

From the Director

Academic Year 2019-2020 began auspiciously. The ISA team worked in coordination with 20 departments and programs across the University, partners across the state, and colleagues in Latin America to organize over 90 events including new courses, lectures, conferences, film screenings, performances, and special programs.

Among the highlights of the year was the stirring performance of “Tres Vidas,” a Core Ensemble Chamber Music Theatre stage production based on the lives of three legendary Latin American women: Frida Kahlo, Rufina Amaya, and Alfonsina Storni.

Other featured events included lectures by: Jonathan Hansen (Harvard) to present on his new important book, *Young Castro: The Making of a Revolutionary*; the annual George and Ann Platt Distinguished Lecture with Lynn Stephen (University of Oregon) on the subject of “Why Central American Women Fleeing Violence Seek Asylum;” Distinguished Professor Lectures by Philip Brenner (American University), on the theme of “A Policy of Ill Repute: The Monroe Doctrine in the Trump Era;” Wendy Wolford (Cornell University), on the subject of “The Plantationcene: A Luso Tropical Theory;” and the ISA Faculty Lecture showcasing the work of Petal Samuel (UNC) on “Caribbean Soundscapes, Antirblackness, and Right to Quiet Discourse.”

ISA co-sponsored a host of collaborative initiatives with units across the campus during the Fall Semester, including Global Spotlight: Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with the Area Studies Centers, the Duke-UNC Rotary Center and the College of Arts and Sciences; Ruth Goldstein (University of California Irvine), with the Department of Anthropology; “Transient Bodies and Gender Politics in 21st Century Mexico” conference, with the Department of Romance Studies; “Theatrical Translation as Creative Process” conference, with the Department of Dramatic Art; John Fife, Sanctuary Movement, with the Department of Religious Studies; “Seeking Asylum in the United States: The Expert Witness Project,” with the UNC School of Law; and Ruta Panorámica Concert, with the Department of Music and Stone Center. And in the early Spring Semester: the UndocuCarolina Distinguished Lecture Shannon Speed (University of California Los Angeles); Reinaldo Funes Monzote (Yale), with the Department of History; Virginia Oliveras (Tulane), with the Department of Political Science; and the “Gender Violence and the Politics of Field Work Wenner-Gren Workshop,” with the Department of African, African-American, and Diaspora Studies, among many others.

The multiple and multifaceted events sponsored and/or co-sponsored annually by ISA were similarly successful, and included the annual Graduate Student Reception, the Consortium



picnic, the Consortium Film Festival, the Graduate Student Symposium, the Global Career Night, the Language Across the Curriculum Training Workshop, the ISA/CGI Global Take Off: Puerto Rico Program, and the annual ISA dinner reception.

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Curricular initiatives included a new course, *Heritage and Migration in North Carolina*, a field research, oral history and service-learning course examining the immigration and settlement of North Carolinians with Mexican and Latin American heritage. Students participated in an alternative Spring Break in Ocracoke, North Carolina, where they collaborated with a local school to facilitate bilingual family heritage workshops and assisted with recovery efforts from Hurricane Dorian. An \$11,000 grant from Humanities for the Public Good secured funding for the family history workshops with Ocracoke high school students.

In response to the pandemic, ISA rushed to move the Spring Semester and the Summer School 2020 courses on-line. The 28th Yucatec Maya Summer Institute was moved entirely on-line, a project that required coordination with instructors and staff in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Faculty and TAs developed a new on-line curriculum to offer two levels of instruction. The program ensured access to technology and connectivity in Mexico and obtained approvals at UNC and at the US Department of Education. The Virtual Summer Institute now holds the distinction of being the only Study Abroad program offered this summer.

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Outreach initiatives increased in number and expanded in kind. The Outreach Program—a long-standing collaboration between the Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University—inaugurated a new partnership with the UNC School of Education. This past year, the Outreach Program co-organized an exchange program between the UNC School of Education and the Universidad San Francisco de Quito to offer opportunities for students to learn about innovative teaching strategies; developed a summer study tour to Ecuador; and worked with Master in Teaching courses at UNC and Duke to explore Latin American resources.

The Outreach Program co-hosted the 5th Annual Learning Through Languages High School Research Symposium featuring 115 high school students presenting in multiple world languages and regions including Spanish and Latin America and the “Global North Carolina: Bringing International Competencies to Teachers and Classrooms,” with UNC Area Studies Centers and the NC Department of Public Instruction. A series of teacher professional development presentations offered K-12 educators resources to integrate Latin American-content into their classroom. Some of the most popular seminars and webinars were: “Teaching Latin American Immigration in Elementary Schools;” “Passion, Politics, and Art in 20th Century Mexico;” “Beyond Mexico: Teaching Latin America and the Caribbean;” “Creating Safe Spaces in Schools for Latin American Immigrants;” and “Brazil: A History of Change.”



The Outreach Program also worked with visiting research scholars through the College Educator Research Fellows (CERF) program to expand Latin American curriculum at community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. The program welcomed four CERF scholars: Rachel Chrane (Lees-McRae College) working on a project on Central American migrant caravans; Yvonne Denis Rosario (University of Puerto Rico) researching the portrayal of black women in Caribbean literature; Renée Lindsey (Davidson County Community College) developing a new course on Latin American Art; and Shearon Roberts (Xavier University of Louisiana) conducting research on the Black Diaspora in Latin American and Caribbean media.

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The Latino Migration Project (LMP) has continued to flourish this past academic year. In December 2019, LMP received a generous grant award of \$161,000 from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to expand its Building Integrated Communities (BIC) initiative to new communities across the state. In late spring, BIC began working with the City of Washington, NC. Past and current BIC communities continue to advance best practices for immigrant and refugee integration with local governments. The Winston Salem BIC Newcomers Symposium organized its second annual statewide conference for agencies throughout the state to assist immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Presentations covered topics such as legal issues for newcomers, human trafficking in North Carolina, fair housing law as it applies to national origins and law enforcement best practices. In collaboration with BIC, the Chapel Hill Town Council unanimously approved a Language Access Plan for Town services and programs. This Plan will help ensure that Chapel Hill moves towards policies and procedures supporting the right of all residents to communicate with the town in the language in which they prefer.



The Carolina Center for Public Service extended a \$4,600 grant to LMP in conjunction with the UNC Disaster Relief Fund to support recovery efforts in Ocracoke, NC. The funds contributed to the completion of repairs to the Deepwater Theatre, a community space of the non-profit organization Ocracoke Alive, sponsor of the island's annual Festival Latino.

LMP continued to expand the holdings of the New Roots archives. New Roots team members Hannah Gill, Jaycie Vos, Laura Villa-Torres, and María Silvia Ramírez published the article in the *Oral History*

Review, "Migration and Inclusive Transnational Heritage: Digital Innovation and the New Roots Latino Oral History Initiative." The article offers insight into the kinds of oral history practices that can advance a paradigm of inclusive transnational heritage with migrant populations and describes new digital tools and strategies designed to facilitate global access to oral histories and engage migrants and other stakeholders in public history initiatives.

<https://academic.oup.com/ohr/article/46/2/277/5530152>

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The pandemic arrived at about the time of Spring Break. Almost everything came to a halt. The North Carolina/Conference on Latin American Studies 2020, scheduled for late March and one year in the planning, with nearly 200 scheduled attendees, was cancelled. Thirteen spring events, cancelled. As a result of the ban on travel, conference and research travel was cancelled. The ten pre-dissertation awards, representing Anthropology, Biology, Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sociology, and the School of Global Public Health, additional dissertation, undergraduate and FLAS awards, all were similarly cancelled. ISA extended awards until January 2021 and will assign priority for the next funding cycle to any awardee adversely affected by the pandemic. Write-up grants were distributed if travel was not required.

In the face of the pandemic, ISA improvised program responses, including a three-week "Virtual Latin American Film Festival" in collaboration with Women Make Movies. The experience introduced new platforms for learning as well as revealed their limitations for teaching. ISA inaugurated on its web page an on-going blog under the title of "*Testimonios*," designed to provide first-person accounts of the pandemic in Latin America, from both UNC students past and present as well as from friends and colleagues of Carolina faculty and staff.

(<https://isa.unc.edu/testimonios/>) The Latino Migration Project moved quickly to streamline and translate resources in support of the communities it serves. The Outreach Program developed resources in key areas of educational need. The Outreach Program and the LMP combined resources to develop a pilot initiative, Ayudantes Escolares On-line (On-line K-5 Tutors), to

provide rapid assistance to families with limited English proficiency who were struggling to help their children with distance learning.

No less challenging than re-inventing programs and assessing the quality of learning through new platforms was the task of re-configuring patterns of working from home, all of which implied multiple conflicting priorities and a re-structuring of the work-day: all giving new meaning to the notion of multi-tasking. The “stay-at-home” mandate required a series of decisions affecting the multiple constituencies served by ISA, both within the University and beyond, to address the needs of our students, institutional partners and colleagues.

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A special thanks to the student assistants and BIC staff of Academic Year 2019-2020: Leslie Alanís, Tanaya Allen, Marisa Carlton, Isaura Godinez, Jorge Gutiérrez, Kierra Hyman, Jazmin Ibarra, Maja Jeranko, Alexandra Landeros, Hannah Marable, and Anna Clare Riggins. And to Brianna Dawn Gilmore, an LTAM graduate, who this year became integral to the day-to-day workings at ISA, we express our deepest appreciation for her contribution to the program during Academic Year 2019-2020.

All of us at ISA wish colleagues and friends a safe summer

Lou Pérez
June 2020

