



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, D C

CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN & LATINO STUDIES

Message from the Director
Fall 2019

Dear CLALS Community,

These are hectic times at the Center, but lots of work is indicative of lots of opportunities. Among the highlights, thanks to support from the Ford, Open Society and Seattle International Foundations, we continue our efforts to shed light on anti-corruption efforts in Central America, and State Department funding has facilitated research on transnational criminal networks in Brazil and the Southern Cone, the latter in collaboration with institutions in Brazil and Argentina. Professors Matt Taylor and Chuck Call, of the School of International Service, have been central to these inquiries, which have also involved several CLALS Fellows. Meanwhile, our partnership with UNICEF has flourished, with our providing orientation programs over the past year for newly appointed senior staff stationed in Chile, Uruguay, Honduras, Jamaica, Haiti, El Salvador and Paraguay. Additional briefings are in the works on Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina, among other countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. I am grateful to faculty from several AU Schools and Colleges for sharing their expertise with UNICEF staff in this important outreach activity.

The Central America focus of many CLALS projects remains a priority, and we are pleased to be embarking on a USAID-funded partnership with the Universidad de Oriente (UNIVO) in San Miguel, El Salvador, on a capacity-building project supporting their faculty's establishment of a Center for Research on Democracy and Civil Society. At the same time, we are emphasizing expansion of our ties to research networks in Mexico -- in part through continued work under the auspices of the Robert A. Pastor North America Research Initiative (NARI) -- and in Brazil, where our growing portfolio of activities will include convening an international workshop at the University of Brasilia on religious engagement with the phenomenon of environmentally-induced migration. Support from the Henry Luce Foundation, which recently awarded us a three-year grant for work on this topic, is vital to this undertaking, which will also involve high-profile events in Mexico and the United States.

We have big plans for the coming year's Annual Latino Public Affairs Forum (ALPAF), to be conducted this year in collaboration with AU's Washington College of Law (WCL) and the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and focused on the "best interests of the child" as a principle for guiding policy and practice in areas of immigration, including asylum. Our research on the challenges and opportunities experienced by Latino youth in the DC metro area and beyond remains a priority, and it has been an honor over the past year to have had the

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opportunity to present AU's research findings on such topics, and on efforts to forge communities more inclusive of Latino populations, to audiences in schools, religious congregations and regional planning agencies in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Our ties to the Latin American and Caribbean diplomatic communities in Washington are also expanding, and we hope to soon announce the launch of a structured program through which CLALS-affiliated faculty and fellows will share their expertise with ambassadors and senior embassy staff, with the goal of augmenting their effectiveness in promoting their countries' engagements with the people of the United States.

As the Center approaches the ten-year anniversary of its founding in 2010, we look forward to a series of events during the coming academic year to mark the occasion. We will also continue to take advantage of opportunities to reinforce one of the guiding principles of AU's five-year Strategic Plan, announced in early 2019: "Change-making" is at the core of this University's mission and has been central to the CLALS vision from its inception. That is the driving rationale for an expansive and societally engaged vision for international and ethnic studies research at our University and beyond. We are grateful for all that our affiliates have done, and continue to do, to accompany us in pursuit of that enduring objective.

With best wishes for peace and tranquility during the year ahead, and warm regards to all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Hershberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "g".

Eric Hershberg
Director, Center for Latin American & Latino Studies