Department of Hispanic Studies
HispaNesNews
At the College of Charleston
Contributors

Many thanks to our contributors.

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Dr. Silvia Rodríguez-Sabater took on the position of Coordinator of Lower Level Spanish within the Department of Hispanic Studies two years ago in May 2009, at a time when some major changes had recently taken place in the Spanish curriculum. During her term as Basic Language Program Coordinator, Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater has devoted a great part of her time to improving both the teaching and learning experiences at the elementary and intermediate language levels. Now that Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater is about to step down as Coordinator, Hispanews wishes to congratulate her on her excellent work, and asked her to share with all of us some of the highlights of these past two years:

**Hispanews:** Being the Basic Language Program Coordinator, especially in a Language Department the size of Hispanic Studies at CofC, entails a wide range of tasks and responsibilities, some of which we might not be completely aware of. Could you share with us some of the most important and challenging tasks you have taken on during these past two years?

**Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater:** One of the most challenging and rewarding tasks has been changing the Spanish 202 curriculum. That change in the curriculum involved a number of tasks: from gathering and leading a committee to selecting textbooks for that level, to piloting the new materials in six sections in Spring 2010, to implementing them in over twenty sections with a large group of students and instructors in Fall 2010. In addition, I also worked with the editor of the selected textbook Atando Cabos to have a customized edition of the book for our SPAN 202 students. The change in materials also meant a challenge to implement MySpanishLab, the online workbook and course management system used with Atando Cabos. A different kind of challenge was the implementation of oral interviews, rather than oral presentations as was done in the past, to assess students’ oral proficiency in the interpersonal mode. Finally, I have been fortunate to have had the possibility of working with two Chairs of the Department, first with Dr. Joseph Weyers and this year with Dr. Mark Del Mastro.

**Hispanews:** Our previous Chair, Dr. Joseph Weyers, incorporated another track of lower level courses for high beginners of Spanish, SPAN 190 and SPAN 200, back in the academic year 2006-2007. Now that a few years have passed by, how do you think this new track has helped students and the curriculum?

**Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater:** It has helped students tremendously. Most of our students come to CofC having taken some Spanish in high school, so most of them do not need to start over in SPAN 101 or in the middle of the SPAN 101, 102, 201 curriculum. By offering the possibility of starting a program that is already designed for them as high beginners, students have a better learning experience, which is tailored to their level. In addition, let’s not forget that they can do two semesters in what used to take three. This type of program is a great innovation at CofC that many schools do not yet offer. Proof of its success is the fact that the SPAN 190 and SPAN 200 Program is already larger than the traditional novice track (SPAN 101 through SPAN 201).

**Hispanews:** Now that your term is coming to an end, could you share with us some of the highlights of your work. What was the most rewarding part? And what made or will make an impact in the near future on the Basic Language Program?

**Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater:** The most rewarding part as Basic Language Coordinator has been working with a large and diverse dedicated group of instructors. As far as the highlights, I believe I have already spoken about the Intermediate SPAN 202 new curriculum, the implementation of oral interviews as assessment of
oral proficiency in the six Basic Language courses, and
the setting up of a website using Ning.com to gather all
the materials the instructor would need such as syllabi
and rubrics (unfortunately, this site is no longer viable
for the program due to technological and fee issues). It
is hard to talk about impact now, but I hope the pro-
gram is a strong one with a solid foundation.

Hispanews: What are the main challenges in the Basic
Language Program?

Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater: To communicate with the
Basic Language Program faculty to accomplish a
standardized and high quality effective program, make
the Program visible and accessible to others and keep
reassessing what works and what does not, both at the
curriculum and at the supporting technology level.
And the last main challenge for the Program in the
near future will be the full transition to the new course
management system, OAKS that has replaced WebCT.

Hispanews: What are some lessons you learned from
previous Language Coordinators (Profs. Sue Turner
and Maria Andrews in particular) and what would
you like to pass on to the new Coordinator, Dr. Robert
Cameron?

Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater: The main lesson I got from
both is that a coordinator has to be a highly organized
individual who always plans in advance. Something
else that they passed on to me was the importance of
being one of the team or group. I am by nature very
organized and what I do to be one of the group is to try
to get to know everyone and to teach at the Basic Lan-
guage level. I would like to stress to Dr. Cameron how
important it is to be organized, to be a good listener
and communicator, to be innovative, and to juggle
being both a leader and a team member. Last but not
least, it is essential to work closely with the Chair of the
Department.

Hispanews: Finally, and since this is already a tradition
in our newsletter, could you share something with us
that readers might not know about you?

Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater: Oh! Let’s see… When I was
in high school and in college, I was a lifeguard and a
swimming instructor at the Club Natació Barcelona
and my favorite swimming class was teaching babies as
young as six months old how to swim.

Hispanews: Thank you very much.

Dr. Rodríguez-Sabater: You are welcome. It was a
pleasure.
Focus on the Faculty

New Faculty

Beginning in the Fall 2011, the department will welcome Dr. Robert Cameron and Dr. Carmen Grace as our new Assistant Professors of Spanish. Dr. Cameron holds a Doctorate in Spanish Linguistics with an emphasis on Second Language Acquisition from Florida State University and Dr. Grace holds a Doctorate in Peninsular Literature in the areas of Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque literature from Ohio State. We extend them a warm welcome!

Faculty Evaluations

Dr. Emily Beck had a successful Third Year Review.

Dr. Raúl Carrillo-Arciniega was promoted to Associate Professor effective in August 2011. Dr. Elizabeth Martínez-Gibson was promoted to Professor effective in August 2011. Congratulations to all of them!

Faculty Mentoring Students

Dr. Lola Colomina-Garrigós directed Elise Lasko’s internship at Caravita, which helped the student develop her advertising and marketing skills in Spanish.

Faculty Activities

Dr. Nadia Avendaño presented a paper entitled “A Chicana’s Coming of Age in Patricia Santana’s Motorcycle Ride on the Sea of Tranquility” at the Cuarto Congreso Internacional de Escritura, Individuo y Sociedad en España, las Américas y Puerto Rico, at the University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo in November of 2010.

Dr. Emily Beck’s study, “Porque oyéndolas les crecían los corazones: Chivalry and the Power of Stories in Alfonso X and Ramon Llull,” was published in the Bulletin of Spanish Studies, 88.2 (2011): 159-176. Dr. Beck has had another article accepted for publication, “Debating Arms and Letters: Curial e Güelfa and Noble Ambitions in the 15th Century” and this article is forthcoming from La Corónica, 2011. Dr. Beck also attended the conference, “Dominant Discourses, Guarded Voices: Religion and Society in Spain and Its Empire 14th-16th Centuries,” An Interdisciplinary Conference hosted by Wake Forest University, October 21-22, 2010. Dr. Beck presented her study “Chivalry, Conversos, and the Noble Ethos in Alfonso de Cartagena,” at a conference on Convivencia in Medieval and Early Modern Spain hosted by the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures at Texas Tech University, September 10-11, 2010. Dr. Beck was also inducted as an honorary member of the Sigma Delta Pi National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society on October 25, 2010. Finally, Dr. Beck received funding for her project entitled, “Navigating Courtly Waters: Preparing Noble Daughters to be Future Leaders of Early Modern Iberia” from the College of Charleston Faculty Research and Development Committee for Summer 2011.

Dr. Karen Berg attended workshops and presentations at the SCOLT conference in Baton Rouge, March 10-12, 2011.

Dr. Raúl Carrillo-Arciniega presented a paper in Puebla last July entitled “Ernesto Cardenal: poeta cósmico” at VI Jornadas internacionales de poesía, organized by the University of Tennessee and Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Dr. Carrillo-Arciniega also presented a paper about the conformation of the mexican identity in Juan Villoro’s short stories at the Con-
ferencia de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea at the University of Texas at El Paso. Dr. Carrillo-Arciniega published the article “De pelados, indio y accidentados mestizos: el drama de ser y estar en México” as a book chapter in *Conciencia Mexicana*. Lubbock: Céfiro P, Texas Tech, 2010. Finally, Dr. Carrillo-Arciniega’s new novel *Los indomables* has been accepted for publication, to be in print by September 2011.

Dr. Lola Colomina-Garrigos presented her article “Mecanismos paratextuales y metaficción como discurso contestatario a la lógica capitalista en Mano de obra de Diamela Eltit” at the Cuarto Congreso Internacional de Escritura, Individuo y Sociedad en España, Las Américas y Puerto Rico at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo, Puerto Rico, on November 18, 2010. Dr. Colomina-Garrigos also gave a lecture entitled “Heritage, Diversity, Integrity and Honor: the Renewed Hope of America” at the National Hispanic Heritage Month Luncheon organized by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in Charleston, SC, on September 16, 2010.

Dr. Mark Del Mastro was named Correspondent Member of the North American Academy of the Spanish Language as well as being named a Board Member of this Academy’s Commission of Education. Dr. Del Mastro delivered key note address entitled “Humanities and You: Where Do I/Will I Go From Here?!?” to open the 3rd Annual Coker College Undergraduate Humanities Research Conference in Hartsville, SC, February 25, 2011. SCETV’s Doug Keel interviewed Dr. Del Mastro about Sigma Delta Pi’s 2010 South Carolina Spanish Teacher of the Year program and its 6th annual awards ceremony held on November 11, 2010.


Dr. Michael Gómez’s article entitled “The Molyneux Problem in Galdós’s Marianela”, was accepted for publication in *Anales Galdosianos* forthcoming in September, 2011. Dr. Gómez also presented a paper at the KFLC at the University of Kentucky on the theme of existential and aesthetic optimism in the early works of Lorca on April 14, 2011.

Dr. Luis Linares-Ocanto presented a paper entitled “Nuevas tendencias en el teatro cubano del S. XXI” at the X Congreso Internacional de Literatura Hispánica in San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 2011.
Dr. Elizabeth Martínez-Gibson’s article “A Comparative Study on Gender Agreement Errors in the Spoken Spanish of Heritage Speakers and Second Language Learners” was published in the January 2011 issue of Porta Linguarum: www.ugr.es/~portalina/articulos/PL_numero15/10.%20ELIZABETH%20A%20MARTINEZ%20GIBSON.pdf

Dr. Luci Moreira presented a paper entitled “Thinking Brazil, thinking business Portuguese: Instructional practices for Professional contexts” at the Ciber Business Language Conference, March 23-26, 2011, in Charleston, SC, organized by Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina. Dr. Moreira also presented a paper entitled “Cinema brasileiro: mulheres cineastas, conflitos e desafios” at the APSA –American Portuguese Studies Association at Brown University, October 9, 2010. Dr. Moreira received the 2011 ExCEl Award (Excellence in Collegiate Education and Leadership) on April 13, 2011. It is sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services and it honors individuals and organizations that create a campus environment that promotes diversity and excellence. Dr. Moreira has been reappointed for another three-year term as Director of the summer Portuguese School at Middlebury College.


Georgia Schlau attended workshops and presentations at the SCOLT conference in Baton Rouge, March 10-12, 2011.

Dr. Joe Weyers published in collaboration with Dr. Rodriguez an article entitled “Ning applications in teaching and administration”, Academic Exchange Quarterly 14, 4: 86-91, 2011. Dr. Weyers was invited by USC on January 18 to give a workshop: “Speaking Strategies: Increasing Students’ Oral Proficiency”. It was a half-day workshop, to faculty in Foreign Languages. He was also invited by the Center for Creative Retirement to do two talks on January 25. The first part was “Language & Culture: You Are What You Say” and the second was “Language Change in Uruguay”.

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 Sigma Delta Pi
The College of Charleston now serves as the national headquarters of Sigma Delta Pi (La Sociedad Nacional Honoraria Hispánica), with Dr. Mark Del Mastro as the Executive Director.

The Nu Zeta Chapter’s officers for this academic year were Dylan Kornegay (president), Sharmaine Edwards (vice-president), and Katie Williamson (Secretary).

Some of this year’s activities were the Spanish reading at the Meeting Street Academy in the fall, the participation in the food contest at the World Cultures Fair (tied for first prize) in the spring, and the welcoming of Panamanian Ambassador Jaime Alemán in November 2010 and of Honduran Ambassador Jorge Ramón Hernández-Alcerro in February 2011, both being inducted into Sigma Delta Pi’s Order of the Discoverers, one of the Society’s highest international honors.

On Monday, October 25, the College of Charleston’s Nu Zeta Chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, inducted the following 13 new student members: Sara Boiselle, Robert Butler, Mark Cipollina, Sarah Comfort, Sharmaine Edwards, Erin Fannin, Caitlin Gilmore, Dylan Kornegay, Angela Myers, Emily Scott, Christin Stewart, Candice Thompson and Bradford Wagner. Also initiated as honorary members were Drs. Emily Beck and Joseph Weyers.

All attendees enjoyed a reception at the conclusion of the induction ceremony. Dr. Nadia Avendaño presided over the ceremony and Dr. Del Mastro presided over the honorary members. Assisting in the ceremony were chapter members Katie Williamson and Megan Roach. Dr. Emily Beck, Devon Hanahan, Dr. Félix Vasquez, and Dr. Marianne Verlinden assisted as well.

A second initiation was held on Monday, April 4, 2011. The following new student members were inducted: Patrick R. Broome, Emily Cox, Michael Dion, Sandi Edwards, Jennifer Franklyn, Michele Greco, Stephanie Harris, Ross Holbrook, Reema Kashif, Jessica Latham, Kristen McCutcheon, Kristen Rayner, Breanna Ross, Nina Saini, Hannah Stevenson and Emily Williams. Mr. Ronald Scheman, LCWA Advisory Board Member, was also initiated as an honorary member for his support of Spanish at the College.

Presiding over the students’ initiation was Dr. Emily Beck and over the honorary members, Dr. Mark Del Mastro. Assisting in the ceremony were chapter officers Dylan Kornegay, Sharmaine Edwards, and Katie Williamson. Faculty assisting included Devon Hanahan, Dr. Félix Vásquez, and Dr. Marianne Verlinden. Dylan Kornegay was presented the Gabriela Mistral Award for her noteworthy initiative in the chapter activities. For event pictures, visit Nu Zeta Chapter’s Blog: http://sigmadeltapicofc.blogspot.com/
In keeping with tradition, the residents of La Casa Hispana have been busy hosting and attending a series of events. This past Fall, they provided Tapas for the Spanish Club as a kick off to the LCWA Film Festival for Spanish-language films. During Member Dinner Night Dr. Weyers held a cooking lesson, in which the residents cooked and ate dinner while getting to know one of their Spanish Professors. They discussed Dr. Weyers’ linguistic studies in Uruguay and other topics of interest like the Drug War in Mexico and Dr. Weyers’ experiences in other countries. Although the following events were not held in the house, they were especially planned for the house and were done as a group: La Casa Reunion in which the new residents of the house had the opportunity to meet former Spanish house residents and talk about their experiences in the house as well as abroad. They also attended “ZUMBA to create a world free of MS”, a fund-raiser by the former president of the Spanish Club, Lawren Anderson at MUSC.

The Hispanic Latino Club became an official club in the Fall of 2010. It was founded by our student Christina Argüello who is also the president of the club. The Hispanic Latino Club is for all Hispanic Latino students at CofC as well as other students who want to learn more about Latino culture. The club participated in the Mardi Gras Carnival on Feb 24, the World Cultures Fair on March 30, as well as Accepted Students Day on March 19, 2011. Among these activities, the club also had several meetings to discuss Latino student retention as well as recruitment. This year’s officers were: Christina Argüello (president), Michael Escobar (vice-president), Kristopher Watson (Treasurer), J’aNice Cunningham-Drakford (secretary), Jeremy López (advertising), and Cristina Getz (philanthropy).

In the Spring semester Sigma Delta Pi met in La Casa Hispana for their second meeting of the year to talk about their future plans as College of Charleston Spanish Honors Society. Many of the residents of the house benefitted from this meeting because they then enrolled to join Sigma Delta Pi. The residents also hosted a fun activity of “Amor y alfajor” for Valentine’s Day in which April Pineda, former resident of La Casa, taught residents and Spanish club members how to make alfajores. Finally, and as an end-of-the-year project, the residents worked with HALOS to help children in foster care by collecting school supplies for back-to-school in August. HALOS operates out of the Charles-

Hispanic Studies Awards

*Distinguished Majors in Spanish: Hispanic Studies*
- Sara M. Boiselle (Dec 2010 graduation)
- Lauren B. Glaser (May 2011 graduation)
- Sara M. Sprehn (May 2011)
- Christin A. Stewart (May 2011)
- Katherine E. Williamson (May 2011)

*Outstanding Major in Spanish: Hispanic Studies*
- Katherine Williamson

*Most Accomplished Spanish Major: Hispanic Studies*
- Sara M. Sprehn (also won the Graeser award!!!)

*Most Accomplished in Portuguese; Hispanic Studies*
- Candice T. Thompson

La Casa Hispana

Hispanic Latino Club
Although there were several changes in the presidency of the Spanish Club, it sponsored the *Tertulias* 2010-2011 at Yo Burrito every other Friday during the academic year as well as two “Tapas y café” events at la Casa Hispana. The Club members met three times during the year and the membership continues to grow.

The big event for Fall 2010 was “El día de los muertos”, on November 2, 2010, the actual day it is celebrated in Mexico. Professor Rosalyna Toth shared her *calaveras, papel picado* and *calacas* to help decorate a traditional “altar con ofrendas”. Students watched a video describing the rituals and were treated to traditional food which included pan de muerto y chocolate along with other pastries, taquitos, and horchata.

In the Spring the club hosted a table at the World Cultures Fair where they displayed Mexican crafts and served taquitos and horchata, which seemed to be a big hit because everything disappeared within 20 minutes.

### Portuguese Club and Portuguese Program

The Portuguese Club and the Portuguese Program had a very successful year in which they hosted and participated in several joint events. In Fall 2010 they sponsored and organized free Capoeira and Samba lessons. They also held a Bate-Papo (Conversation Table in Portuguese.) The Portuguese Club offered cooking lessons at 9 Glebe House were they prepared beijinhos (little kisses) with coconut and sweetened condensed milk, pão de queijo, cheese bread or cheese puffs, and the delicious avocado smoothie. Another successful event was a Film Night in which they showed the light comedy *Cristina Wants To Get Married*.

Spring 2011 was just as busy for the Portuguese Club and the Portuguese Program. They held several events such as Carnival in February, Bate-Papo, Portuguese Conversation Table, Samba Lessons, and at the World Cultures Fair they held a presentation of Capoeira Group of Charleston and the Ji-jitsu Group Krav Maga as well.

Both groups performed two different types of Brazilian Martial Arts. During the International film festival they presented the movie *The Year My Parents Went On Vacation*. This was held as a joint event with the SLCWA.

The following Portuguese students were honored in 2011:
- Outstanding 202 student: Ansley Jones
- Most accomplished student of Portuguese: Candice Thompson
Events

World Cultures Fair

This year the World Cultures Fair was held on Wednesday, March 30th in the First Carolina Arena. There were over forty tables representing different languages, area studies and organizations. From beginning to end, the Fair provided entertainment from outside performers. Thanks to Dr. Luci Moreira, we had a Capoeira and Jiu-Jitsu group. Throughout the day, we also had Asian, African, Bollywood and Belly dancers perform to music from around the world. The Department of Hispanic Studies was well represented with tables representing Brazil, Linguistics, the Casa Hispana, the Spanish and Latino Clubs and Sigma Delta Pi. Our Chair, Dr. Del Mastro spent Tuesday evening at the Casa Hispana with the ladies preparing a paella for the Food Contest competition. Dylan Kornegay, President of Sigma Delta Pi, presented the dish at the Fair and the ladies tied for first place in the Food Contest. During the Fair, Dean David Cohen was presented with a painting created by Ms. Leena Karambelkar, who teaches Hindu. The painting depicts all the languages taught at the College of Charleston.

Over 300 students and faculty attended the Fair throughout the day, which resulted in another successful year for the World Cultures Fair.
Latin American Ambassadors Visit CofC

On November 12, 2010, Panamanian Ambassador Jaime Alemán addressed College of Charleston students and faculty at 2:00pm in Arnold Hall. Following his talk entitled “A Brief History of Panama, the Fastest Growing Economy in the Americas,” the Ambassador was inducted into the Order of the Discoverers of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society. Dylan Kornegay, College of Charleston’s student president of Sigma Delta Pi, and Dr. Del Mastro, National Executive Director of Sigma Delta Pi, recognized Mr. Alemán with one of the organization’s highest honors. A reception sponsored by the School of Languages, Cultures and World Affairs followed the event.

Honduran Ambassador Jorge Ramón Hernández-Alcerro also visited our campus in the Spring of 2011 and gave a talk on Latin America-US relations entitled “Is Latin America in the US front yard?” on February 28, 2011. That same day, Chapter Nu Zeta of the College of Charleston’s Chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, inducted Mr. Hernández-Alcerro into the Order of the Discoverers during his Excellency’s address to the CofC community.

Honduran Ambassador, Jorge R. Hernández-Alcerro (center), with several members of Sigma Delta Pi, after being inducted into the Order of the Discoverers

Ambassador of Panama, Jaime E. Alemán (center), with (from left to right) Katie Williamson, Dylan Kornegay, Dr. Mark P. Del Mastro and Dr. David Cohen, dean of the School of Languages, Cultures and World Affairs
Lawren Anderson graduated in May 2009 with a B.A. in Spanish and a B.A. in Chemistry. She is currently working as a Research Specialist in the Department of Anesthesia at MUSC, and is applying to medical school. She still volunteers periodically as an interpreter at free clinics around Charleston.

Fiorella Brittingham (Class of 2008) has been teaching, for three years now at Bishop England High School in Daniel Island. She teaches second and third grade and admits that, although a handful, she loves teaching kids that age. Fiorella and her husband have two children, 13 year old Isabella and 7 month old Stella Marie. Congratulations on your new baby!

Wendy Caldwell (Class of 1990) graduated with a double major in English and Spanish and is now Associate Professor of Spanish at Francis Marion University. Wendy recalls: “The individualized attention that I received from the professors in the Department of Hispanic Studies at the C of C played a huge role in my own professional destiny. Their passion for the field was contagious, and they inspired me to learn more and to expand my horizons through study abroad. Summer study in Spain was a defining moment in my undergraduate career. It opened my world in so many wonderful ways and led me to return for an extended period of time during my graduate studies. I was also among the first class of undergraduate Spanish conversation instructors. This experience gave me a taste of what life would be like as a graduate teaching assistant. I am grateful to the special professors who mentored me and guided me toward a rewarding teaching career in higher education.”

Alessandra Castillo (Class of 2010) graduated with a Major in Political Science and a Minor in Spanish. She is currently employed as Coordinator of the Office of International Affairs; Employment Office at the Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María in Chile. Alessandra would like to acknowledge that “The classes I took at College of Charleston, my semester abroad in Valparaíso, Chile, and my experience with the Hispanic community in Charleston influenced me to work here in Santiago to do a job that I really enjoy while perfecting my Spanish at the same time. Without the base that the Hispanic Studies program gave me, I am sure that I wouldn’t be able to speak the language, understand the culture in my current workplace, or be very successful in a professional setting anywhere in Latin America.”

Christiane Gaul graduated in December 2002 with a B.A. in Spanish and a B.Sc. in International Business. After that, she went to Brazil for 6 months to improve her Portuguese and to do an internship. This period was followed by an apprenticeship in Germany to be a Commercial Correspondence Secretary for English and Spanish. In addition, Christiane went to Qatar to work for Sheraton Hotels and to start as Public Relations Manager in the capital Doha. Her post was for 2.5 years. She finished her Master of Arts in Latin American & Caribbean Studies and her MBA from Florida International University in Miami (Joint Degree from January 2008 until August 2010). Now she works for andre media (www.andre-media.de) in Germany (her native country) in the international expansions department to coordinate new franchise partners from all around the world.

Kelsey J. Gilmore-Futeral (Class of 2006) graduated magna cum laude from the Charleston School of Law. She is currently practicing law in Mount Pleasant at Futeral & Nelson, LLC.

Jesse Kramer (Class of 2004) is currently the co-owner and Executive Chef of The Brooklyn Taco Company. Their website contains all of the pertinent information about their company: www.brooklyntaco.com and www.facebook.com/brooklyntaco.com. Jesse was a Hispanic Studies Major and a Psychology Major. He would love to do a little snippet with all the College of Charleston grads that have relocated to New York or Brooklyn.

Chelsea Rogers (Class of 2010) graduated with a Major in Spanish and a double Minor in Hospitality and Tourism Management and Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Chelsea is currently employed as Community Health Organizer, Sustainable Food Center in Austin, TX: “So far after graduation I haven’t ended up quite where I thought I would be, but it has been well
worth it. I am currently in Austin, TX working for a non-profit that strengthens the local food system and improves access to healthy food in low-income areas. My professors and classes at the College of Charleston inspired me to be open with my future, prepared me for working with Hispanic immigrants and taught me how to integrate more comfortably into their culture while learning the language. The training and experiences I had in Charleston improved my abilities to reach out to the people I now work with everyday more so than just with language, but culturally as well. These skills are something I will take with me throughout life and I am very thankful."

Sarah Straub (Class of 2008). After graduation, Sarah immediately began graduate school at UNC Chapel Hill. This program was a joint Euromasters program so she had the opportunity to study at Universitat Karlova in Prague, Czech Republic and at Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, Spain. Sarah graduated in December 2009 with a Masters in Political Science: Transatlantic Studies and European Government. She had already been working for a semester with YES Prep Public Schools in Houston, TX. YES Prep exists to increase the number of low-income Houstonians who graduate from a four-year college prepared to compete in the global marketplace and to improve disadvantaged communities. She teaches World Cultures and is the district course leader for Social Studies. Sarah has also taught Art and Spanish at the same institution. Next year, she will be teaching an AP Spanish class to their 8th graders so that they will have college credit even before moving to high school. Other responsibilities include Yearbook, Model UN, Girls Soccer Coach, Boys Soccer Coach, and ISSN liaison.

Amy Walters Vartenisian (Class of 2007) graduated with a B.A. in Spanish and a minor in Secondary Education. Amy was named Teacher of the Year at Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School for the 2010-2011 school year where she teaches middle and high school Spanish. Amy and her husband Drew, who currently live in Rowesville, S.C. In December they had a baby named Mia Kistler. Congratulations to both of you!

Christine Weisglass (Class of 2007) graduated with a Major in Spanish and a Minor in Linguistics. She is presently working towards a doctoral degree in Hispanic Linguistics at Florida State University. After obtaining my graduate degree, I hope to obtain a position teaching linguistics at a college or university. As a professor, I hope that I am able to inspire students to study Spanish and explore the field of linguistics in the same way that my professors at the College of Charleston inspired me. As a student in the Department of Hispanic Studies at College of Charleston, I truly enjoyed writing a Bachelor’s Essay on a linguistic topic with the guidance of one of the wonderful Spanish professors there. Working closely with a professor on a topic that interested me allowed me to get a glimpse of what graduate school would be like. The process was very rewarding and I hope one day be able to help students in similar ways in the future.”
Alumni News

Julie Whitaker (Class of 2006) is living in Charleston and working for CPM Federal Credit Union.

Aubrey Straub (Class of 2006) recalls how her CofC experience helped her find her professional and personal life in Spain: “When I started at the College I never thought I’d become a Spanish major. It’s even more surprising that I’ve ended up living in Spain. After taking advantage of C of C’s study abroad program to Trujillo (twice!) I decided to try to make a life here. Dr. Weyers told me about an opportunity working as an intern at a language academy in Seville, so I applied and I got the job. It was difficult at first, making ends meet. I was working 30 hours a week, making very little money, and living in a Sevillian style home with 16 other people. But I loved every minute of it! The Trujillo program really helped me succeed at my job. I had been forced to learn Spanish because in the town there were very few opportunities for speaking English. However, I wasn’t really prepared for the difference between extremeño and andaluz! It took me a while to figure out that “Graná” was Granada and that “pescao” or “pescaíto” is “pescado”... Despite the dialect differences, my accent quickly adapted and I started falling in love with my new home. As the year ended I found work through the Ministry of Education working as a Language and Culture Assistant. I’ve been working in Aznalcóllar now for two years and am working on finding a full-time permanent job in Seville for the following year.”

Linguistics Program

In January 2011, Dr. Maciej Baronowski from the University of Manchester was invited to the College to visit and lecture in both Linguistics and Anthropology courses. He also gave a talk entitled: “Increasing divergence in American English dialects”, which addressed some of his latest research in the United States.

In addition, on April 7th, Dr. Garrett Mitchener presented “Simulating the evolutionary discovery of combinatorial phonology” as part of the annual Linguistics Discussion Series.

This year Adam Dexter, a French and Linguistics student, has had his paper on historical French linguistics accepted at the International Conference on Hispanic Linguistics in Osaka, Japan this coming July.

Alumna Melanie Keller (2010), recently presented her paper on “Queer Linguistic Activism” at the Women’s Studies Association Conference in Georgia.

Alumna Paula Kiesling (2010), has been accepted into the M. A. in Linguistics program at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa.
Dr. Lola Colomina-Garrigós devoted the week of March 5-12 to an Alternative Spring Break Program in the Dominican Republic (DR). Along with six students: Alex (the student leader), Gaby, Adam, Alison, Sally and Ashley. Jaime Winston (one of the Volunteer Events Coordinators from the Center of Civic Engagement at the College of Charleston) traveled with the group to the north of the DR, to the town of Las Terrenas, in the Samana Peninsula.

**Hispanews:** Tell us about the program itself. What did you do while you were there?

Dr. Colomina: We worked on three different projects for the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation: first and foremost, we helped build a playground (the only playground in a town of 20,000 people, so you can imagine the children’s excitement!); we also helped in the Foundation’s library by cataloguing books and—probably our most exciting task—we did activities with the kids there: we did everything from origami to storytelling, to learning the body parts in English….

**Hispanews:** Can you put those contributions into perspective for our readers? That is, can you tell us what the Foundation’s projects meant for the community there?

Dr. Colomina: Well, in a country where 4 out of 5 kids do not complete their primary education, the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation tries its best to keep children off of the streets—and to build a future for them that doesn’t involve prostitution, as Las Terrenas is rapidly becoming a more popular destination for sexual tourism. In its approximately 5 years of life, the Foundation’s headquarters, the Biblioteca Anacaona, has become the largest library in the northern part of the country with about 6,500 volumes, and its directors and volunteers are doing their best to inspire kids to read and to continue a fragile education.

The Dominican Republic also happens to have the lowest investment in education in Latin America and the Caribbean, with only 1.9 percent of its GDP invested in public education. Without sufficient funds being invested in school supplies and infrastructure, extracurricular activities, teacher/parent training and transportation to and from schools, Dominican children lack the resources needed for a proper education. In this respect, the Foundation is addressing this lack of resources and infrastructure by building a playground on the grounds of the town’s school as well as by providing the kids with books and school supplies.

**Hispanews:** It sounds like the Foundation’s projects are certainly addressing some important needs in the DR… Would you say that the participants in the program also got something out of the work they did?

Dr. Colomina: Of course! I’m quite sure we got much more from them than they did from us! First, the children and people of Las Terrenas helped us remember how much each of us in the group—and in general those of us who live in the so-called “first world”—how much we take for granted, and also how priceless humanity is. Last but not least, the directors of the Foundation, Jose and his wife Anne, are such wonderful, caring and inspiring people. Our group was very touched by their altruistic view of life.
Hispanews: What memories of your experience do you think you will most cherish years down the road?

Dr. Colomina: I will never forget the kids’ smiles and expressions of enthusiasm as we were working on the playground—some of them had probably been dreaming of a swing for weeks, maybe months. It made me happy, but at the same time it broke my heart to know that so many kids around the world lack the minimum living conditions—good water and sanitation, proper education, parental care, etc.—and that means they don’t have the chance to just be kids… It definitely pushed me into a more conscientious and socially-active phase of my life. I will never forget that country’s natural beauty either, a beauty that unfortunately foreigners seem to enjoy much more than the locals (but that calls for another conversation altogether…).

Hispanews: It’s been a pleasure to talk with you. Is there anything else you would want readers to know?

Dr. Colomina: Only that the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation is always in need of school supplies and/or any other item or money you might wish to donate. For more information on how to give, please check out the Foundation’s site at:

http://fundacionmahatmagandhi.com/LasTerrenas-FMG.html
STAY CONNECTED – CLASS NOTES

We would like to know what you have been up to lately. Tell us about your new job, promotion, move to a new city, marriage, addition(s) to the family, special honors received, or anything else you wish to share, by sending us an e-mail to hispanews@cofc.edu, or completing this form and mailing it to: Attention HispaNews - Department of Hispanic Studies - College of Charleston - 66 George Street - Charleston - SC 29424-0001

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