

# THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



WHERE PASSION AND EXCELLENCE ENCOUNTER KNOWLEDGE

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# News from the Director



Dear ISLAC family and friends,

Since the previous issue, ISLAC has been very active locally and internationally.

ISLAC partnered with several student organizations to organize events. These events were conceived to mentor and support students, such as the **Latina/o Success Stories** in the Professional World. For this, we targeted certain professions and fields such as health, pharmaceutical, business and engineering, hoping to offer opportunities to our undergraduate and graduate students. We invited successful Latina/o professionals who not only share their stories but provided practical suggestions. Students were delighted and asked many questions. We also partnered with Latina/e/o/x Graduate Students Organization (LGSO), the Belizean Student Association and the Mexican American Student Association (MASA) to celebrate **Dia de los Muertos** and to learn more about regional traditions. Finally, ISLAC joined the LGSO's **Migrant Solidarity Week** for a panel on migration policies.

ISLAC also traveled internationally to organize the **First Forum on Human Rights and Migrations**, together with the National University of Cuyo (UNCuyo), Argentina. This event allowed to take the agreement signed with UNCuyo to a different level. For the first time, International Human Rights Day was commemorated, in the Province of Mendoza, focusing on Migrations. The event was very participatory, counting with the involvement of different actors, from government, civil society and the consular body. Our goal was to illustrate the relevant role that academia plays influencing policy-making by providing empirical data and generating exchange between involved stakeholders. I am very proud of this **ISLAC milestone**.

I was honored to be invited to give a lecture on **Migrants and their challenges**, to close the academic year, at **University of Mendoza**, Argentina. The event was held both in person and online, with over 80 participants. Overall migration has become a crucial issues across the Americas.

In this issue, we also share some updates about ISLAC alumni, which are always good news, and provide highlight some takeaways with news about/from Latin America.

Let us know if you have news to share or celebrate for the next issue.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you a great holiday season and happy 2025!

Enjoy this new issue!

*Beatriz Padilla*





# ISLAC Past Events

## Latina/o Success Stories in the Professional World

On October 29, ISLAC and Latina/e/o/x Graduate Student Organization (LGSO) organized this mentoring activity, which successfully gathered Latina/o professionals working in the Tampa Bay Area. Our guests were:

- Alejandra Arze, from Bolivia, works at Citibank as Director of Latin American South, Andean & Colombian Markets Business Execution Head.
- Fernanda Duran, from Chile, works at PegasusTSI as a engineer in the Areas of copper mineral processing and other specialties.
- Carlos Silva, from Brazil, works at Bristol-Myers Squibb as Associate Director of Controllershship Strategic Initiatives.
- Lia Perez, from Argentina, works at Moffitt Cancer Center as a Hematologist and Blood & Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Immunotherapy Program.

They shared their inspiring personal and professional experiences; in particular, they talked about crucial decisions that they had to make in their careers, their experiences working in the United States in comparison with Latin America, how their Latin American identity influences their professional life and they shared some pieces of advice with the students who want to build a career in their fields and achieve leadership positions.

The audience enjoyed their stories and ask many questions at the end.

Thanks to the presenters and to all of those who attended!!!! More to come.



# ISLAC Past Events

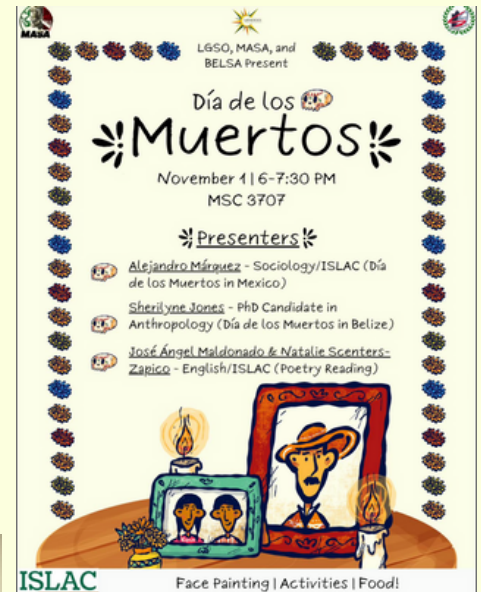
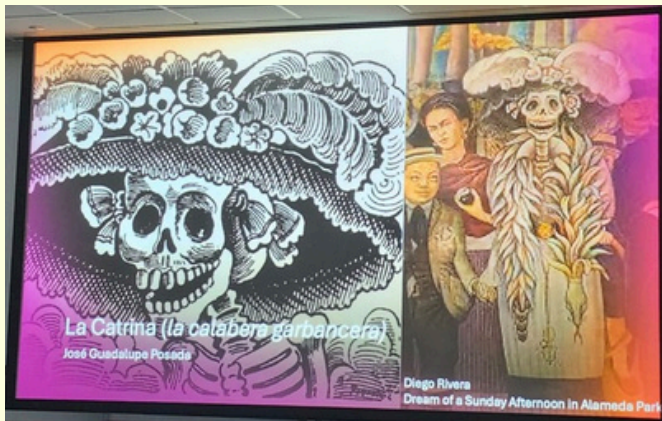
## Día de los muertos

On November 1, Latina/e/o/x Graduate Student Organization (LGSO), the Belizean Student Association, the Mexican American Student Association (MASA) and ISLAC got together to celebrate Día de los Muertos.

There were presentations about the traditions for that day in Mexico and Belize, face painting and traditional food.

Dr Marquez (Sociology) shared stories and customs from Mexico while Nigel Encalada (Anthropology) presented about Belize. In addition, Drs. Angel Maldonado and Natalie Scenters-Zapico (English) read poetry and stories about Dia de los Muertos.

The audience also enjoyed food, and wrote messages to loved ones to put into the altar. It was a lot of fun.





# ISLAC Past Events

## Immigration policy panel

On the framework of the Migrant Solidarity Week, ISLAC collaborated with the Latina/e/o/x Graduate Student Organization (LGSO) and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in organizing an immigration policy panel which was held on November 21, at a local church.

The panel was composed of Lucas Martinez, a representative from LULAC, Beatriz Padilla, Director of ISLAC, and Max Caraballo, an immigration attorney, and moderated by Anabela Villach. The panelists talked about the effect of immigration policies on Latin American immigrant communities, and what the near future may look like for Latino migrants in Florida and in the United States.

After the presentations, the audience asked questions and shared their own experiences. Also, several civil society organizations brought flyers about the rights of migrants that were distributed to the audience.

The event was well attended and people asked for a follow up in 2025.



LGSO PRESENTS

## MIGRANT SOLIDARITY WEEK

### Events

- **The History of Immigration**
  - Tuesday, November 19, 3-4:30 PM, MSC 3709
- **Healthcare and Immigration Community Fair**
  - Wednesday, November 20, 5-6:30 PM, Well Rotunda
- **Immigration Policy Panel**
  - Thursday, November 21, 6-8 PM, Iglesia La Verdad, 109 April Ln, Tampa, FL 33613
- **Community Call to Action**
  - Friday, November 22, 8-9:30 PM, MSC 3709

# ISLAC Past Events

## First Forum on Human Rights and Migrations in Mendoza

On December 10, ISLAC, the National University of Cuyo (UNCuyo) Vice-Rector, the Human Rights Office of the Province of Mendoza (Argentina), the Center for International Relations and Integration Studies of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the UNCuyo, and Save my Identity commemorated International Human Right Day by organizing the First Forum on Human Rights and Migrations.

**The First Forum on Human Rights and Migrations** created a space for inter-institutional dialogue that involved actors from academia, local governments, consular representations, and civil society organizations. Its main objective was to foster an exchange that strengthens the understanding of migration challenges and promotes coordinated responses adapted to the needs of migrants in the region, with special emphasis on the particularities of the local context.

The meeting promoted a consensus-oriented migration management based on integration and respect for human rights in Mendoza. With this, the National University of Cuyo and ISLAC/USF seek to contribute to the construction of collaborative networks and the exchange of knowledge that enable public policies sensitive to the realities of the migrant population and that aligns with the international commitments made by the country.

It was the first joint event we held with the UNCuyo and the Province of Mendoza, taking advantage of the agreement recently signed between both universities. Furthermore, this Forum was declared of **legislative interest** by the **Chamber of Deputies and Senators of the Legislature of the Province of Mendoza**.

The Forum was opened by Gabriel Fidel, Vice-Rector of the National University of Cuyo, Carlos Ruiz Guiñazú, from the National Direction of Migration (Mendoza Region), and Beatriz Padilla, ISLAC Director. María Gabriela Ábalos, a distinguished constitutional lawyer, provided the legal framework for the incorporation of migrant populations and its relations with human rights.

Then, in the first dialogue table, the Municipalities that have adopted a proactive approach towards migrants with differentiated attention policies talked about their good practices. The second round table was composed of civil society organizations and shared what they are doing, the issues migrant face and what are their needs. Lastly, consulates from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Italy, and Peru talked about their activities for providing their nationals living in Mendoza with services to solve their problems. To close, Dr Padilla (ISLAC's Director), Anabela Villach (MALACS), Giuliana Guzzo (UNCuyo) and Marilyn Oviedo (Save My Identity) make the final remarks and recommendations.

See pictures of the event in the following page...

# ISLAC Past Events

## First Forum on Human Rights and Migration in Mendoza

**Primer Foro sobre Derechos Humanos y Migraciones en Mendoza**

Martes 10 de diciembre de 17:00 hs.  
Nave Cultural, Sala 2, Ciudad de Mendoza

**Mesa de apertura**  
Autoridades UNCUYO, Provincia de Mendoza,  
Dirección Nacional de Migraciones y ACNUR

**Mesas de diálogo:**

Mesa 1: Municipios: buenas prácticas de gestión local  
Mesa 2: Organizaciones sociales: acciones desde la sociedad civil  
Mesa 3: El rol de los consulados en los procesos migratorios

**Cierre**  
Dras. María Gabriela Abalos (UM- UNCuyo) y Beatriz Padilla (USF)





# Alumni Spotlights

## Ricardo Noé

**Ricardo Noé** who graduated from in 2020 share his experience with ISLAC & USF. In this own words:

"I am a Berry Scholar and Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD). I graduated in 2020 with a master's in Latin America, Caribbean and Latino Studies from the University of South Florida (USF), where I was a graduate assistant at ISLAC from 2018 to 2020. My master's thesis focused on the role of property rights in shaping political development in Central America.

My time at USF instilled a commitment to mixed-methods research, leading me to employ archival, field, and ethnographic methods to study complex issues from multiple perspectives. This training informs my current research on expropriation and the political economy of coffee in Guatemala, the impacts of foreign direct investment on land reform policies in Latin America, and how the Afro-Indigenous Garifuna community in Honduras coordinate to protect their communal lands. My research also includes pedagogy in comparative politics education, making the case for integrating rational choice arguments, and games inspired by experimental game theory to better explain strategic behavior within particular institutional contexts, collective action, and development.

During my time in ISLAC, I traveled to Buenos Aires, Argentina, as a research assistant, where I interviewed Venezuelan migrants along with Dr. Padilla.

I am also a two-year Adam Smith Fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. I have presented my research at conferences like the Public Choice Society Annual Conference and MPSA."

Thanks Ricardo for sharing your progress. We are proud of your accomplishments!





# Faculty Spotlights

## Beatriz Padilla gave a lecture on migrations at Mendoza University

The Director of ISLAC was the Keynote Speaker at the Conference “Migrants. Current challenges” held at the University of Mendoza, Argentina, November 29. She presented about positionality and situated knowledge, migration policies, intra-regional trends, and current Global Trends. The presentation encouraged a lively debate among the audience, mostly PhD students of that University, as the event was to close the academic year.

The lecture was followed by remarks made by several discussants, including Anabela Villach (MALACS student), Georgina Guardatti, Adriano Spedalitti, María Gabriela Ábalos y Marilyn Oviedo.

The event was attended by a large audience, both in person and virtually.

Thanks Dr Ábalos for organizing such a wonderful event!



**SEMANA ACADÉMICA**  
Conferencia Magistral  
**MIGRANTES**  
Desafíos actuales  
*Dra. Beatriz Padilla*

**29 de noviembre 2024**  
10.00h (Arg.)

**Modalidad**  
Presencial

**Destinatarios**  
Doctorandos/as.  
Estudiantes, profesores y  
graduados de grado,  
posgrado y formación  
continua UM

**Mesa de Diálogo**  
María Gabriela Ábalos  
Georgina Guardatti  
Anabela Villach  
Adriano Spedaletti

posgrado.juridicas@um.edu.ar +549261 4202017 int. 124

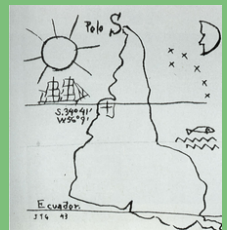
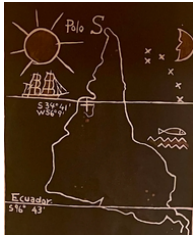
# LAC News Takeaways

Here are some news and events happening in Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Brazil:** Doctors discharged Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva from a Sao Paulo hospital after a pair of emergency surgeries to treat and prevent bleeding in his head. The 79-year-old leftist leader also spoke publicly for the first time at a hospital press conference; he stressed that he was eager to get back to work as soon as possible.
- **Central and South America:** According to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), this region is experiencing a record outbreak of dengue fever, with more than 12.6 million cases and 7,700 deaths since in 1980. Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico were hit especially hard by the virus, accounting for the majority of cases and deaths.
- **Colombia - Ecuador:** The presidents of Ecuador, Daniel Noboa and Colombia, agreed, after a meeting in the Galapagos Islands, to strengthen border cooperation and environmental protection.
- **MERCOSUR:** On December 6, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, and her counterparts from four Mercosur countries (Brazilian President Lula, Argentinian President Milei, Paraguayan President Peña, and Uruguayan President Lacalle Pou) finalized negotiations for a groundbreaking EU-Mercosur partnership agreement.
- **US:** Biden becomes the first US president to visit the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. The region plays a crucial role in storing carbon dioxide, a key factor in global warming. During his visit, Biden signed a declaration on November 17, International Conservation Day, and vowed that the United States would spend millions of dollars on restoring land, planting native tree species, supporting biodiversity efforts, and increasing fertilizer efficiency programs on the Amazon.
- **Uruguay:** Last Sunday, November 24, Uruguay voted for its next President, and the winner of the ballot was Yamandú Orsi, from Frente Amplio, with 52.08% of the votes. The victory represents a progressive turn to the leadership of the country.







For more information on our upcoming events, please visit ISLAC webpage  
<http://islac.usf.edu/>

We would love to include other faculty publications and events in our next issue. Please reach out to Anabela Villach's email listed below.

If you want to **donate** to ISLAC to support our students, academic program or research, please do so in this page

<https://giving.usf.edu/online/gift/f/390750/>

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ANABELA VILLACH  
 EMAIL: ACVILLACHVAQUER@USF.EDU

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
 4202 EAST FOWLER AVENUE, FAO 270  
 TAMPA, FL  
[HTTP://ISLAC.USF.EDU](http://islac.usf.edu)



**UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA**