

# CRISJ's Annual Report

## 2018-2019 Taskforce Report

### Contents

- CRISJ mission ...2
- Events .....4
- Profiles ..... 13
- Advocacy campaigns ....16
- Art contest ... 19
- CRISJ Associates ....20



*Dr. Maria Vargas, CRISJ associate.*

## CRISJ's First Annual Report

In the fall 2018 address to the University, President Robert Nelsen recognized the Taskforce for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice’s (CRISJ) contributions to the University and its vision of making Sacramento State an anchor university by engaging with the community and transforming our surrounding environments with a vision of intersectional social justice. The University provided CRISJ support to become a formal center to continue to develop the work we have been doing over the past few years at Sacramento State and larger community. Over the past few years, the CRISJ Taskforce has worked to become a formal center and to be impactful in shaping the university and larger community culture to one of excellence, inclusion, and empowerment for historically and continuously marginalized students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. CRISJ has addressed, in various ways, critical issues concerning race, immigration, and social justice in the region, state, nation, and world. CRISJ Associates



SACRAMENTO STATE

have organized academic forums and panel presentations—with local and global experts and artists—that have attracted hundreds of students, countless faculty members, and many community members. We have also mentored students in the areas of academic inquiry and civic engagement of interest to CRISJ Associates. In addition, in order to make our expertise relevant, we have also authored policy briefs—benefitting from our

associates' research and community engagement expertise—that challenge biased policing and border enforcement in the context of xenophobic nationalism in the country and globe. The 2018-2019 academic year has been extremely productive, as the task force for CRISJ has produced impactful events thanks to our growing networks, expertise, and commitments. CRISJ associates are truly committed to academic activity and community engagement that empower students and broader community. CRISJ welcomes all members of the Sacramento State community to join us and to help the University become a leader in addressing issues of race, immigration, and intersectional social justice.



*Art by R+A Multimedia.*

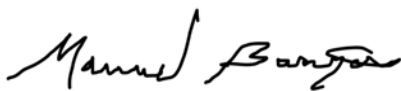
## **CRISJ's Mission**

The Taskforce has worked to implement the mission of the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ), which is to work collaboratively with faculty, students, staff and diverse community members to transform the educational culture at Sacramento State. CRISJ actively works to create a more inclusive and welcoming climate for historically underrepresented/underserved faculty and students through at Sacramento State by actively engaging students and faculty in research and awareness of current issues and concerns about race, ethnicity, and immigration studies, with a social justice perspective. To achieve this mission CRISJ is pursuing a five-year plan that incorporates multiple strategies to:(1) Produce critical knowledge for empowering marginalized communities both at the university and the broader community; (2) Link

this knowledge with civic engagement activities of the university's anchor initiative; (3) Provide mentorship and research opportunities for students and faculty that are aimed at cultivating critical scholars and advocates for social justice; (4) Promote diverse perspectives in teaching, research, and advocacy for the underserved minorities at the university and Sacramento community; and (5) Collaborate with inter- and intra-institutional networks that share goals and objectives that are aimed at creating a diverse and inclusive culture of equity, access, and success for the university and neighboring communities.

CRISJ seeks to apply intersectional and interdisciplinary approaches to examine how race/ethnicity and white privilege intersect with hierarchies of gender, sexuality, class, citizenship/immigration status, disability, environmental justice, and systems of colonial oppression. Thus, the Center explicitly pursues an intersectional and interdisciplinary approach. The emphasis on race, immigration, and social justice— as title concepts of the Center— responds to academic deficits in coverage and analysis that merit substantive attention, research, and advocacy considering their local, national and global significance. Thus, the Center celebrates the importance of cultural diversity and resiliency, affirms indigenous knowledge systems, and values community participation that make the Center's research and activities relevant, transformative, and meaningful to the diverse populations on our campus and surrounding communities. CRISJ addresses a real need at Sacramento State for faculty and students to collaborate on addressing critical issues and to more fully engage with some of the central challenges facing our campus and larger community.

We are happy to share our work for this past academic year and welcome all those interested in our mission to join our network of associates.



Manuel Barajas, Ph.D., el/he  
Professor of Sociology  
Taskforce Chair for CRISJ

## CRISJ's Website

Please check out the amazing work of the taskforce for CRISJ online, where you can also find videos of most of our events:

<https://www.csus.edu/center/race-immigration-social-justice/>

## Events

During the 2018-2019 Academic Year, the Taskforce for the Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) organized several events at Sacramento State to bring to light the current issues that affect our community on and off campus. These events reflect our continued efforts on building bridges on and off campus with faculty, students, and community partners.

### 1. Building Bridges

*By Kristina Victor*

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, at Sacramento State's Harper Alumni Center, CRISJ hosted a fundraiser to support student and community empowerment through research, mentorship, and civic engagement. The fundraising event included local Northern California artists and musicians, a student panel comprised of Sacramento State undergraduate and graduate students, speeches from the CRISJ founders, Professor Manuel Barajas and Professor Stan Oden, and a keynote speech from Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Weber.

The event began with music provided by Beatriz Figueroa, a Sacramento State alumni, and art from several Northern California artists, including: Daniel Paniagua Mendoza, Luis Ramos Campos, Gabriel Romo, Yvonne Saldana, Antonio Sarabia, Rosa Angelica Sarabia, Xabi Soto Beleche, and Jessica Wimbley. The master of ceremonies, Professor Christopher Towler, provided brief opening remarks framing the event and the potential importance and impact of CRISJ for students, faculty, and the community.



*Attendees of the Building Bridges Event at the Alumni Center.*

## CRISJ

The student panel was moderated by Professor Kristina Flores Victor and included Samir Zaca Qayoumi, Gina Haydee Salinas, Jannet Esparza Lezo, and Khalil Ferguson. The students discussed the unique composition of Sacramento State, the diversity of our student body and untapped opportunities for students in terms of mentorship, research, internships, and community outreach. Furthermore, the students stressed the importance of, and need for, engagement in the communities where they came from. In emphasizing the importance of CRISJ, they highlighted how they wish for CRISJ to continue to build bridges to connect what they have learned in the classroom back to the communities where they came from. The students proposed that CRISJ facilitate these interactions. The student panel also noted the types of barriers that first generation, non-traditional students face and how CRISJ could develop our academic curriculum to address some of these issues.

The founders of CRISJ, Professor Stan Oden and Professor Manuel Barajas, described the history and development of CRISJ, and how this particular type of interdisciplinary center works to facilitate the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge, at the college level and in the surrounding community.

The keynote speaker, Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Weber, was introduced by Douglas A.



*Local artists present their work at the CRISJ event.*

Oden, who spoke of the Assemblymember's significant impacts in her community and in her district in San Diego, California over the years. In the keynote address Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Weber discussed the pressing need to stay connected to the communities that have supported our work, and the importance of having strong principles guiding us in our lives, our work, our research, and in our community engagement. The Assemblymember cautioned the audience against becoming academically or personally siloed, so that when important events or issues arise you are not divorced from the communities you serve or the groups to which you may be a member. The Assemblymember suggested that we as academics hold a privileged position, compared to those more vulnerable in our communities, and reminded the audience of the importance of public service in academia. 🍀



*Dr. Oden and Dr. Barajas thank keynote speaker Dr. Weber.*

## 2. Race and Its Societal Impact

By Robert Oden

The Task Force for the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) co-sponsored with Sacramento City Councilmember Allen Warren, a community forum, “Race and Its Social Impact”. This event was held on April 18, 2019, at the Leslie and Anita Harper Alumni Center at Sacramento State University. More than 150 people attended the event. This event brought together students, celebrities and community leaders to bring attention to and discuss the impact of race in the United States. The panel members included the following: Danny Glover (actor and activist), Cedric the Entertainer (actor and producer), Gabby Trejo (Executive Director for Sacramento Area Congregations Together), Matt Ball (Director of Public Affairs for The Church of Latter-Day Saints), and Jaswant S. Bains (President and CEO of Sacramento Packing Inc.). The panel was moderated by Councilmember Warren.

In addition to the community panel, a student panel commented on how race has affected them as students at Sacramento State University and in their community. This panel was moderated by Dr. Stan Oden— CRISJ Faculty Coordinator for Community



*Dr. Oden and Cedric the Entertainer.*

Engagement. Councilmember Warren, in commenting to the Sacramento Bee newspaper about the event, stated that he wanted people “to take a step in a way that brings us closer together”. As a student panelist, Associated



*Danny Glover with students.*

Students Inc. president, Noel Mora stated that, “It’s ultimately, at the end of the day, the physical presence of showing up for each other for whatever needs to be done. I think that speaks powers and speaks volumes” (Sacramento Bee, April 20, 2019.) The Task Force for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice looks forward to continuing these community forums in the future. 🌿



*Dr. Oden and Dr. Barajas with student panel.*

### 3. Community Empowerment Faire

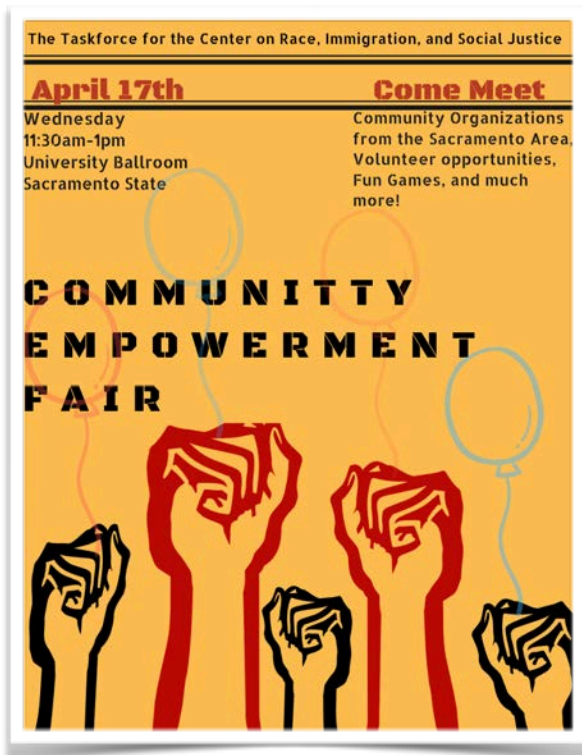
By Robert Oden

On April 17, 2019, the Task Force for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) held its first Community Empowerment Faire at the University Union Ballroom. This event aligns with the community engagement objectives of CRISJ, which is to engage with the Sacramento community through service, research and student volunteerism. At this event, ten community organizations, with staff members present, participated by tabling at the University Union. More than 70 students and faculty members attended and interacted with participating community organizations, which included: F.U.E.L. Network (Family, Unity, Education, Legal), Voice for Youth, Sol Collective, Women's Empowerment, NorCal Resist, Hope Cooperative, Building Healthy Communities, Poor Peoples' Campaign, Asian Resources, and Sacramento Climate Change Coalition.



*Community organizations tabling at Sac State.*

At the faire, students met and talked with various organizations' representatives to learn more about volunteering opportunities. In addition to these community organizations, the Sacramento State University Community Engagement Center also tabled at the event. The event was coordinated by Dr. Stan Oden, Faculty Coordinator for Community Engagement, and was assisted by a group of students from the Business School Honors Project Management class, taught by Professor Deanna Daly. These students, from the Business School, worked with Dr. Oden in planning the event, providing advertising and outreach, as well as assisting during the event. They also invited student artistic performers from various ethnic communities during the festive event. After the event, CRISJ provided lunch for the community organization participants in the Orchard Suite. At that luncheon, community organizations were presented an honorarium for their participation, and Dr. Oden also invited the organizations to be part of CRISJ's Community Engagement Board. CRISJ is committed to serve in a mutual partnership with the community for intersectional social justice goals, aligning with the anchor University vision and mission. 🌱



*Poster for the Faire.*

## 4. Neo-colonialism and Resistance

By Heidi Sarabia

On March 6th, Sacramento State and CRISJ brought together academic and community experts that examined the causes of migration from Latin America to the United States—the event focused on the historical relationships between the sending and receiving communities that contribute to the migratory movement of indigenous communities to el norte.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Luther Castillo Harry, a native of Honduras, came to share his experiences working with the Black Honduran Fraternal Organization (OFRANEH, Organizacion Fraternal Negra Hondurena) and the Fundacion Laugu Hatuadi Waduhenu (FLHW, Por la Salud de Nuestros Pueblos). Dr. Castillo Harry explained how the legacy of colonialism continues to shape the experiences of Black Hondurans, and how the United States' interventions in Honduras have perpetuated the legacy of dispossession, oppression, and abuse against indigenous and black populations in Honduras— forcing many into leaving Honduras.



*Dr. Luther Castillo Harry.*

Dr. Castillo Harry's presentation was followed by a panel of community and scholarly experts. Marianna Rivera (with the Zapatista Solidarity



*Panelist Francisco Dominguez shares his images.*

Coalition) shared how Zapatista communities in Mexico have resisted neoliberalism—the privatization of their lands and resources—by establishing local autonomous governments; Cori Ring (from U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities) described the current situation in El Salvador and how U.S.-Intervention during the civil war structured migration to the U.S. in the 1980s and today; Francisco Dominguez shared his photography work along the U.S.-Mexico border to highlight the continuities of violence that the border has imposed on mostly indigenous people to the American continent; Heidi Sarabia and Jesus Limon shared their research on the extraordinary amounts of money the United States is sending to Mexico to filter unauthorized migration from Central America, making the entire Mexican territory into a zone of surveillance for people on the move; and finally, Maria Vargas shared the current violence Central American migrants are experiencing in Mexico, at the border, and in the U.S.

The event ended with Sacramento State and community artists sharing their work that highlight both the plight and resilience of communities of color throughout the American continent. Students and the larger community learned about the roots of modern migration, the gaps in research and policies, and the policies that can improve the human and environmental conditions across borders. 🌿



## 5. Forced Separation of Loved Ones

By Manuel Barajas

In 2018, drawing international attention, President Trump’s draconian-deterrence immigration acts escalated the practice of separating children from their parents, creating a humanitarian crisis. CRISJ sought to produce critical understandings, empathies, and practices that could move us forward as a society that is more humane and just for all. To achieve this, CRISJ brought together diverse perspectives from scholars, attorneys, community advocates, and artists that could advance our understandings of the nature of state violence, terror, and trauma being experienced by various immigrant communities. The CRISJ forum “The Forced Separations of Loved Ones: State Violence, Terror, and Trauma,” on November 8th, 2018, examined family separation from a historical and contemporary perspectives— raising critical understandings and bringing together multiple communities’ shared experiences with struggles for social justice.

The key note speaker, Dr. Marla A. Ramirez, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard, presented on “Forced Family Separations, Then and Now: Social Factors and Historical Policies that have resulted in Transnational Family Formations.” Her presentation discussed the deportations from the 1930s, highlighting the discriminatory nature of policies that targeted specific racialized-ethnicities. For example, she explained that, while accounting for only 4 percent of the total immigrant population at the time, Mexican-ancestry people accounted for almost all the people deported people at the time— over a million. In addition, deportations did not only target non0citizens, as over two-thirds of the removed were U.S. citizens. This banishment of citizens was unconstitutional and racist. Dr. Ramirez’ research drew from oral-histories and archival documents, and



*Dr. Marla A. Ramirez.*

highlighted how, then and now, transnational families and communities are formed by immigration policies. Hence, she emphasized how, in her view, the caravans from Central America are collective efforts that reject family separation and assert the human right to exist and escape areas that have been impacted by U.S. military, political, and economic interventions.

In addition to the keynote, a panel drew from our local and community talent, that illuminated historical and contemporary experiences with the forced separation of loved ones and resistance. Professor Stan Oden pointed to the forced separation of enslaved Africans from their families, communities, and homeland; and how racialized slavery uniquely separated families unlike those forms practiced in Europe. Professor Geni Cowan, of Choctaw ancestry, focused on the forceful placement of indigenous children in boarding schools, where they suffered extreme abuse and high rates of death in the efforts to de-indianize them. Bonita Amaro and Yolanda Sanchez, with Grannies Respond, shared how they have provided humanitarian aid to migrants arriving in Greyhounds with nothing—giving them a sense of direction, money, clothing, food. Their



*Forced Separation of Loved Ones event held at the Global Lounge.*

compassion and action to welcome migrants was truly inspirational. Saad Sweilem, Civil Rights Attorney for Council for American-Islamic Relations, reviewed various discriminatory policies and practices targeting Muslim communities, and how these acts split families and deny them visitation visas to the United States even in medical emergencies. Sweilem revealed how racist stereotypes depict Muslims as threats, and are used to block asylum cases from regions hurt by US military interventions. Laura Flores-Dixit, Immigration Attorney with California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, also focused on the systemic abuses

in detention centers and in courts for immigrants seeking asylum, lacking legal representation and translators for those who speak indigenous languages. Finally, Gladys Puente, Coordinator with Family Unity Education Legal Network, provided information on a City supported effort to help the immigrant community with know your rights workshops, family emergency planning, updates on laws like DACA, and with a network of social, health, and legal services. All participants illuminated the problematics of xenophobic nationalism that dehumanize racial-ethnic communities, making them exploitable, and disposable. Our CRISJ mission is to humanize these vulnerable communities and build bridges to empower them with equity, dignity, and social justice. Over 430 people attended the forum. The social ambiance was engaged, energized, and inspired. At the reception, students, staff, faculty, and community partners came together and explored collaborative projects. 🦋



*Poster for the Force Separation event.*



*Force Separation participants.*

## 6. Decolonizing Education

*By Elvia Ramirez*

On October 11, 2018, the Taskforce for the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) sponsored a panel presentation titled, “Decolonizing Education: Unpacking Inequality Along the Educational Pipeline.” The panel was comprised of an outstanding and eclectic group of Sacramento State faculty, including Drs. Alma Itzé Flores (Undergraduate Studies in Education), Nancy Huante-Tzintzun (Department of Ethnic Studies), Bao Lo (Department of Ethnic Studies), Andrea Moore (Department of Ethnic Studies), and Susan Nakaoka (Division of Social Work). The panel presentation was held at the Library Art Gallery and was moderated by Dr. Elvia Ramirez (Department of Ethnic Studies). More than 120 people – including students, faculty, staff, and community members – attended the event!

This event provided an excellent opportunity for Sacramento State faculty to disseminate and

share their research findings with the Sacramento State community. Panelists shared their scholarship and insights concerning inequality, coloniality, and social movements in higher education. The first speaker, Dr. Alma Flores, analyzed the intersections of race, racism, education, and health for Latinx students. The following speaker, Dr. Nancy Huante-Tzintzun, discussed the ways that Chicana/Latina scholars negotiate and decolonize their research praxis. Dr. Bao Lo examined student activism in Ethnic Studies and in higher education, using CSU Northridge as a case study. Dr. Andrea Moore discussed the ways she decolonizes her classroom and pedagogical practices, while Dr. Susan Nakaoka shared her research on indigenizing and decolonizing the field of social work. The event concluded with an engaging question and answer session. 🦋



*Dr. Ramirez, Dr. Nakaoka, Dr. Lo, Dr. Moore, Dr. Huante-Tzintzun, and Dr. Flores.*

## 7. ICE Detention Centers

By Maria Vargas

On September 11, 2018, CRISJ presented a panel titled: "Reflection and Analysis of ICE Detention in Context of National Insecurities, Post 9/11". The panel included Tina LeMoine (Sac State graduate student and member of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, LCLAA), Rhonda Rios-Kravitz (Alianza), Beatriz Figueroa (Sac State Student and artist), Alex Gonzalez (Sac State student and member of Nor Cal Resist), Christ Towler (Assistant Professor Political Science), and Maria Vargas (Assistant Professor Ethnic Studies).

The theme of the panel emerged from a tour of the Yolo County Youth Immigration Detention Facility in which Sac State faculty members and students participated in. The tour took place August 6<sup>th</sup> and was initiated by LCLAA, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Sacramento Chapter. The Woodland detention center is one of three detention facilities nationwide with a federal contract to incarcerate undocumented youth. In 2008 Yolo County began a unique partnership with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to house 24 federal detained youth for \$2.9 million a year. When we arrived at the detention center, Julie Burns, the program manager, clarified to us that they did not detain children who had recently been separated from their families under Trump's zero tolerance policy. Instead those incarcerated at the Woodland high security detention center are undocumented and unaccompanied teenagers ranging from 15-18-years-old youth who require "secure placement" because they were accused of committing a "crime" while they were in a less-restrictive detention center. However, when participants of the tour asked Burns what types of "criminal" offenses were committed by the youth, she did not have the information. In the panel, Rhonda and Alex spoke about the larger movement driven by immigrant



*Panelists discuss migrant detention in the U.S.*

advocates and lawyers to shut down juvenile detention centers and the work to place pressure on Yolo County to terminate its federal contract. Alex and Rhonda also highlighted national grassroots efforts to abolish ICE and relocate funds into more humane approaches that assist immigrants and refugees resettled, such as providing mental health services to address the trauma they have experienced in their journey to the U.S. Beatriz spoke about the extreme sadness and compassion she felt when she saw the young men caged in dirty and tiny cells. Beatriz beautifully humanized the youth, reminding the audience that they are not criminals but children, connecting their struggle to the daily injustices that poor communities of color face in the U.S. Tina, who also participated in the tour, discussed the absence of young girls in the facilities, since all of the immigrant youth detained were young men. Studies show that young women are also migrating to the U.S. yet they are not visible in the Woodland detention center. Tina's observation calls attention to the gendered differences in the treatment of immigrant youth, highlighting the disturbing but common practice in which young girls bodies are targeted and made vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Overall, panelists engaged in an insightful conversation and brought up various critical points regarding the criminalization of children in detention centers. The panel brought attention to how immigrant children are subjected to prolonged detention in the service of private prison corporations that have become a powerful instrument of immigration enforcement. 🌿

## Profiles

CRISJ is a network of professors, students, community partners, and artist in the Sacramento Region that work together to implement the vision of the Center. In this annual report, we want to highlight some of the talented people behind the work of CRISJ. We could not do much without all the work, efforts, and talent of CRISJ Associates.

### Faculty Profile: Chris Towler

Dr. Christopher Towler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at California State University, Sacramento. His research and teaching interests broadly include American politics, race and ethnicity, and methodology. More specifically, his work examines ideological predispositions, alienation, political allegiance and support. Recent projects examine the dynamic relationship between progressive social movements and far-right movements reacting to great social change. He received her Ph.D. from the University of Washington, Seattle, and holds a B.A. from the University of Colorado. A former McNair and Ralph Bunche scholar, Dr. Towler was also a McNair Graduate Fellow as well as a Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral and Dissertation Fellow. His work has been published in *Du Bois Review* and *Political Power and Social Theory*. Dr. Towler has also taught jointly in the departments of American Cultural Studies and Political Science at Western Washington University, and he enjoys working with and mentoring students in academia.

Over the past two years, Dr. Towler has been an active CRISJ taskforce member intersecting his scholarship, civic engagement, and compassion for social justice. Immediately joining Sacramento State, he participated in various CRISJ panels, “Charlottesville: Trumpism and White Supremacy,” “Reflections and Analysis of ICE Detention Centers in the Context of National Insecurities,” “Forced Separation of Loved Ones,” and others. He also



*Dr. Towler moderates panel on migrant detention centers.*

served as the masters of ceremonies in various forums facilitating eloquently the social justice theme of the event. He co-authored critical policy statements to the City of Sacramento and State Senators regarding police use of lethal force. Few junior or senior faculty have achieved so much in such a brief period. Sacramento State and community are lucky to have such a transformative scholar, who chose our campus to be part of CRISJ and to advance his teaching and scholarly work. 🌟

## Student Profile: Gina Salinas

During her graduate studies in sociology at Sacramento State and her undergraduate work at University of California Davis, Salinas has researched and performed community service on public opinion of immigrant, inequality in urban planning, racial inequality in school discipline practices, social stratification systems, and the militarization of U.S.-Mexico border. Salinas has been an active member of the CRISJ taskforce since 2017, planning and organizing events, participating in committees, helping develop the vision of CRISJ, and networking with the community partners that share in the CRISJ mission—focusing on the issues of race, immigration and social justice. Salinas explains that, “My participation with CRISJ has translated the ideas that I want to expose my children to—that of changing one person, group, community at a time.”

Salinas describes herself as, “First and foremost, a wife to my best friend and partner of 18 years, William Salinas, and the mother to three amazing children: Isaiah, William II, and Taina. My family has shaped much of what I do and why I have focused so much of my work on the social realities for marginalized people. My understanding of interactions and outcomes are heavily shaped by my the lens of my family identity.” Salinas has been involved with the CRISJ Taskforce by providing a critical voice and perspective from a graduate students’ perspective. Her involvement with CRISJ emerged from her commitment to work on social justice issues. Salinas explains,

“Social justice has moved beyond my own experiences and has become me trying to create a different reality for my family.” Moreover, CRISJ’s particular focus on issues of race and immigration resonated with Salinas given that, “Race and immigration have been a large part of my heritage and therefore my present, as a 2nd generation Panamanian immigrant on my maternal side and a 3rd generation Indian immigrant and of African American lineage on my paternal side. My varied cultural and social background, as well as the ways in which my family came to be part of this country, through political asylum and fleeing racial persecution have informed my identity, choices of advocacy, and studying the areas of gender, race/ethnicity, and class.”

Gina has always been an active member of her community taking part in civic programs and research. She has worked with local schools in gaining grant funding for pre-school education programs, led in the development of academic recognition programs for minority youth, created mentoring programs for the female student populations at the middle-school level, co-chair of Smedberg Middle School’s site budgeting committee, and oversaw academic tutoring programs at the K-12 and Community College levels. She has assisted in research for the Sacramento Food Bank’s women and children outreach program through conducting interviews and collecting data on the progression of the women within the program. She also was active in rape crisis and suicide counseling programs as an organizer, fund raiser and certified counselor. 🌸



*Gina Salinas with her family.*

## Community Partners

The Task Force for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) has been able to work with community partners through in the First Community Empowerment Faire. Ten community organizations participated in the Community Empowerment Faire; while other organizations could not make the event, but are still committed to work with CRISJ. These community organizations have expressed interest in becoming members of the CRISJ Community Engagement Advisory Board. These organizations include:

- Asian Resources – Jace Buenaflor
- Building Healthy Communities – Kim Williams
- F.U.E.L. Network (Family, Unity, Education, Legal) – Gladys Puente
- Hope Cooperative – Toni Hunt
- NorCal Resist – Autumn Gonzalez
- Poor Peoples’ Campaign – Kevin Carter
- Sacramento Climate Change Coalition – Chris Jones
- Sol Collective – Estella Sanchez
- Step-Up (Alianza) – Rhonda Rios Kravitz
- Voice for Youth – Berry Accious
- Women’s Empowerment – Zoe Fishman

### Artist Profile: Beatriz Figueroa

Beatriz Figueroa graduated with a BA in Sociology and a minor in Music from California State University Sacramento. She is an award winning singer-performer and a proud first-generation college alumna. Beatriz comes from an immigrant family that emigrated from Mexico in the mid 80’s. Her father was a freelance painter and designer, and her mother, an aspiring musician. But because of financial hardships in their country, they were forced to emigrate, replacing their dreams and aspirations for cheap labor jobs in the United States. Over the years, Beatriz has been driven by her parents’ sacrifices to pursue higher education in social justice and music.

Throughout high school and her undergraduate career, Beatriz has been an advocate for undocumented students and other minorities by volunteering for the Dreamer Resource Center at Sac State, being the Chair of the Social Justice Committee for the Sac State Newman Catholic Club, and by being a singer and panelist for events

organized by Taskforce for the Center for Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ). Thanks to the Sociology Department and Sacramento State School of Music, Beatriz has also been able to find a common ground between social justice and music. Not only has she worked to diversify musical spaces but is eager to introduce music to events that are dedicated to promote equality and social awareness, such as those organized by CRISJ. Beatriz hopes to begin her graduate career in the near future and will continue representing her community through music and advocacy. 🦋



*Beatriz Figueroa performing.*

## Advocacy Campaigns

This academic year, CRISJ associated supported various legislative efforts, and engaged in multiple community conversations from issues dealing with police violence in our communities, to the importance of requiring ethnic studies in high school.

### Police Brutality

By *Melissa McTernan*

Police brutality against Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, especially at the intersections of other marginalized identities, is a matter of great concern to our CRISJ associates. In particular, the Sacramento community has lost many Black lives at the hands of law enforcement over the past 5 years (see names below), with perhaps the most public case being that of Stephon Clark, who was shot and killed by Sacramento Police on March 18, 2018 while unarmed in his grandmother's backyard. The case garnered national attention and local unrest. In the wake of the shooting and consequential protests, CRISJ associates took the initiative to address the Sacramento City Council, with a formal letter to be physically presented during a weekly Council meeting. The letter called upon the council to 1) develop and pass a more comprehensive use-of-force policy, with recommendations; 2) support SB 1421 which would have supported more transparency around police shootings; and 3) to withdraw councilmember endorsements from District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert. More generally, the letter put the Stephon Clark case in context of a history of police brutality and racial profiling. Relatedly, CRISJ members also attended a council meeting in Spring of 2019 to support AB 392, a comprehensive use-of-force and transparency policy.

In our letter, CRISJ associates explained that, “Since the beginning of 2015, the lives of Dazion Flenaugh, Joseph Mann, and Stephon Clark have been taken by officers of the Sacramento Police Department. Sacramento County Sheriff’s Department is responsible for the deaths of Adriene Ludd, Ryan Ellis, and Mikel McIntyre. California Highway Patrol shot and killed Jason King in October 2016 in Sacramento, and Rocklin Police Department took the life of Lorenzo Cruz just a few months later. Finally, Chico Police are responsible for the death of Desmond Phillips, a Black man who had moved to Chico from Sacramento, because his father feared for his son’s safety being Black in our city.” 🦋



*CRISJ Associates support Weber & McCarthy bill to restrict police use of lethal force at City Hall.*



## Separations of Families

By Elvia Ramirez

During summer 2018, CRISJ associates crafted a letter urging legislators to enact humane immigration reform legislation. CRISJ associates initiated this advocacy effort to help bring attention to the humanitarian crisis occurring along the U.S.-Mexico border. Since 2014, thousands of unaccompanied children and families—mostly from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala—have been arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border seeking asylum. These immigrants have been met with racist and xenophobic rhetoric and policies from national political leaders, conservative media commentators, and the general public. The Obama administration, at the time, responded to this humanitarian crisis by implementing an “aggressive deterrence strategy” that dramatically ramped up family detention. In fact, most of the children who entered family detention that fiscal year were under 6 years of age. The Trump administration followed suit by expanding immigrant detention and criminalizing immigrants via its “zero tolerance” policy. The Trump administration has also significantly undermined and weakened U.S. domestic refugee law and humanitarian policy.

The letter crafted by CRISJ associates condemned Trump’s racist demonization of immigrants and his administration’s plans for bolstering spending on border militarization measures. Guided by social scientific research, the CRISJ letter also put forth several recommendations for public policy, such as increasing pathways for legalization and citizenship for undocumented immigrants; reducing unnecessary and wasteful spending on border militarization measures; addressing the rampant abuses in immigrant detention centers; and expanding protections for refugees and asylees. The letter also urged legislators to consider how U.S. foreign and economic policies create the conditions for migration from countries in the Global South. The CRISJ letter received ample support from allies within and outside our campus community—including a response from Senator Kamala Harris. 🌸



*CRISJ Director, Dr. Barajas, joining a protest against Trump’s family separation policy in front of the DHS Building in Sacramento, Spring 2018.*

# Ethnic Studies

*By Manuel Barajas and Andrea Moore*

CRISJ wrote to the state assembly and senate in support of Assembly Bill 1460, which would make Ethnic Studies a requirement for students at the CSU system. CRISJ's organizational focus in the University is to create a sense of academic belonging for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds who find themselves largely absent in the general curriculum and faculty in all colleges. Ethnic studies, as a requirement for all students, would advance a more inclusive society that values the diversity we represent in several ways. One, it maximizes the knowledge in the classroom by introducing new perspectives that represents a larger universe of experiences in society. Two, it helps students develop critical thinking skills by understanding their world from multiple perspectives—reducing group thinking that can be ethnocentric and intolerant of human diversity. Three, it better prepares our students to be productive and constructive workers and professionals in an increasingly diversified and racial-minority-majority state. Four, it creates a sense of belonging that enhances graduation and success rates for underrepresented minority students. And lastly, it contributes to an education that reflects all racial-ethnic groups' experiences, advances social justice, and support a democracy that works for everyone. A state curriculum that requires Ethnic Studies will help students learn lessons from the past to construct a better future.

Rooted in the struggles for equity and inclusion from the sixties, Ethnic Studies opened an academic space for the histories and perspectives that had been excluded (and/or

distorted) in higher education; thus it purposefully took an interdisciplinary approach to comparatively study race and ethnicity with attentiveness to four historically marginalized groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Chicanx/Latinx Americans (also of indigenous ancestry and as racially mixed as the other categories).

Significantly, the extant research finds that all students benefit academically and socially from taking ethnic studies courses. In 2019, students at California State University System increasingly reflect California's youth demographics (under 18) and minority populations: Chicanx/Latinx (54%), Black (8%), and Asian (13%). However, historically under-represented populations have the lowest educational attainment obtaining a BA or higher degree with only about 10 percent of Chicanxs and 25 percent of African Americans doing so; as compared to 40 percent of European Americans and to 50 percent of Asian Americans<sup>1</sup>. The AB 1460 (Weber) can help improve student success rates, particularly for the most disadvantaged groups. 🌻



*Assembly member Weber introduced AB 1460.*

<sup>1</sup> <https://statisticalatlas.com/state/California/Educational-Attainment#figure/college-graduates-by-race> ; <http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/publications/report-brief/still-falling-through-cracks>

# Art Contest

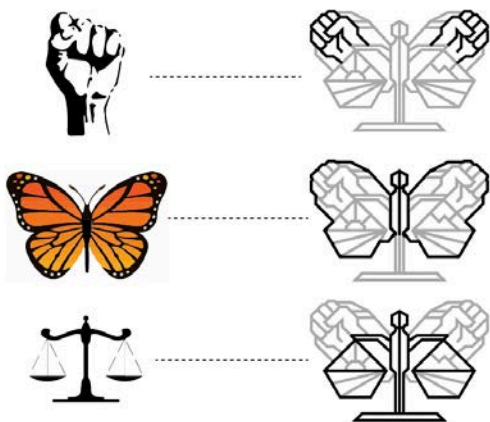
CRISJ also held a contest that asked artists to provide an image that reflected CRISJ’s work, mission, and values. We were impressed by all the submissions and we want to share, in this annual report, the first and second place winners.

## First Place:

### R+A Multimedia

“For this art, we took simple, recognizable, but deeply meaningful icons as our symbolic inspiration. Visible in the design is the closed fist, which is commonly associated with civil and social justice movement during the civil rights era in the struggle for racial equality. The monarch butterfly, an organism that freely and naturally crosses borders, is commonly used to signify migration, especially among migrant communities in the United States. And the scales of justice, which signify equality under the law, but also an aspiration towards social justice that uplifts and nurtures our humanity. The three symbols together form a unifying concept that reflects the mission and focus of the Taskforce for the Center for Race, Immigration and Social Justice.”

—Rosa + Antonio



*R+A Multimedia’s art piece.*

## Second Place:

### Yvonne Saldaña

“What inspired me to do this piece was the fact that the monarch butterfly represents: freedom, transformation and new beginnings. The tree represents growth in



*Yvonne Saldaña’s art piece.*

education, because we always see the tree represented in our education. Merging both the monarch butterfly and tree, gave the best representation for the CRISJ. The tree, rooting itself to the ground, represents this community being well grounded and never uprooting itself from what it represents, making sure we work to help and to never stop. The background in the monarch butterfly tree comes from my own artwork, a representation of my culture and making sure the colors complimented each other. I would like to also say that I had help making this piece the way it is, Celina Gonzales-Cortez guided me in making the art look appealing and suggested certain parts of the final piece. This piece has a very strong and expressive front, which I thought was a very good representation of being open to everyone, kind of like the monarch butterfly tree is extending its arms and giving a hug to any person that desires to part of this awesome community of CRISJ.”

—Yvonne Saldaña

## **CRISJ Associates**

Paula C. Austin, Ph.D.

Manuel Barajas, Ph.D.

Mark Brown, Ph.D.

Christopher Castaneda, Ph.D.

Basia Ellis, Ph.D.

Erin Rose Ellison, Ph.D.

Alma Itze Flores, Ph.D.

Luis-Genaro Garcia, Ph.D.

Jannet Esparza

Su Jin Gatlin Jez, Ph.D.

Aya Kimura Ida, Ph.D.

Jesus Limon

Anne Luna-Gordinier, Ph.D.

Melissa McTernan, Ph.D.

Andrea L.S. Moore, Ph.D.

Susan Nakaoka, Ph.D.

Mark A. Ocegueda, Ph.D.

Robert Stanley Oden, Ph.D.

Meagan O'Malley, Ph.D.

Monicka Patterson-Tutschka, Ph.D.

Raghuraman Trichur, Ph.D.

Tyrone Ralph

Elvia Ramirez, Ph.D.

Marla Andrea Ramirez, Ph.D.

Gina Salinas

Heidy Sarabia, Ph.D.

Nandini Singh, Ph.D.

Michelle Stevens, Ph.D.

Christopher Towler, Ph.D.

Mercedes Valadez, Ph.D.

Maria Elena Vargas, Ph.D.

Kristina Flores Victor, Ph.D.

Laura Zaragoza

### Annual Report Contributors

Manuel Barajas, CRISJ Chair and Writer

Melissa McTertan, CRISJ Associate and Writer

Andrea Moore, CRISJ Associate and Writer

Robert Oden, CRISJ Community Programming Coordinator and Writer

Elvia Ramirez, CRISJ Mentoring Coordinator and Writer

Heidy Sarabia, CRISJ Research Coordinator, Layout Design, and Writer

Maria Vargas, CRISJ Associate and Writer

Kristina Victor, CRISJ Associate, Writer and Photography

Beatriz Figueroa, Yvonne Saldaña, Gina Salinas, Antonio Sarabia, and

Rosa Angelica Sarabia.