

March 6th, 2026

Dear Selection Committee for the College of Creative Arts and Media Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award,

We are writing as the faculty mentors for Irene Guerra Rudas, who has submitted her research for consideration for the 2025-26 College of Creative Arts Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award. Irene is a doctoral candidate in violin performance and is also currently a Resident Musician for Community Music Works in Providence, Rhode Island, a community-embedded program where she teaches in the Youth Program and performs throughout Providence and surrounding communities. Combining her love of teaching with her Colombian background, Irene's research focuses on promoting the music of Latin American composers within the traditional violin repertoire sequence, which has historically been dominated by the Western European art tradition.

Irene's research began from a natural inquisition into performing works by Latin American composers in her own recitals during her doctoral program at WVU. As a performer, she noticed many of these pieces were hard to find, editions were out-of-date or contained errors, and there were very few recordings. Diversifying the repertoire is often an issue of access and education: to date, most violin collections focus on music that is in the public domain, have many recordings and a long-standing tradition. As a teacher, it is easier to teach what you have already been taught; branching outside of that can be intimidating. Irene's research aims to bridge this gap by providing a sequence of Latin American violin repertoire that teachers can use alongside their traditional methods, placing these pieces in sequential context and explaining how they can supplement or replace standard pieces. As her mentors, we are knowledgeable about traditional methods such as the Suzuki Method, Mimi Zwieg's String Pedagogy and Barbara Barber's collections, and have encouraged Irene to explore these methods to understand their sequencing. Irene has created a practical guide that can be used by teachers and students at any level. However, this is just the beginning of this important research. We have encouraged Irene to publish her own collection of pieces and make her own recordings of these works, to continue to increase accessibility of these important works to string teachers.

Irene's research places Latin American violin music in a pedagogical sequence, providing a practical guide for teachers who might want to diversify their teaching repertoire but are not sure where to start. This important work highlights Irene's dedication as an advocate for diversity in the arts and her commitment to teaching, and she is certainly deserving of consideration for this award. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mary Grace Johnson
Assistant Professor of Violin



Dr. Erin Ellis
Associate Professor of Cello