Message from our Director

Dear Friends of the Gastón Institute,

¡Saludos! Greetings!

We hope you and your families are staying healthy and safe. We are hopeful that under the leadership of President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris that we can begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and try to address the structural racism that has exacerbated the negative impacts of the coronavirus on our communities.

As this newsletter highlights, this fall semester we continue to work remotely with our faculty, staff, students, and community partners to produce research and organize events about the most important issues affecting Latinx communities. Our COVID Dashboard contains the most up-to-date data about COVID infections by race/ethnicity in Massachusetts. We partnered with Amplify Latinx and Greater Boston Latino Network to produce a report and data dashboard about the State of Latino Nonprofits in Massachusetts. We welcomed back our former director Dr. Andrés Torres, who joined us for our Speaker Series event and presentations by the winners of the Andrés Torres Paper Series Awards: Dr. Carolina Alonso Bejarano and Dr. Stephanie Huezo.

Due to the COVID restrictions, we unfortunately had to cancel our live event for our 30 Year Anniversary celebration. We are grateful to have partnered with the talented filmmaker Monica Cohen, who has produced a great video about the Gastón Institute’s history and impact that features Dr. Miren Uriarte, Robert Hildreth, State Representative Carlos Gonzalez, Dr. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, and Daniela Bravo.

In Spring 2021, we look forward to the 27th year and new cohort of the Latino Leadership Opportunity Program (ANTH 477). This year’s research seminar will focus on Research for Advancing Equity and Social Justice. We are seeking candidates, so hope you can recommend students and access the LLOP application on our website.

Continue reading to learn about our current projects and to access video links for events you may have missed. Thank you for your continuing support!

Best wishes for the holiday season!

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. Lorna Rivera, Director of the Gastón Institute
GIVING TUESDAY ON OUR 30 YEARS

During these challenging times, the Gastón Institute’s work is more relevant than ever before and we need your financial support more than ever before. With your support we can continue to work with community leaders, elected officials, faculty and students to do research about education, public health, workforce development and immigration. Thank you for your support!

DONATE NOW

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Speaker Series: Andrés Torres Paper Series Awardees

We hosted a very special virtual Speaker Series on October 8, 2020. The Andrés Torres Paper Series Award supports young scholars who document the experience of Latinx in the U.S.

“Magical Coalition” in a New Jersey Town: Solidarity and Immigrants’ Rights by DR. CAROLINA ALONSO BEJARANO, University of Warwick, United Kingdom. Research focused on an inter-ethnic coalition that emerged in the early 2000s in opposition to local anti-immigration legislation in central New Jersey.
Reading and Driving under Popular Education: Tracing Salvadoran-Inspired Activism in Maryland
by DR. STEPHANIE HUEZO, Fordham University, New York. Research examined Salvadoran activists' political advocacy in a literacy and driver's license campaign in Maryland (2003-2013).

WATCH THE EVENT

State of the Latino Non-Profit Sector in the Commonwealth

On October 8th, Amplify Latinx and Greater Boston Latino Network (GBLN) presented a joint release of their reports about the Latino nonprofit sector in Greater Boston and MA. Latino-led community-based organizations (CBOs) and nonprofits have a long history of providing critical human, education, and community services in Boston and the Commonwealth. These organizations have taken a first-responder role during the COVID-19 health and economic crisis.

The presentation included key findings and recommendations from both the Gastón Institute and GBLN research teams, followed by an interactive discussion on the policy, funding, and program solutions to invest and strengthen Latino nonprofits.

WATCH THE EVENT

PEAS presents Virtual Latinx College Fair

The racial and income disparities in education in Massachusetts are well-known, and Latinx students continue to fall further behind, especially in the context of COVID-19. To address some of these disparities, and to make sure that our students have access to the information and opportunities they need to make informed post-secondary decisions, In Pursuit of Equity Accountability and Success (PEAS) collaborated with American Student Assistance (ASA) to host a virtual college fair on October 22, 2020.
The virtual college fair included a “College 101” introductory session highlighting important dates, suggestions for finding the "right fit" and opportunities for youth to meet with college admissions representatives. Caregivers were invited to a virtual "cafecito" to talk about issues, concerns, and questions.

2020 ELECTIONS

The Latino Vote in Massachusetts

On September 10th we hosted "The Increasing Latino Vote in Massachusetts: Lessons from the 2018 Election", a live panel and report release with Senior Data Analyst Dr. Phillip Granberry and Faculty Research Associate, Dr. Luis Jiménez. Professor Paul Watanabe and Lorna Rivera also contributed to the panel.

In the 2018 United States midterm election, voters turned out in impressive numbers and the turnout rate was the highest for a midterm election since 1978. Latinos helped lead the way: although their 40.4% turnout (of the citizen, voting-age population) was lower than the overall national figure of 53.4%, it represented an increase of 13 percentage points over the previous midterm election in 2014.

In 2018 the Massachusett Latino voter turnout was 42.7%, an increase of more than 25 percentage points over the 2014 midterm election. As the Latino population is projected to grow to over 15% of Massachusetts' population by 2035, their voting will become more critical in future election outcomes.

Stay tuned for an updated analysis of the 2020 Latino vote!

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

LATINX YOUTH

TAG | ALERTA Virtual Summer 2020

This summer 2020, our TAG | ALERTA
program virtually served 80 elementary and middle school students (over 50% Latino) from about 23 different Boston Public Schools. Three UMass Boston students from the UTeach program, and six high school student employees funded by Boston’s Department of Youth Engagement and Employment, all worked as teaching assistants and led enrichment activities throughout the summer program. Participants engaged in project-based learning focused on three units of study and research: 1) Latinos in the Arts and Literature, 2) Latinos in Government, and Policies, and 3) Latinos in STEM.

Students also engaged in activities like Arts and Crafts, Athletics (Yoga, soccer, basketball), Photography, Performance, Music, and more STEM. Staff personally delivered supplies and STEM kits to all students. The graduation was virtual and dinner and certificates were delivered to all students and families. We thank our students for all their hard work, perseverance, and dedication. We look forward to the 2021 TAG | ALERTA Summer Learning Academy!

For more information, please contact TAG | Alerta coordinator Michelle Pereira.

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**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

**Andrés Torres Paper Series 2021**

The Andrés Torres Paper Series seeks proposals from young scholars who have completed their dissertation research or obtained their doctoral degrees in the past five years. Selection for this award is through a competitive process. A national committee of Latino scholars convened by the Gastón Institute reviews all proposals and will select 2 (two) proposals for the 2021 Andrés Torres Paper Series Award.

The Institute awards two grants of $5,000 for the preparation of a scholarly manuscript focused on any of the following three broad areas of the...
experience of Latinos, Latinas and Latinx:

(1) the connection between immigration and community formation;
(2) transnational linkages; and
(3) inter-Latino relations and relations between Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups.

more information

Latino Leadership Opportunity Program 2021

The Latino Leadership Opportunity Program (LLOP) is an academic enrichment and leadership development program offered by the Gastón Institute for UMass Boston undergraduate students.

The LLOP offers undergraduate training in applied research and public policy analysis. Students in the program enhance their analytical and leadership skills, learn how public policy is created, become proficient in public speaking, build strong teamwork abilities, meet with policymakers, and receive course credit for their successful completion of the program.

This program has a strong history of success: many graduates are now employed in public policy positions or are enrolled in competitive graduate programs.


Apply Now

Publications & Research
COVID-19 Live Dashboard

A live COVID-19 data dashboard has been developed by the Gastón Institute to track cases by group and understand how the crisis is affecting Latinos statewide. Data is updated weekly from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

ACCESS THE DASHBOARD

State of the Latino Non-Profit Sector in the Commonwealth

In partnership with Amplify Latinx, Gastón Institute researchers gathered data about the current Latino non-profit organizations in Massachusetts. Our goal was to establish a benchmark that would allow us to assess the strengths of the specific services provided by these non-profits to Latino communities across the state.

The data collection and analysis for this report occurred between June 2019 and February 2020 and therefore predates the effect of the 2020 COVID-19 crisis on the work and stability of Latino organizations. Yet, the COVID-19 crisis highlights the great urgency for policies and practices that can strengthen the ability of Latino organizations to respond to community needs.

DOWNLOAD THE REPORT

The Latino Vote in Massachusetts

This report examines the Latino vote in the national midterm and presidential elections from 2002 to 2018. Voter turnout typically is higher in presidential than in midterm elections.

In Massachusetts, elections for governor occur in midterm election years, and this could increase the voter turnout compared to other states that do not have the same gubernatorial election schedule. Latinos hold more elected positions in city and town government.
than they do in state government, and this could increase their voter turnout in these local elections.

DOWNLOAD THE REPORT

Latinos in Massachusetts Series

The Gastón Institute’s 2020 Latinos in Massachusetts series focuses on the ten largest Latino ethnic populations located throughout our state.

Each report uses both household- and individual-level data to estimate population size, median income, educational attainment, and other data about the different Latino ethnic subgroups in our state.

Access the 2020 Latinos in Massachusetts Series

CURRENT PROJECTS

Small Business Needs Assessment Study for the City of Chelsea

A team comprised of staff from Gastón Institute and the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute are partners in the development of a Small Business Resources Action Plan for the city of Chelsea. The goal of the project is to provide information about the economic climate faced by small businesses, including entrepreneurs, with the goal of identifying actionable strategies, initiatives, and other mechanisms to support sustainable and inclusive small business ventures in the city of Chelsea. For more information about the project please contact Dr. Lorna Rivera and/or Dr. Fabián Torres.
Filling in the Gap: Culturally Responsive Outreach for Economic Opportunities

The Gastón institute is partnering with the Gerontology Institute at University of Massachusetts Boston on a AARP Foundation-funded project. The proposed project will work with service providers to develop, deliver, and evaluate a suite of culturally responsive community outreach strategies designed to better connect low-income older people of color with existing resources for economic opportunity. Its main goal is to improve equity in access to existing economic opportunities (e.g., resources for cost-savings and income generation) for low-income older people of color age 50+. For more information please contact Dr. Caitlin Coyle and/or Dr. Fabián Torres-Ardila.

The Massachusetts Representation Pilot Project

Funded by a UMass Boston Healey Public Service grant and co-lead by Dr. Christa Kelleher of the Center for Women, Politics & Public Policy and the Gastón’s Associate Director Dr. Torres-Ardila, this project aims to provide essential information about elected officials through the development of a web tool shaped by input from community organizations and coalitions who will be likely to use the data. The tool will allow individuals and organizations to better understand who is serving in electoral leadership in Massachusetts and the extent to which such leadership mirrors (or doesn't reflect) the demographic composition of the State’s communities, in terms of gender identity and race/ethnicity.

Boston Through a Wider Lens: Advancing Ethnic Studies in Boston Public Schools

The Gastón Institute in partnership with the CANALA Institutes offered the Boston Through a Wider Lens teacher workshops August 17-21, 2020. Director Lorna Rivera and Latino Studies Program Director, Dr. Marisol Negrón facilitated workshops on Latino history and culture with a focus on Villa Victoria in Boston. We will continue to work with Boston Public Schools to develop Ethnic Studies courses for the school district.

Uncovering the Health Care Experience of Brazilian Immigrant Cancer Patients in Massachusetts: A Seed Project

The Brazilian population in Massachusetts in 2018 was close to 90,000. There are no publicly available data on cancer prevalence in this population nor information on how health care facilities treat those patients. This pilot project will interview a sample of Brazilian cancer patients in Massachusetts to describe their access to care, and the continuity and coordination of the care provided to them by health care services in Massachusetts. The preliminary evidence gained through this seed project will enable us to prepare a larger study to characterize the treatment pathway of Brazilian cancer patients, which may contribute to reducing cancer health disparities in the Commonwealth. For more information, contact Dr. Eduardo Siqueira and/or Laura Warwick.
Community-Driven Assessment of Environmental Health Risks in Vieques, Puerto Rico

This project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is led by several Gastón Faculty Researchers: Dr. Lorena Estrada-Martínez (PI), and Co-PIs Adan Colón-Carmona, Rosalyn Negrón, and Lorna Rivera. It examines the environmental impact of the US Navy’s operations in Vieques, an island municipality of Puerto Rico, and will develop novel ways to reduce contamination levels. Using Community Based Participatory Research approaches the project will: (1) Establish exposure to multiple contaminants through person-centered environmental assessments that account for intersecting exposure pathways over time as determined through community input; (2) Establish a resident data monitoring and decision-making infrastructure through citizen science and participatory community engagement; (3) Develop a plant-based remediation system for soil metals and train community members to implement in appropriate sites. For more information, please contact Dr. Lorena Estrada-Martínez.

Workshop on Stress Management during COVID-19 for Latinx Individuals

This workshop has been developed by Bryan Balvaneda, MA, and Dr. Natalie Arbid, PhD, from UMass Boston as a stress management tool for Latinx individuals with special attention to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The information presented here is based on research conducted by Dr. Arbid for helping Latinx individuals manage stress. In this workshop, the facilitators discuss the nature of stress and present two coping strategies for managing stress related to being a Latinx individual and the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information and materials, visit Latinx COVID-19: Workshop on Stress Management.

Bilingual Webinar for Latinx Students at UMass Boston

This project was conceived and directed by Reyes Coll-Tellechea (Department of Latin American & Iberian Studies), Albis Mejía Abreu (Student Support Services Program) and Ana Frega (Director of CLA Advising Office). A bilingual three-part webinar was produced with the support of a mini-grant from the Gastón Institute and a coordinated effort with the Instructional Technology team and several students. This combined experience in advising, mentoring, teaching and being a Latinx students will support Latinx students at UMass Boston as they navigate the pandemic in Fall 2020 and beyond. Access the webinar.

We appreciate your generous support!

DONATE NOW

Meet our Research Collaborators
A fond farewell and best wishes to Maria Tereza Frota, a Doctor of Nutrition in Public Health and Professor at Federal University of Maranhão, Brazil. Maria Tereza has been conducting research at the Gastón Institute through the Transnational Brazilian Project since August 2019 has now returned to Brazil.

Welcome to our new Undergraduate Research Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, and Research Associates: Vishakha Agarwal, Jonathan Vega Martinez, Leyi Perez Limas, Carolina Rojas-Pion, Sheyla Manon and Nidya Velasco Roldán.

**Hall of Fame**

It would not be the same without them! This section highlights some of our most amazing collaborators.

**Research Associate**

Eduardo Siqueira

Dr. Carlos Eduardo Siqueira is an Associate Professor at the School for the Environment at UMass Boston and Coordinator of the Transnational Brazilian Project at the Gastón Institute. Over his career he has researched the political economy of the migration of hazards between developed and developing countries, Brazilian immigrant health, health care policy, and health and safety inequities at work. He has conducted research and outreach activities in partnership with Brazilian community organizations in Massachusetts.

**UMass Boston Staff**

Albis Mejía

Albis Mejia is an Assistant Director and Academic Advisor, bringing over 20 years of higher education and non-profit leadership with an urban context. She has presented extensively on issues related to college access, affordability, and success, expanding learning opportunities for college students, diversity in higher education, and higher education policy. She also teaches study and organizational skills to college students and pre-collegiate students. Albis is a key supporter of the Gastón Institute and a champion of Latinx student success.

**Undergraduate Research Assistant**

Graduate Research Assistant
Sheyla Manon

Sheyla is an undergraduate student at UMass Boston majoring in biology, and part of the Initiative for Maximizing Student Development Program, funded by NIH. As an intern at the Gastón Institute, Sheyla has written a literature review on COVID-19 and Latinos in the U.S. She is currently working on a research projects about cancer and other health diseases in the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Nidya Velasco Roldán

Nidya Velasco Roldán is a Ph.D. candidate in Gerontology at UMass Boston. Her dissertation explores the impact of migration on the health of older Mexicans, focusing on Mexicans who migrated to the U.S. but return back to Mexico and are aging there. As part of the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, Nidya also participates in different projects in collaboration with various members of the Center’s team.

Community Board Member
Natalia Aponte

Natalia wears many hats at El Mundo Boston newspaper. She produces and publishes content through various media platforms, including print, web, videos and social media outlets. Natalia works closely with residents, community leaders and clients to produce interviews that are relevant to the Latino community in Boston. She was born and raised in Colombia and moved to the United States a decade ago.

Community Partner
Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción

Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción is a non-profit organization and a dynamic community development corporation that started in the South End neighborhood of Boston in the late '60s, to address displacement of low-income families due to urban development. IBA is one of earliest partners of the Gastón Institute and offers affordable housing and supportive programming to increase social and economic mobility.

umb.edu/gastoninstitute | (617) 287-5790

For the most updated information please engage with us and our community in social media