Tufts Latino Alumni Take to the Streets

By Arminda Guillama, J’05

On the morning of March 25th, 2006, 20 Latino alumni and current seniors arrived at the Children’s Aid Society East Harlem Center, on E. 103rd Street in El Barrio for a day full of alumni events and activities. The event was the first of its kind for Tufts Latino Alumni. While NYC has its own chapter of the Tufts Alumni Alliance, initiatives aimed at specialty groups have started only recently, and this daylong event was quite a beginning.

Spanning at least 7 graduation years, alumni came together that morning to work with over 50 excited kids on arts and crafts activities at the East Harlem Center, keenly tied to the theme of identity. It was obvious that the theory of active citizenship that Tufts prescribed to had not been lost on this group, and the kids seemed to enjoy the morning, spreading glitter across their poster boards and even including our own Jumbo the elephant in some of their works of art.

After a morning of fun and games it was time for the group to have lunch at a mom and pop Mexican restaurant in the lower east side, followed by an intensive historical tour of the area. Our group spent the afternoon learning about the Latino contributions, the effects of gentrification, and a photo op on Loisaida Avenue. Later that evening alumni, current students and friends came together one more time (Continued on pg. 8)

Where Have All the Latinos Gone?

By Rubén Salinas Stern

As you look around the Tufts campus, it is sometimes hard to know that there are any Latino students here. “I was told that there were over 300 Latino students at Tufts. Where are they?” This ‘perception’ is something that I have been trying to understand for some time now because the data doesn’t indicate that there has been a drop in the number of Latino students. In fact, since 1993 when the Latino Center was founded, the number of Latino students at Tufts has doubled in number. Currently there are approximately 350 students (7.5%) at Tufts who identify as Hispanic. This number is comparable to many of our competing universities. So is this a problem of perception or reality?

When we look at the numbers more carefully we begin to see that although the total number has not decreased, there have been demographic changes in the admitted Latino students. For example, the graduating class of 2005 had 15 Puerto Rican students both from the island and from the states. (Continued on pg. 8)
By Lourdes Laguna ’07

With a Masters in Clinical Mental Health and Social Policy already in place, lecturer Linda Sprague Martinez excitedly communicated to me her professional past and her future endeavors. In the midst of all her undertakings here at Tufts, Martinez is also writing a dissertation on cultural competence in health care organizations for her doctoral candidacy at Brandeis University. Initially, Martinez aspired to go to law school. In accordance with that professional track, she obtained a B.A. in political science at the University of New Hampshire. However, when the legal spark devitalized and Martinez returned home after graduation, her mother gave her three options, “Get a job, go to school or get out.” Martinez followed up on the proposal with two jobs and some classes, including one in clinical mental health which triggered a newfound interest. Before making her way to the hill, Martinez maintained close ties with her community in the NH public school systems as an after-school program director and guidance counselor. In accordance with that professional track, she obtained a B.A. in political science at the University of New Hampshire. However, when the legal spark devitalized and Martinez returned home after graduation, her mother gave her three options, “Get a job, go to school or get out.” Martinez followed up on the proposal with two jobs and some classes, including one in clinical mental health which triggered a newfound interest. Before making her way to the hill, Martinez maintained close ties with her community in the NH public school systems as an after-school program director and guidance counselor. Because of her fluency in Spanish, Martinez remarked that she could always find employment as a clinician; she served as a bilingual therapist in her hometown, which has a large Latino population.

Employed for only a year at Tufts, Martinez is already actively involved and looking forward to even more participation on campus after the completion of her dissertation. Martinez lectures in the Community Health Program (CHP), currently instructing a course entitled Race, Ethnicity & Health and spearheading the internship seminar in the CHP. Regarding these amazing hands-on opportunities, Martinez highlighted the importance of building student-to-community relationships and providing students with a “real world community health experience.” She hopes to take part in more campus activities – joining student group discussions & forums, attending more musical events, and simply helping out with more student groups. Martinez would like to become more involved with Public Health at Tufts (PHAT), and the Latino Center. Next year, outside of her community health expertise, Martinez will be teaching a Freshman Advisory Seminar on Caribbean music.

Martinez openly invites all students to contact her: Linda.Martinez@tufts.edu.
Latino's Mens Group: Personal Reflections

By: Glenn Garcia '09

Adjusting to dorm life my first semester was a challenge. I felt like none of the new friends I had made understood where I was coming from. Even my roommate didn’t know whether I was from New York or Puerto Rico for the first month of school. It seemed that there were just some things that didn’t extend outside the Latino community. Yea, I went to the Latino Center Events, and those helped out a lot, but I felt that there was still something missing. I was searching for that feeling that you get when you're just hanging out with your boys. In September just as school was starting up, I found that niche.

A bunch of guys that I had met around campus told me about Latino Men's Group, or LMG for short. They told me that the group was basically all the Latinos who felt that they lacked a place where we could all hang out in a relaxed environment. Interested in getting out of my dorm, I went down to the Latino Center that Friday for the first meeting of the year. It was a chill environment... even Rubén, the director of the Latino Center, was a member of the group (I guess that even married men need to hang out once in a while). That first semester we had a bunch of interesting discussions and cooked a nice dinner for ourselves. I felt that the first semester the group had given me so much that I felt like I needed to give something back. Over Winter Break I thought about different outings and events that we could have when the meetings started back up again. Well, the ball got rolling and Spring Semester Latino Men's Group went bowling, to play paintball, sponsored Islands of the Caribbean (a night of music and food from the Antilles) at La Casa, and there’s more in store for next semester.

I honestly feel that Latino Men's Group has changed my Tufts experience for the better. So far I've met a great bunch of guys, who I hope to continue having friendships with even after we all graduate. I'm also looking forward to meeting the Latinos from the class of 2010. I hope to see you guys at the meetings!

If you are interested in LMG, please contact: Glenn.Garcia@tufts.edu
Congratulations Class of 2006

Maria V Mayoral
Favorite Class: Digital Signal Processing
Electrical Engineering Dept

Efrain Ortega
Favorite Class: Children & Mass Media
Child Development Dept

Yanelly Molina
Favorite Class: Negotiations & Conflict Resolution
Ex-College

Words of Wisdom

Be experimental freshman year, try to be really involved sophomore year, go abroad junior year, because senior year you don’t want to look back and think you could have had more fun or taken part in certain programs. - Justin Carlson

Work hard enough but make time for other important things – extracurriculars, getting to know people, an internship, etc. - Jennifer Morales

Go through your college years with an open mind and challenge yourself in everything that you do. - Fabiola Paz

Try new things and meet as many new people as you can. Have fun! - Yanelly Molina

The key to college success and happiness is balance! Work hard, play hard. - Maria V Mayoral

Take advantage of the resources and the different experiences available here at Tufts as well as in Boston. - Marisol Rodriguez

The main goal of taking a class is to actually get something out of it—you should be getting more out of a class than a grade. - Sasha Perez

Take responsibility for yourself early on – you’re the only one person looking out for you. And take advantage of all the opportunities and resources available here. - Efrain Ortega
'06 Majors

1- American Studies
2- Anthropology
1- Architectural Studies
1- Art History
1- Biochemistry
6- Biology
4- Child Development
1- Chinese
1- Classics
2- Clinical Psychology
1- Community Health
1- Computer Engineering
8- Economics
1- Electrical Engineering
1- Engineering Psychology
1- Engineering Science
3- English
2- History
25- International Relations
1- International Letters & Visual Studies
1- Italian
1- Mechanical Engineer
1- Peace & Justice
2- Philosophy
6- Political Science
9- Psychology
2- Quant Economics
3- Spanish

Favorite Class:
Racial & Ethnic Minorities
Sociology Dept

Jennifer Morales

Favorite Class:
Feminist Philosophy
Philosophy Dept

Sasha Perez

Favorite Class:
Bilingual Children
Child Development Dept

Marisol Rodríguez

Favorite Class:
Music, Blackness & Caribbean Latinos
Anthropology Dept

Fabiola Paz

Favorite Class:
EPIIC

Justin Carlson

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The Latino Center & ARC
-Marisol Rodríguez

Hmm…I’d say this place [Latino Center]! I’ve tapped this as a resource more than anything else.
-Efrain Ortega

The Latino Center & Career Services
-Jennifer Morales

The tuftslife.com website –Maria V Mayoral

Financial Aid, Latino Center & Study Abroad Office -Fabiola Paz

Career Services –Sasha Perez

The Latino Center & Career Services
-Jennifer Morales

Its location. It is close to Boston, yet the campus feels like a community.
-Yanelly Molina

On Best Resources

On Benefits of Tufts’ Latino Community

1) sense of belonging
2) new perspectives
3) really good recipes
-Efrain Ortega

I didn’t really use the Latino Center (but I will say it is a great place to study at night!)
-Yanelly Molina

1) friendships
2) leadership skills
3) sense of community/mentorship
-Fabiola Paz

Always feeling accepted at the Latino Center, even though I am not an active member of the community.
-Sasha Perez

I would say that the Latino Peer Advisor Program was the most important for me because my advisor really made an effort to reach out to me, inviting me to events and being available for me to just talk about different things relating to my experience. Give a shout out to Diana Caba, my advisor! 
-Marisol Rodríguez

Friendship – a community to be a part of for me at Tufts which is really important through the center, ALAS, resident of La Casa for 2 years, as an advisee and advisor.
-Jennifer Morales

Support, guidance, & friendships
-Maria V Mayoral

The Institute for Global Leadership
-Justin Carlson

On Future Endeavors

Fabiola Paz—Teach for America in Houston as a bilingual teacher for elementary school

Sasha Perez -MCATs this summer and working part time at the Hispanic Health Council

Maria V Mayoral- Tufts Masters Program in Child Development pursuing a concentration in Clinical Developmental Psychology.

Jennifer Morales- PR associate with the People en Español!
'06 Ethnic Identity
37 South, Central American & Dominican
12 Mexican
13 Hispanic
13 Puerto Rican (Island)
9 Puerto Rican (US)
7 Cuban

I would be more involved and I would not concentrate less on my school work – but at the same time that’s not the end all be all of your college life.
- Jennifer Morales

I took classes that were too advanced my freshman year.
-Yanelly Molina

(sigh) This is a tough one! I would’ve gone abroad.
- Efrain Ortega

Career Services: they offer a lot of workshops I never went to. That might have been helpful.
—Maria V Mayoral

I think it worked out pretty well.
—Justin Carlson

Being more involved in academics by interacting more with professors and not having put off getting involved in extra-curricular activities.
—Sasha Perez

I would have been more involved in trying to change campus policies and more politically active.
- Marisol Rodríguez

Academically, I have not fulfilled my intellectual curiosities. Because of that, I would take advantage of the classes and the professors more. I would have also liked to be more involved in the greater Boston community.
- Fabiola Paz
Where Have All the Latinos Gone?

The class of 2003 and 2004 had 30 and 27 Puerto Rican students respectively. In contrast, this year’s freshman class had only 8.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the socio-economic background of the Latino students at Tufts is also changing. I have noticed an increasing number of Latino students whose parents attended college and who have grown up away from cities and removed from the Latino culture. In years past, there were more Latino students at Tufts who were from urban areas and first in their family to attend college. These students were leaders on campus and were successful academically. They gave a lot to this university and made it a better place.

What has been the impact of this demographic change at Tufts? Latino students who have grown up in suburban areas, removed from the culture, are less likely to identify strongly as Latinos and thus less likely to participate in the community. Latino student organizations have complained about the small numbers of students who are economically disadvantaged and to those who have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education. Diversity is much more than adding up numbers.

Why is this change taking place? Is it an aberration or a change in philosophy on the part of Tufts? SAT scores are going up every year for incoming students although research shows that scores are very much linked to socio-economic class and race. Is there too much reliance on SATs? Unfortunately I do not have the answers to these questions.

If this trend continues, however, Tufts will become more elitist, less accessible to working class families, and less interesting. We need to increase access to those who are economically disadvantaged and to those who have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education. Diversity is much more than adding up numbers.

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Senior Awards

Fabiola Paz

Audrey L. Hale Award

Latino Alumni

(Continued from pg.1)

last time for dancing and social activities.

A recent graduate myself, I worked with fellow Jumbo, Jeanette Luna, to coordinate the community service aspect of the event. Planning since October 2005 with at least 5 other alumni and Jonathan Kaplan from Tufts alumni relations, the four part all-day event came together. It was amazing to see how the span of years did not affect the cohesion of the group, and the sense of pride in our Alma mater. One alumni even traveled from Washington, DC for the event. From soon-to-be lawyers, engineers, counselors at community centers and teachers, alumni (some who’d never met until this day) came together to share their time and memories, proving that even after their time at Tufts came to an end, the strong sense of community remains.

The success of this first event will inevitably lead to more gatherings of this kind in the future, perhaps on a different scale. This event was open to current students and alumni of all ages, and all ideas for different and interesting events were welcomed - the Tufts alumni relations department was happy to coordinate the event. In the end, those of us that attended formed a stronger bond, and refreshed our connections to Tufts. I can only hope that events such as these, and many more in the future, will serve to keep the alumni connection strong.
By Lourdes Laguna ’07 & Fabiola Paz ’06

In its newest venue, the Association of Latin American Students (ALAS) held its second annual culture show on March 11, 2006. The night began with a cocktail-style reception in Alumnae Lounge. Even in anticipation for yet another fun-filled culture show, many of the guests were able to enjoy this prelude. A live guitarist entertained them as they lined up to fill their plates with a variety of foods. The guests devoured delectable dishes catered by Oriental de Cuba: maduros, pastelitos de carne, pollo y queso, pupusas, arroz y frijoles, pollo fricassee and ropa vieja.

After a successful reception, the doors to Cohen Auditorium opened. Celia Cruz’s La Vida es un Carnaval resounded in the background and drew in the guests as they settled in their seats. The décor was colorful and the Latin American flags hung proudly. The lights began to dim as the music faded; at last the MC’s of the night, Joel Perez and Yissy Perez, welcomed the guests. The show promised to embrace the Latino culture through a theatrical lens, a swivel of the hips and literary interpretations. Dance performances ranged from salsa to reggaeton choreographed and performed by members of La Salsa, the Caribbean Club and of course A.L.A.S, as well as outside performers from Harvard University and a local high school. “This dance travels across different Latino identities. A voyage exploring our African roots and then, flying us back to NYC for a night out dancing at the Copacabana,” said choreographers Marisol Rodriguez and Lourdes Laguna about the piece Jiri Son Bali. Nonetheless, La novela, La Traición, highlighted the show, written and directed by yours truly and Joel Perez. La Traición is a parody of popular Spanish soap operas. In our novela, Joel and I theatrically explore how love and friendships can easily be broken through temptation and betrayal.

The last act of the night was the Fashion Show, a pageant con ropa y música típica of the Latin American countries that represent the A.L.A.S student body. The show ended with Don Omar’s Reggaeton Latino blasting and all the performers dancing on stage. As the president of A.L.A.S. proudly stated, “The culture show is one of the ways in which we can educate our fellow Jumbos about the diversity, complexity, brilliance and resilience of our people and culture.”
ALAS 2nd Annual
Latino Culture Show

Fashion Show
Lolly & Breese

The Crowd
Live Music at
the Reception

Jiri Son Bali

Joel in La Traición
Hosted by
Joel & Yissy

La Traición

La Salsa

Afuego

Fashion Show

Reception in
Alumnae Lounge

Ballet Folklorico
de Aztlan

The Reception

Jiri Son Bali
Did you know...?

...Hispanics accounted for 16.5% of marine recruits last year, up from 14% in 2001

...Produced by Black Eyed Peas rapper Will.I.Am, Brazilian musician and “ambassador of Brazilian samba” Sergio Mendes released his album, Timeless, in which he collaborates with Stevie Wonder, Jill Scott, John Legend and others (mtv.com)

...Robert Menendez (D-NJ) became the second Cuban American Senator and the third Hispanic overall in Senate

...The first U.S. made, locally produced, telenovela Nuestro Barrio, created in Durham, North Carolina is airing throughout the South

...May 1st, the boycott: a day without Latinos, adults will not attend work and children school.

How will the US economy be affected? (Univision.com)

...Latinos in the Los Angeles area generally in good health and live on average five years longer than non-Latinos in California (UCLA Today)

…Michele Bachelet, Chile’s first female President who was elected in January 2006, is a single parent