

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON



CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN & LATINO/A STUDIES

2021-2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**

CENTER for MEXICAN AMERICAN  
and LATINO/A STUDIES

**The Center for Mexican American Studies**  
**College of Liberal Arts and Social Science & University of Houston**  
**2021-2022**

## **Introduction**

Established in 1972 as an interdisciplinary academic program, the Center for Mexican American Studies was established in 1994 as a university-wide Center positioned within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In 2022, the Center formally changed its name to reflect the growing diversity of the Latino population in Houston and at the university -The Center for Mexican American and Latino/a Studies [CMALS]. The Center focuses on the Mexican American and broader Latino experience in the U.S. Its mission is to advance knowledge through research and academics, promote critical thinking and foster the value of service to the community. CMALS has evolved into an academic unit with several major components: research and publications, recruitment and retention, teaching a new major and minor, leadership training, academic advising, and community service.

## **CMALS Strategic Focus: Goals and Objectives**

Our strategic focus involves (1) Research; (2) Academics; (3) Service; and (4) serving as the headquarters of the national research consortium, the Inter University Program on Latino Research [2018-2023]. In 2021-2022 CMALS was in its fourth year as headquarters of the IUPLR.

## **How CMALS serves the academic and research missions of the university, and society at large.**

As a Hispanic Serving Institution whose student population is 37% Latino, and whose administration has recently signed onto to the Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities, CMALS exemplifies a successful ethnic studies Center/Program that has the most successful record of any student achievement program on campus. This has been true for more than 20 years and it has received state and national recognitions. It has developed an applied major (and minor) to serve the Latino student populations and engages in recruitment of students on a yearly basis.

CMALS also sits at the nexus of two national research consortiums, the country's oldest national Latino research consortium, the IUPLR of which we currently serve as the headquarters, and a new consortium focused on the humanities, *Crossing Latinidades*, which used the IUPLR template for its structure. We are a small Center, with limited opportunities to access local foundations to acquire funds, but we do big things and we do them very well. Our standards have been recognized by the Mayor of Houston, Houston First, Houston Endowment, and university administrators. We have also received accolades nationally.

In 2019, our Latino Art Now! Houston event was a four-month citywide event whose reach was local, national and international. This event is the premier Latino visual art event in the country, and Houston was only the fifth major city to host the event. With strategic outreach, we received 95 newspaper, magazine, online, television and radio features, with an estimated reach of 77.2 million. Houston's LAN event was featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Houston Chronicle* (6 times), and internationally in Spain's *Efe*, Mexico's *Reforma*, and several Latin American newspapers. Clearly, this type of attention benefits our local artists, 8 of whom were invited to exhibit their work across the country, our students, the local community and university.

On Sept 29th, 2022 CMALS unveiled the country's first portable, bilingual and interactive visual digital archive and public knowledge tool which maps the Latino visual art of Houston, *Latino cARTographies*. This tool is state-of-the-art and affords communities with alternative ways to access the arts and experience culture. Within two months, the board was featured at the Heritage Society and the Alley Theater with more venues set to showcase the board. In this way, CMALS serves Houston's Latino artists and communities, and the University of Houston.

In conjunction with the unveiling, CMALS produced an immersive experience for the audience, showcasing individual artists along with community and arts organizations that have sustained the Latino creatives of Houston. While there are numerous immersive experiences occurring across the country, none had yet shown an entire city of visual arts and arts organizations.

In addition, CMALS several reports based largely on polls and surveys were issued in 2020-2022 that informed the Houston and national community about Latino voter participation, among other things. These reports had local, regional and national reach as well.

## Success of Metrics of Original 5 year plan

### CMAS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES PLAN [2016-2021]

#### Short Term Goals

Year 1

Coordinate CMAS Communications

Solicit Faculty "Expert" bios

Update & Coordinate CMAS Alumni

Profile Faculty Affiliates

Join IUPLR

Revise Website

Revise Minor

(working CMAS Seed

#### Intermediate Goals

Year 1-2

Latino Student Survey

Formalize Internships

CMAS Vodcasts

Faculty Mentoring Program

Increase CMALS national profile

Implement new recruitment strategies

Graduate Mentoring workshops

Graduate research support

Update Recruitment efforts

Grant Collaborations

#### Long Term Goals

Year 3-5 years

Major Endowment

CMAS-Department

Student Internships

(institutionalize)

Increase # Visit. Schlars

Major in Latino studies

Modify Website

Fact Brief, Policy Grant

papers)

Secure external  
research funding

Institutionalization of  
Program support grants  
research

Directory of CMAS-Related  
Research Groups

CMAS-IUPLR  
Working Groups

All but a few of the metrics have been achieved and I will therefore, address those goals that were not achieved or had limited success.

Despite attempts to profile faculty ("Expert Bios", a digital roladex that would allow us to send reporters directly to appropriate faculty rather than having one or two Latino faculty trying to address areas out of their scope). Unfortunately, like other organizations we had limited success in getting faculty to respond.

It has taken longer to institutionalize program support grants. This is partially due to the randomness of some program grant rfps, the rotation of opportunities to local organizations determined by the funder, and because we are not always successful in our proposals. However, each year, we have increased the number of grant applications to support the Academic Achievers Program. In 2020, due to the pandemic, we focused on raising funds through grant applications and were more successful than when we host fundraising luncheons. Indeed, during most years, at least half of our program fundraising occurs through proposal writing as opposed to individual donations.

Our CMALS vodcasts were changed into IUPLR vodcasts where our faculty experts would reach a broader audience (our 23 university-member institutions).

Our graduate mentoring has been staggered at best, using faculty panels, and visiting scholar Q&A's to have informal conversations with students. These conversations are guided by a set of questions provided participants but the conversational tone encourages student questions. Still, we do not typically have large turnout for these events.

### **Success Beyond Metrics**

- We not only joined the IUPLR but in 2018, we became the headquarters of the organization and in 2019, we hosted the IUPLR's signature conference, Latino Art Now! with its most successful event to date.
- The Academic Achievers Program received national recognition by Excelencia in Education in 2018 as one of 17 top undergraduate programs to successfully recruit, retain and graduate Latino students.
- 2020-2021 CMALS produced a virtual program, **The Creative Life Series** which will air in spring of 2023. This program was created by national and international arts expert, Juana

Guzman and features more than 18 nationally known cultural workers who collaborated with urban planners to transform the arts economies of city blocks, to create museums and refugee writers residences, and even transform entire communities into arts tourist communities. In these salons we will learn about their motivations, challenges and how they overcame these challenges to demonstrate what works to the next generation of cultural workers. Our reach for this is a national database of thousands of organizations, including the IUPLR, museums, urban developers, and other interested organizations.

- The applied major in Latino Studies was approved to begin in 2022.
- CMALS received a Rapid Response COVID grant (principal investigator, Dr Quiroz) from the Social Science Research Council.
- With the help of our state representatives, our financial support for the Center was substantially increased in 2022.
- CMALS received a \$500,000 endowment from an anonymous donor in 2022. The additional state funds and the anonymous donor funds have allowed us to increase our AAP student scholarships, paid internships and study abroad for 10 students each year.
- After three years of research and translation, CMALS produced the country's first portable, bilingual and interactive visual digital archive and public knowledge tool. This digital board contains, text, images, avatars, animation, music and special effects, video and immersive features, and virtual galleries, to showcase the Latino arts of Houston.
- Houston Endowment gave a one-time "gift" of \$500,000 to CMALS to continue and expand its work on the digital board, Latino cARTographies.

**Personnel and Current Measures of Performance.** Unfortunately, CMALS has been subject to the "great resignation" seen at UH and across the country in the past two years. We have thus been operating with four fewer staff members for more than a year. Our current vacancies include: Communications Coordinator, Administrative Coordinator, AAP Program Coordinator I, and Associate Director. This points to this year's accomplishments as done with substantial challenge and great pride.

**Staff:** Dr. Pamela Anne Quiroz, Director, Dr. Jeronimo Cortina (through May 31, 2022) Associate Director, Jessica Thiam, Department Business Administrator, Fely Aguilar, Director of the Academic Achievement Program, Edward Munoz, Program Coordinator II, the Academic Achievement Program. Tania Ramirez, Financial Coordinator

**IUPLR Staff:** Dr. Marisela Martinez, IUPLR Director, Washington DC

Reyes Ramirez, IUPLR Director, Houston office

**Postdoctoral Fellow** 2022 Cynthia Balli

**Doctoral Student** 2021-2022: Valentina Jager (Visual Art and Creative Writing), Allison Saenz (Public History), Monica Vasquez (Psychology), Javier Franco (Hispanic Studies), Pablo Duque Lopez (Physics), Matthew Zimmerman (Communications)

**Masters Students** Carlos Guajardo, Luisa Perez, Karen Henriquez

**Undergraduate Students:** Mayra Garcia (Communications Intern)

CMALS has also been responsible for selecting and funding UH representatives to participate in fellowships funded by Mellon foundation since 2018.

**\*\* IUPLR-Mellon fellow representing UH in 2022:** Valentina Jagar

**Crossing Latinidades Mellon pre-dissertation fellowship 2022:** Shine Trabucco (History)

## **The personal accomplishments of our staff and graduate students conveys the caliber of our team.**

**Reyes Ramirez**, our IUPLR Houston manager, had his book, *The Book of the Wanderers*, published by Arizona University Press and will be leaving CMALS in January to take on a writer residency fellowship at the University of Texas-Austin.

**Fely Aguilar** contributed her expertise on directing a successful student achievement program to a chapter written for a book on Latino Student Achievement to be published by Oxford University Press.

Our graduate students have been featured by University of Houston publications in acknowledgment of their achievements. This year alone, **Carlos Guajardo** was featured in the UH media, **Pablo Duque Lopez**, a physics graduate student was also featured in university and local media.

<https://stories.uh.edu/2022-hispanic-heritage/index.html>

<https://uh.edu/nsm/physics/news-events/stories/2022/1115-grad-fellowship.php>

<https://uh.edu/nsm/physics/graduate/student-accomplishments/profiles/pablo-lopez-duque/>

**Valentina Jagar** was selected with high praise by the IUPLR-Mellon selection committee for a highly competitive dissertation award that allows her to focus exclusively on completion of the dissertation, as was Shine Trabucco by the Crossing Latinidades selection committee. Shine was received a pre-dissertation fellowship that affords her the opportunity to work with a multisite research team of scholars.

<https://uh.edu/class/news/archive/2020/november/jager-wins-prestigious-award/index>

CMAS fellow, **Allison Saenz** also received one of the country's most prestigious awards from the Smithsonian.

<https://www.uh.edu/class/history/graduate/current-graduate-students/>

In addition, our graduate students contributed substantively to the research, translation and creative presentation of the digital board, Latino cARTographies.

<https://uh.edu/class/news/archive/2022/june/history-phd-shine-trabucco-wins-prestigious-national-latinidades-research-award/>

**Dr. Marisela Martinez** has managed to be both director of the IUPLR Washington DC office and manager of all of the moving parts involved in the digital board, no small achievement when you see the board (2000+ images, 81 organizations and centers, seven featured neighborhoods, videos of artists describing their work, and much much more).

**Faculty:** Pamela Anne Quiroz, Diana Pino, and Andre Rodriguez

## Community Outreach and Service

CMALS has a well established reputation in the city of Houston, particularly among its Latino population. The accomplishments of the past five years augments this reputation and this is supported by awards received locally. Additionally, Dr Quiroz has served on national selection committees (Excelencia in Education), national boards (NHLA, Crossing Latinidades, IUPLR) and local boards (AAMA, Magnolia Grown), and received national recognition for her career accomplishments and her research. Her research and editorships have been published nationally and internationally, and her position as a known scholar in her discipline was established prior to her arrival at UH.

**Rebecca Trevino** received the Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Award in 2018

**Dr Pamela Anne Quiroz** received seven local awards between 2018-2020 and was asked to serve on local and national boards and program/selection committees. Her participation within her academic discipline and on interdisciplinary and international editorial boards, committees, and authoring manuscripts speaks to her standing in the academy.

- 2022 Selection Committee, Excelencia in Education
- 2021 Advisory Board, Crossing Latinidades
- 2020 Vice President of the Society for the Study of Social Problems
- 2020 HACU Leadership Academy Fellow/La Academia de Liderazgo
- 2019 Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Board's Hispanic Heritage Award [Education]

2019 Texas Executive Women [*Women on the Move Award*]  
2019 Houston Business Journal's [*Women Who Mean Business Award*]  
2019 Solo Mujeres Magazine's *Woman of the Year in Education Award*  
2019 City Council, Mayor of Houston's Proclamation [*Latino Art Now!*]  
2019 American Sociological Association Program Committee [organized the annual meeting- invitation by the President]  
2018 American Leadership Forum Fellow [selected - declined]  
2018-2023 Executive Director, Inter University Program on Latino Research [elected]  
  
2018-2023 Board Member, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda  
  
2014-2018 Editor, Social Problems [one of the top 3 generalist journals in sociology]  
  
2014-2018 North American Editor, Children's Geographies [International journal in geography]

### **National**

Dr. Quiroz Committee member: Selection of undergraduate and graduate programs for distinction by Excelencia in Education (national policy organization)  
Dr. Quiroz, Advisory Board Member, Crossing Latinidades Consortium Advisory Board [a new Mellon funded consortium of HIS Research level 1 institutions focused on the humanities] 2021-  
Dr. Quiroz, Board member, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda 2018

### **Local**

Magnolia Park Arts & Community [2021-  
Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans [2020-2022] Chair, Education Committee, Chair, Human Resource Committee

## **Publications & Presentations**

### **Academic/Research**

Pamela Anne Quiroz

*Dating, Mating, and Relating: Personal Advertising and Modern Romance*. McFarland Publishers. 2022

"Detention, Deportation and U.S. Adoption & Fostering of Immigrants' Children: A Mirror on Whose Rights Matter" in Silk Hackenesch, ed. *Adopting Children Across Race and Nation in the United States: Histories and Legacies*. Ohio State University Press. 2022.

"Adoptive Parents Raising Neoethnics and Demonstrating Whose Rights Matter." In 3rd edition of Virginia Rutter and Barbara Risman's *Families as They Really Are*. W.W. Norton & Company. [in press]

### **Digital product**

Latino cARTographies: Mapping the Past, Present and Future of Houston's Latino Visual Artists. w. Juana Guzman.

## Popular Press, newspapers, magazines and online

- 2022 “Meet Pamela Anne Quiroz: Stories and Insights” *Canvas Rebel* magazine. April.
- 2022 Digital billboard maps Houston's Latino Artists and Landmarks, by Joy Sewing, *Houston Chronicle*, Oct 2, 2022.
- 2022 Latino cARTographies: Mapping the Past, Present and Future of Houston's Latino Visual Art. *Houston History Magazine*. Pamela Anne Quiroz and Juana Guzman. May.
- 2022 Latino cARTographies Brings the Museum to the Community, *Houstonia* magazine (feature in the Winter issue) by Geneva Diaz, November 23.
- 2022 Project from the University of Houston’s Center for Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Maps the City’s Latino Art Scene. *Glasstire* by Jessica Fuentes, August 20.
- 2022 Mapping the Past, Present and Future of Houston Latino Art, University of Houston Center for Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Launches Latino cARTographies by Rebeca Hawley, Oct 6

## Funding

### 2018-2022

- 2022 Houston Endowment [\$500,000]  
Anonymous donor] [\$500,000]  
Werlin [\$ 4,000]  
Multicultural Initiatives [\$625,000]  
State Funds [\$781,177]  
State Research Funds [\$226,686]  
University of Houston-President/AAP [\$100,000]  
University of Houston-Provost/AAP [\$54,548]  
Endowments [\$121,327]  
Private Support/Proposals [\$571,835]
- 2021 Office of the Dean [\$150,000]  
Multicultural Initiative proposal [Office of the Provost] \$723,800]
- 2021 Ellucian Foundation [\$10,000] Pathway Scholarships for AAP program
- 2020 Office of the Provost [\$249,186]
- 2020 HEB [\$10,000] AAP Program
- 2020 Social Science Research Council, “Resilient Latinos: Educational Pathways and Careers in the Age of COVID-19: a Multimodal Approach” SSRC Rapid Response Research Grants” w. Jeronimo Cortina and Maira Alvarez
- 2020 Multicultural Initiative [Office of the Provost] \$51,000
- 2020 Office of the Dean [College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences] \$80,000

2018-2019

Houston Arts Alliance \$7,000  
Mayor's City Initiatives Grant (Houston Arts Alliance) \$25,000  
Houston Endowment, \$25,000 [research]  
Houston First Foundation \$50,000  
UH-D \$25,000  
Allegiance Bank \$5,000  
Smithsonian Latino Center \$30,000  
UH Office of the Provost \$244,100 [\$50,000 for research]  
Clear Channel \$275,000  
Southwest Airlines \$16,000  
UH Office of the Dean of the College for Liberal Arts & Social Sciences \$100,000 [research]  
HEB \$3,000  
Arte Publico \$1,000

## Future Measures of Performance

The Center for Mexican American Studies has passed through two periods in its forty-four year history, and is now entering a third phase. From 1972 to 1994 it was the Mexican American Studies Program which grew organically to involve a number of components. In 1994 the program evolved to receive Center status and focused on its student academic programs. Our current strategic planning process involves developing CMAS' primary role as a research center and a link to the Houston and national Latino communities. The Center is particularly interested in policy relevant, transdisciplinary, collaborative and engaged research. We are also entering a period of offering an academic major [ostensibly in a Mexican American and Latino/a Studies Program but they are one and the same]. To make this work we are aligning our AAP program features with our new and incoming cohorts of majors so that they may benefit from the features of the program that work for the AAP students. Added to this, our research strand in the major will align with the research projects we do at CMALS. thus, even as we seek to grow, we are ever mindful of maintaining economies of scale.

With respect to governance, CMALS traditionally had one director. It now has four: Director of CMALS, Director of the AAP program, and UH Director of the IUPLR and IUPLR Washington DC - Director. As any organization grows so too must its specialization and organizational structure. It is important that a Center reflect collaboration, shared governance and decision-making.

CMALS has already restructured its Graduate Fellows program to require Fellows to work on Center related research projects instead of in their departments. When possible, we combine work with their mentor with the research at CMALS. Too often, students who were funded by CMALS were not being engaged in their departments to participate in research activities, teach

or learn the practical skills necessary for their future pursuits. We still maintain close contact with advisors and mentors and the benefits are obvious to all.

CMALS has also restructured its Visiting Scholar position to request that the scholar's supported research result in a year-end brief/paper and that the Scholar teach one course. This will support both research and the new major.

CMALS will continue to submit proposals to build on the Latino cARTographies and expand the VR, AR, and digital possibilities that have emerged as we've produced this visual digital archive. We have submitted to NEH but will return to that venue along with NEA and several others. National inquiries about the board that we have already received, reveal its potential utility to other communities.

Any research Center must focus on obtaining funds to sustain its efforts and the technology required to expand our current projects will require substantial funding. We intend to pursue increased funding for projects that have not only local appeal and utility but also national and international application.

It is the goal of the Center to adapt to the changing needs of the university and the broader Latino and UH community. This means growing both its research program and its academic program and becoming even more inclusive. However, it must also be done while managing the multiple components of the Center.

### **Commitments**

The Office of the Provost committed to providing annual membership for CMALS to participate as a member in the Inter University Program on Latino Research.

### **What additional resources are necessary to fund CMAS?**

We are in need of replacing our missing staff (four positions), as trying to engage research, student programs and a new major, are challenging in the best of circumstances but with the added need to fundraise for research and programs, with a CMALS staff of four (half of whom are immersed in CMALS traditional work of successful student programs), it is extremely challenging. Unfortunately, no immediate reprieve is in sight and we will continue to engage in the multitasking that is so indicative of cultural and ethnic studies Centers.