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‘Celebración’ showcases Hispanic Heritage month with banquet

Courtney Barrera

Intern

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Celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez, Sammy Sosa, Christina Aguilera and Antonio Banderas have one thing in common besides their fame: they are all Hispanic. While NT students may not be famous yet, NT’s Multicultural Center still formally celebrates the Hispanic culture once a year.

The 16th annual Celebración Banquet took place Tuesday night in the University Union’s Golden Eagle Suite.

Each year, the Multicultural Center celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month with a banquet to honor Hispanic students and community members.

“[It] is important for the university community to recognize the accomplishments of Latino students and community members,” said Andrea Robledo, the assistant director of the Multicultural Center. “The banquet provides us with such an opportunity. With the changing demographics of Texas, and Latinos making up the majority of the minority population, the banquet provides the opportunity to recognize that diversity and affirm [NT’s] commitment to a student population that more closely reflects the state’s population.”

Before the banquet began, students of many different cultural backgrounds greeted familiar faces with hugs and smiles.

“Since it is Hispanic Heritage Month, people tend to think the events are only for Hispanics,” Robledo said. “The true purpose behind cultural celebrations and heritage months is for everyone to learn about a culture that is not their own. In doing so, people realize what they have in common.”

Tony Perez, Valley View sophomore, was a first time banquet attendee. The League of United Latin American Citizens is a group Perez got involved with at NT, and he was excited to be a part of the banquet through the organization.

Perez went to a predominantly Caucasian high school, but he said he enjoys the diversity that he’s seen so far at NT.

“You really didn’t see [Hispanics] that much,” Perez said.

He said he was excited for an opportunity to get back to his roots.

The students had time to enjoy each other’s company while they dined on Mexican food and waited for the keynote speech to begin.

To wrap up the ceremony, Arnold Velez, president of the Dallas-Fort Worth Division of Clear Channel Outdoor Inc. gave the keynote speech. Velez addressed the banquet, specifically the students who were present, about their futures. He spoke on the secret to success. “Keep it simple,” Velez said. “Life really is simple, so keep it simple. Don’t complicate things. You can’t let fear get in your way. I’ve never known one single moment where I haven’t been afraid. I get up with fear, it rides to work with me, it sits at my desk all day ... it has saved my life on more than one occasion, but I can’t let it control me.”



Emily Hughes/ NT Daily

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Irma Portillo, Granbury junior, and Norma Carrillo, Dallas sophomore, discuss the program’s festivities for the Hispanic Heritage Month Banquet on Tuesday in the Golden Eagle Suite of the University Union.