




**UCLA BLUM CENTER**  
 on Poverty and Health  
 in Latin America

*Working together to promote equity and well-being*

# UCLA Blum Center 2014 Year-in-Review



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on Poverty and Health  
in Latin America



*Working together to promote equity and well-being*

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In these past few years, December has been a meaningful time to reflect on the UCLA Blum Center's achievements. Two years ago, I was appointed the founding director of our Center and it has been a pleasure to watch our Center grow. It is an honor to share our 2014 End-of-Year Report with you. Throughout these pages, you will read about the expansion of our training and education programs, the breadth of our programming for the campus community and partners, the development of our collaborations, and the evolution of our research, policy and advocacy efforts.

If this year's growth is any indication of what we will experience in 2015, then we know we have an exciting year ahead. In fact, our 2015 plans already call for the development of a range of initiatives, including: an international training program in health management; case study research on social cohesion policies and programs in Latin America; and domestic research on health promotion strategies for working communities. We will continue our efforts to develop a Global Health Minor at UCLA, pursue new student research collaborations for our 2015 Summer Scholars, and facilitate more exchanges for medical residents from Latin America. We also look forward to providing innovative and engaging programming for the campus community, as well as local and global policy makers, scholars, and health professionals.

Many thanks to the generous support from UC Regent Richard Blum, the UCLA Chancellor's Organization, and many others for supporting our 2014 efforts. The future is bright and we look forward to sharing it with you in the coming year.

Para la salud y la prosperidad,

*Michael A. Rodriguez, MD, MPH  
Director*

*UCLA Blum Center on Poverty and Health in Latin America  
Professor, Department of Family Medicine*

# Training & Education

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## 2014 UCLA Blum Summer Scholars

In the second year of the UCLA Blum Summer Scholars program, the Center supported six students in 8-week internships in Latin American countries to collaborate on research and policy efforts with nongovernmental organizations and institutions.



Luis Artieda, MA Latin American Studies/MURP '14, worked with the Inter-American Development Bank on their Salud Mesoamérica 2015 Initiative in Panama City, Panama. Luis's research analyzed factors that contribute to non-utilization of health facilities by uninsured populations in Chiapas, Mexico.

Allyn Auslander, MPH '15, spent her summer analyzing risk factors for liver disease over time at the Institute of Mexican Social Security, Epidemiology and Health Services Unit in Cuernavaca, Mexico.



Ana Mascareñas, MPH '15, worked with Friends NE International and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) in León, Nicaragua on a study exploring the decision-making process for seeking emergency services and care options in northwest Nicaragua.

Erik Peña, MA, Latin American Studies/MPH '15, also worked on the emergency services and care project in León, Nicaragua with Friends NE International and UNAN. The data from this study will assist in improving the local emergency care system and contribute to the strengthening of emergency care systems in other areas of Latin America.





Clint van Sonnenberg, a PhD candidate in Political Science, spent the summer at Cayetano Heredia University in Lima, Peru researching the socioeconomic and political barriers for Peruvians receiving reparations following the country's 20-year civil war and the country's subsequent transition to democracy.

Jennifer Zelaya, MPH/MSW '15, worked in León, Nicaragua to support the development and implementation of a project to assess gaps in services for women who have experienced intimate partner violence. She worked in collaboration with UNAN and Friends NE International.



## UCLA Blum Center Second Annual Spring Conference



More than 130 faculty, government officials, health professionals, policy makers, and students attended the Center's Second Annual Spring Conference on the UCLA campus. Supported through collaborations with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Salud Mesoamérica 2015 Initiative, the two-day conference provided an important forum for international and US stakeholders to discuss

innovative policies and programs for health care systems reform and workforce strengthening.

Globally recognized presenters exchanged programming ideas, systems and approaches for reducing poverty and improving health in Latin American communities. The Consuls General of Mexico and Venezuela offered remarks to participants and 28 students presented research at a lunchtime poster session (for more details, see Student Research below). Health ministry officials, scholars, and policy makers representing nine Latin American countries were key participants in the conference.

One of the main outcomes of the conference was a strengthening of collaborations

with Argentina, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama that have led to additional student summer placements, work with universities, and exchange of ideas. In addition, input from conference participants assisted the development of three white papers to inform the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Culture of Health.



## Collaborative Training: UCLA Blum-HGD Initiative in Haiti



In spring 2014, the UCLA Blum Center collaborated with the Dr. Henri Gerard Desgranges Foundation (HGD) and the UCLA-HGD Initiative to develop a diabetes program at the HGD clinic in Petit Goave, Haiti. The project provided teaching opportunities for workers at the clinic. Additionally, the UCLA Blum Center funded three students who participated in a week-long volunteer mission during spring break to provide support services at the HGD Clinic in Petit Goave for the local community.

## Undergraduate Education: Poverty and Health in Latin America Course and New Global Health Minor

Now in its third year, the undergraduate Poverty and Health in Latin America yearlong course is designed to train students on poverty and other social determinants of health from a Latin American context. This year (2014-15), 120 students are enrolled in the course, and the 2013-2014 cohort saw a record number of 28 students present their research at the UCLA Blum Center Second Annual Spring Conference poster session. The UCLA Blum Center has also begun work to lead the development of a Global Health Minor at UCLA, which will build on the foundational successes of the Poverty and Health in Latin America course.



## Collaborations with the UCLA Office of Residential Life



Throughout 2014, the UCLA Blum Center partnered with the Office of Residential Life (ORL) to provide programming opportunities for undergraduate students living in Theme Communities. Director Michael Rodriguez, who serves as an ORL Faculty-in-Residence, and Center staff participated regularly in events co-organized with ORL staff and resident assistants. These events provided

opportunities for students to learn more about the Center's work and receive guidance for developing their academic and career interests related to global health and poverty issues.

## Facilitating International Medical Exchanges

The UCLA Blum Center supported exchanges for international residents to participate in observerships with UCLA physicians. Supported exchanges included a resident from Nicaragua to observe in Plastic Surgery and a resident from Ecuador to observe in Family Medicine.

## UCLA Blum Center Work Study and Internship Program

The UCLA Blum Center Work Study and Internship program grew in the past year to provide UCLA students with more opportunities to directly support and engage with the Center's work. The UCLA Blum Center hosted four undergraduate work study Center assistants in the last year and five graduate and undergraduate interns who assisted in Center activities including: research, communications and social media, event planning, and student outreach.



# Programming

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## Building Public Awareness on Key Issues: Documentary Screenings

### *Water Everlasting?*

On March 15, the UCLA Blum Center, along with the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), hosted a screening and panel discussion around the IDB documentary *Water Everlasting?*

The film, which focuses on efforts to improve Haiti's public water service after the 2010 earthquake, generated a dialogue with panelists and students about the challenges associated with water administration in Haiti and other low-resource environments where water access is a regular challenge.



### *Food Chains*

In collaboration with the UCLA Law Resnick Program on Food Law and Policy, the UCLA Blum Center co-sponsored a screening of the documentary film *Food Chains* on October 24. The documentary explores challenges faced by American agricultural workers and issues of inequality in our food system; it was screened during the first inaugural UCLA-Harvard Law and Policy Conference: *Transparency in the Global Food System: What Information and to What Ends?* The event and conference helped generate important exposure and discussions on campus around the true social justice costs of our food system for many immigrant and Latin American communities in the United States.

## Second Annual UCLA Inventathon



The UCLA Blum Center was a co-sponsor of the UCLA Business of Science Center's Second Annual Inventathon, a 24-hour competition to create and pitch the best solution to a health care challenge. The Center provided the first place prize, which was awarded to Team Guardian for their concept to create a device that measures abnormal brain signals to more easily monitor chronic kidney disease.

## Separating Facts from Fiction: Public Health Implications of Child Migrants from Central America

On December 3 and to contribute to the national dialogue on the plight of migrant children from Central America to the United States, the UCLA Blum Center co-hosted a program with the UCLA Latin American Institute to explore the public health issues confronting these children. More than 100 students, faculty and staff attended to discuss the complexities around access to services and opportunities for reform.



## Research and Policy

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### Publications

The Center engaged in new research activities in the past year through the development of white papers that explored the impact of certain social and cultural behaviors on health outcomes:

- *Values and Social Cohesion: Major Trends in Societal and Individual Awareness of Health and Well-Being.* Rodriguez, M.A., Wells, K., Binstock, J.K., Brewer, T., Dubois, A., Stark, B.
- *Multi-sector Collaboration: Moving all Sectors of a Community toward Policy and Programs that Work.* Mayer-Foulkes, D., Rodríguez, M.A., Cole, B., Dubois, A., Farzanegan, M., Olamendi, S.
- *Putting Data in the Driver's Seat to Steer Policy and Systems to Promote High-Quality, Equitable Health.* Richards, A., Rodriguez, M.A., Almeida, G., Binstock, J.K., Dubois, A., Olamendi, S.

These preliminary research efforts have led to the development of a study, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to be launched in January 2015. The purpose of the research will be to identify and examine case studies of programs and policies that leverage social cohesion strategies to advance health outcomes in Latin American countries. This new research effort will provide the Center with a unique opportunity to build scholarly knowledge on the topic of social cohesion, which is largely unexplored by the academic community. Anticipated findings will provide substantive insights on how communities and a diverse range of stakeholders can come together to promote health in low-resource settings.



## Young Investigator Research Efforts

In addition to the Summer Scholars' research of summer 2014, during the Second Annual Spring Conference, 28 student and post-doc researchers presented posters on research topics affecting Latin American communities in the United States and abroad. Research topics included: chronic disease prevention and management programs; infectious disease causes and treatment; health policy; nutrition; access to health care; and environmental concerns.

## Launch of Migrant Child Health Coalition

In fourth quarter 2014, the UCLA Blum Center, in collaboration with Duke University, the University of Washington, and members from the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Family Physicians formed the Migrant Child Health Coalition to bring national attention to the conditions facing migrating children from Central America to the United States. This national issue has given rise to politically driven scaremongering around false public health threats; the coalition seeks to build support in the medical and public health community and in public dialogues to end the distortion of facts and to call for appropriate health resources for migrant children. The coalition's first targeted effort has focused on passing resolutions within national professional health associations, and has included a successful adoption of a resolution by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

## Response to Executive Action on Immigration Reform

After President Obama's announcement of executive action on immigration reform in November 2014, the UCLA Blum Center took its own action. UCLA Blum Center Director Dr. Michael Rodriguez, Dr. Steven Wallace of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and Dr. Manuel Pastor of the USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration co-authored an opinion piece, "Those safe from deportation now need access to affordable health care services." The op-ed asserted that the executive action does not do enough to grant access to health services for the five million undocumented immigrants eligible for protection against deportation. The article appeared in the *Sacramento Bee* on November 25 and can be viewed on our website.

## Looking Ahead

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### Strategic Planning Effort Sets Stage for Next Three Years

During the fourth quarter 2014, the UCLA Blum Center engaged in strategic visioning process that reflected on the Center's progress-to-date while informing the Center's priorities for the next three years. The UCLA Blum Center's 2017 Strategic Plan,

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*Positioning the Center for Impact and Growth*, will drive the Center's activities in the coming years, and will position the Center to achieve its vision to improve health for Latin American communities throughout the Americas. The plan established and began to lay the groundwork for the Center's four essential priority areas: 1) organizational and leadership expansion; 2) development of a research program grounded in a multi-disciplinary, action-oriented approach; 3) advancement of a cross-disciplinary training program that prepares a new generation of leaders; and 4) implementation of a policy impact agenda with a focus on both short- and long-term policy solutions that drive effective practices.

## Your Continued Support: Share Our Passion

With so many opportunities ahead in 2015 and beyond, we hope that you will stay in touch with the UCLA Blum Center to share ideas, pursue collaborations, and unite efforts so that collectively we can make an even bigger impact. We believe in our vision to tackle the most pressing health challenges with a compassionate, focused, inclusive, and interdisciplinary approach and we are eager to partner with those who share our values. Stay in touch with us, look for updates about our work on our website, [blumcenter.ucla.edu](http://blumcenter.ucla.edu), and our newsletter, follow us on Facebook and Twitter, @UCLABlumCenter, and know that together we share a passion for creating meaningful change.

## Thanks to Our Supporters

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The successes and the impact of the UCLA Blum Center owe much to the enthusiasm of, and collaborations fostered by, our supporters. Our benefactor, UC Regent Richard Blum continues to help inspire and shape the vision and direction of our growing Center. It is with much gratitude that we thank Richard for his various contributions to the UCLA Blum Center which, along with the network of Blum Centers across the UC system, enables us to realize the potential of faculty, students, and partnerships for crafting applied solutions to domestic and global poverty and development challenges.

Much of our work in the past year was made possible through the support of our partners as well. Thanks to support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the UCLA Blum Center has been able to launch collaborations and research to better understand how a culture of health can be cultivated to improve health outcomes both domestically and internationally. Through the support of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Salud Mesoamérica 2015 Initiative, the Center was able to provide a forum for exchanging knowledge and building networks at our Second

Annual Spring Conference with researchers, policy makers, and health ministry representatives from across Central America. Lastly, we extend a thank you to the Sulentic Family Foundation for their generous contribution to support the work of the UCLA Blum Center to support research, programming, and students in the upcoming year.

## Our Partners

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At the core of our Center's mission is collaboration and innovation with our partners around the United States and throughout the world. Through the insights, commitment, energy, and spirit of our partners we achieve our shared vision of improved health for all Latin Americans. We look forward to both continued and new partnerships in 2015!



**UC GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE**  
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Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México



Pan American Health Organization



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



**IDB**

Inter-American Development Bank



Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua, León



FNE International



salud mesoamérica 2015



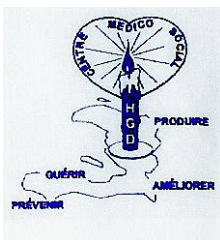
CENTRO DE INVESTIGACIÓN Y DOCENCIA ECONÓMICAS, A. C.



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El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

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**Jenny Binstock, MPP**  
Coordinator, UCLA Blum  
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**Margaret Leal Sotelo**  
Assistant Provost

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Campus Wide Initiatives

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**Burkle Center for International  
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**Center for Argentina, Chile and the  
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**Center for Brazilian Studies**

**Center of Expertise on Migration  
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**Center for Health Policy Research**

**Center for Mexican Studies**

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**Center for World Health**

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**International Institute**

**Latin American Institute**

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**Program on International Migration**

**UCLA Art and Global Health Center**

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