

cover story

PHOTOGRAPH BY BERT VANDERVEEN
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HECTOR HERNANDEZ-ARROYO
'22 (Business Administration)



WE ARE
#ALPFAmilia

The story of one student organization's meteoric rise and the Bryan students who made it all possible

Organizations sometimes say: "We're all family here." But for the Association of Latino Professionals for America, that rings true. Commonly referred to as ALPFA, the association fosters a strong sense of community for members, coining the term #ALPFAmilia or the idea that all members of the organization are treated as family. This Latino-based – but not Latino-exclusive – organization focuses on the personal and professional development of its members by hosting a series of events throughout the year.

ALPFA found its home at UNC Greensboro in May 2020. When universities were shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Founding Chapter President Hector Hernandez-Arroyo '22 (Business Administration) knew there needed to be other ways to stay involved with his friends and peers while quarantining. After searching on LinkedIn, Hernandez-Arroyo stumbled across ALPFA, and the more he learned, the more he felt empowered to start a chapter at UNCG.

Within its first year, UNCG's ALPFA chapter had 89 members – comprised primarily of students from the Joseph M. Bryan School of Business and Economics – more than 100 community service hours logged at organizations such as Linden Place Retirement Home and the Greensboro Fire Department, and partnerships with more than eight different Fortune 500 companies to provide networking and professional development opportunities for its members.

The following year, UNCG ALPFA had 188 members, hosted 10+ networking events, logged more than 275+ hours of community service, and launched its MacBook Scholarship. Hernandez-Arroyo attributes the chapter's rapid success to two ideas: the implementation of both virtual and hybrid events as well as, of course, the #ALPFAmilia mindset.

ALPFA AT A GLANCE

188
MEMBERS

10+
NETWORKING EVENTS

275+
HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

"It is the #ALPFAmilia that made me believe that despite your background, you can lead in your own way and pave the path for generations to come," he said. "I hope this inspires others to be comfortable in the uncomfortable and take initiative to bring their ideas to life."

Hernandez-Arroyo's developing business savvy seems to be trumped only by his timing. Alongside UNCG being No. 1 in the UNC System for total percentage of Hispanic/Latino student enrollment, as of Fall 2023 at the Bryan School, nearly 16 percent of students were Hispanic or Latino – a number that has increased each year since Fall 2018.

These factors, alongside Hernandez-Arroyo's hard work, culminated in UNCG ALPFA winning Southeast Chapter of the Year in August 2022 over more than 100 chapters across 15 different states. Hernandez-Arroyo says that this was one of his proudest moments at the helm of the club before passing the Presidential title to Kevin Serratos-Prudencio '23 (Business Administration).

Creating a Legacy

Though Hernandez-Arroyo has since graduated, the UNCG ALPFA chapter is going strong. With 188 members and counting, approximately 70% of them in the Bryan School, the impact that ALPFA has had on its members and community has been immense. For Victor Velazquez '24 (Finance) and Kathy Meza-Herrera (Business Administration), co-presidents during the 2023-2024 academic year, ALPFA became both a serious vehicle for professional development as well as a home away from home.

"ALPFA has given me wonderful opportunities and resources in the last 4 years of my college experience," says Velazquez. "ALPFA has empowered me to gain amazing friends and mentors."

In summers 2023 and 2024, UNCG ALPFA was invited to ALPFA's four-day long national convention, located in San Antonio and Las Vegas. This annual convention is a chance for a select few ALPFA students from each chapter to work on their professional development and network with Fortune 500 companies. The convention hosted a career fair with over 70 different companies, networking events with segments of industry professionals, and opportunities for ALPFA chapters to mingle.

Hernandez-Arroyo is still connected with the ALPFA presidents today and continues sharing his journey to founding one of the most prominent organizations on UNCG's campus. The impact of ALPFA reaches far and wide, to both members and leadership.

"By joining ALPFA I have been able to break out of my comfort zone and join a Hispanic/Latino community that genuinely wants to help each other succeed," said Meza-Herrera. "By growing professionally and personally within ALPFA, I have been able to empower others within my #ALPFAmilia toward their career goals. ALPFA is truly a family – my family." ■

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