

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2025-1031

TITLE: Resolution Recognizing “La Casita” as a Cultural Landmark at the University of Florida

AUTHOR(S): Senator Marco Salvador

SPONSORS: HSA President Matthew Urra, HSA President of Programming Lucia Urdaneta, HSA Secretary Sofia Lynch, Member Leadership Program Executive Director Fall 2024 Maite Chapartegui, Member Leadership Program Executive Director Spring 2025 Michelle Hudtwalcker, HSA Office of Political Affairs Executive Director Imani Sanchez, Senator Anthony Boulosa, Senator Marian Enriquez

WHEREAS, "La Casita", also known as the Institute of Hispanic and Latino Cultures, is a historically significant site at the University of Florida, serving as a symbol of the rich cultural heritage and history of Latinx students and their contributions to the university community; and,

WHEREAS, "La Casita" was designated in 1994, following immense advocacy efforts from Hispanic and Latino students at UF, as a safe space and resource center for Latinx students at the University of Florida, providing a sense of belonging, empowerment, and support in an academic environment that has historically been challenging for students of color [1]; and,

WHEREAS, “La Casita” has played a critical role in advancing the cultural and academic success of Latinx students, serving as a hub for community engagement, activism, leadership development, and mentorship for generations of students, alumni, and faculty; and,

WHEREAS, “La Casita” has become a site of cultural and social significance for the entire university community, hosting events that celebrate Latinx heritage, history, and identity, including cultural festivals, educational panels, and performances that foster inclusivity, awareness, and diversity on campus; and,

WHEREAS, the presence of “La Casita” on campus is integral to the university’s commitment to inclusivity, helping ensure that Latinx students and other marginalized groups have access to spaces where they can connect, share their experiences, and find solidarity with others who share similar cultural and social backgrounds [2]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida has a responsibility to protect and support adjunct cultural organizations such as the Hispanic Student Association and its sub-branches, that honor the history of its diverse communities, including its Latinx student body, and to ensure that spaces such as “La Casita” continue to thrive and remain accessible for future generations of students, faculty, and staff; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida hereby commits to protecting “La Casita” as a cultural landmark and community space within the university, ensuring that it remains a dedicated resource for Latinx students and a space for cultural celebration and engagement for all members of the UF community.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate will work with the Hispanic Student Association, affiliated student organizations, faculty and staff, and other stakeholders to ensure the long-term preservation and continued use of “La Casita”, including safeguarding its physical space, supporting its cultural and academic activities, and providing necessary resources for its operation.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes and honors the historical significance of “La Casita” as an imperative landmark at the University of Florida and will take steps to ensure that future generations of students will be able to benefit from its legacy.

[1] <https://archive.news.ufl.edu/articles/2019/11/institutes/>

[2] <https://theclio.com/entry/125713>

[3] <https://dl.icdst.org/pdfs/files/a793d1b9708a96071652b5faa11d17a8.pdf>