

The Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication Newsletter

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the CENTER FOR HISPANIC
MARKETING COMMUNICATION



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It's Time for Marketers to Stop Thinking of Latinos as a Monolith



Written by
Lauren Lootens

Lauren Lootens is a second-year master's student in the Integrated Marketing Communications program at Florida State University. She hopes to work in the beauty and skincare industries to help further the impact and representation of marginalized people.

Even though this year has been full of unexpected twists and turns, many of us have shock fatigue ~ things simply don't feel as surprising as they might have at the beginning of the year. But in true 2020 fashion, November had one big surprise in store - the way Latinos voted in the November Presidential Elections was a huge shock for political analysts and the Democratic party. It was not surprising that President-Elect Joe Biden received most of the votes for Latino-identifying voters, but rather that he did worse with Latinos overall than Hillary Clinton did just 4 years before.

The losses amongst Latinos were not universal ~ they mainly came from older Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade County. A lot of the losses were due to anti-socialist rhetoric that came from the Trump campaign, but it runs deeper than that. This is not something that happened over the course of a few months of President-Elect Biden being subjected to fear-mongering regarding democratic socialism. This is simply a symptom of a bigger issue that society has long ignored.

Latinos are not a monolith, though the media largely refers to them as such. According to a 2014 survey by the Pew Research Center, out of the roughly 54 million Hispanics living in the United States at the time, 24 percent of them self-identified as Afro-Latino. A further 34 percent identified as "Mestizo" or mixed-race. Afro-Latinos and mixed-race Latinos have to endure far more discrimination than White Latinos. Not only is racism deeply ingrained in America's social systems, but it is also deeply ingrained in the societies of all Hispanic countries. Colonialism and the Western standard of beauty has made it almost impossible for Afro-Latinos to achieve the same fortune that White Latinos often reach ~ this is even seen in preferences for lighter skin straighter hair.

Afro-Latinos are less likely to have some level of college education in comparison to other Latinos, and they are more likely to have smaller family incomes. Latinos themselves perpetuate the systemic racism that exists in the U.S. and the willingness of Cuban-Americans in Miami-Dade to vote for

President Trump despite his repeated racist remarks against Latinos is a clear example of that. The idea that all Latinos have equal access to the “American Dream” is wholly incorrect. Afro-Latinos are 2.5 times more likely to live in chronic poverty than White and Mestizo Latinos. Yet despite all of these clear disparities that exist amongst the supposed Latino monolith, the media continues to paint Latinos as one homogeneous community.

What does this mean for marketing? The answer is clear - marketers need to start treating Latinos as being bound by a common heritage, but also existing in the same intersections of racial injustice as all people do in the U.S. Marketers can't keep pitching products to Afro-Latinos using only White or Mestizo imagery. There needs to be recognition and representation of this group that has long been cast aside by not only American society, but by their own people. The marketing industry is unique due to its pervasiveness in everyday life. Marketers have the power to impact how people perceive one another in society. Nicole Martins of Indiana University has found in her research that, “There's this body of research and a term known as ‘symbolic annihilation,’ which is the idea that if you don't see people like you in the media you consume, you must somehow be unimportant.” Marketers can use the overwhelming presence of advertisements in society to help Afro-Latinos know they are important and that they matter, while also letting Latinos know there is work to be done in their own communities.



Faculty Profile: Erika Gianni



Written by
Jonathan Tavares



Erika Gianni

The Center for Hispanic Marketing Communications Advisory Board welcomes Erika Gianni, currently serving as the Director of Digital Strategy at Zealand Pharma. Erika, an alumna of Florida State, received her master's degree in Integrated Marketing and Management Communication. At FSU, she took classes with Dr. Korzenny and assisted him in establishing The Center.

Having founded a successful career, she returns in an effort to help support students navigating their education and to further the continuing accomplishment of The Center. "I really wanted to come back to The Center and help advise students who might be in the same place I was in when I was in the program, just trying to navigate my career path," she explained.

After receiving her undergraduate degree, Erika volunteered with the Peace Corps in Honduras. This experience allowed her to explore how important cross-cultural connection is, building communication bridges by exchanging stories and sharing information with different people.

After her return to the United States, she worked at a study-abroad company, taught Spanish, and took language classes at FSU. Discovering the importance of cultural connection and the meaning multicultural marketing had for her, she pursued her graduate degree at FSU. "The communications program at Florida State is excellent, and in particular the multicultural aspects of the HMC communications class helped me to learn about things that I never considered before," said Erika.

With regards to communications, Erika explains the importance of listening and observing to gather insights and from that, determining how to best engage with people. "For me," she said, "it's always about listening, observing and building bridges."

Erika places value on challenging convention in the name of innovation. She believes in searching for new methods and in experimentation, learning from

these experiences to inform efforts down the road. "I'm big on just trying things, experimenting with different ways of doing things, realizing that, if you're not successful the first time, you can try something different to make your efforts more meaningful the next time."

Whatever role students take in their careers, marketing or otherwise, Erika stressed the ability to listen and communicate with diverse groups of people, a skillset indispensable to both The Center and students across the board.

Faculty Profile: Tony Suarez



Tony Suarez

Written by
Jonathan Tavares



these drivers; marketers must be aware of their target audience. “Culture is the thread that binds us all together,” he said. As he sees marketing evolving, he explained marketers must adapt to stay at the forefront, observing an increased consideration of cultural insight. Of the Hispanic market in particular, he sees efforts to reach this audience have become more complex with the more evolved cultural component. He explained that as the landscape of the U.S. market changes, it is up to the brands to evolve with it.

Mr. Suarez brings to the Advisory Board an extensive background of multicultural professional experience and a deep sense of the dynamism and a consciousness of the marketing trade. With his help and knowledge, The Center can continue to carry the values of multicultural awareness into the current and future marketing world.

Tony Suarez, Director of Marketing and Consumer Multicultural Experience at Humana, joins the Advisory Board. Mr. Suarez has been a long-time friend of The Center, having last been involved roughly ten years ago. Working with Dr. Korzenny, he was introduced to teaching at Georgia State University where he was a professor of marketing. He decided to return to The Center as a member of the Advisory Board, working on sharing the marketing profession and skillset with the next generation.

In regard to marketing, Mr. Suarez explained marketers must craft a compelling narrative to present an idea and take into consideration what drives behavior in consumers. Where these consumers exist on the cultural spectrum is crucial to understanding

Alumni Spotlight: Alexia Gonzalez



Written by
Lucia Maldonado

Alexia Gonzalez graduated from FSU's master's program in 2016 while pursuing her certificate in multicultural marketing. Before that, she received her B.A in English in 2015. As a double alumna, Alexia embodies what it means to be a hardworking FSU graduate. She paved a career for herself that is tailored exactly to what her interests and goals are. During her time at The Center, Alexia worked as a TA for a public speaking class. She took full advantage of this opportunity, using these skills now as an oral presenter. During an interview with Alexia, she expressed the dynamic roles that the environment at The Center provided for her. Her learning experiences with account planning strategies and grassroots marketing have since helped her in her professional life. Since graduating The Center, Alexia has worked on many projects with high profile clients such as Hard Rock International, Party City, Domino Sugar, Discover the Palm Beaches, and Hertz. Working with brands with diverse followings allows Alexia to target multicultural audience through marketing campaigns.

While working with all these international brands, Alexia has also worked on her own personal brand. GALA Life is Alexia's blog

which she writes about everything ranging from fashion to wellness, to food and restaurant reviews. As an experienced multicultural content creator, GALA Life reflects Alexia's unique lens through which she views the world to connect people from different cultures by reading about their fascination for one common ground with her largest audience being multicultural groups. GALA Life blog posts like "Five Tips to Perfect Public Speaking," for example, provide insightful advice on how to succeed in any type of oral presentation from someone with academic and professional experience.

In an interview with Alexia, she proposed the importance of "cultural relevancy" when attempting to target multicultural groups." She explains this is because Hispanic cultures vary and encompass different customs and traditions. My interview with Alexia was extremely insightful and excites me for what The Center has in store for someone who is recently getting involved. Read below for more on what she had to say about her time at The Center.

Q&A with Alexia Gonzalez

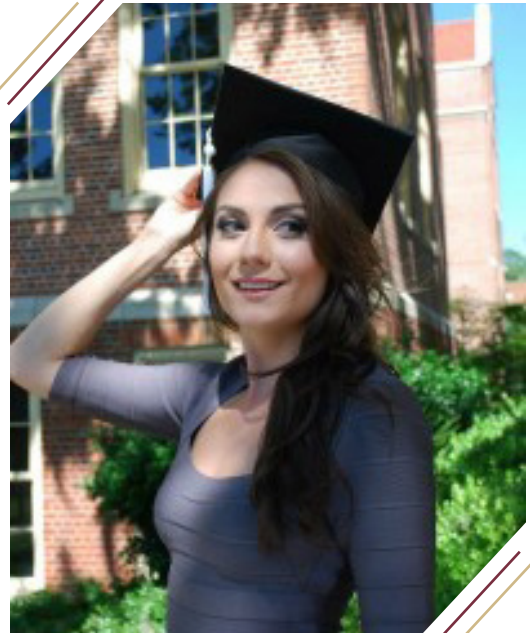
What advice you would give to your past self while you were still at the Center, knowing what you know now about media and digital studies?

“Knowing what I know now about media, I’m regretful of not having become more of an early adopter of social media back in my grad school days. For instance, Latinos are 50% more likely to use social media as sources of information than non-multicultural users.

With the way technology has developed, there will constantly be a new feature and a new platform and if you’re ever wondering whether you should learn more about it, you should! If there’s a new skill that you want to pick up or something unique that you want to create, don’t wait to start learning -- in fact, you can get started as soon as you finish reading this!”

How have you used the connections you made at The Center to further excel in your career?

“I truly attribute a lot of my resulting career selection and development to the Center and Dr. Chapa’s influence. I can honestly say that my time at the Center was a pivotal turning point in my life and for my career and I’m forever grateful for that!”



Alexia Gonzalez

Mentorship Event



Written by
Jonathan Tavares

Despite social distancing over Zoom, mentors and mentees participating in the HMC Mentorship Program came together for the first time on October 2nd. The Mentorship Program puts students in touch with industry leaders, giving them the invaluable learning opportunities brought by their mentors' experience and passion, while also forging a human connection that can last long into students' careers. Members of the HMC Advisory Board in addition to staff from Republica Havas, an international integrated marketing communications agency, lend their time and professional insights as mentors to HMC students.

Former mentee, Lori-Joelle Johnson, shared her experience in the program. She urged this year's participants to take advantage of the opportunities brought by the mentorship as well as the importance of goal sharing and meeting accommodations.

What mentees gain from the relationship is a reflection of the kind of consideration and effort they put into building it. They should give their mentors an idea of who they are, their story, strengths and weaknesses, and where they want their life to go. Mentees should also follow up on the mentor's suggestions and insights, keeping them apprised of how their work is helping a blooming career.



Leif Roll, Marketing Vice President at State Farm, mentor, and Chair of the HMC Advisory Board, encouraged mentees to “definitely get to know your mentors”. He suggested mentees leverage their relationship with these experienced professionals, valuing their wisdom and experience.

Joana Wong, a graduate of the HMC program and Senior Brand Strategist at Republica Havas, reflected on her time in the mentorship. “I’ve been in your shoes” she said to mentees. “They want to see you shine and grow in your career – take advantage of this”.

Mentees introduced their mentors, expressing their anticipation, before their first meetings in Zoom Breakout rooms.

Mentorship Program 2020 - 2021



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Wave when you hear your name
Keep your mics off until it's your turn to speak
Thank you

Ni'A Landon, mentee, is excited to grow professionally. Being part of the program, she says, offers the “honest truth” and a sense of connection. She expects to gain confidence and, as a minority, she feels the program offers preparation for an industry that does not look like her. Mentees felt their meeting a success and their pairing natural, with some mentees and mentors having the same hometown, similar family backgrounds, or having attended the same schools.

Mentors themselves are benefiting from the program, feeling reenergized as they usher the next generation into their professional field. The mentorship “reenergizes someone like me whose been in the game a long time,” said mentee Peter Villegas, Vice President & Head of Latin Affairs at The Coca Cola Company. Chris Miller, a mentor and member of the HMC Advisory Board

and the Vice-President of Sales at Latin America-Emerson, eloquently observed that the “mentor and mentee relationship makes me feel a lot younger”. For both mentee and mentor, the program is mutually fulfilling and enlightening learning experience.

The event closed with a final message from Leif Roll, looking forward to the program and thanking everyone for their generous commitment.

He wished everyone healthy, an important and timely message that attendees took to heart. In spite of difficult times and with innovative resources like the Mentorship Program, the HMC Center continues to safely adapt and grow talented professionals in Hispanic Marketing Communication.

Netflix Panel



Written by
Jonathan Tavares



HMC staff and students met with Netflix panelists October 14th over Zoom. The hour meeting proved to be a highly insightful look into what a career in marketing communications looks like and how these professionals have worked to grow and adapt skills into their present positions.

Adrien Lanusse, the longest sitting member of the HMC Advisory Board and VP of Consumer Insights at Netflix, traced his career steps. Growing up in a multicultural household ingrained in him a natural interest in how cultures differed from one another. In the 1990s, cross-cultural strategization between companies became more competitive as audience outreach became a more globalized concept. As Adrien grew his career through his experience and cross-cultural skills, he helped Netflix cultivate a more global footing.

Celeste Eberhardt, FSU alumna, is in charge of brand campaigns for Netflix. Celeste collaborates with show creators to understand their visions and create marketing strategies; the materials, essence, and tone for each campaign.

As a student, she explained she did not have a clear direction in the beginning, but through a background of internships, extracurriculars,

and job experience, she followed the path that led her to where she is today. Through the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Celeste was placed in an internship as a producer at RGA, a New York based international advertising company, where she began establishing her relationship with Netflix. She remarked, “Slowly, you can kind of find your path in life.”

Ricky Ringer, FSU alumnus, participated in an extensive background of career building and educational experience, building his portfolio. He spoke of his experiences filing and delivering tapes as an intern before becoming involved in post-coordinating film work. Through his footwork and insightfulness, he put himself in direct contact and in reach of knowledgeable professionals. Through this experienced background, he was able to translate this knowledge to working on the film staff at Netflix.

Fielding questions from Dr. Chapa’s students and staff, the panelists reflected on some insightful career fundamentals. Adrien stressed building bridges and making connections, along with open mindedness, curiosity, eagerness, and passion. “Connecting with folks is super important,” he explained.

Celeste expressed similar sentiments about the value of connection, such as through networking and internships

Ricky remarked to students that “Your experience is going to be valued at some point,” highlighting what seemed to be an overarching theme. Up and comers must fulfill that crucial need for experiences and connection with other professionals, both important steps that can lead them on the path they want to go.

Joe Kutchera Event



Written by
Jonathan Tavares

On November 28, HMC staff met over Zoom with Joe Kutchera, a digital marketing and content advisor and author of *E-X-I-T-O: Su Estrategia de marketing digital en 5 pasos* and *Latino Link: Building Brands Online with Hispanic Communities and Content*.

Mr. Kutchera has a rich background of progressively furthering multicultural awareness and communication.

Mr. Kutchera discussed the considerations of using social media to reach audiences. He stressed long-standing rules of communicating sincerely with audiences, listening and providing content the consumer can relate to. This kind of sensibility is important, particularly to the Latino market, in crafting locally oriented, relatable, Spanish-speaking content.

Spanish language social media posts currently face a problem of finding reception. In response, advertisers can analyze these issues and find resources and ways to use them, such as influencers who can help spread messages to a more receptive audience and finding key reference leaders in the community.



Mr. Kutchera advised students to focus on relationships, to ask themselves what kind of relationships they have built with mentors, experts, and professionals. Students must put their best forward in their professional interactions, and to stay present for the needs of others. In choosing where to work, he advised to look for a sense of understanding of the consumers and audience, for aura of inclusivity and forward-thought.

The panel offered excellent takes on the multicultural marketing landscape for students from an experienced and prominent professional.

Republica Havas Panel



Written by
Lucia Maldonado



As the dynamic and norms of this year continued to change, The Center came up with ways to ensure students stayed on an educational path and remained connected with professionals. Events were no longer an option, but Zoom helped overcome this obstacle. Zoom panels allowed students at The Center to network with and learn from renowned professionals in multicultural marketing and beyond. Republica Havas, an advertising and communications agency, participated with an informative panel, Advertising in the Time of Coronavirus. Panel members spoke about the pandemic's impact on their clients, and ways in which the agency adapted to respond accordingly. They explained how Republica Havas quickly pivoted — reevaluating, strategizing, and reconstructing priorities to address the rapidly changing needs of their clients.

Having moved employees to remote work when the pandemic began, the agency stressed the

importance of being a team player, especially in times when everything seems to be going wrong. The Republica Havas panel spoke to students about how they tackled the new challenges, allocating tasks and time to manage the circumstances.

The Republica Havas team is composed of extremely creative and innovative professionals who are united in encouraging the younger generation. The panel stressed the importance of starting the professional journey as early as possible by learning through internships and experience. They advised students to stay open to opportunities, even those that differ from your career path, because it is important to take advantage of every chance to learn.

Armando Estupiñan, Market Research Associate at Republica Havas, offered these encouraging words to students, “Get your foot in the door, learn from other people, follow through, and offer help. Even if it’s not your role, be proactive, be willing to step out of your role; you never know what could come out of it.”

Joana Wong, an FSU alum who is now a Senior Brand Strategist at Republica Havas, spoke to students about the many possibilities FSU offers, which

helped her launch her career. She recommended that students be fully open to opportunities at Florida State that ease the transition from student to professional. “Take advantage of the FSU Career Center Services! They check your resume and give you helpful advice; they also do mock interviews and have a lot of workshops. I learned a lot about performing well in interviews by participating.”

Similarly, Karen Acevedo, Associate Media Director at Republica Havas and an FSU alum, is enthusiastic about the value of internships. “If you can participate in MAIP (Multicultural Advertising Intern Program), do it! The MAIP Internship Program matches you with your interests. Whatever you do, stay open to opportunities, because you learn through your experience.”

The Republica Havas panel provided students at The Center with a very enlightening and insightful perspective of advertising during the pandemic, as well as strategies to kickstart your career. On behalf of The Center, we would like to thank Republica Havas for giving our students hope for their futures and for being so open to all their questions and concerns.

Google and Facebook Panels



Written by
Carolina Perez

This past summer, The Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication hosted two panels to help keep students engaged and connected. The panel series, “Communication in the time of Coronavirus”, aimed to discuss the various ways large companies like Google and Facebook have dealt with the struggles of working during COVID-19, while still maintaining solid relationships with their clients and users.

Google panelists, Diana Carrero, Kira Hooks, and Derek Thompson gave us an inside look at the struggles of transitioning to an online work environment, especially coming from a place with as dynamic a workspace as Google. They spoke of the many ways they are trying to keep the spirit of Google alive through online events that simulate normalcy, like Happy Hours and game nights, while also building communities within the workplace to help serve as a support system for employees. Their employee resource groups have helped multicultural employees struggling to adapt or just looking to feel understood. Carrero, Hooks, and Thompson all spoke on the important qualities of a leader, including organization and participation in these events to help their colleagues stay happy

and become better employees. Having initiative and participating in events that lift others up is always welcome and prudent, helping professional leaders get to know who a hire is outside of work. The panelists continued on to mention the importance of compassion and mindfulness as the pandemic has impacted everyone, all still just humans coping. Their main driving points ended on always acting with empathy, be it for a client, for oneself, or the way one engages with their consumer. Hooks noted that one of the most important things to keep in mind is that consumers seek authentic and meaningful relationships over just following the crowd; Carrero and Thompson spoke on the importance of gratitude and intentionality.

Facebook panelists Brad Auerbach, Ayesha Dhir, Megan Lively, and Marina Romero discussed the ways coronavirus had impacted their company. Their take: a positive one actually! Auerbach mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the struggles incurred, pushed them toward a more complete digital transformation of their company. Dhir mentioned the impactful role that leading with understanding and a desire to innovate did in aiding their transition as well as transferring hope to their clients. Lively and Romero spoke of the



important role that analytics has played in helping them to quickly adapt to better strategize for clients. The main driving points of this panel were perseverance and innovation. Their advice to students was centered on helping them focus on how valuable they are in this market, showing them the opportunities in a market now accepting of remote work and persistent individuals willing to see the obstacles and make it happen.

These panels were an excellent break from the uncertainty that loomed in the summer months when the pandemic was still new, and a breath of fresh air reminding students that compassion, for others and yourself, is one of the best tools in times of struggle.



Media Markets



Written by
Jonathan Tavares

On November 28, HMC staff met with panelists Natalia Rocha from Horizon Media, author Dr. Federico Subervi, and Orlando Comas from the Miami Herald over Zoom. The panelists discussed the role of Hispanic media in communications, politics, and everyday life.

Dr. Subervi highlighted the propagation of niche media and a transformation away from a few common outlets, decreasing awareness of the broader spectrum of media content available. All the while, trending cyber propaganda leads to muddied facts and misinformation, undermining the fabric of society and of democracy.

Ms. Rocha built on this, discussing the selection of media, challenged by these fragmented outlets and to consider how to determine which outlet is best for the consumer in this landscape. These media outlets, as content providers and brands, bear a responsibility to consider commitments and impacts emerging from where they invest their money. This is especially the case as consumers, in a more conscious marketplace, become more informed about where brands stand. As media, ads, and consumers evolve, brands must work to show their audience awareness.

Mr. Comas discussed local media consumption, consisting of computers and now mobile devices, with mobile devices themselves comprising 60% of the overall audience. Again, Mr. Comas commented on the fact-obscuring and reaffirming

tendencies of the internet, occurring to the detriment of truly newsworthy content. This occurs in spite of the notion the internet also works as a great equalizer. Because people can share anything on social media and can stay within their own social circles, Mr. Comas warned that creates risk of factual misunderstanding.

On the role of media to multiple and multicultural consumers, Dr. Subervi explained the answer depends on the media and people. People have different identities and different life circumstances in where they live, their profession, and family. These things all have meaning attached. Communicators must look for outlets that explain these groups; the media does this in a fragmentary way. The media plays a crucial role in forging connection with people of all outlets and aspects of life, though it looks different for everyone.

Mr. Comas highlighted the importance of getting facts to the public, explaining how the Epstein case covered by the Miami Herald broke major national attention. Watchdogs, he said, are important to communities, and society must be mindful of social media use. We must take care to not let these companies become more intrusive than they are valuable to the user.

Ms. Rocha explained the role of the media in needing to balance both the informed consumer and corporate responsibility. Understanding the power of consumers and the brands they want to portray must take into account how these things interact and fuel each other.

Today, she sees brands taking stands, such as in BLM or multicultural acceptance. This helps consumers



understand they are important, sparking shift and change in the market. In both content and practice, consumers are demanding brands do better. Dr. Subervi discussed how media has used specific content to relate to Hispanic and Latino audiences. She explained that, although there is more representation, stereotypes and roles have not changed.

The panelists then discussed changes they see in the marketing industry. Mr. Comas included branded content and solutions combining ad intel and useful brand integration; while Ms. Rocha upheld the importance of Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel, learning media math, budgeting, data reading and interpretation. She also talked about the need to

understand psychology, especially so in multicultural and Hispanic marketing. We have to understand the nuances, have the curiosity to seek to understand audiences, and avoid stereotypes. Similarly, Dr. Subervi discussed situational identity and cultural awareness.

The panelists then advised students on job searching. Dr. Subervi shed light on holding potential jobs to one's own high moral standard. Ms. Rocha talked about having a voice, especially in hearing a multicultural audience, and Mr. Comas discussed the importance of empathy, will, and passion.

The panel proved a highly informative, and insightful look at the broad and widening horizons of multicultural and Hispanic marketing.

Meet the team



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Thank you for
supporting the Center



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MARKETING COMMUNICATION