair (Library of Congress), and **Cristina Rhodes** (Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania).

In addition to the winning titles and honorable mentions, the committee commended thirteen titles:

- *Brick by Brick* written and illustrated by Heidi Woodward Sheffield. Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2020.

- *Clap When You Land* written by Elizabeth Acevedo. HarperTeen, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2020.
- *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* written by Jennifer De León. Atheneum, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, 2020.
- *Efrén Divided* written by Ernesto Cisneros. HarperCollins Publishers, 2020.
- *Evelyn Del Rey is Moving Away* by Meg Medina. Illustrated by Sonia Sanchez. Candlewick Press, 2020.
- *From My Window* written by Otávio Júnior, translated from the Portuguese by Beatriz C. Dias, illustrated by Vanina Starkoff. Barefoot Books, 2020.
- *Gustavo, the Shy Ghost* written and illustrated by Flavia Z. Drago. Candlewick, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020.
- *Letters From Cuba* written by Ruth Behar. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2020.
- *Rise of the Halfling King (Tales of the Feathered Serpent #1)* written by David Bowles and illustrated by Charlene Bowles. Cinco Puntos Press, 2020.
- *Santiago's Road Home* by Alexandra Diaz. A Paula Wiseman Book: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2020.
- *Sharuko: El arqueólogo peruano /Peruvian Archaeologist Julio C. Tello* written by Monica Brown and illustrated by Elisa Chavarri. Lee & Low Books, 2020.
- *We Are Not From Here* written by Jenny Torres Sanchez. Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2020.
- *With a Star in My Hand, Rubén Darío, Poetry Hero* written by Margarita Engle. Atheneum, an

imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division, 2020.

The Américas Award is sponsored by CLASP and coordinated by CLACX and Tulane's Stone Center for Latin American Studies. The award recognizes children's and young adult books that authentically portray Latin America and the Caribbean, with a specific emphasis on potential for K-12 classroom use. The award receives financial support from Florida International University, Stanford University, The Ohio State University, Tulane University, University of Florida, University of New Mexico, University of Utah, UNC-Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Vanderbilt University. For more information about the Américas Award, including related teaching resources, upcoming programming, and the recording of the 2021 public program, visit [claspprograms.org](https://claspprograms.org).

## CLACX Partnership with ReadWorks

Since 2017, CLACX has partnered with ReadWorks, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving reading comprehension for K-12 students. Home to the largest library of curated nonfiction and literary articles in the United States, ReadWorks provides open access to content, curriculum, and training to educators and students. Throughout the ongoing collaboration between CLACX and ReadWorks, more than 144,148 teachers in 49,819 schools across all 50 states have engaged with the content produced by CLACX, and nearly 500,000 students received CLACX content as part of an assignment. CLACX has written more than 90 articles for ReadWorks and continues to create new content each year. All articles are available at [readworks.org](https://readworks.org).

## 2021 EDUCATOR INSTITUTE

# “Central America: People and the Environment” Draws 55 Participants

**C**LACX hosted *Central America: People and the Environment* for educators in partnership with Tulane University and the University of Georgia in June 2021. This year’s program was the third in a four-part series and was attended by K-16 educators representing 22 different US states. Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, the institute took place virtually as a two-week synchronous program. Recordings from the institute are now publicly accessible as an asynchronous online course.

Educators heard presentations, engaged in discussions led by scholars in the US and Central America, and participated in a curriculum development cohort through the institute, through which they brainstormed strategies and developed materials for incorporating the institute content into their classrooms. The curriculum cohorts were led by Tulane University’s **Brooke Grant** (Teacher Preparation and Certification Program) and **Adrienne Gonzales** (Director, Language Learning Center). Prior to each daily synchronous session of the institute, educators prepared for the live discussions with the featured speakers through a collection of digital resources, including pre-recorded lectures and scholarly texts, podcasts, videos, and news articles. Fourteen new instructional resources were created for the program, all of which are now available at [as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/workshops](https://as.vanderbilt.edu/clacx/workshops).

To create continuity within the series, the institute began with presentations from previous institute participants, who shared the curriculum units and best practices they developed after attending the *People and the Environment* programs in 2019 and 2020. The rest of the institute integrated content with curriculum development sessions.

**Justin Wolfe** (Tulane University) provided a

general history of Central America, and addressed the historic, political, cultural, and economic impacts of the Panama Canal project through a discussion of contemporary issues within the historic context of the canal. Tulane University graduate students **Sarah Scism**, **Marina Hernandez**, and **Miguel Lopez** shared “Student Perspectives on Transformative Learning Opportunities,” in which they shared their research on Central America, exploring environmental issues, cultural identity, and culinary and nutritional practices. The first week of the program concluded with a poetry reading by **Jorge Argueta**, Pipil Nahua Indian and award-winning Salvadoran poet. He discussed primary and secondary education in El Salvador and his Library of Dreams/La biblioteca de los sueños in San Jacinto, which provides a safe space for children in El Salvador to read and better understand their multicultural and multilingual backgrounds. “If we start early,” Argueta said, “it is my belief that when these children are offered to join a violent and harmful lifestyle, they will have the strength of spirit to choose life, education, and multicultural pride.”

Week two of the institute began with a presentation by **Amalia Leguizamón** (Tulane University) on her research on sociological impacts of banana monocultures on Honduras, which provided perspective for deeper discussions on the impact of monopolies in Central America. Leguizamón also examined the political economy of the environment of Latin America, addressing topics such as extractivism, the activism of Berta Cáceres, and issues affecting the Lenca. University of Maryland’s **Sarah Foust** continued the discussion of extractivism with her lecture, “Palm Oil, Tourism Industries, and Displacement in Honduras.” Foust also spoke

about her research on the relationship between remittances and the environment in Honduras in her talk, “Remittances, Environment and Mapping Field Work in Honduras.”

The institute included sessions on the intersection of food, history, and culture in Central America.

**Ilda Sarmiento** shared her culinary traditions as a Honduran immigrant in a live cooking demonstration. Sarmiento walked the educators through the process of cooking *pollo frito con tajadas*, a favorite Honduran dish, and discussed traditional Honduran cuisine within the context of Honduran culture and history. **Charlie Mustard** (Jittery Joe’s Coffee Company, Athens, GA), a veteran coffee roaster with more than 20 years of experience sourcing and processing international beans, spoke with **Paul Duncan** (UGA) about the cultivation, harvesting, economic systems, and roasting process for Central American coffee. Attendees also heard from **Michael White**, who shared insight into the business models and production processes for local coffee farmers based on his work at Thriveworkx, a social enterprise in Guatemala. Duncan also presented an overview of Latin American plants, highlighting his plants in UGA’s Latin American Ethnobotanical Garden.

The program concluded with participant presentations of curriculum developed during the institute, including how they will integrate the themes of the institute into their classroom.

Twenty educators attended the final installment of the 4-part series in Panama in June 2022. Participants from across the country were selected for the multidisciplinary cohort following a competitive application process in spring 2022.

The 2018-2022 *Central America: People and the Environment* institute series was led and organized by **Colleen McCoy** (Vanderbilt), **Denise Woltering Vargas** (Tulane), and **Paul Duncan** (UGA).



## EDUCATOR WORKSHOP:

### Exploring Garifuna Culture

In honor of “Teach Central America Week,” CLACX partnered with Tulane University’s Stone Center for Latin American Studies and University of Georgia’s Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute for a virtual educator workshop, “Exploring Garifuna Culture,” during the first week of October. The program featured three Garifuna scholars: Writer **Janel Martinez**, founder of the award-winning site “Ain’t I Latina?” and contributing author of the anthology *Wild Tongues Can’t Be Tamed: 15 Voices from the Latinx Diaspora*; **Saracicia Fennell**, founder of The Bronx is Reading, and editor and contributing author of *Wild Tongues Can’t Be Tamed*; and **Isha Sumner**, author of the first official Garifuna cookbook, *Weiga/Let’s Eat*. Martinez, Fennell, and Sumner examined Garifuna culture and identity through a study of performance, writing, and culinary traditions, and led a related resource discussion and Q&A with participants. The workshop was organized by **Colleen McCoy** and **Denise Woltering Vargas**, and was attended by 29 K-16 educators representing a variety of disciplines from schools across the country. Each participant received new teaching materials to incorporate the content into their classroom.



# Over 3500 Attend Cheekwood's Annual Día de los Muertos Festival

The annual Día de los Muertos celebration at Cheekwood Estate and Gardens returned in 2021 as an in-person event and was held over two days for the first time. Now in its 22nd year, the festival showcases traditional music and dance, Latin American cuisine from regional vendors, a marketplace, and interactive art activities for local K-12 school groups and the public. More than 3,600 people attended the 2021 celebration.

Each year, CLACX, school groups, and Nashville community organizations create altars for the festival which are displayed in Botanic Hall. For CLACX's altar this year, toe tags representing individuals who died crossing the Sonoran Desert comprised the centerpiece of the altar, accompanied by a collection of photographs of the desert taken by photographer



Michael Wells. The materials were created through the *Hostile Terrain 94* exhibit hosted by CLACX in September, which served to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis at the US/Mexico border (see pages 3–5 for more on the project). At Cheekwood, several Vanderbilt graduate students explained the

significance of the altar to visitors, fielded questions, and shared related resources.

Since 2010, CLACX has partnered with Cheekwood to provide educational content for festival attendees, including a bilingual booklet on the history and customs of the holiday, and through service on the festival's advisory committee, with Outreach Coordinator Colleen McCoy representing CLACX for the past five years.

# Educator Book Club

Led by **Colleen McCoy**, The CLACX Educator Book Club gathered monthly throughout the year to critically consider the depiction of Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx cultures in children’s literature, and discuss strategies for incorporating diverse books in the K-12 classroom. This year, 17 educators from Davidson, Wilson, Williamson, and Hamilton counties, as well as one pre-service teacher from the University of Notre Dame, participated in the group. Club members represented a variety of disciplines including English, Spanish, Math, English Language Learning, Counseling, and elementary education.

While most of the meetings took place virtually, the group met on Vanderbilt’s campus in September 2021 with anthropologist **Jason De León**. They discussed his book, *Land of the Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*, visited the *Hostile Terrain 94* exhibit, and attended De León’s public lecture. In April 2022, **Saraciea Fennell**, editor and contributing author of *Wild Tongues Can’t Be Tamed: 15 Voices from the Latinx Diaspora*, joined the virtual



book club for their discussion of the collection of essays by award-winning Latinx authors.

Other book club discussions focused on the following titles: *Don’t Ask Me Where I’m From* by Jennifer De Leon, *When We Make It* by Elisabet Velasquez, *Gods of Jade and Shadow* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* by Meg Medina, *Aristotle and Dante Dive into the Waters of the World* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, *Land of the Cranes* by Aida Salazar, *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jiménez, and *Furia* by Yamile Saied Méndez.

## CLASP Supports Creation of New Curriculum for High School Spanish

A new curriculum unit for the high school Spanish classroom, “Migration Sagas/ Sagas de Migración Interpretada en Novelas y Poemas,” introduces students to a diversity of voices and facets of immigrating to the United States, including unrest in the country of origin, struggles during the journey, and experiences within the US. The unit features over a dozen award-winning books, and centers on two books featured on the Américas Award commended book lists: *Me Dicen Güero*, written by David Bowles and published by Penguin Random House in 2020, and *La Travesía de Enrique*, written by Sonia Nazario and published by Delacorte Books in 2013. The unit also incorporates a selection of Américas Award books with migration themes to be chosen by the students and read in English.

The curriculum was designed by **Christi Moraga**, a retired French and Spanish teacher, ACTFL 2006 Northeast Teacher of the Year, and Américas Book Award Committee member for six years. Moraga’s philosophy includes teaching culture along with promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion while teaching a world language. Additional assistance was provided by **Xena Fitzgerald**, PhD student in Latin American Studies and Art History at Tulane University.

This is the first CLASP curriculum unit to engage multiple Américas Award books in conversation and is available on the CLASP website “Teaching Resources” section.

## CLACX Provides Professional Development for Metro Nashville Public Schools Educators

In November 2021, CLACX Outreach Coordinator **Colleen McCoy** joined 100 Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) teachers as a speaker for the English Learners Virtual Fall Forum, *A Canvas of Partnerships and Practices*. In her presentation, “Exploring Possibilities with Diverse Children’s Literature,” McCoy highlighted a collection of Américas Award titles that address topics such as immigration, civil rights, STEM themes, and cultural connections across Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinx diasporas. The session also featured resources and strategies for incorporating the books within K-12 classrooms, emphasizing opportunities for multidisciplinary collaborations as well as library and community outreach programming. Additionally, attendees explored the free physical and digital educational materials available through CLACX.



The virtual program featured presentations and a discussion with Vanderbilt scholars **Gretchen Selcke** (CLACX), **Antonella Valdivia** (Student Center for Social Justice and Identity), and **Shelza Rivas** (Vanderbilt School of Nursing).

“I am so excited to borrow books from your diverse library,” said an educator participant. “I can’t wait to include more literature for my students that represents them!”

In April, CLACX partnered with the Metro Nashville Public Schools Office of English Learners to host 51 educators for a professional development workshop, “Naming Identities: Exploring the Terms Hispanic, Latino, Latinx, and Latiné.”

Selcke provided an overview of the terms, including definitions, historical trends and impact of use, and contemporary discussions in both academia and society. Valdivia spoke about her experience working with university students of diverse backgrounds, highlighting the recent dialogues on identity occurring across college campuses and the current research on language of identity. Rivas engaged the presenters in discussion and shared her professional experience as healthcare provider for Latinx populations, as well as sharing her personal perspective on the use of identity terms. The workshop closed with a Q&A session moderated by Rivas, and the distribution of related instructional resources to participants.

## Hillsboro High School Field Trip

CLACX hosted 50 sophomores from Hillsboro High School Academy of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (AIBDP) in March. Following a morning information session and campus tour with the Office of Admissions, the students and their teachers attended “Internationalizing Your College Experience” organized by the Global Education Office (GEO). The program featured a presentation by senior study abroad advisor Gabriela Luis and a discussion with Vanderbilt undergraduate students

**Trinity Williams, Agneetta Moisio, and Nathan Miao.** They shared their experiences studying abroad, provided recommendations, and underscored the importance of preparation and how to make the most of an international education experience. **Colleen McCoy** has served as Chair of the AIBDP Partners Board since 2019. CLACX has collaborated with Hillsboro as a Pencil Partner for several years, and this was the fourth time the center hosted a AIBDP campus visit.

## New “CLACX Academy” Engages RePublic High School Students in Latin American and Latinx Issues

In April, **Celso Castilho** and **Colleen McCoy** collaborated with RePublic High School in Nashville for the first week-long “CLACX Academy.” Castilho presented three sessions throughout the week of April 25, leading 28 students through an exploration of the current debates surrounding language of identity, thinking through terms such as “Latinx” and “Latinidades,” and fostering discussions about the significance of the debates as they relate to power, race, and belonging in the US and across the Americas. In addition to introducing new content to the students, the CLACX Academy provided participants with a framework for critically engaging with any contemporary debate, guiding them through an analysis of sources representing differing perspectives



that had been assigned to the students in preparation for the discussion.

Following the week-long academy experience, each participant developed their own “Think Piece” article, responding to questions such as “What

is the Latinx debate about?” and “What does the debate teach us about social identities, and about the relationship between social identities and politics?” The cohort’s writings will be displayed as a public exhibit in RePublic High School.



In April, CLACX supported **OZ Arts Nashville** to host Cuban dance group Malpaso. The contemporary dance company from Havana uses a collaborative creative process, working with top international choreographers while nurturing new voices in Cuban choreography. Malpaso gave two performances attended by nearly 500 people and a free masterclass for professional dancers.

## Global Read Webinar Series

Area studies centers from various world regions collaborated to present the fifth annual Global Read Webinar Series in Spring 2022. The monthly event consists of a sixty-minute webinar for educators, parents, and students that features the author of an award-winning book and gives guidance for incorporating the book into the classroom.

On April 13, the Américas Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature featured a conversation with **Ernesto Cisneros**. He is the author of the *Efrén Divided* (HarperCollins, 2020), which won the 2021 Pura Belpré Award and was selected as a 2021 Américas Award Commended Title. Written for a middle grade reader, the story follows a young boy and his family as they struggle with poverty and deportation. Cisneros visits a harsh reality for many children in the US—the fear of separation followed by the uncertainty of ever returning to a united family. The author balances these unsettling themes with moments of love, family, and friendship in this debut novel.

The virtual program was moderated by Américas Award review committee member **Melinda Gándara** (Santa Barbara City College) and was attended by educators from across the country. Cisneros, a 27-year veteran teacher in Santa Ana, California, treated the audience to several “behind the scenes” stories of *Efrén Divided*, which he wrote in the spirit of camaraderie alongside his eighth-grade students as they developed their own fiction stories for a classroom assignment.

Other Spring 2022 webinars were hosted by the South Asia Book Award, the Middle East Book Award, the Africana Book Award, and the Freeman Award. All webinars are open to educators, free of charge, and available online for classroom use. More than 100 people registered for the 2022 series and received the video recordings, which are available online ([internationalizingsocialstudies.blog](http://internationalizingsocialstudies.blog)).



Students Miguel Cuj, Paola Torres, and Marielos Corado along with Avery Dickins de Girón hosted a Guatemala table for Crieve Hall Elementary’s International Night





# CLACX Supports Global Education Center to Bring Latin American Music and Dance to Nashville

After several postponements due to the COVID pandemic, the Global Education Center (GEC) was able to bring the late Brazilian jazz guitarist **Carlos Barbosa Lima** to Nashville in December with CLACX as a co-sponsor. The renowned musician conducted a three-week residency at GEC and led workshops at the Nashville School of the Arts, Middle Tennessee State University, Davidson County Juvenile Detention Center, Room In The Inn, and The Jazz Workshop, and other locales in Knoxville and Oak Ridge. The culmination of his visit was a premiere performance played by Barbosa-Lima that also featured **João Luiz Lopes** playing a chamber piece and artists from Intersection and GEC sharing rhythms, dances, and traditions from Brazil and Cuban. The concert honored the heritages of Cuban maestro Leo Brouwer who composed a commissioned piece for Barbosa Lima and Luiz Lopes.

CLACX also co-sponsored “Black Arts in America,” a public humanities project led by GEC that explored the ways that Black Arts traditions, from Mother Africa to The Americas, have influenced the overall arts scene in America. The 10-month project included discussions, readings, workshops, films, performances, and exhibitions. “Music of Oppression and Survival” featured a presentation by **Uzoma Miller** on Reggae, Rap, and other genres, followed by an evening reggae concert in January. The project concluded with a four-day Black Dance Festival in April featuring Brazilian, Cuban, and Colombian dance masters. The festival included dialogues on dance, workshops, performances, and dance parties that traced the evolution of dance styles from West Africa to Harlem and in Latin America. In addition to hosting the events, the GEC created a related curriculum guide for educators and schools.

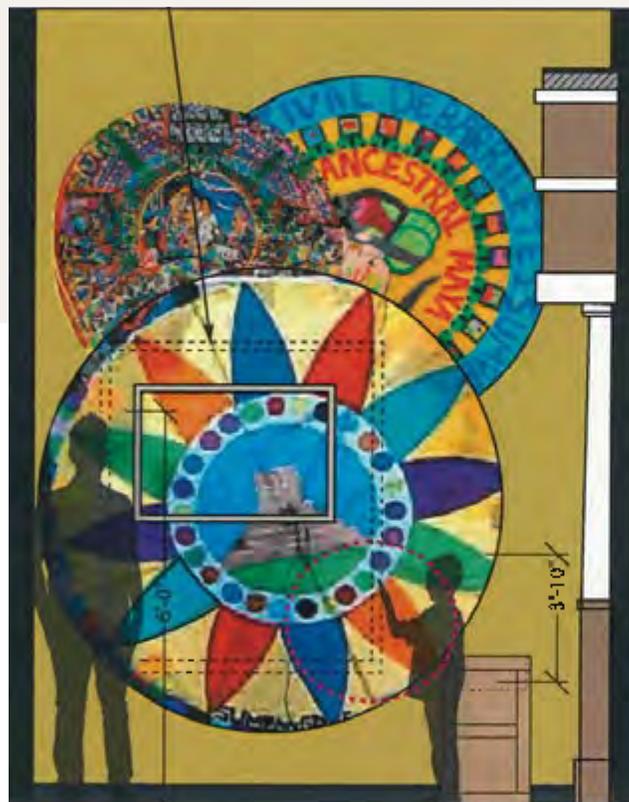


## Trilingual Storytime with the Frist Art Museum

CLACX and Frist Art Museum continued to partner on the Frist’s Trilingual Storytime series this year. Storytime features children’s book simultaneously presented in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language. In July 2021, Storytime featured *Butterfly Park*, offered in-person and live-streamed, attended by nearly 400 participants. This was the first in-person event for families presented by the Frist since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vanderbilt doctoral student in History, **Claudia Monterroza Rivera**, led Trilingual Storytime in March. She read *Dalia’s Wondrous Hair*, a bilingual book by Cuban author and illustrator Laura Lacamara (Piñata Books, 2014), which was selected as an Américas Award commended title in 2015. Families listened to the story of the young protagonist who embraces her long, luxurious, untamed hair by turning it into a refuge for Cuban flora and fauna. The book was chosen to complement the *On The Horizon* exhibit, which ran from January to May (see page 10). “The Frist Art Museum is extremely grateful for partnership with organizations like CLACX that support our non-profit programming across the Nashville community,” Samantha Andrews, Frist Art Museum Experiential Learning Director. “During the uncertainty of the past two years, CLACX was steadfast in their support as we continued to connect art, culture, literacy, and social-emotional learning for students and families through Trilingual Storytime.” Selections for Storytime center around Frist Museum exhibition themes with deliberate intent to feature inclusive and diverse authors, illustrators, or characters. Learn more at [fristartmuseum.org](http://fristartmuseum.org).

## New Guatemala Exhibit to Debut in Chattanooga’s Creative Discovery Museum

CLACX collaborated with the Creative Discovery Museum in Chattanooga in support of a new exhibit on Guatemala’s Day of the Dead celebrations. The exhibit will examine the large kite festivals in Santiago and Sumpango and how Guatemalans living in Chattanooga celebrate. Liza Blair, the museum’s Arts Manager, worked with members of Chattanooga’s Guatemalan community and interviewed Vanderbilt students from Guatemala about the holiday and their traditions. CLACX also supported **Nela Tahay** to translate exhibit signage into K’iche’ Mayan. Tahay is the head instructor of the summer Mayan Language Institute’s K’iche’ program. The exhibit will debut in August 2022.





# HEART—Unifying Communities through Language and Textile Art

**E**lvira Aballi Morell, doctoral student in Spanish and Portuguese, received a grant from Vanderbilt’s Curb Center for a new initiative, “HEART – Unifying Communities through Language and Textile Art.” The project encourages members of Nashville’s Latinx community to come together and around three objectives: creative writing, English as a second language, and textile art. HEART is co-led by **Vladimir Betancur Bedoya**, Coordinator for the Intensive English Center at Tennessee State University (TSU) and Colombian textile artist **Marcela Castaño Velez**. Aballi Morell encourages members of the Nashville Latinx community to tell their stories through literature and writing, Betancur directs the ESL courses, and Castaño engages members in creating textile art forms. CLACX collaborated with HEART to bring **Fatima Gonzalez Solano** and **Rodo Sánchez Zamarron** to Nashville in January 2022. Based at the Universidad de Guadalajara, the two textile specialists have previously worked with the center to offer art education programs. In this visit, they shared the Tenango style of embroidery from Mexico with HEART participants over two workshops. For more about HEART, visit: [heartuc.org](http://heartuc.org).



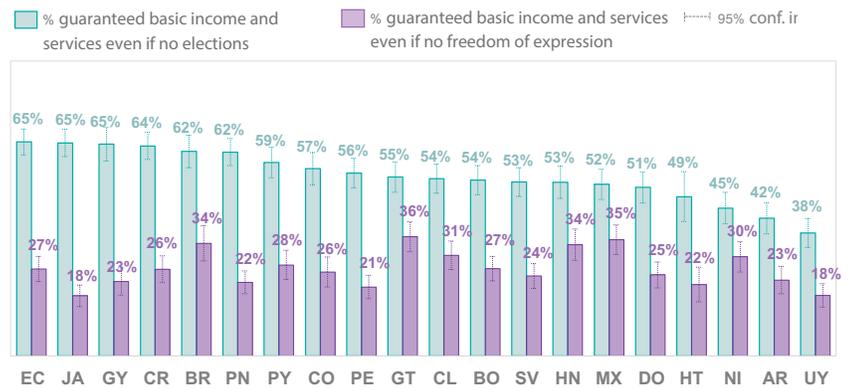
# The Pulse of Democracy in 2021

What can data from the 2021 AmericasBarometer tell us about the pulse of democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean? LAPOP Lab’s director, Liz Zechmeister, and associate director, Noam Lupu, provide some insights in [this regional report](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic presented institutions with a severe and prolonged stress test. The pandemic increased the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) public’s need for government services while simultaneously stretching and diminishing the state’s capacity to provide them. Yet, support for democracy as the best form of government remained steady in the LAC region, an impressive sign of resilience. In fact, satisfaction with democracy increased marginally in 2021 – a sign that the public does not blame democracy for its collective suffering.

Still, skepticism regarding electoral democracy persists and tolerance for centralizing power in the executive increased. When asked to choose between freedom of speech or guaranteed access to basic income and services, the vast majority of LAC residents opt for freedom of speech. In contrast, when asked to choose between a guaranteed basic standard of living or elections, fewer than half choose the latter. This disregard for elections – a key mechanism by which electoral democracies translate the people’s voice into politics – is grounded in views that elections, and elected representatives, are flawed and untrustworthy. What channels for political voice are more attractive than elected representatives? The public appears to see two options: direct democracy and/or strong executives. When asked to choose, large numbers of individuals prefer direct democracy over representative democracy, and many also say they would tolerate

## In most countries, majorities prefer a system that guarantees basic income/services over elections but not over freedom of speech



Source: AmericasBarometer, 2021



strong executives who work around legislatures and judiciaries. These attitudes reveal a critical challenge to the health of democracy in the region: to the degree that citizens feel their voices are not being heard through elections, they may accept deviations from democratic practices.

Read the [2021 Pulse of Democracy](#) to find out more about what the AmericasBarometer reveals about the health of democracy in the LAC region and how efforts around dialogue, inclusion, equity, and good governance can help bolster confidence in electoral democracy.

### SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2022

LAPOP Lab Presents “**The Public and Democracy in the Americas Conference**” in Antigua, Guatemala. Program information and registration [here](#).

LAPOP Lab’s Data Playground is a free online, interactive data analysis tool that continues to expand the accessibility and use of its AmericasBarometer – check out it out here: [vanderbilt.edu/lapop/interactive-data.php](http://vanderbilt.edu/lapop/interactive-data.php)

# LAPOP 2021-22 Highlights

## LAPOP'S Newest Doctors

**Laura Sellers** – On November 15, 2021, Laura Sellers defended her dissertation on emigration intentions, participation patterns, and expatriate voting in Latin America. To address this question, she used AmericasBarometer data to test established theories of emigration intentions and the extent to which those “waiting to leave” engage with the political system. She also tested traditional theories of retrospective economic voting in five Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) that extend voting rights to those living abroad to examine whether expatriates use the economic conditions of their country of residence to reward or punish the incumbent party in presidential elections back home. Her committee was chaired by Jonathan Hiskey along with committee members Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Noam Lupu, James McCann (Purdue), and Marc Hetherington (UNC-Chapel Hill).

**Adam Wolsky** – On August 13, 2021, Adam Wolsky defended his dissertation on public opinion and electoral consequences of political scandals. In the first core chapter of his dissertation, using an original survey experiment fielded online, he investigated how exposure to different frames of a moral scandal involving members of both major US political parties affected how partisans evaluate their own parties. The other two core chapters of the dissertation use Adam’s novel database of wrongdoing committed by presidents in 18 Latin American democracies between 1998-2020. The chapters investigate the relationship between presidential wrongdoing and electoral outcomes in subsequent elections including party system volatility, voter turnout, and protest voting. His committee was chaired by Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, along with committee members Ryan Carlin (Georgia State), Cindy Kam, and Noam Lupu.

## Completion of the 2021 AmericasBarometer and release of the *Pulse of Democracy* report

The LAPOP Lab completed data collection for the 2021 round of the AmericasBarometer in September 2021. The round included 22 countries of the Americas and 64,353 interviews. This 9th round of the AmericasBarometer is the first-of-its-kind, phone-based comparative survey project in the region.

The lab published its regional report, the *Pulse of Democracy*, with key findings from the 2021

AmericasBarometer on November 16, 2021, in a public event hosted in partnership with the Wilson Center. The **virtual presentation** highlighted findings of the Latin America and Caribbean public’s assessment of democratic governance, support for democratic values and institutions, perceptions of basic liberties, and how citizens experience the rule of law and engage in political life.

## Launch of the International Survey Methods Workshop Series

This new workshop series features experts from around the world who deliver presentations on cutting-edge survey methodology, with a focus on research in international contexts. The series is intentionally trans-institutional, engaging scholarship from multiple disciplines.

Learn more about upcoming workshops and watch video of past workshop [here](#).

## Record-high involvement of undergraduate students in lab research activities

The lab expanded its undergraduate research assistant team to include a total of 26 students in 2021. This is the largest number of undergraduate research assistants and fellows LAPOP has ever worked with.

Highlights of undergraduate involvement in lab research include:

- Co-authoring the 2021 *Pulse of Democracy*, the regional report for the 2021 AmericasBarometer
- Authoring dozens of *Spotlight* reports
- Publishing student-authored *Insights* reports
- Writing honors theses using our data and participating in immersion projects

## Continues to expand the accessibility and use of its AmericasBarometer data through the Data Playground

LAPOP Lab’s Data Playground is a free online, interactive data analysis tool. It allows users to access AmericasBarometer data for every country in which the lab conducted surveys since 2004. This includes access to more than 100 variables on topics including the economy, political participation, citizen security, corruption, political tolerance, and democracy. The Data Playground has been updated to include the 2021 AmericasBarometer data.



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