la Celebración Latina 2023

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Greetings!

It is with great enthusiasm that we acknowledge the 24th Annual La Celebración graduates!

On April 28, 2000, the University of Michigan launched its inaugural Celebración Latina to recognize and celebrate this community’s significant contributions to the University of Michigan and continue to do so. Throughout the history of this celebration, many things have evolved across campus. However, the commitment of Latino/a/x students, faculty and staff has remained constant.

As we honor you, we are excited for the opportunities that await you. We are confident that as Michigan graduates, you have the skills, talent, drive, and commitment necessary to overcome whatever challenges you face and make a difference in the nation and the world.

You are joining a community of over half a million Michigan alums spread around the globe—half a million friends, colleagues, and mentors ready to help welcome you into your next chapter. We encourage you to share your knowledge, experiences, talents, dreams, and aspirations with your communities and the world.

Go out and do great things with what you have learned. Do them well, with integrity and joy in the honest work of it. Carry with you the sense of self-assurance that even a pandemic cannot stop you from achieving your dreams. Whatever the next chapter of your story brings, we know the strength of your heritage, the beauty of your talent, and the resiliency of your experience have prepared you to make a difference.

And whatever you do, and wherever you go, Vamos Azul!

Santa J. Ono
President

Laurie K. McCauley
Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Martino Harmon
Vice President for Student Life

Tabbye M. Chavous
Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer
Order of Events

Opening

Master of Ceremonies
Dr. Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes
Professor and Chair of American Culture
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Welcome
Dr. Deborah Willis
Assistant Vice Provost for Equity, Inclusion & Academic Affairs

Keynote Speaker
Elio Morillo
Space Systems Engineer, NASA

Circle Award
Alexa Lynch

Student Speaker
Adriana Ponce
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology
Rackham Graduate School

Class Recognition

Closing
Héctor Galván
Assistant Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiative
Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes is Professor of American Culture and former director and core faculty member of the Latina/o Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is also Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of Women’s and Gender Studies. Born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico, he received his AB from Harvard (1991) and his MA, MPhil, and PhD from Columbia (1999). He is author of *Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009) and of *Escenas transcaribeñas: Ensayos sobre teatro, performance y cultura* (Isla Negra Editores, 2018) and coeditor with Deborah R. Vargas and Nancy Raquel Mirabal of *Keywords for Latina/o Studies* (New York University Press, 2017). His book *Translocas: The Politics of Puerto Rican Drag and Trans Performance* was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2021 as part of the *Triangulations: Lesbian/Gay/Queer Theater/Drama/Performance* series and received the 2021-2022 Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies from CLAGS, the Center for LGBTQ Studies at the City University of New York. He has coedited queer issues of *CENTRO Journal*, Sargasso, and *Hostos Review/Revista Hostosiana* and has published two books of fiction, *Uñas pintadas de azul/Blue Fingernails* and *Abolición del pato*. Larry performs in drag as Lola von Miramar since 2010, and has appeared in several episodes of the YouTube series *Cooking with Drag Queens.*
Dr. Deborah S. Willis is a passionate, enthusiastic administrator, educator, and certified executive leadership coach. As an Assistant Vice Provost she works with the leadership team to develop strategy and tactics that lead to institutional transformation around diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice issues.

Her role focuses on the student experience and she works closely with numerous student-focused units including Student Life and Rackham Graduate School. Prior to joining ODEI, she was an Assistant Director for Professional Development and Engagement at Rackham Graduate School and led the Rackham Professional Development DEI Certificate, a program she designed to prepare participants to work in a diverse environment while fostering a climate of inclusivity.

Throughout her professional career, Dr. Willis has provided vision and advocacy in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and leadership development. Her engaging style of collaboration and coaching encourages progressive, actionable and tangible growth for the people she serves. She is committed to creating initiatives that support an inclusive community and promote institutional change. Dr. Willis holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan and is a proud wolverine.
Elio Morillo
Space Systems Engineer, NASA

Elio’s journey as a space systems engineer has taken him from the far reaches of Ecuador, Puerto Rico, and New York City, to the cutting-edge lunar and Martian programs. With a strong foundation in mechanical and electrical engineering from the University of Michigan, Elio has played an instrumental role in groundbreaking missions like NASA-JPL’s Mars 2020, where he contributed to the success of the Perseverance rover and Ingenuity Mars helicopter. Most recently, he has worked on Blue Origin’s lunar Human Landing System. A product of diverse cultural experiences, Elio is driven by a deep passion for exploration, expansion, and creating equal opportunities for all to access the wonders of space. When he’s not busy pushing the boundaries of human knowledge, Elio generously shares his insights through inspiring talks, volunteer work, and mentorship. Join Elio on his quest to reach for the stars and empower others to do the same.
Congratulations Graduates!
Doctoral Graduates

Adriana Ponce
Rackham Graduate School
Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

Mary Elizabeth Silva-Garza
School of Music, Theatre & Dance
Doctor of Musical Arts in French Horn Performance

Master's Graduates

Ariana Bautista Cortes
School for Environment and Sustainability
Master of Science in Geospatial Data Sciences

Christopher Camacho
School of Social Work
Master of Social Work in Children and Family Welfare

Miguel Angel Lopez
Stephen M. Ross School of Business & Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Master of Business Administration; Master of Public Policy

Eliana Lozano
Stephen M. Ross School of Business
Master of Business Administration
Master’s Graduates

Nilsa Ileana Pedanou
Stephen M. Ross School of Business
Master of Business Analytics

Idalys Vanessa Perez
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Master of Public Policy; Data Science Graduate Certificate

Adrianna Itzamara Rojas
School of Public Health
Master of Public Health in Global Health Epidemiology

Angélica Larissa Tomé
School of Information
Master of Science in Information; UX Research and Design

Marisol Valentin
Stephen M. Ross School of Business
Master of Business Administration

Jessica Villarreal
School for Environment and Sustainability
Master of Science in Ecosystem Services and Management

Maite Alexandra Zapata-Ortiz
School of Public Health
Master of Public Health in Health Behavior and Health Education
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<th>Bachelor’s Graduates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arely Alvarez</td>
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<td>Xochitl Giselle Amaro</td>
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<td>Diego Andrade-Cabrera</td>
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<td>Marisveidy Arellano</td>
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<td>Gabriela Pilar Barrett</td>
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<td>Edgar Becerra</td>
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<td>Julissa Marlyn Cardiel</td>
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<td>Myrka Cardoso-Garcia</td>
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<td>Ruth Mery Carranza Zurita</td>
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<td>Alexandra Castro</td>
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<td>Bianca Cobian-Campos</td>
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<td>Adilene De Los Santos</td>
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<td>Jenely Delgado</td>
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<td>Shannon Nicole Flores</td>
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<td>Kelly Flores Mendoza</td>
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<td>Anjie Garcia</td>
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<td>Airy Crystal García</td>
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<td>Abigail Joana Gonzalez</td>
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<td>Victor Manuel Jauregui-Tapia</td>
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<td>Alexis Jimenez</td>
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<td>Fatima Monserrat Lagunas Vazquez</td>
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<td>Jacqueline Lopez-Bravo</td>
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<td>Melanie Man</td>
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<td>Ashley Martinez</td>
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<td>Ericka Alejandra Mendez Velazquez</td>
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<td>Ashley Durón Mendoza</td>
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<td>Lesley Miranda</td>
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<td>Lorena Miss Ozuna</td>
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<td>Nayetzy Michel Munoz</td>
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Bachelor’s Graduates

Alin Mustafat
Deanna Irene Nila
Bryan Oyuela
Karen Pacheco
Xalma Mavely Palomino
Maryanne Samantha Pantoja
Sydney Marie Perez
Nancy Perez
Joselyn Quintana
Jacqueline Rodriguez
Hiram Rodriguez
Raquel Rodriguez
Megan Roe-Leon
Stephanie Rosas

Crystal Sanchez
Karen Yesenia Sanchez
Alexander Thomas Scotta
Luis Fernando Solano
Carinna Sofía Solano-Vargas
Vincent Sposato
Lesley Michelle Tayagua Lua
Samuel Uribe-Botero
Valentina Vargas
Abylene Vargas-Leon
Martin Gabriel Vega-Velasco
Bernie Allen Velasquez
Ariel Savannah Vidrio
Graduation Celebration History

The University of Michigan’s first Celebración Latina was held in the year 2000 with support from the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI). This celebration was hosted in the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre, and the number of students participating in the graduation continues to grow year after year. We are proud that the celebration continues to acknowledge the accomplishments of Latinx students at the University of Michigan. La Celebración Latina is one of seven cultural graduations hosted annually by the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives.

Thank you to the offices, students, and staff that have supported La Celebración Latina throughout the years.

Graduation Celebration Mission

La Celebración Latina celebrates the commonalities and differences that characterize the experiences of Latinx and other students at the University of Michigan and serves as an example of the University of Michigan’s commitment to diversity.

The ceremony acknowledges the value and uniqueness of the Latinx student experience and serves to commemorate the accomplishments of those students that participate in the celebration. La Celebración Latina recognizes faculty and staff who provide academic enrichments, research opportunities, programs, and activities that promote the communal striving and sense of accountability that help students to achieve.

The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI), in partnership with the La Celebración Latina Planning Committee, institutes this annual celebration as an expression and tradition of valuing the University’s cultural offerings and commitment to diversity.

La Celebración Latina 2023 is coordinated by:

Héctor Galván
Assistant Director, Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives
A Unit of the Office of the Vice Provost for Equity, Inclusion and Academic Affairs
3009 Student Activities Building
515 East Jefferson Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1316
Phone: (734) 936-1055
Statement of Freedom of Speech and Artistic Expression

The University of Michigan strives to create an open form in which diverse opinions can be expressed and heard. Members of the University community, speakers, artists, and other invited guests have a right to express their views and opinions, and the University will protect that right. The University also supports the rights of those with differing views to express their opinions. In the interest of protecting these rights for all, University representatives may warn anyone unduly interfering with a speaker of performer’s freedom of expression, and if the warnings are not heeded, may remove those individuals from the building. The policy extends and affirms University policies set forth by our Civil Liberties Board in our Student Handbook; and in the U-M Standard Practice Guide; Regents Ordinance Article XII, Section 1; and state statutes.

Statement of Affirmative Action

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex*, color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or Vietnam-era veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for Institutional Equity and Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator, Office for Institutional Equity, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388. For other University of Michigan information call 734-764-1817.
Land Acknowledgement

The University of Michigan is located on the territory of the Anishinaabeg people. The Ann Arbor campus currently resides on land ceded through the Treaty of Detroit in 1807. Additionally, in 1817, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadami Nations made the largest single land transfer to the University of Michigan, ceded through the Treaty of Fort Meigs, with the agreement that their children would be educated in perpetuity.

We assert the sovereignty of tribal lands and acknowledge the painful historical and ongoing genocide, forced assimilation, and displacement of Native communities in the establishment of the University.

We affirm contemporary and ancestral Anishinaabeg ties to this land, the profound contributions of Native American peoples to this institution, and the University’s commitment to educate the children of Native ancestors.

Acknowledging the land is an important first step towards healing that needs to be followed by further action. We invite all of you to think about how you can support Indigenous communities that surround you.
These symbols represent the cultural graduation ceremonies that are coordinated annually through the Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI).

Top left to right: Black Celebratory, Native American Graduation, La Celebración Latina

Bottom left to right: Middle Eastern & North African Celebration, First-Generation Graduation, Asian & Pacific Islander Graduation

oami.umich.edu