

**Progress Report for American Philosophical Association Small Grant project:
“Beyond Borders: Bringing Latinx Undergraduates into Philosophy”
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I. Introduction

As noted in our initial project description, the underrepresentation of various groups in philosophy is well-known, and the profession has developed a variety of programs to counteract this underrepresentation through, among other things, mentoring programs for undergraduate, graduate and early tenure-track members of the profession. One group that is significantly underrepresented is persons who identify as Latinx. Our program is aimed at correcting this underrepresentation, following in the footsteps of the successful undergraduate, graduate and early career mentoring programs for underrepresented members of the profession. It is noteworthy that there is no standalone program directed at undergraduate Latinx philosophers, and we have designed our program to fill this gap.

It does so in two ways, and this report details the progress on both fronts. The first component of the project is to provide a mentoring program specifically directed at Latinx undergraduate students at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), which is located at the border with Mexico. The second component of the project was to enable several Latinx undergraduates to take part in the Latinx Philosophy Conference, held in Spring 2018 at Rutgers University.

In this report, we detail what has been done so far with respect to each of these components. In our final report, to be completed after the program has concluded, we will provide details regarding the specific use of APA funds. (Some of this is complicated because costs are being covered through various sources.)

II. The Mentoring Program

We have held or have scheduled five mentoring sessions for undergraduate students at UTEP. The schedule for these visits is attached.

Mentors give a morning mentoring session and an afternoon public colloquium talk. The mentoring sessions are geared toward philosophy majors and minors with Junior standing, but they are also open to Seniors and our terminal M.A. students at UTEP. In addition, we have invited students from the neighboring university in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico and from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM to participate.

To date, we have held two mentoring sessions and one public colloquium talk (due to personal circumstances, one mentor was unable to come to campus and thus participated in the mentoring session via Skype). At each mentoring session, we have had eight students attend. The number of students attending roughly corresponds with the number of undergraduates who are currently applying to (or seriously considering applying to) graduate school. In order to reach a larger

number of students, however, we have also solicited the help of the University Communications office at UTEP to develop a web presence for the program as well as a more far-reaching advertising model.

We have begun distributing anonymous surveys after each mentoring session for students to complete. These surveys contain questions designed to collect demographic data about the attendees (e.g., student status), likert scale questions (e.g., likelihood of applying to graduate school), and open-ended questions that ask students to write about what, if anything, about the session they found helpful and what additional resources students would find helpful as they consider graduate school. We will also send student attendees an electronic survey to complete after all mentoring sessions and colloquia have been held in order to collect data on the overall effectiveness of the program. Our final report will include details about the information that we gather through these channels.

The public colloquia have, thus far, been well-attended by a mix of students and faculty. These events provide additional opportunities for students who are undecided about applying to graduate school to see “philosophy in action” in contexts other than the classroom.

Schedule of Mentoring Events and Public Colloquia at UTEP: Fall 2018

- 1) Linda Martín Alcoff (Hunter College/ CUNY Graduate Center): **September 14th**
Mentoring Session (via Skype): 12:00-2:00 pm, Health Sciences (HSSN), Rm. 206
- 2) Jennifer Morton (City College of New York/CUNY Graduate Center): **Sept. 24th**
 - **Mentoring Session:** “Drawing Boundaries with Family, Friends, and Community”, 9:00-11:00 am., Liberal Arts Building, Rm.222
 - **Colloquium Talk:** “The Ethical Costs of Upward Mobility 3:00-5:00 pm, Old Main, Rm. 211
- 3) Agustín Rayo (MIT): **Oct. 5th**
 - **Mentoring Session:** “How to Start a Career in Philosophy,” 11:00-1:00 pm, Quinn Hall, Rm. 203
 - **Colloquium Talk:** “On the Open-Endedness of Logical Space,” 3:00-5:00 pm, Quinn Hall, Rm. 212
- 4) Carolina Sartorio (University of Arizona): **Oct. 19th**
 - **Mentoring Session:** 9:00-11:00 am, Quinn Hall, Rm. 203
 - **Colloquium Talk:** “How Are We Morally Responsible For Our Actions?” 2:00-4:00 pm, Quinn Hall, Rm. 212
- 5) Alex Guerrero (Rutgers University): **Nov. 15th**

- **Mentoring Session:** “Graduate School in Philosophy: What, Why, How, Where,” 11:00-12:30 pm, Education Building, Rm. 112
- **Colloquium Talk:** “Should We Choose Our Politicians by Lottery, Rather than Election?,” 3:00-5:00, Liberal Arts, Rm. 211

III. The Latinx Philosophy Conference

One of the central stated objectives of the program was to get Latinx undergraduates who are interested in philosophy to see what it might be like to pursue a PhD in Philosophy and a career as an academic philosopher. Toward that end, we planned for three Latinx undergraduate philosophy students from the University of Texas – El Paso to have the opportunity to travel to Rutgers University to attend and present work at the Latinx Philosophy Conference in Spring 2018.

After creating an application form and soliciting applications, we selected three undergraduate students—Danielle Guzman, Lauren Viramontes, and Omar Moreno—to attend the conference on the basis of their excellent applications. Their travel and lodging expenses were covered by a combination of APA funds, Rutgers University and funds available at UTEP. The students presented their work through a poster session during the Latinx Philosophy Conference (see attached program), attended the sessions during the conference, and had an opportunity to meet and talk with current Philosophy PhD students and professors about both philosophical topics and topics relating to academic philosophy. Additionally, the students wrote up a report of the conference which will be published in the upcoming *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy*. Those students made the following comments in their report on the conference:

“During lunch, on the second day of the conference, the three of us, undergraduate students Danielle Guzman, Omar Moreno, and Lauren Viramontes (all from University of Texas-El Paso), had the opportunity to present posters, detailing our individual research projects. (This opportunity was supported in part by an American Philosophical Association Small Grant award for the project “Beyond Borders: Bringing Latinx Undergraduates into Philosophy.”) Lauren and Danielle presented on topics pertaining to metaethics, and Omar presented on 19th century German idealism. The undergraduate presenters provided the following remarks about their experiences of the conference:

“The Latinx Conference enriched my undergraduate studies in several ways. The presentations allowed me to see how philosophical ideas are received and encouraged by the responses and questions of others, to the next stage of their development. The opportunity to present a poster was a unique experience that helped me think about the different ways to organize and present research and philosophical ideas. The conference was also an excellent opportunity to further develop my intrapersonal communication skills. Hence, the most rewarding part of participating in the poster presentations was interacting with the philosophers who graciously provided me with their perspectives on my efforts and engaged with my poster by asking questions about its content.” (Omar Moreno)

“The Latinx Philosophy Conference was an incredible experience. The atmosphere was very welcoming and it was wonderful to learn about emerging work on a diverse range of topics. Using a poster to present my research at the conference was a great way to organize and communicate my thoughts clearly. The feedback I received from philosophers has helped shape and better my project. Overall, the setting was very comfortable and provided a space to strengthen and enrich the existing community of diverse Latinx philosophers.” (Danielle Guzman)

“The Latinx Philosophy Conference provided me with the opportunity to attend presentations from philosophers working in a broad range of subfields, and at diverse points in their academic lives. I am left feeling grateful for the candid conversation that developed during my poster presentation. Receiving valuable feedback, interspersed with lighthearted discussion, allowed for an experience that was both instructive and enjoyable. Engaging in a conversation about my research, instead of merely reading through my paper, forced me to articulate my ideas in ways that I might not have previously. It was certainly fulfilling to sit down with philosophers who I respect greatly, and really just ‘talk philosophy.’” (Lauren Viramontes)

We are very pleased with how the conference went for the three undergraduates, and delighted that their summary of the conference will be published in a professional forum. We will include that publication in our final report.