Latinos Migration Project

A Year of Growth and Impact

THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL
Reflections

The arrival of 2013 presents us with the opportunity to reflect upon how The Latino Migration Project has broadened and deepened its impact over the past year, at UNC and across the state and nation. 2012 was an important year for the civic engagement of Latinos in North Carolina, with historic increases in voter registrations and the passage of Deferred Action, a presidential act largely motivated by the mobilization of youth across the nation. These milestones reinforce the fact that immigrants and their families are deepening their connections to the region, seeking opportunities to amplify their voices, and increasingly calling NC home.

The Latino Migration Project remains critically important as our nation—again on the verge of federal immigration reform—looks to the state with one of the fastest growing Latino populations to understand the implications of demographic change and policy responses. The University of North Carolina remains a hub of knowledge on transnational migration in the region, and the Latino Migration Project is committed to expanding this knowledge and applying it in the public realm.

Our impact at UNC Chapel Hill: Last year we expanded our support for faculty and students by increasing research and travel funding for migration studies, enhancing course and working group opportunities, and improving training for our global internships. We continue to develop resources to enhance migration studies, including a reference guide for Latino migration research in the region, reports on demographic trends in NC municipalities, and a monthly blog that examines the relevance of national immigration issues to the state. For the fourth year in a row we added 50 transcribed interviews to our Latino Migration Oral History Archives, which document the stories of how Latinos are becoming North Carolinians.

Our impact in North Carolina and beyond: We have continued to share resources and work with communities across the state and nation. Our Building Integrated Communities Program has grown from a pilot project to a model now receiving national attention, with awards from Welcoming America, the AARP, and a Graduate Education Advancement Board Impact Award given to former staff member Anisha Steephen for her thesis evaluating the program. LMP organized and participated in 41 educational events that reached more than 1500 people across the state, ranging from venues as far west as Gaston County to the city of Greenville in the east.

Students in our programs contributed more than 2700 hours of public service in North Carolina and Mexico in 2012, further strengthening the relationships we have maintained with migrant communities in Guanajuato for nearly a decade. Our alumni, who have grown in numbers and serve in professions that include human rights and immigration law, education, health, diplomacy and international development, remain engaged in our programs as mentors, consultants, and career counselors.

Finally, we celebrate the addition of some very talented staff members, who include our new program assistant Joseph Sircar, teaching assistant Liz Willis, and intern Maria Obando. We wish the best to Meghan Andrew, Anisha Steephen, Travis Green, Alexandra Morris, and Amy Nunez, who leave us after dedicated work with the Latino Migration Project.

In the pages that follow we share with you some of the highlights of our impact over the past year and extend a heartfelt thanks to our colleagues, community partners, and students for their support and collaboration.

Hannah Gill, Latino Migration Project Director
Community Partners Receive Mújica Award

What do a former captain in the Army Reserves and a pillar of the Baptist community in Eastern North Carolina have in common? The answer: a shared dedication to working with immigrant communities in our state.

Cassandra Daniels (left) and Alvena Heggins (right) were recipients of the Institute for the Study of the Americas’ 2012 Sharon S. Mújica Community Service Award.

Alvena Heggins and Cassandra Daniels are the 2012 recipients of the Sharon S. Mújica Community Service Award, given annually by the Institute for the Study of the Americas to recognize extraordinary commitment to Latin American and Latino communities. Heggins is the Director of the High Point Human Relations Commission and Daniels is the Director of the Greenville Human Relations Council. Both women have been integral to the work of Building Integrated Communities, an initiative of the Latino Migration Project in partnership with municipal governments in North Carolina. Since 2009, Heggins and Daniels have spearheaded new initiatives aimed at developing more inclusive communities and developed action plans to guide efforts in the future. These accomplishments cap long and distinguished careers in public service. In addition to her 18 years of military service, Heggins worked as an English language educator in NC and in Turkey. Daniels has dedicated nearly 25 years of work to the City of Greenville and service to Progressive Free Will Baptist Church.

Daniels and Heggins received their awards on December 8, 2012 at the sixth annual ISA Faculty Dinner at UNC Chapel Hill. Past recipients are Jerry Markatos, Jane Stein, Florence Simán, and Ilana Dubester.

Anisha Steephen Receives IMPACT Award

Anisha Steephen is the 2012 recipient of the Graduate Education Advancement Board Impact Award for outstanding graduate student research of particular benefit to North Carolina. Steephen’s master’s thesis was entitled “Innovative Bureaucratic Incorporation Strategies for North Carolina.” Her study examined the process through which immigrant integration strategies have been developed through an evaluative case study of Building Integrated Communities (BIC). Steephen received her Master’s Degree from the Department of City and Regional Planning in the spring of 2012 and worked under the supervision of UNC faculty member and BIC collaborator Dr. Mai Thi Nguyen.

Steephen will be honored at The Graduate School’s Annual Student Recognition Celebration in April 2013 where she will have the opportunity to showcase her research to the campus community, state legislators, and others. Steephen will also be awarded a $500 cash prize.

This is the second IMPACT award given to students for work with the Latino Migration Project; in 2009 Lindsay Haddix won the award for her thesis “Immigration and Crime in North Carolina: Beyond the Rhetoric”, which informed a research report disseminated by the LMP to key groups interested in immigration issues in North Carolina.

For more information on BIC, please turn to page 7.
Notable quotes
from Project Guanajuato interns in Mexico

“Instead of being the funny gringos...every Monday through Satu-
day night that they see around, we're teachers or even friends.
--Jennifer Ibarra

These students are truly a joy to teach because they are so energetic and willing to learn.
--Michelle Carreño

Not many people can say that they went on a special trip to serenade a Mexican woman with a little Guns and Roses!
--Tim McEachran

One night while I was walking to the field to play soccer, I saw a group of men in the back of a truck with their guitars. I asked them if I could play guitar with them, and they told me to come along. I went and got my guitar and we drove to the house of a man named Peter to provide Mariachi music for a cookout. After helping ourselves to chicken, pork, pasta and Pepsi, we began to play. At first, I struggled with the new rhythms, but after a while, I caught on. I couldn't quite pick out the lyrics to all the songs, but in many of them, I heard references to the town of Dolores Hidalgo and the state of Guanajuato. After they ran out of songs, they asked me to play a few. I played two songs by Johnny Cash and one by Bob Dylan. I think that they really enjoyed my American music just as I enjoyed the Mariachi and Mexican folk songs that they played.
--Matt Austin

“Instead of being the funny gringos...every Monday through Saturday night that they see around, we're teachers or even friends.
--Jennifer Ibarra

Project Guanajuato is a summer community development internship experience for UNC undergraduates started in 2007 by undergrads who participated in APPLES Global Course Guanajuato. This project is a collaborative effort between the Latino Migration Project and the Fundación Comunitaria del Bajío. Each summer, a team of students help teach English, recreation, arts and dance classes at local schools in accordance with the mission of the Fundación: to create viable economic and social opportunities in communities in the Bajío region.
Alumni spotlight: Atif Mohiuddin
Blazing a path for immigrant health

When Atif Mohiuddin joined the inaugural class of APPLES Global Course Guanajuato in 2006, he brought his own personal insight into the challenges and struggles associated with immigration. Born and raised in a Guatemalan community in western North Carolina by Muslim Indian parents, Mohiuddin did not come from the typical immigrant family. “A big driver in my life is understanding where other people are coming from,” he says.

His participation in the course enabled him to expand and connect these personal experiences to an interest in public health. His final project was based on his service experience as a diabetes educator for the Guatemalan Mayan community in his hometown of Morganton. In Guanajuato, Mohiuddin was eager to engage with doctors, healthcare workers, and migrants in order to better understand health issues associated with migration.

Throughout his undergraduate career, Mohiuddin took full advantage of UNC Chapel Hill’s diverse and engaging curriculum to comprehensively explore the human side of Latino migration: “living in the US we just see people who have arrived, we don’t really understand the back-story of what are the driving forces that are really pushing people to come to the US for a better life...You really, in your heart, get a better understanding, you can empathize much better, after speaking with the families...” At UNC, Mohiuddin found his academic niche in Latin American studies, an interdisciplinary Migration and Diaspora studies major of his own creation, and an intense pre-med curriculum. He participated in a number of programs locally and internationally that incorporated his dual interests in immigration and medicine. He also received a scholarship through the Latin American studies department to travel to Mexico to participate in the UNC Duke Yucatec Maya intensive language program. While abroad, he traveled to the Guatemalan town of Aguacatán to volunteer at the local hospital and to connect with the family members of his neighborhood friends back in Morganton.

After graduating from Chapel Hill in 2008, Mohiuddin went on to pursue a medical career in ophthalmology at The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Despite his rigorous course load and relocation to D.C., Mohiuddin upheld his commitment to service, mentoring local high school immigrants interested in health careers. Now, in his fourth and final year, he is preparing for his future residency career while still providing eye screenings and bilingual medical treatment to local, under-served communities. Today, he looks back at his undergraduate experiences as formative in his development into a self-defined “strong ally for a group of people that are often misunderstood or attacked unfairly.” On a daily basis, Mohiuddin is always ready and eager to share his experiences with others in hopes of promoting a more immigrant-friendly America.

More than 100 UNC students have traveled to Mexico with LMP programs since 2007.

Shout-Out to Our Summer Interns

This summer, ISA interns Amy Nunez (UNC ’12) and Alexandra Morris (UNC ’13) created a comprehensive Latino migration resource guide, worked to expand and promote the Latino Migration Perspectives oral history archive through the creation of an interactive migration map, managed social networking sites and the Project Guanajuato team blog, and compiled articles and newsletters.

APPLY for a Summer 2013 LMP internship! Visit isa.unc.edu/lmp/funding-employment/
In Guanajuato City, we stumble across a bagel shop and duck inside for a quick caffeine fix, chattering away about our reflections on the city thus far. A young barista, about our age, asks what we would like, her accent as American as Levi jeans and the Fourth of July. ‘Where are you from?’ we ask the barista. ‘Vermont’, she responds. Her story unfolds before us, yet another testimony to the transnational links between our nation and its southern neighbor. Brought to the U.S. at age 3 by her parents, Daniela barely ever knew Mexico. She grew up in the U.S., attending school and preparing for the future. When the end of high school came, however, reality struck. Without documentation, the costs of higher education in the U.S. were out of reach. To enter into a Canadian university [a more feasible possibility], she would have to return to the ‘home’ she’d never known: Mexico.

Her family returned to the state of Jalisco, and there she attempted to obtain a student visa to study in Canada. Three attempts and $1500 later, however, she had nothing to show for her efforts. Still searching for education, she moved to Guanajuato City, where she currently is working and preparing to study at the University of Guanajuato. When she finishes her story, I stand silent, surrounded by not only my five classmates with whom I ventured out for a coffee, but also a sixth peer, a young woman who could have been my classmate, my neighbor, my friend. In so many ways, we are so similar: two young women hoping to educate themselves and build their lives and their careers on their own terms. And yet far more than a coffee counter stands between us; tomorrow, I would be returning to the U.S. to resume classes at UNC. Daniela, on the other hand, would continue to develop her new life in this new city.

Listening to a variety of experiences of migration drove home how broken our system has become. How easily the humanity of these issues seems to be forgotten in discussions of policy and debates of law. Perhaps the hope lies in learning peoples’ stories... If only we could reach out more often across that political border that divides Mexico from the U.S. and take advantage of the economic, social, familial and cultural bonds that bind us. One thing seems certain: we cannot continue to ignore the irreversible linkages between our two countries, cemented by centuries of shared history, deeply rooted trade networks and mass movements of people between the two countries. Above all I have no doubt that the experiences I had in Guanajuato will continue to influence my understanding of the complexities and humanity of immigration.
"VIVA CACKALACKY!
LMP funds a new CD that pays homage to Latino talent in NC.

In the Spring of 2012 UNC Chapel Hill Professor David García and 17 of his students embarked upon a class project to produce an album documenting local Latino music scenes. Their new CD, “¡Viva Cackalacky! Latin Music in the New South” pays homage to the growing Latino community in North Carolina, focusing upon music as a dynamic medium to explore their migration experience.

In the CD’s booklet, García expounds upon the project’s objective: “Our aim is twofold: first, to recognize the invaluable contributions that these musicians and their communities have made to North Carolina’s cultural vibrancy; and second, to provide future students of immigration a unique perspective into the musical threads that bind migrant, immigrant, transplant, and native communities in the New South.”

The project was granted a 2012 Latino Migration Research Award from the Latino Migration Project and received additional funding from the UNC Program of Latina/o Studies. García’s class (MUSC/INTS 258: Musical movements of migration, exile and diaspora) was primarily responsible for every step of the production process. Producing the CD required dedicated involvement: students attended performances, interviewed musicians and ultimately acquired their participation in the compilation. The project thrived upon student-led creativity and innovation.

The CD compilation is entitled “¡Viva Cackalacky! Latin Music in the New South” and includes songs performed and recorded in NC over the past two decades. The CD encompasses a wide variety of styles of music from norteño, mariachi and música llanera to salsa, merengue, samba, cumbia and religious music. Tracks range from Rey Norteño’s popular ode to the city of Raleigh to Mariachi Amanecer Tapatío’s live performance at La Hacienda Mexican Restaurant in Chapel Hill.

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: LMP Research Awards | Deadline: January 18, 2013**

Awards ranging between $500-$1000 are available to UNC Chapel Hill students and faculty conducting research relating to Latin American/Latino migration.

Visit the following link for more info: [http://isa.unc.edu/lmp/funding-employment/](http://isa.unc.edu/lmp/funding-employment/)

**Building Integrated Communities**

Building Integrated Communities is a statewide pilot project of the Latino Migration Project. The intent of this project is to help North Carolina city governments successfully engage with immigrants and refugee populations in order to improve public safety, promote economic development, enhance communication, and improve relationships. The program is made possible by a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

Read the recently published newsletter online at [isa.unc.edu/bic/news-publications/](http://isa.unc.edu/bic/news-publications/)

*Durham, NC - foreign born population density by region.*
Help support the Latino Migration Project by making a tax-deductible donation to the UNC Institute for the Study of the Americas.

The Latino Migration Project provides research and educational expertise on Latin American immigration and integration issues in North Carolina.

Established in 2006, The Latino Migration Project is a collaborative program of the Institute for the Study of the Americas and the Center for Global Initiatives at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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Photo taken in Guanajuato, Mexico - by Brittany Peterson.