



Loyola Marymount University
Intercultural Affairs

A Celebration of You

In *A Celebration of You*, we take a moment to highlight students, staff, and faculty who demonstrate Inclusive Excellence. In this spotlight, we aim not only to celebrate your successes, but to foster more personal connections within the LMU community.

This month, OIA celebrates the specified programs that are instrumental to the success and well-being of our students from underrepresented backgrounds. We interviewed professor Ernesto Colín, Ph.D., an LMU alumnus who benefited from *Chicano/a and Latino/a Student Services* as a student. Dr. Colín, associate professor of Teaching & Learning in the School of Education, has also dedicated his time to mentoring students and giving back to a community that helped him thrive. We asked Dr. Colín a few questions about his experience and what keeps him dedicated to the work.

How would you describe your undergraduate experience at LMU?

I had a wonderful experience as an undergraduate at LMU. I am a first generation college student who left home for LMU, but I was able to thrive because of a dynamic campus community, support systems, life-long friendships, amazing mentors, enriching courses, student organizations, and a wonderful eco-

system. The main adjustments I had to make were structuring my time and learning to juggle academics with other involvements.



Can you share a salient memory or experience with *Chicano/Latino Student Services* that contributed to your career or life path?

I have numerous memories of the ways CLSS and those involved there made a positive impact on my life and career. CLSS fostered in me such things as leadership, coalition building, cultural pride, opportunities for activism, transformative programming, connections to alumni, resources for student led projects, a gateway to greater Los Angeles, and a bridge to my academic interests. The director was a role model, someone truly committed to our community, an activist part of a large network. I remember, for example, the CLSS office helping us organize a big concert/cultural night called Westside Cafe. It was a big deal and many of us were involved in planning and organizing fundraising, artist and musicians, lighting and sound, marketing



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and media, sales, vendors, security, everything. We had bands who later went on to Grammy-award-winning success there and hosted people from across the city. The Chicana/Latina students, artists, and activists. . . *artists!* involved in this movement inspire me to the day.

What was your motivation to become a professor? Did you always seek to come back to LMU?

My motivation to become a professor involves a long story, a large intersection of elements. Part of it is to honor my parents, grandparents, family and ancestors, who have sacrificed so much and worked so hard for me. They toiled in fields, gardens, factories, homes, and kitchens so I can stay in school. I came to enjoy school, especially as I got older and was able to specialize in areas of passion. Also, I am energized by the dynamism of a vibrant college campus, featuring constant renewal, events, and learning experiences. Also, I enjoyed my LMU involvement in many student organizations, like the El Espejo tutoring program and my work-study job in the School of Education which nudged me toward becoming a public high school teacher. I loved teaching and coaching in high school but was encouraged to go on to a doctoral program and started teaching at three different institutions of higher education. Research, academic life, mentoring, and being in a community of scholars became generative things in my life. I did not seek to come back to LMU but I am so deeply grateful a visiting scholar position and tenure track opportunity matched with my expertise and academic timing.

Can you share with us your teaching philosophy and vision for your students?

This can be another long answer, but boiled down I try to walk alongside my students, learn from them, support their passions, and have my relationship marked by mutuality.

What do you most enjoy about your mentorship and leadership roles at LMU?

Aside from the aforementioned ancestors/family, I would not be where I am today without the fundamental support, guidance, and encouragement of mentors, from high school to the present. They helped sustain all my goals and accomplishments. I feel blessed in this regard and am still in touch with my key mentors. And thus, my hope is to pay that gift forward. I cherish the opportunity to support students in their personal, academic, and professional journeys, even in small ways, in the hope I can make the road a little easier for them, the same way obstacles were removed or doors were opened for me in the past. I love seeing students accomplish their goals and get their degrees, go on to things like further study, exciting jobs, community organizations, international contexts. I love when students stay in touch and when long term friendships develop, as well.

The resilience, determination, and passion of our students drives the work that we do. Having been a student and now a faculty member, Dr. Colín represents the very ideal we strive to embody at LMU and OIA: creating the world we want to live in, and thus promoting a cycle of inspiration, elevation, and enrichment. Thank you, Dr. Colín!