Message from the Director

Greetings!

Welcome to the second year of the Transnational, Cultural, and Community Studies (TCCS) graduate program. I am excited to be beginning my tenure as the Director of the program, with its cohorts of amazing students and faculty (see the updates later in this newsletter!). It is hard to believe that an entire semester has already gone by this academic year, but events especially since Election Day in November have emphasized how important the social justice mission of TCCS is in education. I am extremely grateful to be a part of such a supportive community standing together to promote education, justice, equity, and advocacy for ethnic and racialized communities.

While we intended to release this fall newsletter earlier in the semester, a series of transitions in addition to a flurry of activities and responses post-election have caused some delay. Nonetheless, we continue to be very excited about our second cohort of students, introduced in this newsletter. We also include here some updates from faculty and from our first cohort of students, who have been doing wonderful things this year.

This semester and continuing through the academic year, we are working on a number of things, including: strengthening our community partnerships and connections, expanding the number of partnerships with UMass Boston certificate programs for our students, collaborating with other departments and programs to sponsor multicultural and social justice events on campus, and participating in the development of resources and initiatives to support the health and advocacy of ethnic and racialized communities on campus and in local communities. Look for our monthly events calendar with campus and community diversity events, and (starting in spring 2017) our monthly updates about TCCS initiatives, faculty, and students including our TCCS blog.

Wishing you and yours a happy solstice followed by growing light and warmth.

Karen Suyemoto

Karen Suyemoto, PhD

Director, Transnational Cultural and Community Studies (TCCS)

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Introducing Our Students
Our TCCS students bring diverse and rich backgrounds and perspectives.

Arturo Arévalo is a documentary photographer and decolonized thinker originally from Colombia. He received his BA in Sociology and Gender Studies, with a minor in Anthropology, at UMass Boston. He uses photography and video to explore socio-anthropological topics in contemporary society. Recently, Arturo worked as a mentor and collaborator on community projects in Colombia. He strongly believes in the power of art as a tool for empowerment and healing. Arturo is primarily focused on sharing the stories of the different communities who have opened their doors to him. He believes in the power of images for telling stories and is committed to use photography to amplify their own voices.

Jessica Faustin is a 2nd-generation Haitian American from Medford, Massachusetts. She holds a BA degree in Psychology-Sociology from UMass Boston. There, Jessica worked as an undergraduate Research Assistant with Professor Shapiro, conducting a dialogue group session with students on “Black Beauty White Standards,” a qualitative research study led by now-Dr. Speshal Walker. The first in her family to pursue graduate studies, Jessica chose TCCS because the program offers her the opportunity to see the world from a transdisciplinary lens by integrating her psychological and sociological tools along with her personal experiences. In her free time, Jessica enjoys listening to music, cooking, nature sighting, and spending time with her two older sisters.

Katsyris Rivera Kientz graduated from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) in Cayey in 2016 with majors in Psychology and Mental Health and a minor in Sociology. There, she worked on a research action project, “Colectivo Universitario para el Acceso”, that focused on access, retention, and graduation of socio-economically disadvantaged students at UPR in Cayey. Her research interests include cultural identity, immigration, race disparities, and gender issues. Particularly, she is interested in studying Puerto Rican national identities and immigration to the US as it relates to the Puerto Rican diaspora. Exploring social interactions, diverse organizations, and a broader awareness of history through the Caribbean Studies Summer Institute marked her pathway into choosing TCCS as her next academic step. She is currently a Research Assistant in the “Multiculturalism and STEM” project directed by Dr. Rosalyn Negrón. An animal lover, Katsyris rescued animals in Puerto Rico and volunteered in the Protective Federation of animals of Puerto Rico Organization, and All Sato Rescue, Org.
Our Students, cont’d

Our TCCS students bring diverse and rich backgrounds and perspectives.

Leidy V. Quiceno has a BA in Criminal Justice (magna cum laude) from UMass Boston and was a member of the National Criminal Justice Honor Society (Alpha Phi Sigma). In 2016, she received a graduate certificate in UMass Boston’s Gender, Leadership, and Public Policy program. Currently, she serves as a Research Assistant for the Latino Student Success Initiative (LSSI) and a Student Advocate at Chelsea High School. Her role in the LSSI sheds light on the personal, academic, and professional experiences of Latino/a transfer students from Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), highlighting the barriers they face at UMass Boston. Her presentation at the BHCC Chelsea campus communicated how educators and universities can listen to students’ voices to best support their academic success. In TCCS, Leidy hopes to sharpen her skills as a community leader and social advocate. Leidy is a proud Colombian-born woman, family-oriented, and the first in her family to attend college. She is also passionate about fashion, styling people, doing make-up, and putting outfits together. She enjoys salsa music and loves dancing to Colombian cumbia.

Richard Truong is a 2nd-generation Vietnamese American. He was born in California and moved to Boston as a child. For most of his life he grew up in low-income housing and was educated in the public school system in Somerville. Richard went to UMass Boston where he majored in Business Management with a concentration in Marketing and a program of study in Asian American Studies. He considers himself to be very cultural and is always looking to find connections with people. Richard identifies as a gay male, which had its challenges. However, his identity helped him have more authentic relationships with those he is close with. Richard is passionate about helping people, thus his career in higher education working as an Assistant Director of International and Transfer Students in Undergraduate Admissions at UMass Boston. Richard is a self-proclaimed foodie and one day wants to start his own food blog - and in his spare time he watches documentaries.
Capstone Projects
A sneak-peek of the 1st Cohort’s capstones

Candida Rose Baptista
“KabuMerikanus - The Sum of US: The Cape Verdean-American Musical Legacy”

Tariana V. Little
“A Participatory Evaluation Guide for Chica Project”

Tri Quach
“I’m Chinese from Vietnam”

Iria Dopazo Ruibal
“Expanding and Deepening Diverse Parent Engagement at Waltham High School through Planning, Delivering, and Monitoring of Culturally Relevant Programming for Parents”

Kim Soun Ty
“Lead Poisoning in the Lynn Cambodian American Community 1980s-1990s”

Nicole Young
“Space, Race and Networks: A Look at Neocolonial Discourse and Impacts in Vieques, Puerto Rico”
Ping-Ann Addo taught a class, “ANTH 269L: Anthropology of the Object”, a non-western art class where the class looks at culture through the artistic lens of the maker and the maker’s audience. Dr. Addo also emphasizes the importance of costuming in the Caribbean culture because they express themselves through their costumes, which are difficult and expensive to make. Each costume has an important role in this global and transnational event.

Loan Dao presented a paper on Asian American and Pacific Islander youth activists in the undocumented youth movement, chaired a panel on Southeast Asian American education pipelines, and participated in a plenary on discrimination in the academe at the Association of Asian American Studies conference in April 2016. Dr. Dao also co-organized the Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix Immigrant Achievers Scholarship, a new scholarship on campus for immigrant students of any citizenship status.

Peter Kiang gave a lecture on “Educational Experiences of Asian American Students” at a summer institute on race and education at Boston College High School and a lecture on “Education in Crisis: The Cambodian and Cambodian American Community” at a summer institute at Middlesex Community College in Lowell.

Rosalyn Negrón spent the summer working on the “Multiculturalism & Stem Success Project,” a three-year study funded by the National Science Foundation. The project investigates whether multicultural identities and skills gives multicultural students of color an advantage in their STEM studies.

Aminah Pilgrim assisted with the coordination of SABURA youth program, an annual summer program she co-founded for youth ages 4-12, in Brockton, MA. Dr. Pilgrim also continued work with Boston Public Schools Office of English Language Learners, planning the first ever Cape Verdean Kriolu dual language school program, to begin in academic year 2017-2018. This historic BPS initiative will be conducted along with Haitian Kreyol and other languages in an effort to expand the BPS dual language offerings.
Lorna Rivera conducted research for the Latino Student Success Pathways project, which helps to train faculty and staff to adopt culturally inclusive practice, engage Latino families in the educational process, and connect Latino transfer students with UMB academic support, cultural activities, and mentoring that engages Chelsea High School students in educational and career planning. Lorna also conducted research on the outcomes of Latino students in charter schools.

Marisol Negrón attended the first biannual conference of the newly founded international Latina/o Studies Association, where she was a respondent in the panel, “Race, Knowledge Production, and Spaces of Belonging in Puerto Rico.” She also participated in storytime for the YMCA at the Hyde Park summer program for kids up to 5 years old.

Ester Shapiro became board chair to the award-winning organization “Found in Translation,” which trains low-income immigrant women to be medical interpreters. Dr. Shapiro also continued to work with the Latino Student Success Initiative as part of a collaboration with Bunker Hill Community College and UMass Boston, led by Professor Lorna Rivera and other contributors.

Karen Suyemoto participated as a mentor in the American Psychological Association’s (APA) Minority Fellowship Program Summer Institute and served as a delegate from the Asian American Psychological Association to the APA Council, where she advocated for greater attention to the psychological needs of racial and ethnic minority communities. She also presented a training to increase racial and cultural sensitivity for advising staff at Kennesaw State University.

Shirley S. Tang continued her work as a Research Fellow for the Center for Minority-Serving Institutions at UPenn and delivered a talk on “Forming Partnerships in Research” at the Center’s 2016 Elevate Conference on June 17. She also led a faculty development summer institute at Bunker Hill Community College.

Cedric Woods completed a project to create a support group for Native American women survivors of Domestic or sexual assault. He also held a series of listening sessions around topics/issues prioritized by Massachusetts Native Communities. This is part of Cedric’s lifelong commitment to have sustainability within the Native American communities and give each of them a voice.
Summer Activities
From our TCCS Students

Candida Rose Baptista spent six weeks conducting research in The Republic of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) as a foundational part of her TCCS Capstone Project. Her research questions focused on the music of Cabo Verde and how it connects to and impacts broader issues of culture, identity, politics, emigration, and diaspora (especially with reference to the United States) and everyday life in Cabo Verde.

Thary S. Lim worked as a Research Assistant for the Dr. Negrón’s STEM project and as an Intern for the Merck Family Fund. She also contributed to utilizing Peacemaking Circles to reduce disproportionate discipline among youth of color in Seattle, efforts in which she has been involved since 2015.

Tariana V. Little received an International Seed Grant from UMB’s Office of Global Programs to support a Visiting Fellowship at the University of A Coruña in Galicia, Spain, where she conducted research on the transnational lives of the Dominican diaspora in Galicia and Madrid. While there, Tariana also participated in the international summer school “Gender and Race in transnational Migration Studies.” In August, Tariana conducted research in the Dominican Republic, as part of ongoing collaboration with a Rutgers research team to develop a mobile application to prevent depressive symptoms among primary care patients in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Tariana also helped to maintain the TCCS program’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/TCCSatUMB/

Iria Dopazo Ruibal received an International Seed Grant from UMB’s Office of Global Programs to conduct research in Spain during summer 2016 on social determinants of health with special focus on the education of immigrant populations. Iria also completed a Visiting Fellowship at the University of A Coruña in Galicia, Spain, and had the opportunity to participate in the international summer school “Gender and Race in transnational Migration Studies” in Galicia.

Kim Soun Ty spoke at the APIASF (Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund) conference.
Achievements – Congratulations!

To our TCCS Faculty and Students

Loan Dao for her book contract with Temple University Press and her manuscript *Generation Rising*, an ethnographic study of Southeast Asian American youth activists in the immigrant rights movement.

Marisol Negrón for her book contract with Duke University Press and her manuscript *Made in NuYoRico: Salsa as Cultural Sign and Commodity*, which examines salsa’s emergence among New York’s Puerto Rican communities in the 1960s and 1970s, the music’s development as a global commodity, and its transnational flows to Puerto Rico.

Shirley S. Tang for receiving the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching, making her the first woman of color recipient in UMass Boston history.

Publications

From our TCCS Faculty and Students

Loan Dao:


Karen Suyemoto:

Tariana V. Little:


TCCS 600: Professional Seminar, Wednesdays 4:00PM - 6:00PM
This course consists of a series of workshops focused on assessing, developing and supporting skills necessary for a successful graduate experience: professional and academic writing skills, doing a literature review, and using library databases for research. Taught by: Karen Suyemoto, Professor of Psychology (Karen.Suyemoto@umb.edu)

TCCS 612: Community Formulation and Development, Tuesdays 5:30PM - 8:15PM
This course teaches students concepts, theories, and techniques for understanding community dynamics, conducting research in communities, and practicing in and with communities in development processes. The course develops an understanding of the institutional, national, and global forces acting at the neighborhood level, including an examination of the interactions among public policy, the interests of community residents, and nonprofit and private stakeholders. Covering such areas as economic development, education, social welfare, and grassroots organizing – with a focus on the formation and development of communities of color – the course draws on post-colonial and transnational studies to explore decolonizing traditional understanding(s) of community. Students will understand communities as complex, dynamic, contested, contradictory, and a principal arena of organized collective action to change or preserve the status quo. Theories and approaches will be examined in the context of case studies drawn from local communities. Taught by: J. Cedric Woods, Faculty, Native American and Indigenous Studies (Cedric.Woods@umb.edu)

TCCS 622: Transdisciplinary Research in Practice, Thursdays 4:00PM - 6:45PM
This course offers students hands-on experience in transdisciplinary research, focused on designing and carrying out actual field and/or archival research, applying multidimensional framework analysis, and identifying forms of data across disciplinary boundaries. Students work on an individual or a collaborative transdisciplinary research project to apply concepts and skills gained from grounded research experiences in community settings. Taught by: Loan Dao, Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies (Loan.Dao@umb.edu)

TCCS 797: Special Topics: Community Health & Equity, Mondays 4:00PM - 6:45PM
This course will introduce students to transdisciplinary U.S. and global perspectives on community health/mental health as a bridge between personal health and multi-systemic resources creating societal conditions for “wellness as fairness”. Students will learn about social determinants of health/mental health, community-engaged integrative health care using cultural and intergenerational life-course perspectives, and their application for transformational action research, policy and practice with diverse populations, specific health and social justice issues, and health promotion/prevention/treatment interventions across settings. Students will bring to the course their specific areas of research, practice, or policy interest in community health/mental health, and explore how they can inform their work with relevant research, public policy initiatives, community partnerships, collaborative leadership, and social movements promoting health equity. Taught by: Ester Shapiro, Associate Professor of Psychology (Ester.Shapiro@umb.edu)