



2013-2014 Recipients of the Julian Samora Endowed Scholarship

Each year the Julian Samora Endowed Scholarship, founded by Julian Samora in 1993, provides support to one undergraduate and one graduate student engaged in scholarly activities focusing on Latinos in midwestern communities. The recipients for the 2013–14 academic year are William Escalante and Violeta Nieves.



Violeta Nieves is a senior at Michigan State University majoring in dietetics. Her parents immigrated from Michoacán, Mexico to the United States to find better “educational opportunities” to offer to their children. She is the third out of six children, and she is the first person from her working class family to go to college. Having the opportunity to attend college has made her work harder to pursue her dreams and fight obstacles that would prevent her from succeeding in college. Due to obstacles faced, she relates to many other Latinos that strive to succeed. She wants to advocate health and wellness to prevent nutrition-related diseases and ease the roadblocks that the Latino community encounters in health prevention. Violeta feels very fortunate to have the love and support from her family that has allowed her to pursue her goals and dreams.

William Escalante is a dual degree Ph.D. student in Sociology and Chicano/Latino Studies at Michigan State University. He is interested in issues of Culture, Migration, and Racial-Ethnic Identity among Mexican descendants living in the United States. He has pursued these interests through continued work as a senior member with the African Atlantic Research Team and a research assistant with the Julian Samora Research Institute on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan.

Mr. Escalante’s current work examines celebrations of Día de Los Muertos in the Midwestern region of the United States. Using qualitative investigative methods combined with migration and census statistics, he investigates processes Mexican migrants employ to reaffirm if not re-establish their cultural identity in locations different from their land of origin. He has presented his work at professional conferences in the United States, Mexico and Cuba.

