

Fall 2012

Issue 20



LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO STUDIES AT UOFL

Caminos

Alberto Ruy-Sánchez Lectures on Arabic Influence on Mexican Culture

On October 23-25, 2012, Dr. Alberto Ruy-Sánchez, renowned Mexican writer and Director of *Artes de México*, returned to campus to present the 11th Annual LALS Heritage lecture, “Elusive Identities: The Arabic Presence in Mexican Culture.” In 2002, Ruy-Sánchez delivered the inaugural Heritage Lecture and was presented with the distinction of Honorary Captain of the Belle of Louisville. One of the highlights of this visit was a private tour of our Majestic Lady. On previous visits, the author was named an Honorary Citizen of Louisville and a Kentucky Colonel. This year, Suhas Kulkarni (right) and Ben Ruiz (left) of the Mayor’s Office of Globalization presented the author with a proclamation signed by Mayor Greg Fischer, which declared October 24, 2012 “Alberto Ruy-Sánchez Day” in Louisville. In the Heritage lecture and two other public lectures, the author spoke about the “*punte de arena*,” or “bridge of sand” that unites his native Mexico with Morocco. Students of Dr. Buchanan’s Introduction to Latin American Studies course and students of Dr. Hutcheson’s graduate Spanish course, Introduction to Hispanic Studies, were captivated by the author’s explanations of the many ways the Arabic world informs his narrative fiction. On October 23rd, the author gave a public lecture about the Mexican celebration of the Day of the Dead, providing numerous images from the *Artes de México* collection to show the diverse ways *El Día de los Muertos* is observed in Mexico. Co-sponsors for his campus visit were: A&S IDOP, the Dept. of Anthropology, Dept. of CML, CODRE, LALS, Liberal Studies, and Middle East & Islamic Studies.



Alberto Ruy Sanchez Presents Inspirational Lecture on the Day of the Dead



LALS Student Altars to Carlos Fuentes/Chavela Vargas and UoFL Student Anthony Flaherty

Alberto Ruy-Sánchez’s talk to the nearly full Chao Auditorium provided a beautiful description of the rich celebration of the Day of the Dead, which is not only observed in Mexico, but throughout the United States as well. Having learned about the Day of the Dead celebrations since I was a young student, I had never actually heard a Mexican explain the tradition in such a personal and meaningful way. By hearing his perspective, I was able to more fully understand why they celebrate this day. When the author explained that people are able to feel the loved one’s presence in his or her absence, I was able to connect on a level that I understood.

Having lost people in my life, I have always felt very close to them while doing things they enjoyed or eating their favorite foods, and hearing Ruy-Sánchez’s explanation of this closeness in their absence profoundly impacted me and gave me an entirely new perspective on *El Día de los Muertos*. When people erect altars to honor their departed loved ones, they do so mainly to make their presence felt in their absence so that they never forget those who have already left this life. To me, this was such a beautiful idea, and it gave me the drive to honor my friend Anthony Flaherty, who was also a student in our LALS 310 Introduction to Latin American Studies class this semester. By constructing an altar for him, it became a way for me and others to be with Anthony, even though he is no longer physically here. I can honestly say that because of Alberto Ruy-Sánchez’s lecture, I understand the principle behind a cultural practice that is foreign to me, and I thank him for opening my eyes to this idea. —Taylor Forns, LAS Minor

LALS Activities and Co-Sponsored Events

Screening of Documentary Film “Sin País” with Director Theo Rigby

On Tuesday, September 18, 2012, LALS joined the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, the Louisville Film Society, La Cámara, and the Hispanic Latino Coalition at the Dreamland Film Center for a co-sponsored screening of “Sin País.” This film focuses on one family, the Mejías, who left their native Guatemala to pursue the American Dream. The film captures the reality that many immigrants in this country face: the nightmare of deportation and separation from their family, and questions the fairness of current immigration policies. After the screening, Director Theo Rigby answered questions and invited people to tell their personal immigration stories. Ben Ruiz shared the story of how he came to the US from Mexico as an adolescent, and after serving in the military and creating a successful business in Louisville, finally became a US citizen. — Claudia López, LALS Major (pictured on the left with Kayla Wohner, Theo Rigby, Leah Dahline, and Rhonda Buchanan)



LALS Club Embraces Wes Moore’s Call to Make a Difference in the Community

On September 19, 2012, LALS co-sponsored with First Year Initiatives a return engagement by UofL’s Book-in-Common author Wes Moore. Wes Moore spoke about his life and experience writing *The Other Wes Moore*, and encouraged students to get involved with their community. This year, before his keynote lecture, Wes Moore went with students to SOUL service projects in the Parkland neighborhood with West End School students. LALS has also answered his call to action with the creation of our new LALS Club, whose mission is to provide service to the local Latino community and to volunteer for service opportunities on campus. One of our community partners is Big Brothers Big Sisters. **We invite everyone to contribute to our BBBS Winter/Holiday Assistance Drive. We are collecting unwrapped hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and toys for children (7-18 years) in our LALS Office in Stevenson Hall 305 through Wednesday, December 5, 2012.** — Leah Dahline, LALS Major and LALS Club President

Panamanians Assist LALS at the *Celebremos* Hispanic Heritage Event



On September 20, 2012, LALS participated in the Annual *Celebremos* Hispanic Heritage event, organized by the Spanish Section of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages. A large crowd gathered in the Humanities Quad and visited dozens of information booths. Tamales were sold at one of the booths, and at the west side of the court traditional flamenco dancers in extravagant costumes provided entertainment. I visited the Spanish Club booth and then spent time at the LALS booth. There I spoke in Spanish to Berta Calvert (pictured in center), one of my favorite Spanish teachers, who directed the 2012 Study Abroad Program in Panama. A group of Panamanian students enrolled at UofL also volunteered at the LALS booth. I had met some of them when I went to Panama last

May. Students of Spanish who visited the LALS booth were given a handout with interview questions to ask the Panamanians about their country. I enjoyed practicing Spanish with my *amigos* from Panama, even though I always worry about making errors. Jorge Adolfo González pointed out that their English is not always “grammatically correct” and their pronunciation is not perfect, and yet we can still communicate with each other. He said Panamanians appreciate the effort we make to speak Spanish and are not judgmental if our Spanish is not perfect. His encouragement meant a lot to me and I know if I continue to attend these events, I will be able to see my Latino friends more often and practice Spanish more. As a 2012 Panama Scholar, I spent time at the LALS Booth encouraging students to participate in the 2013 Study Abroad Program in Panama. I loved it! – Conner Loew, LAS Minor

LALS Activities and Co-Sponsored Events

Immigration, Deportation, and Education: “The Other Dreamers”

On October 19, 2012, the Cultural Center hosted a lecture by Itzel Polo Mendieta, community organizer for the Other Dreamers, young immigrants who have been deported to Mexico or have returned voluntarily. The speaker provided information about issues faced by these Mexican youth, many of whom have lived most of their lives in the US. Their US education credentials are not always accepted in Mexico and so these young people have trouble finding jobs and often end up working in call centers because they can speak English. In fact, many do not speak Spanish fluently. Witness for Peace is one group that works with the Other Dreamers to help them find employment in Mexico and realize their dreams. There are more issues involved with immigration than meets the eye, and it was enlightening for me to see what other problems existed and how I could try to help. Visit the Witness for Peace website for information and to sign a petition: <http://www.witnessforpeace.org/> Co-sponsors: Witness for Peace, Dept. of Political Science, A&S IDOP, KITLA, LALS, and UNA- Louisville Chapter. — Corey Long, LAS Minor

LALS Assists St. Joseph’s Catholic Church with Day of the Dead Celebration



For the first time, the annual Downtown Celebration of *El Día de los Muertos* was hosted by St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Butchertown. On October 27th, which happened to be National Make a Difference Day, LALS Club members created an LALS altar to Father Thomas Merton, with help from Vanessa Hurt, Director of the Merton Institute for Contemplative Living. The altar highlighted Merton’s connections to Latin America and his international background. The evening of November 2nd, Fr. David Sánchez held a rosary ceremony and Mass in Spanish, and afterward led a procession of parishioners, most of whom are Latinos, into the cafeteria to view all the altars, including those made by

the children of the parish to remember their loved ones. After Fr. Sánchez blessed the altars, the celebration began with Latin music from a live band, folkloric Mexican dances, and tamales, bratwursts, corn, and fries. LALS students helped with the activities for children, which included decorating sugar skulls, coloring skull masks, making paper skeletons and paper flowers, and face painting. The event was a huge success and St. Joseph’s looks forward to continuing the tradition of the Downtown Celebration of the Day of the Dead for years to come.



LALS Minors Anita Smith and Kristen Connors

The 19th Latin American Film Festival Focuses on Ecuador

The 19th Annual Latin American Annual Film Festival “Reel Ecuador” was held October 17- November 3, 2012 and featured eight Ecuadorian films and visits by film directors and producers. LALS Major Kelsey Stanley enjoyed meeting Mabel Cabrera de Sánchez, who produced and acted in the film *Zuquillo Express*: “I was able to ask her questions about the motivations behind making the film and about the filmmaking process in general.” LALS Major Jenni Lohrey attended the screening of *Deported*, which was directed and produced by Fernando Miele. In a movie review for her LALS 310 class, Lohrey remarks: “The film *Deported* was based on an actual event that the director experienced. The film was set in an unnamed airport in an unknown country where Ecuadorians were being denied entry into the country and kept in a solitary room without their passports or personal belongings. The complications associated with immigration, not only for Ecuadorians but for all Latin Americans, were captured in a single film. I believe this film, along with all the films included in the Latin American Film Festival this year, improve the quality of lives for all Latin Americans living in Louisville because they promote cultural understanding.” The festival was organized by the Spanish Section of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and co-sponsored by many organizations, including LALS.

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For information, visit our website and click on "Major"!

11th Annual Study Abroad Program in Panama

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LALS Internship Poster Session

Wednesday, November 28, 2012
3:30-4:30; SRB 139
Featuring local and foreign internships and presentations on internships in Peru

Congratulations to our December Graduates!



Kelly Burns - LAS Minor
Adrienne Singleton - LALS Graduate Certificate



Natalie Schuetz (left) and Leah Dahline with Alberto Ruy-Sánchez

Congratulations to Natalie Schuetz who was promoted to LALS Program Coordinator, Senior on July 1, 2012! Natalie has been a valuable member of the LALS Staff since 2009. As an undergraduate at UofL, she completed the Latino Studies minor, and is now pursuing the LALS Graduate Certificate, along with an MA in Communication. Natalie designs our colorful *Caminos* newsletter and keeps our webpage and Facebook page up to date. Welcome to Leah Dahline, our new LALS Student Assistant and President of the LALS Club! Leah will graduate in May with a double major in Spanish and LALS, but until then, she assists with outreach to the community and keeps the LALS office organized!

Desde los Cuatro Caminos



From the Crossroads

¡Saludos amigos!

The past six months have been packed with wonderful new developments for the LALS Program. The Board of Trustees approved the new BA degree in LALS in July, and we're already off to a great start with 7 new majors, and several others ready to declare. We will celebrate the graduation of our first class of LALS Majors in May 2013! With the new BA degree, the LALS Program will contribute to the 55,000 Degrees Initiative, whose goal is for 1500 Latino students to earn college degrees by 2020. Our new LALS Club, whose mission is outreach to the Latino community, kicked into high gear this semester, creating Day of the Dead altars for the campus celebration at Ekstrom Library and the 7th Annual Downtown Celebration at a new venue, St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The Mexican writer Alberto Ruy-Sánchez visited campus in late October, and in addition to presenting the Heritage Lecture on the Arabic presence in Mexican culture, he enlightened many of our students about the traditions of the Day of the Dead, explaining why altars are erected in memory of departed loved ones. We mourn the loss of Anthony Flaherty, a beloved student in the Introduction to Latin American Studies class that I taught this semester. He passed away on September 12, 2012, and though his time among us was brief, he touched the hearts of so many with his kind and bright spirit.

I am very grateful to Natalie Schuetz, LALS Program Coordinator, Senior, and Leah Dahline, LALS Student Assistant and LALS Club President, for all that they do for the LALS Program. I look forward to working with them everyday in the beautifully decorated LALS Offices in Stevenson Hall 304-306. We love it when students, faculty and guests drop by to visit us. No appointment needed! In the spring of 2013, I will be on sabbatical leave and am looking forward to finishing the translation of a novel by Alberto Ruy-Sánchez and working on a book on the narrative fiction of the Argentine author Perla Suez. I will hold office hours on Wednesdays until I leave for Argentina in April, and I'll be back in time to cheer on all our LALS graduates at commencement in May! ¡Felices fiestas!

Rhonda Buchanan, Director of Latin American and Latino Studies

FALL 2012



Latin American & Latino Studies



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