Students discover Latin focused resources

By Victoria Cruz
News Writer

On March 25, the Organization of Latin American Students hosted an opportunity fair to connect students with campus resources available to them.

OLAS hosted eight different campus groups at the event centered around Latino-focused resources. Students were asked to visit every station using a passport to encourage their participation.

"We were really inspired to put something like this together because we really like to bring people together and make sure people know about the resources available to them," business information systems major Catalina Espinosa, a junior, said.

Students spoke directly to administration and student leaders to learn about their educational opportunities.

One of the organizations that connected with students was the Center for Academic Success and Accessibility Services.

Representatives from CASAS shared ways students can excel academically using their unique support programming.

Building on these efforts, the UndocuAlly Student Alliance shared resources available to undocumented students and their peers.

Students were able learn about upcoming events and guarantee the safety and educational well-being of any student who may need additional support for their immigration process.

Expanding students' global opportunities was another key focus of the event. The Office of International Education hosted two representatives to cover their diverse offerings.

One introduced students to the various study abroad options available, including short-term faculty-led trips and semester-long programs.

The other representative introduced students to the Fulbright Program which offers funding for research organizations and student teaching opportunities abroad.

Another organization present at the event was Latino America Unida, Lambda Alpha Upsilon Fraternity.

By promoting a community that is focused on fostering connection, support and cultural engagement, the fraternity aims to uplift Latino voices.

The Women in Leadership Academy brought a strong focus on empowerment to the event by highlighting resources designed to help women step into leadership roles.

Through workshops and educational programs, they provide a supportive space for women on campus to connect and support their community.

The Office of Career and Professional Development serves as a hub for students, with programming to help all students feel confident starting their career.

Guiding Eyes Puppy Raising connects students with dogs in training that will later assist those who are blind or visually impaired.

These specialized service dogs are raised and trained while living with students.

Students who attended the event said they enjoyed exploring the wide range of campus opportunities and resources available to them.

Psychology major Ariana Lecates, a junior, said she was proud of how many students came to the event to support and gain new information.

"There was a really great turnout," Lecates said. "It's really exciting people liked to see the different departments."

Although the event was open to all students, Lecates emphasized that its main focus was on Latin students.

"We were really pushing to have Latin-focused opportunities. Students should know what is available to them. I hope other programs recreate similar events to help students get connected to opportunities," Lecates said.

Biology major Melany Villavicencio, a junior and OLAS President, said that she was impressed with the outcome of the event.

"It went exactly as we envisioned it. Students and partners applauded our whole team on creating a chance for them to share their opportunities," Villavicencio said.

She shared a special thanks to all the OLAS allies and partners who came together to support their mission.

"We wanted to showcase opportunities on campus to our students. We are so grateful for our community allies who helped bring the event together," Villavicencio said.



PHOTOS | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

Students learning about the Guding Eyes Puppy Raising chapter at the OLAS fair in the Multicultural Center on March 25.



Attendees learning about the various resources that are available to them and speaking to student representatives at the OLAS fair.

Women panelists confront self-doubt in academia

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

Students and staff filled the School of Business Case Study Room to hear a truth rarely spoken aloud: even the most successful leaders sometimes feel like they do not belong.

In a powerful session for Women's History Month on March 24, the university's interim president, professors and staff, shared how they turned the quiet weight of self-doubt into a shared source of resilience.

"I also felt uncomfortable in spaces that I felt like I didn't belong, but I put that aside in the driver's seat and let it not drive me," Rabia Hos, the dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, said. "What drove me was the students or the impact that I made."

Moderated by Jess Gregory of educational leadership and policy studies, the panel brought together a diverse group of campus leaders.

This included Sandra Bulmer, interim president; Isabel Logan, associate professor of social work; Siobhan Carter-David, associate professor of history and women's and gender studies; Javon Noblin, staff member, adjunct and graduate student; and Julia Irwin, interim provost.

Each speaker offered a unique perspective shaped by their role in higher education. Despite their different pathways, each woman shared one commonality: imposter syndrome.



PHOTOS | WADE BARILLARO

One of the six panelists, Julia Irwin, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, speaking at the Yes, You Belong: Women Navigating Academia event on March 24 in the Case Study Room of the School of Business.



Rabia Hos, the dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, and Sandra Bulmer, interim president, speaking about imposter syndrome during the event.

This syndrome is not a rare experience but a shared reality for women across academia.

"For so long, I felt like I was the only one in the room," Noblin said. "Oftentimes, there were spaces where I could have been the only woman or the only Black woman, and I'm just sitting there quietly."

Noblin said that she could no longer ignore the silence in the room, as she was holding herself back from being heard.

Over time, Noblin said she made an intentional decision to start speaking up in these spaces.

"I'm passionate about higher education, and for me, it was necessary that the people with whom I'm sharing spaces understood and continue to understand that because I'm not going anywhere. This is it; this is me," Noblin said.

Noblin encouraged attendees to show up as their authentic selves and take up space in their environments.

The panel also addressed the demanding nature of academic careers and the importance of protecting one's well-being.

Panelists emphasized that while passion for students and scholarship often drives their work, it can also lead to overcommitment in environments that fuel burn out.

For this reason, Bulmer emphasized how important it is for attendees to set boundaries.

"You have to have boundaries, and you've got to take care of yourself because no one else in academia is going to do that for you," Bulmer said.

Bulmer said that figures in academia may feel like they have to take on everything because they feel connected to the role. However, she warned that women in particular can get pulled into this mindset in ways that may ultimately be to their own detriment.

Throughout the discussion, the importance of community took center stage. Panelists stressed that support systems, mentorship and shared understanding play a critical role in navigating academic spaces.

Logan, a first-generation student whose first language is Spanish, reflected on how access to guidance and mentorship can shape an individual's ability to set boundaries and manage expectations in higher education.

"When you're someone who comes from a background where no one expected you to even be in academia in the first place, you may not have those supports," Logan said. "So, it really does depend on how good your mentors are once you enter academia."

Logan's advice underscored the idea that success in academia is haped by meaningful guidance and support from others.

Panelists outlined that their message is not to steer attendees away from pursuing academic paths but instead to reframe how success in those spaces can appear, especially when navigating challenges like imposter syndrome.

As the discussion came to a close, the panelists ended on a hopeful note about growing in academia. Rather than viewing perfection or expertise as an end point, Irwin invited attendees to see learning as a journey driven by curiosity and interest.

"Be curious. If there's things that really excite you that you're curious about, you will be the expert in the room, and students will really enjoy learning about that from you," Irwin said.