The First Year Experience

Ulysses Hernandez was born and raised in Santa Ana, CA but spent his four years of high school in a boarding school in New Hampshire. Having grown up in a neighborhood predominantly Vietnamese and Hispanic, and under the upbringing of Mexican parents, Ulysses greatly appreciates diversity at Tufts. What’s difficult for him, however, is being from across the country while “other Latinos [at Tufts] come from New York or from around the area.” Ulysses comments that as a Mexican-American it is sometimes difficult to relate to other Latinos on campus because most of them are from a Caribbean background—feeling like a minority within the minority.

An example of a fellow Jumbo whose home is not too far from Tufts is Alexandra Wynn. Like Ulysses, she was raised in a very diverse neighborhood in Queens, NY. “In comparison to other schools this size, [Tufts] is very diverse,” she comments and adds that the students here are very open minded. The “Many Voices, One Community” panel during freshman orientation was one of the things that helped her realize this.

The First Year Experience

Both Ulysses and Alexandra are grasping the challenges of college life. Ulysses says, “I didn’t think I’d have this much work my first year.” Then again, Ulysses is a Mechanical Engineer in the making, and a tough curriculum is to be expected. Alexan-

LAATU: Tufts’ First Latino Alumni Association

On July 10th, 2007 the Tufts Alumni Office approved the creation of LAATU, the Latino Alumni Association of Tufts University. This organization is the first of its kind on the Tufts campus. I sat down with Shioban Torres (class of ’04 and president LAATU) at Tacos Lupita in Porter Square. We ate some pupusas and discussed how and why the organization was formed.

When did you start the Latino Alumni Association?

We submitted the application to the Alumni committee at Tufts on May 11th of 2007 and it was finally accepted on July 10th.

Did you think about forming a Latino Alumni Association as an undergrad, or was it an idea that was formed later?

No. We were definitely not thinking about that as undergrads. When I went to grad school I really missed hanging out and keeping in contact with my Tufts friends, so we started organizing periodic get-togethers. Later, I got an email from Ruben and people in the Alumni Association who were thinking of organizing an alumni event in NYC in 2006. This initial event sparked interest and the following year we had another alumni event that had a large turnout. After the success of these events, we decided to make it official.

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dra, on the other hand, will potentially major in International Relations - a program which highly influenced her decision to come to Tufts. In addition, both students expect to take full advantage of Tufts programs abroad. Having already enjoyed a school year abroad in Spain during high school, Alexandra is definitely interested in spending another year abroad. Ulysses is considering traveling with Engineers without Borders, an organization that does community service trips in countries like Ecuador.

Ulysses and Alexandra have made their homes away from home in Bush and Tilton respectively and have been lucky with respectful roommates. During the weekends, Ulysses often visits his brother who is a student not far from Tufts, and Alexandra can also find support from her twin sister, a fellow Jumbo. While they didn’t plan to attend the same school, Alexandra “appreciates that her sister is here, but respects their time apart.” She also appreciates that she and her sister were assigned to different cultural centers at Tufts; the Latino Center and the Africana Center respectively. Alexandra explains, “My sisters and I have an African American father, but I am more aware of my Dominican side.” However, she and her sister can meet diverse individuals within each center and come together and connect social circles. She is very aware that “Centers play an important role in the University” and help mold one’s identity. Ulysses has been active with the Latino Center, having had attended the trip to Jamaica Plain and assisting with the LMG dinner for Mujeres. Yet as a member of the Hybrid Racing Club at Tufts and other distinct organizations, he is obviously taking advantage of diverse groups on campus.

Thus far, Ulysses has realized the need to “procrastinate less and get out more” as a freshman. Alexandra would suggest to “branch out” and make new and diverse friendships. The Latino Center wishes them and the class of 2011 much success in their endeavors.

Was the University receptive to the formation of a Latino Alumni Association?

Jonathan Kaplan in the Alumni Office did a great job at really reaching out to us—I mean, any time we emailed him or called him, he was very quick to respond. He sent us all the application materials. He was the one who even brought it up! The University was really helpful.

LAATU had its first on-campus event during Homecoming weekend this year. How was the turnout?

We had a very good turnout. It was great to see a lot of my old friends and there were a few alumni I had never met before. It was also good to meet current seniors and start some networking.

What are other events you have planned?

We will have our annual event in NYC next March. And we are also having period “happy hours,” mostly in the NYC area, where alumni can meet in a casual setting and socialize. We also really want to organize a mentorship program with current undergrads. A lot of us are in grad school or are professionals and we could provide good advice to current students and be a support system. We are also working to establish a scholarship fund for Latino undergrads. Our website www.tuftslatinoalumni.org is currently under construction, so keep your eyes out for it.

Other than the mentorship program, what are other ways you plan to engage the current undergrads?

I spoke to Ruben and Vanessa Rojo (president of ALAS) because we want a campus liaison to inform LAATU about what is happening on the Tufts campus, what issues are affecting the Latino Community, and to keep alumni informed about events. Vanessa volunteered to be that liaison for the class of 2008.

What would be the ideal outcome of LAATU?

We want to take over the world! (laughs) I just hope it’s really successful. The main ingredient is passion—having people who are really motivated and willing to make this work.

The formation of LAATU is a very valuable asset for Tufts students. It will help build an important professional and social network among Latino alumni. If you would like more information about LAATU, visit www.tuftslatinoalumni.org or email Shioban Torres at shiobantorres@gmail.com.
### Latinos in Class of 2011

**Total:** 75  
**Female:** 44  
**Male:** 31

**Ethnicities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central/South American</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (country not specified)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican (US)</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Puerto Rican (Island)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where are they from?**

- MA - 21  
- NY - 12  
- CA - 10  
- FL - 6   
- NJ - 5   
- TX - 4   
- CT - 3   
- PA - 3   
- IL - 2   
- PR - 2   
- MD - 1   
- OH - 1   
- RI - 1   
- VA - 1   
- Venezuela - 1  
- VT - 1   
- WA - 1
Latino Center Events

Latino Center Open House

Jamaica Plain Trip

Thomson Island Retreat
Latino Heritage Month

Opening Reception

Poetry Cafe

Latino Food Fair

Game Night

LAATU Homecoming Event
Latino Studies, like Latinos themselves, resides at the intersection of what is Latin American and what is “American.” The minor in Latino Studies allows students to emphasize either Latinos’ connections with Latin America or their location within the U.S. racial and socio-political context. The minor serves as a “bridge” that encourages students to connect the theories, methodologies and content of the two supporting programs in new, intellectually exciting, and productive ways.

The minor has been designed to serve the general population of Tufts students, Latino and non-Latino alike, who are interested in learning about cultural difference in general, and within the U.S. in particular. While a minor in Latino Studies will be attractive to social science and humanities majors, it will also be useful to those students intending to enter professions in which knowledge of the various Latino communities will be a valuable resource, such as medicine, community health, dentistry, education, child development, urban and environmental planning, business, and international relations.

Requirements:
- One Introductory Survey Course
- One Latin American Survey Course
- One Survey Course in comparative race relations in the U.S. context
- One Core Course consisting of at least 50% Latino content
- One Elective Course relevant to Latino Studies with substantial and/or relevant Latino content
- One community-based Capstone Experience—A project, thesis, performance, or an oral presentation that must follow the guidelines of the Interdisciplinary Minor Program, integrating the knowledge and methodologies of the disciplines involved. In addition, humanities majors may fulfill this requirement by interning at an approved arts agency that works with Latino artists and/or serves Latino communities and then producing a project analyzing the experience.

Students interested in pursuing a Latino Studies Minor should register with:

Program Director: Deborah Pacini-Hernandez, Department of Sociology, x 7-2463
Get Involved!

Apply to Become a Latino Peer Advisor!
The Latino Peer Advisor Program was created to support first year students. Latino Peer Advisors organize fun and helpful activities and programs designed to help first year Latino students make their transition to college life a success.

Applications will be available in late March 2008!
For more information on the program visit: ase.tufts.edu/latinocenter or call x73363

ALAS Culture Show 2008!
“Raices”
The Association of Latin American Students (ALAS) is proud to present its fourth annual Latino Culture Show. The extravaganza will feature dancers, singers, live music, and good food. Sign up and get involved—you don’t have to be on stage to contribute!

The show will take place on Saturday
March 8th

Email Vanessa at Vanessa.rojo@tufts.edu to get involved.

Live in La Casa Next Year!
La Casa Latina offers any sophomore, junior, or senior the opportunity of living with others who are interested in Latino culture. Residents are required to coordinate and participate in house projects and activities in conjunction with any campus organization, academic department or the Latino Center.

The deadline to apply is:
February 4th, 2008
Interviews: February 4th—February 11th
Roster Announced: February 12th—15th

For more information visit:
ase.tufts.edu/latinocenter or call x73363

Join MUJERES for discussions on Latina issues, interracial dating, film screenings, events with other groups, and more!

Fridays from 6-7pm at La Casa, 8 Whitfield Rd.

For more information contact: Jenna.Robey@tufts.edu

All women are welcome!

Tufts LMG (Latino Men’s Group) is an organization dedicated to creating, uniting, fostering, and strengthening the community of Latino men at Tufts. LMG is a safe and open setting where Latino men can voice their thoughts and opinions on issues regarding both the Latino and Tufts communities.

Sundays at 7pm in the Latino Center.

Contact Juan.Pimentel@tufts.edu for more info.
Are you interested in submitting articles, pieces of art or pictures for NOTICIAS? If so, contact: The Latino Center at ext. 7-3363 or email latinocenter@tufts.edu