

# ALAS

Association of Latina Alumnae of Smith College



## WINTER 2012

---

### WHAT'S INSIDE...

ALAS President's Report  
Plea for Support  
Meet the Board  
Upcoming Events  
and more...



ALAS is on Facebook

## President's Report

Dear ALAS Friends,

Just as fast as the holidays came and went so has the beginning of 2012. February is here and I hope the start of a new year has brought excitement and fun! It certainly has for ALAS and undoubtedly the remainder of the year promises to bring new adventures and take ALAS to new heights.

In the spirit of forging ahead and taking ALAS to the next level, our past President, Norma Melgoza '92, supported the election of a new President and Board. I served on the prior ALAS board under Norma's leadership as a Program Co-Chair. Let me say that Norma is an incredible individual and did an amazing job forging and broadening a relationship with the Alumnae Association and strengthening an organizational base created by ALAS' first president Sylvia Bolivar '88. Needless to say, following in the leadership capacity of these two very dynamic and accomplished women are definitely some big shoes to fill. But the new Board and I are up to the challenge of continuing to move ALAS forward in a positive direction!

The new Board and I were elected in September 2011 and have since been meeting via regular conference calls to gain ground and move ahead. The 2011-2012 ALAS Board is made of up some new and familiar faces. Returning board members include Catherine Cota '91, Maria "Mini" Narajo '91, Ashley Zurc Pereira '07, Rebecca Ames '01, and Norma Melgoza '92. We also have newcomers Angelica Huertas '10, Amanda Lee Keammerer Aderibigbe, Tabitha Palencia '07, and Kathia Fernandez '09. We each bring a wonderful mix of perspectives and also happen to be scattered all over the county! Without a doubt, the talent of these women will take ALAS to the next level. This newsletter highlights the ALAS board members, so please take a moment to read about these amazing and talented women.

We hit the ground running in September and got busy to planning for new programs. We recently held a potluck fare in Hartford, CT at the home of Yuly Susaya '02 and a tea in Northampton on January 28th. ALAS is working to create a mentorship program with Nosotras and looking for alumnae living in the New England area to participate.

And even if now is not the right time to be a mentor, we still want to see you and hear your ideas on how ALAS can continue building a community among Latina alumnae and be a resource to current students.

ALAS will also be delving into new waters and moving forward with plans to incorporate as a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt organization. Becoming a 501(c)3 organization will allow ALAS to modernize a bit by collecting dues on-line, establishing our own bank account, and fundraising for new initiatives. You can support this effort by becoming a dues paying member or making a monetary donation in any amount to ALAS.

ALAS is off to a busy start but don't worry there is more to come. ALAS will be hosting events in other cities in the upcoming months, so make sure to keep an eye out for announcements. We'll do our best to keep individuals informed on a regular basis via email. Don't forget you can also catch up with ALAS via Facebook, Twitter, and our website. Until next time!

*Un abrazo,*




**Monique Chavoya '02  
President**

**"...the new Board and I are up to the challenge of continuing to move ALAS forward in a positive direction!"**

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Association of Latina Alumnae of Smith (ALAS) works to create community among Latina alumnae and Smith College.

ALAS works collaboratively with the Alumnae Association of Smith College (AASC) and alumnae across the world to establish an organization that is strong, responsive to the changing needs of alumnae and creative in our approaches. We are flexible, vibrant and embrace the diversity of our alumnae and ever-changing world.

### Meet the Board

#### **Monique Chavoya '02 President 2011-2014**

Monique Chavoya graduated from Smith in 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Latin American Literature. She also holds a Master of Arts in Urban Planning from UCLA. Currently, Monique works for McCormack Baron Salazar, a national for-profit developer of economically

integrated urban neighborhoods. Since joining the company in 2007, Monique has worked on a full range of development activities for MacArthur Park Apartments, a two-phase Transit Oriented Development in Los Angeles, California. Her responsibilities include securing project financing from public and private sources, managing the land use entitlement process, as well as interacting with public agency partners, community residents, and stakeholders.

Monique volunteers for a variety of organizations in the Los Angeles area. She currently resides in the Boyle Heights community of Los Angeles, CA. Monique served as the ALAS Networking Chair for the Lost Angeles area from 2008-2011. She is also an active member of the Los Angeles Smith Club.

(Picture above left)



**Ashley Zurc Pereira '07**  
**Vice President**  
**2011-2014**

Ashley graduated from Smith College with a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies. Since then she has embarked on several entrepreneurial ventures which include co-owning a daycare, a property management company, and Orgullo Publishing. In 2009, she published her first children's chapter book: *Lilly & Milly: Amigas 4 Life!* and the bilingual sequel will be released in Spring 2012. She is currently living in Springfield, MA with her husband Paul. Ashley served as the ALAS Communications Chair from 2009 to 2011.



**Norma A. Melgoza '92**  
**Treasurer**  
**2011-2012**

Norma is continuing after serving as President of ALAS for 3 years (2008-2011). She was inspired to join ALAS while serving a 3-year term on the Alumnae Association Board of Directors (2005-2008). In the 90s, she served as the treasurer and Alumnae Recruitment Coordinator for the Chicago Smith Club. While at Smith, she majored in English and Latin American Studies. Norma is currently an associate vice president in hospital operations at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She received a Master's degree in health policy and management from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School. Norma lives in Chicago with her husband Paul and 16 month old son, Cole.



**Maria Naranjo '90**  
**Secretary**  
**2011-2012**

Maria ("Mini") graduated from Smith College in 1991 with a Bachelors Degree in Government and Latin American Studies. Since graduation, Maria has spent the most of her career directing grassroots social justice organizing campaigns in the Washington DC Area. As the Deputy Director of the Service Employees International Union-Local 32BJ, Maria has

helped immigrant and janitors of color fight for higher wages and benefits in the workplace. Maria also spends much of her time on Labor Education and skills building trainings for the thousands of union members that she is responsible for in the Washington, DC area. Maria is a mother of two lovely children (ages 6 and 9) and lives with them in Silver Spring, Maryland. She served as Secretary of ALAS from 2008-2011.

**Catherine Castillo Cota**  
**'AC 91**  
**Director of Fundraising**  
**2011-2014**

Catherine has pursued her passion for social justice/social change throughout her life. Since leaving Smith College she completed degrees at Seattle University School of Law and Claremont Graduate University. Now an educator in Southern California, Catherine has been a founding teacher of an Early College High School program where she taught College English and College Political Science to high school students in South Central Los Angeles. Catherine is now embarking on founding a public charter high school with one of her former high school students and also establishing a new company, One Good Teacher. She is looking forward to bringing her organizational and fundraising skills to benefit ALAS as your new Director of Fundraising. Catherine served as Vice President of ALAS from 2008-2011.

**Rebeca Ames '01**  
**Recruitment & NAAC**  
**2008-2012**

Rebeca has been working since 2003 as the Alumnae Admissions Representative in Queens, New York, recruiting, interviewing and working with young women interested in Smith. She is also strengthening the NYC ALAS recruitment base, meeting with admissions offers and building the Latina Book Award base to recruit more talented Latina students. Rebeca works as the

Director of Membership for Central Park Summer Stage and City Parks Foundation.

*Please contact ALAS if you are interested in recruiting Latina women to Smith College!*



**MEET THE BOARD**

Monique Chavoya '02  
President  
2011-2014

Ashley Zurc Pereira '07  
Vice President  
2011-2014

Norma A. Melgoza '92  
Treasurer  
2011-2012

Maria Naranjo '90  
Secretary  
2011-2012

Catherine Castillo Cota  
'AC 91  
Director of Fundraising  
2011-2014

Rebeca Ames '01  
Recruitment & NAAC  
2008-2012

Angélica G. Huertas '10  
Communications Chair  
2011-2012

Amanda Lee Keammerer  
Aderibigbe '09  
Co-Networking Chair  
2011-2012

Tabitha Palencia '07  
Co-Networking Chair  
2011-2012

Kathia Fernandez '09  
Nosotras Alumnae Mentor  
Coordinator

If you are interested in volunteering for ALAS, please contact us at [ALASAlumnae@live.com](mailto:ALASAlumnae@live.com)

**Meet the Board Continued...**

**Amanda Lee Keammerer  
Aderibigbe '09  
Co-Networking Chair  
2011-2012**

Born and raised in San Antonio, Amanda earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Russian Civilization and Government from Smith College in 2009. As a Smithie, she was involved in numerous organizations and committees, such as the Otelia Cromwell Day Committee. Amanda served as co-chair of Nosotras from 2008-2009, and loved every minute of it! She believes that it's difficult to top the bond between Smithies; furthermore, the potential for personal growth that lies within a Smith college experience is indescribable. This is why she feels so strongly invested in the future of Latinas and working-class students at Smith. As the current Community Relations Manager for LULAC (the League of United Latin



American Citizens) in Washington, DC, Amanda works with people of all ages to advance the needs of the Latino community in the United States and Puerto Rico via social media communities, national events, programs, and website content management. She hopes to apply for her Masters in Communications, complete her first marathon, read more books, try new recipes, and learn as much as possible about "techie stuff" throughout 2012.



**Kathia Fernandez '09  
Nosotras Alumnae Mentor  
Coordinator**

Kathia Fernandez graduated from Smith in '09 with a double major in Education and Spanish. Since her graduation she has worked in both middle and high schools teaching Spanish to urban communities. Kathia currently lives in Hartford and seeks to reconnect to Smith as the Nosotras Alumnae Mentor Coordinator for ALAS.

**Tabitha Palencia '07  
Co-Networking Chair  
2011-2012**

Tabitha Palencia is currently a 5th grade teacher following through with her goal of giving back to her home district. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in administration. Tabitha has an incredible passion for moral purpose, especially in the education field. She is interested in ALAS because as a student, she relied on the Latino network through her years at Smith. Tabitha is interested in giving back and contributing to ALAS.



**Angélica G. Huertas '10  
Communications Chair  
2011-2012**

Angélica is a Smith 2010 graduate with a B.A. in English Language and Literature and a Philosophy minor. She is currently working as Marketing Manager for Shakesperience Productions, a professional theatre company that tours to schools and various other venues across the Northeast. She is interested in the many uses and forms of communication, and is especially passionate about the arts as a vehicle for social change. As a board member, Angélica wants to play an active role in the advancement of both Latina Smithies and the organization as a whole.

**Become an  
ALAS Nosotras  
Mentor!!**

The mission of the ALAS Nosotras Mentor Program is to provide support for Nosotras members at Smith College and to ensure their successful transition to higher education and their retention; and furthermore to provide resources and guidance post-graduation.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Kathia at [Fernandez.Kathia@gmail.com](mailto:Fernandez.Kathia@gmail.com)

**We really need  
your help!**

## ALAS Plea for Support

Norma Melgoza '92  
Treasurer

Over the past 10 years, ALAS has matured as an organization. We have hosted events throughout the United States ranging from Los Angeles, Boston, New York City, Dallas and Chicago. The events were well-attended by alumnae representing various professional, cultural and diverse perspectives in life. In addition, ALAS' newsletters continue to generate enthusiasm and keep the membership connected in between events. After 10 years of solidifying as an organization, its time to look to the future.

In an effort to continue growing, the board decided to pursue 501c3 Federal Tax Exemption as a public charity. With this designation, ALAS will be able to open a bank account, collect dues on-line, fundraise and apply for grants.

ALAS' inability to collect dues on-line through pay-pal has inhibited our growth and modernization.

We will continue to partner with the Alumnae Association of Smith College by designing programs that promote our bonds to the college.

The tasks for seeking 501c3 status are expensive. We are asking the membership to please contribute to the efforts by making a donation to ALAS of \$5, \$10 or \$15. Your contribution will help pay for filing and incorporation fees. We estimate the total expense at \$1,200. In return for your support, your name will appear on a roster of distinguished alumnae who have supported ALAS throughout the years. Our next newsletter will publish the column recognizing your support.

Please take the time to complete the attached form and send your contribution to ALAS.

Thank You!

***"In an effort to continue growing, the board decided to pursue 501c3 Federal Tax Exemption as a public charity."***

## Upcoming Events!

**February 10, 2012**

4:00pm to 5:00pm  
Nosotras Tea with Alumnae Alumnae House, Northampton

**February 25, 2012**

Hartford, CT Potluck  
Location TBD

**March 2012**

Northampton, MA Potluck  
Date & Location TBD

**Coming Soon!**

**Los Angeles, CA**

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art will be opening a new art exhibit called *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*. We are currently planning an event that will coincide with the exhibit.

**Boston, MA**

Alums have expressed an interest in having an event in Boston.

**Please let us know if you are interested in helping us plan an event in your area. Contact us at [ALASAlumnae@live.com](mailto:ALASAlumnae@live.com)**



Left to right: Yuly Susaya '02, Ashley Zurc Pereira '07, Kathia Fernandez '09, Rebecca Reyes '09

## Potluck Fare in Hartford, CT

On Saturday, January 14th alums gathered at the home of Yuly Susaya '02 in Hartford, CT for a potluck fare. Smithies brought dishes from fried yucca to *arroz con gandules* and a *pernil*. It was a relaxing and intimate afternoon filled with great conversation. Memories surfaced, career tips were exchanged, and play dates were made. They will be meeting again in Hartford on February 25th from 3-5pm. Location TBD.

## Tea in Northampton, MA

On Saturday, January 28, alums and Nosotras members gathered at the Alumnae house for a traditional Smith tea and conversation.



Left to right: Ingrid Davalos '10, Kimberly Gillette '99, Deliabridget Martinez '06, Marichuy Gomez '14, Rebecca Reyes '09, Ashley Zurc Pereira '07, Daniela Jacobson '08, Jessica Gutierrez '12, Kathia Fernandez '09

## Interviews Matter! Alumnae Recruitment Training Los Angeles, CA

Monique Chavoya '02 hosted a training for Alumnae in the Los Angeles area on the topic of recruitment on Saturday, January 21st. The session covered key strategies for identifying talented young women for Smith. The event was co-sponsored with the Smith College Club of Los Angeles. Participants left with information on hosting recruitment events, holding interviews and working with college counselors. If you were unable to attend the Los Angeles event but would like to host an event in your city or help with the recruitment efforts on an individual level, please reach out to ALAS' Admission Coordinator, Rebeca Ames at [rebeca.ames@gmail.com](mailto:rebeca.ames@gmail.com).



# ALAS Membership and Survey

**Please update your information:**

Name		Class Year:
Address		
Home #:	Work #:	Cell #:
Email:		

**Membership Dues:**

Class of 2011	Free
Basic membership	\$25
General Support	
Contribution for 501c3 Status	\$5, \$10, \$15 Other _____

**Checks should be made payable to:**

**Alumnae Association of Smith College  
c/o Norma A. Melgoza  
1007 W. Armitage, 2F  
Chicago, IL 60614  
Attention: ALAS Dues**

*ALAS is in the process of applying for 501c3 status. This would allow ALAS to open a bank account, collect dues on-line and plan innovative fundraising events. Your contribution will help support the legal fees & support ALAS' growth.*

Please indicate your interest in attending or helping to organize either locally or regionally, the following group functions or events:

ALAS Nosotras Mentoring Program	___Y ___N	Career Panel	___Y ___N
Admissions Interviews/Recruiting	___Y ___N	Book Club	___Y ___N
Women and Financial Independence Seminar	___Y ___N	Hosting an Event	___Y ___N

Would you be interested in Career Networking breakfasts/roundtables? \_\_\_Y \_\_\_N

Would you be willing to be contacted for informational interviews? \_\_\_Y \_\_\_N

What kind of programs and events would be most appealing and/or helpful to you?

Suggestions:

Email: [ALASAlumnae@Live.com](mailto:ALASAlumnae@Live.com)