InDigital II Conference Explores Indigenous Media

CLAS and Middle Tennessee State University hosted InDigital Latin America II in March. Organized by CLAS with Professor of Anthropology at MTSU Richard Pace, the international conference explores Latin American indigenous peoples' engagement with digital media and is a follow up to the first InDigital conference in 2015. The study of indigenous media is a relatively new and rapidly expanding field combining innovative research in anthropology with theoretical perspectives from media studies. As the only conference to bring scholars together in this field, it provides a forum to discuss the various innovations, novel applications, and sociocultural impacts that are emerging. Presentations from the 2015 InDigital conference provided the basis a forthcoming volume from Vanderbilt University Press, edited by Richard Pace.

Amalia Córdova, the Latino Curator for Digital and Emerging Media at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, delivered the keynote address. A filmmaker herself, Córdova's scholarship focuses on indigenous film. Elizabeth Weatherford, the executive editor of the bilingual Native Networks/Redes Indígenas website, delivered an invited lecture and made closing comments. This year’s conference had a special focus on indigenous musicians, featuring artists from Brazil, Guatemala, and Chile who were invited to share their work and music. Pykatire Kayapó is a pioneer in Kayapó engagement with digital and social media and is known for country music. Mayan hip hop artist Tz’utu Kan leads the group Balam Ajpu, with bandmates Dr. Nativo and M.C.H.E. The group performs music in Tzutujil Mayan and Spanish, and their recent album, Tributo a los 20 Nawales, features tracks to evoke a specific nawal. Jennifer Silva, known as JAAS, is a Mapuche musician and filmmaker whose music video, Newen, was produced in collaboration with...
BRAZIL INITIATIVES

Brazil TIPS Project May Unlock Key Answers

Brazil is home to one of the world’s most accessible and advanced health care delivery systems, yet Brazilians repeatedly give it low marks. Why? That’s the question that Vanderbilt University faculty and student researchers want to answer. Funded by a TIPS award, they are taking to Rio’s largest slum this spring to find out why its residents believe the health care system misses the mark.

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Assessing Health Care in Brazil program, led by Marshall Eakin, with key collaborators Tim Steeling from Vanderbilt Tuberculosis Center and Liz Zecharmeister from the Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), is entering the final phase of its research. The team was formed two years ago to investigate Brazil’s high levels of health care dissatisfaction and low levels of health care utilization for people at risk of tuberculosis. Now, with only several months to go until LAPOP’s American Barometer survey goes into previewing in Brazil, the TIPS group is finalizing the survey questions and completing IRB approvals.

The TIPS program mobilizes Vanderbilt’s broad base of expertise in Brazil by bringing together a dozen historians, political behavorists, public opinion experts, anthropologists, and infectious disease specialists from three colleges and schools and the library to assess Brazil’s health care situation through a multifaceted lens. Students are also part of the unprecedented effort, with six undergraduate research fellows immersed in this project on top of their regular course load.

Six undergraduate students are immersed in this project: Ethan Chervonski, Madison Courtyard, Kathryn Hornoff, Aaditi Naik, Giovanna Rodolfo Pires, and Paige Southworth. This spring, they are working with the team to finalen question batteries for the survey and upcoming focus groups. At least three undergraduates will travel to Brazil over spring break with group advisors, will meet with local stakeholders, and get to know the health infrastructure on the ground.

“This TIPS award will help us discover new ways to define and measure the social, economic, and political causes and consequences that underlie disparities in health care experiences and outcomes,” said Marshall Eakin, professor of history and the award’s principal investigator. “We also wanted to provide an immersive student experience, and graduate and undergraduate students have a path to contribute to the effort—the development of a new public health care paradigm—that advances our understandings of societal barriers and influences on quality health care and outcomes.”

A 2014 survey conducted in Brazil by Vanderbilt’s Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), shows that although experts see the country’s system as a successful model in scaling up health care access, Brazilians who responded to the survey overwhelmingly gave that same system a falling grade. About 62 percent of Brazilians surveyed said they had little or no confidence in the health care services in the past year, and three out of every four of those surveyed were dissatisfied with those same services. They also said that deficiencies in health-related public services overall was the most serious problem facing their country.

Experts at LAPOP and Vanderbilt’s Center for Latin American Studies are developing a survey to answer three overarching questions:

• What explains the gap between the widespread access to health care and the strikingly low satisfaction with those services?
• What societal implications does that dissatisfaction have for democratic development?
• What role do cultural, economic, social, and political factors play in health care outcomes?

The undergraduate fellows are each working with a faculty mentor to develop a research project tied to the survey and its results and may submit questions to the survey to further their research project. Supported by $5,000 grants, the fellows may also travel to Brazil to help administer the survey in March and do further research next summer, working with the data after the survey is completed. The fellows will present their findings at a campus forum in the spring and complete an academic project for a grade.

Junior Katie Hornoff came to Vanderbilt with her eyes on medical school, but that goal evolved into an interest in public and community health thanks to her coursework in the Center for Medicine, Health and Society. She learned about the TIPS research opportunity through friends. For the Brazil project, Hornoff is interested in pursuing one of two issues: how the LGBTQ community accesses the health care system and other unmet needs within vulnerable populations.
BRAZIL INITIATIVES

health care system, or how the stigma of hav- ing tuberculosis impacts a patient’s adherence to the months-long treatment schedule. Paola Southworth, a junior currently studying abroad in Argentina, became interested in Brazil her first year at Vanderbilt. “I took a class in Portuguese, and I loved it,” she said. “Then I took a Commons seminar on capoeira (a Brazilian martial art developed by slaves and former slaves bought from Africa), and that opened me up to learning more about Brazil.” Originally a public policy major, Southworth added Spanish and Portuguese as a second major. She has since tacked on a Brazilian studies minor. “I’ve fallen in love with the culture of Brazil,” she said. “It’s not like the rest of Latin America. There’s a huge African influence in Brazil from the slave trade that you don’t see in the rest of the region.”

For the TIPS program, Southworth is consider- ing looking at the impact of policies like the Bolsa Família program, which is similar to food stamps in the United States. Edkin says the Brazil TIPS project will con- tinue past the survey. “Brazil is an emerging

Festa Junina Celebration at Farmer’s Market

F estas Juninas, or June Festivals, are Catholic traditions that were brought to Brazil in the sixteenth century, when the country was a colony of Portugal. These fes- tivals celebrated the days of four saints: Saint Anthony, on June 13; Saint John, on June 24; Saint Peter and Saint Paul, on June 29. Festa Juninas were also called junianas due to the name of the only saint originally celebrated: São João (Saint John). More than that, the festivals celebrated the plantation and harvest rituals of the native people who already lived in the continent before the colonizers arrived. Many places in Brazil face drought from June to September, so this period is used to clear the grounds, fertilize them, and then start planting in them. In Brazil, June also marks the beginning of winter.

Today’s June Festivals typically feature bazaars decorated with small colored flags where people wear straw hats and checkered clothing, play games to win small prizes, as well as eat different types of food and drinks. Most dishes feature seasonal ingredients like corn (canjica), pumpkins (pe-a-molhado), beans (feijão), or collard greens (caldo verde)

InDigital II Conference (Con’t from cover)

Mapuche community leaders and featured in the Smithsonian Institution’s Native America Film + Video Festival. All three artists performed at an opening concert at MTSU, and again at the opening reception for the conference. In addition to participating in panel presentations, conference attendees were invited to a Southern dinner at Vanderbilt and explored the Nashville music scene, ending the conference by basking on Broadway.

CLAS Hosts Mariza Soares

I n October and November 2016, CLAS and June Landers hosted Mariza Soares (Universidade Federal Fluminense) as a visiting professor. Soares is one of the key collabora- tors on the Ecclesiastical and Secular Sources for Slave Societies digital archive project that Landers directs. While on campus, Soares presented a lecture for the Circum-Atlantic Studies Seminar, participated in the November First Tuesday Lunch Series, and interacted with graduate students who conduct research in Brazil.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Medical Students Travel to Guatemala and Haiti through Integrated Science Course

T wo Vanderbilt medical students had the opportunity to examine health systems and disparities in Guatemala and Haiti through Vanderbilt University School of Medicine’s Integrated Science Course in Global Health. Didactic global health online modules and distance mentoring by the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health supplemented the month-long clinical rota- tions. Students returned from this biannual course with a deeper understanding of Latin American culture, a greater insight to health conditions and issues of social justice in the region, and a renewed passion for medical work.

Malena Outhay, a fourth year medical student who recently completed a year of research in Haiti, will return to Haiti in April. She will participate in clinical rotations at Partners in Health Mirebalais University Hospital and conduct needs assessments in the surrounding community.

Moore Center for Pediatric Surgery Partnership

T he Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospi- tal at Vanderbilt sends surgical teams to Guatemala twice a year. Through a partnership with the Shalom Foundation and CLAS, the specialty teams perform operations at the Moore Center for Pediatric Surgery in Guatemala City free of charge. In September 2016, a urology team of 15 members screened 120 patients in one day of clinic, and performed 60 surgeries. Last February, the ENT team screened 120 patients on day one, and completed 79 surgeries during their week in Guatemala. Most recently, an ophthalmology team went down in February 2017.

The opportunity to work in Guatemala has taught me so much about clinical medicine and beyond. Through Primera Pasos, I have been able to work with adults, children, and pregnant women. I have counseled the patients to better understand their illness while at the same time learning from them about what it means to be Guatemalan and about their approaches to disease. This is an experience that I will cherish forever.”

—Christina Marmol

Christina Marmol traveled to Guatemala to work with Vanderbilt’s long-time partner, Primera Pasos. As part of her rotation at the clinic, she worked alongside physicians, nurses and staff to learn about health condi- tions, health systems, and health disparities particular to the K’iche’ communities served by the clinic and to Latin America as a whole.

THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

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Seventh Annual Vanderbilt Global Health Case Competition and Haiti Week

In February, CLAS and Vanderbilt’s Institute for Global Health hosted a series of events focused on Haiti, all of which received great interest from Vanderbilt students and members of the community. The cornerstone of Haiti Week was VIGHS’s seventh annual case competition, which challenged students to develop solutions for improving surgical capacity in Haiti.

The week kicked off with a presentation on the conditions of health and surgery in Haiti from Dr. Louis-Franck Telemaque and Dr. Raymond Pierre, Haitian surgeons working at the capital’s premier public hospital, Hôpital De L’Université D’État D’Haiti, and at the Ministry of Health. They challenged the audience to consider ways that outside groups could be integrated with the local health system rather than perpetuating a separate, competing system of health care aid. The following day, Kevin Mehcan (Director of the Haitian Studies Project at the University of Central Florida) shared his research on hydroponic菜 and Haiti Week.

Seventh Annual Vanderbilt Global Health Case Competition

Sixteen student teams competed in the university-wide Global Health Case Competition. Each team, composed of four to six students, had to represent at least three different schools. This year’s challenge was to develop an innovative solution to a complex, real-life global health problem: “Improving Maternal Health Outcomes in Haiti through Expanding Access to Safe Surgeries.” Keynote speakers Dr. Telemaque and Dr. Pierre revealed the case problem on February 6. Teams then spent the next week researching, analyzing, and preparing their recommendations on the case, which they presented on February 14 to a distinguished panel of expert judges and audience members. Dr. Millien served as keynote speaker at the competition. Judges represented a wide range of expertise and interdisciplin ary knowledge, and included the following Vanderbilt faculty and staff: Douglas Heimburger, Nicholas Carter, Ronni Kaufman, Sophia Kostadenetz, Christopher Sizemore, Muktar Aliyu, Bart Victor, Jessica McAlbottor, Alimun Lutz, and Mario Avila, and guests Christophe Millien, and Amy Fugleman. Students from all disciplines, backgrounds, and levels of experience are encouraged to participate each year. Teams had the opportunity for two consulting sessions from Vanderbilt University’s Advanced Degree Consulting Club, which helped support and prepare students as well as provided professional development and insight into program development. The winning team (Colette Abah, Sade Arinze, Solaim De-Tiutu, Miller Morris, Adossa Mansfield, and Abisola Summon) represented Vanderbilt University at the annual Emory International Global Health Case Competition in March.

Other Haiti Week events included a Haitian cooking class organized by the Latin American and Caribbean student association, and an introductory lecture on Kreyòl by Christophe Millien. Student teams are studying Kreyòl with Vanderbilt students are studying Kreyòl with.

What Makes Quality Coffee: Guatemalan Farmers and the Rise of Third Wave Coffee

Each February, CLAS and the Institute for Global Health host a workshop and public event on trends in coffee with the Nashville business community. This year, CLAS partnered with Crema, the Jean and Alexander Heard Library, and Blair School of Music to bring Bill Hempton, a Specialty Coffee Association Lifetime Achievement recipient, to speak at Vanderbilt. More than 65 people from the community and university turned out to learn about the rise of third wave coffee, different from the mass-produced, mainstream market. The talk was preceded by a reception with lively music from the Blair Jazz Tri.

Vanderbilt Students Volunteer in Latin America during Spring Break

Cont. on back cover
Graduate Student Roundtable Held

CLAS hosted its spring semester Graduate Student Roundtable in January. Presenters were recipients of 2016 Tinker Field Research Grants. Jorge Delgado, candidate and history, discussed his research on colonial Mexico, with a focus on slavery in the Guadalajara region. Kadiiri Vaquer, doctoral student in Spanish and Portuguese, presented a comparative analysis of Cuba and Puerto Rico, arguing that the two islands have common “dios da- de un mismo paisano” due to U.S.ocolonial policies. Two students from Peabody College’s program in international education policy and management discussed the results of their research projects in Central America. Amanda Keitner shared her analysis of the impact of a non-governmental organization based in the Cangrejal Valley, Un Mundo, that trains teachers to include and work more successfully with special education students in rural Honduras. Caroline Martin presented her research based on stakeholder interviews to determine barriers to parental investment in a new public-private model school project in Chinandega, Nicaragua.

Following the presentations, CLAS Assis- tant Director Nicolette Kostie provided information for students interested in applying for the 2017 summer awards program. CLAS awards nearly $100,000 each summer to support graduate and undergraduate student research or language study in Latin America. Those include the Tinker Field Research Grants, Simon Collier Travel Awards, and Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships. The annual deadline for summer awards applications is in early February. More information about CLAS summer awards is available here: as.vanderbilt.edu/clas/graduate-programs/financial-aid/student-summer-awards.

Anthropology Graduate Student Named National Humanities Without Walls Fellow

Emma Banks, a Vanderbilt Ph.D. candidate and graduate research assistant in anthropology, has been selected as a National Humanities Without Walls PreDoctoral Fellow for 2017. Banks will travel to Chicago for the fellowship workshop this summer and further her anthropologi- cal research on the displacement of Indigenous peoples by coal mining. “Emma Banks is doing important and original research that expands our knowledge of the effects of mining on local communities in Colombia,” said Brian Power, senior associate dean for graduate education and research in the College of Arts and Sciences. “By combining her research with advocacy on behalf of the communities of indig- enous and Afro-descendent people, she studies, she serves as a shining example of how academic work can be harnessed to have a positive effect on the world.”

Banks is currently working in northeastern Colombia studying the impact forced resettlement due to mining has on societies, politics, economics, and culture while actively participating in local advocacy work on behalf of the communities. “During the workshop, I will be able to develop my passion for social justice causes while also discovering the full range of opportunities in alternative academic sectors, gaining hands-on experience from field trips, and establishing new networks,” Banks said.

Global Pathways Summit Fosters Academic Ties (Con’t from cover)

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Latin American Images Competition

Latin American Images Competition Winners Announced
The annual Latin American Images Competition continues to grow year after year. Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff were invited to submit their favorite original photo taken in Latin America. Fifty-one submissions representing 17 countries were entered to the competition this year. Judges Candice Amich (English) and Ben Tran (Asian Studies) served as judges for the competition and selected the top twenty photos to be printed and displayed in the Buttrick Hall atrium.

A reception was held in January to announce the winners of the competition. First place was awarded to anthropology doctoral student Chelsey Dyer for Eternidad, second place to Spanish and Portuguese doctoral student Elsa Mercado for Gorditas de Horno, and third place to Assistant Professor of Anthropology Carwil Bjork-James for Dignity in Protest. The People’s Choice Award went to LAS M.A. student Miguel Cuj for Maya Ixil Women, Guatemala based on the number of “likes” received on social media. For the third year in a row, Alma Paz-Sanmiguel coordinated all facets of the competition.

Celebrate Nashville

Each October, Cheekwood brings the traditions of Día de los Muertos to Nashville with a festival that includes traditional music and dance, vibrant art activities, a marketplace, altar displays, and Latin American cuisine. CLAS works closely with Cheekwood to provide educational materials for the festival, and Lisa Finelli and Avery Dickins de Girón serve on the festival’s advisory board. A record-breaking number of over 5,700 people attended the festival in 2016.

CLAS hosted an altar in collaboration with Nashville School of the Arts. Teachers Marti Proffitt Streuli and Camila Spadafino drew inspiration from the “Murals in Mexico and Nashville” teacher workshop and conducted a weeklong student project to create miniature murals. The top twenty student murals were selected to display at the festival as a part of the CLAS altar. CLAS staff and graduate students also decorated real sugar skulls to contribute to this year’s altar.

Cheekwood’s Día de los Muertos Festival

Metro Parks highlights the diversity of cultures and traditions in Nashville with their annual Celebrate Nashville festival. The festival takes place in Centennial Park each October, and it features a marketplace, food, dancing, and live music from cultures around the world. The festival celebrated 20 years in 2016. Each year, CLAS hosts a booth in the global village highlighting the unique characteristics and qualities of a different country in Latin America.

Cuba was the focus of this year’s booth, as we wanted to highlight the changes in U.S. and Cuban relations, as well as the advent of Vanderbilt’s study abroad program in Havana. Visitors viewed artifacts from the Cuba culture box, completed a coloring sheet, and received a keychain from Cuba. Alma Paz-Sanmiguel, Lisa Finelli, and a number of graduate students contributed to make the booth a success.

LAS Students Encourage Creativity and Increase Awareness of Latin America in Local Classrooms

Andrea Delgado and Jessica Fletcher, both M.A. candidates in Latin American Studies, have taken a leap into local classrooms in Nashville. Together they have developed a Latin American Arts and Culture curriculum series designed to introduce students to rich traditions from this diverse region of the world. The workshop model focuses on student engagement, active participation, and hands-on activities to make learning fun and interactive.

Interdisciplinary in nature, the lessons incorporate art and cultural traditions from Latin America with language learning, geography, current events, history, and more, and they provide a resource for teachers seeking fun, short educational activities that encourage creativity and increase awareness of Latin America. This spring, Jessica and Andrea will work with the Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt to create videos of these lessons and post them on the CLAS digital resource page so that they will be available to teachers across the country.
Workshop on Volcanoes and Rainforests in Latin America

TEACHER WORKSHOPS

As part of a new initiative to include and serve teachers from nontraditional disciplines, CLAS targeted Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teachers through a professional development workshop focused on volcanoes and rainforests in Latin America. Twenty-one elementary, science, and Spanish teachers participated in the daylong standards-based workshop. Guillermo Guadala (Earth and Environmental Sciences) explored the geological processes related to the breakup of Gondwana into South America and Africa and the opening of the South Atlantic Ocean some 130 million years ago. Malu Jorge (Earth and Environmental Sciences/Biological Sciences) discussed tropical ecology, biodiversity, and conservation of rainforests in Latin America. Jennifer Bradham, a former teacher and current doctoral student, shared field investigations conducted in 2016 and provided educators with tools for project-based learning. At the end of the workshop, teachers divided into subject-area and grade-level groups to brainstorm possible avenues for implementation of the knowledge from the workshop into their classrooms.

CLAS Partners with Tuskegee University for Teacher Workshop on Zora Neale Hurston's Engagements in Latin America

A novelist and folklorist Zora Neale Hurston worked in the U.S. South and Caribbean. To celebrate her 110th birthday in 2016, CLAS and Tuskegee collaborated to host a two-day professional development workshop for K–12 teachers in Marion County, Alabama. The workshop featured CLAS Affiliated faculty member Rhonda Collien, Associate Professor of English at Tuskegee University, and Tiffany Ruby Patterson, Associate Professor of African American and Diaspora Studies at Vanderbilt University. Their presentations offered insight into the life and legacy of Zora Neale Hurston in the United States and the global south. Many of the teachers participating were not previously aware of Zora Neale Hurston's work in Haiti, Jamaica, and Honduras, which resulted in lively discussions led by Dr. Patterson. Teachers discussed the value and importance of using diverse literature in the classroom, and they explored how to incorporate Zora Neale Hurston in a variety of classrooms and grade levels.

The night prior to the workshop, a public screening of the film Jump at the Sun was held. It was open to the workshop participants and the public, all of whom engaged in a post-screening conversation led by workshop presenters and Dr. Zanice Bond, Assistant Professor of English at Tuskegee University. The feedback from the two-day event was overwhelmingly positive, as participants explained that these professional development opportunities are infrequent in their school districts. Teachers left the workshop with classroom activities and lesson plans on these topics, as well as a copy of Dr. Patterson's book A History of a Southern Life.

Workshop on Volcanoes and Rainforests in Latin America

Targets STEM Teachers

Workshop on Volcanoes and Rainforests in Latin America

OUTREACH

Street Art Stories: Murals in Mexico and Nashville

The recently established Nashville Walls Project has breathed new life into downtown sites long overdue for a facelift. Internationally renowned artists saw blank canvases throughout Nashville and turned them into beautiful and engaging murals. Capitalizing on Nashville’s growth in street art, CLAS and Cheekwood partnered to offer a professional development workshop exploring murals in Nashville and Mexico for over 40 K–12 educators.

CLASP Promotes Latin America-Related Resources at National Council for Social Studies

The creator of the Nashville Walls Project, film producer and art advisor Brian Grof, shared his inspiration for inviting muralists from around the world to create murals alongside the work of local muralists throughout downtown Nashville and took the educators on a virtual tour of the murals. Professor Leonard Fulgare (History of Art) explored the meaning and history of Mexican muralism and connected Nashville’s murals to the tradition in Latin America. He also led teachers in a deep analysis of a piece of Diego Rivera’s work, providing them with a model to replicate in their classrooms. Workshop participants had the opportunity to visually interpret their own idea of place by creating a collaborative mural with a small group. One teacher expressed her excitement about the workshop stating that the topic has great connections to her Spanish language class where students are asked to make a cultural comparison between Spanish-speaking communities and their own.

CLASP promotes Latin America-related resources at national council for social studies

February 7

Dinner and a Movie: Marinco 23

CLAS hosted a workshop in honor of Black History Month each February. This year, CLAS hosted a Dinner and a Movie to share a wider audience of teachers who have difficulty attending the daytime workshops. Participants gathered to share a warm meal and view an exclusive screening of Marinco 23, a 2016 Brazilian film that explores the enslavement of fifty black and mulatto boys in rural Brazil during the 1930s. Two of the surviving boys (show in their ‘30s) share their stories for the first time in the film. CLAS Assistant Director Nicolita Kostiw led a discussion with teachers discussing the film, exploring fascism, Nazism, and scientific racism play out in Latin America.

March 3

Numbers and Graphs: Integrating Latin America in Any Classroom

April 12

#TechCLAS: Teaching Latin America and World Language Using Technology

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

To ensure that we are reaching a national audience, CLAS and the University of Florida collaborate on a series of online educator events for Infusing Latin American Studies Across the Curriculum. We hosted two webinars in spring 2017: “Exploring Latin America through Digital Gaming: Lessons from second Language Acquisition and Interdisciplinary Approaches,” led by Stephanie Knight (Language Technology Specialist at University of Oregon’s Center for Applied Second Language Studi). In February, and “Afro-Latinx/Hispanic Cultural Heritage: Embracing Diversity Across Disciplines,” led by Kristauna Hines-Gaither (Assistant Professor of Spanish and the Director of Diversity and Inclusive-ness at Salem College in North Carolina in March.

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Nicaraguans Are Afraid to Express Political Opinions—But Most Approve of Ortega

Nicaragua’s President Daniel Ortega enjoys widespread approval from a public that is largely satisfied with the country’s democracy. Yet, this same public expresses significant concerns about freedom of expression. These contrasting currents in public opinion were detected in LAPOP’s 2016 AmericasBarometer study of Nicaragua.

LAPOP delivered a report on the study in presentations in Managua and Bluefields in December, 2016. The events were coordinated with USAID, a core sponsor of the project. Results from the Nicaragua report were referenced in over 30 news stories, and journalists placed a particular spotlight on concerns about the public about discussing politics without fear of retribution.

The Nicaragua study forms part of LAPOP’s AmericasBarometer, a regular study of public opinion in the Americas. The 2016-17 round consists of national surveys in 29 countries. The project is developed and directed by the LAPOP international survey research institute at Vanderbilt. The Nicaragua survey was fielded from September 13–October 19, 2016, with fieldwork ending just two weeks before the country’s presidential election.

For understanding his re-election two weeks later, the study found that 69 percent of Nicaraguans approve of President Ortega’s work in office. One-in-three said they are satisfied with the way democracy works in Nicaragua, and tolerance of dissenters increased somewhat compared to the 2014 AmericasBarometer study.

At the same time, the results showed key deficiencies in Nicaraguans’ experiences with democracy, especially freedom of expression. Fifty-five percent say that they are not free to express political opinions without fear, and sixty-three percent agreed that one needs to be careful about expressing opinions when talking about politics with friends. Not surprisingly, these fears of repression correlate with lower support for Ortega. In short, while most Nicaraguans support their leadership and the political system, many express serious doubts about guarantees of freedom of expression in the country.

The Nicaragua media reported widely on these findings. Headlines (translated to English here) included “Survey Reveals Fear to Speak about Politics,” “Nicaraguans Afraid to Speak Freely,” and “Authoritarianism Provokes Fear of Speaking.” Thus, while the average Nicaraguan describes a chilling climate when it comes to political discussions, the press corps remains strident in its efforts to report on all aspects of the country’s politics.

More information about the 2016 AmericasBarometer study, and other public opinion research by LAPOP, can be found at vanderbilt.edu/lapop.

Hillsboro High School Externship on Social Justice in the Americas

In 2013, CLAS and the Nashville Public Library partnered to create a puppet show called The Amazing Twins: Ancient Maya Tales from the Popul Wuj. Now part of the library’s permanent repertoire, it travels throughout the middle Tennessee region and is presented at community events and in schools. Most recently, a performance was held for students at Martin Luther King Junior Magnet High School during Hispanic Heritage Month. Spanish teachers at the school incorporated curricula on the Maya to complement the show.

The externship has been nominated for Externship of the Year in the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce annual Academies of Nashville Awards.

Best Practices in Internationalizing Classrooms and Communities

I n December 2016, CLAS participated in the second annual Area Studies and Outreach Conference: “Best Practices in Internationalizing Classrooms and Communities” in collaboration with over sixty NRCs from across the country. The working conference was held at the International and Foreign Language Education office in Washington, D.C. and highlighted important themes of outreach across area studies while producing valuable insight into best strategies for engaging with K-12 communities, community colleges, minority-serving institutions, and the general public.

More than forty students, parents, and members of the Vanderbilt community attended the presentation and were invited to help grade the final projects. Students presented their proposed action plans for social justice issues in Latin America, including police brutality, gender inequality, domestic violence, and the impact of drug trade. The students reported that they were pleasantly surprised about how comfortable they were in talking about their research. They also indicated a great amount of growth and learning, reflecting on the interconnectedness of the many issues they studied and the contemporary relevance of those issues in the United States. LAPOP staff were excited to see high school students using their data, and they were impressed by the creative solutions the students proposed for issues in the region.

As an entry event to the unit, Hillsboro students viewed Javela Rising, a film about a social revolutionary in a Rio de Janeiro favela who uses music to counteract the violent oppression enforced by teenage drug armies and sustained by corrupt police. Following the screening, Vanderbilt Professor Benjamin Legg led a discussion about Brazil’s culture, current events, and social justice issues found in Brazil today.

Shelly Wilkinson, mathematics teacher at Hillsboro, summed up the experience by reflecting on the interconnectedness of subject areas. She commented, “I enjoyed being able to incorporate data and math in a meaningful way to address important issues related to humanities, world language, and social justice.”

The externship has been nominated for Externship of the Year in the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce annual Academies of Nashville Awards.

THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
WWW.VANDERBILT.EDU/CLAS
### FACULTY NEWS (CON’T)

**Beningo Trigo** (Spanish and Portuguese) published a new book *Malady and Genius: Self-Sacrifice in Puerto Rican Literature.*

The Blair Big Band, directed by **Ryan Middagh**, was selected to play at the Jazz Education Network national conference in New Orleans Jan. 4–7, 2017.

**Liz Zechmeister** (Political Science) was named Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Political Science. She and Vanderbilt Ph.D. candidate Oscar Castorena recently published a manuscript, “Representing the National Economic Agenda in Latin America” in the *Journal of Electoral Studies.*

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**CLAS 2017–2018 EVENTS**

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<td>First Tuesday Lunch: Brazil TIPS Project with Marshall Eakins (History), Timothy Sterling (Medicine), and Liz Zechmeister (Political Science)</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Latin American Images Photo Competition Reception and Awards Ceremony</td>
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<td>January 26</td>
<td>Teresa Cribelli (University of Alabama), &quot;Industrial Forests and Mechanical Forests: Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Brazil&quot;</td>
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<td>February 2–11</td>
<td>Haiti Week with CLAS and VIGH</td>
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<td>&quot;Impact of Foreign Aid on the Haitian Medical System (with Chief of Surgery at the State University Hospital in Port-au-Prince) and &quot;International Development Aid in Haiti: Lessons Learned&quot;</td>
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<td>February 3</td>
<td>Kevin Meehan (Professor of English and Director of the Haitian Studies Project, University of Central Florida), &quot;Provisions: Popularizing Hydroponics as Climate Change Adaptation in the Caribbean&quot;</td>
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<td>February 6</td>
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<td>Citcum-Atlantic Seminar presents Professors John Thornton &quot;Written Documents and Kongo Administrations&quot; and Linda Heywood &quot;The Strategic Diplomacy of Queen Njinga: Written, Spoken and Performed&quot; (History, Boston University)</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>First Tuesday Lunch Series with Bob Barsky (English and French), Tiffany Patterson (African American and Diaspora Studies), and Tom Verrier (Blair)</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>Black History Month Dinner and a Movie for Educators: Menino 23 with Nicolette Kotrla</td>
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<td>LACS Cooking Class: Haitian Food</td>
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<td>Dr. Millien, &quot;Separating Haiti’s First Conjoined Twins: Healthcare in Haiti&quot;</td>
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<td>February 13</td>
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<td>February 13</td>
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<td>International Lens Presents Lúpe Under the Sun, with discussion by William Luis (Spanish and Portuguese)</td>
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<td>February 22–24</td>
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<td>Concert at MTSU with Pykatire Kayapo, JAAS, and Balam Aipu</td>
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<td>March 15</td>
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<td>March 16–18</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
<td>International Lens presents Ixcanul with discussion by Avery Dickins de Girón</td>
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<td>July 13–15</td>
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