Directors’ Note

This past year has been a turbulent one for US-Latin American relations, hitting new lows with the tragic and inhumane separation of refugee families seeking asylum at the border. Distracted by its anti-immigrant hysteria, the US government missed opportunities to engage with various crises and opportunities in the region. Amid these circumstances, the JKSIS Latin America Center continues to offer solidarity with all people of the Americas.

From deteriorating democracy to corruption to political violence, Latin America has seen a year of uncertainty. The Honduran president stole an election after halting ballot counting in a suspicious power outage, and, in Venezuela, half of the opposition abstained from elections. A Peruvian president resigned to escape impeachment for corruption, and judicial maneuvers in Brazil invalidated the leading candidate for the October 2018 elections. Colombia elected a president poised to revise the country’s recent peace agreement, and Nicaragua is turning increasingly authoritarian, with conflicts between security forces and protesters. Increasing uncertainty appears in protests against IMF-imposed austerity (Argentina and Haiti), attempts to prolong incumbency (Bolivia), rivalry amongst power-holders and their predecessors (Ecuador and Panama), and defections from ruling parties (El Salvador).

Chile and Costa Rica presented predictably peaceful elections while Cuba and Mexico saw significant transitions. Cuba’s first-of-their-kind elections were followed by a new constitution. In Mexico, a repeatedly-denied candidate secured an undeniable electoral landslide and mandate for reform.

On the economic front, rising commodity prices have constituted growth, but US interest rate increases dampened capital flows and US tariffs and attacks on existing agreements threaten to tighten trade and slow growth. Instead of seeking collaborations, the US government seems concerned more with anti-immigrant xenophobia, yesterday’s War on Drugs and Cold War Right-Left conflicts.

The Center continues to be a hub of Latin America activity in the Rocky Mountain region. We are linking with universities, policymakers, and civil society actors who share our values of civility, respect, equity, development, and democracy. Our events over the last year featured water protectors from El Salvador, leaders of Puerto Rican dignity struggles, and indigenous candidates for office in Mexico. We proudly hosted three postdoctoral fellows from Brazil, Puerto Rico, and the Chicano community of Southern California. We also took the Korbel community to Latin America, with student trips to Brazil and Mexico, and new partnership agreements with local universities and thinktanks. Our faculty published 3 top-rated books.

In the coming year we are planning flagship events on Cuba, Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil, and will continue to expand our partnerships and guided visits. Locally, we will also continue organizing with the Latinx population around issues of concern for them, including immigration, education, and gentrification. We are particularly proud to welcome two new postdoctoral fellows whose work targets all of these issues.

One of the most significant changes is within the Latin America Center itself. After shepherding the center since its inception, Aaron Schneider is moving onto new administrative duties and passes leadership to Oliver Kaplan and Rebecca Galemba. He express his gratitude to them and is grateful to the entire Latin America Center community who have supported us to date.

This promises to be an exciting year for Latin America, US-Latin American affairs, and the Latin America Center. Thank you for joining us, and we look forward to further collaboration.
Support the Latin America Center!

The Latin America Center’s programming is made possible thanks to our growing group of generous donors:

- Mr. Rodolfo E. Biasca
- Mr. John DeBlasio & the GPD Charitable Trust
- Mr. Eduardo L. Feller
- Mr. Andrew Jacob
- Mr. James T. Polsfut
- The Biennial of the Americas

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- **$2,500** – Named lecture series such as the Mesa Immigration Research RoundTable Series
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- **$10,000** – Named scholarship for Latin American students and/or Latino students to attend the Korbel School

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Conference Participation

65th Annual Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies Conference (RMCLAS)

Three students participated in this year’s Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies Conference in Reno, Nevada. Here’s what students had to say about their experiences.

Christine: “Elite Capture of Peace and Security in Guatemala: An Examination of the Indigenous Peoples Reality in the Post-War Period”
“My experience at RMCLAS helped hone my presentation, writing, and researching skills alongside my colleagues at the Josef Korbel School and experienced scholars in the field. I received valuable reading recommendations to further my research, which has shaped my independent study in my last quarter at Korbel. Not only was my experience at RMCLAS valuable for furthering my academic interests, but also a fun weekend exploring a new city with my fellow panelists and Professor Schneider!”

Casey: “The United States and the Proliferation of Latin American Populism: Assessing Patterns in US Responses to Varieties of Populism in Latin America”
“Presenting at the (RMCLAS) was an experience that I will not soon forget! I engaged with several experts, recent research and scholarship on my subject. I received great feedback for my own research endeavors.”

“The other panels were interesting and the short trip to Lake Tahoe was so relaxing and beautiful. I think the best part, however, was getting to work together with classmates and our panel chair, professor Schneider, in a way that would have never been possible through regular coursework. If you get the chance to go to a conference, it’s worth it!!”

Pictured: Amanda Kragt, Professor Aaron Schneider, Christine Caldera, and Casey VanSise
For a 2nd year, LAC professors Rafael R. Ioris and Aaron Schneider spent two weeks in Rio de Janeiro teaching a mixed group of students from Korbel and Brazilian universities. The class included presentations by Brazilian experts as well as applied visits to local historical sites, research institutions, and development projects. Students pursued internships with Brazilian organizations and we are drafting formal relationships with Brazilian universities to pursue exchange, research, and dual degree programs.

Lynn Holland has been studying the recent surge in metal mining and legal reforms designed to alleviate poverty in rural communities. In December 2017, she taught a course in conjunction with the Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW), in Soconusco near the border of Mexico and Guatemala to study the effects of titanium mining on the environment and local residents.

The course will be offered again this fall with support from the Denver Justice and Peace Committee (DJPC).
Since January 2015, Rebecca Galemba has been leading the DU Just Wages Project @ Korbel, a research team of graduate and undergraduate students at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies to investigate day laborers’ experiences with wage theft in the metro Denver area. For day laborers, wage theft commonly manifests as underpayment and outright nonpayment for work completed.

From October 2016 through August 2017, a research team of 8 graduate and 5 undergraduate students surveyed 400 day laborers to understand their experiences with wage theft and the larger climate in which wage theft occurs. We found that over 60% of day laborers surveyed have experienced wage theft; about 20% of these in the past 6 months. Despite available legal avenues to recoup wages, 50% tried to recoup unpaid wages and only 39% asked for assistance. With scarce opportunities for work, the time and resources it takes to pursue wages is challenging, especially given under-enforcement of labor laws. The research team will hold a public dissemination event in the fall of 2018 to raise awareness of the issue. Professor Galemba has been collaborating with community partners and the City of Denver to strengthen wage protections, including co-authoring a White Paper with Towards Justice and Southwest Carpenters in spring of 2018.

In 2017, the project began promoting the project publicly through Facebook, LinkedIn, a blog, and email newsletters. The DU Just Wages Project @ Korbel was also selected by University of Denver Advancement to participate in a fundraising campaign on crowdfunding platform DUGood. The campaign raised over $3,000, which has been used to support student training, outreach to workers, and work with El Centro Humanitario’s Direct Action Team to directly assist workers in wage theft cases.
Social Justice Solidarity

The Social Justice Solidarity Series (SJSS) is a student-driven initiative of the Latin America Center that prioritizes the experiences and needs of under-represented DU students to advance the cause of social justice on campus and in the Denver community. During the 2017-18 academic year, SJSS convened student spaces that interrogated inequities on campus such as racial aggression and gendered violence, and identified contradictions between the university’s ideals and the lived realities for students of color. SJSS engaged in solidarity actions with the people of Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, bringing a postdoctoral scholar from the island and organizing a two-day event including scholars, journalists, lawyers, labor organizers, and representatives of the Puerto Rican diaspora. The SJSS also addressed the uncertainties facing undocumented students, including clinics to help them and community-members update their immigration status before renewal deadlines. For more information contact the coordinator (aaron.schneider@du.edu) or the student lead (abigail.richards17@gmail.com).

Qualitative Research Methods Class

Professor Galemba’s graduate class on Qualitative Research Methods partnered with community organizations to engage in research on issues affecting the immigrant community in Denver. In the spring of 2018, student groups conducted 1) participatory action research with El Centro Humanitario’s Direct Action Team (DAT) to understand the barriers low-wage workers face in reclaiming unpaid wages; 2) interviews with lawyers, criminal justice professionals, and community advocates to understand how interior immigration enforcement is impacting the criminal justice system and immigrant communities in Colorado; and 3) engaged research while volunteering with Casa de Paz to shed light on issues of immigrant detention and asylum. They hosted a public event to share their work with the community with a community advocate who spoke about the impacts of deportation on her family, as well as Boulder DA Michael Dougherty, who shared how Boulder seeks to enhance safety and trust in the current immigration climate.
Fall 2017 Events

**Book Launch: Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves**
By Oliver Kaplan
September 19th
Dr. Oliver Kaplan presented his new book, *Resisting War*.

**Lecture: The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Cyclical, Structural, or Systemic?**
October 18th
Dr. William I. Robertson discussed the state of global capitalism.
Co-hosts: Economics Department, Political Science Department, Communication Studies Department, and the Sociology Department.

**Talk: Vidalina Morales: The Campesina David Who Slew the Mining Goliath**
November 1
Vidalina Morales shared her experience fighting and eventually passing legislation to ban metal mining in El Salvador.

**Mesa Immigration Roundtable: Building Transnational Feminist Solidarity Networks**
November 10
Presenter Sergio A. Gallegos and Discussant Carlos Jimenez discussed trends in transnational feminist solidarity networks.
Winter 2018 Events

**Book Talk: Contraband Corridor: Making a Living at the Mexico-Guatemala Border**
January 11
Dr. Rebecca Galemba presented her new book Contraband Corridor.

**Talk: “Indigenous Rights, Alternative Development, and Democracy in Mexico”**
January 17
Bettina Cruz of the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) in Mexico, with Francisco Grado Villa, discussed the struggles of indigenous populations in Mexico.

**Talk: “Dragging the Past Before the Court of Justice: Trials of Human Rights Abusers Living in the U.S.”**
February 12
Dr. Terry Karl discussed human rights abusers that have relocated to the United States, and how she has helped seek justice for their victims.

**Talk: “Cuban Revolution in America”**
February 22
Dr. Teishan Latner discussed his extensive research into the clash between the United States and Cuba.

**Mesa Immigration Roundtable: “Failure to Pursue: Immigrant Day Laborers and the Colorado Wage Claim Process”**
March 9
Presenter Dr. Rebecca Galemba and discussant Dr. Sarah Horton discussed the wage claim process of day laborers in Colorado.

**Book Talk: The Making of a Dream: How a Group of Undocumented Immigrants Helped Change What it Means to be American**
February 27
Laura Wides-Muñoz presented her book The Making of a Dream and discussed the lives of those living undocumented in the United States.
Spring 2018 Events

Talk: “Fighting for a Better Life in Chiapas”
March 29
Cohosted by the Denver Justice and Peace Committee

Talk: “Puerto Rico: Forging a Path Forward”
April 16
A panel discussion about the current state of Puerto Rico before and after Hurricane Maria, and suggestions for moving forward.

April 24
Post Doc Fernando Horta presented and discussed his research on the theory of realism and its effects on the Cold War.

May 1
Post Doc Daniel Olmos, an IRISI Fellow, presented and discussed his research on the regulation of day labor-

May 2
Post Doc Raymond Laureano presented and discussed his research on Puerto Rico’s paradiplomacy during the

Panel Discussion: Mexico Elections
May 3
Cohosted by World Denver
A panel discussion on the Mexican Presidential elections.

Talk: “U.S.-Brazil Trade Disputes During the Brazilian Military Dictatorship: The Case of Soluble Coffee and its Implications for Brazil’s Foreign Policy in the Cold War”
May 9
Dr. Felipe P. Loureiro discussed a trade dispute between the U.S. and Brazil during the Cold War and its effects on Brazil’s foreign policy.

Book Launch: Renew Orleans? Globalized Development and Worker Resistance after Katrina
May 10
Dr. Aaron Schneider presented his new book Renew Orleans?

Qualitative Research Methodologies Presentations
June 1
Dr. Rebecca Galemba’s class presented their Qualitative Research projects, with lectures from immigration community advocate Virginia Calderon and Boulder County DA Michael Dougherty.
Publications

Aaron Schneider

Oliver Kaplan

Rebecca Galemba

Lynn Holland
(2018) "Honduras: Hearing the Call for Democracy," Carnegie Ethics Online, February 20, 2018

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