



LARES Newsletter

Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services Program

Rewarding Experiences

By Sara Agate

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Attend upcoming Latino events!
- If you are looking for scholarships visit the following link:

<http://www.lares.uic.edu/>

- Schedule an appointment to meet your LARES Counselor!

Hola, me llamo Sara Agate! The past three and a half years have been the most rewarding experiences of my life. As a senior, I can honestly say that I have welcomed the challenges and embraced the many opportunities set before me. I will be happily graduating this summer with a degree in political science and have taken the necessary pre-medical courses with the intent of becoming a physician. It was not until my junior year that I made the decision to declare political science as my major. That decision stemmed from my involvement with students and the community.

I remember walking into the Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services (LARES) program and connecting with the advisors and staff who I felt genuinely cared about my success as a student. Getting involved with various programs on campus has given me the opportunity to network. I have had limitless opportunities to build relationships with faculty, professors and students meanwhile having the academic support offered by LARES and the Hispanic Center of Excellence in Medicine (HCOE) to perform well in my studies. Soon after my exposure to LARES and HCOE they have been “my home away from home”.

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**Get Involved!
LABS at UIC**



LABS-ALPFA Convention

By Angie Ortega

Through the continuing support of LARES-ABEL (Aspiring Business and Engineering Leaders) initiative and the College of Business Administration (CBA), the Latino Association of Business Students (LABS) was able to send 8 of its members to the 2010 Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting (ALPFA) Convention in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. The sponsorship covered most expenses, the students only paid \$125 for this 4 day event. Participants attended leadership and personal development workshops as well as various networking and social events.

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By Karen Mariscal

Being a student at UIC was not as easy a task as I had initially thought it was going to be. At first, I struggled with my class work and adapting to the educational environment. I grew up on the southwest side of Chicago and attended schools that were not culturally diverse or generally the best performing in the city. After the first few semesters, I realized that if I wanted to succeed at UIC, I could not remain isolated from my peers.

During that time, a LARES advisor suggested that I become involved with the school's Writing Center. And so, I did. There, I was able to interact with students that had similar interests as me, as well as, students of various other interests. I also got the opportunity to use my strengths to assist students with the process of writing. Joining the WC did not only allow me to open up, build relationships and become more involved in school, but it also allowed me to make professional connections with staff and tutors. Through these connections, I discovered a student group dedicated to assisting future teachers: Future Teachers for Social Justice (FTSJ).

FTSJ is a student group that works with future teachers in: completing the various application processes, sharing experiences in the classroom, going out to classrooms and tutoring, addressing pre-student teaching concerns, relieving a little bit of the stress that college students' face. When I first joined, I was not sure what "teaching for social justice" meant or if I wanted to become a teacher striving towards social justice. However, after attending a few meetings I realized that teaching for social justice did not have one definition, but rather a multitude of definitions that translated into simply good teaching. Involvement in FTSJ really helped set me on the right track in accomplishing my goals. I will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Teaching of English. I have come a long way from where I began, but I know that as a result of my involvement in FTSJ and the WC, my academic career looks promising.



The Writing Center 105 Grant Hall 312-413-2206

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Beyond academic and networking support, it has been through these programs that I have learned more about my identity and community. Embracing my heritage has helped me learn about the different identity roles and responsibilities I have as a Latina, a woman, a student advocate and an academic scholar. There are two types of learning in college, at least for me, which happens inside and outside of the classroom that have made me flourish as a student.

As a result of being involved outside of the classroom in student organizations like the Health Oriented Latino Association (HOLA) and Undergraduate Student Government (USG), one of my most memorable experiences was being a fellow in the Institute for Policy and Civic



Sara Agate

Engagement's – Urban Public Policy Fellowship (UPPF) program last spring. As a fellow, we attended weekly seminars focused on public policy and its effect on society. I worked with the Midwest Latino Health Research, Training and Policy on the Illinois Hispanic/Latino Health Initiative survey. Being a fellow, I learned of various disparities and how policy can bridge the gap of inequities that underserved communities face. As a Latina, I have learned a lot about my culture and the health and immigration disparities in my community. As an academic scholar, I have learned that the value of my degree is bound with a social obligation to help underserved communities. As a student advocate, I have learned that trust with others builds lifelong relationships and provides us the courage we need to face challenges.



With the help of academic support programs, mentors, professors, supportive friends and family I am feeling comfortable with my transition into life after college. It is with great enthusiasm that I encourage you to get involved in extracurricular activities to enrich your undergraduate career and to help you prepare for your future endeavors after college. Your brain is the key to success! Try to stay balanced, in every sense of the word. Balance academic priorities (after all it comes out of our banking accounts) with activities, relationships, exercise and time for yourself.

Congratulations on your accomplishments thus far!



Schooling and Education By Jose Valencia

Looking back at my undergraduate career at UIC, I am reminded of words the great American writer Mark Twain once said, "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education". The meaning being that although there is much to be learned from formal education, there are many things, some of the most important in my opinion, that cannot be gained from lectures or textbooks. In an education system that prizes 4.0 above everything else, promotes graduating as fast as one can and trains students to obsess about getting an A in the next test, so much so, that they forget to actually learn and grasp the material, it is important to remember his message.

Even though I was an above average student (3.2 overall G.P.A.), showing my respect to academia, it was not in the classrooms or lecture halls, but through my extracurricular activities and community work that I was able to gain the most knowledge and grow as a young adult. Through my involvement I have: introduced hundreds of students as an Orientation Leader, traveled to Washington D.C. to speak with our representatives, volunteered in New Orleans to rebuild the city after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, lived outside the country in

Montreal to learn about a different culture, planted baby trees throughout the Midwest, protested the coal power plants in Chicago, the list could go on. I have not only had amazing experiences and adventures because of my involvement, but I have also met great and remarkable people. It has been with these people that I have traveled with, stayed up all night working on issues and have fought and persevered with – friends that I can see myself working with and remaining close with for the rest of my life.

Do not get me wrong, I learned plenty in classes. Especially considering that my major was something that I was actually interested in (history). On the other hand, taking a required general education course that I had absolutely no interest in kind of killed the subject field for me. I would rather spend an hour organizing an event for my student org on an issue that interests me and that I know I will continue working on after I graduate, than do homework for a music theory class that will have no consequence on my life after the class is over. With all the problems that we as a society face, how could I not become involved? Once a student becomes aware of these issues he/she can never

turn their back on them, never pretend that they do not exist. That is why I chose to devote my UIC career to sustainability, minority issues and representing students whenever I could.

So in the end, what is my final message, the lesson from my unconventional anecdote? I am not advocating for one to disregard classes in favor for real world experience through extra-curricular activities. Instead, I am suggesting a more balanced college experience by being somewhat selfless and giving up some of your time to an issue that you find important, joining a civic minded student organization or even starting one yourself. Instead of stressing out over getting a 100% on the next test or graduating in three years, slow down and appreciate that you are in college – a time to experience, experiment and be open minded. I know that had I stuck to the road most often taken, I would not have met the many great people that I did, nor would I now be ready to move forward equipped with the knowledge, skills and experience that I need to tackle the issues of the 21st century as a young, productive citizen and a proud, recent graduate of UIC.



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Since approximately 2,000 people attend this convention, 60% of which are professionals, students had plenty of opportunities to network with them. On the last day, there was a career fair, over 100 companies recruiting. By then, students already knew many professionals; which made it easier for them to submit their resumes and be remembered, and even get interviews on the spot.

Throughout the years, many LABS' members have received interviews during the ALFPA Convention, many of which have resulted in internship and job offers. They have also established strong, long-lasting relationships with professionals that have helped them in achieving their career goals. The ALFPA Convention has provided them with opportunities to grow personally and professionally while easing their job search. I am the current president of LABS, and I obtained internships with Kraft and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). Even in today's tough job market, in August of 2010 I received a job offer from PwC to start working in November 2011. Like myself, William Biancucci, Gilbert Gomez, and various other LABS member have enjoyed these benefits, in large part, thanks to the support of LARES.



Angie Ortega

LABS President



Thank You LARES!

By Maria Alejos



My name is Maria Alejos. I am an undergraduate student at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Art and Design program. I am very fortunate to continue my education at this University even though I struggle financially. Last semester I applied for the LARES award and received the award for the Spring semester. I was scared that I would not be able to continue my studies in the spring. Obtaining the award made me realize that hard work pays off, I am very thankful to LARES and the staff for being so supportive. They supported me not only financially with this award, but also with much academic advice. The LARES staff has a constant, positive outlook that is contagious and helped me to believe in greater possibilities.

It is so difficult to see my parents struggle making payments, take more work hours to pay for my college tuition, and come home exhausted. My father currently works seven days a week and is only home when he is sleeping. It gives me much pain to see my father's tired eyes and cracked hands. Most men his age don't work nearly as many hours or are often retired. I have thought about leaving school in the past, so that he would not have this great burden. However, my father says that he works hard so that I can achieve bigger dreams in life. He tells me that he works so that one day I won't have to work as hard to provide higher education for my children. Then I think if I give up on school, all of his hard work will have been for nothing. All of my dreams and hard work would amount to very little. This award has helped me and my family a great deal.

The LARES award has inspired me to work even harder in my courses. It has also comforted and provided me with a peaceful mind. I have been able to study this semester without having to worry about tuition and fees. This award has made a great impact upon my future and for that I can't thank LARES enough.

Winning the LARES Tuition Award in the Spring 2009 and Spring 2011

By Julio C. Urbina

Winning the LARES tuition award the first time was a blessing. I was going through some tough times, I had no money for school and honestly I was not very motivated to return to school. I didn't quite have my mind in the right place going through knee surgery and the death of my grandfather amongst other things. I was very fortunate to learn about and win the LARES tuition award. I was very motivated to obtain good grades on the following semester so that I would prove that I was deserving of the award.

LARES has been great to me. They helped me with the application process when I was in high school, provided academic advising, informed me of many scholarships, and are always willing to help out in any way they can. I am currently the recipient of the LARES tuition award and I am trying my best not to let LARES down. Last semester I was only able to afford one class and getting this award once again has been a great lift for me.

I am eager to obtain my Electrical Engineering degree regardless of the obstacles. Sometimes you have to struggle a bit to get to where you are, but it's nice to know that there are people and organizations like LARES that are genuinely dedicated to helping students. I cannot thank LARES enough for their support. Hopefully this tuition award will continue to be available so that students in need can take advantage of it, just like I did.



SHPE-Regional Leadership Development Conference

By Dennis Hernandez

The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) was started in California in 1974 to establish a network of engineers with the goal of promoting the importance of technical fields among the Hispanic and Latino community. In 1980, the SHPE student chapter at UIC was established, first as Latino Association Supporting Engineering Careers (LASEC), then renamed as SHPE-UIC. Thirty years later, SHPE-UIC is still committed to motivating young underrepresented students to become developed leaders who are conscious of their community and successful in their careers in engineering and the sciences. LARES has been supportive of SHPE-UIC and its endeavors to reach out to the Chicago Latino community and serve as role models to those who may want to consider a career in engineering and choose UIC as their school.

The Region 6 Regional Leadership Development Conference (RLDC) is a student organized conference held every year all across the country for members of SHPE. Its mission is to groom Hispanic engineering students into confident and competitive professionals. The conference will encompass student and professional chapters from the Midwest region.

RLDC develops the patience, maturity and interpersonal skills often absent in engineering classes. Those who register for the conference are given the tools to become effective leaders and communicators. All participants will be invited to attend a college and career fair where companies from across the region and the country will be looking for available engineering graduates and experienced professionals.

The conference will take place on the UIC campus on Friday April 8th and on the IIT campus on Saturday April 9th, participants will be housed at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place.

For more information about the conference and how to attend, visit <http://shpe-rldc6.org/>, for information about the local SHPE chapter visit http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/prof/shpe/home/new/index.html.

Meet the New LARES Staff



Patricia Martinez

Patricia Martinez

Greetings! My name is Patricia Martinez and I graduated from UIC in December of 2009 with a major in Business Management and a minor in English. Currently, I advise students in the College of Business Administration. As an undergraduate, I was involved in some activities such as tutoring at the Writing Center, being a member of LABS (Latino Association of Business Students), and participating as a model for the UIC Spring 2008 Fashion Show. I strongly believe that it is vital for students to be involved in extracurricular activities in order to make new friends, gain experience, and network. I am really looking forward to assisting students in attaining their academic goals and in maximizing their potential.



Annette De La Torre

Annette De La Torre

Hello my name is Annette De La Torre and I recently joined the LARES staff as a recruiter and admissions counselor. I advise students majoring in Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, Pre-health and science fields. I am a proud UIC alumna; I graduated in May 2010 with a double major in Applied Psychology and Sociology. I was born in Dodge City, Kansas. Shortly after, my parents moved to Chicago where I have spent the majority of my youth growing up in the Pilsen neighborhood. As an undergraduate, I devoted my time as an intern at Mujeres Latinas en Acción after School Program with a focus on young children struggling in their academics. I tutored and gave presentations on the importance of higher education. Nonetheless, I hope that I can provide a welcoming and comfortable environment to students. I look forward to working with current UIC students in achieving their educational goals.



Diana Soriano

Diana Soriano

Hola! I am Diana Soriano. I have recently joined the LARES staff in the Fall 2010 and I feel very blessed to advise prospective and current UIC students that are in the College of Education and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. I am a UIC alumna and I have my Bachelor of Arts in Teaching of History with a concentration in Latin American studies. I am a first generation student, the first to graduate from a university in my family, and my first language was Spanish. I understand the struggles and obstacles that students have to overcome throughout their academic careers and I am here to strengthen the Latino pipeline in higher education. I know how one person has the potential to make a difference in someone's life and my commitment is to reach out to the Latino communities and help all students reach their goals. I believe that all students have the potential to excel in their academic and professional careers.



Irma Ortega

Irma Ortega

My name is Irma Ortega and I have been working at UIC for 18 years. I joined the LARES team last spring as an Office Support Specialist. I am the first point of contact for the students that call or visit our office and I really enjoy helping students. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family and watching romantic movies.

Upcoming Latino Events- Spring 2011

1. Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education -19th Annual Professional & Student Development Conference

<http://www.ilache.com/home.htm>

"SECURING OUR FUTURE: STRENGTHENING THE LATINO PRESENCE IN THE ACADEMY"

Friday, April 1, 2011

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Northeastern Illinois University
5500 North St. Louis
Chicago, IL 60625



2. African American & Latino Research Forum

<http://grad.uic.edu/cms/?pid=1000471>

African American & Latino Dialogue

Thursday, April 14, 2011

UIC Student Center East
750 South Halsted Street
Chicago, IL 60607



3. 2nd Annual DREAM Gala

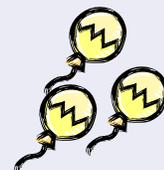
<https://sites.google.com/site/dreamgala2011/>

"Celebrating the Past, Living the Present, Fighting for our Future"

Friday, April 22, 2011

6:00pm to midnight

Apollo's 2000 Banquet Hall
2875 W Cermak
Chicago IL 60623



4. LUCHA Conference

• April 8, 2011 Grant Hall
Room 106 at 4pm

• April 15, 2011 Grant Hall
Room 106 at 4pm

• April 20, 2011 EPASW
Commons Room Third Floor at 2:30pm

• April 29, 2011 EPASW
Commons Room Third Floor at 2:30pm

• **5. Pa' Lante Conference** TBA



UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

Check us out on the web!

<http://www.lares.uic.edu>

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Educational Services Program (LARES)
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“To empower students by providing personal growth and educational opportunities and to prepare leaders who will make individual and collective contributions toward the cultural and social advancement of the Latino community.”

LCUA 25th Annual Recognition Dinner for Latino Graduates

25th Anniversary



UIC - LCUA

The Twenty Fifth Annual Recognition

Dinner for Latino Graduates

Friday, May 6, 2011

Hyatt Regency Chicago

Regency Ballroom

151 East Wacker Drive

The Latino Committee on University Affairs (LCUA) promotes the development of educational, professional and career opportunities for all Latinos at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The Annual Recognition Dinner for Latino Graduates is a special event that provides an opportunity for all graduates to celebrate their achievements together with families and friends. At the event, each graduate receives a certificate of achievement and has the opportunity to say a few words of appreciation.

LCUA encourages all Summer 2010, Fall 2010, and Spring 2011 Latino graduates to participate in the celebration. Each graduate will receive two complimentary tickets, one for themselves and another for a family member or guest. Additional tickets can be purchased and will be available for pick up and/or purchase beginning March 28, 2011 at the LARES office. For more details, contact Evelyn Rosales (LCUA Graduate Assistant) at erosal4@uic.edu or (312) 996-3356.

