

Spring 2019

Issue 32



LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO STUDIES AT UOFL

CAMINOS

LALS Co-sponsors Campus Visit of Poet Ivonne Gordon Vailakis

On February 21, 2019, the award-winning Ecuadorian poet, Dr. Ivonne Gordon Vailakis graced the students of Dr. Buchanan's Spanish 311 class and Dr. Medina's LALS 311 class with her breathtaking poetry. As a first generation Indian American, I felt so connected to her words as though she were speaking directly to me. Gordon Vailakis not only expressed the sentiments of marginalized voices, but through her passionate art, she expressed a part of my heritage that I



have not been able to express. When I heard her read, "Do Not Call Me a Foreigner," I recalled a younger version of myself who had no real sense of belonging. With this poem and others from the collection *Colibríes en el exilio (Hummingbirds in Exile)* Gordon Vailakis is able to closely connect with her readers who feel lost on the journey of self-discovery. I was so enchanted with her first presentation that I also attended the Hispanic Keynote Presentation that she gave the next afternoon during the Louisville Conference, on the topic of language and displacement. It's been two months since her campus visit and I still think about "Don't Call Me a Foreigner" and how this phrase has made a lasting impact on my entire life. I am reminded of the young, timid girl I once was, and the woman I have grown to be, the resilient hummingbird who is about to embark on the journey of life. More importantly, Gordon Vailakis taught me that being different does not mean you are alone. Globally, we are connected through both our similarities as human beings, and our differences as unique, multicultural individuals. —Natasha Mundkur, Political Science/Marketing Major, Spanish Minor, 2019 Fulbright Fellow to India.

Sponsored by LALS and the Asociación de Ecuatorianistas

Latin American and Latino Studies Career Panel



On March 6, 2019, at 12:00-1:00, four LALS alumni and six LALS seniors, participated in our first LALS Career Panel, co-sponsored by the Cultural Center's Hispanic Latino Initiatives and the UoFL Career Development Center. Over lunch, each student spoke passionately about the ways in which the LALS program has benefitted their current and future career paths. They were joined by several other LALS students who attended the event and shared their perspectives on ways in which an LALS degree would prepare them for their future careers. Their presentations clearly showed that the LALS Program may prepare student for careers in a wide variety of fields, such as: criminal justice, education, public health, counseling, law, non-profit organizations, and social work, among others.

LALS Alumni in the Spotlight

Chelsea Flint

After graduating in December 2018 with degrees in Anthropology and LALS and a minor in Spanish, I sold all of my belongings, bought a plane ticket for the middle of February, and have been traveling around México ever since. I am currently living in Mérida, Yucatán. I got a job here as Director of Communications and Marketing for a documentary film called *Jats'uts Meyah* based in the Yucatecan pueblo of Yaxhachén. The film is being directed by U of L alumnus Amanda Strickland and seeks to increase indigenous media representation, and raise awareness of the importance of ancestral knowledge and women's work by telling the story of 90-year-old Maya midwife Doña Bacila. Being a part of this project combines all of my favorite things; it's like writing ethnography, storytelling, and making art all at the same time! I am incredibly thrilled to be a part of something that aligns so perfectly with my interests. Additionally, I am gaining valuable experience in doing research and working with local populations, which I plan to continue in the coming months. I received the news just a few weeks ago that I have been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for 2019-2020! In July, I will move to Colombia to work as an English Teaching Assistant in a local university. I am simultaneously proud and humbled to be the recipient of this award and cannot wait to see what the next couple of years have in store for me. In the meantime, I will continue to be present and embrace every beautiful moment that life has to offer. *¡Saludos desde México!*



Megan Lenahan



After graduating in August with majors in LALS and Fine Arts, I am currently working as the Program Services Assistant at Doors to Hope, a non-profit not too far from UofL that is building an encouraging learning community for immigrants. Everyday at Doors to Hope, I work closely with Latin American immigrants who come to our doors searching for English classes, homework help, and skills to build a better future. My job as the Program Assistant focuses on finding resources and volunteers for our After School Tutoring Program and our English as a Second Language Program. It is definitely challenging work, but I am learning along the way how to provide the best support for our students. There are many times when I reflect on how my LALS degree and my experiences studying abroad in Costa Rica and Panama prepared me for working in this diverse cultural community. My ad-

vice to current LALS students is to find an organization and get involved! While I enjoy working in an organization that uplifts Louisville's immigrant community, I also plan to move to a Spanish-speaking country within the next year or two. I have been named as an Alternate Candidate for a Fulbright scholarship to teach English in Panama, and have applied to other teaching programs as well. I am always looking for ways to grow as a more tolerant global citizen, and am excited for the opportunities to come!

Chase Riddle

After graduating from the University of Louisville in 2014 with a double major in LALS and Political Science, I attended George Washington University Law School, where I was an Aston Fellow. I earned a Juris Doctorate degree in 2018, and am currently an attorney at Peace Law, PLLC, a law firm with multiple offices in the central Kentucky area (<http://www.peacelawky.com>). I specialize in criminal defense, family law, and estate planning. I'm glad to practice law in my home community, and I hope to continue to improve my Spanish language skills from the University of Louisville and the Latin American and Latino Studies Program so I can fully assist Spanish-speaking clients.



Kelcey Robinson

I graduated from UofL in 2016 with a double major in Spanish and Latin American & Latino Studies. I also served as the LALS Program Assistant and LALS Club President for two years. Additionally, I was a 2015 Panama Scholar and completed my internship at Adelante Hispanic Achievers in Spring 2016, and still volunteer with AHA when I can. It's an amazing organization that is making a huge impact on Louisville's Latinx/Hispanic youth. This May I will receive the a Masters of Science Degree in Social Work from UofL's Kent School of Social Work. Throughout my graduate career, I have had the opportunity to complete practicums at a private foster care agency and a private mental health facility here in Louisville. It was important to me that I continue to practice my Spanish and improve my conversational skills. Fortunately, I have been able to serve as an ad-hoc interpreter working for Family & Children's Place, and for both of my practicum sites. I was also recently offered a full-time position at The Brooks Hospitals--KMI as an Intake Admissions Clerk where I am responsible for providing triage services, helping patients complete registration paperwork, and scheduling assessments. I hope to start working as a therapist or an assessor as soon as I pass my Certified Social Worker (CSW) exam. Wish me luck!



Seth Drake Completes LALS Internship at the Office of Congressman John Yarmuth

I have had the opportunity to serve constituents within Kentucky's Third Congressional District as an Aide with Congressman John Yarmuth's office, focusing primarily on immigration related matters. I have been fortunate enough to gain valuable work experience while learning the intricacies of the American immigration system by working cases ranging from immigrant and non-immigrant visa petitions to employment authorizations. My experience at UofL as a student of Political Science, Latin American and Latino Studies, and Spanish has provided me with language, political, and cultural education necessary to be successful in working with Louisville's immigrant community. Recently, I attended a Cross-Border Congressional Briefing in San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico. I joined Congressional staff from all over the country for a three-day training at the San Diego Passport Agency, the San Ysidro Port of Entry, and the Consulate General in Tijuana, Mexico. I was able to observe border crossing procedures and visa interviews, which supplements the work that I do everyday in casework matters pertaining to both the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State. I plan to carry these experiences with me as I pursue further career and academic opportunities pertaining to both foreign affairs and immigration policy.

Immediately after graduation this May, I will be moving to Spain as part of my recently awarded Fulbright grant. Upon my return, I plan to pursue my graduate education and a career with the United States Foreign Service. The Latin American and Latino Studies initiated my interest in foreign policy and immigration issues, and I am forever thankful for my experience as an LALS student.

—Seth Drake, LALS and Political Science Major, 2016 Panama Scholar, 2018 Lewis Scholar, 2019 Fulbright Fellow to Spain



Spring LALS Internship Research Forum

On Monday, April 22, 2019, at 9:00-9:50 in Stevenson Hall 307, four LALS interns will give public presentations of their research projects, based on their experiences at the following LALS internship sites:

Taylor Bryant—Adelante Hispanic Achievers

Melanie Mullins—Backside Learning Center

Seth Drake—The Office of Congressman Yarmuth

Kiara Seth—Doors to Hope

The Public is welcome. Light refreshments will be served.

2019 Lewis Scholars

Sarah Draud—Argentina

Jordyn Mattingly—Spain

Taylor Ohlmann—Costa Rica

Rachel Pillitteri—Spain

Sarika Polcum—Chile

**LALS Graduating Students****LALS Majors**

Chelsea Flint-Fall 2018

Bianca Velez-Fall 2018

Taylor Bryant

Seth Drake

Kylie Nethers

**LALS Graduating Students****LALS Minors**

Melanie Mullins

Gina Rodríguez-Jaquez

LALS Graduate Certificates

Shannon Barnes-Fall 2018

**2019 Panama Scholars**

Amaray Coca-Venegas

Alarah Gillum

Desirae Harper-Payne



Mackenzie McCamish

Whitley McGovern

Nicholas Nuccio



Mariela Ramírez

Meredith Valentine

Nicholas Yopp

***Desde los Cuatro Caminos******From the Crossroads***

¡Saludos amigos! I hope you will enjoy reading this issue of *Caminos*, created by Maria Shields, our new LALS Student Assistant and LALS Club President. I'm very grateful for all her help and for the assistance provided by Jan Rayburn, Administrative Specialist in the WGSS Department. It was a busy spring semester for the LALS Program. In February, LALS co-sponsored the Hispanic Keynote Presentation of the Louisville Conference, given by Dr. Ivonne Gordon Vailakis, along with a special lecture and recital for two classes. Dr. Manuel Medina, Professor of Spanish, organized her campus visit, and also invited LALS to co-sponsor the 2019 Festival of Languages, held on March 26th in the Red Barn. I'm pleased to report that Dr. Medina has been given a secondary appointment in LALS, as has Dr. Tricia Gray, and each will teach one course a year for the program. I'm particularly grateful to Dr. Gray because she will direct the LALS Program during the fall 2019 semester, while I'm on sabbatical leave.

The LALS Career Panel, held on March 6th, seemed like a family reunion. I was so proud of each student who spoke about the positive impact that the LALS Program has had on them personally. This issue of *Caminos* features four of our alumni, including Kelcey Robinson and Megan Lenahan, who participated in the Career Panel. Like Kelcey, Megan conducted her LALS internship at Adelante Hispanic Achievers, and now serves as an LALS Site Supervisor for Doors to Hope! Megan is still waiting to hear if she will be selected as a 2019 Fulbright Fellow to Panama, and two other LALS majors have been awarded Fulbrights: Seth Drake to Spain and Chelsea Flint to Colombia. We celebrated them, and the 2019 LALS Graduates, Panama Scholars, and Lewis Scholars at the 12th Annual LALS Spring Showcase on April 3rd. It was wonderful that Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Constance Lewis could attend the event and hear how grateful we are for their generous support. Please visit the LALS Facebook page to see the gallery of photos taken by Lorena Miller, Director of Doors to Hope. Finally, I must thank one other valued member of the LALS family, Jake the LALS Therapy Dog, whose presence in our offices has brightened the day of so many students and staff!

¡Feliz verano! Rhonda Buchanan, LALS Director



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