

Students Air Issues on Latino Community

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The stigma around HIV/AIDS is one obstacle preventing health education from reaching the immigrant population of Latinos in New Orleans, according to research by a pair of Tulane students. Searching for reasons behind a spike in HIV cases in that community, the students developed an informational radio program, which was broadcast on WTUL-FM and posted online as a podcast.



Students in a course taught by Casey Love, professor of practice in political science, developed radio-style programs on Latino culture that are posted on the Stone Center for Latin American Studies website. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The project by Juliet Harris and Molly Mattesky was part of a service-learning course taught by Casey Love, a professor of practice in the [political science department](#). Love's students produced a series of radio programs about issues facing the city's Latin American immigrants, including their relations with New Orleans police and the growth of businesses that cater to the Latino community.

The radio-type recordings have been added to the free [audio library](#) on the Stone Center for Latin American Studies website and can be downloaded as podcasts. Love is one of several faculty members who have worked with the Stone Center on the

recordings, with funding provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

In their [radio program](#), Harris and Mattesky interviewed health professionals and activists, finding that communication and culture hinder AIDS awareness because of language barriers, a lack of education programs and a perceived link between HIV and homosexuality.

“I allow the students to choose any topic that has relevance both to U.S. and Latin American relations and to the New Orleans community,” says Love. “The result is pretty amazing because it's completely student directed and based on their own research and editing.”

Grant funding made possible the assistance of [Eve Abrams](#), a radio producer whose work often airs on National Public Radio in New Orleans, to train the students in interview techniques, scriptwriting and program editing.

[Denise Woltering-Vargas](#), program manager for the Stone Center's Latin American Resource Center, initiated the website library of recordings. She says the goal of the podcast collection is to provide different perspectives on Latin America and Latinos throughout the city.

“We also believe it is a valuable resource for educators who want to utilize these recordings to teach their students about the culture,” says Woltering-Vargas.