

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025

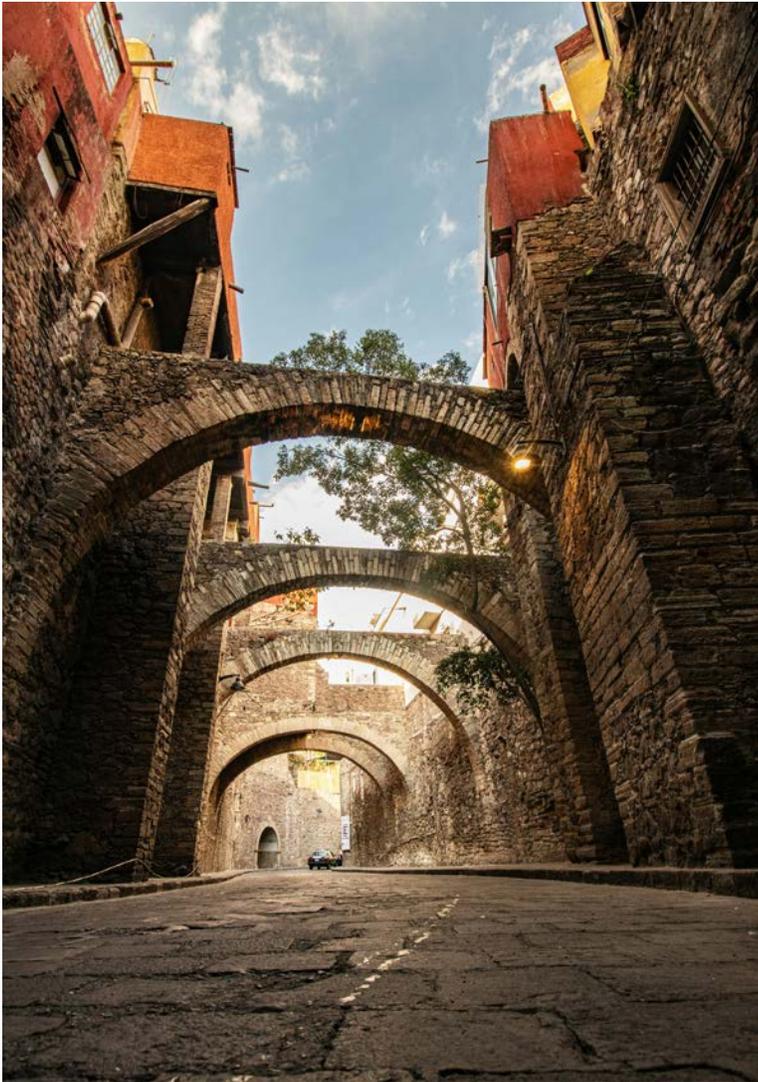


### A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2025 was a year of significant organizational progress and notable student achievements for Brillantes Caminantes (BC). We continued to uphold our mission of “Brightening the Future Through Education,” and this report highlights the accomplishments that made the year so impactful.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Members of the Board of Directors are elected to two-year terms at the Annual Meeting in January and serve on a fully volunteer basis. In recent years, recruiting Board volunteers has been challenging, and new members have sometimes stepped into their roles with limited hands-on training. To address this, BC implemented a new policy—approved by the membership—to “pre-elect” or nominate candidates for Board positions in the autumn, followed by their official election at the Annual Meeting in January. This process gives nominees several months to learn the responsibilities of their roles before taking office, strengthening recruitment efforts and easing the transition to new Board members.

At the 2026 Annual Meeting, elections will be held to fill the remaining one year of the President’s and Vice President’s terms. Both officers were elected last year with the understanding that they could commit to only one year of the two-year term; therefore, their successors will be elected to complete the final year of those terms. Our current Vice President, Karen Robinson, initially committed to serving only one year but has since decided to run for election to complete the remaining year of the term. Elections will also be held for new two-year terms for Board Secretary and Student Affairs Coordinator. Our Treasurer, Carolyn Black, is beginning the second year of her term.



## PRESIDENT

María Ernestina Rosas Castro was “pre-elected,” or nominated by the members, for President of BC, with her formal election to take place at the 2026 Annual Meeting. She is a bilingual Mexican, holds a degree in medicine and a Master’s in Public Health, and retired as a college professor from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. María divides her time between the United States and Mexico. Although she would prefer to spend more time in Guanajuato—where her heart lies—recent U.S. government policies have made that difficult. Nonetheless, she has committed to being in Guanajuato during BC’s key time periods and to attending other meetings by video.

María believes that education is the most effective way to improve lives. She has volunteered with organizations such as *Mujeres Unidas*. While she comes to BC without prior experience in our organization, the Board will work closely with her to share institutional knowledge and support her transition into the role.

## SECRETARY

Carmen Nieto Vega was “pre-elected,” or nominated by the members, for Secretary of BC, with formal election to take place at the 2026 Annual Meeting. A bilingual Mexican, she is well known to many of us through her work as a notaria in Guanajuato. Now retired, Carmen previously served as BC’s notaria for several years and is already familiar with the organization’s work.

She has served as a university Secretary and as Secretary of the National Association of Notaries. She is also the recipient of the *Forjadores de México* award. Carmen and Oriana, our current Secretary, have been communicating regarding the responsibilities of the position, and Carmen is eager to begin. She has already provided valuable assistance to the Board on several matters since her nomination.



## STUDENT AFFAIRS COORDINATOR

Hermes Antonio Villafuerte Molina was introduced to BC through Andy Barbosa, one of our graduates, who invited him to volunteer as Student Affairs Coordinator. Hermes holds a Master's degree in Communication and Educational Technologies and is also a Computer Systems Engineer.

He was appointed by the Board to serve as BC's Student Affairs Coordinator in 2025 and has agreed to continue in this volunteer position for the 2026–2028 term. In this role, Hermes addresses student needs that align with BC's mission and ethics, verifies that students meet scholarship requirements, and provides support in exceptional cases requiring closer monitoring. He has designed activities that help BC students connect with one another across different universities and fields of study, as well as coordinating monthly student meetings.



## OUR EIGHT STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED IN 2025



**Angeles Valentina**  
Aguilar Rivera,  
Social Psychology



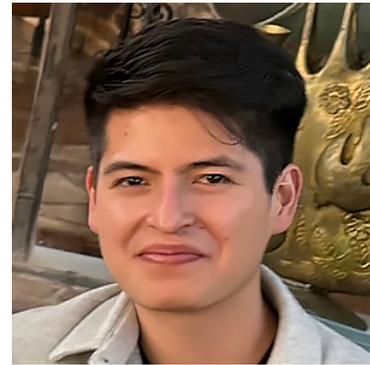
**Edwin Darío**  
Rodríguez Hernández,  
Mechanical Engineering



**Martín Esaú**  
Honesto Pacheco,  
Quality & Productivity  
Management



**Paloma del Rocío**  
Becerra Zárate,  
Food Industry  
Engineering



**René Gregorio**  
Sánchez Balderrama,  
Architecture



**Valeria Vianney**  
Vizguerra González,  
Food Industry  
Engineering



**Vanessa (Vane)**  
Méndez Rocha,  
Pharmaceutical Chemical  
Biology



**Ximena**  
Argote Hernández,  
Marketing



## OUR SIX NEWEST STUDENTS

The Selection Committee once again did an excellent job reviewing multi-page applications, interviewing prospective students and their families, and selecting exceptional candidates for BC's program. Under a new policy (see below), one new student was accepted in January.



**Agustín**  
Rodríguez Vega,  
Computer Science



**Ariadna** Monserrat  
Acosta Pérez,  
Industrial Engineering



Guadalupe (**Lupita**)  
Gómez Galván,  
Education



Karol **Andrea**  
Comenero Rodríguez,  
Hydraulic Engineering



**Rodrigo** Alfredo  
Álvarez García,  
Business Management



Rosa (**Rosita**) Lizbeth  
Tovar Álvarez,  
Tourism Resource  
Management



## JANUARY ADMISSIONS

A new policy was adopted to allow the admission of students who:

1. Are selected by the Selection Committee in August;
2. Do not pass the entrance exam in August;
3. Pass the entrance exam later *that same year*; and
4. Subsequently request BC's support.

Under this policy, these students may be admitted to BC's program beginning in January, *provided* their admission does not exceed BC's capacity in terms of funding or other resources (such as available mentors).

## GRADUATE SUCCESSES

We heard from several of our graduates this year about their current work and future goals. Below is a sampling of their accomplishments.

- Andy Barbosa, who graduated in 2021, is currently a manager at Coppel.
- Fabián Pacheco, who graduated in 2015, works with government protection programs. Notably, Fabián says his experiences with BC changed his perspective on immigrants in Mexico.
- Luis Martín Ortega graduated in 2015. He works as a process and maintenance engineer at Beiersdorf (brands Nivea and Eucerin). Through his work, he has traveled to Germany and Italy. He has also started his own business.
- Marisol Tavares García graduated in 2018 and is a teacher at a public elementary school — her dream job.
- René Sánchez Balderrama completed his studies abroad in Portugal, his first time outside of Mexico. He credits BC with providing the stability, support, and security that enabled him to pursue this opportunity. While studying in Portugal, René also visited Spain, England, and Italy. He says, “Now I have friends from all over the world.” He is currently working as a photographer (including for BC) and as a remote associate architect at a studio. He plans to pursue a Master's in Architecture.



## STUDENT MENTORS

Our volunteer mentors continue to do an outstanding job supporting their students. Several students have received financial assistance for medical needs through the recommendations of their mentors. Beth Lozano, Cecilia Zavaleta García, Cesar Altamirano Acosta, Fawn Potash, Gisele Phillips, and Yolanda Contreras Cortez joined us as mentors this year, and Nina Johnson and David Spencer rejoined us as mentors. Two experienced mentors, Silvia Salas and Rosemarie Conde, agreed to serve as Mentor Coordinators.

One mentor, Lee Gould, helped save her student's life through her recommendations to the family during a medical emergency, her presence at the hospital, and her assurance to hospital staff that the student's expenses would be covered. Although not all mentor-mentee interactions are as dramatic as Lee's experience, BC mentors make a profound difference in our students' lives.

## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Fundraising Committee was reorganized into two subcommittees: Donor Relations and Events. Both subcommittees were highly effective this year in strengthening relationships with donors and delivering a successful Pastorela. The organization's financial position reflects the impact of their work. The year-end Financial Report is appended to this report.



The Pastorela was a great success this year, featuring a humorous play by Juan José Prado, strong student performances, and production by Silvia Salas, who coordinated costumes, rehearsals, and all backstage operations necessary for a successful performance.

The Pastorela was supported by numerous volunteers who organized and managed all aspects of the event. For the first time, food service was fully catered, with Jan Bezuidenhout



donating her time to design the menu and to prepare and present the appetizers and main dishes. Students' families provided desserts, enabling them to attend and participate in the event.

For the first time, a raffle featuring high-value prizes was held and generated additional fundraising revenue through strong attendee participation. Two students were prize recipients. The Board anticipates continuing this initiative in future years.

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee was formed this year and Sunday Sommers has provided outstanding leadership as Chair. A letter was sent to all members encouraging them to share BC's work with friends, neighbors, and acquaintances and to invite them to Members' Meetings.



Carolyn Black prepared printed cards with a QR code to share BC's information with new contacts. Sunday created pamphlets in both English and Spanish to support outreach efforts and facilitate introductions to BC. In addition to these printed materials, BC's website (BCgto.org) has been updated by Agota Page with new photos and information.

The committee has maintained an active presence on Facebook and has received positive feedback on its posts. René Sánchez Balderrama and Sunday Sommers have created videos for Facebook, TQM, the BC website, and Instagram. The first video featured one of our graduates who came to BC with selective mutism. With BC's support, she overcame this challenge and now works as a veterinarian. Her video highlights her journey since graduating in 2021.



Mentors continue to play an important role by encouraging their students to create personal videos for publication on BC's social media platforms. Their support is greatly appreciated.

## INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP

COVID created barriers to introducing new people to the BC community. Some long-time members have returned to the United States, and others are no longer with us. As a result, recruiting new members remains important. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light work."

The membership voted two years ago to expand BC. Our committees are strong and functioning well. We encourage members to share the good news of BC's work with others.

## BOARD AUTHORITY

The Board was granted authority to make decisions for BC from January 27, 2025, through the 2026 Annual Meeting, except for:

1. Electing voting officers of the Board;
2. Approving the Annual Report and Budget;
3. Defining Board structure (i.e., Board positions);
4. Approving Members' Meeting minutes;
5. Expelling a member;
6. Amending the Bylaws; and
7. Approving dissolution of the *Asociación Civil*.

This authority will be reviewed and amended as needed at the January 2026 Annual Meeting.

Recognizing the impact of inflation on students and their families, the Board approved an increase in monthly scholarships beginning in August 2025, from \$2,100 pesos to \$2,600 pesos, and during registration months, from \$2,600 pesos to \$4,000 pesos.

A seventh Board position was created: Member at Large, a non-voting role. Rob Fleming accepted nomination to this position. Traditionally, the Member at Large serves as a point of contact for member concerns, addressing them directly or communicating them to the Board as appropriate. Members are welcome to contact Rob or any Board member with concerns. Board meetings are open; members may request inclusion by contacting Eli Castelazo.



Many thanks to the wide range of individuals who supported BC and contributed to our successes in 2025.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eli Castelazo, President

Karen Robinson, Vice President

Carolyn Black, Treasurer

Oriana Landa, Secretary

Hermes Antonio Villafuerte Molina, Student Affairs Coordinator

Silvia Salas, Mentor Coordinator (Non-Voting)

Rob Fleming, Member at Large (Non-Voting)

Brillantes Caminantes  
Statement of Activities January 1 to December 31, 2025

	MX Books \$MXN	US Books Converted to MXN 18.00	Mexican + US \$MXN	2025 Proposed in \$MXN	Actual vs. Proposed %	Activity MX+US USD	2025 Propose USD
<b>Revenue</b>							
<b>Donations</b>							
Pledges		846,132	846,132	540,000	1.57	47,007	29,428
Individual		209,236	209,236	126,000	1.66	11,624	7,000
Kevin Donnelly Memorial		80,484	80,484	-	0.00	4,471	-
Interest		23,111	23,111	-		1,284	-
<b>Total donations</b>	-	1,158,963	1,158,963	666,000	1.74	64,387	36,428
<b>Fundraisers</b>							
Tickets Pasterla **	49,300	540	49,840	54,000	0.92	2,769	3,000
Bar Sales	5,860		5,860			326	
Auction	26,400		26,400			1,467	
Stay at Home			-			-	
Giving Tuesday		5,850	5,850	36,000	0.00	325	2,000
Other Donations	6,792		6,792			377	
<b>Total fundraisers</b>	88,352	6,390	94,742	90,000	1.05	5,263	5,000
<b>Total Income</b>	88,352	1,165,353	1,253,705	756,000	1.66	69,650	41,428
<b>Expenses</b>							
<b>Student fees</b>							
Scholarships	507,500		507,500	468,000	1.08	28,194	26,000
Titulación	2,860		2,860	21,600	0.13	159	1,200
<b>Total student fees</b>	510,360	-	510,360	489,600	1.04	28,353	27,200
<b>Extra academic support</b>							
Additional courses	6,010		6,010	18,000	0.33	334	1,000
Conferences	4,059		4,059	18,000	0.23	226	1,000
Other extra			-		0.00	-	
<b>Total extra academic</b>	10,069	-	10,069	36,000	0.28	559	2,000
<b>Extra health support</b>							
Dental	22,700		22,700	18,000	1.26	1,261	1,000
Optometry	5,300		5,300	5,400	0.98	294	300
Psychotherapy			-	3,600	0.00	-	200
Other Medical		3,089	3,089		0.00	172	
<b>Total extra health</b>	28,000	3,089	31,089	27,000	1.15	1,727	1,500
<b>Total student fees &amp; extra support</b>	548,429	3,089	551,518	552,600	1.00	30,640	30,700
<b>Student meeting expense</b>							
Space			-			-	
Food		15,353	15,353	12,600	1.22	853	700
Other			-			-	
<b>Total student meeting</b>	-	15,353	15,353	12,600	1.22	853	700
<b>Other student expenses</b>							
Computers	84,200		84,200	45,000	1.87	4,678	2,500
Reading program books	4,498		4,498	9,000	0.50	250	500
<b>Total other student</b>	88,698	-	88,698	54,000	1.64	4,928	3,000
<b>Total student fees, extra, &amp; other</b>	637,127	18,442	655,569	619,200	1.06	36,420	34,400
<b>Fundraiser expenses</b>							
Publicity	2,470		2,470		0.00	137	
Supplies	2,478	9,644	12,122		0.00	673	
Food	2,994	20,000	22,994		0.00	1,277	
Drinks	1,981		1,981		0.00	110	
Raffel Items	16,584		16,584	9,000	1.84	921	500
Tables, chairs	3,155		3,155		0.00	175	
<b>Total fundraiser expenses</b>	29,662	29,644	59,306	9,000	6.59	3,295	500
<b>Operating Expenses</b>							
Newsletter			-			-	
Website			-			-	
Bank fees			-			-	
Bank	3,568		3,568	5,400	0.66	198	300

	MX Books \$MXN	US Books Converted to MXN 18.00	Mexican + US \$MXN	2025 Proposed in \$MXN	Actual vs. Proposed %	Activity MX+US USD	2025 Propose USD
Paypal		1,962	1,962	1,080	1.82	109	60
Accounting			-		0.00	-	
Accountant	42,000		42,000	36,000	1.17	2,333	2,000
Software			-		0.00	-	
Postage, Mailing		348	348		0.00	19	
Legal Services			-		0.00	-	
Printing		5,855	5,855	900	6.51	325	50
Supplies			-			-	
Taxes - SAT			-			-	
Mentor Business Meeting			-			-	
Member/Mentor Social Event			-	-	0.00	-	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>45,568</b>	<b>8,165</b>	<b>53,733</b>	<b>43,380</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>2,985</b>	<b>2,410</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>712,357</b>	<b>56,251</b>	<b>768,608</b>	<b>671,580</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>42,700</b>	<b>37,310</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>(624,005)</b>	<b>1,109,102</b>	<b>485,097</b>	<b>84,420</b>		<b>26,950</b>	<b>4,118</b>

		TOTAL CASH USD	
BofA	23,379	USD	23,379
Savings BofA	20,007	USD	20,007
CD BofA	51,164	USD	51,164
2nd CD BofA	40,113	USD	40,113
Pay Pal	529	USD	529
Giving Fund F	3,100	USD	3,100
BBVA	2,739	MXN	152
Undeposited	82,960	MXN	4,609
<b>Total USD</b>			<b>143,053</b>