

CLLAS

2024 CLLAS Impact Report



CLLAS



CENTER FOR
LATINO/A & LATIN
AMERICAN STUDIES

University of Oregon



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Who We Are

CLLAS

The Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies at University of Oregon fosters student and faculty research initiatives that focus on Latinx and Latin American issues across Oregon, the U.S., Latin America, and beyond. Since 2008, CLLAS has invested over \$300,000 in funding for more than 130 projects, serving as a critical launchpad for many, and helping them leverage an additional \$2.1 million in funding.



What We Offer



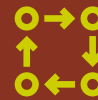
Research Funding

Every year we award \$35,000 in funding to help advance student and faculty research projects within the field of Latinx and Latin American Studies.



Professional Development

CLLAS offers targeted professional development programs, fostering research excellence, academic career advancement, and interdisciplinary collaboration through workshops, training, and networking opportunities for faculty, students, and affiliates.



Research Promotion & Dissemination

We support CLLAS grantees and affiliates in promoting their research through CLLAS-hosted events, weekly newsletters, local media outlets, social media, and more.



Community Engagement

CLLAS fosters community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration through dynamic events, linking Latinx studies scholars, students, local leaders, and community members in dialogue and social impact.



Latino Roots Project

CLLAS proudly houses the Latino Roots Project which advances knowledge and understanding of Oregon's rich Latinx history through a UO course, traveling exhibit, and documentary.

► Message from the Director



Dr. Christopher Chávez, Carolyn Silva Chambers Distinguished Professor of Advertising at University of Oregon, became the Executive Director of CLLAS in 2021. He is a leading expert in media studies, exploring its intersection with popular culture, advertising, and issues of race and ethnicity, with a focus on marginalized communities.

As the director of the Center for Latina/o and Latin American Studies, I am pleased to celebrate the amazing work that was done this year by our associated faculty and students. As a cross-disciplinary research center, CLLAS has continued to fund, support and promote scholars from across campus. This past year alone, we showcased work from such diverse fields as Global Studies, History, Education, Law, Anthropology, and Communication and Media Studies.

Graduate students are an essential part of our research community, and we are pleased to have had the opportunity to publicize their work. This year, graduate students presented their research on a broad range of topics. Among the work that was presented was a study on Mayan labor and tourism in Mexico, research on access to healthcare for H2-A farmworkers, and a historical study intended to reclaim the histories of enslaved women in Puerto Rico. Finally, we were able to celebrate the work of our undergraduate students, who were recognized at end of the year celebration of undergraduate research.

The year ahead will be one of growth and change. This past spring, the university's faculty senate unanimously voted for the University of Oregon to become a Hispanic Serving Institution. This is an important step for the university, and we are certain that the center will continue to play an important role in serving the needs

of our faculty and students. Also, we will welcome ten new faculty members, who were hired as the College of Arts and Sciences Latinx cluster hire. We are excited to work closely with these scholars, and to help them in their pursuits.

Finally, I want to welcome Dr. Erin Beck, who will serve as the Associate Director of CLLAS. Dr. Beck is an Associate Professor of Political Science and has been an active member of CLLAS over the years. I look forward to working closely with Dr. Beck as we continue to move the center forward.

I want to thank the College of Arts & Sciences, the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion, and the Office of the Provost for their continued support for our work. Finally, I want to say thank you to the members of the Executive Board, who represent disciplines from across campus. All of this would not have been possible without the help and support.

Meet Dr. Erin Beck: CLLAS Associate Director



Please join us in welcoming Dr. Erin Beck, the new Associate Director of CLLAS, who joined the team in May 2024. As an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Oregon, Dr. Beck brings expertise in gender-based violence, access to justice, and Latin American politics and development. Her research focuses on marginalized communities, particularly women, and explores the uneven impacts of violence against women reforms in Guatemala.

► Our Funding Impact

Catalyzing Seed Research Projects

Since 2008, CLLAS has invested over \$300,000 in 100+ student and faculty research projects, providing a critical launchpad for many early-stage initiatives that have catalyzed an additional \$2.1 million following support from CLLAS. By supporting the development of new initiatives and research, CLLAS has played a pivotal role in advancing knowledge and understanding of Latinx and Latin American communities around the world.



\$300,000 invested across 100+ projects



8:1 return on investment: Every dollar invested by CLLAS has raised an additional \$8 in subsequent funding (\$2.1 million)



70% of CLLAS-funded projects have resulted in articles, presentations, exhibitions, films, or distinguished awards

In 2018, CLLAS was among some of the first to fund Ernesto Martínez's powerful short film project "La Serenata," a deeply moving exploration of identity, culture, and belonging. This initial investment set in motion a remarkable trajectory, with "La Serenata" garnering widespread acclaim, numerous awards, and a licensing deal with HBO Max. The film has ignited crucial conversations, built community, and uplifted queer Latinx youth globally. As Martínez now expands "La Serenata" into a feature film, CLLAS is honored to continue its support alongside other funders. We are proud to have invested in this project from the beginning, showcasing our dedication to innovative research, creative expression, and community engagement.



Ernesto Martínez, Department Head and Associate Professor of Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies (IRES) at University of Oregon, is partnering with esteemed director Adelina Anthony to develop 'La Serenata' into a feature film. Building on its initial support for the short film in 2018, CLLAS was proud to support the feature film project with additional funding in 2023.



Scan to watch the short film for "La Serenata" and learn more about the feature film currently in production!

► Board of Directors



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SOJC



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Lynn Stephen
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Lanie Millar
Romance Languages



Adriana Miramontes
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Audrey Lucero
Education

► Staff

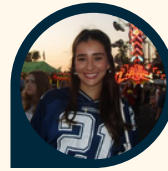


Eli Meyer
Operations Director

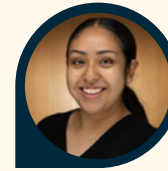


Janice Daniels
Digital Engagement Specialist

► Student Employees



Anna De Sanctis Ruiz, '26
Business Administration



Karina Zamora Rosales, '24
Public Relations



Susana Velazquez Huanosta '26
Education & Journalism



Admaryz Lopez Navarrete '25
Spatial Data Science and Technology

► Year-in-Review

\$33,600 Distributed

Last year we awarded \$33,600 in funding to student and faculty research projects at University of Oregon.

- Faculty Research Projects: \$20,000
- Graduate Research Projects: \$12,000
- Undergraduate Projects: \$1,600

20% Increase in Grant Applicants

Last year 43 individuals applied for CLLAS funding, which is a 20% increase compared to the previous year.

30% Increase in Event Attendees

CLLAS hosted 20 engaging events in 2023, featuring research colloquiums, workshops, and bi-weekly tabling initiatives, capped off by the 2024 Latino Roots Celebration. Our events attracted a total of 600 participants, marking a 30% increase in attendance.

400% Increase in Social Media Followers

- 1371 Instagram Followers
- 1000 Facebook Followers
- 20 LinkedIn Followers

How a Community Health Clinic Has Responded to the War on Drugs

An Ethnographic Study of PrevenCasa's Impact on Women Who Use Drugs in Tijuana

By Carolina Arredondo Sanchez Lira, 2023 Graduate Research Grantee

The War on Drugs in Mexico, initiated in 2006 and inspired by U.S. militarization strategies, has largely failed to achieve its objectives. Instead, it has exacerbated violence, corruption, and instability, particularly in border regions such as Tijuana. Women who use drugs have been disproportionately affected by this crisis, facing heightened stigma, gender-based violence, and severely limited access to essential services. This situation has deteriorated further under President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), whose administration, despite promises to de-escalate the conflict, has intensified militarization and reduced funding for harm reduction initiatives, worsening the marginalization of already vulnerable communities.

My research addresses a particularly overlooked group: women who use drugs. Traditionally, research on substance use has focused predominantly on men, leaving significant gaps in understanding the unique challenges faced by women. This ethnographic study examines PrevenCasa, a non-profit clinic located in Tijuana's Zona Norte, and assesses its impact on women who use drugs amidst the intensified conflict exacerbated by AMLO's policies.

The study involved conducting four focus groups with clients and interviews with five staff members from PrevenCasa, providing valuable insights into the lived experiences of women who use drugs, the significance of PrevenCasa's services, and the broader network of support organizations. In total, the study engaged 19 participants: 14 women in focus groups and five staff members.



Pictured Above: Carolina (second from the left) and the PrevenCasa team in Tijuana, Mexico

Lived Experiences and Challenges

A prominent theme emerging from the study is the pervasive nature of violence. Participants reported experiencing structural, community, and gender-based violence, with structural violence being particularly prevalent. Many women described violence inflicted by the criminal justice system, including physical and sexual assaults by police officers. Cristina, one participant, recounted a harrowing encounter with a police officer who threatened her with severe harm if she reported the assault:

“He [the policeman] told me, ‘If you go and make a report, I know who you are, I’m going to take a good look at your face and wherever I see you, I’m going to grab you and throw you into the sewage waters, and you’ll wake up all swollen.’”

Participants also highlighted how the Mexican government's policies contribute to structural violence. For example, the restricted availability of life-saving medications like Narcan, which is controlled and expensive, heightens the risk of fatal overdoses. Karen, a staff member, observed: “I have always said it, COVID didn't mean much. For the community, the death of a fellow drug user due to an overdose meant much more... there was a really strong epidemic, it was the arrival of fentanyl, COVID didn't really mean much.” This statement underscores the severe impact of the fentanyl crisis compared to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the lack of access to Narcan significantly increasing the risk of overdose deaths among drug users.



Importance of PrevenCasa:

Despite the dire circumstances, participants emphasized the crucial role PrevenCasa plays in their lives. The clinic offers a sense of safety, advocacy, and community support, fostering a feeling of belonging among women who use drugs. Carmen, a focus group participant, expressed:

“Well, PrevenCasa makes you feel like you are loved despite being, well, a drug user. We feel a lot of support and a lot of acceptance and that makes us feel a little better despite everything... it gives us something very real.”

PrevenCasa’s services, such as providing showers, help reduce encounters with the police and prevent theft of personal belongings. During my time at PrevenCasa, I observed the staff’s unwavering dedication and resilience. Their focus on patient autonomy and harm reduction strategies is vital and should be prioritized.

The stories collected in this research offer a stark reminder of the human cost of the War on Drugs. Women who use drugs in Tijuana are not mere statistics but individuals with profound stories of resilience and struggle. PrevenCasa provides a beacon of hope in an otherwise bleak landscape, but it is clear that broader systemic change is necessary. The insights from this study advocate for a fundamental shift in drug policy—one that emphasizes harm reduction, human dignity, and rights over militarization and punishment.

Expanding and supporting community-based care models like PrevenCasa is essential to addressing the root causes of suffering and providing the support and opportunities these women deserve. PrevenCasa’s work exemplifies the positive impact of compassionate, community-centered care and serves as a model for future initiatives aimed at creating a more equitable and supportive environment for all affected by substance use.



Carolina Arredondo Sanchez Lira, a Master of Arts in Global Studies, focuses on the intersection of health, social justice, and human rights. Her expertise lies in harm reduction, health equity, and community-driven initiatives. This ethnographic study sheds light on the critical role of PrevenCasa, a community health clinic in Tijuana, in supporting women who use drugs amidst Mexico’s ongoing War on Drugs. This conflict has disproportionately affected women, exacerbating stigma, violence, and limited access to essential services

Meet our 2024 Outstanding Undergraduate Awardees



In June 2024, we gathered together in the EMU Crater Lake Rooms to honor and celebrate this year’s incredible group of undergraduate award recipients. Students were joined by their family, friends, and University of Oregon staff and faculty to share about their work, which ranged from religion and film projects, to healthcare and artwork of incarcerated Chicano men.

Zoë McKeehan (History, Religious Studies)

Independent Study Project on the Sense of Community and Religion in Huilloc (pictured left)

Skye Grubb (Anthropology)

Pano Art- Beyond the Success Story: An exploration of the Community, Care, and Testimonios of Incarcerated Chicano Men (pictured center)

Sebastián Ibáñez Sanhueza (Clark Honors College)

Medical Interpretation and the Art of Storytelling (pictured right)

Diego Solorio (Film Studies, Political Science)

Project: Short Screenplay: “Chupacabra” (not pictured)



Scan the code to learn more about these incredible projects from our Outstanding Undergraduate Awardees!

In 2023-2024 our funded projects worked with **10 communities** across the U.S. and Latin America



1. **Eugene, Oregon** - A photo of Audrey Lucero, Janette Avelar, and Angel Dorantes after presenting their research on Latinx student experiences in the 4J School District.

2. **Oaxaca, Mexico** - A photo of a transnational student showing school pride, photographed by Ilana Umansky.

3. **San Juan, Puerto Rico** - A photo inside the General Archive of Puerto Rico, photographed by Rosa O'Connor Acevedo.

4. **Maranhão, Brazil** - A green iguana photographed by David Meek during his travels.

5. **Cuzco, Peru** - A photo of Michelle Scalise Sugiyama and Lawrence Sugiyama exploring Machu Pichu during their research travels.

Scan to learn more about the faculty and graduate projects funded by CLLAS!

Eugene, Oregon - Dr. Audrey Lucero, (College of Education), Janette Avelar (Quantitative Research Methods in Education), and Angel Dorantes (Latino Outreach & Retention, Linn-Benton Community College) conducted a study on Latinx students' experiences in Oregon's Bethel School District, uncovering concerns around belonging and inclusivity in the 4J School District.

Tulum, Mexico - Sofia Vicente-Vidal, Anthropology PhD student, investigates Tulum, Mexico's spiritual tourism industry, uncovering contradictions between affluent travelers' luxury experiences and local workers' harsh realities, emphasizing the need for sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

Chaco Region, Argentina - Michelle Scalise Sugiyama and Dr. Lawrence Sugiyama (Anthropology) study how Argentina's Wichí and Qomlé'k communities shared ecological expertise through oral histories, traditional agriculture, and cultural ceremonies that honor the natural world, promoting cross-cultural understanding and conservation.

San Juan, Puerto Rico - Rosa O'Connor Acevedo, Philosophy PhD student, explores colonial documents in Puerto Rico and Spain, revealing enslaved women's resistance and rebellion. Her research challenges traditional views on marronage, centering female 'cimarronas' in Caribbean anti-slavery struggles, and informs her dissertation on gender and slavery.

Los Angeles, California - Dr. Ernesto Martinez's (Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies) film project, "La Serenata," addresses the lack of LGBTQ+ Latinx representation in media. This feature film explores love, tradition, and identity, promoting social justice, cultural understanding, and acceptance through a powerful narrative.

San Lucas Quiavini, Mexico - Stephanie Morales Curiel, Linguistics PhD student, addresses the critical need for language preservation in San Lucas Quiavini. By developing a community-driven orthography, her study contributes to language revitalization, literacy, and cultural empowerment among indigenous youth, informing broader language policy and education initiatives.

Puerto Rican Migrants in the U.S. West - Dr. Catalina de Onís explores the stories of Puerto Ricans forced to leave their home due to climate change. Through personal narratives and community engagement, she sheds light on their resilience, challenges, and determination to rebuild in the US West.

Tijuana, Mexico - Carolina Arredondo Sanchez Lira, Global Studies PhD student, investigates harm reduction strategies for women who use drugs in Tijuana, Mexico, revealing marginalization, violence, and resilience. Her research emphasizes the importance of targeted services, reduced stigma, and increased resources.

Maranhão, Brazil Dr. David Meek (Global Studies) examines the intersection of education, inequality, and sustainable development in rural Brazil. His study reveals school closures disproportionately harm marginalized communities, exacerbating poverty and inequality. Community-led solutions are crucial to address these systemic issues and ensure equitable access to education.

Oaxaca, Mexico - Dr. Ilana Umansky's (College of Education) research aims to improve education for students who navigate two countries and cultures. By addressing language barriers, cultural marginalization, and systemic hurdles, she seeks to boost academic success and social integration for transnational students in Mexico.

A Year of Discovery:

Unpacking Transnational Student Experiences in Oaxaca



Pictured Above: Ilana (far left) and her research team in San Bartolomé Quialana, Oaxaca.



Ilana Umansky, Associate Professor of Education, explores how policy affects immigrant and English learner students' opportunities and outcomes through data-driven, longitudinal research.

By Ilana Umansky, 2023 Faculty Research Grantee

In fall of 2023 my husband, two elementary-aged daughters, and I boarded a plane heading to Oaxaca, Mexico. While I had lived and worked in Nicaragua and the southern Mexican state of Chiapas in my twenties, my focus in more recent decades has been on the ways that education policy shapes the experiences of immigrant students in U.S. public schools and I teach classes on U.S. education policy and educational equity. With sabbatical around the corner, I started thinking about how I might, after the grind of the tenure track, expand and explore my research and impact.

In pondering this, I thought about the students I had gotten to know in Nicaragua and Mexico decades before. My work history felt surprisingly and unnecessarily disconnected – with one period in Latin America, focused on working with national, state, and local governments to improve the quality and relevancy of schooling, and the second period exclusively focused on the US, examining ways in which immigrant children were marginalized and underserved in school. But many of these were the same students, I thought. When I analyzed the educational context of immigrant children in the U.S., so many of them from Mexico and Central America, I failed to account for their

lives, experiences, and learnings in their home countries. What would it look like, I wondered, to consider the broader life experiences of students, particularly transnational students who had lived and attended school in both their country of origin and the U.S. This, I thought, felt like a worthwhile way to spend sabbatical, learning to see the student population I cared so deeply about in a more expansive, and I hoped, thorough way. I immediately thought of CLLAS, and their 2021-2023 theme of “human and environmental crises in the Americas,” applying for, and gratefully being awarded a seed grant to support travel and data collection.

Officially, my goal was to study the formal and informal policies that schools had in place in rural Indigenous communities for the transnational students they served. More basically, though, I wanted to learn about and from these students and their families about their schooling experiences. The resulting year was one of immense learning. After dropping my daughters off at school in the morning (for another day immersed in a language they were slowly learning), an amazing young Oaxacan doctoral student, Zaideth Ponce, and I would head out of the city and into one of the small villages that surround Oaxaca City. With support from the Indigenous branch of the state department of education and local officials, we built relationships with seven different school communities. At each school, we conducted interviews with transnational students, as well as with their parents, teachers, and principals. The most eye opening interviews for me were often those with the parents. Maybe because I’m a parent myself, I was rocked by the stories they privileged me with; why they had moved from their village to the U.S., and back again, and the immense commitment they had as advocates for their children even as they maneuvered bureaucratic hurdles and new cultural, linguistic, and educational contexts.

Zaideth and I would joke, on the way home, about how we learned as much hanging out in the schools as we did in the interviews themselves. We’d see parents arriving at school gates to hand their children lunch through the oft-locked bars, we’d hear the conversations of students seamlessly weave from Zapotec into Spanish and back again, and we’d chat with a teacher who wanted to practice their English. I am so grateful to CLLAS, and to the communities that welcomed us, for the opportunity to gain this wider perspective on the lives and experiences of students whose lives transcend national boundaries. These are unbelievable kids – whether they are bravely stepping foot into a school with a brand new set of rules, values, and ways of being; or simultaneously learning two languages – Zapotec to speak with their peers and grandparents, and Spanish reading and writing in school (while all the while maintaining their English talking to their little siblings in the U.S. over facetime); or joyfully maintaining their hip Los Angeles look while their peers look on askance.

I could tire you with our emerging findings about education policy, but for now I’ll just let you know that with Zaideth’s help we’ve been able to return to every school community to offer a stack of children’s books on the transnational experience, and to present a written report on school practices to support transnational students. Now, I’m deep in the thick of analyzing individual interviews, and each one brings memories, smiles, and gratitude.

Thank You



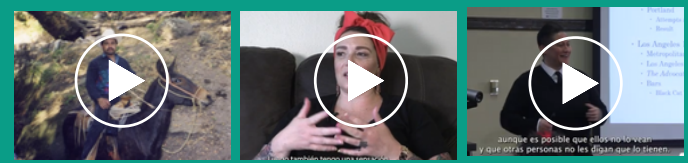
We'd like to acknowledge the following businesses and campus units that make our work possible. Thank you!



Live a Good Life.



On June 6, we filled the EMU Ballroom for our 7th biennial celebration, honoring Oregon's vibrant Latino history and 100 student-produced documentaries since 2010. Special guests included UO President Karl Scholz, Ramón Ramírez (former PCUN President), and musician Ricardo Cárdenas, commemorating another year of outstanding films from Dr. Lynn Stephen and Gabriela Martínez's Latino Roots course.



Scan for the Latino Roots video gallery!