MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings!

Welcome a new year for the Transnational Community and Cultural Studies Program.

We had a busy and productive last year, ending with wonderful capstone presentations from our second cohort of students, including Jessica Faustin, Katsyris Rivera Kientz, Leidy Quiceno, and Richard Truong.

Our faculty and students have had a busy summer, contributing to community projects, activism, education, and scholarship focused on empowerment and action to address multiple challenges facing higher education, the local Boston and Massachusetts communities, the nation, and beyond.

This fall, we are excited to welcome a new cohort of 7 stellar individuals—whose introductions are on the following pages. We are also excited to be interviewing faculty candidates this year, for a joint faculty appointment with Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. We continue this year to strengthen our partnerships with the Ethnic Studies Institutes at UMass, and to engage in various projects within and outside the academy—check out what folks have been up to this summer in the following pages. We are also excited to be able to have new and expanded ways to communicate about our program, and the students and faculty that make TCCS such a special community of activist scholars: Check out our new TCCS Community Student and Alum pages on the TCCS website; it is amazing to see what the alumni of our program are accomplishing. Also check out the TCCS blog, where TCCS students and faculty reflect on a wide range of issues related to social justice and community.

Karen Suyemoto, Ph.D.
Director, Transnational Cultural and Community Studies
Meet Our New Students

Kim Coffman is a 23 year old, biracial, radical woman from Glendale, CA. She comes to the TCCS program with a background in feminist studies and theory, and after having done research about social abjection and Cambodian Americans, she hopes to extend her research to include current activism by second and third generation Cambodian Americans. She is also interested in biracial identity politics and experiences, but has yet to do any research in that field aside from her own soul searching. Her mother was a refugee from Khmer Rouge Cambodia and is the main influence of her area of interest. Her father is a white man who also grew up in Glendale, CA. She loves dog grooming, raising animals, yoga, painting, and singing. Also, if she had a green thumb, would be inclined to own a flower shop or be a professional florist. However, that doesn’t seem to be in the cards for her so she’s decided to try to find a place in academia and community involvement, as it quenches her thirst for knowledge and desire to contribute to the community.

Kevin Kang is a second-generation Korean-American from Charlotte, North Carolina. He graduated in 2015 from UNC-Charlotte with a Bachelor’s in Philosophy, focusing on Critical Race, Social, and Political philosophy. Kevin has been involved with multiple ethnic-cultural based organizations, inclusion and diversity initiatives. In addition, he is currently a mentor working with Southeast Asian youths. Growing up in the south with a small, but growing, Asian-American population, Kevin experienced a lot of racism and was often exoticized. The experience of always being “othered” helped focus his concepts on identities. Thus, Kevin is passionate about uncovering the Asian Americana narrative, understand the historical contexts and the implications they have on contemporary interpretations of race, gender roles, communities, and cultural norms. In his free time, Kevin is a fitness, gaming, and is very involved with his fraternity.
Franklin Jesus Ortiz recently graduated from Umass Boston with a degree in Communications and a minor in Africana Studies. He is half Dominican and half Puerto Rican and raised in the city of the Boston for his entire life. Franklin attended Boston public schools his whole life and learned later in his high school years that he had a learning disability called dyslexia which gives him much trouble with reading and writing assignments. He was able to overcome these struggles to achieve his goal of getting his degree with the help of his mentors, friends, and family. Franklin has a firm purpose for social justice to help many people as he possibly can to achieve their goals in life. Outside of school he usually spends his time boxing and lifting weights and trying to find different ways to travel around the world.

Jungmi Lee is from South Korea. She completed her master’s degree in German Language and Literature focusing on playwriting. She studied playwriting and TV screenplay writing, too. Knowing that the Korean society is getting more diverse ethnically and culturally by both international marriage and immigration from North Korea, China, and many other countries, she is interested in how those diverse cultures could communicate each other in the community, how this activity could be expressed and accepted in the society, and how their self-identity and social identity could be established as a result. She focuses on the North Korean immigrants who contribute on understanding of quite different society in South Korea. Her experience in the TCCS will be a key to become a future cultural ethnographer in a dynamic Korean society.
**Ashley Torres (she/her/hers)** is an Afro-puertorriqueña first-generation graduate. In 2018 she received the Women’s Gender and Sexualities studies founders’ Award for Academic Excellence and Social Activism. She has been involved in different organizations such as Strong Women Strong Girls, Casa Latinx, and has been an active social participant for the Beacon Voyages for Service. She currently works for a non-profit, Wayside Youth and Family Networks, working with youth experiencing housing insecurities. In 2017 with an award from the Robert Hildreth Fellow Program, Ashley conducted research on identity, gender, racial equity and activisms in the city of Buenaventura, Colombia. Ashley passion is to work with girls, women and LGBTQ people on empowerment through education which have lead her to combine her social justice activism with several research projects, through the Latino Leadership Opportunity Program. Ashley likes to dance and to travel while traveling she loves to try new fruits (her favorite fruits are green grapes and mangoes).

**Charlie Phan** is a Vietnamese American and the first in his family to graduate from college. He earned a Bachelors degree in Sociology with minors in Communication and Italian from UMass Boston. Through past experiences, Charlie has enjoyed working in mentoring roles and working with youth. Some of those experiences include working as a Peer Mentor for the Asian American Student Success Program at UMass Boston as well as working with middle schoolers in after school and summer programs. Charlie hopes to use his passion for mentoring and working with youth in order to help create change and solidarity. In his free time, Charlie enjoys watching his hometown Boston Celtics play basketball as well as watching anime and playing video games. Charlie used to write rap lyrics and record songs. Occasionally, he still writes from time to time whenever lyrics come naturally to his head.
Ashley Tarbet DeStefano is an activist and knowledge-seeker originally from Brockton, Massachusetts. She holds a BS in Political Communication and Social Advocacy from Emerson College, where she is now the assistant director for community engagement in the Social Justice Center (SJC). Her five years working in the SJC has inspired her ongoing commitment to fight for justice and co-liberation with local organizations such as Massachusetts Jobs With Justice, SURJ Boston’s Immigrant Justice and Anti-Islamophobia action partnership, the MIRA Coalition, and Movimiento Cosecha, and with student-led campus organizations such as UNITE to organize for justice for undocumented Emersonians and family members. In her time in the TCCS program, Ashley hopes to build a better understanding of the social, cultural, and political formation of immigration and how these systems work together to maintain borders, nations, and power, as well as the development and celebration of migrant identities and cultures. Her research interests center on the question that her professional praxis returns to daily: how do we approach community engagement in higher education from a liberatory social justice practice? When she is not plotting to dismantle the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, Ashley enjoys reading visionary fiction, watching Doctor Who, spending time in nature with her life partner, and winning over the love of their two cats.

To read about our second year cohort and alumni, check out our TCCS Student Community page
Congratulations!!!!!!!

To our second cohort of students on their capstone completion and graduation from the Transnational, Cultural and Community Studies program!

Jessica Faustin, Richard Truong, Katsyris Rivera Kientz and Leidy Quiceno
Izabela "Iizzie" Villanueva
...was a High School Course Enhancement Instructor for TRIO Upward Bound - Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, California during the summer. Iizzie created the curriculum for, taught, and facilitated a course entitled “Mic Drop: Spoken Word and Performative Poetry as Resistance and Reclamation”.
... was a selected fellow at the annual week-long Community Engaged Research Institute (CERI) hosted at the University of California, Santa Cruz.
... became a Writers’ Room fellow with 826 Boston at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School in Dorchester. 826 Boston is a nonprofit youth writing and publishing organization that empowers traditionally underserved students ages 6-18 to find their voices, tell their stories, and gain communication skills to succeed in school and in life.
...is currently a graduate assistant working with Dr. Loan Dao on a photovoice research project called Inside Chinatown. The project is in collaboration with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), Pao Arts Center, Labor Resource Center, UMass Labor Studies, and TCCS.
... is planning on becoming more involved with Boston Pilipino Education, Advocacy, and Resources (PEAR).

Myles Green
...participated in the Writing Workshop for Teachers at the Kenyon Review, sponsored by the Beacon Student Success Fellowship at UMass Boston.
...attended the William Joiner Institute’s Summer Writers’ Workshop on the campus of UMass Boston where he performed in a Theater of the Oppressed workshop to address the lack of funding for the school's numerous institutes.

Fernanda Macedo
...began the build out for a new salon in Somerville set to open January 2019. This location is also set to be the location she plans to develop into a low-cost cosmetology school after her TCCS Master's degree is finished.
...became a mother for the first time! Baby Alora Rebello Macedo was born at a healthy 8lbs, 20 inches.

Zainab Salejwala
...used the summer to focus and gain more clarity on her capstone project
...also went to the beach, a sunflower farm, and travelled to India.
Taina Teravainen
...was an interviewer and transcriber for "Care Counts", a research study being done by the Association of Women for Action and Research in Singapore. The study looks at the financial impacts on older women who serve as the primary caregivers of their elderly relatives, in order to develop policy recommendations to support these caregivers.

Grace Furtado
...participated in the U54 Research Education Program a summer research opportunity that stems from a decade-long partnership between UMass Boston and the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, a program assisting students in developing research skills particularly in the area of health disparities.
...was able to train in and implement qualitative interviewing techniques with Latinx patients and their caregivers at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.
...attended the Cancer Health Disparities in the Age of Genomics Conference at the Broad Institute. She participated in workshops that presented not just the ongoing health inequities that are present within cancer research but innovative solutions that institutions are currently implementing.

Juan Pablo Blanco
...attended the annual Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions conference in New York City, joining graduate student unions from all over the U.S. and Canada.
...was part of UMass Boston's Graduate Employee Union's bargaining team, along with fellow TCCS student Myles Green, finalizing their contract after a year and a half of bargaining.
...worked with the Immigrant Student Program to hold the first ever undocumented mentorship program at UMass Boston, training undocumented students to advocate for and provide direct mentorship to other undocumented students on campus.
...attended a convening on student organizing in Washington D.C. held by the national Jobs With Justice.
...was invited as the keynote speaker for the annual all-mentor training held for all peer-advisors and mentors at UMass Boston.

Jeanette Mejia
...presented a poster titled "Intervention on Self-Efficacy in Quitting Smoking at 2-Month Follow-up in Women Living With HIV" at the Summer Research Symposium for U54 Dana-Farber Harvard Cancer Center Partnership in Boston, MA.
...presented a poster titled "Black American Coping, Emotional Responses to Racism and Race-Related Stress" at the American Psychological Association Division 45 Conference in Austin, TX.
...participated in a 12 week cancer research program aiming to decrease cancer health disparities as a U54 scholar.
Ping-Ann Addo
...became the new Faculty Fellow in the Office of Community Partnerships for academic year 2018-2019. Information about the position can be found here.
...took advantage of the summer to catch up on writing.

Sofya Aptekar
...continued to work on her research study examining the experiences of undocumented college students in the CUNY system.
...presented a paper entitled “Co-ethnic communities and employment trajectories of Asian and Latino undocumented youth in New York City” at the Law and Society Association Annual meeting in Toronto.
...presented a paper from another project, “Citizenship Acquisition among Immigrant Members of the US Military” at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in Philadelphia.
...took advantage of the less hectic summer schedule to help run an urban kayaking program in Brooklyn, participate in a community garden, support an immigrant rapid response network, and serve as a CourtWatch observer in a local arraignments court.

Michael Johnson
...was lead co-editor, with Prof. Gerald Midgley of the University of Hull, in the UK, of a special issue of European Journal of Operational Research titled “Community Operational Research: Innovations, Internationalization and Agenda-Setting Applications.” A website describing the project can be found here.
...finished a book manuscript, under review at SUNY Press, titled “Supporting Shrinkage: Better Planning and Decision-Making for Legacy Cities”, with Justin Holland, professor of urban planning at Tufts University and Eliza Davenport Whiteman, post-doctoral fellow at Columbia University. The book features contributions by UMB doctoral students George Chichirau and Charla Burnett.

Sarah Mayorga-Gallo
...was a panelist for Interpreting Race: Trends, Dilemmas, and New Directions Panel alongside Elijah Anderson, Kathleen Blee, and Michael Rosino at the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction Conference. Philadelphia, PA.
Marisol Negrón
...participated in a roundtable discussion on "Teaching Intro to Latinx Studies" at the biannual meeting of the Latino Studies Association in Washington, D.C.
...gave the keynote lecture, “American Progress: Critical Race Praxis Across the Curriculum” at the Latino Student Success Institute summer symposium sponsored by UMass Boston and Bunker Hill Community College.
...was awarded a grant from the Dean’s Research Fund in the College of Liberal Arts at UMass Boston for her research on notions of “diaspora” among Puerto Ricans since the 1950s.
...joined professor Lorna Rivera on a grant from the Hildreth Foundation for the Latino Student Success Institute at UMass Boston with the goal of increasing college access, retention, and graduation rates for Latina/o students.

Rosalyn Negrón
...has been serving as the Research Team Lead for Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s 2018 Congressional for NY14, where she coordinates research volunteers, district-level research, policy research, expert vetting, and brief writing.
...applied, along with Marisol Negrón, Lorena Estrada-Martínez, and Daniel Aldrich (Northeastern) for a National Science Foundation grant titled: “Socio-political and moral factors in Post Hurricane Maria Evacuation Decisions: Implications for Puerto Ricans’ Well-being”.
...applied, along with Adán Colón-Carmona, Fabian Torres-Ardila, Hannah Sevian, and Katalin Szelenyi, in partnership with the Gastón Institute, for a National Science Foundation grant titled: "STEM Education Equity and Diversity (SEED) Scholars Program, a Community-Centered Approach to STEM Workforce Development.
...served on the strategic planning committee for the Sustainable Solutions Lab @ UMB with a focus on enhancing the center's equity agenda.

Karen Suyemoto
...traveled to Palestine for two weeks as part of the Faculty Development Seminar from the Palestinian American Research Council.
...participated as a mentor in the American Psychological Association's Minority Fellowship Program Psychology Summer Institute.

Cedric Woods
...chaired a panel and presented at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association annual conference in Los Angeles.
...conducted contracted work to assist the Chickahominy Indian Tribe of Virginia in the establishment of new tribal programs.
...gave testimony to the MA Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to support the adoption of the new curriculum framework for history and social studies.
...submitted a response to a contract to oversee outreach and implementation for substance use prevention initiatives for Native communities in MA.
...provided a teacher training workshop as part of the JFK summer training institute.


