

# 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,

The first good news I want to share is about one of our ISLAC affiliated student, **Carlos Marcelo Cuadra**, who won the 2024 Julio Cotler Paper Award, through the OBREAL network (in which I have been involved for over 20 years). His paper entitled “Progresos y retrocesos en la calidad y acceso a la universidad en el Perú en los últimos 30 años” was not only recognized for its quality, but also received a monetary prize of 2,000 euros. Congratulations! The second edition of this award opens in May 2025.

A group of ISLAC affiliated students and myself, attended the Noche Unidos at the Ringling, representing USF and enjoying music and dance in a breathtaking scenario.

This past February, the Latina/e/o/x Graduate Students Organization (**LGSO**), celebrated its first anniversary with a party in MSC Ballroom. It was a great event and other students organizations as well as ISLAC were present, to show their supporting. It has been a year full of collaborations and good moments that have enriched us all. LGSO is certainly touching the lives of many of our students, so well done. Happy birthday!!!

Since February, ISLAC is hosting **Dr Mario Guerrero** who came to USF as a Fulbright Visiting Scholar. His office is 253 FAO Building, in case anyone wants to stop by. He is originally from Argentina, and works at the National University of Cuyo and CONICET.

March 12th, **Julissa Ramirez**, defended her MA thesis on "Navigating Change: The Migration Experiences of Post-2017 Cuban Migrants in Tampa Bay". Dr Adriana Novoa was her advisor, and Dr Madeline Camara and myself were part of the committee. Congrats!

This past March, three of our ISLAC affiliated Faculty, Alejandro Marquez (Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences), Diana Leon-Boys (Communications) and Jose Angel Maldonado (English), organized a conference on Democratic Violence in Latin America, featuring presentations about Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Haiti, Brazil, El Salvador, Chile, Puerto Rico, Perú, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Ecuador, Jamaica, and Bolivia. This three day event focused on the role of “violence” within Latin American democratic contexts. The event was organized in the context of the Humanities Institute Faculty Fellowship Program, and was very well attended, illustrating the interest in the Latin American and Caribbean Region. Several other ISLAC affiliated faculty, students and Fulbright Visiting Fellow were involved as discussants or presenters. Alejandro, Diana and Angel, well done!

In addition, ISLAC celebrated Carnaval featuring Carnaval histories and traditions in Brazil, Cuba and Colombia.

Enjoy!

*Beatriz Padilla*



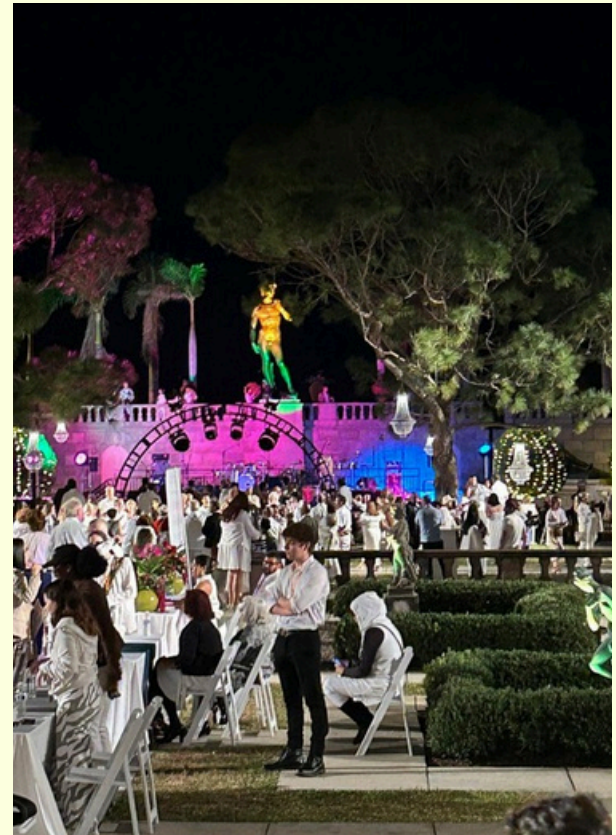


# ISLAC Past Events

## Noche Unidos at The Ringling

ISLAC participated in the third annual Noche Unidos, a celebration of Hispanic Heritage organized by The Ringling and UnidosNow, on January 31st.

The elegant evening event took place in the beautiful Courtyard of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, in Sarasota, and included dining, dancing, live music, and fellowship to honor the rich and diverse cultures that have influenced our Gulf Coast community, such as the African diaspora, Indigenous America, and European traditions. Participants enjoyed lively Puerto Rican rhythms performed by Bomba Yemayá and vibrant parades throughout the night, infused with the upbeat of Mardi Gras spirit brought by the New Orleans-based 79rs Gang. The dress code was total white!



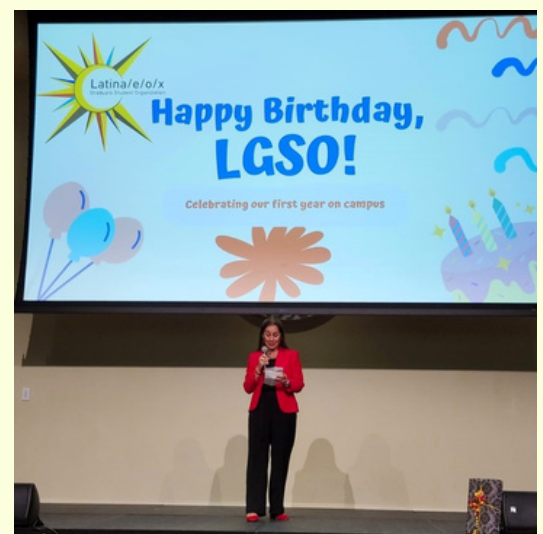
# ISLAC Past Events

## LGSO Birthday

🎉🍰 On February 8, the Latina/o/x Graduate Student Organization (**LGSO**) hosted a celebration to mark its first anniversary.

Dr Padilla, who is LGSO' Faculty advisor, attended this remarkable event, which featured music, games, and food! 🎉🍰

The mission of this organization is to create an interdisciplinary space for underrepresented graduate students across USF. It aims to provide essential support through faculty mentorship, peer support, and professional development, while also engaging in local and international community outreach initiatives. LGSO has organized several impactful events for Latin American and Caribbean students at the University, such as the Latin American and Caribbean Culture Festival, which attracted nearly 100 attendees, Día de los Muertos, among many others, co-hosted with ISLAC.





# ISLAC Past Events

## Conference on Democratic Violence in Latin America

This conference, held between March 12 and 14, focused on the role of violence within the context of democracy in Latin America and Caribbean countries. It addressed a wide range of critical topics relevant to the region, including environmentalism, drug trafficking, militarization, collective and public memory, political corruption, borders, popular culture, advocacy, migration, and tourism.

**Diana León-Boys, José Ángel Maldonado, and Alejandro Márquez**, ISLAC Affiliated Faculty, were the organizers of this event, which was sponsored by **USF Humanities Institute**. Participants included representatives from universities across Latin America, the United States, and Canada. They expressed concerns about the development of democracy and the impact of violence in several transnational contexts, such as Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Haiti, Brazil, El Salvador, Chile, Puerto Rico, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Ecuador, Jamaica, and Bolivia.

ISLAC Affiliated faculty, Drs. **Kersuze Simeon-Jones, Natalie Scenters-Zapico, Aaron Augsburg, Beatriz Padilla, and Adriana Novoa** participated as respondents. Additionally, **Livia Guimarães de Oliveira**, ISLAC undergraduate student, presented a paper entitled ‘Shoot First, Ask Later’: The Relevance of the Military Police in the Culture of Fear and Violence in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro”; and **Mario Guerrero**, a Fulbright visiting scholar from Argentina affiliated with ISLAC, spoke on “Marginalization, Violence, and Environmental Exploitation: Challenges for Governance in Latin America.”



# ISLAC Past Events

## Carnaval in Latin America



🌟🎭🌟 **ISLAC** and the Latina/e/o/x Graduate Student Organization (**LGSO**) joined together on March 14 to celebrate the vibrant rhythms, colors, and traditions of Carnival in Latin America and the Caribbean. 🎵🌺🎉

Participants had a valuable opportunity to learn about the history, characteristics, and social and political implications of carnival celebrations in the region. **Júlia Lopes de Paulo** presented on Brazil, discussing the carnivals in Pernambuco, Olinda, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro. She highlighted the rhythms of Frevo, Maracatu, and Samba, emphasizing how these festivities serve as a platform for both celebrations and political demonstrations.

In her presentation on Cuba, **Glenda Vaillant Cruz** described how Carnaval is celebrated in Santiago, focusing on the importance of comparsas and "La Conga." She also addressed social inequalities associated with the celebration.

**Yasmeen Armoush** focused on the Carnival of Barranquilla, Colombia, which is the second largest carnival after Brazil's. She shared her personal experiences participating in the parades and mentioned the initiative "Tampa Bay - Carnival de Barranquilla," which is organized as a collaboration between Tampa and Barranquilla Sister cities Program.

¡La vida es un carnaval!

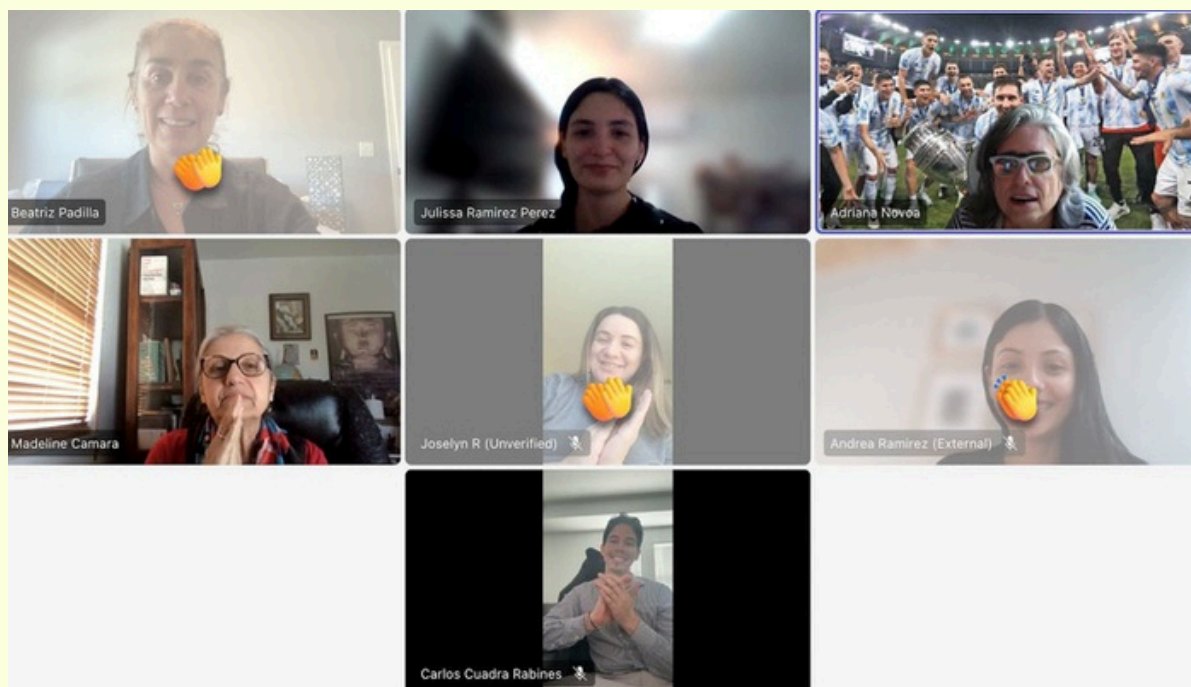




# Student Spotlight

## Julissa Ramirez Perez defended her Master Thesis

**Julissa Ramirez**, a student of the Master in Latin America, Caribbean, and Latino Studies, successfully defended her thesis, **"Navigating Change: The Migration Experiences of Post-2017 Cuban Migrants in Tampa Bay."** The committee was composed of Drs Adriana Novoa, Madeline Camara and Beatriz Padilla. The audience included friends and family members. We are so happy for your success, Julissa!





# Student Spotlight

## Carlos Cuadra was recognized with the Julio Cotler Award

The article "Progress and setbacks in the quality and access to university in Peru in the last 30 years," by **Carlos Cuadra**, one of our ISLAC affiliated students, was selected as one of the winners of the First Edition of the **Julio Cotler Paper Award**, launched by OBREAL. The article examines the changes in higher education in Peru over the past 30 years, arguing that despite the reduction of economic inequality, deficiencies persist. Although reforms have contributed to inclusion, structural and economic challenges still limit equitable access to quality higher education.

**OBREAL** (Observatorio de las Relaciones Europa - America Latina) is a unique non-profit association that promotes interregional cooperation and dialogue in the Higher Education sector, working with members and partners from different continents to promote dialogue and synergies between the governmental, academic, and social sector.

The Julio Cotler Program received hundreds of proposals on the topic 'Education and Social Inequality', and 'Strengthening Democracy', for two calls: the one designed specifically for participants from Peru and the one aimed at participants from the rest of Latin America or OBREAL members (Observatorio de las Relaciones Europa - America Latina). The Julio Cotler award includes a monetary recognition of 2,000 euros and the publication of the article. Congratulations Carlos!!! For those who want to follow Carlos' steps, the call for the 2025 edition is currently open at this link: <https://obreal.org/es/activity/julio-cotler-2025/propuestas/>

Carlos Cuadra holds a Master's Degree in Finance from the University of South Florida (USA), as well as two Bachelor's Degrees, one in Administration and International Business from Universidad Privada del Norte (Peru) and another in International Relations from Universidade Anhembi Morumbi (Brazil). In addition, he has specialized in Compliance, Risk, and Money Laundering Prevention. Currently, he is a certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at USF and works in the banking sector. He is also a founding member of the LGSO and the USF chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).

Congratulations Carlos!!!





# Student Spotlight

## Tailyn Osorio was in Barbados conducting preliminary fieldwork.

Tailyn Osorio, a PhD student in Applied Anthropology, is conducting preliminary fieldwork for their dissertation on youth with disabilities and disability organizations in Barbados. ISLAC is proud to support her professional development and growth.

During a recent trip, Tailyn carried out several activities related to her field of specialization:

- Spoke at a Caribbean education conference
- Consulted with the Autism Association of Barbados (AAB) about their dissertation project
- Led an Autism workshop for primary school teachers at AAB's request
- Volunteered to interpret within the community, where both ASL and Bajan Sign Language are used.

The following images showcase their work in the community!



# Alumni Spotlight

## Yasmeen Armoush professional achievements



**Yasmeen Armoush**, graduated with a Master degree from the MALACS program at USF in May of 2024, and she is still very active with ISLAC.

At present, she is working at the **USF - St.Pete Campus** for the PATHe program as a Transfer Advisor.

She works closely with college students at St. Petersburg College planning on transferring to USF, and helping if a student is just unsure of their path or what they want to do after. She helps them to explore their options.

Yasmeen also serves on the Board of Directors for Tampa Sister Cities.

She feels that her master's degree has helped her learn and grow professionally.



**Go bulls!**



## ISLAC welcomes Fulbright Scholar Mario Guerrero

**Mario Guerrero** holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM) and is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) at the Universidad Nacional de San Luis (UNSL). He earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Public Administration from the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (UNCUYO), Mendoza, Argentina.

Throughout his academic career, Mario has participated in programs at several institutions, including Syracuse University (USA), Universidad de Antioquia (Colombia), University of Hradec Králové (Czech Republic), University of Texas at Austin (USA), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), and the University of La Verne (USA).

Currently, he serves as the academic coordinator of the Centro de Estudios Internacionales y de Integración (CERIDI) at the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (FCPyS) of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (UNCUYO).

His academic work has been dedicated to studying the relationships between actors, international institutions, and cooperation, with a particular emphasis on how emerging countries from the Global South have created their own international institutions. Also, he has gained valuable insights from his experiences in borderland contexts, such as the Amazon and the Orinoquia. He is willing to share these experiences with the ISLAC and USF community.

Welcome Dr Guerrero!



# ISLAC Upcoming Events

## Gentrification in Puerto Rico

ISLAC, LGSO and LULAC are organizing an interactive cultural and musical learning experience led by faculty, students and performers, on **gentrification** in Puerto Rico. The event is inspired on Bad Bunny's most recent album, **DeBí Tirar Más FOToS**.

Stay tuned!

**LGSO x ISLAC x LULAC**  
**Present**  
April 11 | 6-10 PM | TECO Hall  
A DISCUSSION AND LISTENING PARTY FOR

**DeBí  
TIRAR  
Más  
FOToS**

**Logos on the left:**  
- Latin Dance Club  
- THE 813 PROJECT  
- ISLAC  
- U.S. Flag  
- Latina/le/ra

**Logo on the bottom right:**  
- PUERTO RICO 20 25 SEGUIMO AQUI

**Bottom text:**  
Food | Presentations | Performances | Open Dance Floor



# Upcoming events

2025 ISLAC Global Symposium:

## Latin American & Caribbean Migrations across the World

Latin American and Caribbean Studies have grown significantly since the 1960s, adapting to the forces of globalization, transnational migrations, international trade, and global partnerships.

In commemoration of its 30th anniversary, the Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean (ISLAC) is hosting its second Global Symposium, focusing on Latin American and Caribbean Migrations across the World. USF faculty, students and international experts will share their research findings and recommendations.

**April 15th, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

College of Education Building (EDU) - TECO Hall  
4110 USF Apple Drive  
Tampa, FL 33620

**Register now:**

**<https://forms.office.com/r/rLbWiffbeT>**



**30<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY**

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF  
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH FLORIDA**  
College of Arts & Sciences

# Call for posters!



ISLAC accepts submissions for posters. This is a unique opportunity for students to present their research on migrations across the Americas (including Latin America and the Caribbean), Latino populations in the US and the Latin American and/or Caribbean Diasporas worldwide.

## **Poster requirements**

Poster Size: A1 (23.4 inches - width x 33.1 inches - height). Accepted format: PDF format. Please ensure that your poster adheres to these specifications to facilitate smooth setup and display during the symposium.

## **Abstract Submission:**

An abstract about the content of the Poster must be sent to [padillab@usf.edu](mailto:padillab@usf.edu) and [acvillachvaquer@usf.edu](mailto:acvillachvaquer@usf.edu) before **April 4**. The proposal should include a title, author(s), department, program, and abstract, with the title of ISLAC SYMPOSIUM POSTER in the email subject line.

## **Best Poster Award**

This award acknowledges outstanding contributions and innovations in research. All posters will be evaluated based on criteria such as clarity of arguments, visual appeal, and relevance to the symposium theme. Awards will recognize the best undergraduate and graduate student's poster.



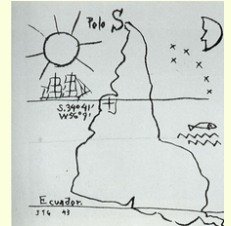
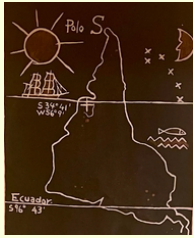
# LAC News Takeaways

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

- **Argentina:** Deadly floods struck on March 7 when a year's worth of rain fell in a matter of hours in and around Bahia Blanca, a major port city in the south of Buenos Aires province; entire neighborhoods were inundated by the fast-rising waters. The disaster resulted in at least 16 people killed, more than 1,450 people evacuated, and \$400 million in infrastructure damage.
- **Brazil:** Jair Bolsonaro, Brazilian former president, will face trial for attempting a coup after he lost the 2022 election.
- **Ecuador:** President Noboa wants foreign armies, namely US, European and Brazilian armies, to help fight gangs violence in the country. He has a plan, but needs assistance from special forces.
- **Haiti:** Violence has led to unprecedented levels of displacement in Port-au-Prince, with over 60,000 individuals affected within a month. The escalating violence has severely impacted communities in various neighborhoods of the capital. The majority of the displaced have found refuge in 48 displacement sites, including 12 newly established ones, while others have sought shelter with host families already facing significant strain.
- **Organization of American States (OAS):** On March 10, the organization elected Surinamese Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin as its new secretary general through 2030, taking over from Uruguayan diplomat Luis Almagro. Albert Ramdin is OAS first Caribbean leader.
- **Venezuela:** Senior officials from Venezuela and the United States have announced the resumption of deportation flights for migrants from the U.S. to Venezuela, following a temporary suspension of these repatriation flights that began last month.
- **Election year:** Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Honduras will hold presidential elections. Plus, Argentina will hold midterm elections later this year.



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



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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