

I am here to speak against the discontinuation of the major, Master's degree, and graduate certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. I am a professor in the Department of anthropology and have been a faculty member at KU since 1989. I am a Latin America specialist with a research focus on indigenous peoples of Central and South America and the Caribbean. I have been a faculty affiliate of the Center for as long as I have been at KU. I have taught many undergraduate majors and graduate students in Latin American Studies in my courses, especially those that are cross-listed in the program, and have also served on committees for Master's theses in the program. I led a semester-long KU Study Abroad program in Costa Rica that was administered through the Center of Latin American Studies. I have served on the Executive Committee for the Center and also served as acting director of the Center during the transition between former directors Danny Anderson and Betsy Kuznesof. I served on the promotion review committee for Anita Herzfeld, a faculty member in the program, and I have represented Latin American Studies on search committees for the hiring of faculty with seed money from Title VI grants. I have been a presenter in the Waggoner Research Colloquium and have given many public presentations for the Center. I have also participated in the program's teacher training programs. My teaching, research, and service have been cited in successful grant proposals for Title VI funding in 1994-2006, 2010-2014, and 2018-2022. In Fall 2017, I served by invitation as the Greenleaf Distinguished Chair of Latin American Studies at Tulane University. In brief, I have been involved with this academic program in many different ways for many years including during my terms as director of Indigenous Studies and chair of the Department of Anthropology.

The Latin American Studies program was established at KU sixty years ago, after the University had already established pioneering exchange relationships with partner institutions in Latin America, including with the University of Costa Rica (the oldest such exchange agreement between a university in the U.S. and Latin America). The program has had an ongoing, beneficial impact on my teaching and research as well as that of countless other faculty members throughout the University. Undergraduate and graduate students in the program that I have taught in my courses have typically been of the highest caliber. They often have personal experience in Latin America from participation in study abroad, international travel, and mastery of Latin American languages, including lesser-taught indigenous languages such as Quichua and Kakchiquel. The addition of a Caribbean focus has enhanced the program's international expertise, especially given KU's long-term strengths in Haitian Creole. Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) grants provided by the Center to students have been a major contribution to their success, especially when underwriting international study. The program has expanded its scope from a focus on countries and cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean to people from these countries in a broader, transnational diaspora. Issues of transnational migration to and from the U.S. merit the best scholarship we can provide and I believe our program has long succeeded in promoting this. I have served on committees for successful Masters' theses in the program that were completed by students who went on to pursue doctoral degrees in highly rated, competitive programs at KU and elsewhere. The program's alumni represent some of KU's greatest assets.

The program director and affiliated faculty expressed concern when KU's program in Global and International Studies (GIST) was created because we thought this other program would draw

students away from Latin American and Caribbean Studies. I think this has proven to be the case, and may explain the declining enrollments in its undergraduate and graduate programs. While there is significant merit in training students broadly for careers addressing global issues, there is also great value in training Latin America specialists. I am concerned that the discontinuation of the degree programs in Latin American Studies will result in a dearth of KU graduates who are adequately prepared for careers in this field. Many graduate programs in Latin American Studies at other universities give admission preference to students with degrees in that field. The same is true for employers who are seeking specialized expertise in that area. I am skeptical that students with degrees in Global and International Studies will have the same level of success.

The rationale for discontinuation of the program asserts that having only 0.5 FTE faculty has hindered the Center's ability to attract students. In fact, this has been a minimal cost for a program with high success. Historically, the success of the program was the direct result of expert recruitment and advising, especially by retired faculty member Anita Herzfeld—whose services are sorely missed—and others who devoted considerable time, effort, and expertise to program recruitment. However, the strength of the program has always been its diverse faculty affiliates. Yes, our primary teaching responsibilities are to our home units, but we have been successful at fulfilling these while also providing curricula relevant to degrees in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. There are many options for improving the Center's ability to attract students that do not require the assignment of additional FTE. In particular, a concentrated effort on quality advising has been critical to recruiting majors and graduate students.

The Dean of the College has stated that discontinuance will have no impact on the mission of the College and the University to offer courses in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. However, creating an undergraduate concentration on Latin American and Caribbean Studies within the GIST B.A. degree has not yet been formally approved. This will affect course scheduling and approval and enrollment in other programs. The creation of a graduate concentration within the GIST Master's program has also not yet been formally approved. I respectfully request that the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee vote against discontinuance and postpone this decision until such time that the Director, Executive Committee, and faculty affiliates of the Center of Latin American and Caribbean Studies have been able to review and formally approve the proposed changes. Given that the program has had sixty years of success, it is unwise to discontinue it before these changes have been completed.

The Center of Latin American and Caribbean Studies serves the University as a whole and not only the College. It has been funded by substantial Title VI grants from the U.S. Department of Education. While the record of the Center is strong, I am concerned that changes to the academic program may jeopardize chances for future Title VI funding. For this reason, I urge the committee to vote against discontinuance at this time.

Thank you for considering my objections.

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