

Campus Latino Community Comes Together

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In both Spanish and Portuguese, the word “gente” means “people.” To GENTE, a Latino organization at Tulane, the term is a classification the diverse group can agree on, and also an acronym for the mission of the club ? Generating Excellence Now and Tomorrow in Education.



Octavio Barajas, right, a doctoral student, and Efren Lopez, a first-year architecture student, talk about their plans for GENTE, a new Latino organization on campus. (Photo by Guillermo Cabrera-Rojo)

Founding member and third-year PhD student Octavio Barajas says that the purpose of GENTE is “to spread Latin American culture on campus and to create a support network for Latino students.”

The organization began as a result of Barajas' search for the Latino community through the Office of Multicultural Affairs at Tulane. The office initially was instrumental in bringing Latinos together. Since then Barajas was given an internship as a graduate assistant in the office and has supported GENTE as a moderator of the group.

Efren Lopez, a first-year architecture major and GENTE president, knew that he wanted to do something with Tulane's small Latino community when he arrived on campus. Lopez hopes to raise awareness on the differences among the community through GENTE ? a name that was chosen “to encompass the variety of different identification labels within the Latino community,” he says.

Lopez is of Mexican descent, but other members of the organization hail from various Latin American countries, including Brazil, Panama and El Salvador.

The first meeting of GENTE occurred a little over a year ago. Since then, it has become an official campus organization. The group has had only one major event on campus so far ? building altars on McAlister Drive for the Day of the Dead ? but they have big plans for the future, says Lopez. He anticipates establishing GENTE as an organization as major as TUCP (Tulane University Campus Programming), putting on regular events. Look for updates on the [GENTE](#) Facebook page.

He says everyone on the uptown campus should keep an eye out for “GENTE presents â?!” signs in the near future.

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