



A YEAR OF PROGRESS AND SUCCESSES

2024 was a year of much progress and success, both for our students and the organization as a whole. Most importantly, the word has gone out among the greater Guanajuato community that Brillantes Caminantes, A.C. (BC) is a going concern, accepting new students, holding student, member and board meetings, celebrating student graduations, and, of course, continuing our traditional annual Pastorela. We have added new active members and are working on completing committees that make BC a success. We anticipate more new members as 2025 unfolds.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The December Pastorela was a huge success, both raising the most funds and exposing BC to our largest audience ever. A million thanks to Juan José Prado, Silvia Salas Carreon, and Museo Gene Byron - and our wonderful students who became overnight actors – who made this happen! What a fun event to attend!
- New member Susan Mortimer offered to revive our much-needed newsletters. She is currently featuring our students and their accomplishments, along with other essential BC news. We look forward sending our monthly newsletter out to our list of nearly 452 people who have demonstrated interest in BC.

- Brillantes Caminantes accepted four new students starting classes in August 2024 and one new student starting classes in January 2025. This was possible due to our success in recruiting applicants and in raising the funds to support them.

NEWS OF OUR STUDENTS

Meet our five new students as they begin new careers:



Alondra (Alo) María Nieto Cerpa

Industrial Engineering, Technological Institute of Guanajuato



Christopher Erik Catarino

Mechatronics Engineering, Technological Institute of Guanajuato



Juan Miguel Sánchez Martínez

Mining Engineering, University of Guanajuato



Jonathan Asahel Bustos Juárez

Financial Engineering, Bicentennial Polytechnic University (Silao)



Rosa Lizbeth Tovar Aguirre

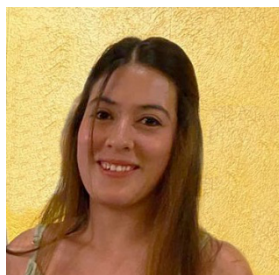
Tourism Resources Management, University of Guanajuato

Our 2024 Graduating Students



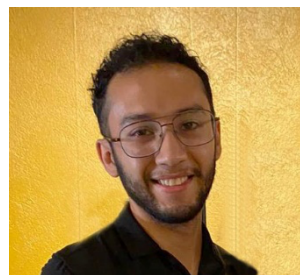
Daniel Mohamed Garcia Gutierrez

Public Accounting, University of León, Guanajuato Campus



Gabriela (Gaby) Arredondo Preciado

Elementary School Education, Teacher Training School



Josué Emmanuel Sánchez Quintero

Public Accounting, University of Guanajuato



Reyna Caudillo Ortega

Architecture, University of Guanajuato

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

In addition to maintaining BC's required 9.0 grade point average, our students stood out in many different ways. *Ximena Argote Hernández*, studying marketing, won first place at the Universidad del SABES in Irapuato inaugural Science and Technology fair, earning the opportunity to travel to Spain with her advisor. She also won first place for a painting submitted to the Cultural and Knowledge Conference contest and titled **Crack of the Future** focusing on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action, thus granting her a trip to Colombia.



Crack of the Future



Legislative Palace, Guanajuato Capital

UG Architecture student *René Gregorio Sánchez Balderrama* applied for and was accepted into the Universidad Fernando Pessoa in Porto, Portugal through the University of Guanajuato's International Mobility Program. He will spend his last semester there before graduating in 2025. To achieve this, René made a plan to live frugally, saved money from working on weekends, and successfully sought support from the UG, the municipality of Guanajuato, and BC. René drew this representation of the old Legislative Palace.

Due to the generosity of our donors, BC has been able to help many students over the years go to conferences and universities in and outside of Mexico, with our students required to find the additional needed funds.

COMMITTEES

The Membership Committee has been meeting regularly with potential new members. From their efforts, we have several new and active members and volunteers. We will continue to meet in person with people who express interest in BC to explain BC, what we do, answer their questions and identify where they feel their strengths are regarding becoming an active member of the organization.

The newly formed Fundraising and Finance Committees are working closely together and having great results. The 10 members are in two subgroups, one working on critically important fiscal reports, actual and projected budgets, and donor relations while the other is working on fundraising events and other tasks as needed. BC is in excellent financial shape as we identify qualified candidates for fall 2025 and looking at other ways to provide organizational support.

BOARD MEMBERS

Matilde Tónix was elected by the membership as Student Affairs Coordinator and has proved to be a superb organizer of germane seminars for the student meetings, as well as being a liaison between the board and the students. She will continue as Student Affairs Coordinator during 2025. Also elected to serve as Board Secretary was Oriana Landa Cansigno. She has skillfully summarized member and board meetings as well as frequently translating during these meetings.

Our Mentor Coordinator, Sarahí Hernandez, moved to Todos Santos and found she needed to resign due to her workload at her new job. Rob Fleming and Eli Castelazo served as Interim Mentor Coordinators. Starting in January, Silvia Salas Carreón with assistance from Rosemarie Conde will serve in this capacity. The Mentor Coordinator also serves as an ex officio nonvoting Board member.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

BC achieved many goals through the extraordinary efforts of BC's Treasurer, Carolyn Black. We applied for and received, after many trips to SAT (MX equivalent of the IRS) with and without the accountant, an E-Firma which enables BC to work directly with SAT in person or on line. We also obtained a current BC Constancia de Situación Fiscal.

Carolyn Black agreed to be our fiscal representative, assuming fiscal responsibility for BC's actions, providing that all voting BC members submit documents in compliance with SAT requirements for a non-profit: Constancia de Situación Fiscal, current utility bill showing residency, and copy of a Mexican government issued photo ID. By year end, we had 18 members complying and thus able to vote.

As the attached year-end financial report shows. BC is in an excellent position to continue to fulfill our mission to provide talented high school graduates from the Municipio de Guanajuato and without financial resources to continue their studies.

NEW DIRECTIONS

On March 10, 2024, a "Working Committee" led by Rees Storm presented future organizational options for BC: upsize, downsize, or dissolve. The membership voted to, in a fiscally responsible way, transition to upsizing BC's operations to include more students, more committees to help manage, and whatever new administrative structure and procedures are needed (to be approved by the members in the future) to make a larger organization function well. This vote to upsize will be revisited after one year.

While we have 18 voting members who have met SAT requirements, BC also has many other experienced and new non-voting members and volunteers who are performing crucial and appreciated work for BC. Without them we could not accomplish all that we do without any staff. We look forward to their continued involvement and their transition to voting member when requirements are met.

In 2024, the Board sought to increase BC membership and involvement among the Mexican community. We have and will continue to have three of our six board positions filled by Mexicans. We look forward to increased involvement and are encouraging all of our members and supporters to continue to reach out to our Mexican friends and community.

In an effort to smooth the transition of new officers of the board, the membership approved a policy in September to hold preliminary elections for the following year's open board positions. These preliminary elections allow the officer-elect to get to know the job, understand current the history of the policy changes the board has made over the years (and therefore BC's current policies), and the board members with whom they will be serving. The officers-elect will then take their board positions after being officially elected by the membership at the Annual Meeting. This policy will be discussed regarding a change to the Bylaws.



*Graduating Student,
Rayna Caudillo Ortega and
Anna Adams*

A number of other potential changes have been mentioned during that past year, including having meetings conducted virtually so that all can attend and possibly adding administrative assistance to the budget. This idea and others will be taken up by the new board for discussion and then presentation to the membership as a whole.

The membership voted to make the lists of current students (with majors, mentors and expected graduation date) and voting and honorary members available to all members. Member and board meeting minutes will also be available. This will be implemented in 2025.

The board recently established a new policy to accept students for January semester/term, provided that the funds are available. These January scholarships will be available to students who 1) were accepted in August by the Selection Committee but didn't pass the entrance exam to the university/college department of their choice, took their entrance exam in December of the same year and passed, and contacted BC to request scholarship and other support starting in January.

CONCLUSION

Unlimited gratitude to all who have supported BC during this past year. Please stay in touch with us through our website <http://www.bcgto.org> and on social media, newsletter list and our active members and volunteers.

**BC has come a long way in just a year.
2025, here we come!
Let's see what we can do in this year!**

Submitted by the Brillantes Caminantes, A.C. Board of Directors:

Susan Eli Castelazo, President and Interim Mentor Co-Coordinator
Karen Robinson, Vice President
Carolyn Black, Treasurer
Oriana Landa Cansigno, Secretary
Matilde Tónix, Student Affairs Coordinator
Rob Fleming, Interim Mentor Co-Coordinator