

AAC&U Conference 2019

**The Global Next Door: Local Engagement, Accompaniment, and New Forms of Diversity**

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**[SLIDE: Opening]**

**Good Morning.** My name is David Hernández and I am honored to join you for this conference on global citizenship. Unfortunately, because of my own teaching duties, I was only able to arrive last night. But I look forward to our conversation this morning.

I am an associate professor of Latina, Latino, and Latinx Studies at Mount Holyoke College in Western Massachusetts, an historically women's college with a commitment to inclusivity and gender diversity. I know I am among educators of all stripes, including faculty, administrators, and student affairs professionals. You are the people that the make our colleges and universities work.

As such, in all honesty, I am humbled and somewhat intimidated to be before you. You will notice that I am not particularly versed in the language of global engagement—the "cursory nods and talking points about global learning in mission statements," as stated in the conference website. As a rank and file professor, as much as I try to situate my research and teaching and provide citation to the proper discourses, developing the language of community engagement was never my goal. However, in my years of teaching, I have created, participated in, or witnessed a number of projects that integrate global learning into students' experiences, with the hope that they would carry these into their other academic, professional, or political projects. I want to share some of these efforts with you today.

**[SLIDE: ROAD MAP]**

Today, I'll be talking about these things: a little bit more about myself; The Global-Local Initiative on my campus; Community Based Learning in Western Massachusetts; "Accompaniment," as defined by Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipsitz, and which I have practiced in immigration contexts; and finally, I'll close with a brief discussion of campus and community diversity.

As I have stated, I am more or less a rank and file professor at my college, a role that I relish. I have some administrative duties and recently became the faculty director of our peer-writing center, the Speaking Arguing, and Writing Program (or SAW). As a faculty member (and also as a graduate student) I've accumulated a variety of teaching experiences. I've taught at three large research one universities, a big state university across the bay from Berkeley, where I earned my Ph.D., two liberal arts colleges, and recently at the nearby community college, where I co-taught a class last Spring, merging students from Mount Holyoke College with Holyoke Community College students into what we called a "learning community." Reciting this list of teaching experiences, I feel compelled to tell you that I am not terribly old, but I am not that young either. I've been around the block. I also have experience in residential life, as a faculty-in-residence in my first job at UCLA.

Global learning, you all know, is a massive field and institution, as evidenced by the complexity of the conference program. It reaches the globe spatially with education abroad, internships and exchanges, and also local experiential learning. It addresses multiple communities in various contexts.

I am here to speak about a version of global citizenship, and what I am calling the Global Next Door. I want to explore experiential learning opportunities in our own backyards and how faculty, staff, and students can partner locally to meet learning goals that are often attributed narrowly to international internships and study abroad. Each of our campuses is situated in a social and spatial context that answers to local needs, conditions, and complexities while simultaneously offering unique, often unknown, experiences. I suggest that everyone stands to gain by developing pedagogical and learning experiences that prioritize reflexivity,

reciprocity, and solidarity. Engaging the global next door can serve as a springboard for local activism, further study abroad, and public-facing intellectual projects.

Encouraging students to exit campus during their time at your institution will not limit them to local issues, but on the contrary, allow them to analyze global phenomena discovered in the classroom and while studying abroad, and upon their return. From climate change and justice to public health and migrants' rights, there are opportunities for what linguist Jonathan Rosa calls "collaborative civic engagement," where the community is part of a shared campus, and all of its students visit each other.

Engaging with the Global Next Door is a break from normative teaching methods and spaces. I recall last Spring, when I was co-teaching a course with a faculty member at Holyoke Community College, when my students marveled about entering "the real world," simply by piling in a van, which transformed into a moving classroom, bustling with noise and ideas.

Finally, I should add, that local civic engagement is not simply an aspirational goal, or a boutique experience, but a practice that can be sustained with institutional commitment and programming. These efforts fit within the missions of your colleges and universities and are critical to student success, retention, and preparation for the world that awaits them.

**[SLIDE: GLOCAL]**

So, how did I get here? On our campus, a multidisciplinary group of faculty and relevant administrators met over the course of two years, utilizing a faculty seminar format, to discuss what we were calling the Global-Local Initiative. If any of you saw the movie "Up in the Air (2009) with George Clooney and Anna Kendrick, there is a scene where Kendrick is providing a corporate presentation for firing people remotely, via Skype. It's here where she merges Global and Local to create the term Glocal. It's worth seeing the film, or finding the "glocal" clip on

YouTube, if only to see how some of our progressive discourses are also used in corporate capitalism.

As such, the term "Global Local" never sat well with me and I never had the heart to mention the film to my colleagues. But I was happy to be at the table with committed peers in environmental studies, economics, geography, education, biology, math, and my field, Latina, Latino, and Latinx Studies. We provided an inventory of all the campus projects that approximated the still-cloudy Global-Local concept that we grasped at. We shared scholarship, pedagogical strategies and curricular modules, developed a fellowship structure, and created a course and small conference on "Global Challenges." We struggled with naming our connections, but found some nonetheless.

**[SLIDE: the Language of Global Citizenship]**

As such, I was thrilled when the organizers invited me to this conference and I read in the letter of invitation, some of the language that we had struggled to find organically. The invitation letter stated plainly and cogently: "This conference will examine how campuses are effectually incorporating global learning into educational experiences and ask how to expand the reach of these experiences to include all students at all institutional types. AAC&U asserts that global learning is vital preparation for life, work, and civic engagement not just despite, but because of contested political and social contexts."

Wow. That was easy. It took us two faculty seminars over two academic years to get there. I should also report our initiative recently changed, or flipped, its name to, Local-Global, dispatching with the odd cinematic parallel. Local-Global learning, as we've collectively defined, "engenders understanding of context specificity and appreciation of interrelationships across different sites and scales of analysis. It encourages students to integrate curricular and co-curricular learning and to cultivate skills and dispositions to engage community challenges ethically and reciprocally across borders."

**[SLIDE: Local Engagement: Responsibility, Respect, Reciprocity]**

For my part in the Local-Global project at Mount Holyoke College, my lens has always been through research and teaching on U.S. immigration policy. I would say that my work is more rooted in and hopes to approximate what Mari Castañeda and Joseph Krupczynski call “Latinx Community Academic Praxis” that emphasizes “social justice partnerships in action, which aim to critically engage with the multiple intersections of oppression” (3). Now as I've mentioned, I don't get too hung up on the language, titles, and professional-speak around developing global citizenship. As a teacher, my job always seems much simpler, to help students engage in civil dialogue around diverse communities and difficult topics. I want them, no matter their budding expertise, to use their powers for good.

That said, the language of global citizenship and even our clumsy use of Global-Local helped me engage with my own existing coursework in meaningful ways. I reexamined my courses on Latina/o Immigration, The History of Deportation, a film class titled Visualizing Immigrant Narratives, and also a recent addition, "Aliens, Anti-Citizens, and Identities." Although I focus on the experience of immigrants in the U.S., migrants are necessarily global figures with ongoing networks in other countries that are maintained and even expanded after migration. As well, my department, which uniquely combines Spanish, Latina/o/x Studies and Latin American Studies, is by definition a global-local formation, sometimes generating synergies and other times divergences.

In 2014, after being approached by our very proactive Community Based Learning office (or CBL), I began adding CBL components to some of these classes to allow students to engage with local communities, oftentimes immigrants. I relied on the relationships that the CBL office had cultivated with local nonprofits and nearby civic organizations, including the struggling Holyoke Public Schools. At first it wasn't easy to merge an existing course, taught for many years, into a program with deeply held commitments and philosophies about community engagement.

To make CBL work for me in the short-term, I worked with our office to develop what I called CBL-Lite, or a volunteer program within my classes, that was above and beyond the coursework. Now, how do you ask students to simply do more, just for the heck of it? Turns out, it wasn't that difficult, and about a third to half my classes—that's 6-9 students—was interested in being placed with CBL partners. For me, this was manageable. While studying immigration, they translated in the public schools at parent-teacher meetings, creating a "Spanish Corp." They tutored young people, worked in community gardens, and supported staff at rape crisis shelters. They brought the concepts of our class into the community and embedded community concerns into their coursework and class discussions.

Whereas my courses engage with the study of Latin American migration, our local community, Holyoke, Massachusetts, refracted a very specialized version of Latina/o/x belonging and citizenship. While we have migrant populations from throughout the Americas, the majority of the "migrant" community locally is Puerto Rican, and thus not immigrants at all (in the lawful sense), since they are all U.S. citizens. Half of the city of Holyoke itself is Puerto Rican and 80% of its public schools. This is a terrific lesson for students who have to untether the migration experience from strictly lawful citizenship or "having papers." In that sense, my students grapple with the global and local simultaneously through the study of migration at home, including the U.S.'s varied role in displacing people from their home countries through colonialism and empire.

Now, we don't just send students to Holyoke and wish them luck. A central aspect of CBL courses at Mount Holyoke College is what we call "Holyoke Bound." This is a day-long training seminar, held each semester on a weekend day, for students in our consortium of five colleges. Holyoke Bound is a requirement for CBL courses and CBL courses are requirements for some of our majors and minors. I am happy to say that Mount Holyoke College students make up consistently half of all participants. Holyoke Bound prepares students for collaborative work in the community—by meeting community partners and leaders, learning the local history, and via experiential workshops provided by community members.

Holyoke Bound is the opposite of experiences I had in college, when trial by fire was preferred to careful preparation. When I was a first year student, and my first summer arrived, I really didn't want to go home, get my old pizza job back, and just "be" in the place that the university allowed me to escape. Somehow, right before the term ended, I got roped into a book selling scheme, where a company hocking bibles, cookbooks and study guides took students from the west coast to the east and from the east coast to the west. I went east, in my first taste of experiential learning. However, with the exception of a week of "sales school" resembling a religious revival, the model was NOT TO PREPARE YOU. I was instead immersed with a small crew of other students in Pawtucket Rhode Island, knocking on doors 12-14 hours a day for a summer, in the hope of earning a bundle to pay for college. I learned lessons, but they were unnecessarily hard ones. That I was one of few Latinx kids thrust into a white working class milltown on the decline did not help and was never discussed. The simple lesson is that preparation matters, if only to give students the ability to opt out if it's not their time.

Holyoke Bound aims to intervene in the idea of the "outside looking in," and seeks mutual transformation of students and community partners. Community based learning in Holyoke, where everyone is recognized as a producer of knowledge, centers the vibrant struggle of Latina/o/x communities in ways that "disrupt stereotypical and deficit based understandings of Latina/o/x populations" (V. Rosa). As such, local engagement facilitates the goal of accomplishing more than "just doing good," or adding value, but aims to build lasting partnerships.

All of our neighboring communities possess knowledge and have research needs. Working together as a collective learning community, students can build archives, recognize and legitimize hidden communities, and register voices and cultural production already underway. During the foundational years of ethnic studies programs and departments (and queer and gender and women's studies too) there was a dearth of knowledge about communities of color. Histories had been ignored, and voices were passed over and erased. Scholars and their students in

this era, the 1960s and 1970s, responded by entering communities to build archives, to speak with elders, and both recover and record history. Ethnic Studies today, continues to place a premium on community knowledge, but times have changed, and we have added more nuanced instruments to our tool belts. There have been feminist and queer interventions, the embrace of intersectionalities beyond what we in ethnic studies fields call the four food groups—not just Black Americans, Asian Americans, Latina/o/x and indigenous communities—but also, we look beyond the four-part mantra of race, class, gender, and sexuality. We have added citizenship status, disability, religion, and family as lenses and critical intersectionalities and gender identity has become more inclusive beyond the binary of man and woman. So, the analytical tools at our disposal to be deployed and tested by students have never been stronger.

Faculty from all fields and departments have the potential for local engagement. One byproduct is that they become experts in these local communities. One of my colleagues, Vanessa Rosa, writes about urban renewal projects in Canada and public housing in New York City, and through experiential learning in her courses, she has become the local expert on housing and the Holyoke Puerto Rican community.

The institution hosting these programs has so much to gain. Collaborative partnerships can diminish town-gown tensions and walk the talk of institutional values. Your institutions, through the dedication of resources, can provide avenues for engagement, for mutual visitation, and collaborative partnerships.

We all have to move beyond the photo opportunity and short-lived website presence produced by our Communications offices. Social media is a fantastic promotional tool, well-received and legible to students. But students, especially students of color, are aware that the website and campus brochure can overstate its diversity, and understate the communities outside our gates. Instead, we should aim that our institutional social media promote human interactions and understanding and reflect the global engagement taking place

not just in Costa Rica or Italy or our other education abroad programs, but that global engagement happens in Holyoke, Chicopee and Springfield Massachusetts.

More so, and this is critical, community engagement must be made legible as research, teaching, and service, recognized as labor by your institution for tenure and promotion. Faculty, staff, and students should be remunerated for work that's central to a liberal arts education.

[transition]

Now, I don't want to use all my time speaking about the just the conceptual benefits of the global next door—benefits that accrue to you, your students and institutions, and our neighboring communities. I know you know many of these things already. Let me provide a couple of fruitful examples from my own research and teaching on U.S. immigration enforcement.

My work addresses the immigrant detention regime, the federal authority to detain migrants pursuant to their removal from the United States. I look at this enforcement power historically, addressing the malleability of race in the detention process, and rethinking racial technologies used to punish noncitizens.

**[SLIDE: CRISES]**

Whereas I am interested and have engaged with contemporary detention policies—such as the Trump administration's "zero tolerance"/family separation policies, the smothering of the asylum system, and other assaults on lawful migration processes—my research suggests that the contemporary innovations in detention policy emerge from a genealogy of detention (represented in this slide), precipitated by socially constructed national crises over the course of centuries—from fear of contagion, to the demonization of foreign ideologies, to military conflicts, and domestic "wars" on crime, drugs, and terrorism. I look beyond these individual "crises" to examine patterns that occur in a variety of historical and political contexts. My book in preparation, *Alien Incarcerations*, suggests that while U.S. immigration and naturalization policies have relaxed and become more inclusive over time, detention policy has over the course of a century

consolidated power over noncitizens, becoming harsher and more efficient in its capacity to facilitate deportation.

Now I know a lot of you are thinking—that Donald Trump has got to be the worst, separating families, putting children in cages, smothering the asylum system, and using the most vile rhetoric to describe immigrants, especially those from Latin America. But Donald Trump is one of many.

**[SLIDE: other presidents]**

Each president has placed his imprint on immigration enforcement, creating a presidential status quo that continues today. And this only goes back 50 years.

[water]

Even though I had benefitted from the Global-Local collaboration with my colleagues and had implement numerous CBL classes with success, I was still searching for a way to move my classes from a general experience of community engagement to something tied explicitly to my research and teaching interests in immigration enforcement. One of the problems of immigration—gifted to us by the political leaders on the slide—is that the border is all around us, even in Western Massachusetts.

**[Accompaniment]**

**FCJ:**

In spring 2017, a group of eight students, faculty, and staff and a representative from a local community organization visited the Franklin County Jail (FCJ) in Greenfield (about 25 minutes away) where male migrant detainees are held. The goal of our visit was to gauge the feasibility of establishing a permanent visitation program and learning community between migrant detainees who are held at the county facility, students, and local community members in our region. We also sought to deepen our collective understanding of detention experiences in the United States. In forging a relationship with the jail, we aimed to move beyond public awareness toward educating volunteers in self-reflective learning and an ethic of civic participation in dark political times.

The individual visit to the facility felt simultaneously formative and tenuous—potentially a ‘one-off’ or final visit—or possibly the next phase of our program development. We developed a curriculum, in Spanish and in English, to be taught through my History of Deportation course. We set dates. I met with all the registered students letting them know about the parameters of the class. We were ready, but in a profound lesson about carceral institutions and bureaucracies, the plan fell through on the jail's end, seemingly due to pressure from the federal authorities.

My colleague Serin Houston and I, and two undergraduates, wrote a collaborative journal article about the experience, less about the bureaucratic hassles, but more a reflection of our experiential learning at the jail as students and teachers, affirming what is often missing from detainee discourse—the humanity of immigrants.

While our full-blown CBL course at the jail fell-through, my students and I recalibrated our goals and collectively created a senior seminar on the history of deportation. As part of the course, we decided to arrange a visit to a local Guatemalan man, Mr. Lucio Pérez, who was residing in migrant sanctuary, hidden from the federal authorities by the First Congregational Church of Amherst. We visited Mr. Pérez at the 5-month mark of his sanctuary—and I should report, that this weekend marks his second year, living in the church.

Although we were reassured that we were welcome, and that Mr. Pérez regularly took visitors, we were also acutely aware that our class stood to benefit more from this experience than Mr. Pérez. We prepared in several ways, learning all we could about his family and legal situation, studying about the 1980s sanctuary movement and today's efforts as well, and held an informational fundraiser for the College to share with our community news of Mr. Pérez and raised funds for his family. We also produced a collectively written blog article on an immigration website reflecting on the experiential visit.

One of the unique challenges and critical lessons of these 2 examples of experiential learning, and one that is ever-present in my research, is that in addition to the goal of approximating respectful and culturally sensitive immersion and engagement with local communities, there is the experience of futility—that is, bearing the weight of work that goes nowhere and sometimes can't help, but is, nonetheless, absolutely necessary.

**[SLIDE New Forms of Diversity]**

As we close, let me make just a couple of simple points about diversity on campus and in our local communities. My school is a diverse place, with about 20-25% domestic students of color and 20-25% international students as well. We are a women's college, but we also have gender diversity as well and other forms of diversity—first generation students, queer and transgender students, undocumented and DACA students, athletes, some parents and non-traditional students. When I speak to students about arriving to college, I often speak to them in the terms of migration—or what I might call matriculation as migration. But I have to remember that not all students arrive from elsewhere. Some are "of the community." My global next door may be their, simple, "next door. When we visited Lucio Pérez in sanctuary, for example, some of those students were undocumented. They bear special burdens and intimacies. That diversity needs to be recognized.

When I attended college so many years ago, the word and lesson of the day was "ethnocentrism." Ethnocentrism is defined as the "evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one's own culture." Or, in other words, your worldview is at the center and normal, and all else is peripheral and different. For me, and this something I had to learn, ethnocentrism meant that there was a world outside the world I was living in. Pretty simple. The confusing part was that when I entered college as a first generation student, I thought the university was that world outside. It was so different and diverse from what I had experienced thus far—which wasn't much. I grew up in the suburbs, had never travelled abroad, had my first airplane ride at

18, and had ventured into the city, Los Angeles, only one or twice for a ballgame or concert. Little did I know at the time, that there was another world beyond the university that my circuitous trajectory through academia would introduce me to.

[conclusion]

To conclude, I am proud to be a rank and file faculty member at my college. I teach, I learn, I bear witness and I share.

Many of our institutions have piloted and innovated programs that prioritize global learning. Mine is no exception. Mount Holyoke College, for example, provides each student with funds for a paid internship during their four years on campus. This was a signature program of Lynn Pasquerella, recent president of Mount Holyoke College and now president of this organization. Many of our students merge this internship with study abroad. And yesterday, while I was sitting in a plane, our students were formally presenting their research findings and experiences from these internships at the Learning from Application, or LEAP, symposium. My department, Spanish, Latinx, and Latin American Studies also hosts its own mini-LEAP symposium for our majors and minors. That is happening today. Whereas the vast majority of these students use their internship funding in Spanish-language countries abroad, I am always proudest of those students, often Latinx students, that conduct their internship experience a little closer to home in the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Spanish speaking country in the world—that is, the United States of America. They've explored immigrant-serving community health clinics in Montgomery County Maryland, just outside of Washington D.C, or worked with transgender immigrants in detention centers in the state of New Mexico, or maintained water supplies for migrants in the desert in California and Arizona. Whether in English or in Spanish, and often having developed their civic-engagement chops down the road in Holyoke, Massachusetts, these students engage the world right at home. I couldn't be more proud.

Thank you.