



## AUDIENCE RESPONSE INSPIRES STUDENT THEATRE GROUP

When Zelma López and Salvador García, the president and vice president of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, invited CSU-San Bernadino's *Acto Latino* Theater Group to the Annual Hispanic



Fall Festival, they weren't expecting the experience to be quite as transformative as it was. Sigma Delta Pi and OLÉ (*Organización de la lengua española*) had put in hours of work arranging and advertising the event with support from Dr. Cecilia Lara and the Office of Diversity. But after they saw the emotional reactions from the audience, they decided it was not enough. "After the play," López remembers, "two students filled with emotions approached the actors, crying, and offered to donate their art projects to help fund *Acto Latino* performances. The comments from the

audience were very similar, of how the stories seen in the play were very similar of the stories told by their own family members."

"We believe that it is important to show the culture and struggles of other ethnicities in the form of theater which other people can relate and put it in perspective with their own culture," says López. So she and García decided to found a UNCP chapter of *Acto Latino* as their service learning project for their Methods of Teaching Spanish course. They currently have approximately 10 students of diverse backgrounds working on a play by Luis Valdez, and the CSU-San Bernadino group has invited them to travel to California this spring to present their work. "We are nervous," López admits, but "the whole group is always having fun practicing their lines, and enjoy[ing] rehearsing the play. We are positive that our enthusiasm will reflect in our performances."

### Student Profile: Jordan Williams

Jordan Williams is a third-year English major with a concentration in Literary Studies. He decided to major in English because "It was my favorite subject in high school, and I have always seemed to have a knack for writing. As every proper English major should, I also love to read!" His favorite thing about being an English major is "getting to write about and discuss great works of literature every day. It's truly a dream! I have always said the English faculty are the most helpful and passionate on the entire campus of UNCP. I also love the small classes and the fact that since we are a 'small' major, I've been able to develop life-long friendships with fellow majors."

For fun, Jordan likes to read political books and pieces. He recently finished reading Hillary Clinton's *What Happened*, and he also loves murder mysteries like the Alphabet series by Sue Grafton.

When asked how he spent his free time (when you're not reading, of course!), Jordan responded, "Free time? What is that?" Outside of his coursework, he said, "I work as a consultant in the University Writing Center, and I'm also an assistant manager at my family's convenience store. In my spare time, though, I enjoy shopping and working with the teenagers at my church."

Jordan would encourage all of his fellow students to take English classes at UNCP beyond general education requirements. "They truly are the best classes on campus," he said. He also would like to thank the department for all the support it has given him these last three years.

## ROMEO AND JULIET COMES TO GPAC

As an artist-in-residence show produced using a professional cast, the September 2017 production of *Romeo and Juliet* was a first for Givens Performing Arts Center and University Theatre. “We wanted to do something



unique for our audience,” GPAC director James Bass said. “University Theatre director Jonathan Drahos and I brought our resources together to benefit our GPAC audience as well as our students.”

Professional actors from Los Angeles and New York starred in key roles, and they worked with University Theatre students to provide them with a professional experience filling secondary roles. For example, Lindsay Pearce, who played Juliet, had appeared in hit TV shows *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Glee* as well as numerous film and stage productions.

Film and stage veteran Drahos directed the play; Stephanie Peters developed costumes; David Underwood oversaw props and support; and Eric Voeck designed the set, lighting, and projection.

Peters and Underwood were excited to see the collaboration between UNCP students and professional actors. “I think collaborations like this are an excellent opportunity for our students to see how professionals work and to start making contacts that can serve them well once they graduate,” Underwood said. The benefits to students are incredible, Peters said. “It allows us access to more front-of-house talent and publicity, which ultimately means we reach a bigger

audience and are better financed,” she said. “Growing this collaboration could mean larger, more elaborate shows that allow for more student participation both on stage and behind the scenes and the ability to hire more professionals for them to work among and learn from.”

### New Faculty Profile: Dr. Danielle Brownsberger

Dr. Danielle Brownsberger describes her choice to major in English as one of trust: “I decided to have faith in the idea that if I majored in a subject I enjoy—and had some talent in—that money would follow.” Dr. Brownsberger, who joined the ETFL faculty as the Coordinator of Undergraduate English Education, made the choice to major in English as an undergraduate at Pennsylvania State University—University Park and continued on to a Ph.D. in English with an Emphasis in Education from Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Connecting with others has been the most important thing in both her studies and teaching. As an undergraduate, “I enjoyed British Literature classes the most. I remember being inspired by my Romantic Literature class—more particularly by the friendship between Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, and Lord Byron. Whenever I hear people talking about ‘squad goals,’ I think of these writers.” That emphasis on interconnection shapes her approach to teacher training: “it is most important to me that my teacher candidates learn the importance of relationship-building and compassion in the classroom.”

As she moved to her degree, she realized that teaching would allow her to combine the two things she was passionate about: “reading great literature and helping struggling people learn.” In the classroom, she communicates that passion to teacher candidates. Outside the classroom, Dr. Brownsberger has a “pretty great” two year old boy, Kai, who “dominates my free time.” When she does have free time, she still turns to fiction, joking that “dystopia rarely disappoints.”

### In Memoriam

#### Dr. Chet Jordan

1937 - 2018

The department mourns the loss of Chet Jordan, who passed away on January 10, 2018 after a brief illness.

Dr. Jordan taught Theatre and Speech at UNCP for 37 years before retiring in May 2017. He was respected for his dedication and talent in his role of teacher, and his kindness, insight, and fairness in his role of advisor, advocate, and mentor.