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History of OLAS: The Beginning

In the fall of 2000, a Latina student named Diana Cordoba arrived at Salisbury University to complete her bachelor's degree. Although her dreams were beginning to come true, a simple look around reminded her of how different she felt. At the time, the Latino population in Wicomico County was less than 2%. Diana Cordoba was right – she felt alone because very few people looked like her.

OLAS remained active for several years, holding regular meetings and participating in multicultural festivals. However, with the departure of its first advisor and the graduation of its founders, the organization went on hiatus, waiting for new students who shared the same interests.

“No, [in 2000], there weren't many Latinos. In fact, diversity was very limited when I was in college. There weren't many diverse groups you could join ... Being in a place and feeling that you don't belong is ... stressful. If you are not connected with the people who help you, with the people you identify with, you just can't do it.”

– Diana Cordoba, Interview, April 2024



Following the advice of Dr. Brian Stiegler, a Spanish professor at that time, she created a club to bring together other Latinos. And so, the idea for OLAS was born.

For several months, Diana Cordoba searched for two other students who shared her interests. She found support from a Chilean student and a Filipino student. In the fall of 2001, the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS) was officially established with Dr. Carmen J. Jiménez (Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies Department) as its first advisor.

In the fall of 2008, another Latina student, María Díaz, arrived at Salisbury University. Her experience echoed that of Diana Cordoba: There was a need for a space where Latino students could share their stories and interests.

“I noticed that there were not a lot of students who looked like me ... and I was shocked ... First week, Mr. [Vaughn] White, who was the director of Multicultural Student Services said: 'You know that we used to have an organization called OLAS?' ... He planted that seed: We need representation.”

– María Díaz, Interview, May 2024

OLAS was reactivated in the spring of 2009. Its new advisor, Dr. Corinne Pubill, Modern Languages & Intercultural Studies Department professor, helped shape the organization's path for the next 15 years.



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1. OLAS Cookout, Salisbury City Park, Salisbury, MD, c. 2011
2. OLAS members working on OLAS Squawk Por Aquí banner, Salisbury University, 2011
3. Members of the Spanish Club at Salisbury University, Conway Hall, c. 2008
4. First Salsa Night, Salisbury University, December 19, 2012
5. One Stop Event organized by the Vulnerable Population Task Force. Students serving as Spanish interpreters for the community during the pandemic. From left to right: Danitza Verano Roman, Juan Camilo Arango Millan, Madelyn Esparza, and Dr. Corinne Pubill, November 2021
6. OLAS members with the advisor Dr. Corinne Pubill, Dr. Carolina Bown (Fulton School), and Dr. Leticia Ortega (Seidel School), May 14, 2012



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Liked by laureninlosangeles and others
su_olas Startin Salsa night right! Hurry and come down to the Wicomico Room!!
September 19, 2012



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Liked by rodriguezastrid881
su_olas Say hello to the OLAS exec board & our advisor Dr. Pubill!
May 14, 2012