Reflexiones

Estimad@s colegas y estudiantes,

The year is off to a running start! Primeramente, CLS is pleased to welcome three new CLS faculty members. Professor and documentary filmmaker Alexandra Hidalgo joins us from the Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures in the College of Arts and Letters, where she engages in and supports research and scholarship addressing fundamental aspects of Latina/o experience and pedagogy. Professor Patricia Marin is a faculty member in the College of Education’s Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education (HALE) Program, and focuses on issues of access and equity in higher education, Latinos in higher education, particularly graduate students, and higher education policy and legal issues. Professor Riyad Shahjahan, also of HALE, is driven by the question “What constitutes valid ways of knowing in higher education?” He explores how some ways of knowing are valued over others and the social-cultural-political-historical processes that impact knowledge validation and dissemination.

Summer 2014 was full of conversations and developments in and around Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies nationally. The Imagining Latina/o Studies: Past, Present and Future conference was held in Chicago to rave reviews. The largest meeting of Latina/o Studies scholars ever, it organized 119 panels over three days and registered 520 participants. The emerging topics reported by the conference organizing committee highlighted the issues that have begun to inform our field and are already informing our lives: “Latino elites and conservatives, intralatino differentiation, constructions of illegality, social movements around immigration, and Latinas/os in new destinations.”

In other conference news, the 2014 National Association of Chicana/o Studies (NACCS) Midwest Foco will be held October 23-25 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. We look forward to having MSU Chicano/Latino Studies represented at this important Midwest Latina/o Studies event. The 2015 national NACCS conference is set for April 16-18 in San Francisco, with the theme “Chicana/o Ini/Civilities Contestation y Lucha: Cornerstones of Chicana & Chicano Studies.” This second iteration of the conference theme came about after “[c]ommunications and dialogue with the NACCS membership...critically highlighted the coercive uses of the term of ‘civility’ and prompted a vigorous dialogue...” (www.naccs.org). Monopo-

lizing the authority to establish apparent standards of collegiality and respect, accusations of “incivility” very often serve to marginalize direct, honest and legitimate challenges to dominant and dominating structures of power. Hopefully, the 2015 NACCS conference will be able to explore productively this paradox of institutional in/civility.

Many of you are aware that we are in the middle of National Hispanic Heritage Month. We appreciate the opportunities given the campus community during this time to learn more about Latin@ in the US. Check our back page for listings! And remember, every month is Latino@ Heritage Month at CLS!

Professor Sheila Contreras
Director