

CRISJ's Annual Report

2019-2020 Taskforce Report

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Honduran Water Protectors at Sac State, photo courtesy of Mark Coplan/SHARE

CRISJ's Second Annual Report

The taskforce for the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) is committed to confronting the hard issues of systemic racism and intersectional oppressions with our work, that includes scholarly and community engagements, and our hearts. Although the impacts of COVID-19 have been rough for everyone regionally and globally, the hurt and injury fall disproportionately on those most marginalized along race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, legality, and disability. Events in this 2020 magnify the gross injustices that have persisted for way too long and that have undermined a people’s democracy that equitably represents all groups’ well-being in the U.S. The lives of Black men and women continue to be stolen by a policing institution rooted in the history of their enslavement in plantations and *haciendas*. The political rhetoric of law and order is used to criminalize and dehumanize people of color and the poor. Historically underrepresented minorities are denied access to quality housing, education, and health coverage which amplify their poverty and vulnerability during regional and global crises.

The browning of America has intensified white nationalism and structural violence. Moreover, families are forcefully split and traumatized as they are caged and detained for being unauthorized migrants, without accounting for the centrality of U.S. disruptive interventions in their homelands.



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Paradoxically, these subjugated communities constitute much of the essential labor that contributes the material, cultural, and spiritual wealth of the country. The 2020 CRISJ Annual Report reviews some of these important topics and activities undertaken to expand understandings, empathies, and actions that promote equity, empowerment, human rights, and environmental justice for historically marginalized communities.

CRISJ also invites you to join us and collaboratively take on the mission of building bridges for community empowerment and social justice in Sacramento and beyond. Of particular concern for us in the university context, minoritized faculty—specifically Black and Brown—were devastated with the

highest attrition rates during the last Great Recession, and this emergent economic depression could further erase minority faculty's presence in the classroom, curriculum, and research at a time when students and public would greatly benefit from their voices and standpoints that reflect the people in California and nation. The hate and devaluation of people of color is something many of our CRISJ associates and partners understand first-hand in and off our campus communities. We need everyone's support to transform the university's academic culture to one that is safe, affirming, and inclusive of students, faculty, and communities that have historically been oppressed. CRISJ stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the Indigenous people whose land we stand on and whose labor and resources sustain this nation. 🦋



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/>

CRISJ's Mission Statement

At Sacramento State, CRISJ's mission seeks to create a more inclusive and welcoming academic climate for historically underrepresented/underserved students, faculty, and community by actively engaging them in research, analysis, and advocacy on race, immigration and intersectional issues with a social justice framework. To this end, CRISJ has a comprehensive and integrated program:

- (1) Produce critical knowledge for empowering marginalized communities both at the university and the broader community;
- (2) Link this knowledge with civic engagement activities aligning with 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 social justice 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 that are aimed at creating an inclusive culture of equity, access, and success for the university and neighboring communities.

CRISJ practices intersectional and interdisciplinary methods to examine how systemic racism and white supremacy intersect with the hierarchies of gender, sexuality, class, nationality, legality, disability, environmental justice, and systems of colonial oppression. The emphasis on race, immigration, and social justice responds to academic deficits in their coverage and analysis that merit prioritized attention considering the current national and global realities with xenophobic nationalism against indigenous peoples and anti-black violence. Thus, CRISJ champions human diversity and resiliency, affirms indigenous knowledge systems, and values community participation that make the Center's research and activities relevant, transformative, and meaningful to our campus and surrounding communities. We welcome all those interested in our mission to join our network of associates and partners. 🦋

Public Statements

During the 2019-2020 Academic Year, the Taskforce for the Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) wrote, and collaborated on, several public statements. Informed by empirical data and our commitment to social justice, these public statements represent our commitment to support our communities.

June 3rd, 2020

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail", wrote the phrase from the one dissenting Supreme Court Jurist John Harlan in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which was "Justice delayed is justice denied". We as a campus community of Sacramento State University are deeply affected and saddened by the brutal torture and murder of brother George Floyd on Monday, May 25th. Since that murder, black, brown, white, Asian, Native Americans, and persons of various gender identities have marched and protested. They have been beaten, arrested, and harassed by police forces, led by unconstitutional pronouncements of law and order by the president. We applaud the arrest of George Floyd's killer, however delayed, and also the arrests of the three other former members of the Minneapolis police department who participated in the killing of George Floyd.

The Task Force for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) has from its inception in 2015, been dedicated to opposing racism, racial violence, environmental racism, and indignities against African Americans, Latinx people, indigenous Americans, Asian Americans, Muslims of all nationalities, and LGBTQ individuals. We support the social justice protest against the police murder of unarmed black men and women and all people of color. We support the fight to end the jailing and expulsion of Central American and Mexican people, particularly the caging of children and adults at the hands of the Trump administration. These people are fleeing domestic terror in their own homelands—which has been amplified by US policies and interventions.

We oppose violence and destruction of our communities. We seek to unite with oppressed communities through higher education, advocacy, and non-violent protest. We applaud the protesters nationally and internationally. We oppose the authoritarian utterances, proclamations, and actions by the military state to suppress people's right to protest.

We seek to continue to promote CRISJ as a platform for critical race and intersectional analysis, community engagement, academic excellence and mentorship of CSUS students. We seek to work with all Sacramento State University entities to fulfill our programmatic mission.

Dr. Stan Oden
Professor
Political Science
CRISJ Community Engagement Coordinator
And CRISJ Associates



Events

During the 2019-2020 Academic Year, the Taskforce for the Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) organized several events at Sacramento State and virtually 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—including virtual gatherings during the current pandemic.

1. Guapinol Water Protectors at Sac State

By *Monicka Tutschka*

On Monday, October 7, 2019, CRISJ welcomed the Guapinol 4 to the Sacramento State campus. The Guapinol 4 are part of a Honduran grassroots coalition of human rights defenders who are attempting to protect the water supplies of the Guapinol town and 14 neighboring communities from an illegal extractive mining project that is poisoning clean water sources in their communities.

Families were left without drinking water. The panel illuminated how multinational corporations in poor nations create poverty and ultimately force people to migrate. Activists Juan Lopez, Juana

Esquivel and Reynaldo Ramos were released from a Honduran prison after all charges against them for protesting were dropped and CRISJ invited these activists to speak to the Sacramento community in the student union. Students, community activists, faculty and university administrators listened to their message of hope and struggle.

The Guapinol 4 also attended a political science class where they spoke with students, and they met for an hour with various Sac State student activists to share insights on how to organize and promote active and engaged citizenship. 🦋



Honduran Water Protectors at Sac State, photo courtesy of Mark Coplan/SHARE

2. Poor People's Campaign Forum – Viewing of video “We Cried Power”

By Stan Oden

On February 19, 2020, in collaboration with the Poor People's Campaign, CRISJ hosted the viewing of documentary, “We Cried Power.”

The event was sponsored by CRISJ and led by Dr. Stan Oden. The forum featured members of the Sacramento Poor People's Campaign led by Rev. Kevin Carter, organizer for the Poor People's Campaign. The forum was held in the Pacific Suite of the Sacramento State's University Union. Rev. Carter introduced the video “We Cried Power” to the audience and

presented a 45-minute preview of the full documentary.

The video featured marches and protests organized by the Poor People's Campaign as well as speeches and comments from its leaders, including Rev. William Barber, who spoke about the need for a “moral revival” in America to end poverty, militarism, systemic racism, and environmental injustice. After showing the video, Rev. Carter conversed and answered questions from over 30 students who attended the event. Refreshments of pizza and soda was provided for the audience. 🦋



3. Race, Borders, and Belonging

By Susan Nakaoka

On November 12, 2019 CRISJ presented a half-day forum “Race, Borders and Belonging” in the Cottonwood Suite of the University Union. The event was organized in response to the tragic 2019 mass shootings in El Paso, TX, Dayton, OH, and Gilroy, CA. There were more mass shootings (417) that year than any year before Gun Violence Archive began tracking them in 2014.¹ The focus of the panel was to provide a glimpse into the shared experiences of communities of color who are often targeted as scapegoats for societal ills. Individuals from these communities are often told that



Keynote speaker Dr. Beth Cadwell

they don’t belong, that they should go back to where they came from, or worse, they become victims of hate crimes. The current xenophobic nationalism has contributed to this lethal violence.

The event highlighted the shared history and experiences with white supremacy, and unique experiences of some groups (e.g., Japanese Americans, African Americans, Latinxs) who become targets of violence in unique historical periods. Guiding questions for the event were: What are the lessons from these experiences? What are the recommendations? How do we move forward most effectively?

Dr. Stan Oden introduced the keynote speaker Dr. Beth Caldwell, who is a professor at Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles. Especially fitting for the



Poster for the event.

theme of the event, Dr. Caldwell shared excerpts from her new book “Deported Americans: Life After Deportation to Mexico.” Many immigrants that were unjustly deported to Mexico are faced with acclimating to a lifestyle and country that is unfamiliar to them. Dr. Caldwell described the social justice implications and the long-term impact of family separation and other consequences of the deportations. The familial fragmentations put great pressures on members on both sides of the border, with those in the US struggling to make it with less earning power than before and then having to remit to those recently deported.

Sac State Professor Ayanna Yonemura talked about the heightened political climate in the Trump administration, specifically about how the hyper masculine rhetoric leads to restrictive migration policy. Finally, Susan Nakaoka provided a unique story of race and belonging by highlighting Fernando Sosa, a U.S. World War II Veteran who is half-Japanese and half-Mexican. Sosa fought for the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated U.S. army unit composed of Japanese Americans, despite that fact that many of the soldier’s families were still incarcerated in U.S. concentration camps.

The panel was followed by a warm reception with plenty of food and inspirational music by Beatriz P. Figueroa and Tyrone Ralph and art from Sacramento State students, alumni and the local community. 🦋



Panel

Following the keynote, Dr. Kristina Victor moderated a panel of faculty and community members. Laura Flores Dixit, an Immigration Attorney for California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF) and Gladys Puente, FUEL Coordinator for CRLAF, provided an overview of legal realities for undocumented workers with a focus on farmworkers and the rural poor.



Artist Tyrone Ralph performing

1. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mass-shootings-2019-more-than-days-365/#:~:text=In%20the%20end%2C%202019%20had,2017%20and%20337%20in%202018.>

4. Community Engagement Advisory Board Meeting

By Stan Oden

This meeting among CRISJ faculty and community organizations was organized by Dr. Stan Oden and was held at the Sacramento State University Downtown Center. This was the second meeting of the CRISJ Community Engagement Advisory Board which consists of over twelve community organizations and agencies in Sacramento. In attendance were Xithlali with NorCal Resist; Herman Barahona, United Latinos; Ann Pratt, Sacramento SWH; Mario Galvan, Poor People's Campaign, Reverend Kevin Carter, Poor People's Campaign; and Lolita Goldring, Women's



Participants at the meeting

Empowerment. Also attending the meeting was Gina Salinas, CRISJ associate volunteer, and CRISJ Chair, Dr. Manuel Barajas. The invited guest at the meeting was Dr. Patrick Oberle, Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Sacramento State. Dr. Oberle was invited to provide the advisory board on the benefits of community mapping by using the Geographic Information System (G.I.S.) in assisting them in framing community needs that relate to their constituents. At this meeting, it was decided that there will be further discussions regarding this important tool for community partners. Also, there was a presentation on the upcoming 2nd Annual Community Empowerment Faire. Food was provided for the participants at the meeting. 🍷🍷



Dr. Oberle

5. Poor People's Campaign Forum

By Stan Oden

The Task Force for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice through the efforts of Dr. Stan Oden, organized with the Poor People's Campaign of Sacramento, an informational forum, which was an update of the Poor People's Campaign in Sacramento and nationwide. The forum was led by Reverend Kevin Carter, local organizer, and Kathleen Williams editor of the People's Tribune, as well as Robert Coplin, organizer with the Sacramento Tenant's Union. The event was attended by more than 50 students, faculty and administrators in the Cottonwood Suite at the Sacramento State University Union. Refreshments of pizza and soda was provided for the audience. The audience heard updates on the Poor People's Campaign and the efforts to work with the homeless community in Sacramento. Students were able to ask questions and engage in discussion with the Poor People's Campaign organizers. 🦋



Collaborations

CRISJ engaged in multiple collaborations on and off campus. For example, Over a period of two months, Dr. Stan Oden worked with a team of six students from the College of Business class, led by Professor Deanna Daly, who helped plan for the implementation of the 2nd Annual Community Empowerment Faire to be held at the Sacramento State University Union on March 17, 2020. Dr. Oden met with the students over four occasions to plan for a successful event. The students designed activities for the event, a publicity plan through social media, and created flyers for the event. The students also outreached out to students and faculty about the event. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the event was cancelled less than a few days before the event. The students produced an extensive twenty-one-page report on their efforts which will be helpful in planning the next Community Empowerment Faire.

Another collaboration included a committee composed of various groups on campus, including CRISJ, The Multicultural Center, the Latin American Minor at Sac State, Central Americans for Empowerment (CAFE), together with our community partner, U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, met throughout the academic year to plan a series of events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Oscar Romero in El Salvador. We were able to produce a public statement letter and a virtual panel, and continue to meet and plan further actions to commemorate the life and work of Oscar Romero who inspires with his work focused on the most vulnerable and dispossessed in El Salvador. In the future, we plan to hold a brown-bag series focused on issues related to issues related to the most vulnerable crossing borders, the work of activists across borders—both from an academic perspective, but also from the perspective of those in the ground, living these experience and working to create a more just social world.


6. Dhoolpet Ganesha Film Screening

By Heidi Sarabia and Manuel Barajas

On February 27th, 2020, in collaboration with the Multicultural Center and the Dreamer's Resource Center, we welcomed Juanita Ontiveros, member of the Royal Chicano Air Force, United Farm Workers, and California Rural Lega Assistance Foundation, who brought to campus a documentary film, Dhoolpet Ganesha about a small marginal community in southern India as they attempt to throw the best Ganesha Festival in town, tracking the black idol of Ganesha, whereby revealing explorations of colorism, politics, gender, religion, economics, and caste. Directed by Anantha Perumal (2018). This film was co-sponsored by the Multicultural Center and the Dreamer Resource Center, and presented a visually beautiful depiction of life in a small town that took place in India but could have taken place in any small rural village in Mexico—which makes the film very relatable. In fact, Juanita Ontiveros explained that when farm managers brought “untouchables” as a way of controlling labor in northern farms in California, Mexican farmworkers immediately offered assistance and befriended these “untouchables,” thus frustrating the divide-and-conquer tactics

of the managers. The hierarchies of colorism, religion, tradition, family, migration, economics, and gender shown in the film remind the viewer how the global structures of racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and intersectional oppression might look very specific in the local context, but are indeed universal and rooted to colonial histories that links the world. 🦋

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Film Screening: Dhoolpet Ganesha

The film is a documentary that follows a small marginal community in southern India as they attempt to throw the best Ganesha Festival in town, tracking the black idol of Ganesha, whereby revealing explorations of colorism, politics, gender, religion, economics, and caste. Directed by Anantha Perumal (2018).




DISCUSSION WITH: Juanita P. Ontiveros
(CRLAF, UFW, RCAF)

DATE: Thursday, February 27, 2020

TIME: 3:00–5:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Riverside 1015

For more information, contact CRISJ Faculty Associate Dr. Sarabia at 916-278-7574 or email heidi.sarabia@csus.edu or MFC Program Coordinator Filgulin Palom at 916-278-5386 or email fpalom@csus.edu

Poster of the event

7. Essential Labor: Farmworkers During the Pandemic

By Kristina Victor

The online panel on “Essential Labor: Farm Workers during the Pandemic” addressed the following questions: (1) who these essential farmworkers are, (2) what their labor conditions are like, (3) how we can support and advance policies which protect labor and human rights, and (4) what resources are available to help farmworkers and their families? The webinar hosts were Heidy Sarabia, Professor CSUS, Manny Lares, LULAC; Kristina Flores Victor, Professor CSUS. Professor Manuel Barajas, the moderator, provided a welcome to the online panel and provided the audience with background and context on the importance of farmworkers in the U.S. economy. He also described how precarious their employment can be, since the vast majority have no sick leave, no insurance, and no unemployment benefits. Most of these workers are undocumented and of indigenous ancestry from various regions of Mexico and Central America, and thus are acutely vulnerable to exploitation. Despite billions of dollars in relief money being directed at the agricultural sector there is very little support being provided to farmworkers directly.

Irene de Barraicua— Public Relations Manager, *Lideres Campesinas*— described how farmworkers are unable to socially distance at work and are still working in large groups (20-60 people at a time) and carpooling or taking buses to their job sites. She stressed the fact that most farm



Poster of the event

workers do not have access to healthcare or the funds to pay for healthcare, and are unlikely to seek out medical care when ill. A large part of their campaign is to inform and educate farmworkers about the availability of doctors and medicines, sometimes without charge. Preventing outbreaks of COVID-19 in the fields and dealing with the health impacts in the farmworker community are structurally challenging. As essential labor they are forced to work for prolonged periods without enforcement of labor, health, and environmental protections because funding to these agencies have been historically lacking and the pandemic context has worsened their already hazardous occupation.

Nuri Rúbio— UNITE and Sacramento State Alumni—discussed the experience of working in the fields as a child and even while in college. She describes how physically demanding farm work is, and how financially precarious the lives of the

farmworkers are—when their employment is disrupted even for a short period or when they experience a small financial setback. She points out the contradiction of farmworkers' importance in the economy in spite of their poor working conditions and mistreatment. Nuri worked a whole summer non-stop to save money for a cell phone, and during a long and cold work day pruning grapevines in the winter she went to a porta potty. Her body was exhausted, her hands numb from the cold, and upon reaching out for her phone it fell into the toilet. The material loss didn't hurt her; but the understanding of how much work had gone to get the phone revealed the extreme devaluation of her labor and humanity. She recommends for policies that extend dignified pay and basic labor protections such as workers' compensation benefits, healthcare, and disability insurance. Simply, without their labor no one else eats.

Desirée Rojas— President of Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)—described how her organization is putting pressure on the Governor of California to address the plight of farmworkers. The Governor is being asked to provide emergency funds specifically directed at farmworkers and immigrants, labor protections, protective equipment and sanitation. The Governor had recently extended some funds, but with a very limited reach and impact on the majority of farm workers. LCLAA also called on the Governor to increase Cal OSHA inspectors and inspections in the fields to assess working conditions and violations, particularly during the pandemic. Al Rojas —helped co-found UFW— described in

more detail the conditions that farmworkers faced before COVID-19, and are still facing during the pandemic, such as exposure to chemicals, lack of safety protections, low pay, and low oversight of the agricultural sector. He stressed the need for continued organizing throughout the state/nation and across borders.

The last panelist, Juanita Ontiveros—California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation—also described the importance of lobbying the Governor in California and the need for stimulus funds to go to farmworkers in California. Even before the pandemic, she noted the hardships already faced by farmworkers, such as pesticides and pollution, and how this exposure harms farmworker's families too. Moreover, many immigrants are being held in detention during the pandemic, and thus are at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19 in crowded conditions. Fear of deportation has not disappeared during the pandemic; it has just been added to fears about health, job safety, and access to resources. Employers must do a lot more to allow workers to safely distance at work, and they must engage in more cleaning and disinfecting at the jobsite.

Each panelist described the need for farmworkers to have the same protections as other essential workers: access to healthcare, unemployment insurance, disability benefits, ability to socially distance at work, and basic sanitation. Their calls to action include expanding education about what resources exist, continuing to organize workers, and pushing the Governor to expand relief to immigrants in the state. 🌱

8. Social Justice Work Sin Fronteras: Celebrating the life of Oscar Romero in light of the 40th Anniversary of his martyrdom in El Salvador

By Maria Vargas

On June 12th CRISJ presented a Zoom panel titled: "Social Justice Work Sin Fronteras: Celebrating the life of Oscar Romero in light of the 40th Anniversary of his martyrdom in El Salvador." Panelists talked about Archbishop Romero's legacy of defending the human rights of Salvadoran farmworkers who were exploited by the Salvadoran coffee oligarchy.

The panel included both community activists and Sac State staff and faculty. Edgardo Palomo (Central Americans for Empowerment) provided a brief introduction into the life of Romero explaining why Romero's weekly homilies represented a revolution of its own and eventually led to his assassination by the Salvadoran military. Maria Elena Martinez (U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities) provided a powerful testimonio of experiencing the passion of Romero's homilies when she was a young girl living in El Salvador. She recalled her mother forbidding her from attending protests and rallies having anything to do with Romero, to avoid military violence and repression. Her aunt and uncle joined

The poster features a central illustration of Archbishop Oscar Romero and a white dove against a background of a sunset and a church tower. The title is prominently displayed in white text. Below the title, it lists the Zoom panel details, registration information, panelists, and the moderator. Logos for CRISJ, U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, and Sacramento State are at the bottom.

Social Justice Work Sin Fronteras:
Celebrating the life of Oscar Romero in light of the 40th Anniversary of his martyrdom in El Salvador.

Arzobispo in El Peten, El Salvador

Zoom Panel:
Friday, June 12th 1:00-2:30pm

Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://crisj.zoom.us/j/92416138181?pwd=ZDZMcUk0TGZCc0p1aU9uVjRlR0Zkdz09>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The purpose of this event is to highlight the life and legacy of San Oscar Romero de las Américas (Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero), killed by death squads March 21, 1980 for his defense of the rights of the poor to organize for justice, and his influence in all the Americas.

Panelists:
Luis Garcia, CSU Sacramento, Department of Art
Michael Ring, U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities
Maria Elena Martinez, U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities
Edgardo Palomo, Central Americans for Empowerment
Maria Vargas, CSU Sacramento, Department of Ethnic Studies

Moderated by Georgia Rosset, Central Americans for Empowerment

Logos: CRISJ (Center for Racial and Ethnic Justice), U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, Central Americans for Empowerment, SACRAMENTO STATE (Multi-Cultural Center)

Poster of the event

thousands attending Romero's funeral and had to flee for refuge in Maria Elena's home due to violence unleashed against the mourners. Romero's example served as an important inspiration for Maria Elena's life of social justice work.

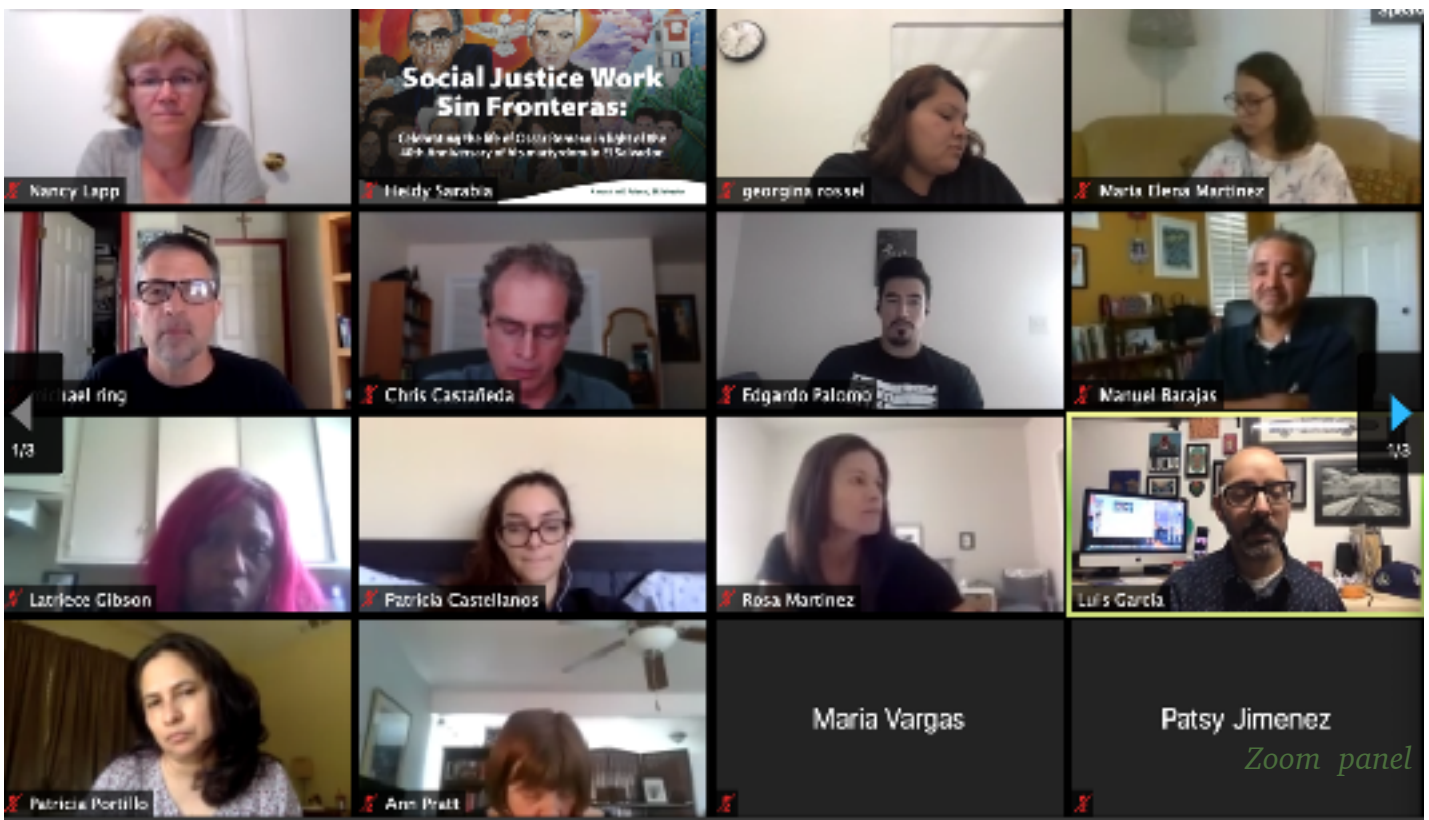
Michael Ring (U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities) spoke to the importance of martyrs like Romero who fearlessly confronted the

Salvadoran state and military in solidarity with poor farmworkers. He also connected Romero’s revolutionary acts to contemporary police brutality and execution against black and brown peoples.

Luis Garcia, (CSU Sacramento, Department of Art) reviewed various murals, depicting poor farmworkers along with allies partaking in revolutionary acts as well as exposing the horrific violence perpetuated by the military. Through a comparative lens, Garcia connected Mexican murals to Central American murals in the context of social justice and oppressed communities finding a voice through art.

Maria Vargas, CSU Sacramento, Department of Ethnic Studies, spoke to the importance of remembering and celebrating the martyrs who unlike Romero fall outside the masculine-normative of cisgender-ness, heterosexuality, male, and

religion. She named Evelyn Robles and Jade Camila Diaz, two Central American transgender women who were brutally murdered due to their human rights organizing for Transgender rights. Lastly, Vargas highlighted that while Romero has a yearly remembrance, folks like Jade and Evelyn who fought tirelessly are easily erased and forgotten from historical memory. These grassroots activists represent and inspire a more powerful and inclusive social justice movement and future. 🦋



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: Susan Nakaoka

By Elvia Ramirez

Dr. Susan Nakoaka is the Undergraduate Program Director and an Assistant Professor in the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Nakaoka received her Ph.D. in Urban Planning at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Her current research and scholarly focus centers on Critical Race Theory, oral histories of Asian Americans and Mexican Americans in the Sacramento River Delta, and Native Hawaiian community development models. She has published her research in various scholarly journals, including *Intersectionalities: A Global Journal of Social Work Analysis, Research, Policy, and Practice*, *British Journal of Social Work*, *Harvard Asian American Policy Review*, *Journal of Culture*, and *Ethnicity in Social Work*, among others. Dr. Nakaoka has taught various courses at Sacramento State, including Social Work and Diverse Populations, Social Work Policy and Welfare in America and the Master of Social Work Capstone course Services, Welfare in America, and Race, Class and Gender. She has also taught at other



Dr. Susan Nakaoka

institutions, such as University of Hawaii, California State University Dominguez Hills, Loma Linda University, and UCLA.

Dr. Nakaoka is originally from Southern California and is a third-generation Japanese American. Like many other Japanese Americans at the time, Dr. Nakaoka's parents were forcefully and inhumanely imprisoned in concentration

camps during the World War II era. After the war, her father's family settled in Walnut Grove, a small town on the Sacramento River Delta. Having family members forcefully placed in concentration camps and growing up in a predominantly Asian American and Mexican American community are the major forces shaping Dr. Nakaoka's interests in race and social justice.

Besides having an impressive scholarly and teaching record, Dr. Nakaoka provides invaluable service to the campus and community. She currently serves on the Asian Pacific Islander Committee of the Delta Protection Commission, and she's a Board Member of Sacramento River Delta

Historical Society. On a national level, Dr. Nakaoka serves on the board of the Association for Community Organizing and Social Action. Along with her social work colleague Dr. Stacey Ault, she is a founding member of a network of critical race scholars in social work. Dr. Nakaoka is also an active member of the Taskforce for the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) at Sacramento State. She has served on two CRISJ panels and is currently a coordinator for a CRISJ book-drive for children in the Delta region. Dr. Nakaoka is an invaluable member of the community, and our students, faculty, and staff are lucky to have her at Sacramento State! 🌸

Student Profile: Jannet Esparza

Jannet Esparza is a Sociology master graduate from California State University, Sacramento. She received her B.A in Political Science and Communications with an emphasize in Broadcasting Journalism from California State University, Fullerton. Her research focused on the paradox of the immigration-industrial-complex in California. Her experiences and background as an immigrant motivates her research and professional endeavors. Jannet's research interest include immigration, criminality, and race. Moreover, she has been active in community service and worked at various non-profit organizations where she became well verse in a variety of immigration reliefs available for immigrant communities.

Jannet has been active in CRISJ, participating in forums and panels organized by CRISJ—her critical stance and perspective have made an invaluable member of CRISJ. 🌸



Artist Profile: Luis R. Campos-Garcia (Lurac)

Art is a tool we can use to inspire people to create social change.

Luis Ramon Campos-Garcia (Lurac), is a multidisciplinary artist, graphic designer, cultural worker, educator, and migrant from Mexico City. His work explores the use of visual art, graphic design, and music to create worlds inhabited by fantastic creatures inspired by Mesoamerican and Mexican culture, street art, cartoons, globalization, and everyday life. He is interested in cultural diversity and how it can enrich the human experience. His work blurs the lines of fantasy and reality addressing themes like culture, justice, and dreams that question the hegemony prevalent in today's society in Mexico and the United States of America. Luis studied at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México before coming to Sacramento and earning his B.A. in Studio Art at CSUS. He was a co-recipient of a Block by Block grant by The Crocker art Museum. Luis is currently the Arts Director at Sol Collective Arts and Cultural Center. He provides art experiences in the form

of workshops, exhibitions, and art-making activities in different communities.

He has participated in events organized by the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice, by bringing artwork to exhibit, and creating an image to be used for posters.

He will continue doing social commentary through art, as well as developing and providing participatory art experiences for kids, youth, and adults. 🦋



Lurac with his art

Community Partners

During the 2019-2020 Academic Year, the Taskforce for the Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) worked closely with many community partners that include Parent, Teacher Associations (PTA), non-profit organizations, and grassroots activists. This year, we want to highlight some of those partners.

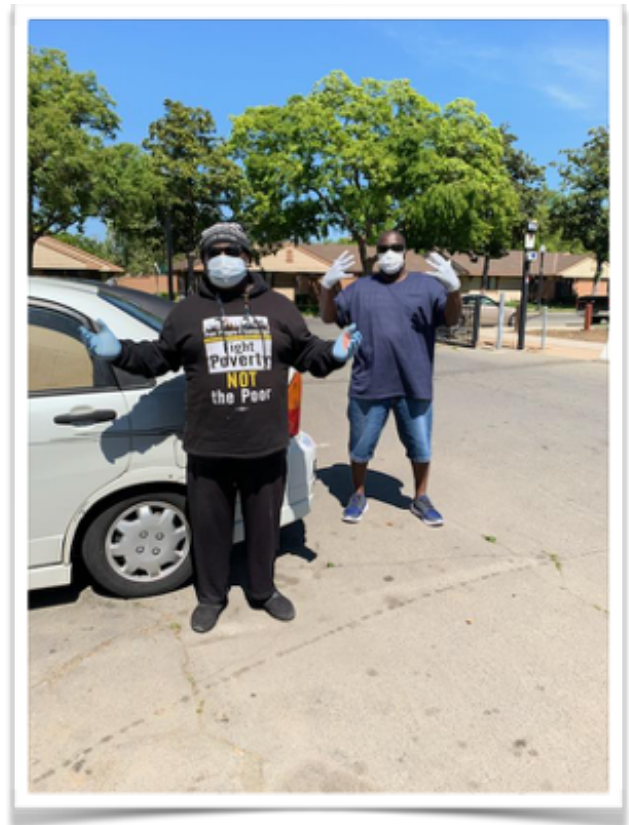
Poor People's Campaign

Reverend Kevin Carter has become a regular member of CRISJ—attending meetings regularly and planning events on campus on a regular basis. Reverend Carter has a long history of community activism for social justice in Sacramento and across the nation. He has been a leading voice in the Poor People's Campaign (PPC). As part of this work, he has worked closely with Faye Kennedy and Cathleen Williams advocating for the most marginalized and disempowered communities in society.

He actively advocates for the basic needs of the unhoused, which includes providing them the essentials (water, food, hygienic necessities, masks for COVID-19, etc.) and teaching them social distance to protect themselves from the Corona Virus. He also assists the unhoused—who are over 55 and have health needs—get services and housing. This work is an everyday and long-going effort because of the pandemic and the scarcity of housing.

On July 5th, he participated in a state-wide, open-house zoom meeting and invites those interested in joining PPC Campaign to help form a moral fusion of people and

organizations to create a movement that addresses the intersectional problems our marginalized communities are facing: i.e., poverty, systemic racism, the war economy, and ecological devastation and religious extremism. Brother Carter invites the Sacramento State community to join the fight for the general welfare of society and to stop the spiritual and social death of our people who are denied humanity and dignity. Our communities are in great need of an economic uplift, so let's join Brother Carter as we move together forward and not one step back! 🦋



Brother Kevin Carter on the field fights for social justice and against poverty.

U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities

By Michael Ring

The US-El Salvador Sister Cities Network (USESSC), a network of communities and individuals across the United States sistered in struggle with Salvadoran communities organizing for dignity, justice and sustainability in El Salvador, celebrates our collaboration during the 2019-2020 academic year with Sacramento State's Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ). Our partnership with CRISJ facilitated educational exchanges between Sacramento State Educators and Students with students affiliated with our sister communities in El Salvador who are all members of CRIPDES, Asociación para el desarrollo de El Salvador (the Association for the Development of El Salvador). CRIPDES is an organization of Salvadoran rural communities who have been working together for social, economic and political rights and justice in the Salvadoran countryside since 1984.


Sacramento State Professors Dr. Heidy Sarabia and Dr. Nancy Lapp brought a USESSC speaker into their classrooms to share ideas and perspective on the historic struggle of the Salvadoran social movement to fight for a society that meets the needs of all Salvadorans. Dr. Sarabia also worked together with US-El Salvador Sister Cities to host online exchanges between Sacramento State students and university students from the CRIPDES communities attending the National University of El Salvador. These exchanges provided students on both sides of the border an opportunity to exchange ideas, knowledge and perspectives that opened



eyes for all involved and initiated brainstorming about how to sustain these relationships going forward.

CRISJ, USESSC also teamed up with CAFE (Central Americans for Empowerment), the Multi-Cultural Center and other Sacramento State organizations to host a panel honoring the 40th Anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Oscar Romero. The panel shared insights into Romero's life, his commitment to accompanying poor people's organizations across El Salvador as they confronted the Salvadoran wealthy, the Salvadoran military, the U.S. government and the traditional church hierarchy and demanded dignity and justice in the 1970's. Speakers shared insights into Romero's willingness to use his platform as El Salvador's Archbishop to serve as the voice of the voiceless, to break through government censorship to reveal the truth about the regime's systematic violence against its own people and to connections of Romero's legacy to struggles for justice in the United States and Latin America to the present day. On March 24, 1980, a death squad sniper with ties to the vicious military regime ruling the country at that time, silenced Romero and his call for liberation of the poor majority in El Salvador.

US-El Salvador Sister Cities thanks CRISJ and its members for a great year of partnership and looks forward to strengthening our collaboration with CRISJ and the Sacramento State community. For

more on US-El Salvador Sister Cities: www.elsalvadorsolidarity.org 

Sacramento Solidarity with Honduras

By Ann Pratt

Three frontline Guapinol Water Defenders Juana Ramona Zuniga, Juan Lopez, and Reynaldo Domínguez Ramos from Tocoa, Honduras were hosted at Sacramento State University by the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) in conjunction with Sacramento Solidarity with Honduras on October 7, 2019. That this was possible required a remarkable series of dominos to fall into place on a very short timeline. The Water Defenders received the prestigious Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Awards on October 3, 2019 from the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D. C. on behalf of the Comité Municipal on Defensa de Bienes Comunes y Naturales del Municipio de Tocoa (Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Natural Assets of the Municipality of Tocoa). José Artiga, Executive Director of the SHARE Foundation, put into action a plan to have the Water Defenders come to the Bay Area, including Sacramento for a series of events following the awards ceremony. This plan was complicated because final approval for the Defenders to travel to the United States did not take place until late September.

Ann Pratt, OP, Chairperson, Sacramento Solidarity with Honduras talked with fellow committee member, Maria Burke, Sacramento State Senior in Political Science, about the possibility of the Defenders coming to Sacramento State. Maria became the invaluable link that made the Water Defenders campus visit possible. Once travel was approved, Maria emailed Professor Monicka Tutschka on September 24th to find out if CRISJ would be interested in bringing the Water Defenders to campus. Professor Tutschka contacted her fellow CRISJ faculty members about the possibility and they were eager to bring the defenders to campus with Environmental Studies Professor Michelle Stevens taking the lead. This was followed by a flurry of planning activities that resulted in a day long series of campus presentations including an initial panel discussion, faculty lunch, class presentations, and meetings with student activists. The Water Defenders message of “wake up humanity, there is no more time” clearly connected with the students who are well aware of the environmental peril. The SHARE Foundation and Sacramento Solidarity with Honduras look forward to connecting with CRISJ on their newest solidarity campaign related to food insecurity, VAMOS A LA MILPA Campaign for El Salvador and Honduras.



Public Statements

Divesting from Immigrant Detention Centers

August 7th, 2019

To the CalPers Board,

On behalf of the Taskforce for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISI) at Sacramento State, we urgently request that CalPers divest all funds from private detention centers. CalPers must cease investing in private security corporations who operate multi-million dollar contracts with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain Central American families, unaccompanied children, and single mothers under inhumane and torturous conditions. These migrants are escaping dire conditions of poverty and violence in their home countries and are lawfully seeking their right to asylum in the United States. Yet, private security corporations show a void of moral compass and inhumane coldness as they seek profits by detaining impoverished and vulnerable asylees.

Currently, more than 41,000 immigrants are held in detention daily by ICE; and more than 11,000 children, in custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). These immigrants are detained within the U.S. and along the U.S.–Mexico Border and includes adults and children. The Trump administration still seeks to increase the daily detention capacity to 52,000¹. Over 60% of immigrants are detained in privately-run detention centers and the two largest are GEO Group and CoreCivic². Together, they detain more than 18,000 immigrants per day³, and make close to \$1 billion in ICE-related revenue⁴.

The cruel conditions of detention centers that immigrants face have been thoroughly described by journalists, doctors, lawyers, and even lawmakers. Detention centers are overcrowded, neglected, filthy, inhumane, and violent. Doctors describe these centers as “deplorable,”⁵ and lawyers document “scenes of tearful, malnourished children reeking in filth and jammed into frigid overcrowded quarters.”⁶ This July, US-Representative from New York, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez visited detention facilities in the El Paso border-area and described her tour experience as horrifying and haunting. She stated, “People drinking out of toilets, officers laughing in front of members of Congress,” a situation described by detained women as “psychological warfare—waking them at odd hours for no reason, calling them wh*es, etc.”⁷

Despite cameras not being allowed in the detention centers, U.S. lawmakers and news reporters have observed the inhuman conditions that Central American migrants are subjected to, and have loudly denounce such acts as human rights violations. These detention centers are modern concentration camps, and immigrant activists have protested against them around the country. Even the Office of the Inspector General has called for the Department of Homeland Security to “take immediate steps to alleviate the dangerous overcrowding and prolonged detention of children and adults in the Rio Grande Valley.”⁸ And the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has stated that the U.S. government is violating international law, given that “border management measures must comply with the State’s human rights obligations and should not be based on narrow policies aimed only at detecting, detaining and expeditiously deporting irregular migrants.”⁹

Given the national and global outrage, we argue that divesting from private security corporations who violate human rights is one way the nation’s moral compass gets fixed. This step in the right direction for social justice has precedents. Big banks have begun to divest from private prisons. Bank of America announced it will cease lending to detention centers and private prisons¹⁰, as well as JP Morgan¹¹ and Wells Fargo¹².

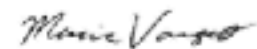
In light of the abuses perpetrated at detention centers, the members of the CRISJ taskforce recommends that CalPers follow suit as have other companies, such as Bank of American, JP Morgan, and Wells Fargo, as well as governments, from California to Virginia¹³, and divests all the money from CoreCivic and GEO Group. We are at a juncture in history, where will CalPers stand in these difficult times? We hope you side with human rights and social justice, and make a strong and clear statement that detention and incarceration of migrants is unacceptable, that cruelty in private detention centers is unacceptable, that separating families is unacceptable, that any form of violence against vulnerable people on the move is unacceptable, that negligence of children by the U.S. government and their contracted parties is unacceptable. Take the right stand and divest all the investments that support these oppressive conditions at private detention facilities.

Make the just, moral, and human decision and divest from CoreCivic and GEO Group.

Sincerely,



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Taskforce for CRISJ's allies in support of this letter CLFASA

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Legacy of Oscar Romero



U.S.-El Salvador
Sister Cities



SACRAMENTO STATE
Multi-Cultural Center



CRISJ

INSTITUTION FOR
CENTER ON RACE,
IMMIGRATION
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

Tuesday, March 24, 2020, marked the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in San Salvador, El Salvador. Romero was shot by a sniper while saying mass after calling for the Salvadoran police and armed forces to cease the repression of the masses of Salvadoran people, who for years organized to end a brutal military dictatorship. The Salvadoran dictatorship killed thousands of civilians each year and secured unjustified structural inequalities that left the great majority of Salvadorans in extreme poverty.

For many years prior to his death, Romero's calls for peace and justice had threatened the rich and powerful in El Salvador and their allies in the Salvadoran army and U.S. government. He continued denouncing human rights abuses (killings, tortures, disappearances) even after receiving many death threats and calling on the U.S. government to end all aid it was providing to the Salvadoran regime. For his refusal to remain silent in the face of the injustice and repression, he was killed.

The Sacramento State Committee to Remember Oscar Romero had planned to host an educational panel and community art project on Monday March 23 on the Sacramento State campus to honor Romero, all those who gave their lives in the Salvadoran struggle for justice, and other people who fought against injustices. Unfortunately, because of the current health crisis, we have postponed the event. However, we still want to share some words from Romero that we believe are appropriate at this time, when social solidarity with those most vulnerable and marginalized is badly needed.

Romero called on all of us to stand with those most in need,

I am content that our church is persecuted precisely because of its preference for the poor and for trying to act in the interests of the poor and to say to the people, to the government, to the rich and the powerful: if you don't take an interest in the poverty of our people as if they were your own family, you will not be able to save our society (Romero, July 15, 1979).

Y me alegro de que nuestra iglesia sea perseguida precisamente por su opción preferencial por los pobres y por tratar de encarnarse en el interés de los pobres y decir a todo el pueblo, gobernantes, ricos y poderosos: si no se interesan por la pobreza de nuestro pueblo como si fuera su propia familia, no podrán salvar a la sociedad (Romero, 15 July 1979).

Romero's words and example call on all of us to stand in solidarity with those most at risk during the COVID 19 crisis: the sick, the elderly, the economically and socially marginalized, communities of color, immigrants, people in prison and so many others. We must stand together

and remember that all of us deserve love, respect and our basic rights to food, shelter, education, medical care and the right to have our voices heard. Human life has no price.

We hope San Romero's words inspire all of us to stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable communities around the world as we face this pandemic. As he said, we have the moral obligation and right to organize for a better world,

...(people) are not prohibited from organizing themselves; it is a right and in certain moments, such as today, it is a duty, because the fight for social and political justice can't be done in isolation, but rather through the force of the people united clamoring for their rights (Romero, Sept 16, 1979).

Yo quisiera hacer un llamamiento a los queridos cristianos; no les está prohibido organizarse; es un derecho y en ciertos momentos, como hoy, es también un deber, porque las reivindicaciones sociales y políticas tienen que ser no de hombres aislados, sino la fuerza de un pueblo que clama unido por sus derechos (Romero, 16 sept 1979)

If you are interested in our efforts and would like to work with our committee, please contact us:

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Thank you.

In solidarity,
Sacramento State Committee to Remember Oscar Romero

US-El Salvador Sister Cities
Taskforce for the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social (CRISJ)
Central Americans for Empowerment (CAFE)
Sac State Latin American Studies program
Sac State Multi-Cultural Center

CRISJ joined advocacy groups in support of releasing people from jail: A Potential Death Sentence during the Pandemic

By Manuel Barajas

The wave of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rise and disrupt life across the globe.

Regionally, on March 19, 2020, the County of Sacramento ordered a “Shelter-In-Place.” On behalf of the task force for the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) at Sacramento State, we expressed a heartfelt urgency for the moral responsibility to protect the health and safety of our community, and asked the Sacramento Court and the Sacramento County Sheriff to act immediately to secure the safety of all human beings, including individuals held in custody, county employees, medical professionals, social workers, and clerical staff who work in the jails. CRISJ recommended to the Court to support the Public Defender’s motion to release people incarcerated in Sacramento County’s jails.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no vaccine that protects from COVID-19. Therefore, the only way to prevent this illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. Hospitals are becoming overwhelmed and allowing for the continued incarceration of non-serious inmates only hurts efforts to isolate and mitigate the pandemic. Even convalescent/ nursing homes, who have nurses and health trained staff, find themselves impacted with notable cases throughout the nation, including in Sacramento County. Jails and other detention centers will be less equipped to handle COVID19, and the impacts will fall unfairly and disproportionately on individuals from disadvantaged background, low-income and racial minority.

Jails, detention centers, and prison systems are designed to punish and maximize control of the incarcerated population, not to minimize disease transmission, heal trauma, or deliver mental or physical health care. The physical structure of a shared room space prevents the 6 feet social distancing order. The physical structure of incarceration facilities restricts inmates from isolating themselves if they are sick.

Sacramento County Jail conditions are a high risk to those jailed as well as to the employees of these facilities. As such, CRISJ recommends that the Sacramento County Jail implement community-based alternatives to incarceration to alleviate the dangerous conditions in the facilities. The most vulnerable –the elderly, pregnant women, those with mental illness, etc. – should be released immediately to avoid illness or even death and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. In brief, nobody’s sentence in jail included being subjected to a potentially deadly virus.

Book Project

CRISJ Book Drive: Increasing Access to Books in the Sacramento Region

By Kristina Victor

The issue: As the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic became clearer, California schools were closed and distance learning programs were instituted across the state. Even with the most carefully designed distance learning programs students no longer have access to vital resources provided by their schools. Students miss out on face-to-face instruction, socialization, and access to other resources. Many of our K-12 students are significantly disadvantaged under distance learning programs. CRISJ was particularly concerned with students' lack of access to their school libraries, or classroom libraries. We wanted to develop a program to help address this lack of access to books in certain schools in the Sacramento region. We believe organizing an annual book drive for local schools will help address short and long-term accessibility to books.

Method for selecting a local elementary school. CRISJ used the Community Literacy Map for Sacramento County (put together by the Sacramento Public Library Foundation) to help identify elementary schools in our region which have student populations matching CRISJ's mission and underlying goal of promoting social justice. The schools we identified have large numbers of students who qualify for free and reduced breakfast and lunch, high racial and ethnic diversity,

SPONSORED BY THE TASK FORCE FOR RACE, IMMIGRATION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (CRISJ), SAC STATE

BOOK DONATION DRIVE

Students are experiencing limited access to traditional school resources and school libraries, decreasing student access to books. CRISJ will be collecting books for Isleton Elementary and Walnut Grove Elementary, two schools serving migrant farmworkers

June-September 2020
Pick-up available

The poster features a graphic of a book with the CRISJ logo on the cover, standing next to three stylized bookshelves filled with red books.

high numbers of English Language Learners, and no existing program or group already working with the school. We identified the following several elementary schools: Walnut Grove, Ethel Baker, Pacific Elementary, and Tahoe Elementary. Our initial reaching out to these schools at the end of the spring semester was well received by several schools, and we are currently preparing for the deliveries for the fall semester.



region. CRISJ will organize the pick-up, cleaning, organizing, and cataloging of the books before bringing them to the schools. We anticipate working with school principal(s), and/or the school librarian(s), and teachers in the elementary school who need books for their classroom.

Expanding the book drive in the future. We are hoping to begin the book drive with 1-2 local elementary schools and possibly over time expand to include a few local middle schools and high schools. At CRISJ we view programs like the book drive as opportunities to be more involved in our local community. Over time we plan to expand the book drive to additional elementary schools and high schools in the Sacramento region. CRISJ could work with teachers to set up “wish lists” for books and resources which could greatly improve the educational experience for their students. Once relationships with the schools are established we see these schools as potential sites for our undergraduates to be involved as volunteers, mentors, tutors, and college ambassadors. We also see this as a point of collaboration between CRISJ and other groups/faculty on campus that are involved in additional education and literacy efforts. 🦋

What can CRISJ offer to school(s) in our community? The annual book drive will help replenish and diversify the school libraries, and classroom libraries, at the selected schools. We are soliciting book donations from faculty and staff at Sacramento State and from individuals throughout the Sacramento

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