

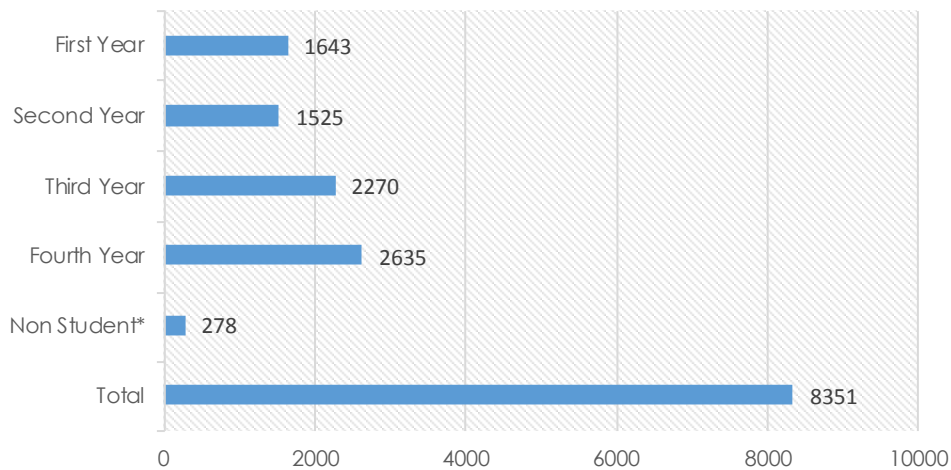


University of Florida's La Casita Annual Report 2014-5

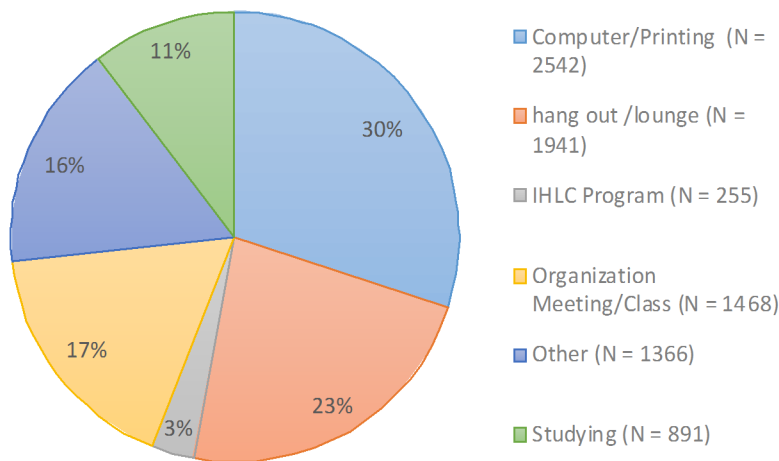


Utilization of La Casita

2014-15 Distribution of IHLC Visitors



2014-15 IHLC Space Utilization



Total participants = 8463

The total number of visitors was 8,351 which is consistent with last year's number of visitors which was 8,344.

Last year, La Casita's main visitors are juniors and seniors. This year we fulfilled our goal of increasing the number of first and second year students who visited La Casita. The IHLC Ambassadors worked diligently to advertise our programming to various populations in order to enhance the spaces usage.

While many students who visit La Casita come to print, many come to "hang out" and we attribute that to our ability to create a feeling of inclusivity. The number of students who visited La Casita for one of our programs is at about 16% and 17% of visitors came to La Casita for organizational meetings.

It is worth mentioning that La Casita gets the most visitors in the middle of the semester (October & February). This information might be helpful for other departments within Student Affairs.

2014-5 Vision

The Institute of Hispanic-Latino Cultures, also known as "La Casita," is a hub of information for Hispanic-Latino students, both undergraduate and graduate, as well as faculty and staff. La Casita seeks to provide various campus and community events in order to bring students, faculty, staff and community members together. Students also receive mentoring and guidance in a safe and productive environment. La Casita is a welcoming and educational "home away from home" where students learn, socialize, work as a team and build relationships in order to support and positively impact lives.

For this year, La Casita focused on doing more intentional planning that falls in line with the Division of Student Affairs' Multicultural and Diversity Affairs unit (also known as MCDA). We focused on providing students with safety and support, community and inclusivity, leadership and skills development, social justice education and training opportunities for our ambassadors.

Big things are happening at La Casita!

- Florida Hispanic-Latino Collegiate Forum happened in March and fostered self-reflection and community building dialogue for 60 students! Our guest speaker was UF Alumna, Juana Bordas author of *The Power of Latino Leadership*.
- Students participated in national Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) conference held in Denver. Next year the conference will be held in Miami!
- La Casita wishes to congratulate UF's first Latina Student Body President—Joselin Padron-Rasines

Where we've been and where we're going

La Casita continues to provide UF students with services like: free coffee and tea, printing (up to 10 pages per visit), and a home-away-from-home! We're open 9 AM—9 PM Monday-Thursday and 9 AM—5 PM on Fridays.

La Casita relies on student volunteers & staff to function. Our ambassadors or “embajadores” as they like to be called, staff La Casita ensuring that each visitor who walks through the door feels welcome. They also develop and execute programs and other events. More importantly, they learn how to work together and use their individual cultural experiences to educate their peers.

La Casita ambassadors are divided into three committees: culture, social justice and outreach. Each committee is lead by a Senior and Junior Ambassador who keep their team members on track and on budget. Some Ambassadors are special liaisons (like from the Hispanic Student Association and Hispanic Heritage Month) and/or have additional tasks like updating our webpage or assisting with our budget revenue system.

As our staff tripled, La Casita Ambassadors focused on letting Hispanic/Latino/a students that we are their on-campus resource *and* they worked on function as a team since we were quickly growing!

As we prepare for our expansion building a strong team and communication was necessary for our team. For next year, La Casita will continue to prepare for our expansion. Students have elected the nickname of La Salita (the little living room) for the new Hispanic/Latino/a Reitz Union space. Additionally, La Salita will consist of the IHLC new's Programming Coordinator and will also be known as the Office of Hispanic Excellence. We are excited for the expansion and look forward to helping more students find their home-away-from-home at the University of Florida!

From the Director

2014-5 was a fantastic year for La Casita! We have expanded our outreach efforts to encourage more first and second year students to utilize the resources, attended the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities annual conference in Denver, CO and we held our biennial Florida ¿Qué Pasa?, and many other social justice efforts.

Because it has been a memorable year, it makes my departure from La Casita difficult. In my short time as Director, La Casita has tripled its staff and we successfully fundraised for this year's Forum and next year's Hispanic Heritage Month. We also witnessed the University's first Latina Study Body President! I'm grateful to have been part of this amazing, historical year and I will miss the La Casita familia! **It's great to have been a Latin Gator!**

In solidarity, Dr. Olivia Garcia