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Cristina Ortiz Earns Institute on Diversity, Equity and Advocacy Multicultural Research Award

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Cristina Ortiz Earns Institute on Diversity, Equity and Advocacy Multicultural Research Award](#)

Summary: She will use this opportunity to provide a holistic picture of what happens to rural communities within the context of globalization.

[Cristina Ortiz, assistant professor of anthropology, has received a University of Minnesota Institute on Diversity, Equity and Advocacy \(IDEA\) Multicultural Research Award \(MRA\)](#) for “Rural Community Identities in a Context of Transnational Immigration.” [Ortiz](#) will use this opportunity to provide a holistic picture of what happens to rural communities within the context of globalization.

IDEA invites proposals that ultimately “will lead to innovative scholarship and teaching that addresses urgent social issues.” Ortiz’s work will do so by bringing together narratives from various segments of the Morris community—longtime English-speakers, Latino community members, civic leaders, children, college students, and more—to illustrate the demographic shifts taking place in rural areas.

“People think rural places are idyllic and agrarian, that things in Morris have always been the way they are, but small towns are in an interesting place in the transnational scope,” Ortiz says. “Farmers here do business in Brazil and Russia and employ workers who come from Mexico and Central America. We are in a very interesting place socially and culturally and historically.”

Ortiz became interested in this kind of work while conducting research for her dissertation on the effects of immigration patterns on a meatpacking community in Iowa. Since joining the University of Minnesota, Morris faculty in 2013, she has continued to pursue participatory, community-based research, particularly as it pertains to [Morris’s growing Latino population](#). Together with colleague [Assistant Professor of Psychology Oscar Baldelomar \(who received the MRA in 2013\)](#), Ortiz has collected three years’ worth of interview and focus group responses as well as survey data. With her receipt of the MRA, she now has the resources she needs to sort through all of this data in search of publishable, actionable conclusions.

One purpose of the MRA is to increase the visibility of social issues like globalization and the immigrant experience, so recipients are encouraged and required to present their work at various University events. Because of her commitment to research that empowers participants, Ortiz also plans to share her findings with members of the Morris community in the hope of building bridges among individuals and organizations.

“It’s really important for people to be able to understand what one another’s experiences are like, especially in a national context of anti-immigration rhetoric,” she says. “Rural communities actually have a really long tradition of being welcoming places to immigrants. That’s a really important story to be told to counter this greater narrative.”

Since its inception in 1996, the MRA has awarded more than \$1.5 million to more than 152 University faculty working in equity and diversity research from at least 45 different disciplines. More information on award recipients and criteria is available at diversity.umn.edu/idea/.

[View this story electronically.](#)

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