

August
2025

Volume 21 No. 9

El Sol Latino

Un Periódico Diferente / A Different Kind of Newspaper



Fiestas Patronales De
HOLYOKE
2025



Reinado Fiestas Patronales de Holyoke 2025



Miss Fiestas Patronales
NASHELY COLÓN
(San Juan)

Reina Juvenil
Fiestas Patronales
ANALIA RIVERA
(Ciales)

Reina Infantil
Fiestas Patronales
MARILYZ MALDONADO
(Camuy)

Comité del Reinado:
Mónica Vélez, Iris
Miranda, Kayla
Rodríguez, Maguie
Sánchez. Jurado:
Marilyn Rivera -
Directora del Desfile
Puertorriqueño de
Boston, Nancy García
- Reinado del Festival
de Boston, Yamalisse
Amaro - Coordinadora
de Educación

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Julio 31 - Agosto 3



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Dedicadas al Pueblo de Comerío Julio 31 - Agosto 3



Fiestas Patronales de Holyoke 2025

Dedicadas al Pueblo de Comerío, Puerto Rico • Julio 31 - Agosto 3

Visita al Wyckoff Country Club y al Salón de la Fama del Volleyball



Primer Plenazo de la Escuela Bomba de Aquí

con Rafael Concepción Collazo,
Jerry Ferrao y Gabylon Negrón

Alcalde de Holyoke Joshua García
reconoce a Saúl “El Pulpo” I Peñaloza

19 de julio de 2025 – Holyoke, MA



The Importance of Local Spanish Language TV Programs in Civic Education and Engagement

by MANUEL FRAU-RAMOS

A recent study conducted by Volodymyr J. Gupan and Charles R. Venator-Santiago, published by the University of Connecticut's Puerto Rican Studies Initiative, addresses the question of what kind of impact one local Spanish-language TV program has had in the Greater Hartford region.

The answer to this question was published in a report this year.

Pueblo Informado es Comunidad Empoderada /Education is Vital to Empower the Community: A Report on the Impact of El Show de Analeh's Civic Education Program, 2022-2024, summarizes some of the key findings of a study designed to examine the impact of El Show de Analeh. This Spanish-language variety show aired on Saturday mornings on Univision and focused on civic education and engagement.

The study draws on a survey of Latinos in the Greater Hartford region, six focus groups, and the production of shows during this period. The study concludes that *El Show de Analeh* had a positive impact on the civic education and action of its viewers.

The program, which has been airing since 2007, is an innovative half-hour Spanish-language television talk show that aims to inform, empower, and entertain the vibrant and diverse Latino community. It airs Saturdays at 11:00 on Univision's local channels.

The show addresses the issues facing Latinos today, serving the Greater Hartford area and beyond. The partnership between *El Show de Analeh*, Capital Community College, and Univision allows the production team to share its creativity, passion, and vision for engaging and uplifting the community through the art of television.

This research was financed by **The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving**, which awarded a three-year grant (2022-2024) to The San Juan Center and Capital Community College to produce the show. The grant aimed to build civic engagement to increase citizen participation in politics and government with a focus on programs designed to promote civic education and engagement among Latinos in Connecticut. A primary objective of this grant was to expand upon a civic engagement series created and shared in 2017-2018, which centered on citizen involvement in politics and government.

As part of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving grant, we were tasked with evaluating the impact of *El Show de Analeh* on civic education and engagement among Latinos in the Greater Hartford Region.

Charles R. Venator-Santiago collaborated with the recipients of the grant, including Ana Alfaro and Rose Fonseca (*El Show de Analeh*), Fernando Betancourt (The San Juan Center), and John H. McNamara (Capital Community College) to organize, develop, and participate in the production of various episodes during the three-year period. This report incorporates the information gathered in this process.

The project sought to: 1) Produce a continuing *El Show de Analeh* series on public policy, voting, and community action topics directly impacting the Latino community in Greater Hartford; 2) Involve Capital Community College's (CCC) Liberal Arts Action Lab in programming and dialogues; 3) Engage students from CCC and Trinity College in research on neighborhood and quality of life

issues in the city; 4)

Broadly disseminate the series on civic engagement through

broadcasts, social media and interactive forums (in person and remotely); 5) Recruit a cohort of student leaders to organize campus and community engagement, and promote engagement of peers in citizenship activities as well as production interns for the series.

A recent Pew Research Center report on the changing consumption of news suggests that while Americans are increasingly consuming news from digital platforms, they still value local news outlets. Latino participants in our study affirmed this conclusion in multiple ways. They commented that cable television was too expensive, less accessible than digital sources, and that *El Show de Analeh* was the only Latino program of its kind.

Ana Alfaro is the producer and host of *El Show de Analeh*, the weekly program on the Univision Network and UniMas. Ana described *El Show* as "a dream production turned into a successful reality." Not many media personalities are as deeply involved in community projects as Ana Alfaro. She is not just a key community leader, but also a trusted voice in the media. This section explores the impact of *El Show de Analeh* on its viewers. We rely on both the survey and a focus group of viewers to gain a better understanding of how *El Show de Analeh* influences viewers' opinions about civic engagement. Our overall findings align with Pew Research Center research on this topic, specifically that viewers still trust local journalists and TV shows over other platforms because they have a better understanding of civic issues that matter.

Of the 412 Latino survey respondents, 74, or approximately 18%, answered that they had either watched at least one episode or were regular viewers of *El Show de Analeh*. Given the declining TV viewership among Latinos, we were surprised that such a high percentage of Latinos in the Greater Hartford Region reported watching a cable-based television show.

The report supports previous studies regarding the impact of *El Show de Analeh* on civic education and the actions of Latino viewers. Overall, it reveals some inconsistencies between focus group feedback and survey responses. Unfortunately, our study was not designed to compare and contrast these two methods of gathering information. Our primary goal was to assess the relationship between *El Show de Analeh*'s presentation of civic issues and the opinions of potential viewers. However, the discrepancies between these two approaches to examining the effects of Spanish-language television on the civic engagement of Latinos in Connecticut raise essential questions that warrant further investigation with more focused methodologies.

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INITIATIVE

War on the poor: Health care is at risk for millions in America MIGUEL L. ARCE and JOSÉ P. ARCE

Trump's health care rampage makes absolutely no sense for people living at the margins of society. It is a wholesale, cold hearted attack on people who utilize Medicaid/CHIP, ACA or rely on rural health care. Furthermore, the Trump administration's health policy agenda is creating chaos and turmoil at federal agencies as a result of layoffs and other disruptive actions by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). These layoffs are expected to have short- and long-term consequences for public health and the health programs that millions of Americans rely on according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP, January 30, 2025). "Belt-tightening" translates into fewer health services and medical professionals, a smaller number of hospitals, especially in rural communities.

CBPP—a nonpartisan research and policy institute focused on federal and state budget policies aimed at reducing poverty and inequality while promoting fiscal responsibility—indicates that, "millions could lose health coverage or see their health costs rise. One hundred (100) million people have health coverage through Medicaid (72 million), another seven million covered by the Children's Health Insurance (CHIP), and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces (23 million). Rural health centers are especially vulnerable with more than 300 hospitals at risk for closure. When people lose their health coverage, they lose access to preventive and primary care, care for life-threatening conditions, and chronic disease management" (January 30, 2025). Simply put, the frenzy of Trump's cuts to healthcare's programs, which are a safety net for poor and working-class families, will cause irreversible harm to children and families.

Medicaid/CHIP Cuts

Approximately 72 million Americans are currently enrolled in Medicaid, about one-fifth of the total United States population, according to government data. Reductions in federal funding for Medicaid will significantly impact access to care for millions of low-income individuals and families. This will lead to increased uninsured rates and will harm vulnerable populations. Medicaid is the primary payer for the majority of nursing home residents, and pays for around 40% of all births in the United States (CNBC, updated 7/2/25).

States support the funding of Medicaid through matching funds. They have flexibility in how they finance the non-federal share of Medicaid matching funds. States use taxes on health care providers or managed care plans to help finance their Medicaid share. Trump and the republican party declare that States can pick up the costs. Unfortunately, lowered revenue forecasts come at a time when states already have been experiencing tighter budgets due to slower revenue growth, increasing expenditure demands and reductions in federal resources to numerous other joint federal/state funded services. It is unlikely that states would be able to effectively replace revenues raised by such taxes and so would cut state Medicaid funding, which would also reduce federal matching payments. A critical number of people would lose coverage or receive diminished care as a result of these funding cuts (CBPP, January 30, 2025).

In certain states, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides low-cost health coverage to children and pregnant women in families that earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid. All

States offer CHIP coverage and work closely with its state Medicaid program. CHIP benefits are different in each state. Each location has different names and benefits; for example, in Illinois it is called "All Kids" while in Massachusetts it's called "Mass Health." However, all states provide comprehensive coverage, including: routine check-ups, immunizations, doctor visits, prescriptions, dental and vision care, inpatient and outpatient hospital care, laboratory and X-ray services, emergency services, and behavioral health services. Clearly, children must have access to the health care that they need to grow and thrive to become thriving and responsible adults. As Congress debated budget reconciliation measures, alarm bells should have been ringing for anyone concerned about the health and well-being of children. As it stands, current proposals would force hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicaid and CHIP. These severe cuts threaten the health, development, and future prosperity of millions of children who rely on Medicaid and CHIP for their health care (Focus on Children First, March 17, 2025).

Affordable Care Act

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, referred to as the Affordable Care Act or "ACA" for short, is the comprehensive health care reform law enacted in March 2010.

The law has three primary goals:

- Make affordable health insurance available to more people. The law provides consumers with subsidies ("premium tax credits") that lower costs for households with incomes between 100% and 400% of the federal poverty level (FPL);
- Expand the Medicaid program to cover all adults with income below 138% of the FPL (though not all states have expanded their Medicaid programs);
- Support innovative medical care delivery methods designed to lower the costs of health care generally (United States Department of Health and Human Services, March 17, 2022).

Millions of people rely on the ACA marketplaces for health insurance. Trump's plan follows the Project 2025 playbook. The "Big Beautiful Bill," which has become law, will not extend premium tax credit enhancements, leading to higher costs and potential loss of coverage for many. This will affect small business owners, self-employed individuals, and others who rely on these subsidies to afford health insurance coverage.

Before the passage of the ACA in March 2010, insurers could charge higher premiums to people with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, asthma, or pregnancy; exclude conditions from coverage; or exclude people from a plan altogether. The ACA prohibited those practices. Rolling back the ACA protections would create an environment where people with health conditions would pay higher premiums and out-of-pocket costs for reduced coverage or end up uninsured (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, January 30, 2025).

Rural health

Health disparities affect millions in rural communities. These disparities are deeply rooted in economic, social, racial, ethnic, geographic, and health workforce factors. The aforementioned factors are a complex mix limiting access to care, make finding

continued on next page

War on the poor: Health care is at risk for millions in America continued from page 8

solutions more difficult, and intensify problems for rural communities everywhere. Rural communities—from Appalachia and the Deep South to the Midwest and western states to Alaska and Hawaii—share common risks for poorer health. These challenges—including few local doctors, poverty, and remote locations—contribute to lack of access to care. Compared with urban areas, rural populations have lower median household incomes, a higher percentage of children living in poverty, fewer adults with postsecondary educations, more uninsured residents under age 65, and higher rates of mortality (North Carolina Rural Health Research Program, 2017). As one might guess, shortages of physicians contribute to rural health difficulties; primary care doctors are stretched thin, and specialists, including mental health and substance abuse providers, are a rarity.

The claim that rural hospitals typically operate on thin profit margins and rely on Medicaid payments is generally supported by credible evidence. Rural hospitals have long operated on the financial edge, especially in recent years as Medicaid payments have continuously fallen below the actual cost to provide health care. More than 20% of Americans live in rural areas, where Medicaid covers one in four adults, according to the nonprofit Kaiser Family Fund, which studies health care issues.

Researchers from the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research who examined the original House version of the “Big Beautiful Bill” concluded it would push more than 300 rural hospitals — many of them in Kentucky, Louisiana, California, and Oklahoma — toward service reductions or closure (July 2, 2025). In six states, at least half of children living in small towns and rural areas are covered by Medicaid/CHIP. These include New Mexico (59.9%), Louisiana (57.7%), Arizona (55.9%), Florida (51.9%), South Carolina (51.1%) and Arkansas (50.5%) [Center for Children and Families, January 15, 2025].

Alternative Policies Can Make Health Care Less Expensive to Access

The extreme Project 2025 and the Trump agenda represented by policy changes outlined above, would fund a transfer of wealth to the highest-income households while billing future taxpayers—our children—with the cost through an ever-increasing budget deficit. It would make millions of people worse off while extending and expanding tax breaks for wealthy households and businesses (CNN, May 24, 2025). It is the wrong direction for our nation. A far better path would be to ensure people have the resources and services they need to thrive; such as making affordable, good-quality health coverage accessible to everyone. For instance, in addition to extending the premium tax credit improvements, Congress could

close the Medicaid “coverage gap.” These measures would help more than 1.6 million uninsured adults with incomes below the poverty line, who are ineligible for Medicaid because their state has not enacted the ACA Medicaid expansion. Reducing deductibles and other cost sharing procedures for marketplace enrollees would also improve affordability for people who grapple with health care costs. Streamlining enrollment and renewal processes in Medicaid would help more eligible people get coverage without gaps.

In short, there are policies and measures that we can choose to implement to benefit at RICK populations, which in turn would create a more prosperous future for all of us. We need only to open our eyes to the suffering of our neighbors to see that indeed when we are united, we become one family living under the same roof. We must not leave any member of our family behind.

El Sol Latino

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Conozca sus Derechos Respecto al ICE ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL | La Fiscal General de Massachusetts

En las últimas semanas, nuestra oficina ha escuchado sobre la creciente preocupación por la aplicación de la ley de inmigración en Massachusetts. Las familias están siendo separadas. Arrestan a los padres delante de sus hijos. Sacan a la gente de sus coches a plena luz del día. Incluso el Servicio de Control de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE, en inglés) admite que muchos de los arrestados no han cometido ningún delito.

Estas medidas no tienen que ver con la seguridad pública. Tienen que ver con el miedo y con la incitación al caos y a la confusión en nuestras comunidades.

Es por eso por lo que desde mi oficina hemos creado una guía titulada “Conozca sus derechos” para ayudar a los inmigrantes, las familias y las comunidades a comprender sus derechos y el marco legal básico de las medidas del Servicio de Control de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE) de los Estados Unidos.

Esto es lo que necesita saber:

¿Cómo aplica la ley de inmigración el ICE?

ICE puede identificar a aquellas personas de quienes ellos sospechan que deben deportarse del país. Esto puede incluir a personas que ingresaron a los Estados Unidos sin autorización, que se quedaron más tiempo del que se permite con una visa, que fueron acusadas de violar los requisitos de inmigración (como no registrarse con ICE) o a quienes el gobierno federal les haya revocado la autorización legal.

ICE no necesita demostrar que se cometió un delito para arrestar y detener a una persona que es objeto de deportación. En muchos casos, tampoco necesita una orden judicial ni administrativa si considera que alguien está aquí violando la ley de inmigración y hay posibilidades de que huya.

¿Cuándo puede entrar el ICE a su hogar y a otros espacios privados?

En la mayoría de los casos, los agentes del ICE no pueden ingresar legalmente a espacios privados, como hogares u oficinas privadas, a menos que presenten una orden judicial firmada por un juez o reciban el consentimiento voluntario de alguien con autoridad sobre el espacio.

Usted no tiene la obligación de abrirles la puerta a menos que le muestren una orden judicial válida.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si el ICE intenta ingresar a mi hogar?

Las personas tienen derecho a hablar desde detrás de la puerta para solicitar que le muestren la orden judicial y verificar que la haya firmado un juez. Sin la orden, tiene derecho a denegar la entrada.

¿Cuáles son mis derechos si soy arrestado o detenido por ICE?

Si ICE lo arresta o lo detiene, tiene derecho a lo siguiente:

- Permanecer en silencio
- Negarse a firmar documentos que no entienda
- Contratar y hablar con un abogado, aunque el gobierno no está obligado a proporcionarle uno

Nunca dé información falsa o documentos falsos, ya que eso puede dar lugar a cargos penales.

Durante una medida de cumplimiento por parte del ICE, puede ser útil hacer las preguntas adecuadas. Si bien es posible que ICE no esté obligado a responder todas sus preguntas, estas son algunas preguntas útiles:

- ¿Me están deteniendo?
- ¿Estoy bajo arresto? ¿Por qué?
- ¿Tienen una orden judicial? ¿La puedo ver?
- ¿A dónde me llevan?
- ¿Para qué agencia trabajan?
- ¿Cuáles son sus nombres y números de placa?
- ¿Cómo puede mi familia o mi abogado ponerse en contacto con ustedes?

¿Cuáles son mis derechos como testigo? ¿Qué puedo hacer para ayudar a una persona a la que están arrestando o deteniendo?

Como testigo de una medida de cumplimiento por parte de ICE, puede observar desde una distancia segura y grabar la interacción, pero legalmente no puede obstruir, impedir o agredir a un agente del ICE.

Siempre y cuando no obstruya la medida de cumplimiento, también puede ayudar a la persona afectada a hacerle preguntas al agente del ICE, tales como las mencionadas anteriormente. También puede preguntarle a la persona a la que están deteniendo si tiene un abogado de inmigración al que pueda llamar o si hay un familiar al que le gustaría que usted llame.

¿Qué sucede después de un arresto de ICE?

En general, llevan a la persona a una oficina local de ICE para que le tomen las huellas digitales y le tomen una fotografía. Luego, a la persona la pueden trasladar a cualquier instalación de ICE en cualquier parte del país, a menos que un tribunal ordene no hacerlo. En la mayoría de los casos, recibirán una notificación para comparecer ante el tribunal de inmigración.

La persona detenida puede solicitar una audiencia de fianza en la que un juez de inmigración decide si puede quedar en libertad mientras su caso avanza.

También se le puede solicitar que firme documentos en los que renuncia a derechos importantes o que dan lugar a la deportación. Tiene derecho a permanecer en silencio y a negarse a firmar documentos que no comprenda.

La conclusión es que no es necesario ser abogado para ayudar a alguien. Solo con saber lo básico se puede hacer una diferencia.

Desde la Oficina de la Fiscal General nos comprometemos a garantizar que cada persona en Massachusetts sepa que importan, que pertenecen y que tienen derechos.

Unámonos y mantengamos la seguridad en nuestras comunidades - no a través del miedo, sino a través del conocimiento.

Esta guía está disponible en línea, aquí: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/05292025-ago-ice-guidance-spanish/download>. También puede comunicarse con la Oficina de la Fiscal General al **617-727-2200**.

2025 Pynchon Medalists Announced

SPRINGFIELD, MA. June 17, 2025- The Advertising Club of Western Massachusetts' Trustees of the Order of William Pynchon announced their selection of two local residents as this year's Pynchon medal recipients. Kelly McGiverin, chairperson of the Pynchon Trustees, stated, "These are challenging times—and more than ever we need local heroes like these two recipients, who model selflessness and community responsibility." For the first time since the award's inception in 1915, the Pynchon Board of Trustees now includes a past Pynchon recipient as a voting member.

Slated to receive the Advertising Club's Pynchon Medal at an official event this fall are the following recipients:

Paul Lambert, nominated by Edward Cohen.

Paul Lambert has served as president and CEO of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra since 2022, having initially joined as an interim director. He guided the organization through a period of significant challenges, resolving contractual disputes and restoring its operational stability. In so doing, Lambert ensured that live classical music remains a part of Western Massachusetts' cultural landscape. Under his leadership, the symphony has embraced cultural diversity in its programming to attract broader audiences throughout the region. Recent performances have showcased African American composers, commemorated the Juneteenth holiday, and featured a "Fearless Women Award" concert honoring Women's History Month.

Prior to joining the symphony, Lambert spent two decades at Springfield's Basketball Hall of Fame, where he developed community engagement initiatives that connected the city's residents—especially young people—with the organization's programs. He continues his community involvement through the Springfield Rotary Club, where he has helped establish programs for those in need, including a monthly meal service for the region's unhoused population.

Anthony Russo, nominated by Lois Nesci.

As vice president of the Agawam City Council, Anthony Russo has distinguished himself through responsive leadership and an approach to public service that extends well beyond traditional council duties. He has shown exceptional commitment to the community's most vulnerable residents through hands-on charitable work and personal sacrifice. Russo donates his entire council salary to local charitable organizations and families in need, with a special focus during the holidays on ensuring no child goes without. For several years, he has made annual visits to local Toys for Tots drives, arriving with a trunk full of toys purchased with his council earnings to benefit children in need. In service to Agawam's elderly population, Russo organized the "Sand for Seniors" program, personally ensuring that more than 60 residents receive sand for safe home access during the treacherous winter months, while also volunteering

regularly at the Agawam Senior Center for meal service and social

activities. Through his advocacy for veterans and his belief that public service means giving back to the community, Russo embodies compassionate leadership that spans from the youngest to the oldest residents of Agawam and beyond.

This year's recipients were chosen from a pool of nominations received by the Advertising Club of Western Massachusetts. All nominees are researched by the trustees, who then deliberate before selecting final recipients. Pynchon medalists are chosen by unanimous decision of the Pynchon Board of Trustees, who comprise the current and three past presidents of the Advertising Club of Western Mass, as well as one past Pynchon recipient.

Pynchon Trustees for 2025 are Scott Whitney, Brenda McGiverin, Kelly McGiverin, Myke Connolly, and past Pynchon recipient Janine Fondon.

The presentation of the Pynchon Medal and celebration will take place in the fall of 2025, with a date and time to be announced.

For additional information on this year's Pynchon recipient, please get in touch with Kelly McGiverin at 413.561.5966 or via email at Kelly.McGiverin@wwlp.com. Visit adclubwm.org for more details and a complete listing of Pynchon recipients since 1915.

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Anatomía de una maldición

por **JOSÉ EDGARDO CRUZ FIGUEROA**

Cuál es la anatomía de una maldición? La pregunta se me ocurrió mientras escuchaba un disco de Tom Harrell con Maribel a mi lado tratando de poner en su sitio las mil piezas de un rompecabezas. La imagen que debía reconstruir era *La boda campesina* de Bruegel el mayor, hecha en el 1568. Era cerca de la una de la tarde, un día frío pero soleado. Afuera algunos árboles comenzaban a desecher sus hojas, mustios, como doblegados frente a la posibilidad inminente de un desastre o la llegada de una carta anunciando una desgracia. Otros se veían encendidos, forrados de hojas rojas refractando la luz de la misma manera que un fósforo refracta una mirada, como si el cambio de color en el otoño fuese un desafío ante lo inevitable.

No me gustan las trompetas, dijo Maribel, pero esa suena dulce. Y me encanta el sonido del órgano.

La canción que escuchábamos en ese momento incluía órgano en vez de piano y el sonido evocaba una función religiosa pero no en la iglesia sino en la playa.

Harrell es esquizofrénico paranoico, le dije, y cuando único se siente libre de la enfermedad es cuando toca la trompeta. Las enfermedades mentales son una maldición, pero él suena totalmente controlado y en paz, dijo Maribel.

Entonces escuchamos “Heliotrope”, una conversación entre la trompeta de Harrell y la guitarra acústica de Charles Altura, y pensé que una maldición puede sobrellevarse en la distracción de un solo de trompeta en un registro bajo, en los acordes de una guitarra, o en la cronometría de una batería, un bajo y un piano. O quizás se sobrelleva cuando uno se da cuenta de que es permanente, inevitable. A veces lo que nunca se va se torna invisible precisamente porque no se va.

Le penúltima canción del disco se titulaba “Wind”. El viento es símbolo de libertad me dijo Harrell cuando se sentó a mi lado. Era blanco y alto. Su pelo rubio, que una vez pareció negro, se había tornado blanco y con el pasar de los años se había jorobado, quizás por el hábito de tocar con la cabeza hacia abajo. Su mujer llegó con él y se ubicó en el trasfondo, pendiente a lo que él necesitara.

A mí su llegada me pareció extraña. Yo soy promotor de conciertos pero en ese momento estaba en la sala de mi casa. El concierto más próximo era en la primavera y no había contratado a Harrell. Verlo a mi lado era parecido a las veces que miraba un árbol enrojecido, como ahora, y se me ocurría que miraba un flamboyán en primavera en vez de un arce en otoño. El flamboyán era un cliché nacionalista en Puerto Rico pero para mí no tenía ese significado. A mí la imagen se me aparecía al frente de la casa de mi mamá en Los Maestros, cuando me disponía a salir acompañado de Lizbeth Bronstein, luego de haber disfrutado de sus dones en la casa mientras mami estaba en el trabajo. En esa época nunca se me ocurrió pensar en maldiciones de ningún tipo pues era joven, el pasado era liviano, el presente era una fiesta y el futuro se llamaba Lizbeth, las hilachas de su pelo rubio un cuaderno lleno de poemas, sus muslos arrugados por la celulitis un manjar.

Maribel siguió bregando con su rompecabezas. El disco seguía sonando. Cambié el ángulo en que miraba y Harrell desapareció. Mi entorno volvió a transformarse. Afuera el paisaje era distinto: hojas verdes en vez de rojas, gallinas cacareando en vez de estorninos silbando, y un calor de la santa madre que me parió. Pensé que el

tiempo y el espacio se habían convertido en un capricho. Recordé lo que había dicho Bergson de que el presente, que mañana será el pasado, contiene la imagen del mañana, aunque comprender que es así no es fácil. Mi confusión, mi sentido rojo de las hojas antes y mi sentido verde más tarde, era quizás el resultado de la coexistencia, que es difícil de apreciar, del futuro y el presente, aunque en mi caso la coincidencia era tanto espacial como temporal. El tiempo había transcurrido sin que lo notara. El espacio era otro, más caluroso pero familiar. Aun así, no me quedaba duda de que lo que vivía ahora estaba por venir en otra parte.

A través de los años Harrell solía aparecerse y desaparecerse de los conciertos sin previo aviso y su estado de ánimo podía oscilar violentamente. Una vez que trató de suicidarse tuvo una reacción tóxica a la medicina que le recetaron.

A veces escucho voces que me hacen perder el sentido de la realidad, me dijo, pero cuando toco las voces se van.

Sus músicos se daban cuenta de sus síntomas pero nunca decían nada. Él tampoco. Subía al escenario, el que fuera, sin hablar, siempre mirando para abajo, y no hacía más que contar. *One, two, three* y el grupo, como el que inicia el rito de una sociedad secreta, salía tocando.

Siempre y cuando me tome mis medicamentos puedo funcionar, me dijo. Pero es la música lo que me mantiene estable. Comprendo tu maldición, le dije, mi hija una vez trató de matarme. Esa es la mía; no que me amenazara sino la condición que le llevó a ponérseme de frente con un cuchillo largo en la mano. No reaccionó. ¿Tú tocas la trompeta?, me preguntó. Yo dije con un poco de vergüenza que tenía una pero que no sabía tocarla. Ve y búscala, me dijo, para que podamos seguir hablando. Me lo dijo mientras miraba hacia otra parte como tratando de ubicarse.

La familiaridad y candidez de Harrell me pareció desconcertante. No estaba acostumbrado a verme envuelto en la intimidad de alguien a quien solo conocía por su trabajo y mucho menos a compartir mi propia saga, aunque de eso no le dije casi nada.

Entre su maldición y la mía habían similitudes. Yo encontraba alivio en el tormento de los demás y pensaba que le pasaba lo mismo a otros afectados al saber de mis adversidades. Pero con él no era lo mismo. Nuestro punto común era abstracto para mí y concreto para él. Era igual con mi hija. Su maldición me afectaba pero ella era quien la vivía a diario. Harrell no sufría por el martirio de otro sino que lo tenía enterrado en su alma, como una garrapata que no cesa de chuparte la sangre. Eran dos anatomías distintas afianzadas a dos cuerpos similares, una enfermedad común con rasgos particulares.

Terminamos de escuchar el disco y Maribel sugirió que saliéramos a cenar. Harrell y su mujer se disculparon. Tenían que regresar a Nueva York de inmediato. En vez de salir a cenar comimos las sobras del día anterior. Ya no teníamos televisor en el cuarto así que Maribel se retiró y yo me puse a mirar una película en la sala. Cuando subí a la cama Maribel estaba roncando.

Cuando el teléfono sonó apenas había dormido cuatro horas. Una enfermera del hospital local me dijo que mi hija había sido detenida por la policía y que les respondió gritando. Ellos dedujeron correctamente que estaba trastornada y en vez de arrestarla la llevaron al hospital. Allí se tiró al suelo chillando como una urraca,

continued on next page

Anatomía de una maldición continued from page 12

diciendo que el Diablo quería que se matara.

Era la énesima vez que recibía una llamada de ese tipo, la enésima vez que mi hija era llevada al hospital. Mientras la parte izquierda de mi cerebro hablaba con la enfermera la parte derecha tarareaba la melodía de “Heliotrope”. Así mitigaba mi desbarajuste. Recordé la foto del disco en la que se veía a Harrell con sus dedos sobre las válvulas de la trompeta cubriéndole la boca, con el ceño fruncido y una mirada inquietante, como la de un energúmeno haciendo un esfuerzo por parecer normal. De golpe, como si me hubiese lanzado de un avión a treinta mil pies de altura y terminara reventado, tuve una idea más precisa de cuál era la anatomía de una maldición: sorpresiva, inevitable, permanente, a veces patente, a veces disfrazada, a veces interrumpida por sonidos, colores, y recuerdos que te desubican sin que hayas dado un paso. Entonces me invadió un sentido profundo de paz.

Harrell estaba en un rincón del cuarto lubricando las válvulas de su trompeta. La puso en su estuche y dijo que no podía hablar pues alguien lo estaba escuchando. La paradoja de hablar para decir que no se puede hablar quedó flotando en el aire. Yo no le dije nada.

Procedí a explicarle a la enfermera la condición de mi hija, dándole los datos más importantes. Esa información es útil, ella dijo, para cuando la vea el psiquiatra.

Antes de irse Harrell me miró como con pena, pero creo que en realidad era una mirada que decía: lo entiendo. Con voz queda me deseó buena suerte aunque creo que confundí el sonido de su voz con el de su trompeta tocando “Heliotrope”.

Quisiera saber si cree recomendable que la ingresemos, dijo la enfermera. Yo le dije que sí, que eso era lo más recomendable. ¿Dónde dejó el carro?, le pregunté. Eran las cinco de la mañana. No entendía cómo el tiempo había pasado ni recordaba lo acontecido entre la una de la tarde y esa hora de la madrugada. Hice un esfuerzo y entonces vi a Harrell, a su mujer, a Maribel con su rompecabezas, un árbol prendido en llamas que no supe si estaba frente a mi casa o frente a la casa de mami. Vi a Lizabeth quitándose la ropa y poniéndosela de nuevo, mirándome como si se fuera a desmayar. Escuché el sonido del viento imitando la canción de Harrell.

Maribel se vistió y fuimos al hospital para recoger las llaves del carro. Yo me puse cualquier cosa y ni siquiera me peiné. No me lavé la boca pues sabía que no iba a hablar con nadie. Me llevé el disco de Harrell para volver a escucharlo. Después de dar varias vueltas por el área donde mi hija lo había dejado lo encontramos. Usamos el remoto para identificarlo por las luces parpadeantes y el pitido interminante de la alarma. El sol no había salido así que aunque estaba frente a un árbol muy frondoso, no puedo decir que estaba bajo su sombra. El tope del árbol era verde; un verde oscuro y pesado. Un siempreverde, pensé, pero en esta penumbra no puedo decir de qué clase. El carro estaba en una zona de NO ESTACIONE y faltaba poco para que la prohibición comenzara.

A lo lejos se veía la alborada avanzando, lista para postrarse frente a nosotros. En el horizonte otros árboles surgían de la niebla según ésta comenzaba a disiparse. Podían haber sido tanto arces como flamboyanes. La distancia y la niebla ocultaban su color. Podían

haber estado tanto allí, en el lado este del Río Hudson, como en otro sitio, igual que yo: saliendo de la casa de mami en Los Maestros o bregando con una crisis en Albany. Creo que en ese momento mi lóbulo parietal no estaba funcionando. Me pareció ver flores azules o quizás púrpuras volviéndose borrosas y emitiendo un olor muy agradable que poco a poco perdía su intensidad. Quizás era el sonido de “Heliotrope” transformado en color y fragancia pero en *fade out*.

El día estaba semi-oscuro cuando Maribel y yo nos separamos, ambos rumbo a casa, en carros distintos. Ya estaba propiamente ubicado, consciente de mi realidad inmediata. Diez minutos más y el carro de mi hija habría violado el mandato a no estacionarse en aquel lado de la calle después de la seis de la mañana. Encendí el motor y ajusté los espejos retrovisores. Por dentro el carro era un basurero. Mente desordenada, carro en desorden. Una pregunta me daba golpes en la frente: ¿Cuántas veces más una crisis nos obligará a salir de casa a las cinco de la mañana? Pensé que al menos la regla de estacionamiento no había sido violada. Habíamos evitado una multa y por eso me sentí aliviado.



JOSÉ EDGARDO CRUZ FIGUEROA

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Critical Perspectives on Latino Education in Massachusetts

edited by **LORNA RIVERA** and **MELISSA COLÓN**

AMHERST, MA | **UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS PRESS** | August 2025 | 324 pages

DESCRIPTION

In Massachusetts, the Latino population increased by 475 percent between 1980 and 2017, marking a dramatic growth. This diverse ethnic community of Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Salvadoreans, Colombians, Brazilians, and more also contains a wide range of cultures, immigration and migration experiences, languages, and socio-political backgrounds. However, there are numerous commonalities involving education. Recent research at the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Policy reveals that Latino students in Massachusetts are more likely to attend public schools, in communities with significant academic achievement and opportunity gaps as well as other challenges, from food scarcity to higher rates of unemployment. At the same time, the state-wide shift to standards-based education has had a disproportionately negative impact on Latino students, who already feel the effects of politically motivated anti-immigrant policies and laws that limit bilingual education.

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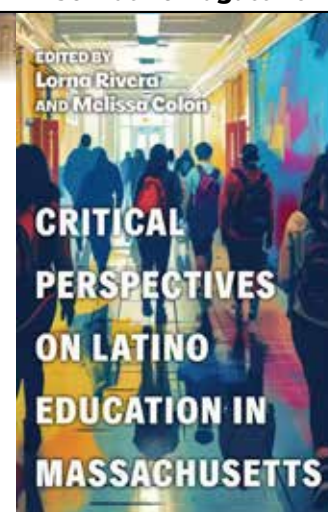
LORNA RIVERA is the Director of the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, and professor in the Leadership in Education Department and Latino Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is the author of the award-winning book, *Laboring to Learn: Women's Literacy and Poverty in the Post-Welfare Era*.

MELISSA COLÓN is an assistant professor of Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Before becoming a professor and researcher, she worked as a public school teacher, community organizer, and nonprofit leader, including serving as the Executive Director of *Iniciativa: The Massachusetts Educational Initiative for Latino Students*.

PRAISE

"This new volume is valuable for the diversity it brings to its topic, with a mix of research methodologies; voices of academics and community members; varied generations of contributors; and the issues it addresses, including legal documentation, languages used in the classroom, and dis/abilities. It nicely builds on the historical work of the Gastón Institute."—**Ofelia Garcia**, author of *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*

"This volume offers a series of strong, informative, and timely chapters on the state of Latino youth education in Massachusetts, ultimately making a well-rounded case for what changes should be made to improve the circumstances for Latino students within schools. The stories of educators and leaders who have navigated the complicated, frustrating, and often discriminatory blockades in Latino education offer insights into what it takes to keep going, and how to do things right."—**Michael Medina**, Boston University's Wheelock College of Education Human Development



El ABC de DtMF

Diccionario de palabras de Puerto Rico y referencias culturales en *DeBí TirAR Más FOToS*
por **MAIA SHERWOOD DROZ** • PUERTO RICO | **Publicación Independiente** | 2025 | 80 páginas

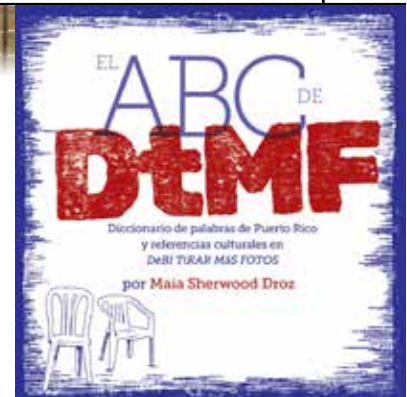
Desde a *fuego* hasta *zumba*, pasando por *cañita*, *chulería* y *corillo*, este diccionario reúne todas las palabras, frases y expresiones del español de Puerto Rico presentes en el disco **DeBí TirAR Más FOTOS** de Bad Bunny (2025). Incluye también los nombres de personas y lugares, y las referencias musicales y culturales necesarias para adentrarse en el universo que se despliega en sus 17 canciones.

El ABC de DtMF tira una foto del momento lingüístico y cultural actual en Puerto Rico. Define y contextualiza el vocabulario y los referentes particulares que figuran en el disco, ilustrando cada entrada con ejemplos tomados directamente de las canciones. Está

dirigido a todos los puertorriqueños, en la isla y en la diáspora, así como a quienes, desde sus países, se han hermanado con Puerto Rico a través de la música.

Autora

Maia Sherwood Droz es lexicógrafa, editora y consultora lingüística. Sus áreas de interés principales son el español de Puerto Rico, los diccionarios y la relación entre lengua e ideología. Dirige *Tesoro.pr*, el Tesoro lexicográfico del español de Puerto Rico. Es miembro numerario de la Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española.



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Why the traditional college major may be holding students back in a rapidly changing job market

by JOHN WEIGAND | Professor Emeritus of Architecture and Interior Design, Miami University



This article was originally published in **The Conversation** | June 30, 2025

Colleges and universities are struggling to stay afloat.

The reasons are numerous: declining numbers of college-age students in much of the country, rising tuition at public institutions as state funding shrinks, and a growing skepticism about the value of a college degree.

Pressure is mounting to cut costs by reducing the time it takes to earn a degree from four years to three.

THE CONVERSATION

Students, parents and legislators increasingly prioritize return on investment and degrees that are more likely to lead to gainful employment. This has boosted enrollment in professional programs while reducing interest in traditional liberal arts and humanities majors, creating a supply-demand imbalance.

The result has been increasing financial pressure and an unprecedented number of closures and mergers, to date mostly among smaller liberal arts colleges.

To survive, institutions are scrambling to align curriculum with market demand. And they're defaulting to the traditional college major to do so.

The college major, developed and delivered by disciplinary experts within siloed departments, continues to be the primary benchmark for academic quality and institutional performance.

This structure likely works well for professional majors governed by accreditation or licensure, or more tightly aligned with employment. But in today's evolving landscape, reliance on the discipline-specific major may not always serve students or institutions well.

As a professor emeritus and former college administrator and dean, I argue that the college major may no longer be able to keep up with the combinations of skills that cross multiple academic disciplines and career readiness skills demanded by employers, or the flexibility students need to best position themselves for the workplace.

Students want flexibility

I see students arrive on campus each year with different interests, passions and talents – eager to stitch them into meaningful lives and careers.

A more flexible curriculum is linked to student success, and students now consult AI tools such as ChatGPT to figure out course combinations that best position them for their future. They want flexibility, choice and time to redirect their studies if needed.

And yet, the moment students arrive on campus – even before they apply – they're asked to declare a major from a list of predetermined and prescribed choices. The major, coupled with general education and other college requirements, creates an academic track that is

anything but flexible.

Not surprisingly, around 80% of college students switch their majors at least once, suggesting that more flexible degree requirements would allow students to explore and combine diverse areas of interest. And the number of careers, let alone jobs, that college graduates are expected to have will only increase as technological change becomes more disruptive.

As institutions face mounting pressures to attract students and balance budgets, and the college major remains the principal metric for doing so, the curriculum may be less flexible now than ever.

How schools are responding

In response to market pressures, colleges are adding new high-demand majors at a record pace. Between 2002 and 2022, the number of degree programs nationwide increased by nearly 23,000, or 40%, while enrollment grew only 8%. Some of these majors, such as cybersecurity, fashion business or entertainment design, arguably connect disciplines rather than stand out as distinct. Thus, these new majors siphon enrollment from lower-demand programs within the institution and compete with similar new majors at competitor schools.

At the same time, traditional arts and humanities majors are adding professional courses to attract students and improve employability. Yet, this adds credit hours to the degree while often duplicating content already available in other departments.

Importantly, while new programs are added, few are removed. The challenge lies in faculty tenure and governance, along with a traditional understanding that faculty set the curriculum as disciplinary experts. This makes it difficult to close or revise low-demand majors and shift resources to growth areas.

The result is a proliferation of under-enrolled programs, canceled courses and stretched resources – leading to reduced program quality and declining faculty morale.

Ironically, under the pressure of declining demand, there can be perverse incentives to grow credit hours required in a major or in general education requirements as a way of garnering more resources or adding courses aligned with faculty interests. All of which continues to expand the curriculum and stress available resources.

Universities are also wrestling with the idea of liberal education and how to package the general education requirement.

Although liberal education is increasingly under fire, employers and students still value it.

Students' career readiness skills – their ability to think critically and creatively, to collaborate effectively and to communicate well – remain strong predictors of future success in the workplace and in life.

Reenvisioning the college major

Assuming the requirement for students to complete a major in order to earn a degree, colleges can also allow students to bundle smaller modules – such as variable-credit minors, certificates or course sequences – into a customizable, modular major.

HCC Awarded \$423K Grant for TRIO Student Support Program

HOLYOKE, MA | HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE | July 10 — The U.S. Department of Education has awarded Holyoke Community College a TRIO Student Support Services grant of \$423,190 to improve college retention and graduation rates among low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.

This award, which runs through June 2026, marks the continuation of more than 30 years of TRIO SSS services at HCC. Since 1993, the program has served thousands of HCC students, helping them stay in school, earn degrees, and build meaningful careers.

SSS is one of eight federal TRIO programs funded under the Higher Education Act of 1965 to remove social, academic, and cultural barriers to higher education. Since its inception in 1968, TRIO SSS has helped millions of low-income, first-generation students graduate from college and contribute to their communities and the economy.

Through individualized services including academic tutoring, financial aid, scholarship guidance, career exploration, personal and academic counseling, and mentoring, TRIO SSS empowers students to overcome barriers to success. These comprehensive supports make it significantly more likely that students will complete their degrees or successfully transfer, with the lowest possible debt.

“The TRIO Student Support Services program at Holyoke Community College empowers students to achieve their academic goals through personalized academic support as they navigate both educational challenges and personal growth,” said Elsie Rodriguez-Garcia, director of TRIO programs at HCC. “Through mentorship, guidance, and valuable resources, TRIO inspires students to realize their full potential and thrive during their college journey. TRIO is more than just a support service, it is a community that engages, encourages,

and uplifts students – fostering resilience, persistence, and lasting success beyond college.”

Nationally, the TRIO SSS program has a proven track record. According to a 2019 evaluation by the U.S. Department of Education, students in TRIO SSS at two-year institutions were 48 percent more likely to earn an associate degree or transfer to a four-year school, and students at four-year institutions were 18 percent more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree compared to similar peers not in the program.

“TRIO programs generally and TRIO SSS in particular transform students from the least resourced backgrounds into college graduates,” said Kimberly Jones, president of the Council for Opportunity in Education in Washington, D.C. “This vital program makes all the difference for nearly a million students each year across the country.”

Notable alumni of the TRIO Student Support Services program include Michael Cashman, town supervisor of Plattsburgh, N.Y.; former NASA astronaut José Hernández; and Cheryl Johnson, 36th Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives.

TRIO programs (Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Veterans Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program) help students overcome academic, economic, and social barriers to higher education. TRIO services include assistance in choosing a college and tutoring; personal, financial, and career counseling; assistance in applying to college; workplace and college visits; special instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and mathematics; assistance in applying for financial aid; and academic assistance in high school or assistance to reenter high school or college.

HOLYOKE
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Why the traditional college major may be holding students back ... continued from page 15

This lets students, guided by advisers, assemble a degree that fits their interests and goals while drawing from multiple disciplines. A few project-based courses can tie everything together and provide context.

Such a model wouldn’t undermine existing majors where demand is strong. For others, where demand for the major is declining, a flexible structure would strengthen enrollment, preserve faculty expertise rather than eliminate it, attract a growing number of nontraditional students who bring to campus previously earned credentials, and address the financial bottom line by rightsizing curriculum in alignment with student demand.

One critique of such a flexible major is that it lacks depth of study, but it is precisely the combination of curricular content that gives it depth. Another criticism is that it can’t be effectively marketed to an employer. But a customized major can be clearly named and explained to employers to highlight students’ unique skill sets.

Further, as students increasingly try to fit cocurricular experiences – such as study abroad, internships, undergraduate research or organizational leadership – into their course of study, these can also be approved as modules in a flexible curriculum.

It’s worth noting that while several schools offer interdisciplinary studies majors, these are often overprescribed or don’t grant students

access to in-demand courses. For a flexible-degree model to succeed, course sections would need to be available and added or deleted in response to student demand.

Several schools also now offer microcredentials– skill-based courses or course modules that increasingly include courses in the liberal arts. But these typically need to be completed in addition to requirements of the major.

We take the college major for granted.

Yet it’s worth noting that the major is a relatively recent invention.

Before the 20th century, students followed a broad liberal arts curriculum designed to create well-rounded, globally minded citizens. The major emerged as a response to an evolving workforce that prioritized specialized knowledge. But times change – and so can the model.

JOHN WEIGAND is Professor Emeritus of Architecture and Interior Design at Miami University, having served as Interim Dean in Miami’s College of Creative Arts (2022-24), Associate Dean (2015-22), and Department Chair (2006-15). After earning the Master of Architecture from the University of Illinois, he worked professionally as an architect in Chicago before coming to Miami in 1995 to conceptualize a new degree program in Interior Design aligned with Miami’s existing BA in Architecture.



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