



Center for Latin American Studies Strategic Plan 2016-2021

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Mission Statement

The Center's mission is to advance knowledge about Latin America and the Caribbean and its peoples throughout the Hemisphere, and to enhance the scope and quality of research, teaching, and outreach in Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies at the University of Florida.

Our Aspiration

To advance the Center's nationally and internationally recognized preeminence in Latin American Studies

Goals

Goal 1: An exceptional academic environment supported by a community of students, faculty, and staff who represent diverse experiences and backgrounds.

Goal 2: Outstanding interdisciplinary academic programs that prepare students for success as professionals and engaged citizens.

Goal 3: Faculty preeminence in research and teaching that advances interdisciplinary knowledge and human well-being.

Goal 4: Strengthened public engagement of the Center's programs with faculty, alumni, and local, national, and international communities.

Goal 5: A physical infrastructure, efficient administration, and support structure that enable the Center's preeminence.

Goal 1:

An exceptional academic environment supported by a community of students, faculty, and staff who represent diverse experiences and backgrounds.

Objective 1:

Enhance the geographic and demographic diversity of our students, faculty, and staff.

- Prioritize searches in topical areas that can attract scholars from underrepresented groups (e.g. Afro-Latinos)
- Increase outreach to HBCUs and Afro-Caribbean organizations
- Develop a better data base to support student recruitment efforts

Objective 2:

Strengthen the Center's climate of inclusion and respect.

- Provide greater mentoring and support for minority and underrepresented faculty, recognizing the additional service demands on these faculty
- Devote time/space during Center retreats and orientations to discuss diversity issues

Objective 3:

Expand the Center's connections with units across campus and in the community to promote diversity and inclusion.

- Expand our collaborative programming with Hispanic Latino Affairs (HLA)
- Develop a new partnership with the Center for the Study of Race & Race Relations
- Develop/strengthen partnerships with Health Science Center six colleges: Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy Public Health and Health Professions, and Veterinary Medicine
- Develop outreach and service learning opportunities with community-based organizations in Gainesville and abroad

Goal 2:

Outstanding interdisciplinary academic programs that prepare students for success as professionals and engaged citizens.

Objective 1:

Encourage more UF undergraduates and LAS certificate/minor students to study abroad and develop their language skills.

- Develop more effective recruitment through study abroad fairs, class visits, web, and social media
- Use returning students and study abroad alumni as ambassadors (perhaps designate alumni representatives in US cities and states, and in Latin America)
- Emphasize benefits (language skills, cultural knowledge, overseas experience) relative to costs, and the safety of UF programs
- Introduce and publicize new study abroad programs related to specific topics and careers (e.g. public health) and/or with service learning opportunities
- Raise awareness of financial aid available for study abroad
- Enhance language and/or study abroad requirements in degree and student recognition programs (e.g., International Studies; "medals")

Objective 2:

Enhance the number and quality of students applying to our graduate programs.

- Develop more effective recruitment through web, social media, mailings, class and campus visits
- Feature profiles/stories of current students and alumni on Center website
- Employ alumni network to recruit prospective students
- Use affiliates to recruit students at UF and when they travel in US and Latin America; make networking or recruitment a condition of Center travel or research grants
- Tap into Fulbright programs in Latin America
- Develop targeted recruitment at universities in Florida and the Southeast through strategic campus visits and relationships with academic advisers at those institutions
- Highlight 4+1 program for UF students
- Consider institutional agreements with universities in Florida and the Southeast to permit transfer of undergraduate credits for accelerated degree (4+1 model)
- Pay student fees for GAs

Goal 2 - continued:

Objective 3:

Better prepare our graduate students as professionals in academic and non-academic careers.

- Define the range of professional skills needed by our students
- Continue workshops and career fairs; work closely with UF Career Center
- Establish ways that the Center's professional skills courses can reach more students and transfer these skills to other faculty or graduate students
- Develop and expand internship opportunities, including using our alumni network to provide internship and mentoring opportunities

Goal 3:

Faculty preeminence in research and teaching that advances interdisciplinary knowledge and human well-being.

Objective 1:

Recruit and retain high-caliber faculty

- Focus future hires in key thematic areas (Afro-Latin America, modern Latin American history, health sciences, urban issues)
- Target fundraising efforts on endowed chairs/professorships in strategic areas
- Provide greater research support for Center-based faculty (seed grants, research assistants)
- Develop clear expectations for faculty with joint appointments
- Increase support for dual career couples and strengthen paternal leave policy

Objective 2:

Increase the professional and public visibility of our faculty

- Enhance efforts to highlight the exciting work that Center faculty (and affiliates) are accomplishing, involving student mentoring, research and training activities
- Increase support for faculty publications and conference presentations that enhance the Center's global visibility
- Provide training for faculty in media relations and social media to more effectively communicate their research to the broader public
- Develop faculty expert database that is easily accessible to media outlets

Objective 3:

Expand initiatives to support innovative interdisciplinary teaching and cross-campus collaboration

- Target course development grants to support interdisciplinary co-taught courses
- Increase the space, funds, and time for the development of innovative pedagogy
- Integrate into courses opportunities for interaction with professional practitioners who can share their interdisciplinary approaches and efforts to promote human well-being

Goal 4

Strengthened public engagement of the Center's programs with faculty, alumni, and local, national, and international communities.

Objective 1:

- Enhance the visibility of the Center's programs and their impact nationally and internationally
- Determine how to break down the broader Center mission and target it according to each stakeholder profile (community, faculty, students, alumni)
- Develop user-friendly system of receiving key information from affiliates, alumni, students in order to share their stories
- Define and clearly describe role of all involved in communications process
- Identify best channels to reach each audience (print material, web, social media, etc.)
- Review current communications efforts of MDP and TCD programs. Determine how to consolidate efforts and reduce redundancy
- Investigate possibility of creating an annual report for Center activities
- Establish media connections externally and internally with UF units

Objective 2:

Engage with other LAS centers and scholars around the world, beyond the US and Latin America

- Compile list of current and functioning relationships with other Centers and scholars (classify by region of world, topic studied, faculty involved)
- Identify other possible areas of interest by world center location that would bring a mutually beneficial relationship to further UF's and the Center's mission

Objective 3:

Improve engagement with our alumni at the faculty and student levels

- Continue current initiatives for career readiness through alumni and student interaction
- Explore partnerships with Career Resource Center and other units on campus to highlight presence of LAS alumni across campus and disciplines
- Identify current interaction and engagement between alumni and faculty to serve as models to disseminate. Promote engaging alumni in classes as invited content experts
- Explore and leverage potential of existing Latin American Careers LinkedIn group
- Explore and leverage the possibilities of engaging alumni across world regions

Goal 5:

A physical infrastructure, efficient administration, and support structure that enable the Center's preeminence.

Objective 1:

Provide an adequate physical infrastructure to support the Center's academic, research, and outreach missions.

- Maintain a 3-5 year replacement cycle for Center computers and other technology
- Create an informal, flexible space for social and scholarly interactions
- Create and maintain a comprehensive relational database for all students and alumni connected to the Center
- Create and maintain an expert database/re-structure affiliate page on Center website
- Ensure continuing support for the Latin American and Caribbean Collection

Objective 2:

Ensure a sufficient and efficient administrative support structure for faculty and students.

- Hire an additional fiscal assistant to maintain/increase grant and international travel support
- Orient faculty in how best to include overheads for administration and indirect costs in grant proposals to strengthen the Center
- Add detailed administrative procedures to Center website
- Increase understanding of roles and expectations between faculty and staff in matters pertaining to fiscal and other administrative tasks

Objective 3:

Enhance and maintain communication channels and the understanding of each individual's role and potential in making the Center respected and preeminent.

- Improved website highlighting faculty, students
- Provide more frequent updates on administrative changes/processes:
 - Weekly notes/reminders in the Constant Contact email
 - More information on website
 - Mini-workshops/presentations by staff
- Create more opportunities for all staff to contribute to the Center's strategic planning activities