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Tacita de café event
Somos Latinx Lideres (SoLL) at the Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) aims to provide a space for Latinx identified staff and allies to discuss topics related to Latinx research, networking, and to enhance career development. SoLL has three goals with the common theme of enhancing the work environment of Latinx staff at Northwestern University:

Goal 1: Host events for Latinx FSM Staff.

Goal 2: Create networking opportunities through events that are of interest to Latinx staff at FSM.

Goal 3: Collaborate with other affinity groups across Northwestern University.

In this edition we highlight two Latinx Scholars, Artur and Irma! Artur Queiroz is a postdoctoral scholar at the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing. Irma is a clinical research assistant at Rush University. If you are interested in nominating someone to our next newsletter please email andre.avila@northwestern.edu

We are also looking for new core members to help us with our initiatives. Members are asked to attend a monthly 1-hour meeting and help out with activities such as coordinating events, creating newsletters, and connecting with perspective members. If you are interested in being part of our core committee, please reach out to andres.avila@northwestern.edu

We are excited to grow as a Latinx affinity group across FSM and are optimistic about SoLL’s involvement in more events. If you have any suggestions on ways to carry out our mission statement, please let us know! SoLL will gladly share your idea with all SoLL members to provide networking, community, and inclusivity opportunities.

Thank you for your support,

Somos Latinx Lideres (SoLL)
Artur Queiroz, Ph.D., (he/him) I am 28 years old, Brazilian, recently finished my double Ph.D. in Public Health at the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública at Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal) and in Science at Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil).

Are there specific events/influences that drove your interests into your focus of study (internships, volunteer work, personal experiences, mentorship from a professor/employer, etc.)?

My interest in LGBTQIA+ health is an intertwined journey with my discovery for my own sexuality. I see my focus on the field as my way of giving back to my community. I can point an event the was a landmark in my career: the IAS 2019 in Mexico City. I was part of a group of Latin American delegates for the event. This moment made me realize how many of my peers were working in similar projects and how international collaboration can be beneficial. This pointed me in the direction of working in global health aspects, like the UNITE NGO in Lisbon, where I provided evidence based support for policy making in members of the parliament.

Throughout your professional journey, from undergraduate to your current position, what were some things you found supportive or lacking in navigating through higher education?

Looking back at my training as a Nurse, I missed a more in depth discussion and theoretical background on how structural aspects (racism, sexism and homophobia) can impact on the daily life and health of people.

What advice would you give aspiring professionals seeking graduate programs, specifically BIPOC aspiring professionals?

In many spaces BIPOC are not welcomed and people are going to hold this against us if they can, but this gives us a unique perspective in many aspects. We should use this to strengthen our analyses, creating knowledge that can and should, defy the norm.
Irma Rodas (she/her) is a Clinical Research Assistant in the Multicultural, Diversity, and Latinx Health Equity Research Program at Rush University Medical Center, Department of Family Medicine. She has a B.A in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and is currently obtaining her Associate’s Degree in Nursing at Malcolm X College. Her research interests involve public health advocacy and initiatives targeting clinically underserved populations.

Are there specific events/influences that drove your interests into your focus of study (internships, volunteer work, personal experiences, mentorship from a professor/employer, etc.)?
Being born in an impoverished region in Guatemala, I witnessed the amazing work that local healthcare providers performed with the people in the community. My grandmother was a midwife and I admired her kindness and ability to provide diligent care. This inspired my work with underserved communities, such as All of Us Research Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and my current work with Dr. Lisa Sanchez-Johnsen in the Multicultural, Diversity, and Latinx Health Equity Research Program developing community-based lifestyle interventions targeted towards minority populations.

Throughout your professional journey, from undergraduate to your current position, what were some things you found supportive or lacking in navigating through higher education? (i.e., support systems, affinity, or other university groups, etc.)
As a first-generation BIPOC student, I faced the challenge of navigating the academic world alone. For someone to whom this is all new, it can certainly be overwhelming, however I was eager to take advantage of the resources afforded to me. Joining different organizations and leadership opportunities, including the Medicina Scholars Program through the Hispanic Center of Excellence at the University of Illinois at Chicago, allowed me to create a support system to guide me along my journey. Surrounding myself with individuals with similar aspirations, found through these opportunities, provided me with the motivation and inspiration to continue to pursue my academic interests.

What advice would you give aspiring professionals seeking graduate programs, specifically Black, Latinx, and other minoritized aspiring professionals?
Aspiring professionals of color often face obstacles that are unique to our experiences. As such, it can be difficult to stay motivated in the face of those challenges. One piece of advice when encountering these issues is to envision your goals and remind yourself why you are working hard. My grandmother and my family were my biggest motivations and remembering that in tough times kept my morale high. Finally, make sure to celebrate every small achievement and milestone along the way towards your longer-term goals. It can be overwhelming feeling the constant chase towards a goal but reflecting on what you have achieved is incredibly important.

Is there anything else that was not asked, but you feel is relevant?
As a Latina woman, it is important for me to see more people of color in healthcare. I want patients belonging to underserved populations to know that there are individuals who can advocate and represent them in the healthcare field.
Announcement board

We want to highlight more work of Latinx faculty and students in higher education. If you know someone that may be interested, please let us know so we can highlight their work! You can submit your nominations here: https://forms.gle/LXaeTLxemNLM8MmT8