

**SUBMITTED BY: M. ROY WILSON, PRESIDENT**

**RECOMMENDATION TO RENEW CHARTER  
Center for Latino/a and Latin American  
Studies**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors renew the charter for the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies (CLLAS) through January 31, 2029, as recommended by the Center and Institute Advisory Committee-I (CIAC-I). The Provost concurs with this six-year charter renewal recommendation, as does the Policy Committee of the Academic Senate.

**Background**

Established in 1972 the mission of CLLAS is to:

Transform the academy, and ultimately society, by providing equitable access to a quality university education to student interested in U.S. Latino/a and Latin American cultural studies while enhancing diversity on campus.

In 2003, Dr. Jorge Chinaea became the Director of CLLAS. Under Dr. Chinaea's exemplary leadership, CLLAS supports students during the recruitment and admission process, holds an 8- week summer program for students ahead of their entry into WSU, and provides peer mentors and academic advisors throughout the students' time at WSU. Dr. Chinaea is supported by an assistant director, three full time faculty, one part-time faculty member, and two academic staff. Additionally, the center employs multiple college work study/student assistants each year to assist with administrative task and approximately a dozen peer mentors to support students participating in the center's learning communities. CLLAS has an annual budget of approximately \$915,000. Fifty-five thousand dollars of which is supported by external funding sources, \$55,000 annually from an endowment, \$690,000 from the university general fund and \$115,000 in endowed scholarship funding. Over the last 15-years CLLAS has absorbed University-wide budget reductions to the general fund by reducing payroll.

**Review**

In accordance with the Board of Governors Wayne State University Statute 2.23.01 *Centers and Institutes: Policy on Creation, Operation, Review, and Discontinuance*, CLLAS underwent a formal review by the Center and Institute Advisory Committee-I (CIAC-I) during the Winter of 2022 - 2023.

The CIAC-I committee followed the guidelines provided by the Provost's Office to assess the evidence and value of the CLLAS as a freestanding unit at WSU. The review process involved a) an in-person site visit at the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies including interviews with the Center's leadership, senior management team, internal and external constituents b) CLLAS self-study from 2022 and 2015/16 d) attachments to the self-study including faculty professional records, publications, rechartering documents from 2009, a rechartering application from 2015 and a report to the provost in 2019. The CIAC-I report recommended that the charter for this Center be renewed for a period of six years. The committee submitted a final report to the Provost and to the Policy Committee of the Academic Senate. The Policy

Committee of the Academic Senate received the report and prepared a recommendation for a six-year renewal also.

### **CLLAS strengths as indicated by the CIAC-I**

CLLAS' value and activities are closely aligned with Wayne State University's mission and values:

- a. During the site visit the CIAC-I found repeated support for value CLLAS brings to all of its constituencies. These include faculty, students, student service units, and community leaders and citizens. The Center was repeatedly cited for its high-quality, training, and mentoring environment and extreme dedication to its students and the Southwest Detroit citizens with whom it works.
- b. Working with 2,500 students over the past 50 years and 250 undergraduate Wayne State University students currently.
- c. Providing a place to be and a sense of belonging for students from diverse backgrounds – who are often commuter students.
- d. Providing an 8-week summer enrichment program for students entering Wayne State.
- e. Training and hiring peer mentors – an exceptional program for both the mentors and the undergraduate students they serve.
- f. Holding research and scholarly conferences for students and faculty to participate in.
- g. Conducting important nationally recognized scholarship in Latino/a and Latin American Studies.

Given its 50-year history in Latino/a and Latin American studies and its deep advocacy for and championing of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, CLLAS plays a unique and important role at Wayne State University. CLLAS is unique in that it integrates multiple and disparate parts of the Wayne State mission; ones that are typically found across and not within the same unit. CLLAS strengths include its embeddedness in student success for Wayne State University undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds, as well as its faculty whose expert teaching and scholarship in Latino/a and Latin American Studies provide important role models and academic mentors for the students associated with the Center. In addition to CLLAS embeddedness in Wayne State student services (e.g., admissions, financial aid, academic advising), CLLAS has strong connections to the community, with a focus on Southwest Detroit. The CLLAS is a model program for successful work with under-represented students as well as high level scholarship in Latino/a and Latin American studies.

### **Recommendations by the CIAC-I for the next charter period**

The committee recommended the following for the CLLAS:

- a. **Sponsorships, other forms of fund development:** Currently, only 6% of the centers budget is derived from externally funded grants and contracts. While this is a major goal for the CLLAS, there is confusion about how best to reach this goal. The review committee believes that there are two clear pathways towards fund development: (1)

CLLAS alumni—the profile of CLLAS needs to be raised among Major Gift Officers (especially in CLAS) and collaborating with the Center leadership will be key; (2) more philanthropy dollars through foundation and corporate giving. CLLAS leadership will need assistance in both identifying new sources and in writing grant proposals. In the review committee’s opinion, CLLAS represents a significant opportunity for the Corporate and Foundation Relations office of Wayne State.

- b. Faculty Research:** The CLLAS leadership and faculty believe that by hiring a grant writer they can make major strides towards enhancing their research. The review committee agrees that resources being put towards grants is an excellent idea, however, the review committee offers an alternative approach. Instead of hiring a grant writer, hire grant consultants to work one on one with faculty who are seeking funding. Grant writing for scholarly projects is best done by faculty who will lead the projects. The review committee recognizes, however, that grant writing skills are a different type of writing. OVPR and the Provost office offer support for humanities and social science grants, grant writing workshops, and grant consultants. CLLAS may need some funds from these offices to be able to make use of grant workshops and consultants.
- c. CLLAS Advisory Boards and Community Engagement:** The loss of clerical/program assistant support and the COVID-19 pandemic stymied the ongoing advisory board meetings. It is critical to CLLAS that these meetings resume. The review committee agrees, however, that coordinating these meetings and the follow up activities that result from them require a new staff member (i.e. program assistant or clerical position).
- d. Education:** Wayne State is counting on CLLAS leadership and years of experience to play a prominent role in creating a hub of programs for under-represented students on the 7th floor of the Student Center. This is an excellent role for CLLAS and the Center Director; faculty and staff are excited about these opportunities. In other educational goals, CLLAS is interested in furthering interdisciplinary modules in STEM to broaden the academic exposure CLLAS is involved in.