Message from our Director

Dear Friends of the Gastón Institute,

¡Saludos! Greetings!

Indeed, our world has changed dramatically since our last newsletter. We at the Gastón Institute are outraged about the racial violence we continue to witness every day. We stand in solidarity with our Black colleagues, students, and community members to demand social justice and to advocate for new social policies to dismantle systemic racism. More than ever before, we need to fully support Ethnic Studies curriculum in our schools, and expand the work of racial/ethnic institutes like the Gastón Institute, the Institute for Asian American Studies, Institute for Native New England Studies, and the William Monroe Trotter Institute at UMass Boston. Ethnic studies courses increase knowledge and critical consciousness about the root causes of racism, and teach us about the history and effects of systems of oppression on communities of color. Ethnic studies courses help us strengthen and mobilize our community cultural wealth, and they help inspire a sense of solidarity and collective action in advancing human rights. We hope you will join us in calling for more Ethnic Studies in our educational institutions!

Since our staff moved to remote operations at UMass Boston, we continue working hard on producing research and projects that advance racial equity for Latinx and communities of color. In this newsletter, you will find some of our recent reports such as the “Aquí Estamos y Contamos” Census 2020 outreach campaign in Chelsea, as well as our latest demographic reports focused on Latino ethnic groups in Massachusetts. We have an excellent COVID-19 research working group: Dr. Gonzalo Bacigalupe, Dr. Lorena Estrada-Martinez, Dr. Eduardo Siqueira, and Dr. Miren Uriarte-who are partnering with us on projects related to the COVID-19 impact on Latinx communities. Check out some of the COVID-19 Latinx projects below, our COVID-19 Dashboard for updated statistics statewide and stay tuned for the publication of our new report, "COVID-19 and Latinos in Massachusetts" (forthcoming in July 2020).

A special welcome to our new Chancellor Dr. Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, our first Latino Chancellor at UMass Boston! We look forward to building a strong future for our university together. We also thank Interim Chancellor Dr. Katherine Newman for her outstanding support. Finally, our most heartfelt Congratulations to the Class of 2020! We hope you will watch the Latino Leadership Opportunity Program (LLOP) students’ excellent documentaries about the impact of COVID-19 on their lives.

Thank you for your continuing support, and best wishes during these challenges times.
Sincerely Yours,
Dr. Lorna Rivera, Director of the Gastón Institute

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

**TAG | ALERTA Summer Learning Academy**

The Talented and Gifted Latino Program (TAG) and Project ALERTA are designed to support Latino students and English Learners through a combination of project-based classroom practices and a learning environment that fosters students’ cultural pride and civic engagement in a five-week interactive summer learning program online.

The summer program 2020 runs from July 6th to August 7th, Monday through Friday.

[CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO](#)

**RECENT ACTIVITIES**

**LLOP Showcase: COVID-19 Family Portraits**

**COVID-19 FAMILY PORTRAITS: STORIES OF VULNERABILITY, LOVE & RESILIENCE**

This spring, students in the Gastón Institute’s Latino Leadership Opportunity Program (LLOP) documented their experience during the COVID-19 crisis. The seminar was co-led by Associate Professor Rosalyn Negrón and filmmaker Mónica Cohen (The Boom House) and co-sponsored by the Office of Community Partnerships.

[WATCH THE INSPIRING VIDEOS](#)
Massachusetts During COVID-19 (PEAS)

In Pursuit of Equity, Accountability, and Success (PEAS) presented a webinar (and supplemental materials) in an effort to raise awareness about how COVID-19 was affecting the lives of Latinx families throughout the Commonwealth. The session had several panelists including community leaders, students, and educators.

WATCH THE SESSION

Access Password: 6Y&W%@G+

Census 2020 Q&A

On May 18, the Gastón Institute hosted a live session on Zoom, in Spanish, about the 2020 U.S. Census. Laura Medrano, Supervisory Partnership Specialist at the U.S. Census Bureau replied to questions about privacy concerns, how to complete the Census and a discussion about the consequences of Census under-counting.

WATCH THE FULL SESSION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COVID-19 Mini Grants

The Gastón Institute congratulates the grantees from six projects at UMass Boston that were awarded $2,000 to do research about COVID-19 impacts on Latinx students at UMASS Boston.

The funded projects are "The experiences of AfroLatinx students during the spring 2020 semester, quarantine period" (Dr. Aminah Pilgrim); "Community Health and Environment" (Dr. Eduardo Siqueira); "Adapting and implementing a culturally adapted stress management workshop for Latinx students" (Natalie Arbid, Bryan Balvaneda); "The Cajitas Project, a culture/creative arts assignment created for Latina/o/x studies classes" (Dr. Ester Shapiro); "Latinx Art & Covid-19: Memory & Identity at UMass Boston" (Dr. Gonzalo
Bacigalupe); and "Production of a three-hour online Zoom workshop to address topics of academic, financial, and emotional support for UMB’s Latinx students as they navigate the pandemic in Fall 2020 and beyond" (Dr. Reyes Coll-Telechea, Albis Mejía, Ana Frega)

These awards were made possible by a Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Innovation Grant and our partnership with Bunker Hill Community College to advance Latinx Student Success.

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**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**

**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. See our latest reports on this series:

- [Latinos in Massachusetts: Puerto Ricans](#)
- [Latinos in Massachusetts: Dominicans](#)
- [Latinos in Massachusetts: Brazilians](#)
- [Latinos in Massachusetts: Salvadorans](#)
CURRENT PROJECTS

Bunker Hill Community College Partnership funded by the MA Higher Education Innovation Grant

The Latinx Student Success Initiative builds upon a long-standing collaboration between Bunker Hill Community College and the Gastón Institute's Latino Studies affiliated faculty. The LSSI expands our ground-breaking work with BHCC's Center for Equity and Cultural Wealth (CECW) to build ethnic studies curriculum and advance cultural wealth frameworks for working with the diverse student bodies served by our two institutions. For more information please contact Dr. Lorna Rivera 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.

State of Latino nonprofits in Massachusetts

Amplify Latinx, the Greater Boston Latino Network, and the Gastón Institute are partners in a research project to develop an inventory of the currently existing nonprofit and civic organizations in Massachusetts led by Latinx or serving Latinx populations. Stay tuned for the report findings to be discussed at the next Amplify Latinx public policy conference.

Advancing Ethnic Studies in Boston Public Schools

In years 2020-2021 the Gastón Institute as part of CANALA will work with Boston Public Schools to develop Ethnic Studies curriculum and offer professional development for teachers in BPS. For a second summer, we will offer the "Boston Through a Wider Lens" teacher institutes in August 2020. For more information about registration please contact Elena Stone.

We appreciate your generous support!

DONATE NOW
Meet our Research Collaborators

A good farewell and best wishes to our collaborators leaving us this semester:

We wish our beloved Franklin Ortiz the best while he finishes his thesis. We also want to thank Adriana Oyola Vivas for her amazing work helping us with strategic initiatives and corporate relations.

Our sincerest congratulations to our graduate research assistants Krizia Valentino, Shane McCormack, and Ashley Torres on receiving their Masters degrees! We are very proud of you and will miss you all!

Hall of Fame

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

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**Research Associate**

Lorena Estrada-Martinez

Dr. Lorena M Estrada-Martinez is an Assistant Professor of Public Health in the School for the Environment at UMass Boston. A member of our faculty board and Latinx Studies, Lorena is a public health researcher with expertise on racial/ethnic health inequities, community health, environmental justice, and life course approaches to health disparities research. Beyond academia, she is interested in public health activism and community mobilization.

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**International Scholar**

Laura Warwick

In Boston for four years, currently as a visiting scholar at The Gastón Institute, Laura Warwick is a Brazilian MD and Behavioral Medicine Psychotherapist studying the Health Care Experience of Brazilian Immigrant Cancer Patients in Massachusetts. Her research aims to recognize challenges and benefits of these treatment pathways, including possible Mental Health manifestations, her area of expertise. Beyond academia, Laura is passionate about family, friends, learning new things, engaging in causes for animals, spirituality and sports.
Michelle Irene Polanco Pereira is the current Coordinator of the TAG | ALERTA Program. Michelle has been part of the program since 2012, she was an O'ryant TAG Club Student, Summer Teaching Assistant, and Saturday Academy Project Assistant. Both TAG and Project ALERTA were apart of her family's history years before her, having family members graduate and attribute TAG | ALERTA as an important part of their lives. Born and raised by Honduran parents, Michelle is a graduate of Wentworth Institute of Technology, with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture.

Bansari Kamdar (UMass Boston, MA in Applied Economics 2021), is a Research Assistant for the Gaston Institute and an independent journalist. She also holds an M.A. in International Relations and International Communications, along with graduate certificates in Asian Studies and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Her writing focuses on gender, security and political economy of South Asia and has been published in globally renowned newspapers and magazines like The Diplomat, CNN-News18, Huffington Post and Yahoo News. Her goal is to become a foreign correspondent and start her own newspaper.

Dan is the Community Engagement Specialist for the Chelsea Police Department in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Dan works closely with residents, community leaders, elected officials, business owners and organizations along with police personnel to create meaningful relationships and partnerships aimed at improving the safety and well-being of the community. Dan was born in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico and was raised in Arizona, where he later became the Director of Leadership Programs for Valle del Sol.

Amplify Latinx is a non-partisan, collaborative movement whose mission is to build Latinx economic and political power by significantly increasing Latinx civic engagement and representation in leadership positions across sectors. We have collaborated with Amplify Latinx on several projects, including the recent "Inventory of Latinx-serving and Latinx-led Non-Profit and Civic Organizations in Massachusetts."
For the most updated information please engage with us and our community in social media.