Adelante Juntos – Spring 2012

**¡Sembra! Cultivating New Opportunities and Leadership Through Collaboration**

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¡Bienvenidos! Welcome to *¡Adelante Juntos!* The newsletter that keeps you informed on the latest from the CLC, the UNC Latina/o Studies Program, and the Latina/o community at UNC-Chapel Hill! In its third year the CLC continues to provide a hub collaboratively connecting student, faculty, staff and community-driven initiatives in Latina/o affairs at Carolina.

First of all we would like to take the opportunity to recognize the recent accomplishments of some of the individuals who have made the CLC what it is today. Assistant Professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures Dr. Oswaldo Estrada won the 2012 Distinguished Teaching Award for Post-Baccalaureate Instruction for which he received a $5,000 prize and was recognized by the Chancellor during the halftime of the UNC-Virginia men’s basketball game. Elaine Townsend, co-director of Scholars Latino Initiative (SLI) and senior intern to the CLC won the UNC Undergraduate Student Diversity Award, and Dr. María DeGuzmán, director of the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies, won the UNC Faculty Diversity Award. In other good news, Dr. DeGuzmán also recently received promotion to full professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature. The accomplishments of these individuals reminds us that the motor that drives the CLC is the excellence, hard work, and spirit of collaboration in academic, scholarly, and community-based endeavors of individuals committed to enriching our university and our community. Congratulations to Dr. Estrada, Elaine Townsend, and Dr. DeGuzmán, and thank you all for your contributions to the CLC.

In addition to these updates, this edition highlights just some of the other accomplishments, projects, and experiences of leaders at UNC-Chapel Hill and in the community who have helped the CLC expand its collaborative programming and outreach in new exciting directions.

We hear from one of the most prominent advocates in Latina/o affairs in North Carolina, former chairwoman of the National Council of La Raza and UNC alumna, **Andrea Bazán** who was our UNC 2011 Hispanic Heritage Month keynote speaker and helped the CLC coordinate the White House’s Hispanic Community Action Summit in Durham on March 17, 2012.

We learn from writer, poet, and professor of Spanish **Dr. Luís Marcelino Gómez** about his course on Spanish and Spanish-American literature designed specifically for heritage speakers – students who grew up speaking Spanish at home.

Director of [the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies](http://englishcomplit.unc.edu/latina-o/UNCLatResources.html) **Dr. María DeGuzmán** shares details about the UNC Latina/os & Education Project, the Program’s latest initiative in collaboration with the UNC School of Education that brings nationally recognized scholars on Latina/o education to campus to share their latest research.

**Dr. Brian Hogan**, professor in Chemistry and academic director of [Scholars Latino Initiative](http://cgi.unc.edu/sli), explains his projects building a schoolhouse and writing textbooks in Spanish and the Mayan language Q’eqchi’ for Guatemalan girls in the town of Nueva Esperanza.

**Dr. Beverly Taylor**, chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, announces the recent hiring to [the Creative Writing Program](http://englishcomplit.unc.edu/creative) of lauded non-fiction travel writer and journalist [Stephanie Elizondo Griest](http://www.aroundthebloc.com/).

UNC undergraduate, **Ellen Magnuson** recounts how her adventures encountering and overcoming stereotypes while studying abroad in Argentina prepared her to be the student coordinator of the living-learning community, [La Casa: the Spanish House](http://housing.unc.edu/residence-life/living-learning-communities/spanish-house.html).

Finally [**Manny Amaya and Darius Whitney**](http://clc.unc.edu/about-us/staff/), two of our undergraduate program assistants at the CLC, provide a glimpse into how working at the CLC provides our undergraduates opportunities for personal and professional growth through hard work and engagement with diverse communities on campus.

These highlights are but a part of the exciting collaborations in Latina/o affairs taking place at UNC-Chapel Hill. Once again the CLC collaborated with over 32 student groups, departments, programs, centers, and community initiatives to celebrate the third-annual campus-wide celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month at Carolina. And in a new collaboration with [La Casa, the Spanish House](http://housing.unc.edu/residence-life/living-learning-communities/spanish-house.html) and the Carolina Hispanic Association (CHispA), the CLC helped organize the first annual clothing drive gathering 197 articles of clothing for residents of Siler City. In addition to these exciting highlights, the CLC continues its close collaborations with partners that have proven key in the ever-increasing prominence of Latina/o affairs at UNC-Chapel Hill such as [the Teatro Latina/o Series](http://www.teatrolatinoseries.com/), [Latijam – Latino Journalism and Media at Carolina](http://latijam.jomc.unc.edu/latijam/), and [the Student Health Action Coalition](http://www.med.unc.edu/shac/).

North Carolina, the Triangle, and the university continue to be fertile ground for new collaborative opportunities in Latina/o affairs and scholarship that have national and global implications. As a collaborative hub for Latina/o affairs at the North Carolina’s flagship public university, the CLC is proud to help connect established leaders, provide new leaders support in their endeavors, and provide our students the opportunities and experiences to become the leaders of tomorrow. In only our third year, we’ve come a long way, yet the possibilities on the horizon for future growth challenge us to continue collaborating and pushing in new directions. ¡Adelante Juntos!

**Coming Back to Carolina**

Andrea Bazán

(What should we list as her title? I know she recently left Triangle Community Foundation)

This past fall, I had the pleasure of being invited by the Carolina Latina/o Collaborative (CLC) and Carolina Hispanic Association (CHispA) to give a talk at the end of Hispanic Heritage Month. I always enjoy coming back to Carolina- especially if it’s after hours and I don’t have to deal with the parking. Coming to UNC for graduate school is what brought me to North Carolina eighteen years ago, and besides being a Latina, a mom, and all the other roles I play, I am a proud Tar Heel.

This talk in particular was special. It had been a few years since I had given a Hispanic Heritage talk on campus. Those of us involved with Latina/o issues are often asked to participate in these events when this time of the year rolls around- we get calls from companies, schools and others needing ideas or a speaker. Some of the requests I’ve gotten over the years are interesting – “Can you tell me what we could serve to our employees for a reception? Tacos?” But, all well meaning.

As I arrived and was greeted by Josmell, *casi ni le dije hola* when I saw that there were three people waiting for me. And I had not seen them for over fifteen years. Dr. Esteban and Estela Brignole and their son, Paco Brignole. Paco is now getting a graduate degree at Carolina and heard that I was speaking. His parents just happened to be visiting him. They are from Argentina, my youngest brother’s godparents and the first people after my parents who held me after I was born. Later as I talked about my life I couldn’t help but get emotional as I saw them sitting in the audience. I hadn’t ever told my life story in front of a family friend (or even a family). In Argentina, we don’t talk much about the Dirty War and how some of us left so quickly. As a family and culture, we have endured much.

My story is not unique. Every immigrant has a unique story of how they came arrived to the US, and these are as varied and different as the people that make up the Hispanic community.

It is this diversity that is apparent at Carolina today, which has a higher number of Latina/o students, faculty and classes than when I was a student in the early 1990’s. There is an active Hispanic student organization (CHispA), and a scholarship program available for Latina/o students (Scholars Latino Initiative, SLI) that is a model of excellence. The presence of the Hispanic community on campus is becoming visible. CHispA is a respected entity outside of town as well and has, from time to time, gotten involved in some policy issues. But I consider this a beginning step. As many Latina/o students tell me, the student body at Carolina is still a long way away from representing the reality of what the state looks like today.

So as we celebrated Hispanic Heritage month this past fall, it also gave us an opportunity to highlight some of the concerns. Hispanics continue to be our state’s poorest, the underclass and often our invisible people. Against all odds it is for many of them. What is our responsibility? We must ask this question of ourselves.

I believe that education is the great equalizer in this wonderful country of ours, and one of the bedrocks of our democracy.

We have all heard of the ‘immigrant work ethic’ and the strong value that some immigrants place on education. Much of it comes from our parents (and in some cases, ourselves) who came here with little if anything, to get a better life.

I encourage all of us to continue to take our responsibility to stay engaged seriously. There is much to do in terms of access to education, increasing resources for our students, and most importantly, to open the doors wide open for more and more to come and enjoy the privilege to be a Tar Heel.

**History of the First Time**

**Dr. Luis Marcelino Gómez***(Holguín City, Cuba, 1950) is a Latin American writer living and working in the USA. He has a Ph.D. in Spanish and works as a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is also a medical doctor and has practiced medicine in Africa for two years, from 1980 to 1982. In Angola, he wrote the first African short story collection written by a Latin American writer in Africa. In 1985 some of his African short stories received a National Award in Havana. Later, those stories were published under the title “*Donde el sol es más rojo*” (Where the Sun is Most Red) (1994) in Miami and again in 2003, by Panamericana Editorial in Colombia under the title “*Memorias de Angola*” (Memories of Angola: African Short Stories.). He has published other short story collections:* Oneiros *(Término Editorial, U.S.A. 2002) and* Cuando llegaron los helechos *(When the Ferns Arrived) Monte Ávila Editores, Caracas, Venezuela, 2011. He has also published two books of poetry. In 1985 he won a National Prize of Short Story in Havana, Cuba. In 2007 he was a finalist in the Juan Rulfo Short Story Prize in Paris, France.*

I certainly would never thought that anybody would ask me to speak about our new course: Spanish 262, Introduction to Spanish and Spanish-American literature for Heritage Learners, which is being offered for the first time at our university. Although I was the one who developed the course, organized every aspect to the last detail, and received this project as my own, the initial idea came from my colleague, professor Julia Cardona Mack approximately two years ago. She wished that I could teach the course because I have a major in Spanish-American literature and a minor in Spanish literature. I am also a published writer and my studies of Hispanic letters were based on my love for the works written in my mother language.

Spanish 262 was created only for heritage learners because these students were normally registering in another similar class, Spanish 260, which was created for Americans whose first language is English and who have never had any connection with Spanish culture, having only learned it in the classroom. These students, unlike the native ones, do not process Spanish the same way as those who have grown up listening to their parents and other relatives speak it at home.

For the first time in more than two centuries since our university opened in 1795, a course of literature is taught in Spanish only for Hispanic students. We cannot lose this great opportunity given by this course, which allows us to reflect on the enormous impact that the Hispanic population has had in North Carolina.

Introduction to Spanish and Spanish American Literature for Heritage Learners introduces students to Hispanic Literature through the reading and discussion of representative works of Spanish and Spanish American authors: from its origins to the 21st century. It offers students an introduction to literature through analysis of prose fiction, poetry, essays, and plays. This course is a prerequisite for all upper-level Spanish literature courses. During the classes of theatre, students will represent the works of Spanish and Spanish-American authors studied during the semester by performing works of theatre.

The authors who are studied include Garcilaso de la Vega, San Juan of the Cross, Miguel de Cervantes, Luis de Góngora, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, Rubén Darío, Jose Martí, Miguel de Unamuno, Federico García Lorca, Nicolás Guillén, Pablo Neruda, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez.

The students will also read two extra works apart from the textbook: one of poetry and one narrative, both of which students will base their essays on throughout the course. This semester we will study Pedro Salinas's poetical anthology, a representation of the poetry of the *Generación del 27* in Spain. The chosen narrative is *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo, one of the most important novels written in Spanish America during the 20th century.

**The Latina/os & Education Project, Another Collaboration of the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies**

**Dr. María DeGuzmán** (*Interviewed by John Ribó*)

**Director, UNC Program in Latina/o Studies**

**Professor, Department of English and Comparative Literature**

During fall 2011 and spring 2012 the Latina/os & Education Project—a co-sponsored endeavor initiated by the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies and the UNC School of Education—brought a number of distinguished speakers to campus to present on learning and teaching mathematics and education in the context of socio-economic and ethno-racial inequities of the U.S. educational systems. Monday October 3, 2011, Dr. Rochelle Gutiérrez, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Latina/o Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign presented “Desarrollando Nepantler@s: Rethinking the knowledge needed to teach mathematics.” Thursday, February 16, 2012, Dr. Judit Moschkovich, Professor of Mathematics Education in the Education Department at the University of California at Santa Cruz, presented “Beyond Words: Language(s) and learning mathematics,” a talk summarizing research on how students communicate mathematically and how they learn more than one language. Thursday, March 22, 2012, Dr. Luis Moll, Professor in the Department of Language, Reading, and Culture in the College of Education at the University of Arizona, gave a talk titled “Only Life Educates: Mobilizing cultural resources for teaching and learning.” The talk discussed ideas on how to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and other resources that exist in local households and communities to shape a pedagogy that both connects to students’ experiences and engages them academically.

*How has the creation of the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies helped cultivate Latina/o studies at UNC-Chapel Hill?*

The UNC Program in Latina/o Studies, that includes the UNC Latina/o Cultures Speakers Series that has brought over 35 distinguished scholars, creative writers, and performers to campus, has been pivotal in fomenting Latina/o Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. We have made connections with scholars and artists all around the country and, essentially, put Latina/o Studies on the map in our Southeastern region (we have the first such program in the Southeast) and nationally.

*The UNC Program in Latina/o Studies’ is based on models of Latinidad and transdisciplinarity that proved key in the conceptual formation of the CLC. How do these models allow for flexibility and inclusiveness in collaborative scholarly and community-based endeavors?*

The UNC Latina/o Studies Program is dedicated to inclusive, intersectionally rich understandings of "Latinidad." And, our scholarly approach is transdisciplinary as in not only interdisciplinary (drawing from different disciplines) but, furthermore, productive of dynamic, new kinds of approaches, methods, and scholarship that includes active collaborations on campus between different units and between campus and surrounding communities in the areas of education, health, and the wide spectrum of the arts (visual and performance-based, for example, music and theatre).

*The Latina/os & Education Project is the latest of many collaborations of the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies with UNC faculty that highlight scholarship in Latina/o Studies practiced in a range of fields. What are some of the other collaborations in other scholarly fields of inquiry that the Program has helped organize?*

For the past year the UNC Latina/o Studies Program has been collaborating with the UNC School of Education to foment the Latina/o Studies Program's Latina/os & Education Project and the new goals (under the direction of Professor Marta Civil) of the UNC School of Education in relation to the rapidly increasing population of Latina/os in the state of North Carolina. The UNC Latina/o Studies Program has for many years partnered with the Stone Center for Black Culture and History to bring scholars to UNC - Chapel Hill specializing in Afro-Latina/o histories and cultures. The Latina/o Studies Program has also collaborated with its advisory board faculty (such as David García) to disseminate knowledge about Latina/o music performance and production in the state of North Carolina. The Program has also teamed up with the UNC Art Department and the Carolina Latina/o Collaborative to showcase the creations of up-and-coming Latina/o visual artists working in the Southeast and elsewhere. The UNC Latina/o Studies Program has partnered off-campus with Duke University's program in Latina/o Studies on a number of events.

*What are some of the things you'd like to see the UNC Program in Latina/o Studies accomplish in the future?*

In the near future, I would like to see the Program do the following: create more courses for students particularly in the area of U.S. Central American Studies and add some courses in Creative Writing; continue to expand its Latina/os & Education Project and its collaboration with the UNC School of Education; maintain its joint efforts with its other collaborators; and attract more faculty and students (both undergraduate and graduate) to its mission to develop Latina/o Studies here at UNC - Chapel Hill and in the Southeast as a region.

*What are your current and future plans for your own research?*

This spring semester I have completed my second book, [*Buenas Noches, American Culture: Latina/o Aesthetics of Night*](http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/product_info.php?products_id=155666), to be published by Indiana University Press at the end of this June 2012. This second book examines a wide range of Latina/o texts along with some film and photography that evoke night. Representations of night have constituted an aesthetics of self-representation for Latina/os: resistance to compulsory state-sanctioned definitions of Latina/o identities and conditions for exclusion from or inclusion within the body politic of the United States. I am currently working on two more books. One is on the relationship between words and photographic images and more specifically story writing and the uses of photography in Latina/o fiction. The other is a collaborative photo-text project with political science and women's studies scholar Carisa R. Showden on my photographic work taking / making photographs of minikins, or miniature figurines, and her production of haiku.

**Act Locally AND Act Globally**

**Dr. Brian Hogan**

**Research Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry**

**Academic Director, Scholars Latino Initiative**

I was thrilled this past summer when one of my former students asked if I would serve as the Academic Director for the UNC Scholars’ Latino Initiative (SLI) through the UNC Center for Global Initiatives.  To me this was a perfect fit for my slightly modified version of the saying, “act locally, think globally.” My mantra is, “act locally AND act globally.”

Last spring, I received the Chapman Fellowship through the Institute of Arts and Humanities, allowing me a semester to explore my passion for education and humanitarian work.  I returned to the nation of my adopted daughter’s birth, Guatemala, fluent neither in Spanish nor any indigenous Mayan language.  I had only been to Central America one time in 2007 to pick up my daughter, but the poverty I saw stayed burned on my brain. Consequently, I got involved with the Chapel Hill based non-profit *Guatemalan Student support Group (GSSG)*, which brings impoverished Guatemalan youth to the United States for high school. In addition, I started working with the Guatemalan based *From Houses to Homes* building houses and schools for poor families in some of the most poverty stricken towns surrounding Antigua, Guatemala.

I am truly fortunate to have forged a relationship with one of the students from GSSG, Judith, who is from the remote village, Nueva Esperanza, in Guatemala’s Northeast Izabal district. She arranged for me to stay with her family in the village and I was anxious to see if there was anything I could do to help with education or basic literacy. Very quickly, I realized education was something that most Guatemalans neither have access to nor have funds for. Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in the world, but the people here have a rich culture and are ravenous for education.  School is not free after grade 6 and almost 70% of the population is illiterate.  The situation is far worse for indigenous children who generally do not complete third grade, and, based on my time in Nueva Esperanza, most children rarely attend any type of productive schooling and do not speak Spanish, the predominant language of instruction, but rather the native Mayan language Q’eqchi’. The Guatemalan government’s official stance on education is that it should be bilingual, but it is difficult to find teachers who are fluent in Spanish, one of the 22 Mayan languages and are willing to live in rural villages for minimal pay. Further, there is a very high rate of instructor absenteeism in rural schools, and some teachers have actually stolen money from families under the false pretense of providing “extra English lessons”.

As a result, I decided I would start writing bilingual Pre-K books in both Q’eqchi’ and Spanish.  At the request of the village elders, I was asked if we could help build a new school. With the help of a talented young man, Byron Cap, a former GSSG student and graduate of Saint Thomas More Academy in Raleigh, we completed building a school in Nueva Esperanza and we opened with an inauguration ceremony on January 15, 2012.  The two-room schoolhouse will double the number of girls attending school from 11 to 22 over the next two years.

Nearly all the women in the village of Nueva Espranza are illiterate and only speak Q’eqchi’.  Increasing the number of girls that attend school is an important instrument in helping developing countries emerge from poverty.  Research has shown that metrics such as pediatric health, malnutrition, overall health, and economic development all increase as maternal education increases.  Hence, it is incumbent on the village to increase the number of girls who achieve at least an 8th grade education and are fluent in Spanish. My long-term goal is to use literacy as a means to facilitate a self-perpetuating model of educational growth and economic security for the inhabitants in the Nueva Esperanza and the surrounding villages. At times the task seems daunting, and the obstacles innumerable. But every time I look into the deep brown eyes of a young village girl excitedly going off to her first day of school it is like staring into the ecstatic eyes of my own daughter when I put her on the bus for her first day of Kindergarten.

**Creative Writing Hires Stephanie Elizondo Griest**

**Dr. Beverly Taylor**

**Chair, Department of English and Comparative Literature**

Creative writer Stephanie Elizondo Griest will become an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature beginning in the summer of 2013, after a year’s fellowship devoted to working on a new book project.

Stephanie Elizondo Griest has mingled with the Russian Mafiya, polished propaganda in China, and belly danced with rumba queens in Cuba. These adventures inspired her award-winning memoirs *Around the Bloc: My Life in Moscow, Beijing, and Havana (*Villard/Random House, 2004), *Mexican Enough: My Life Between the Borderlines* (Washington Square Press/Simon & Schuster, 2008), and the guidebook *100 Places Every Woman Should Go* (Travelers' Tales, 2007). She won the 2007 Richard J. Margolis Award for Social Justice Reporting, got inducted into PEN in 2008, and edited the 2010 volume of *Best Women's Travel Writing* (Travelers' Tales, 2010).

Her writing hasn't gone unnoticed. She was a Hodder Fellow at Princeton University for the 2005-2006 academic year, and has won residencies at Can Serrat outside Barcelona, Spain; the Art Omi International Arts Center in Ghent, New York; the Writer's Colony at Dairy Hollow in Eureka Springs, Arkansas; the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska City, Nebraska; and Ragdale in Lake Forest, Illinois. She has also been a Visiting Writer at the University of Nebraska's MFA Program. *Around the Bloc* was named "Book of the Year" by the Mayor's Book Club of Austin, Texas; "Best Travel Book of 2004" by the National Association of Travel Journalists of America, and a "Best Book of 2004" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. *100 Places Every Woman Should Go* won the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation's Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism's "Gold Prize for Best Travel Book" in 2007 and the "Best Travel Book" in the International Latino Book Awards in 2008. *Mexican Enough* won the 2009 PEN Southwest Book Award for Nonfiction and *Best Women's Travel Writing 2010* won the gold medal for Best Travel Book in the Independent Book Publishers Awards. Griest has also been awarded honors and scholarships from the following organizations: *USA Today*, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Freedom Forum, the Network of Hispanic Communicators, the Headliners Foundation, the Pan-American Golf Writer's Association, Scripps-Howard, the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and the University of Texas at Austin's School of Journalism. She has been a Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute in New York City since 2005 and a Macondista (of Sandra Cisneros's Macondo Workshop) since 2009.

A passionate activist, Griest co-founded the Youth Free Expression Network, an anti-censorship organization for teens that is a program of the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) in New York City, and is currently on the board of NCAC.

Griest currently resides in Iowa City, Iowa, where she is pursuing a MFA in the Nonfiction Writing Program at the University of Iowa as a Dean's Graduate Fellow. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1997 from the University of Texas at Austin with degrees in journalism and Post-Soviet Studies and earned a certificate of Advanced Russian from the Moscow Linguistics Institute. She learned Spanish at the Ole Language School of Queretaro Mexico, picked up Mandarin on the streets of Beijing, and is currently studying American Sign Language. She studied tribal gypsy belly dance for six years and has performed in China, Mexico, New York, California, and Texas.

**Beyond Being La Rubia Jankee**

Ellen Magnuson

Spanish House Student Coordinator

In December 2007 I was on a train with my Paraguayan exchange student, Belen.  I was starting to plan where I was going to study abroad for a semester and continually insisted that I would go to Italy; Belen was persuading me to go to South America.  She was successful, and in August 2008 I flew from Miami to Santiago, and landed in Rosario, Argentina.  This flight was the beginning of my realization that I was a "Jankee" and not "Sureña," – or which was ingrained in my life as offensive. After traveling in Argentina I realized the complexity behind what it truly means to be Latina/o, the European influence constantly classified Argentina as the exception to Latin American culture.  I began to relate to Argentina, I wanted to be seen as Argentinian but my American and Scandinavian roots caused me to be an exception. Furthermore, I began questioning who I was. Growing up in North Carolina I was always a "carpetbagger", who was neither a Northerner nor Southerner. Many people believed that I was wasting my time learning Spanish and later Arabic. My life in Argentina was characterized as La Rubia Jankee que quizás es de Brazilia – the blond Yankee perhaps from Brazilia – (I never understood this reasoning).  In Chapel Hill, I became the student coordinator for the Spanish House, so I must be Latina or at least someone in my family must be. The truth is that I do not see myself as any of these people. I am truly an individual that happens to love Spanish, Arabic, foreign films, soy milk, hiking, and Goodwill among many other interests.  Just like every student around the world, I relate more to the exception rather than the stereotypes that divides our campuses and continents.  There's beauty in breaking stereotypes; the main issue is that once they're broken we have to discover who we really are as individuals.

**The Carolina Latina/o Collaborative provides insight for young, driven student**

Darius Whitney

CLC Program Assistant

Interview by Manny Amaya

CLC Program Assistant

Vice President of the Carolina Hispanic Association (CHispA)

Darius Whitney, 19, a first year at UNC-Chapel Hill from Charlotte, NC didn’t know what he signed up for when he filled out his cover letter to work for the Carolina Latina/o Collaborative. Knowing he wanted to major in political science and later pursue law, “I just wanted to reach out.” Whitney said. Whitney was very involved in high school, like many Carolina students, and only wanted to keep up the momentum once touching down on campus. Better known as the CLC, The Carolina Latina/o Collaborative offers work-study positions for those who qualify, in order to serve as a central hub for not only Latina/o based organizations on campus, but all diverse organizations.

Whitney says the CLC has done nothing but good for him. “Josmell (director of the CLC) has been a great mentor for me, I learned a lot from him and the office, things like public speaking, and professionalism used to be something I couldn’t grasp; now it comes naturally!” explained Whitney. Through the office Whitney also volunteers with the Minority Student Recruitment Committee under The Office of Diversity of Multicultural Affairs. When asked what advice Whitney had for upcoming first years he responded, “To be honest, don’t be a statistic, too many minorities fall behind because they just don’t try. It’s really about never settling and always being active, to never forget to enjoy what you do, because there’s no point in doing something if it doesn’t hold a special place for you.”

The insightful and busy first year serves as the Outreach and Support Assistant within the office. He is mainly responsible for making a social media presence for the CLC by heading the Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and YouTube pages. Whitney is also responsible for contacting media outlets to make sure people stay informed with the latest on what’s going on with the CLC. As a first year Whitney had to adjust quick, starting his position on the eve of Hispanic Heritage Month in September. Darius coordinated a Hispanic Game Night in collaboration with the Xi Gamma chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. in honor of HHM. “I felt like I earned my place after Game night, I loved working with the Sigmas, and plan to work with many other organizations to come. That was definitely a highlight for me.” said Whitney with a smile.

Darius plans to continue his work in helping minorities in his duration at Carolina.