

Visiting Assistant Professor of Modern Languages in Spanish **Mara Barros-Garca** came to Knox after doing research as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. She received her B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. from University of Granada and is visiting Knox until the end of August.

The Knox Student: What have you been teaching during your time here so far?

Maria Barros-Garcia is a visiting assistant professor of Spanish. (Photo courtesy of the Knox College website)

Mara Barros-Garca: First term, I taught 101A and 201, so Intermediate and Elementary [Spanish]. Then I taught Introduction to Linguistics, and it was the first time in my life that I was teaching in English, but it was really good. It was a great experience, and my students were super good and interactive, and they participated and were patient with my English, and they were very nice, which was good. It was challenging for me ... but it was a nice experience, and I love linguistics. This term I have two sections of 103A.

TKS: How have you liked Knox College?

MBG: I love it. I would love to stay here for another year, at least. It's really different from what I did before because the University of Granada in Spain is huge and the University of Illinois is huge, so it's a different atmosphere, and what I like the most about Knox is that sense of community and everyone's so welcoming and nice and they knew my name since day one. Last year, no one knew me or who I was. And the department, I see that everyone works together and decides the syllabus together, or they choose the textbook together and they share materials, and that's not usual. That's not what I saw before. Professors are sometimes more individual and they don't share what they do. There's more competition. Here, as far as I know, it's not like that.

TKS: What was your experience like at University of Granada?

MBG: Granada's my hometown and in Spain, you usually study in your hometown. If the major or the specialization is in the city, nobody goes abroad. That's really different. I stayed with my parents. The entire educational system is very different and very cheap. I paid about \$1,000 a year. But the university's prestigious. It's one of the oldest in Spain and it was really fun. I spent the last year in London, England doing ... a year abroad in a European country. I wish I were a student again. And then I started my master's and Ph.D. I know here it's not common to do grad school where you did undergraduate, but in Granada, you stay there the whole time.

TKS: How is Knox College different from University of Granada?

MBG: I kind of see the advantages of being in a small place. I really feel that there's a sense of community here. Everyone helps each other. I appreciate that from Knox. The best thing is how I feel in the department. That I feel like one more professor in the department, not just the new one who's going to be here for a year. They really welcomed me the first day and were treating me as an equal, and that's just the best experience.

TKS: What are your plans for the future?

MBG: I'm still looking for options. I'd love to have something like this. My passion is teaching, so I'm looking for a full time position at a college level, maybe here or in Europe or in Spain.