I. Equal Opportunity Compliance
As part of the faculty and staff hiring process, and in accordance with our 2016-2021 strategic plan, the Center strives to identify and recruit minority candidates to apply for open positions. We follow non-discrimination practices in all hiring decisions, as well as with admission decisions for our Master of Arts in Latin American Studies (MALAS) program and our Master of Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) program—the latter administered jointly with the Center for African Studies. We actively encourage foreign students from Latin American countries, and other world regions, to apply for admission to our graduate programs through various partnership agreements with organizations and universities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

II. Equity Accountabilities
Part of the Center for Latin American Studies' mission is to advance knowledge about Latin America and the Caribbean and its peoples through research and education and virtually all of our programs, academic initiatives, and outreach activities support diversity. As a National Resource Center funded by a US/Department of Education Title VI grant, we are also required to work closely with minority-serving institutions and to organize a wide range of events aimed at incorporating different perspectives and fostering open debate about Latin America's regional relations and contemporary affairs.

The Center regularly invites scholars, policy makers, artists, activists, and community members with the goal of promoting a comprehensive knowledge of Latin American cultures. The highlight of our activities and initiatives for the 2016-2017 AY includes:

- The Latina/o Studies Lecture Series invited scholars that engaged students in discussions about the economic crisis in Puerto Rico and its implication for demographic changes in Florida, Latinas/os’ racial dating choices and their effect on US race relations, and the unanticipated consequences of DACA (Deferred Action of Childhood Arrival) for young adults.

- In Fall 2016, the Southern Cone Conservation Initiative of our Tropical Conservation Development (TCD) Program organized an event titled: “Women Scholars in Environmental Sciences and Sustainability: Opportunities and Challenges in Latin America,” which brought together 52 women from different generations across Latin America to examine gender specific issues at work and build a collaborative network to strengthen women’s impact in the region.

- The 66th Annual Conference, "Cuba and the United States in the 21st Century," celebrated on March 30-April 1, 2017, which counted with the participation of over 20 guest speakers from Cuba and more than 200 attendees.

- Outreach events organized in collaboration with minority-serving institutions such as Bethune-Cookman University (HBCU), the Georgia Consortium of Colleges (Community Colleges), and Florida A&M University (HBCU). We are looking into expanding relationships with the University of Puerto Rico (one of the largest Hispanic-serving institutions in the US).


- We continue to award book scholarships to students from Latin American countries in order for them to qualify for in-state tuition (FS 1009.21 (10)(e)), thus making UF more accessible to Latin American students.

I think it might be good to use the official name of these scholarships, rather than their nickname.
III. Diversity in Services

One of the primary goals that guide our 5-year strategic plan is to foster “an exceptional academic environment supported by a community of students, faculty, and staff who represent diverse experiences and background.” We have been extremely successful in building a team of faculty and staff that represents diversity in terms of race, gender, culture, language, and country of origin. At the faculty level, LAS continues to achieve gender equity with women making up 50% of the center-based faculty. This year we were particularly successful in increasing the representation of Hispanics/Latinas(os) in our staff population (5 out of 11) by hiring four Spanish-speaking employees with cultural roots in Bolivia, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic/Puerto Rico.

27 students from the US, Latin America, and Europe were enrolled in our MALAS program. Of those 27 students, 59.3% were women and 25.9% were of Hispanic/Latina(o) heritage. Our MDP program counted with an enrollment of 34 students, out of which 76.5% were women. 14.7% of MDP students were Hispanic/Latina(o) and 38.3% international students (“nonresident aliens”).

Additionally, we graduated 19 undergraduate students enrolled in LAS minor and/or certificate program, of which 12 (63%) were women.

Using the data provided by the Office of Institutional Planning and Research, we gathered the following identity information from center-based faculty, professional and support staff, and graduate students for the 2016-2017 AY.

### Center-Based Faculty

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<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latina(o)</th>
<th>Black/African American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
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### Professional and Support Staff

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<th>White</th>
<th>Non-Resident Alien</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total number of staff includes two team members who left the Center in Spring 2017

** The Non-Resident Alien is of Hispanic/Latina(o) descent
### IV. New Initiatives

The Center assisted in the creation of three interdisciplinary working groups: "Buen Vivir and Post-Development Pathways in Latin America," "Digital Library of the Caribbean as a Research/Teaching Commons: An Interdisciplinary Working Group on the Arts and the Humanities," and "Biosensors for Displaced Communities in Rural Colombia." In addition to organizing lectures, sharing research works, and creating instructional materials, these groups help us promote Latin American studies on campus and beyond by bringing together UF faculty, students, and Latin American scholars.

As part of the Center’s strategic plan, we succeeded in recruiting Tanya Saunders to teach about race, gender, and sexuality in Cuba and Brazil. She is an Associate Professor in the Center for Latin American Studies and the Center for Gender, Sexualities, and Women’s Studies Research.

LAS also managed to hire a Latina as Assistant Director of Administrative Services who is a first-generation college graduate and Ph.D. recipient and the first person of this ethnicity to hold such an administrative position at the Center.

In terms of our graduate programs, the Center recently revised the MALAS Graduate Handbook to include a diversity statement. The students enrolled in the 2016 MALAS program represented a dozen countries of origin and seven native languages. The handbook celebrates this cultural diversity and provides more information to students and faculty on how to navigate the numerous resources our Center has to guide them successfully throughout the program.

We also revamped our website to highlight in a more effective way the Center’s interdisciplinary character and the depth and breadth of our academic programs and outreach activities.
V. Accolades

Our Center was the recipient of the 2017 American Organization of Teachers of Portuguese (AOTP) Award thanks to the successful work of our Associate Director of Outreach, Mary Risner, promoting Portuguese language and Brazilian culture in K-16 classrooms and the community in general. The award commemo-rates LAS deep commitment for education, diversity, and inclusiveness.

Pilar Useche, Associate Professor in the Department of Food and Resource Economics and the Center for Latin American Studies, led UF representation in the Land-Grant University-Colombia Dialogue Consortium that established a scholarship program for Colombian students interested in doing agricultural research.

LAS Assistant Director of Administrative Services, Lenny A. Ureña Valerio, was elected an Executive Committee Member of the Consortium of Latin American Studies (CLASP), an organization that advances the study of Latin American cultures and languages nationwide. She will serve in this position until the end of 2019.