Students connect through dominoes

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor

Students gathered in the Multicultural Center on March 4 for Dominoes y Dialogue, an event hosted by the Organization of Latin American Students that invited participants to socialize and learn a game rooted in many Latin American cultures.

The event, held from 2:30–3:30 p.m., encouraged students to bring friends, play dominoes and connect with others.

"Based on the Super Bowl that just happened, Bad Bunny's Puerto Rican, and dominoes is a big part of Puerto Rico and Caribbean cultures," biology major Melany Villavicencio, a junior and the president of OLAS, said. "We thought it would be nice to do something that's really Latin-based."

Tables were arranged with domino sets as students filtered into the room between classes, some learning the rules while others shared their familiarity with the traditional game.

Dominoes hold cultural significance across many Latin American and Caribbean communities, where the game is often played during family gatherings and community celebrations.

By bringing the tradition to campus, OLAS aimed to introduce students to a familiar pastime while also encouraging cultural exchange.

For some participants, the event served as a reminder of traditions seen at home.

Villavicencio said she has watched relatives play the game for years and wanted to reconnect with that cultural practice by sharing it with students on campus.

"Dominoes brings people together from Puerto Rican, Haitian, Cuban and other Caribbean cultures," Villavicencio said. "But it also brings people who maybe don't know the game or haven't played it before and gives them the chance to learn."

Students stopped by the event throughout the afternoon, some stayed for a game while others briefly visited between classes.

Laughter and conversation filled the room as players asked questions about the rules and shared stories about playing with family members.

For many participants, the activity created a familiar atmosphere that blended cultural tradition with the everyday rhythm of campus life.

Creating spaces for connection is especially important during busy points in the semester when students may feel overwhelmed by academic responsibilities.

With midterms approaching, organizers hoped the event would provide a short break from studying while allowing students to unwind and meet new people.

OLAS regularly hosts events that highlight cultural traditions while creating opportunities for students across campus to connect.

Activities such as Dominoes y Dialogue allow the group to share elements of Latin American culture in a relaxed environment that welcomes both members and students who may be encountering these traditions for the first time.

Villavicencio said events like Dominoes y Dialogue help students meet new people and build relationships that can extend beyond college.

"I think connection is a big part of our future," Villavicencio said. "Everything after graduation is about connections, and it starts with building those relationships in clubs and organizations here. Especially with midterms coming up, this is a great way to relax."



PHOTOS | VALENTINA TORO

Members of the Organization of Latin American Students E-board pose for a photo.



Students sit at a table to play dominoes and participate in conversation.

Bouquets build belonging on campus

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor

Flowers and conversation filled Adanti Student Center Room 306 on March 4 as students created bouquets during Flowers and Belonging, a wellness event hosted by the UndocuAlly Student Alliance to encourage connection and reflection

The event, held from 3–4 p.m., offered free flowers for students to arrange into custom bouquets while taking a break from their daily routines.

"We had a talk with our executive board, and we thought a Flowers and Belonging event would be a nice idea because we always include a mental health check-in in our events," business administration major Jerimiah Parra, a junior and the president of UASA, said.

Organizers said the activity was designed to create a calm space for reflection and community building during a busy point in the semester.

Students stopped by throughout the afternoon, selecting flowers and assembling bouquets while chatting with friends, meeting new people and listening to Latin music.

The activity created a relaxed atmosphere where students could step away from academic stress for a short time while engaging with others in a welcoming campus space.

The event also reflected the broader mission of UASA, a campus organization that supports undocumented students and their allies.

Parra said creating welcoming spaces on campus is especially important for undocumented students and those from mixed-status families.

He explained that the organization focuses on building a sense of belonging while providing opportunities for students to connect with others who may share similar experiences.

"Community is a very big and important thing that people don't realize how much it can impact," Parra said. "This club shows that we're here for undocumented students and even allies whose family members may be undocumented or part of mixed-status families."

Beyond advocacy efforts, UASA also hosts social and educational events intended to support student wellness and encourage involvement across campus.

Activities such as game nights, discussions and creative gatherings allow students to meet others while learning more about the organization's mission.

Parra said the group hopes to reach students who may not yet know about the club by hosting accessible events.

In addition to social programming, the organization has also worked to expand opportunities for undocumented students, including advocating for greater access to campus activities and also collaborating with other organizations at the university.

Students moved between tables selecting flowers and arranging bouquets while talking with friends and meeting other attendees.

Some carefully chose colors and stems to build personalized arrangements while others helped classmates assemble their bouquets.

The activity encouraged conversation as students compared their bouquets, turning the room into a relaxed and interactive space centered around creativity and connection.

Organizers hope events like Flowers and Belonging encourage students to pause during a hectic semester while also strengthening connections across campus.

"I hope students take away that our club is based on community," Parra said. "No matter what you're going through, having a community makes things easier because you know you're not by yourself."

Owls Decide: Popcorn or candy?

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor

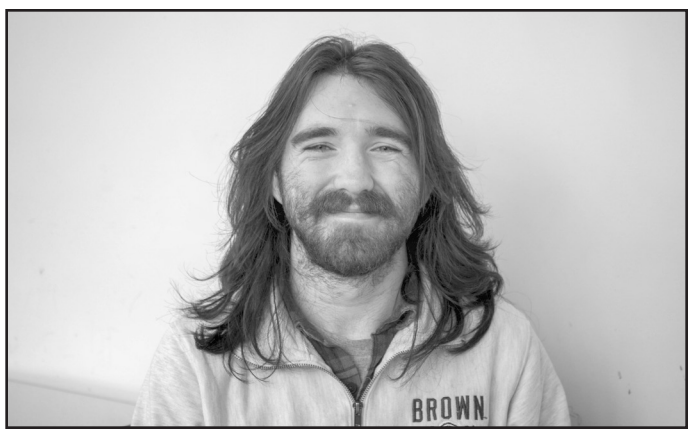


PHOTOS | LILY RAND

"Popcorn: it doesn't make my stomach hurt; I can eat more of it."
-Biology major Rae Riley, a senior



"Popcorn. I prefer something saltier than sweet."
-Mathematics major Tyler Czajkowski, a junior



"Candy, it's just sweeter. I have a sweet tooth."
-History major James Clinton, a junior



"Candy, I like sweets better."
-Exploratory major Seth Lang, a sophomore



"Popcorn, I'm not a big fan of candy."
-Social work major Lillian Spagnoletti, a senior



"I prefer candy because I choke on popcorn kernels."
-Psychology major Daisha Thomas, a senior