



DARE TO DO MORE

LaGuardia's Centro de las Américas is officially approved by the CUNY Board of Trustees! What started as a dream less than a year ago has cleared a major hurdle in becoming a reality.

Centro de las Américas will support and celebrate LaGuardia's students while also serving as a cultural and intellectual hub in Western Queens that celebrates the rich and varied traditions and history of the people of Latino heritage. It will become both a conduit for partnerships between the College and community-based organizations as well as an organizing force for cultural and intellectual activities and events that celebrate all of the Latino cultures for the residents of Queens.



It is with pleasure that I also share that co-directors for Centro de las Américas have been selected by the search committee. Dr. Sonia Alejandra Rodríguez and Dr. Ryan Mann-Hamilton each have research, service, and teaching experiences that directly relate to the mission of Centro de las Américas, and both also bring the personal experiences their own bilingual and bicultural upbringings that reflect the population Centro de las Américas wishes to serve.

Dr. Rodríguez received her PhD in English from the University of California Riverside and completed her undergraduate degree in English and Latinx Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her areas of teaching and research are twentieth and twenty-first century American literature, children's literature, Latinx Studies, and Gender and Sexuality studies.

Dr. Mann-Hamilton received his PhD in Anthropology from the CUNY Graduate Center with a concentration in Africana Studies, and holds a Masters in Environmental Systems and an undergraduate degree in International Studies from Humboldt State University. His areas of teaching and research focus on the Caribbean and Latin America and engage with multiple themes around displacement, nation making, environmental justice, AfroLatinx social movements and more recently, food sovereignty. His scholarly interests in the intersections of history, politics, the environment, culture, and race are reflected in his research, classroom practice and his work across the campus.

The establishment of Centro de las Américas is thanks to the dedication, ingenuity and persistence of the committee and working group members, under the leadership of Nayelli Valencia Turrent, Chief of Staff. Please join me in thanking these participants:

- Pablo Avila, Associate Director of ePortfolio and Digital Learning, CTL; Division of Academic Affairs (Working Group Member)
- Anita Baksh, Associate Professor, English
- Olga Calderon, Professor, Natural Sciences
- Loretta Capuano, Director of Student Information Services, Division of Enrollment Management (Working Group Member)
- Cheri Carr, Associate Professor, Humanities
- Soraya Ciego-Lemur, Deputy Director, LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, Division of Academic Affairs
- Milena C. Cuellar, Professor, MEC (Working Group Member)
- Hugo Fernandez, Professor, Humanities (Working Group Member)



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- Hector Fernandez, Professor, Business and Technology
- Alcira Forero-Pena, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Social Science
- Liesl Fores-Iza, Director of Communications, Division of Adult and Continuing Education (Working Group Member)
- Belkis Gonzalez, Associate Professor, English
- Ana Maria Hernandez, Professor, Education and Language Acquisition (Working Group Member)
- Elsie Hernandez, Production Coordinator/Administrative Assistant, Division of Communications & External Affairs
- Rosa Herrera-Rodriguez, Senior College Lab Tech and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Education and Language Acquisition
- John Hunt, Interim Assistant Dean, Division of Adult and Continuing Education
- Ryan Mann-Hamilton, Assistant Professor, Anthropology-Social Science (Working Group Member and Co-Director)
- Ian McDermott, Associate Professor, Library
- Deborah Nibot, Admissions Manager, Division of Enrollment Management
- Wendy Nicholson, Executive Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Arianna Pina, Assistant Director, Student Financial Services, Division of Enrollment Management
- Joy Sanchez-Taylor, Associate Professor, English (Working Group Member)
- Javier Serna, Lecturer, Business and Technology
- Elizabeth Streich, Public Relations Manager – Division of Communications & External Affairs
- Rebecca Tally, Associate Professor, Social Science (Working Group Member)
- Nathan Tosh, Program Coordinator, Women's Center and LGBTQIA Safe Zone Hub, Division of Student Affairs
- Ingrid Veras, Associate Professor, Natural Sciences (Working Group Member)

I also want to thank Vice President Shahir Erfan and his team for identifying M-141 as the physical location for Centro de las Américas, and LaGuardia's Senior Graphic Designer Cindy Busch for developing the new logo. I look forward to continued progress in the establishment of Centro de las Américas in the months ahead.

¡Felicidades!