Message from the Director

Greetings!
Welcome to the third year of the Transnational Community and Cultural Studies Program. Last year ended with a flurry of activity and wonderful accomplishments:

• Capstone completion and graduation of our first cohort of students: Candida Rose Baptista, Tariana Little, Tri Quach, Iria Dopazo Ruibal, Kim Soun Ty, Nicole Young
• The tenure of two of our core faculty, Loan Dao and Marisol Negrón
• The success of the Not My Normal teach in, which offered over 40 hours of programming to UMass Boston students, faculty, and staff, involving presentations from over 25 faculty, 15 individual students, 30+ students from class activism projects, and 10+ outside speakers from regional universities, community organizations, and national projects.

We had a busy and productive second year, and found that our strong community and shared values for social justice, empowerment, and community engagement were particularly important in negotiating the challenges facing the nation, especially those affected immigrant, refugee, and ethnocultural and racial minority communities.

This fall, we are excited to welcome a new cohort of 12 stellar individuals— whose introductions are on the following pages. We continue this year to work to strengthen our community partnerships and connections, our collaborations with other departments and programs to sponsor multicultural and social justice events on campus, and our participation in the development of resources and initiatives to support the health and advocacy of ethnic and racialized communities on campus and in local communities.

Karen Suyemoto, Ph.D.
Director, Transnational Cultural and Community Studies
Meet our new students

Juan Pablo Blanco is a community organizer and academic originally from Mar Del Plata, Argentina. He holds a BA in Philosophy from UMass Boston, with research interests in immigration, specifically undocumented populations, and different national structures and responses to immigration around the world. Juan’s own experiences as a former undocumented student led him to getting involved in local organizations such as the Restaurant Opportunities Center of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Jobs with Justice, and currently with PHENOM, the Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts. He has worked in many campaigns dealing with immigrant rights and access to higher education. Through TCCS, he hopes to blend his deep interest in the theoretical work that is being done in the fields of immigration and migration with his work in the community, to develop research that will be both academically important as well as a tool for immigrant communities for self-emancipation. Outside of his academic and professional work, Juan enjoys cooking and playing the bass.

Izabela "Izzie" Villanueva (they/them & she/her) is a Taiwanese-Filipinx, first-generation graduate student from California. They received their B.A. in Psychology and Asian American Studies, with minors in Education and Sexuality Studies from UC Davis. Inspired by the resilience of her ancestors, communities, and low-income youth of color, Izzie aspires to bridge connections that supersede imperialist borders and fascist orders, and explore what coalition building and solidarity looks like between different marginalized communities. She has worked for California-based organizations such as Sac Girls Speak, Asian Pacific Islander Queers (APIQ), and Southeast Asians Furthering Education (SAFE). Izzie incorporates their love of poetry and spoken word in their activism by believing in the power of vulnerability, oral storytelling, and narrative building as ways of identity exploration and validation. Currently Izzie is a graduate assistant for the Labor Resource Center, working closely with Community Labor United.
**Zainab Salejwala** is the first in her family to graduate from a four-year college and move on to graduate school. She majored in Psychology with a minor in Asian American Studies and Sociology at UMass Boston. During her undergrad years, Zainab has been a mentor, tutor and teaching assistant for Academic Support Programs. She has also worked in Dr. Karen Suyemoto’s research lab. Currently she is a research assistant in Dr. Rosalyn Negrón’s lab where they are continuing a three-year study that focuses on UMB students of color in the STEM field. Zainab’s research interests are teaching English as a second language, systematic barriers in secondary and higher education, community development, intersectionality, systems of oppression, South Asian diaspora, and mental health. In her spare time, she likes writing, photography and playing with her baby cousins.

**Jimena Cascante-Matamoros** is Costa Rican. She completed her bachelor’s degrees in Gender Studies and Sustainable Development, and Chemistry in Costa Rica. She has worked with lesbian and bisexual women in Costa Rica, doing research towards rescuing the historical memory of this community, and has also performed spoken word poetry within this community. She is passionate about gender equality, teaching and urban cycling. She loves social clowning as a means to lighten people’s hearts. Her dream is to have a house that is big enough for anyone who needs it to come by, share and enjoy, and to possibly own a pet pig.

**Jeannette Mejía** is a second-generation Dominican-American. She grew up in Lawrence, MA, and graduated from UMASS Boston in Spring 2017 with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. As an undergraduate, she joined the Black Mental Health Research and Advocacy Lab with Dr. Tahirah Abdullah, where they conducted research surrounding mental health, race, microaggressions, trauma, resistance, and more. She presented and created a poster which included how microaggressions result in social anxiety for Black Americans, and how ethnic connection mediates the relationship between microaggressions and trauma. She is especially interested in the mental health of Black and Latinx Americans, trauma, microaggressions, the development of racial identity, experiences of Afro-Latino/a, the stress that second generation immigrants face and how that affects their mental health, language, the barriers that Spanish-speaking immigrants face in the U.S when they seek medical help, how racism affects the mental health of Black and Latino children in the education system in low-income communities, and the resilience and resistance of low-income communities that have been racialized.
**Alexandra Jennie Richmond** is originally from Northern Michigan and moved to Massachusetts for her Undergraduate degree at Endicott College. She received a B.A. in History and minored in International Studies. While pursuing this degree, she became a global ambassador in charge of running intercultural and international affairs on campus, and helping international students acclimate and maneuver their way through the college cultural community. She also joined the Model UN team, where she further developed her passion for human rights and equal representation. Moving forward, Allie hopes to use her love of history to pursue her passions for cultural heritage representation in common education, advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, self-determination, and promote understanding and acceptance for all.

**Grace Furtado** is a 2nd generation Puerto Rican and Azorean-American from New Bedford, Massachusetts. She received a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Latino Studies from UMass Boston. Throughout the last 10 years, she has worked with a number of populations – women in recovery from substance use, homeless families in Roxbury and children involved with the Department of Children and Families. In addition, she has been able to present at a number of conferences and workshops surrounding varying types of issues: the *Not My Normal* teach-in series on the campus of UMass Boston, the Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference and as a part of the Annual Latinx Student Success Institute. Her goal with being part of the TCCS cohort is to utilize her education in becoming an agent and facilitator of social change by promoting equity, particularly through education for critical consciousness.

**Taina Siying Teravainen** is both a Singaporean and an American, Chinese and white, far away from home but also now possibly a local of the Boston area. She received a B.F.A. in Writing, Literature & Publishing with a minor in Women's and Gender studies from Emerson College. Taina is interested in transnational human migration and identities, and the way personal migrant narratives are recorded and passed on through memoir. She is passionate about speaking out against sexual and gender violence.
I wander and wade amongst oak trees, ancestors, plastic scraps and volunteer tomato plants that appear beside and within me. As I walk, thorns of wild ‘invasive’ roses whose seeds my forefathers brought here in the soles of their boots prick me unexpectedly – and I cut them back. All too often, I regret interfering with their be(live)ing. I’m learning. We con-spire... You and all your thorns are perfect just like mine. I remove my shoes to feel a log sighing back into the earth yet I return to their sweatshopped-comfort when the road becomes gravel, mountains moved from far away. Why do I still carry these clippers? Why do I avoid the sharpness of gravel under my feet? I sing and still myself to listen and remember stories of place, people and smells that are entangled in my be-longing. ---

**Myles Green** is an educator who studies whiteness and anti-racism education in the TCCS program. He is a facilitator for CCI’s White People Challenging Racism, an urban farmer for the Boston Medical Center’s Rooftop Farm and avid Playback Theatre performer.

**Penh-Samnang Kan** comes from Cambodia. She finished her MA in Global Inclusion and Social Development during the summer of 2017. Penh-Samnang’s SGISD capstone research project was an organizational case study focusing on the history, impact, and future vision of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in addressing memory, justice, and healing for people who survived the Cambodian genocide. Her research interests grow out of her prior work at DC-Cam where she was an organizer for various projects such as conducting interviews with Khmer Rouge survivors and organizing country-wide film screenings for the award-winning documentary film "The River Changes Course". She has worked extensively in media and film production in a variety of Cambodian film and media industries including Rock Production and Cambodia Television Network (CTN). She has a passionate interest in the role of documentary media and education in addressing the legacy of trauma and genocide in both Cambodia and throughout the Cambodian diaspora. Under the guidance of her faculty advisor, Prof. Shirley Tang, she has been intensely involved with many younger Asian Americans at UMass Boston.
**Fernanda Macedo** is the quintessential entrepreneur. She holds a B.A. (Cum Laude) in Human Services (UMass Boston), is a licensed cosmetologist who owns and operates Fernanda’s Beauty Salon in Somerville, MA, and is using the field of cosmetology to bring work-force development to her community. She is in the TCCS program to research her community’s needs to best answer them, by opening a low-cost cosmetology school for her community. Having immigrated from Brazil at a young age, Fernanda understands issues of inaccessibility in current work-force development options for minorities. When Fernanda is not empowering her community by bridging academia and cosmetology, she loves horseback riding, scuba diving, hiking, and spending time with family.

**Mirlande Thermidor** graduated from Umass Boston with a B.A. in Africana Studies and a minor in Latino studies. She loves to study and experience the fusion of both African and Latino culture. Travel is her ultimate passion in life. Visiting places like Senegal, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico has shown her the beauty of this world. From living for a short time in Bolivia and being a part of the People to People initiative in Cuba, she understands the deep connection between both Black and Latino cultures. As her home is the Caribbean, she holds music in a special place in her heart. Music brings people together and helps to form communities without the construct of race. Music, being it Bachata or Hip Hop, has its many influences and inspirations from both the beautiful Black and Latino cultures. She holds these two cultures very dear to her and is focused on preserving them through educating the youth.
to our newly tenured faculty,
Loan Dao and Marisol Negrón!

Loan Dao has been a faculty member in the undergraduate Asian American Studies program and the graduate Transnational Cultural and Community Studies program at UMass Boston since 2011. Her work is specialized in Southeast Asian refugee migration and community development, immigrant and refugee youth, and other underserved and underrepresented populations. Dr. Dao has published on topics that include Vietnamese American female leadership, and culturally competent services for elderly Vietnamese. She has served as a mentor for many Vietnamese, Laotian, Hmong, and Cambodian undergraduate students. Professor Dao currently serves as a commissioner for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission, and sits on the advisory council for the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants. Congratulations to Professor Dao for her tenure and promotion!

Marisol Negrón is a core faculty member of the TCCS Program, and faculty in American Studies and Latin@ Studies at UMass Boston. She is also a founding member of the New England Consortium of Latin@ Studies. Dr. Negrón’s research examines how cultural products transmit collective memories and social identities across generations of Latin@s. She is currently working on a book, tentatively titled “Made in NuYoRico: Salsa as Commodity and Cultural Sign Since the Mid-1960s,” which recovers the aesthetic practices and material conditions within New York’s Puerto Rican communities that informed the music’s development as a cultural product. The project traces how salsa reflected and was informed by an emerging Nuyorican subjectivity that privileged New York, the city’s Puerto Rican communities, and their collective experiences as racialized and colonial subjects as well as cultural agents. Congratulations to Professor Negrón for her tenure!
to our first cohort of students on their capstone completion and graduation from the Transnational, Cultural and Community Studies program!

Candida Rose Baptista
Tri Quach
Kim Soun Ty

Tariana Little
Iria Dopazo Ruibal
Nicole Young
Cedric Woods
...moderated a panel discussion at a symposium on the life of Quaker merchant and ship captain Paul Cuffe, on the 200th anniversary of the entrepreneur's death. Dr. Woods' discussion focused on Cuffe’s Native American heritage, and his vision for ending the slave trade in Africa which had resulted in his father’s shipment to New England on a slave ship.

Loan Dao
...spoke at the Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Moving Mountains Equity Summit, on Oct 12-14, 2017. She was the plenary speaker for “SEAAs expanding a larger civil rights and social justice agenda,” and the panel moderator for “Reconciling Identity, Home, and Responsibility for Southeast Asian American Scholars.”
...was on a panel at Asian American Commission State House Advocacy Day, Oct 17, 2017, to discuss immigration policy and its effects on AAPI’s in MA.
...represented MA Teachers Association at the APA Labor Alliance (APALA) 50th Anniversary conference in August 2017.
...worked with the MA AG's office to create an advisory and safety plan for MA colleges and universities concerning vulnerable immigrant students over the summer 2017.
...assisted the UMB Office of Student Affairs to plan for an immigrant student office within the new multicultural center.
...helped organize the AAPI Civil Rights Forum, Oct 27, 2017.

Karen Suyemoto
...worked with her partner on a new on-line interactive project about the history of race and racism in the U.S. that they hope to be able to connect with ethnic studies institutes and educators.
...presented in a panel focused on allies/accomplices, "Being, becoming, and fostering allies: Social justice advocacy relationships across privilege" at the American Psychological Association conference, Washington DC.
...served as a mentor and facilitated a panel on leadership and advocacy for the Minority Fellowship Program’s week long Psychology Summer Institute.
...conducted workshops at Albany Medical Center, training mental health care providers (psychologists, social workers, rehab staff, nurses) for "Cultural Responsiveness and Ensuring Equity in Mental Health Service Provision" and "Taking Action for Promoting Cultural Responsiveness and Racial Equity in Mental Health Services".
Sofya Aptekar

...served as a delegate to the annual convention of the Massachusetts Teacher Association in late May. Alongside hundreds of other delegates, Dr. Aptekar got to propose and vote on the direction the MTA is taking, including fighting for LGBTQ-inclusive sex education in the state, pushing for divestment of our pensions from coal, and resisting white supremacy in the classroom.

...worked in her Brooklyn neighborhood with several organizations, including DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving) and SURJ (Standing Up for Racial Justice) to build a Hate Free Zone. The idea of this zone is to build community defense against ICE raids, police brutality, and hate crimes.

...traveled to Mexico City in June for two presentations on her research on immigrant veterans in the US: one at the UNAM’s (National Autonomous University of Mexico) Centro de Investigaciones sobre America del Norte, and the other at the annual meeting of Law and Society Association. Highlights including touring the UNAM campus, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and visiting the encampment that seeks justice for the 43 missing college students of Ayotzinapa.

...traveled to Montreal in August for the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, where she presented a paper on public libraries as resistive spaces, and served as a discussant on a panel of papers on race, ethnicity, and inequality in consumer culture.

Ping-Ann Addo

...took part in a pop-up artist residency this summer called "Where is Home". Dr. Addo’s 2D visual piece was a map-based personal commentary on gentrification in her neighborhood, titled “Gen-trick-fixation.” The residency was hosted by the Design Studio, Intelligent Mischief, and a visiting artist from Trinidad, Chris Cozier.
Updates from our TCCS students

Leidy Quiceno
...participated in Latinos for Education, a fellowship collectively pushing for education equity for Latinx communities
...was involved in Summer School Student Advocacy
...was named Mentor of the Year at Partners for Youth with Disabilities
...served as a moderator at the Women in Leadership Development conference
...graduated from the Women's Pipeline for Change
...participated as an organizer and coordinator for Latinx Student Success’ Second Annual Conference
...marched for peace as a counter to the Boston Common “free speech” rally in August
...prioritized self-care through being an avid hiker, semi-vegan, and meditator

Katsyris Rivera-Kientz
...trained in documentary film-making in the New Immigrant and Refugee Visions program at Community Supported Film, Roxbury
...has been involved in the UMB for PR student Puerto Rico’s relief efforts
...has been documenting Post-Hurricane Maria relief efforts around Boston
...kept being critical about U.S. and P.R. relationship
Available here.

Available here.


Addo, P-A. Geographies of Textile Authenticity: Marking Tongan Temporal and Spatial Relationships in Diasporic Cultural Production. Pacific Studies, 40(1/2)

