Assumption Students Produce Spanish Publication

Worcester, MA - Producing a written publication can often be a long and rigorous process. The production cycle for a typical newspaper or newsletter may involve many stages including conducting interviews, writing, and editing. This process usually takes a lot of time and effort—especially when it is conducted in a different language.

Thirteen Assumption College students, who were enrolled in a special topics course on Latin American chronicles during the Spring semester, produced two editions of Crónicas de todos los Colores, a newsletter written entirely in Spanish. This publication was the first of its kind at Assumption according to project coordinator and course instructor Juan Carlos Grijalva.

The course offered an introduction to the study of Latin American literary journalism beginning in the 19th century and continuing to the present day. Some of the authors that were read in the class included José Martí, Gutiérrez Nájera, Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Monsivais, Elena Poniatowska, Germán Castro Caicedo, Rodolfo Walsh, Tom Wolfe, and Norman Mailer.

The students studied how the writings of such authors chronicled issues of everyday life such as problems of modernity and violence. Throughout the semester, the students were asked to write their own chronicles based on their everyday experiences at Assumption. Some of these experiences included: college life, problematic situations in the city of Worcester, volunteer experiences, study abroad experiences, and selecting a major.

In the first edition of Crónicas de todos los Colores, the students wrote about their visit with Sergio Rivera, the editor of Vocero Hispano, a Spanish newspaper produced in Worcester (pictured above left). The edition also featured an interview with President Plough, and articles on several student life issues.

For the second edition, which was released during the week of commencement, the students conducted an interview with Massachusetts Congressman James McGovern. The issue also featured articles about outstanding people on campus who have helped inspire students (members of the faculty, administration, etc.).

The 13 students in the class controlled every aspect of the publication, including translating interviews, reading, editing, and deciding on what topics to cover through the use of an editorial committee. The editors for the newsletter were Bill White and Kurt Lavimoniere. The editorial committee was composed of Lauren Muzyka, Kristin Donahue, and Mary Curran. Writers for the publication included Ashley Daley, Andrea DeCastro, Steven Major, Amanda Richards, Colleen Cullen, Meredith Marsh, Michele Lisacki, and Jean Slavkovsky.

This group of students was composed of both Spanish majors and non-Spanish majors, which makes the success of the project even more impressive. “I encourage all students on campus to use foreign languages as a tool to produce good things,” said Grijalva. “This project shows that nothing is impossible in learning a new language.”

Copies of the publication were distributed on campus and were also shared with the foreign language departments at both the College of the Holy Cross and Clark University. Grijalva hopes that this type of course and project will continue in the future and hopes to start a Spanish journalism club on campus.

In noting the success of the project, Grijalva would like to thank the following people who helped make the project a reality: President Plough; Congressman James McGovern; Michael Land, assistant professor of English; Sergio Rivera of Vocero Hispano; the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Cultures; the Department of Latin American Studies; the Student Government Association (economic help); and the entire Assumption community.

The two online editions of Crónicas de todos los colores are available at http://www.assumption.edu/users/grijalva/Journalism.htm.