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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA



February Newsletter

Getting back into the groove!

We hope that after a few weeks, you're getting adjusted back to our regularly scheduled program. In the first weeks back, we've already done so much! Read our newsletter to see what we got going on.

SPRING 2026 CHARLAS CON CAFÉ

MEZCAL BACANORA AND THE ARIZONA BORDERLANDS - A HISTORY OF CROSS BORDER INTERACTIONS

with Michael Hurley, *Borderland Spirits*



Mezcal Bacanora is not just an agave spirit that has such a unique history and culture that it now has its own name and Designation of Origin in the Sierras of Sonora, MX. It is also a significant cross border spirit that lends to a critical understanding of the history and heritage of Arizona as a borderland state. In fact, you can consider Bacanora as Arizona's sole unique heritage spirit. Agave has been used as food and fermented beverage in the Southwest borderlands for thousands of years as documented by archaeologists and in the writings of Jesuit and Franciscan padres. Mezcal as a distilled spirit was well established in what is now Southern Arizona/Sonora well before any Weberian borders were established. Mezcal Bacanora had a short commercial era from about 1880's until prohibition in 1915. Prohibition in Sonora lasted 80 years in Sonora and was often quite brutal, but strong cultural persistence enabled its underground survival. However, today that intangible cultural heritage that persisted for so long may be threatened as it transitions into a modern economic commodity.

Friday
Feb. 6, 2026

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Coffee & snacks at 12:30 pm

Marshall 280

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
Center for Latin American Studies

confluentcenter
for Creative Inquiry

Join us on Friday!

A History of Cross Border Interactions

 **February 6, @ 1 p.m.** (Coffee & snacks at 12:30 p.m.)

 **Marshall Building, Room 280** (845 N Park Ave, Tucson, AZ 85719)

Join us for a unique history and cultural discussion on mezcal bacanora, a significant cross-border spirit that lends a critical understanding of the history and heritage of Arizona as a borderland state.

 **About the Presenter:**

Michael Hurley has worked on all things water since the time of dinosaurs. He started his career in the Grand Canyon, worked at all three Arizona Universities, then throughout the western US and eventually West Africa. There he worked on culture in transboundary governance and conflict management and in governance of artisanal fisheries. After a mini coup ended his primary project, he returned to Tucson to establish Borderland Spirits and continue this cultural focus through Bacanora and the borderlands.

[Learn More](#)



**2026
CCI AI HORIZONS
2.0 GRANT
RECIPIENTS**

Kenia Okiyama
College of Humanities

Juanita Sandoval
College of Education

Andrés Caballero
College of Fine Arts

Alexis Joy Hagestad
College of Fine Arts

Jose Luis Camarena Jr.
Mel and Enid Zuckerman
College of Public Health

Sachi Tushar Chinchay
College of Science

Erica Julissa Cortez
College of Agriculture,
Life & Environmental
Science

Amairani Kimena Mendieta Escalante
College of Social and
Behavioral Science

Arif Seyfi Gasilov
College of
Architecture, Planning,
and Landscape
Architecture

Damon Clark James E. Rogers
College of Law

Reimagining AI from the Borderlands: Meet the AI Horizons 2.0 Fellows

We're proud to announce our second cohort of the CCI AI Horizons 2.0 - Fronteridades Edition program. This year's cohort is comprised of two undergraduate and eight graduate

students from a variety of disciplines, exploring creative, ethical, and community-centered approaches to artificial intelligence in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Through interdisciplinary projects spanning visual art, multimedia storytelling, and digital works, recipients are engaging critical questions of culture, technology, and border life.

Read the full announcement on our website to learn more about our grantees.

[Learn more](#)



Show & Tell Recap!

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us for our first Show & Tell of the semester, *Re-envisioning Tucson's Mexican Heritage*. The panel featured [Dr. Lydia Otero](#), [Raul Aguirre](#), and [Mayor Regina Romero](#), who together offered a rich and engaging conversation on Tucson's history and the continued movement toward a Mexican-American/Chicano Cultural Center, looking at where efforts have been, where they are now, and where they're headed. A huge shout-out to our host, Playground Bar & Lounge!

If you missed the conversation, check it out!

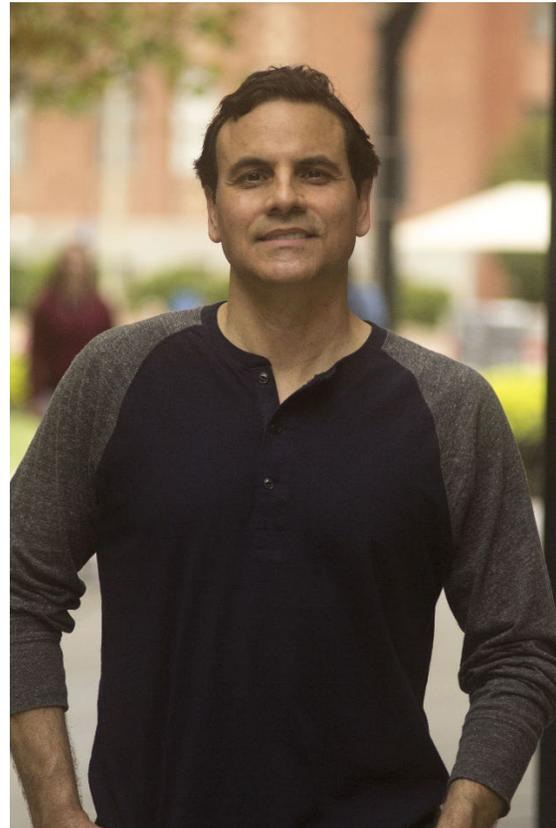
[Watch Here](#)

Confluencer Updates!

Moral Borders: Faith and Humanitarian Work

In this episode of the [Voices of Fronteridades Podcast](#), author and U of A religious studies professor Dr. Alex Nava joins us for a conversation on asylum and humanitarian work along the Arizona borderlands. Drawing from his fieldwork, Dr.

Nava reflects on how humanitarian organizations and volunteer networks support asylum seekers amid shifting political climates.



[Listen Here](#)

New student worker!

This semester, we welcomed Yashi as our Website Manager and Developer!

As our student worker, she'll be helping with improving our website and supporting updates across projects and events. We're excited to have her on our team! 🎉



Funding Opportunities

The.ERP_Sponsored.Campuswide.
Undergraduate.Student_Initiated.Original.
Research.Program

ERP invites students from all colleges to apply for funding to support original, student-designed research projects. If selected, you will receive \$1,000–\$1,500 to help cover project costs, including stipends, travel, supplies, and equipment. Students who show strong progress may be eligible for additional funding and will present their work at a Fall Student Forum. Don't miss this opportunity to turn your idea into impact—
apply now!

Deadline: March 2, 2026

ERP-Sponsored Campuswide Undergraduate Student-Initiated Original Research Program



The ERP-Sponsored Campuswide Undergraduate Student-Initiated Original Research Program supports original student-led research across all colleges, awarding 10–12 students \$1,000–\$1,500 to fund project costs and present their work at a Fall Student Forum.



LEARN MORE

Please submit your application to:
msrp@surgery.arizona.edu

[Learn More](#)

Need.funding.for.summer.fieldwork.in.
Latin.America?

Grad students from any discipline at the U of A are invited to apply for the Tinker Field Research Grant. The grant supports travel to Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Funding is for master's and pre-dissertation research conducted May–August, with priority for M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation projects.

Info Session:

Friday, Feb. 6, 2025 | 2–3 PM
Marshall Building, Room 284

Application deadline: March 16, 2026

Scan to learn more



**2026 TINKER
FIELD RESEARCH
GRANT
APPLICATIONS
NOW OPEN**

Graduate students from **ANY DISCIPLINE** who wish to conduct research in Latin America during summer 2026 are encourage to apply!

INFORMATIONAL SESSION:
February 6, 2026
2-3pm
Marshall Building, Suite 284

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION:
March 16, 2025 by 11:59 pm
las.arizona.edu/tinker

CONTACT:
Katie O'Brien
obrien7@arizona.edu

 COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
Center for Latin American Studies

Tinker
Foundation

[Learn More](#)

Applications are open for the 868283

Udall Center Fellows Program*

Udall Center Fellows will receive time off from teaching or summer supplementary compensation so they can focus on a research project of their choosing related to, informing, or potentially impactful to some aspect of public policy. All University of Arizona faculty members are invited to submit applications for the 2026-27 academic year.

Deadline: February 16, 2026



The UDALL CENTER FOR STUDIES IN PUBLIC POLICY in partnership with the COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES presents

ARIZONA

UDALL CENTER FELLOWS PROGRAM

2026/27

SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH TRACK

ATTENTION ALL SBS FACULTY
GET MORE TIME to focus on research!

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
UDALL CENTER
for Studies in Public Policy

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

APPLY
BY FEB 16 2026

[Learn More](#)

868283 SaludArte

The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, in partnership with the Pima County Health Department, seeks an artist or artist team to create a community-driven art project addressing substance use stigma in Pima County. The selected artist(s) will collaborate with people with lived experience to produce artwork that sparks dialogue, builds understanding, and supports healing and public health.

Budget: \$29,000

Deadline: March 10, 2026



Request for Qualifications

PIMA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ARTS FOUNDATION FOR TUCSON AND SOUTHERN ARIZONA

SaludArte

2026 SaludArte

BUDGET \$29,000 DUE MAR 10, 2026

Apply now to create temporary public art installations that bridge Public Art with Public Health.

[Learn More](#)



Now that you are all caught up, make sure you stay up to date with us by following us on [social media](#), checking out our [Linktree](#), or visiting our [website](#)!



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Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. The university strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.