

BRILLANTES CAMINANTES GUANAJUATO

Supporting the Future Through Education

Newsletter

August 2019

BC Welcomes New Students



Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are able to accept seven new students for the academic year 2019-2020.

Several students have already begun their studies:

- Araceli Lona Garcia is starting her second year at the University of Guanajuato in industrial relations.
- Natalia Itzel Acevedo Alvarez is studying to be a primary school teacher at Benemerita y Centenaria Escuela Normal *Oficial de* Guanajuato, entering her third year.
- Dulce María Molina Frías is starting her third year at the Instituto Universitario del Centro de México, where she is studying social psychology.
- Ariadna Aimee Rodríguez López will enter her third year at the University of Guanajuato in the field of culture and art. She is our first student to pursue a career in the humanities.

Students who are beginning their studies:

- Juan Manuel Nieto López has been accepted at the University of Guanajuato to study pharmacological biochemistry.
- Jennifer Rodríguez Vega will study political science at the University of Guanajuato.
- Jorge Humberto Martínez González will study mathematics, also at the University of Guanajuato.

The Board of Directors Meets New Challenges

The following BC members were elected to board positions at the annual meeting in February:

AJ Buckingham, President, has been involved with BC since 2014, including serving as vice president from 2016-18. She is a clinical psychologist who lived and worked in Chicago before moving to Guanajuato in 2014. Her work history includes 14 years as a director in a large social service agency that served people who were homeless and refugees.

David Spencer, Vice President, moved to Guanajuato from Salt Lake City in 2018. He is bilingual, having spent his youth in the Mormon Colonies in Chihuahua, as well as living and working in Barcelona for a number of years. He has a professional background that extends from office management to acting in both drama and musical theater.



Anna Adams, Secretary, has lived in Guanajuato since 2007. She is a founding member of BC and previously served as president. She retired as a professor of Latin American history at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, where she taught the colonial and modern history of Latin America, women's history, and Latin history and where she published her research on non-Catholic religious communities in Latin America.

Jorge Castelazo, Treasurer, moved permanently to Guanajuato in 2015. He worked as a librarian in a large research library in Boston for many years, before switching to mainframe computers, where he specialized in systems operation, network, and data security. He is bilingual. His father was born in Guanajuato, his mother was born in Mexico City, and he was born in Los Angeles.

Ingrid Barradas Bribiesca, Member-at-Large, moved from Germany to Guanajuato in 1986. Since then she has worked at the University of Guanajuato, teaching courses that range from intercultural communication and cultural tourism to research methodology and business and organizational communication. She currently coordinates the Internationalization of the Division of Economic and Administrative Sciences. Ingrid speaks German, Spanish and English and has been involved with BC since 2018.

The board inherits a vibrant and growing organization. The number of students we support has more than doubled in the last five years—from 12 in 2014 to 27 for the 2019-20 academic year. And, happily, our donor base not only remains strong—it, too, continues to grow. As a result, we voted to increase the annual scholarship to \$24,000 MXN for 2019-20. Additionally, we now pay the fees for up to three class registrations per year (in the past we funded two, even though some universities required three). We will also pay the full cost of “titulacion”—a post-graduation requirement that can be quite costly and gives a student the final professional credential needed to get a good job. Along with 27 students, we also coordinate a corps of 23 mentors who ensure that no student falls through the cracks.

With this expansion, the board is focusing on systematizing our way of doing things. Since the founding of BC, we've relied on the institutional memory of the founders, many of whom remain involved as members. Various roles—ranging from organizing the student applications to managing the food for a benefit—were typically attached to individuals. Starting this past spring, we're focusing on breaking down and documenting the tasks of running and sustaining Brillantes Caminantes and, when possible, distributing and attaching tasks to positions.

For example, the vice president will now be in charge of coordinating student requests for additional support and the member-at-large will manage the documentation of student grades. In the past, both of these tasks fell to the president to manage. We are now recruiting non-board volunteers to fill coordinator roles, which include coordination of mentors, student applications, laptop distribution, development, the newsletter, and more.

Finally, we will create a policy and procedure manual that will document the tasks that make it possible for BC to solicit, screen, and interview students for scholarships; disburse monthly scholarships; coordinate mentors; communicate with our donors and other supporters and friends; produce fundraising events; and myriad other behind-the-scenes details. The result will be smooth transitions for future officers and coordinators and better delineated responsibilities—all in service to our mission of providing Mexican students with scholarships and the support they need to become professionals and future leaders.

Psychology Students Present on Depression

In April, students Abigail Rocha (Psychology, University of León) and Magui Lozano (Educational Psychology, University of Central Mexico) gave a talk about depression.



Abigail Rocha

They noted that depression is very common and is, in fact, the leading cause of disability worldwide. Depression is of two types – recurrent depression and manic-depression. It can range from mild to moderate to severe. Unfortunately, depression sometimes results in suicide attempts.

However, health professionals can offer psychological treatments, such as behavioral activation, cognitive behavioral therapy and interpersonal psychotherapy, or antidepressant medications.



Magui Lozano

It is important for BC students to recognize symptoms of depression in their classmates and offer support, including suggesting professional treatment.

Student Update

Each BC student works with a mentor who meets with them regularly, follows their progress, and provides support when needed. Mentors provided updates on the following students.



Abigail Rocha is studying Psychology at the University of Leon and expects to finish her degree in April 2020. Abi started her professional practice in a middle school in May, while continuing her social service in a mental health center and taking classes. Instead of writing a thesis, she and several colleagues from psychology, architecture, accounting, and business administration will begin working on a project that combines research from their several fields of study.



Consuelo Aguayo is studying geology engineering at the University of Guanajuato. She expects to graduate in December 2020. Her professional practice will be an investigative project related to volcanos. The project is not yet underway, but she has been discussing it with the teacher-investigator who will be working with her. Chelo is very excited about this project.



Luz Maria Gonzalez studies nursing and obstetrics at the University of Guanajuato. She will finish her degree in December 2019. Luzma recently finished a clinical practical rotation in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She enjoys taking on more challenging assignments and interacting with other professionals. Luzma spends two nights a week taking care of an elderly gentleman, a job she enjoys.



Leticia Caudillo is a fourth year veterinary student at the University of Guanajuato. She will graduate in June 2020. Leti spent her spring vacation apprenticing at a veterinary clinic in Guanajuato six days a week. She is working with her mentor on English skills because she will need to pass the TOEFL exam in order to graduate.

Olga Araceli Rodríguez, BC Graduate, Speaks to Students



Olga, or Chely, is a former BC student who graduated in organizational psychology from the Guanajuato branch of the University of Leon in 2015. She is a woman who has managed to succeed in spite of adversity in her life. She currently works for the Secretary of Social Welfare of the federal government.

At the June 2 monthly meeting of students, she gave a talk on the programs that her organization offers to people in the city. One of them is “Insurance for Mothers.” All mothers with children under 25 years of age can register in that program, and children will receive the insurance if their mother dies. To register

one only has to show official ID and choose a person to be responsible in the event of the mother’s death. Olga emphasized that the program has had to be self-promoting since it has not been publicized anywhere, even though it has been in effect since last year. She plans to go to various communities to distribute information, and she asked for volunteers from among the students to help her.

She also talked about scholarships for students that will be awarded starting in the next academic year. She invited students to sign up for the programs at the office of the Secretary of Welfare. The students were attentive and interested and participated in the discussion.

Olga is an enthusiastic person who has returned several times to participate in our programs, presenting themes of interest to students. She recognizes the support of Brillantes Caminantes and says that because of that support, she has been able to achieve her life’s goals.

Newsletter Update

After three years, Constance La Lena has passed the editor’s torch. It now takes two of us to do what she’s been doing on her own. Paula Dunning is handling the content end of things. Agota Page will be responsible for the layout and technical requirements.

A big thank-you to Constance for establishing this newsletter and setting a standard that will be a challenge to meet.

Our goal continues to be to keep you informed about the work of Brillantes Caminantes and the progress of our students.

Veronica Says Good-bye

I began my studies in public accounting in August of 2014. In March of that year while I was preparing for the admissions exam, the director of my high school told me about an organization that offered scholarships for university study. I was excited by the idea of having a scholarship for my entire university career. I remember attending the first meeting. It was exactly the day before I was to begin my studies. Now that I have graduated and that part of my life is over, I feel proud and a little sentimental, looking back on that day.

I remember the friends I had in Brillantes Caminantes in those first semesters - students studying law who were about to graduate, a medical student who talked about his extracurricular activities. We all had the economic support of Brillantes Caminantes that helped us go forward and removed one of the obstacles that would have prevented us from studying.

During my time at the university, I even achieved one of my greatest dreams - to study for a semester in the Fachhochschule Dortmund in Germany, the country with the largest economy in Europe. I had the opportunity to study in English and in German and to meet people from all over Europe. I learned about the German work ethic and broadened my knowledge by being part of an international community.

During my four and a half years of study at the University of Guanajuato I was awarded recognition in accounting, auditing, fiscal management and costing: I grew, I developed skills, I learned, I participated in knowledge marathons, I became a professional, I met people who became very important to me, I left a mark on the student community. I was the treasurer of the student organization in the largest department in the University of Guanajuato and in my second to last semester, before going to Germany, I organized the student section of the Public Accountants of Guanajuato, a project that works with the Mexican Institute of Public Accountants. Finally, in January 2019 I was granted my degree with a citation for academic excellence.



Veronica and Olga Rodriguez (BC 2015)

I consider myself blessed for finishing my BA, because, unfortunately, the percentage of students who actually finish their degrees is low. Now, as a graduate, I am committed to work in my profession with responsibility and humility and to contribute to the growth of my country and my profession. Currently, I am working in the department of budgeting for financial resources in the University of Guanajuato. My plan for the future is to be certified as a public accountant to work overseas.

Thank you, Brillantes Caminantes for supporting me during my university studies.

Verónica Sánchez

Cecy Says Good-bye

My experience with Brillantes Caminantes began in August of 2018 and ended in May of 2019.



Cecy and her mentor Pam Naesig

Brillantes Caminantes has been very important for me not only for the economic support but also thanks to this organization I met extraordinary people like Anna, AJ, Nina, Jeff and especially my mentor, Pam. They have all been very important to me, not just as an association, but like family.

Brillantes Caminantes has supported me in these last months and thanks to them I was able to finish my degree. Because of my high grades, I received a scholarship from the university which made my monthly payments lower than my classmates. I was able to pay my monthly fees with the scholarship from Brillantes Caminantes. Not only did they pay my monthly fees, but they paid for the cost of my degree which is a separate cost. Without BC I would not have been able to pay for it.

Additionally, BC's support allowed me to stop working and dedicate myself entirely to my social service. Without that support, I would not have been able to study without working. And through my social service, I was hired to work in the public ministry.

Brillantes Caminantes supported me in every aspect of my studies. They were always there with me, especially my mentor, Pam, an extraordinary person whom I love very much. Even though my scholarship ended in May, the ties between her and me will not end. And I also plan to continue being part of BC.

Brillantes Caminantes is a non-profit organization. It just supports students without asking anything in return. It is a unique organization. Now, I can say that thanks to Brillantes Caminantes and my family, I realized my dream:

I COMPLETED MY STUDIES AND I AM A LAWYER.

Sandra Cecilia García Gutiérrez

Donations Via PayPal



BC is now able to accept support via PayPal. You can send a one-time donation, or you can set up a recurring monthly payment. Simply go to the Donations page of the Brillantes Caminantes website (<https://www.brillantescaminantes.org/donaciones-donations>), and press the PayPal button that will link you to the PayPal system. (If you don't already have a PayPal account, go to <http://www.paypal.com> and follow the directions for establishing one.) its easy!



Another Successful Fundraiser

BC's spring fundraiser this past March featured Ecos de Mina in a night of flamenco, tapas, and wine. It was held in the beautiful courtyard patio of BC supporter and mentor Xochitl Tortolero on a lovely spring evening. With more than a hundred people in attendance, it was our most successful event ever, netting \$30,000 mxn.

Our next fundraiser will be our traditional student-acted Pastorela in December, with plans in motion for a salsa event in March 2020.



Brillantes Caminantes invites you to sponsor a member of our incoming class of students

Every year our graduates realize their dreams and join the professional workforce, making the world a better place for themselves, their families, and their country. And every year we welcome new students who are taking their first steps toward the kind of opportunity that education provides.

Support the journey!

We never commit to new students until we know that we will have the required funding to support them for the duration of their academic careers. With your pledge to be a long-term donor to Brillantes Caminantes, you become a cornerstone of the association and ensure our capacity to unlock the future for talented, economically disadvantaged students from Guanajuato. Your donation is tax deductible in the U.S.

Full sponsorship of \$6000 USD: \$1,200 USD for five years

Half sponsorship of \$3000 USD: \$600 USD for five years

Donations of any amount and duration are, of course, always welcome

For details on how to become a sponsor or make a donation, go to www.Brillantescaminantes.org and select "Donations" from the menu.



Support BC While You Shop

Amazon reports donating more than \$100 million to more than one million charities since the inception of AmazonSmile in 2013.

Sign up for Amazon Smile, and Brillantes Caminantes will receive 0.5 percent of your eligible purchases (this doesn't apply to purchases made through Amazon Mexico)—at no additional cost to you. Simply sign on to <https://smile.amazon.com>, search for “Brillantes Caminantes AC,” and select it as your charity. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every

eligible purchase you make on AmazonSmile will result in a donation. Note, however, that you must buy through the AmazonSmile website, and not all purchases are eligible.

Brillantes Caminantes Meetings Are Open to All

Student meetings are held from 1 to 3 pm on the first Sunday of every month except July. It's a great way to see and hear what our students are like and to experience their energy. Join us at Foro Cultural 81, Calle Positos 81.

The Brillantes Caminantes board of directors and members convene monthly on the Monday that follows the student meeting, 5 to 6 pm at the Hotel Embajadoras. Topics range from the treasurer's report to policy discussions, future planning, and fundraising—a good way to experience how the organization works.

Meeting dates, times, and locations are posted monthly on the home page of our website:

www.brillantescaminantes.org.

Our Board of Directors

A.J. Buckingham, President * David Spencer, Vice President * Anna Adams, Secretary
Jorge Castelazo,, Treasurer * Ingrid Barradas Bribiesca, Member-at-Large

Thanks to Our Contributors!

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We hope you enjoyed reading this issue of our newsletter, but if you don't want to receive it in the future, e-mail brillantescaminantes@gmail.com with **Unsubscribe** in the subject line. Our next issue, will be December 2019.