



# American Latino Museum Internship and Fellowship Initiative

Sample Application ALIF-255039-OMS

## University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$741,469
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley will create and support a new museum-based undergraduate internship and graduate fellowship program in partnership with American Latino museums. Project activities will include the creation of a new transdisciplinary museum studies course, expansion of outreach for students to enroll in internships and fellowships, and the development of a family engagement plan to involve students' families in the internship application process. Project funds will support the recruitment and support staff for the formation of a Student Advisory Board and a Family Advisory Board. The implementation of the museum-based coursework will result in the creation of a new museum-focused academic course, and a handbook for students participating in internships at American Latino museums.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Performance Measurement Plan

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

## University of Texas Río Grande Valley Center for Mexican American Studies

### Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program

#### Project Justification

**Introduction** The University of Texas Río Grande Valley (UTRGV), established in 2015, is a comprehensive, multi-campus university that serves a largely rural Mexican American and Latinx population on the U.S. México border. UTRGV, unified under one new institution, was formed from three legacy institutions - UT Brownsville, UT Pan American, and the UT Regional Academic Health Science Center in Harlingen, Texas. UTRGV is the second largest HSI in the nation with over 32,000 students, of whom 92% are Mexican American and/or Latinx, 54% first-generation, 60% women, and 63% of all undergraduates receive the Pell Grant (UTRGV 2022).<sup>1</sup> UTRGV offers over 80 undergraduate and 60 graduate programs. In 2016, UTRGV launched its strategic plan to serve the surrounding community, the Río Grande Valley. As part of that plan, an initiative was developed to establish UTRGV as a bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate (B3) university.

The history of the Río Grande Valley is marked by the persistent marginalization of Mexican, Mexican American, Black, and Indigenous peoples from social mobility due to overt and systemic racism as well as implicit bias which has manifested itself in deficit thinking systems and policies. This deficit thinking has also plagued education. The limited funding for higher education programming and infrastructure has contributed greatly to the marginalization of local families. In 2015, the creation of UTRGV allowed for a substantial increase in available state and federal funds. However, what funding was available was not specifically dedicated to dismantling systemic racism or uplifting the cultural wealth of the students and community. Even though UTRGV has accomplished many milestones in enrollment, research, programming, investment, and partnerships since then, the university still needs additional financial resources that strategically target the legacy of racism that has affected and continues to affect the quality of educational services inside and outside the classroom. This includes the opportunities our students have to access and participate in internships and fellowships. However, the difficulties our students face to participate in museum internships and fellowships at American Latino museums are particularly difficult for several reasons. One reason is a lack of funding to build infrastructure and capacity. A significant investment in infrastructure and capacity building is critical to the success and sustainability of the program. Other reasons include funding for student participation and family engagement. Some of UTRGV's greatest strengths are the cultural, linguistic, familial, and navigational capital that its students bring with them to campus. Tara Yosso refers to these forms of capital as cultural wealth (2005). This is a great resource both to the process for building institutional capacity but also a great resource to American Latino museums across the nation. However, rarely are our students afforded the opportunities to engage in both the capacity building and important exchanges that not only build their knowledge in museum studies, but also benefit the museums through the knowledge our students bring with them. Through this grant, the UTRGV Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) aims to bring together an interdisciplinary team of faculty and students to develop and implement a university wide ***Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program***. This program will be carried out in partnership with two American Latino museums: the Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame and Museum (Supporting Document 2) and the National Hispanic Cultural Center (Supporting Document 3).

Latinx Serving Institutions underperform when compared to “white normative standards” in higher education, and Latinx students will continue to be marginalized and underachieve if “Hispanic Serving Institutions” (HSI) continue to be entrenched in whiteness (Garcia, 2019, p.3). Problematically, Latinx students are often viewed through a deficit-based model: low-income, first-generation students are typically presumed to have a very limited ability to engage in a “traditional” collegiate experience and successfully complete college...guided by an unchallenged discourse fueled with deficit language such as: “incapable of learning,” “not college material,” “speaking with accents,” “high risk,” “high maintenance,” “disadvantaged,” “remedial,” “underprepared,” or “culturally deprived” (Rendón, et al., 2014). These ideologies bleed into museum studies and thus limit the participation of Latinx students in the very important internships and fellowships often regarded as the gateway to employment at museums. However, we heed the recommendations of Rendón, Nora, and Kanagala (2014) when they urge institutions to consider assets that are not based on schooling, but rather assets such as cultural assets, lived experience, and rising above socioeconomic circumstances. Gina Ann García argues that Latinx Serving Institutions often underperform when compared to “white normative standards” of higher

<sup>1</sup> All references may be found in Supporting Document 1

education and therefore, Latinx students will continue to be marginalized and underachieve if institutions continue to be embedded in whiteness (García, 2019, p.3). To truly be Hispanic/Latinx *serving* rather than solely Hispanic/Latinx *enrolling*, García argues that faculty, administrators, students, and staff must work together to 1) connect students to faculty and staff who speak Spanish, 2) develop a sense of racial and ethnic identity, 3) provide cultural connections so students gain a sense of belonging, 4) provide cultural and ethnic curricula and culturally relevant pedagogy, and 5) actively work to “disrupt barriers to success” for Latinx students (2017, pp. 113S-114S). With this project, we seek to disrupt these barriers to success, while also contributing to the diversification of both museum professionals and museums themselves through the advancement, support, and empowerment of American Latino museums.

**Goals and Objectives** - The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at UTRGV through the IMLS grant will aim to “support museum-based undergraduate internship programs designed to advance careers of individuals in the study of American Latino life, art, history, and culture” (Goal 1) and “support museum-based fellowships to increase museum career opportunities for individuals in the study of Latino life, art, history, and culture” (Goal 2). This will be accomplished by “expand[ing] and enhanc[ing] existing museum-based internship programs for undergraduate students pursuing studies relating to American Latino life, art, history, and culture” (Objective 1.2) and “creat[ing] new museum-based fellowship opportunities for students pursuing advanced studies related to American Latino life, art, history, and culture” (Objective 2.1). We will meet these goals and objectives by providing undergraduate and graduate students at UTRGV with paid internships and fellowships at two American Latino museums—Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame and Museum and National Hispanic Cultural Center. In order to meet these goals and objectives, we will use the funds provided by the IMLS to 1) engage in deliberate, collaborative and thoughtful planning, 2) create a new transdisciplinary museum studies course at the undergraduate and graduate level 3) expand our outreach to encourage students to partake in these internships and fellowships, 4) develop promotional materials, 5) expand our web presence to inform students of the internship and fellowship opportunities, 6) develop and implement a family engagement plan to both involve families in the internship recruitment and application process and also create better familial understanding of the benefits and logistics of participating in an internship, 7) fund internships and fellowships at American Latino museums, 8) develop strong and sustainable relationships with American Latino museums, and 9) carry-out annual internal and external evaluations to disseminate knowledge about challenges, benefits, and success of the project.

**Need** - An interdisciplinary team of 5 faculty from 8 different academic disciplines (Ethnomusicology, Art, English, Spanish, Anthropology, Mexican American Studies, Gender Studies and History), but all affiliated with the Center for Mexican American Studies and the Mexican American Studies academic program, collaborated to identify the needs, problems, and challenges students at UTRGV have with accessing and participating in both museum internships/fellowships and specifically interning with American Latino museums. In addition, feedback was sought from a group of undergraduate and graduate students from History, Dance, Anthropology, English, Gender Studies, and Mexican American Studies on what they perceive are the needs, problems, and challenges they and their peers face in participating in museums internships and fellowships, and in particular those at American Latino museums (Supporting Doc 4). Through this collaborative and intergenerational needs assessment process, it was determined there are three needs: financial, infrastructure, and familial.

***The first and greatest need students at UTRGV face in accessing and participating in a museum internship and/or fellowship is financial.*** The financial need is observed by both the faculty and students and supported by institutional data. Enrollment data indicates that 74% of all first-year students receive the Pell Grant. In other words, at an institution of over 32,000 students, almost 24,000 receive the Pell Grant (UTRGV 2022). This measure provides an excellent gauge for determining financial need as the Department of Education reveals that Pell grant recipients are those students that “demonstrate exceptional financial need” (2021). The financial need we collectively identified is not payment for tuition necessarily, but the financial costs incurred by students to participate in a museum internship program. As Fischer (2019) declares “Unpaid labor is never truly free. It foists costs onto others, including interns themselves, and ultimately suppresses wages all the way up the pay scale. The elimination of unpaid labor is a necessary first step toward real and lasting change.” For UTRGV students participating in a local internship program the financial needs revolve around the cost of transportation, meals, attire, and financial stress on the family incurred by working less hours at their primary place of employment. While UTRGV does not collect data on student employment, anecdotal data from the planning team

of faculty and students indicate that the vast majority of students not only attend school full-time but also work off campus. In addition, participating in an internship/fellowship outside of the Río Grande Valley is virtually an impossibility, not only due to the economic hardships of missing work, but also the lack of financial resources to travel outside of the Río Grande Valley and the expenses incurred for housing, transportation, and meals associated with an internship/fellowship outside of the students' hometown. In sum, our students simply do not have the luxury of participating in unpaid internships even if it results in credit earned towards graduation. These internal needs assessments clearly affirms research that demonstrates that in order to ensure equitable access to internships and fellowships museums should consider compensating interns with stipends or offering paid internships (Garcia, 2018). After all, Jill Medvedow, the director of Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art and the chair of the AAMD's Professional Issues Committee, said, "It is obvious that unpaid internships are only available to those who have the means to work without pay. This has been a long-standing practice, but it still needed to be articulated out loud as a first step toward change" (Stackpole, np, 2018).

***A second need that was identified is the lack of infrastructure*** for students outside the Departments of Anthropology and Art to take an internship course in which they may earn credit for their degree. The Department of Anthropology and the Department of Art both have internship courses that collaborate locally with the Museum of South Texas History and the local International Museum of Art and Science. However, these courses are limited to meeting elective graduation requirements for anthropology and art students. Furthermore, it is crucial to point out that none of these already available internships are not carried out at an American Latino museum despite the fact that 93% of our students are Mexican American and Latinx. Therefore, there are large access and opportunity gaps to an internship course for credit for students coming from other academic disciplines, where there exists both great student intrigue and the possibility for employment upon graduation at a museum and/or post graduate studies in museum studies. Related is the need to offer students meaningful opportunities to develop and practice professional presentational skills such as resume preparation and cover-letter writing which courses preparing them for internships and fellowships typically offer. Given the university's goals to become a bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural institution and serve the Latinx community, the need to help students develop these skills in English and Spanish in a bicultural learning environment such as an American Latino museum is all the more important. This lack of infrastructure results in lack of access to internships and fellowships at museums that are exclusively committed to the American Latinx experience. While the Río Grande Valley has a population of 1.3 million residents, of which 94% identify as Latinx (U.S. Census, 2022), there is only one American Latino museum in the region, the Texas Conjunto Hall of Fame and Museum established in 2001. The Río Grande Valley is home to several other museums. However, while many of these museums house some Latinx collections they do not dedicate themselves entirely to the Latinx experiences, cultures or histories. In addition, UTRGV does not have the infrastructure in place to facilitate internships and fellowships at American Latino museums. Therefore, UTRGV faces the critical need to develop an infrastructure that provides our students with opportunities to not only to intern at American Latino museums but for students across all disciplines, not just Anthropology and Art, to partake in these meaningful museum internships. Additionally, both of the museums we are partnering with also need to further develop sustainable infrastructure for internships and fellowships. Cifor and Watson (2020) remind us of not only the need for infrastructure in museum internships but that too often this need is overlooked. This infrastructure building includes, but is not limited to 1) developing a transdisciplinary museum internship course with well-defined learning objectives (Kocak, 2020), 2) developing relationships and partnerships with American Latino museums, 3) the development of recruiting and promotional materials, 4) the development of efficient and fair compensation models, 5) the development of an internship manual, 6) understanding of students' needs to undertake the internship effectively and how to meet them and 7) a plan for sustainability.

***A third need that we identified is family engagement.*** Our grant team conversations revealed that one of the biggest obstacles our students face is what they perceive as lack of parental support for their participation in an internship program outside of the Río Grande Valley. One current graduate student we consulted with on the grant proposal when asked "Would your family be opposed to you participating in an internship out of state" responded, "*Although my family would grow to like that I am interning out of the Valley or the state, they would initially oppose it. I am the youngest in my family, and a girl, so the idea of me becoming more and more independent scares my family. I think especially with Latinx culture, and for the youngest of the family or girls in particular, it is very difficult to separate from family. A factor that adds to this separation anxiety is that when my family thinks of an out of state internship, the first thought is going to work for a white man up North, because unfortunately, that is what they had to do all their lives as farmworkers. Lastly, there is*

*huge trauma within my family, myself and other families with moving up North and dealing with white people, so just the thought of that, although it probably would not be the case, is extremely scary.”*

In addition to anecdotal evidence such as the one provided, both institutional and census data give us some insight as to why this may exist. At UTRGV, 94% of the students are from the Río Grande Valley which indicates a strong preference and/or need for students to not leave the region in pursuit of higher education. Additionally, institutional data indicates that 55% of UTRGV students are first-generation students. Moreover, the census reveals that over 25% of the Río Grande Valley population are born outside of the United States, 25% live below poverty, over 80% speak a language other than English at home, and 35% have less than a high school education. Some may see these numbers as indicators of deficiency. However, we see them as indicating two things. First, a clear opportunity gap exists. Second, there is an immense amount of cultural wealth that is not being leveraged to support our students' success in college and access to internship and fellowship programs (Yosso 2005). The data indicates that families simply do not have a personal point of reference as to what an internship or fellowship is, what are the benefits, and what are the logistics of participating in an internship/fellowship. This is a critical area that must be addressed to ensure equitable access to paid museum internships/fellowships. To address this need, a clear and effective family engagement plan must be developed as well as bilingual information and products to ensure that not just the students have access to American Latino museum internship and fellowship opportunities, but that their families gain a better understanding of what it entails. Moreover, we must be diligent when engaging with our students and their families to discuss how they possess immense cultural wealth that will not only facilitate their own success but also bring an important and too often omitted voice to museums. To that end, we will form a family advisory committee made up of parents to provide valuable feedback on grant activities, how to engage in outreach with families, and how to address specific concerns of families.

In sum, there are three clear needs that we have identified through both our conversations and data that are addressed in our proposal; ***financial need, need for greater infrastructure/capacity, and need for family engagement.*** We will use the grant funds to address these needs through the following activities

- engage in deliberate, collaborative, and thoughtful planning and evaluation with faculty, staff, family, and students through the establishment of a faculty advisory board, student advisory board, and family advisory board
- create a new transdisciplinary museum internship course at the undergraduate and graduate level
- expand our outreach to encourage students to partake in these internships
- develop promotional/recruitment materials
- expand our web presence to inform students of these internship opportunities
- develop and implement a family engagement plan to both involve families in the internship application process and create a better understanding of the benefits and logistics of participating in an internship
- fund internships at American Latino museums
- develop strong relationships with American Latino museums
- build the infrastructure to sustain the program

**Target Group** The target group for our project are majors and minors in the College of Liberal Arts and College of Fine Arts, including but not limited to: Anthropology, Mexican American Studies, Ethnomusicology, Art, English, Spanish, History, Dance, Creative Writing, and Interdisciplinary Studies. According to the Fall 2022-Spring 2023 UTRGV enrollment data, this is over 8,000 of UTRGV's total student population. However, this internship course will be open to any student at the university. UTRGV has a dedicated mission to utilize its research, teaching, and community engagement to become a bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate (B3) university. This B3 initiative seeks to serve our students and the border community by embracing our vibrant socio-cultural and linguistic landscape. With UTRGV's B3 mission, students can obtain a B3 scholar seal on their diploma for taking five courses from the approved list. Our goal is to make this project's internship course one of those courses, therefore further extending the reach of our students while also providing them with bilingual and culturally conscious, sustaining training. Furthermore, we envision having students from these majors involved in the planning process for how we will implement this project in years two and beyond. As previously mentioned, up until now our students have had few opportunities outside of the department of Anthropology or Art to pursue these intermediary career steppingstones that train them for positions before graduation and almost none have had the opportunity to pursue internships at American Latino museums. From the pool of 8,000, we aim to have a minimum of 24 students per academic year participate in the internships/fellowships during the grant period. A small cohort of students from the above-mentioned disciplines participated in an advisory capacity to the faculty drafting this proposal. The success of their participation led us to include a student advisory board for the duration of the project to ensure their input and feedback throughout the duration of the project. The inclusion of a student advisory board is critical

to ensuring their voices are heard and capacity building.

# University Enrollment Explorer

Select Students



As you make your selections, the table and chart on the right will display the number of students you have selected from each year and semester. Filters chosen on this tab will carry over to the non-custom tabs listed at the top ("Who are they?", "Where do students come from?", & "Where are they now?")

Customize the Display

Lower Level Unde.. Upper Level Unde.. Masters Doctoral

Year(s) All Term All

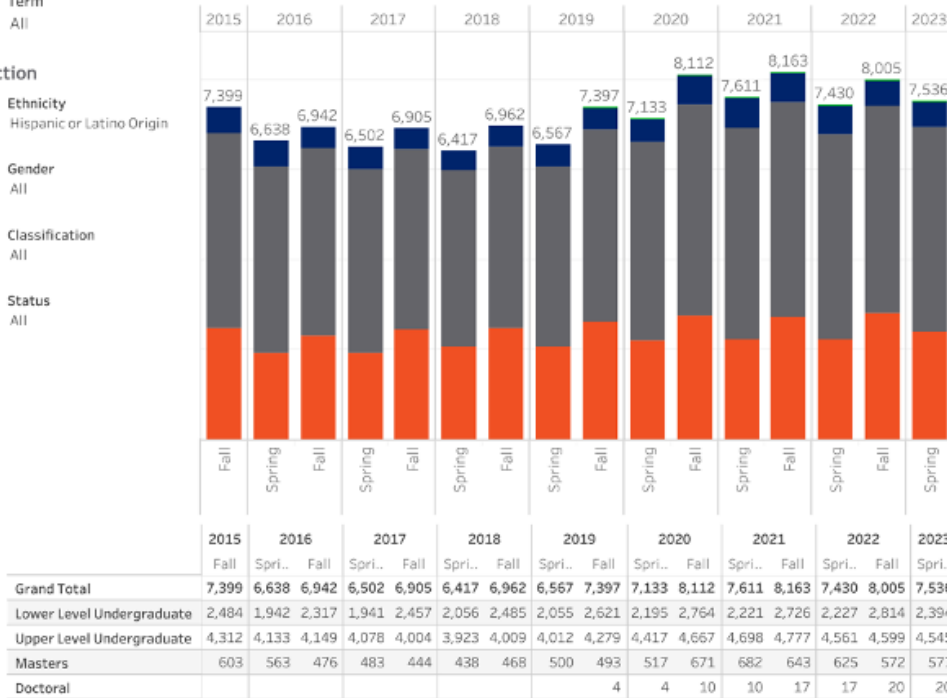
Customize Your Selection

College Multiple values Ethnicity Hispanic or Latino Origin

Department All Gender All

Major Description All Classification All

Reportable  N  R Status All



Compiled by Strategic Analysis and Institutional Reporting department. Source: CBM001

Last updated on 06/10/2023

**Beneficiaries** The ultimate beneficiaries of this project are the students participating, the employers whom they will serve upon entering the workforce, the broader RGV and UTRGV communities, and American Latino museums as well. Specifically, a minimum of 48 students will benefit by receiving training and experiences that they would not have had the opportunity to obtain without the project. Even with UTRGV’s excellent partnerships with local museums, their resources are limited, and partnering with others outside of the RGV like the National Hispanic Cultural Center will provide our students with so many additional opportunities to be trained by professionals with expertise we do not have here currently. This will also provide our students with essential skills and training that they can bring back to our local community and share with others, further disseminating that knowledge locally. Furthermore, these skills will make our students more marketable upon graduation, therefore giving them the opportunity to obtain employment in museums or cultural centers which have historically required previous training and experience. After all, by ensuring that the interns are provided with professional development opportunities, we expose them to current industry trends, and prepare them for future roles in the museum field that will be of benefit both locally, regionally, and nationally (Lee, 2016). While we would love to have all our students reinvest their training and skills back into our own community and stay local, some will choose to leave the area, but will leave better prepared with firsthand knowledge of the Latinx experience of living in the RGV coupled with their experiences and knowledge from working at an American Latino museum. Overall, no matter where our students end up, there will be more Latinx voices seated at the table to make sure our stories are being told and that exhibitions and collections are representative of their community’s experiences. Developing an internship program with American Latino museums that collaborates with UTRGV ensures a diverse intern cohort which will enrich the learning environment, fosters

creativity, and promotes equitable representation within the museum field (Smith, 2019). Long term, our internship has the potential to have a substantial impact on the museum community. In sum, a minimum of 48 students will directly benefit during the project period. Additionally, an unidentified number of students at UTRGV will benefit in the long term from the capacity and infrastructure built. Moreover, the community, local museums, and the partnering museums will benefit from the students' participation.

**Project Work Plan** The team will spend the first grant year establishing an institutional framework that will ensure the success and sustainability of the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program during and after the grant period. Activities for this first year will be, but not limited to hiring and recruiting support staff, museum site visits, creating new coursework for the internship program, recruiting for the Family Advisory Board and Student Advisory Board, and developing the schedules for bi-weekly meetings for faculty, staff, students, and families.

Hiring and recruiting support staff will include the formation of a Student Advisory Board of both undergraduate and graduate students and the formation of a Family Advisory Board who will work closely with the CMAS Faculty Advisory Board to oversee the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program throughout the grant period. The Project Director will facilitate these activities and will create a job posting in order to hire a part-time Program Coordinator who will be able to serve in the position during the grant period. The Project Coordinator will work with the Students, Faculty, and Family Advisory Boards to establish bi-weekly meetings throughout the grant period, develop a recruitment plan for student interns, a family engagement plan, the implementation of a performance management plan and all required grant reporting. The collaboration among students, faculty, and familial community members will ensure successful and sustainable intergenerational program relationships.

The Project Coordinator, with support from the Project Director and the Advisory Boards, will begin creating a webspace for the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program. They will also create and disseminate promotional materials for the program, including posters, flyers, social media pages and posts in major outlets (Facebook & Instagram), and a UTRGV webspace. The Project Coordinator will work closely with the UTRGV Office of Translation and Interpretation to also develop all of these materials in Spanish to ensure families of the students have full and equitable access to all the information about the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program. It will be crucial that Project Director, Project Coordinator, CMAS Faculty Advisory Board, Student Advisory Board, and Family Advisory Board visit the museum sites we have identified in order to solidify partnerships, identify potential housing locations, identify museum recruitment materials for the internship positions, develop internship and fellowship activities in consultation with the museums, familiarize themselves with museum collections, and address any other logistical matters that may arise. Given both the opportunity gap that exists for families in the Rio Grande Valley to visit museums both in and out of the region and the apprehensiveness of family to encourage their adult children to participate in Fellowships and Internships away from home, it is critical for the Family Advisory Board to visit the sites. The family advisory board will play a critical role in communicating with other parents about the benefits of participating in the program and will be able to provide first-hand experiences regarding the museum, the location, and logistics of participating.

Creating new coursework for the internship program will be critical for the success of the program. This new coursework development will involve the creation of a new transdisciplinary Museum Internship and Fellowship course at the undergraduate and graduate level. This will be a course that students in any discipline can take and apply to their graduation requirements. The Student and Faculty Advisory Boards will work together to develop and submit a course proposal for approval to the University Curriculum Committee for initial implementation in 2024-2025. Once the course is approved, the Project Director in consultation with the Student and Faculty Advisory Boards will develop a bilingual syllabus to be implemented in Years 2 & 3. This new course will be a requirement for students participating in the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program. In addition to the new course and syllabus, a new handbook for students participating in the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship Program will be developed.

A central component of the Latinx Museum Internship course is the Family Engagement Plan. A Family Engagement Plan has been successful in improving student engagement, retention, and graduation. The team will be guided by the established principles and practices of previous family-engaged programming. To carry out the Family Engagement Plan, the team will invite established, local organizations with whom UTRGV has already established strong partnerships to

participate as part of the Family Advisory Board. During this time, the team will also develop efficient and fair processes for compensating student interns. This will include stipends for the students participating in the internships, airfare for non-local internships, and living allowance stipends for non-local internships.

### **Years 2 & 3**

After the first year's activities have established the foundation for the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program, the second and third years will involve the implementation of those plans. This will include the continuation of monthly and bi-weekly meetings between the team that include the Project Director, CMAS Faculty Advisory Board, the Student Advisory Board, and the Family Advisory Board. Together, with the help of the Program Coordinator, the team will begin to implement the intern recruitment plan, the Family Engagement Plan, and roll out the Museum Internship course to begin summer 2025. Intern and Fellow recruitment will consist of the team visiting classes in person, attending student organization fairs, new student orientations, transfer student orientations, and the dissemination of promotional materials across the three UTRGV campuses (Edinburg, Harlingen, and Brownsville). It will also include the use of targeted social media. Once the recruitment plan has been rolled out, the team will host the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship Program Orientation.

The Museum Internship Course will begin Summer 2025 and be held once per summer for the remainder of the grant period, through Summer 2026. The course will be taught by one or more faculty members of the CMAS Faculty Advisory Board. During the grant period, the team will travel to the site visits during the implementation phase. This will include both the Texas Conjunto Hall of Fame and Museum (San Benito, TX) and the National Hispanic Cultural Center (Albuquerque, NM). These site visits will serve the critical purpose of observing the program in action and to meet with students to determine needs, trouble shoot, solidify partnership with the museum, and overall, ensure program success. During the remainder of the grant period, the team will also implement the Performance Management Plan and complete yearly grant reports. These practices will ensure mutual accountability across the entire team and ensure the success and sustainability of the UTRGV Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program during and beyond the grant period.

**Compensation Models** - The Department of Labor is the federal agency that determines if an intern is an employee and subsequently whether they should be paid or unpaid. The recommended best practice is to pay interns at least minimum wage to not violate the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). College credits are not an accepted form of compensation and will not be offered in lieu of compensation. Compensation models for the student internships and fellowships will follow the UTRGV's student employee rate. While minimum wage in Texas is the same as the federal minimum wage of \$7.25, UTRGV pays student employees \$12 per hour. Should the student be placed at a museum in a state with a minimum wage above \$12 per hour, UTRGV will honor the same compensation. In addition, students placed outside of the Rio Grande Valley will receive a stipend to cover the transportation, lodging, and meals in the city where they will work. We will use the federal government's "General Services Agreement" per diem rates to establish fair living stipends. The part-time staff member will receive the university pay rate for the position of "Program Coordinator." Since the staff member will work 0.50-time effort, they will receive a salary that is 50% the amount of the full-time pay rate. The Project Director and Faculty Partners will not receive paid compensation for their work during the 9-month academic year. Rather, they will receive a course buyout to reduce their teaching by 1 course to allow the faculty to dedicate the time necessary to engage in the project work and planning. The Project Director will receive a buyout each semester during the three-year period. The Faculty Partners will receive a course buyout only during year 1 of the grant to engage in the intensive planning process. The Project Director and Faculty Partners will receive compensation during the summer for their work implementing the project during the summer at a rate of \$5,000 each, the approximate equivalent of teaching one course in the summer.

**Intern/Fellow Activities** Interns and fellows will undertake a range of activities determined by the needs of the partnering museums in consultation with the Project Director, the Faculty Advisory Board, the Student Advisory Board, and partnering museums. Examples of activities in which interns and fellows may participate include cataloguing materials, maintaining or expanding digital collections, planning and hosting museum events, assisting in grant writing and other fundraising activities, assisting in exhibition planning and coordination, support in bilingual and bicultural communications, community engagement, and outreach. Activities will be discussed and agreed upon with partnering museums during year 1 in order to convey activities to students. We will continually evaluate the activities to ensure that best practices in museum internships and fellowships are followed drawing on existing literature and industry insights.



These best practices include but are not limited to: 1) clearly defined learning objectives that align with the intern's academic and career goals (Hamel, 2017), 2) pairing interns with experienced museum professionals as mentors to create a supportive learning environment (Anderson, 2019), 3) exposing interns to different departments and aspects of museum operations through rotational assignments (Hanks, 2018), 4) offering interns engaging, hands-on projects that contribute to the museum's mission helps them feel valued and motivated (Smith, 2016), 5) providing regular feedback sessions between interns and supervisors (Solis, 2019), 6) prioritizing diversity and inclusivity in their internship programs to foster creativity, encourage different perspectives, and reflect the communities museums serve (Gomez, 2020), 7) adherence to ethical and legal standards, ensuring interns are treated fairly and provided with a safe working environment (American Alliance of Museums, 2021), and 8) providing networking opportunities for interns to connect with professionals and peers, expanding their professional networks (Chen, 2018).

**Risks & Mitigation** This project will not expose interns, fellows, partner museums, or the public to any more risk than they would normally encounter in their daily lives. To ensure that UTRGV fellows and interns provide high quality services, they will be required to enroll in a course on museum studies prior to being placed as interns or fellows in a partnering museum. Additionally, the program director and PIs will discuss the needs of individual partner museums with their respective staff and recommend the students best qualified to meet those needs as interns and fellows. Additionally, partnering museums will offer training and supervision for the interns and fellows they select. Finally, the project director will request performance reviews of interns and fellows from partnering museums. Performance reviews will be shared with fellows and used to evaluate their experience and improve training structure.

### **Project Personnel**

- *Project Director* – Dr. Andrés Amado, Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology, will provide the leadership for the project team as Project Director in the planning, implementation, and management of the project.
- *Program Coordinator* – In the first month of Year One a part-time Program Coordinator will be hired. This Program Coordinator will facilitate all of the financial, administrative, logistical, and clerical duties needed to make the project successful.
- *Student Advisory Board*—A Student Advisory Board of undergraduate and graduate students will be formed to provide input and feedback on all project activities. It is critical to include the students' perspectives and voices in developing any student-centered program in order to best meet students' needs.
- *Family Advisory Board*- A Family Advisory Board of parents will be formed to provide input and feedback on all of the project activities. It is critical to include the family's' perspectives and voices in developing any student-centered program to best meet the students' needs within an understanding of how family affects their decisions to participate or not participate in museum internships and fellowships.
- *Faculty Advisory Board*– Like the Student Advisory Board, a committee of the grant PIs will assist the Project Director in planning and implementing the activities of the grant in order meet the goals and objectives of the grant. The faculty that make up the committee are from various disciplines in which students have an interest in museum studies and have an excellent track record in student engagement. They are: Dr. Stephanie Alvarez (Director of the Center for Mexican American Studies, Associate Professor of Mexican American Studies), Dr. Alejandra I. Ramírez (Assistant Professor of Writing and Language Studies), Dr. Milena Melo (Assistant Professor of Anthropology), and Dr. Christen S García (Assistant Professor of Art).

### **Time, Financial, Personnel, and Other Resources**

**Year 1** The grant team anticipates that we will need a full year of part-time effort (20 hours/week) to carefully design the UTRGV CMAS Latinx Museum Internship Program during Year 1. This part-time work will be carried out by a part-time staff member (20 hours/week), the Student Advisory Board (5 hours/week), the Project Director (8 hours/week), and the Faculty Advisory Board (8 hours/week). Start-up materials, equipment, printing, and supplies will be needed. Additionally, travel to American Latino Museum sites will be required. The anticipated financial costs are \$135,981 (see attached budget for itemization).

**Years 2 & 3** The grant team anticipates that we will need two full years of part-time effort to execute and evaluate the UTRGV CMAS Latinx Museum Internship Program during Years 2 & 3. This part-time work will be carried out by a part-time staff member (20 hours/week), the Student Advisory Board (5 hours/week), the Project Director (8 hours/week), and the Faculty Advisory Board (4 hours/week). Start-up materials, equipment, printing, and supplies will be needed. Additionally, travel to American Latino Museum sites will be required. The anticipated financial costs are \$465,016 (see attached budget for itemization per year).

**Project Results** - This project addresses three needs/challenges; *financial, infrastructure, and family engagement*. Grant funds and activities will be used to deliver measurable results in these three areas.

NEED	RESOURCE/ACTIVITY	INTENDED RESULT
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FINANCIAL</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stipend to Pay for Labor</li> <li>• Funding for Travel Costs</li> <li>• PT Program Coordinator</li> <li>• Annual Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Access to Internships &amp; Fellowships Outside Region</li> <li>• Greater Participation of UTRGV Students in Internships &amp; Fellowships Regionally &amp; Nationally</li> <li>• Societal Benefit of Greater Diversity of Students, Experiences, Epistemologies, and Ideas in Museum Work Beyond Region</li> <li>• Advancement of Understanding Financial Needs of Latinx Students</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Undergraduate Course</li> <li>• New Graduate Course</li> <li>• New Promotional Materials</li> <li>• New Recruitment Materials</li> <li>• New Webpage</li> <li>• New Handbook</li> <li>• Develop Partnerships with American Latino Museums</li> <li>• Student Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Faculty Steering Committee</li> <li>• Develop Sustainability Plan</li> <li>• Annual Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Cross-Disciplinary Participation of Students</li> <li>• Greater Participation of UTRGV Students in Internships &amp; Fellowships Regionally &amp; Nationally</li> <li>• Sustainable Courses, Recruitment Plans, Partnerships</li> <li>• Advancement of Understanding Unique Needs and Challenges of American Latino Museums</li> <li>• Advancement of Knowledge in Best Practices for Internships / Fellowships, particularly for Latinx Students</li> <li>• Societal Benefit of Greater Diversity of Students, Experiences, Epistemologies, and Ideas in Museum Work Beyond Region</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Faculty Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Meet with Families</li> <li>• Family Engagement Plan</li> <li>• Annual Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancement of Understanding Latinx Familial Understanding of Internships/Fellowships</li> <li>• Advancement of Knowledge in Need for Latinx Family Engagement in Museum Studies</li> <li>• Greater Participation of UTRGV Students in Internships &amp; Fellowships Regionally &amp; Nationally</li> <li>• Societal Benefit of Greater Diversity of Students, Experiences, Epistemologies, and Ideas in Museum Work Beyond Region</li> </ul>

**Tracking Progress Towards Intended Results** The grant team will track the program’s progress in collaboration with program participants including student interns, families, faculty, and intern supervisors. Student interns will be tasked with maintaining a weekly journal that covers goals, tasks performed, and skills gained. Prompts and questions in the journal will include written and creative responses. Intern supervisors will complete a survey at the end of the first and sixth week to identify areas of growth. Family members will also be invited to complete a pre and post internship survey that tracks changing attitudes and other areas of growth. Students in program courses will complete a pre-survey at the beginning of the course. At the end of the course, targeted questions will be included in the student course evaluations that will serve as an exit survey. The grant team will compare pre and post surveys to identify areas of growth in attitudes, skills, and behaviors. Upon completion of the internship, the grant team will facilitate a focus group that includes a final reflection on the program (classes, orientations, and internship) from start to finish. Furthermore, the grant team will carry-out a performance management plan (attached) that will not only track progress, but continually (re)assess the grant

activities for timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, and quality.

**Change in Knowledge, Skills, Behaviors, and/or Attitudes** Our goal is that specific skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors will change for student interns and their families. For example, by the end of the program, student interns will be able to identify the value of and how their wealth of cultural, linguistic, familial, and navigational capital is beneficial in a museum setting. Additionally, student interns will gain job skills including communications, organizational, clerical, and museum-specific knowledge. Through meeting, working and interacting with museum peers, supervisors, and visitors, students will increase their interpersonal skills. In the act of leaving the Valley, students will overcome the stigmatization of not being able to leave the Rio Grande Valley. Family approval is crucial to changing students' attitudes about leaving home. Through the program's family support component, family members will be in a better position to support their child leaving the Rio Grande Valley. In addition to leaving home, family will gain a better understanding of the value of internships and museum work. Lastly, students will bring their newly gained museum skills back to the Rio Grande Valley, where they can reinvest them in their local community.

**Improvement of care, condition, management, access to, or use of museum collections, records and/or records.**

Since we are applying as an Institution of Higher Education rather than a museum this is not applicable.

**Products** Through the funded program the following products will be produced

- Bilingual Program Website
- Syllabi for Undergraduate and Graduate Course
- Bilingual Internship & Fellowship Handbook
- Professional Museum Portfolio for Each Student: CV, Cover Letter, Narrative of Accomplishments
- Bilingual Presentation Slides for recruitment, orientation, and family engagement
- Archived Public Presentations by Student participants that culminate program participation from orientation, classroom, and internship/fellowship
- Conference Presentation(s) by Faculty on Project Results at a National Conferences
- Peer-Reviewed Publication(s) on Project Results, Evaluation, and Research Findings

**Sustainability Beyond Conclusion of Grant Period** Critical to its success is the sustainability of the proposed project and its benefits beyond the conclusion of the grant period. For this reason, sustainability has been built into the project in several ways. This grant will ensure the creation and then continuation of new classes which will enable the recruitment of students to the program, build strong partnerships with university and the American Latino museums, and foster meaningful relationships built with families that will ensure the sustainability of the project. The will include products housed on a newly created bilingual website that will be maintained by the Center for Mexican American Studies and which can be continually utilized. Letters of support from the Deans' of the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Art and related department administrators detail the commitment of university leadership to the program (Supporting Document 5). Additionally, the faculty collaborating from various departments are committed to continuing the work of the project beyond the grant period. Most of the grant funding is used to create the infrastructure and capacity for the program to ensure the long-term success of the project. It is critical that a large investment of time and finances be committed to the planning and assessment to build the foundation and sustainability of the program. After the project has been established, piloted for two years, and products created, funding for this very significant portion of the project will no longer be needed. The challenge will be the sustainability of the funding for the payment of students participating in the internships/fellowships beyond the timeline of the grant. Nevertheless, there are several avenues available to continue the funding for which we will have strong evidence of the success and benefits of the program's continued execution as evidenced by the aforementioned products resulting from our grant period. These new funding streams could potentially include; percentage use of student fees, consulting the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning for support,, collaborating with our partner American Latino museums on other grant applications, working with our local Congressman Vicente González (Supporting Document 6) to secure funding, and lastly connecting with our Office of Development to create an endowment to specifically fund student internships/fellowships. We feel confident that the effective execution of this program during the grant period and working with all these entities will result in future funding for our UTRGV students to participate in the project for many years to come.





**Applicant Name: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Center for Mexican American Studies**

**Project Title: CMAS Latinx Museum Internship and Fellowship Program**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Data We Will Collect</b> (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	<b>Source of Our Data</b> (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	<b>Method We Will Use</b> (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	<b>Schedule</b> (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
<b>Effectiveness:</b> The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre and post surveys at the start and completion of each family engagement activity will inform effectiveness of meetings.</li> <li>• Pre and post surveys of student participants will be conducted prior to and after internship/fellowship orientation.</li> <li>• Pre and post surveys of student participants will be conducted prior to and after their fellowship/internship activities.</li> <li>• We will conduct annual surveys of all project partners (staff, students, faculty, museum personnel) engaged in leading and managing the project, as well as key representatives from the two American Latino museums involved with the project.</li> <li>• Interviews of all student interns, fellows, and museum partners will be conducted yearly at the completion of the internship/fellowship.</li> <li>• Observations and Informal Discussions during museum site visits will occur to assess against our intended project results and make adjustments as necessary to activities.</li> <li>• At the end of project years 2 &amp; 3, our external evaluators will present results of the ongoing evaluation and compare them against our intended project objectives and results.</li> </ul>			
<b>Efficiency:</b> How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each quarter, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis.</li> <li>• At the completion of each NHCC internship/fellowship, we will calculate the cost effectiveness of housing students.</li> <li>• At the end of each project year, the Project Director and Project Coordinator will submit an analysis of all costs incurred to the Faculty and Student Advisory Boards.</li> <li>• All cost savings will be used to provide more students with internship/fellowship opportunities.</li> <li>• At the end of each project years 2 &amp; 3, our external evaluators will include an evaluation of efficiency as part of their evaluation and report.</li> </ul>			
<b>Quality:</b> How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of the internship/fellowship, we will administer a survey to all student participants, families, and museum partners.</li> <li>• At the end of project years 2 &amp; 3, our external evaluators will present results of the ongoing evaluation of quality and compare them against our intended project objectives and results.</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeliness:</b> The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each quarter, the Project Director will (re)assess the fit of our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates.</li> <li>• Each month, the Project Director and Project Coordinator will meet with the Faculty Advisory Board to ensure tasks/activities are being completed as detailed in the proposed Schedule of Completion.</li> <li>• Each quarter, each project partner will submit to the Project Director a report showing their progress on meeting project milestones.</li> <li>• Annual reports will provide an analysis of timeliness and include recommendations as part of the project's ongoing formative assessment, as well as annual and final summative outcomes regarding timeliness of activity completion and appropriateness of Schedule of Completion.</li> </ul>			