



*Elías Alcántara*

Lehman alumnus Elías Alcántara, a Bronx native is one of only three Americans to win a 2010 scholarship for graduate studies from the Organization of American States (OAS). He will attend the Institute of International Studies at the University of Chile in Santiago for two years to earn his master's degree in international studies, while also conducting research on the rights of indigenous people. He plans to examine the types of mechanisms Bolivia and other South American governments will put in place to help that population exercise its rights. "Their movement," he notes, "also parallels the Civil Rights era in the United States during the 1960s in many ways."

"My studies in Chile will be an invaluable learning experience for me and for my community when I return." says the 2008 grad, who traveled to New Orleans with fellow Lehman students in 2007 to help rebuild areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Among the three American winners, Alcántara is the only male candidate to receive this year's award, which provides 100 percent funding for tuition and books, a round-trip plane ticket, a living allowance, and full health coverage. Supplementing his scholarship is a \$10,000 award from the Lehman College Foundation to enhance the opportunities offered by the OAS.

Alcántara, whose parents emigrated to New York from the Dominican Republic, completed his freshman year at Medgar Evers College and then transferred to Lehman for its political science program. The following semester, he was accepted into the Lehman Scholars Program. A double major in political science and philosophy, he was elected CASA (Lehman student organization) president during his senior year, earned induction into Golden Key Honor Society, as well as the political science honor society, and became involved with the Herbert H. Lehman College Public Service Leadership Institute as a mentor. He also took part in a study-abroad program through City College, spending a semester at London Metropolitan University and traveling to other European cities.

Since graduation, Alcántara has worked as campus engagement coordinator for the SEEK program at Lehman, helping to get students involved in leadership activities and study-abroad programs. He also tutored SEEK students during the last two years at Lehman. Alcántara himself entered CUNY through SEEK, remained in the program through graduation and credits his success to the guidance he received from both faculty and SEEK mentors.

Alcántara hopes to study international law after completing his master's degree.

The OAS is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States in 1889-90, and is committed in its mission to the principles of democracy, human rights, security and development.

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