Jose Ortiz's Reflective Statement
Spring 2026

This reflective statement and accompanying portfolio are intended for my reappointment and to illustrate my accomplishments in teaching, service, and scholarship at SUNY Cortland. Each section below highlights my achievements, reflections, and goals for the future.

Teaching

In my time at SUNY Cortland, I have taught five undergraduate courses (EDU 471; FSA 100; FSA 103; FSA 129; FSA 400) and five graduate courses (FSA 525, 580, 651, 652, & 653). My course evaluations have ranged between 3.6-5. In my evaluations, students have highlighted my mastery of course material, effective teaching strategies, described my passion for teaching, and have commented on areas of improvement.

In the classroom, I aim to get students involved by engaging them in reflective and participatory small- and large-group discussions. Some of my new classroom activities have called on students to: analyze dense text in small groups to reach a consise understanding of authors' main points; work collaboratively with one another to answer quiz questions; and work together to answer critical reflection questions posed throughout the lecture. While students have commented on the difficulty in interpreting articles I assign, students have also noted the effectiveness of small group discussions and have appreciated my teaching of main points in simpler language. Additionally, I have worked to make upper-level undergraduate courses (such as FSA 400) more relevant to where students are in their teaching trajectory. I most recently redesigned my FSA 400 course and presented students with a more action research focused curriculum. In the Fall 2025 semester, students unfortunately noticed the novelty in my approach when teaching FSA 400. I will take my FSA 400 students' feedback and adjust my curriculum for future students to understand the importance action research has in teacher education.

Students in my FSA 400, 651, and 652/653 classes also expressed concerns over me not providing timely feedback on assignments. All sections of FSA 400 are required to assign a main culminative assignment known as a Practitioner Inquiry Project (PIP). Students in my last two sections of FSA 400 (Fall 2024 and Fall 2025) expressed questions and confusion over the purpose of the PIP. While teacher action research is a useful skill to develop, students must buy into the power of research for creating social and institutional change, which is a task I work on conveying to students every time I teach a research focused class. As such, attending to students' reservations over research and providing constructive feedback on 15-20 students' 10–15-page PIPs in a timely manner was difficult to do, especially considering the added expectations of Block faculty needing to travel to and observe FSA 400 students at their immersion sites. While I understand the importance and effectiveness of returning assignments back to students in a timely manner, I chose to sacrifice a quick turnaround period in favor of providing quality feedback.

Similarly, FSA 651 and 652/653 are two graduate courses where students are expected to submit a 15–20-page research paper. Class sizes for FSA 651 usually ranged from 20-25 students and 5-10 students for FSA 652/653. At the graduate level of study, expectations are usually higher both in quality and substance of assignments. As such, fulfilling my professor duties of providing constructive feedback often required a bit of wait time for my graduate students. In the

future, I will work on strategies for providing timely constructive feedback to students while also encouraging peer-to-peer reviews in all of my classes.

Utilizing technology has broadened the way I have been able to reach students and deliver course content in the classroom. I have developed and taught more online asynchronous and synchronous courses (FSA 525, 580, 651, 652, and 653) that introduce graduate students to urban education issues and teacher action research methods that hopefully positively influence their teaching practices. Developing and teaching courses online presented its share of adjustments and challenges, but it also contributed to my growth as a teacher. I am constantly seeking new ways to get students engaged despite the limitations that come with not being able to participate in-person. As such, I have been receptive to my undergraduate and graduate students' feedback as I continuously work to improve my overall teaching practice.

As a Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners (CALP) Democracy Engagement Fellow (awarded Spring 2025), I have begun exploring ways to create a more welcoming environment for students to share their lived experiences and perspectives. In class, undergraduate students have engaged in civic discourse, brainstorming ways teachers can advocate for better social policies that will directly address those education-related issues explored during class. In these polarizing times, it is essential to implement effective teaching strategies that will allow me to disseminate knowledge and facilitate classroom conversations in a way that is not too unsettling for undergraduate students. Training future teachers who will profoundly impact students' lives is already reason enough to improve my teaching practice. With the ongoing social and political issues severely impacting society today, I need to ensure that I am effectively preparing undergraduate students to engage in civic discourse as they proceed to become participating members of U.S. society once graduating from college.

Service

My national, college, school, and department service revolve around supporting students who have been historically marginalized in higher education. Throughout my time at SUNY Cortland, I have been able to form connections with national organizations and offices across campus that support my mission for social justice. As such, I have been able to develop curriculum, be on scholarship selection committees, and provide direct academic support to undergraduate and graduate students, in and outside of SUNY Cortland.

I was elected chair of the Academic Grievance Tribunal from 2024-2025 where I led administrative proceedings between faculty and students over suspected violations of academic integrity (Chapter 340 of the College Handbook). I currently serve as the Latino, Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LLACS) minor Coordinator and Chair. My role as LLACS Coordinator and Chair has seen me making internal and external connections across the SUNY Cortland community to promote and advocate for Latina/o/é heritage and culture. For example, I collaborated with the City of Cortland Mayor's office to put together the Latinx Festival. Another leadership role I have assumed on campus came when I was appointed senator of the faculty senate. I am an education representative at bi-weekly meetings with other faculty senators from across campus. I also joined the Journal of Scholarship of Engagement (JoSE) committee.

My recent leadership role in LLACS not only reflects my long-term commitment towards serving the Latiné community (see AAHHE work from 2020-present and my research focusing on Latiné students) but it addresses a point Dr. Andrea Lachance made in my 2025 reappointment letter over "see[ing] more leadership in service for promotion to Associate

Professor" (Andrea Lachance letter for reappointment for Dr. José Ortiz, April 15, 2025). The LLACS coordinator and chair role was vacant for two years prior to my appointment. As the new LLACS coordinator and chair, I must assess and plan areas of improvement within the program as I set out to promote Latiné heritage and culture in and around SUNY Cortland.

Joining JoSE continues the work I started as a Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners (CALP) Democracy Engagement Fellow (see teaching section). In class, I create opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in civic discourse. JoSE is an online peer-reviewed academic journal that provides current and future K-16 educators with evidence-based methods for applied (experiential) learning as it relates to students' civic readiness[1]. Through my involvement in JoSE, I now have an opportunity to reach a national stage as I review and recommend manuscripts for publication that will support educators and practitioners when discussing polarizing topics within the classroom.

At the school level, I continue being a part of the Scholarship Committee where once a semester, members review scholarship applications and decide on undergraduate students who will be awarded a School of Education scholarship. I was also invited to be a part of the C.U.R.E. Program Scholarship Review Committee in 2025 where we award students a scholarship for committing to support and teach at an urban school once graduating from SUNY Cortland.

At the department level, I have reviewed the department's undergraduate curriculum as part of the FSA Curriculum Committee to make sure that curriculum is up to date with New York state standards for teacher accreditation. I most recently contributed to the establishment of a completion program specifically designed to provide non-traditional students with an accessible pathway to NYS certification in Students with Disabilities (All Grades). This completion program acknowledges the lack of access non-traditional students have to teacher education programs. As such, part of my work when designing the program involved figuring out the best way for students to transfer as much as 60 prior learning credits into the program. Ultimately, students will be able to finish the program within two years after taking 60 additional credits at SUNY Cortland.

Scholarship

My research focuses on Social and Emotional Learning, spirituality in education, Chicana/o Studies, Critical Race Theory, Latina/o Critical Race Theory, and testimonio as a form of narrative for emotional reflection. In 2024, I got a chapter in the *Decolonizing Classroom Management: A Critical Examination of the Cultural Assumptions and Norms in Traditional Practices* book published by Rowman & Littlefield. In 2025, the Association of Mexican American Educators journal published my article, *Using Testimonios to Enhance Social Emotional Learning Skills for High School Latina/o/x Students* after a two year wait and review process. I also published another article in 2025 in the Ethnic Studies Pedagogies journal titled *The Potential Role of In Lak'ech and the Nahui Ollin in Nurturing Social Emotional Learning*. I currently have another article accepted with an anticipated publication date of June 2026. I have also been able to present my current and upcoming research at both national and international conferences. For example, I will be presenting a co-authored research paper that explores how grit and resiliency is promoted within Social Emotional Learning (SEL) literature at the upcoming American Educational Research Association. By applying a decolonial lens to how

[1] https://www2.cortland.edu/programs/civic-engagement/jose

grit and resiliency have been framed in SEL practices, I argue that SEL practices encourage students to conform their emotional responses to social and institutional inequities instead of advocating for more equitable conditions. This paper jumpstarts a research project I aim to complete over the next two years.

Final Reflection

My six years at SUNY Cortland have not only brought forward new challenges, but they also provided me with new opportunities to grow as a teacher, researcher, and advocate for students. Coming to SUNY Cortland in 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed the opportunity to have an extra COVID year in the tenure/promotion review process. With one year left until my tenure review/promotion, I will continue the teaching, service, and scholarship work I am currently involved in while also searching for new opportunities to get involved in and around the SUNY Cortland community. Thank you for taking the time to look at my materials.