El Centro Back from Hiatus, Reviving the Newsletter

When budgets get cut, difficult decisions need to be made. When budgets got cut at El Centro, focus on retaining incoming freshmen students trumped retention of staff and the newsletter. The staffing concerns distilled the importance of our mission statement and core values.

El Centro Mission Statement:
“Providing an inclusive learning environment that welcomes all students. El Centro supports and strengthens the academic and cultural experience of students by providing workshops; leadership opportunities and Latina/o cultural awareness programs that promote students success and retention.”

Core Values:
1. Academic support/success
2. Cultural Awareness/Enrichment
3. Resources
4. Retention
   Understanding the need for a family-like environment that is essential to Latino culture and a successful Latino student requires specific staffing: Peer Resource Leaders. Dedicating resources to Peer Resource Leaders ensures that the students come first. These student leaders were each assigned a residence halls to increase coverage of engagement of Latinos all over campus. Peer Resource Leaders have been shown to increase retention through mentoring, engagement, support, and peer-peer camaraderie. These students served on campus and off campus in the attempt to reach as many Latinos as possible.
   We are proud to announce that through careful budgeting we have been able to increase Peer Resource Leaders and bring our beloved newsletter back.

Graduate Watch
Many graduate programs lack the community and support that is essential to retention and success of the Latino student. El Centro began “Meet & Greet” (renamed: Todos Juntos {All together}) this fall in order to connect students for mentorship, social interaction, manage stress & maintain balance in life, learn about resources and share connections/stories to survive graduate school. This cohort was designed as a forum to support and appreciate the Latino graduate students from the plethora of graduate programs here at Colorado State. Our first meeting (September 7th, 2011) had fifteen students in attendance. For more information about this group please contact Phyllis Chacon <pcjustice@gmail.com>.
National Hispanic Heritage Month
A Recap
¡Sí Se Puede!

National Hispanic Heritage Month (NHHM) is an essential awareness outreach to share the Cultura Latina (Latin culture); this month spans September 15th through October 15th, to encompass the Dieciséis de Septiembre (Mexican Independence Day). At Colorado State University, NHHM was infused with a variety of workshops, social events, informational forums and community involvement activities.

An address by Tony Frank, CSU President, initiated the Colorado State NHHM on September 15th; his address focused on the many of the accomplishments Colorado State has achieved: record enrollment, Colorado School of Choice, top ranking of American colleges, and more. Quemando, a salsa band, followed the address to start NHHM with flourish. The next day, “El Grito de Independencia” began the celebration of Mexican Independence Day. The day featured music, speeches, and plenty of dancing. Students attending these events commented how “exciting and fun” the events were.

The celebrations continued with Real Talk: Intersecting Identities of Afro-Latinos hosted (September 20th) by the Black African-American Cultural Center. The primary discussion included the impact that skin color has on the assumptions individuals make and how skin color affects an individual. Ciana Gurule, pointed out that cultural relativism exists; in some parts of the world, dark skin is the premium desired characteristic over lighter skin. This reminded the audience that skin coloration is truly in the eye of the beholder; every coloration is desired and beautiful, in its own right.

Legislation that is important to people of Hispanic Heritage was addressed September 22nd. Lambda Theta Nu, a sorority, led the Dream Act: A Path to Citizenship, a workshop designed to inform the public about the necessity of the Dream Act. This act, if passed, would grant residency to non-citizen (alien) minors; specifically, if a minor completes a degree program at a university or serves time in the United State military, then they may be granted residency for a period of time or, even, citizenship. Martha Alvarez commented that the workshop was “very informative” and the “presenters displayed the information superbly.” The month continued with:

- Preconceptions and Misconceptions about Latino Culture
- Latinos and Empowerment
- Agriculture, Climate Change & Food Security: Studies from the US & Latin America
- ¡Vamos La Universidad! – For Spanish Speaking Parents
- How Ovarian Cancer Affects Women
- Exploring Heritage Study Abroad
- Environmental Justice in Chile Presented by Ernesto Sargas
- T.E.A Time: Immigration - Past and Present
- GUIDE Film Series: Fight of the Fields
- GUIDE Film Series: The Queen of Water: An Andean girl’s inspiring journey to reclaim her identity
- Value & Challenges of Bilingual Education at Irish & Harris Elementary PSD Schools
- Sounds of Caribbean
- Comedian Monica Palacios
- Poudre School District (PSD) Students Present Lorenzo de Zavala
- Graffiti 101 with Metzli
- Hispanic vs. Latino: How do you identify?
- Noche Latina: Cultura, Musica y Sabor
- Overall, the month was viewed as a success by those in attendance and El Centro. All who attended appeared to enjoy themselves and commented on their anticipation for next year’s National Hispanic Heritage Month.

“AN INDIVIDUAL WHO STANDS OUT, OR DISAGREES OR TAKES RISKS IS A DANGER TO SUCH SYSTEMS AND IS EFFORTLESSLY AND, UNCONSCIOUSLY SIDELINED.”
~ JOHN RALSTON SAUL ‘VOLTAIRE’S BASTARDS.’

Upcoming Events

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Written by: Mayra Granados

La Raza is a student organization at Colorado State University. It is our mission as a student organization to focus on celebrating and bringing awareness to Mexican culture and gaining a better understanding of our history. By empowering students of Mexican descent at Colorado State University and throughout Colorado, we will emphasize the importance of attaining a higher education in hopes of helping diminish the increasing dropout rates of minority students. It is our goal to develop a close relationship with members of the community, with the purpose of bridging the large gap between university students and the Latino Fort Collins community. We wish to serve as a secondary family to university students of Mexican descent in facilitating the transition to the University setting. Lastly, we will address oppression and other social issues preventing our academic, social, financial, and professional success.

For more information contact us at la_raza_csu@hotmail.com or call Mayra at 303-246-2930

Although we have a mission statement and have done a lot of events during our time here, we like to pride ourselves in being a FAMILIA at CSU. We strive in providing a support system for students to come to CSU and aid them in their transition into college life. As much as La Raza can say that we are a family, what makes us very proud is that people outside of La Raza can see that we really are a family. We are different from fraternities and sororities because we do not need our members to prove themselves in order to be welcomed into the family. Members can come in and out as they wish, and the majority of the time they stay. La Raza is a space for these Greek organizations to come together and put on strong and meaningful events that will impact the CSU community. As a founder of La Raza, I am looking forward to seeing the organization and family grow over the years and, of course, continue to keep the Mexican/Chicano spirit alive!

Written by: Zulema Sierra

Guadalupe “Pep” Torres, Executive Director of the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance (Coca), spoke about the impact of ovarian cancer. Pep described the warning signs of ovarian cancer to be bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, difficulty eating or feeling full quickly, and urinary urgency or frequency. COCA’s mission is to create awareness of this deadly cancer while supporting and developing further research about ovarian cancer. Accompanying Pep was Vivian Griego, an ovarian cancer survivor. Vivian shared her compelling story of battling the traumatic cancer. Griego and Torres stressed the importance of early detection. For more information please visit the COCA website colo-ovariancancer.org.

“My cancer scare changed my life. I’m grateful for every new, healthy day I have. It has helped me prioritize my life.”

Olivia Newton-John
The Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) is the governing body for culturally-based fraternities and sororities. Colorado State University’s MGC is made up of eight diverse organizations.

- Alpha Phi Gamma Sorority, Inc. (Asian-based)
- Delta Xi Nu Multicultural Sorority, Inc.
- Lambda Sigma Upsilon Fraternity, Inc. (Latino-based)
- Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc. (Latina-based)
- Nu Alpha Kappa Fraternity, Inc. (Latino-based)
- Pi Lambda Chi Latina Sorority, Inc.
- Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity, Inc. (Latino-based)
- Beta Gamma Nu (Associated Member)

For more information about the MGC, please visit: csumgc.colostate.edu/ or contact: Natalie Smith <npsmith@rams.colostate.edu>

**Highlight: Delta Xi Nu Multicultural Sorority, Inc.**

- Delta Xi Nu Multicultural Sorority, Inc. is the only official Multicultural sorority at Colorado State University; and, it is one of the first in the state of Colorado.
- Motto: “Sisterhood, Culture and Education”
- National Philanthropy: Domestic Violence Against Women Awareness
- Chapter Philanthropy: Drinking and Driving Awareness
- Contact: Erica Jackson (President), <ecjackso@rams.colostate.edu>
“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson
Vanessa Villegas Selwyn
DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY, MCIN PROGRAM

Written by: Vanessa Villegas Selwyn

As with any individual, I am able to define myself in various ways: my family, my friends, my work, my education, my ethnicity, my gender, and more! I refuse to limit my nature with any specific definition; instead, I have always tried to live as an amalgamation of each part of my identity.

My heritage consists of Native American, Mexican, Russian, Italian, and German blood. My mother is Hispanic, Catholic, and was the first in the family to graduate high school, college, and grad school; while, my father of Russian-German heritage, Jewish, and first in his family to graduate high school and college. I was raised in two cultures, two religions, and learned to exist in both. As I grew older, I learned to blend each side of me into who I am today.

As far as school is concerned, I’m the prototypic high achieving nerd. I graduated High School (May 2003) in the top 10% of my class. I graduated from New Mexico State University (May 2008) with a Bachelors of Science in Biology, Bachelors of Arts in Psychology, Minors: Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Human Biology. I, also, achieved University Honors, which denotes that I wrote an undergraduate Honors Thesis. Then, I completed an alternative certification program, receiving a level one teaching license and Masters in Curriculum and Instruction at New Mexico State University (May 2011). Now, at CSU, I am a PhD candidate in the MCIN (Molecular, Cellular, and Integrative Neuroscience) Program.

For work, I’m split between two loves: teaching and research. I love teaching; I feel that education is a window to inner truths and ultimately the future. There are no words to describe the feeling of helping a struggling student have a “light bulb moment.” I taught Chemistry, Biology, and Physical Science at Chaparral High School for two years. The high school I taught at was underprivileged, minority (97% Hispanic). My students competed in statewide STEM competitions and one group took first place in Innoventure their first year competing! Many (over 60%) of my students have successfully gone on to undergraduate institutions. Teaching was an amazing experience that allowed me to mold future generations of scientists and leaders. The second love, research, has led me to my current PhD interest in Neuroscience. I have had five research experiences that were varied and allowed me to explore my passion for science. I spent four years, in Dr. Daniel Howard’s Lab of Evolutionary and Ecological Genetics examining the Phylogenetic relationships of crickets and katydids. During my final undergraduate year, I examined episodic memory in humans under Dr. James Kroger in the Mind and Brain Laboratory. I was fortunate to experience two summer internships: (1) Dr. Gregory Flor- ant’s Physiology Laboratory examining hunger in hibernating animals in their summer months; and (2) Dr. Marissa Ehringer’s Genetics of Substance Abuse Laboratory attempting to find a correlation between running and alcohol usage in mouse models. These last two summers (2010 and 2011) I worked as a graduate facilitator to the Medicinal Plants of the Southwest Program, and Team Discovery Workshops teaching techniques and monitoring independent undergraduate research.

Overall, I am a multicultural individual that has attempted to be the epitome of the best parts of my heritage.

Enrique Nuño Lara
Masters Program, Student Affairs in Higher Education

Written by: Enrique Nuño Lara

My name is Enrique Nuño Lara. I was born, and have lived my whole life in Mérida (the capital city of Yucatán, Mexico). I graduated, June 2011, with a degree in Psychology from the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). During my undergradu- ate studies, I participated in student affairs; specifically, I was involved in student government in collaboration with several university administration offices. I came to be at Colorado State University, originally, through the CSU/UADY Leadership Exchange Program. While here, I had the opportu- nity to fall in love with CSU; it lead me to my current standing as a first-year graduate student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) Mas- ter’s program. I am, currently, serving as a Graduate Coordinator at the Student Leadership, Involvement & Community Engagement (SLICE) Office. Above all, I am passionate about the Mayan culture and developing leadership and involvement opportunities for students in Mexican Universities.

“Go forth boldly in the direction of your dreams; live the life you’ve imagined.” ~Henry David Thoreau
El Centro Student Leaders
¡Sí Se Puede!

INTROCUING LEE CAMACHO

Written by: Lee Camacho

My name is Lee Camacho. I am a first-year student here at Colorado State University; currently, I am a double major student (Environmental Health and Spanish). As a first-year student, I am residing at the Corbett Residence Hall in one of the five key communities. My aspirations include medical school to empower me to fulfill my dream job of becoming a Toxicologist. Toxicology is the study of how harmful effects may occur - in humans, other animals, plants and the environment - and how they can be avoided or minimized. Currently, I am working as an Office Coordinator and as Webmaster of the El Centro Student Diversity Office.

INTRODUCING ANA LAURA LIZARDO

Written by: Ana Laura Lizardo

My name is Ana Laura Lizardo. I was born in Zacatecas, México and came to the US at age 2. I am the second oldest in a family of four daughters. I was raised in a small town in Colorado called Leadville. I decided to come to CSU because the town was very appealing and seemed just perfect for my son, Luís Angel and me. The programs and opportunities offered were just what I was interested in. As a freshman I am currently undeclared but I would like to major in psychology and/or Human Development and Family Studies. My goal is to work with adolescents, either as a counselor or as a teacher. My interest in working with adolescents sparked after I became a mother while in high school. It became a struggle to balance school, family & friends, but thankfully I had great support from my family, teachers/counselors and friends. I now realize the importance of having a support group. This is why I would love to work with young students that are unfortunately faced with situations that can put their education process in jeopardy. One of my favorite quotes that sum up my experience is, "No matter how far down the road you go, you can always turn back," and this is exactly what I would like for all those students to know. It is never too late to get back on track. One of my hobbies is spending time with my son and watching him grow! Taking the steps needed to get into higher education was not easy but I am very proud of myself for accomplishing them. My ultimate dream is to provide a great example to my family, and especially to Luis Angel.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” ~ Nelson Mandela
El Centro is one of the seven diversity centers at Colorado State University. A marker of efficacy for a diversity center is student outreach (attendance). So far, for the current (Fall 2011) semester, we have received a total of 3006 visits from students from August – October. On average, El Centro receives 63 students per day. This AMAZING number is evidence of the dedication of the staff and community of El Centro. The El Centro Staff hope to receive even more student engagement…So...

DON’T BE SHY, STOP ON BY!

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Karla November 27
Lorraine November 29
Lupe December 7
Roberto December 11

Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that people who have the most live the longest!

Editor-in-Chief: Phyllis Chacon
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Editor: Vanessa Villegas Selwyn
Doctoral Program Molecular Cellular & Integrated Neuroscience
Publisher: Lee Camacho
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