

CRISJ

Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice

Contents

Message from Manuel Barajas,
CRISJ Director 1

Spotlights

Faculty 3

Student 5

Events

Trans-migraciones 6

Convocation 7

World on Fire 8

Solidarity 11

Elections 12

Community Faire 13

Art Workshop 14

Agricultural work 15

Teach-in 18

Un/Equal freedoms 19

Public Statements

Advocacy 21

Projects

Book drive 23

Podcast 24

Mentoring Program 26

Literacy Project 27

UCI PromISE Research 28

Acknowledgements 29



CRISJ

**CENTER ON RACE, IMMIGRATION
& SOCIAL JUSTICE
AT SAC STATE**


Message from Manuel Barajas, CRISJ Director

The Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) at Sacramento State works for the empowerment of communities and environments that have suffered historical and continuous systemic oppression. A major concern that motivated the creation of CRISJ was the under-representation of communities of color among faculty and in the curriculum in the university. The diversity gap between the students and faculty on campus and system wide are extreme. Therefore, we actively work to advance critical knowledge from various and integrated forms of expertise, particularly from the points of views and experiences that are often erased, distorted, and marginalized academically. CRISJ's focus on collaborative and innovative work seeks to elevate and amplify the understandings, empathies, and thus motivations for social and environmental justice at Sac State and the community.

After serving as a taskforce since 2016 for the university, our first year as a formalized center in the fall of 2020 began in the context of overlapping pandemics (i.e., COVID-19, political-economic insecurities, and racial and intersectional oppression). The world was on fire. The University urgently needed a center focusing specifically on the historical and systemic problem of racial and intersectional injustices, and CRISJ associates and partners dove into the urgent matters of social and environmental justice with vigor and determination, creating critical knowledge, mentorship, and community engagement to advance sustainable and impactful changes needed in the local and larger society. Our focus, examining how normalized structures of racial, gender, sexual, class, and national inequalities hurt the human condition, motivated us to work with partners in university and community to dismantle these oppressive systems. This CRISJ Annual Report 20-21 reviews our work, examining and challenging inequities in higher education, farm labor, border politics, climate and environmental justice, criminal injustice, among other topics.

This CRISJ report also demonstrates innovative ways of participating in social change via writing advocacy briefs/petitions, engaging with artistic and activist communities, and developing educational empowerment projects on and off campus. CRISJ's work reaches out to local, state, and federal public officials in contestation, for example, of lame duck executions, incarceration of minor-offenders during the pandemic and beyond, and inhumane immigration political policies. We also connect with the artistic community as a way of amplifying awareness and action for social change, as exemplified by the artistic project of "Un/Equal Freedoms: Expression for Social Justice." Over 30 local and regional artists expressed through art—visual, poetry, songs, and dance—their desire for a more just and healthy world. To expand equity and representation of marginalized communities, CRISJ is also developing a Podcast, "Building Justice," that captures academic and community voices committed to building a just world and eliminate the gross inequities in power and wealth, along race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and class. We also hosted the second Community Empowerment Faire that brought together community organizations serving those at the margins of society, i.e., the unhoused, the undocumented, victims of sexual/gender violence, and those affected by environmental destruction. The intent is to connect the university and community in collaborative and mutual relationships for the advancement of healthier futures for all.

Aligned with an intersectional social justice mission, CRISJ produces critical research, mentorship, and community engagement with the goal of normalizing equity, diversity, and social justice values and practices in the university and larger community. We hope you will join CRISJ's transformative vision of and work for a world without racial, gender, sexual, class, disability barriers and borders. *Luchando por un mundo mas justo y humano!* [Working for a more just and humane world!]



Manuel Barajas, Ph.D., el/he
Professor of Sociology
CRISJ Director

Spotlights

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 Spotlight: Robert Stanley Oden

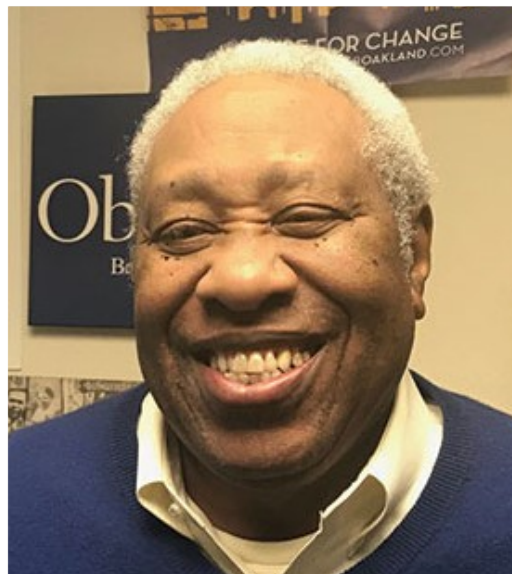
After 20 years at Sac State, Dr. Robert Stanley Oden has retired, leaving an impressive mark in the university and community. Dr. Oden was appointed as Assistant Professor in the Government Department (today the Political Science Department) at CSU Sacramento in Fall 2001, but his amazing story began in Southern California. He was born and raised in San Diego, California, the son of Clyde and Allie Mae Oden. He has two brothers, Dr. Clyde Oden, Los Angeles, and Douglas Oden, Esq. San Diego. His educational trajectory, like many of our students and first generation academics began in San Diego City College. He eventually transferred to UC Davis where he majored in Political Science in 1969. At UC Davis, he was a student leader on campus and became the President of the Black Student Union. For a brief period he was also a member of the Black Panther Party in Oakland in the summer of 1968.

After graduating from UC Davis, Dr. Oden went back to San Diego to work for the San Diego Model Cities Program as Assistant Coordinator for Citizen Participation, for four and half years. He left the Model Cities Program and earned a Masters Degree in Community Environmental Management from United

States International University. After his M.A., he moved to the Bay Area with his family, and worked for seven years as an Administrative Analyst in the Housing and Community Development Department for the City of Berkeley; and then worked an additional seven years as a senior member of the Berkeley City Manager's office—coordinating a union-management cooperation program called Public Service Committees.

In August 1989, Dr. Oden retired from the City of Berkeley and received a graduate fellowship to attend UC Santa, where he eventually earned his Ph.D. in sociology in 1999, and finished his dissertation, *Power Shift: A Sociological Analysis of Political Incorporation of People of Color in Oakland, California, 1966-1996*. In the Fall of 2001, he joined the Government Department at CSU Sacramento as an Assistant Professor. Since then, he has published numerous articles ranging from social justice and service-learning to essays on the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the citizens of New Orleans.

On top of his teaching and research activities, Dr. Oden was also very involved in various community-based and faculty-based activities in Sacramento. For example, he helped lead the fight to defeat Proposition 54 through the United Sacramento Citizens Against the Information Ban PAC in which he was chair. He is also served as Chair of the Board of Directors of The Freedom Bound



Dr. Robert Stanley Oden

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Center/Sol Collective Inc., a community-based organization working in the areas of social justice, health advocacy and youth community organizing. Dr. Oden was also a member of the Sacramento Central Labor Council and executive board member of the California Faculty Association at CSU Sacramento, and at-large delegate to the CFA State Assembly, as well as a founding board member of the UC Davis African American Alumni Association. Dr. Oden was also in the review panel of the National Education Association journal, Thought and Action.

Since 2013, Dr. Oden and Dr. Manuel Barajas, from the Department of Sociology, envisioned putting together a center that would address the gross underrepresentation of faculty of color at Sac State, and wrote a formal letter to the new Dean of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS) in 2014; their hard work produced the first fruits in 2015 when the SSIS Dean approved a summer group of faculty to write a proposal in the summer of 2016. The name, Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) emerged from this taskforce, and the CRISJ taskforce began to operate—putting together panels on

campus, envisioning community and mentoring collaborations, among other things. Dr. Oden became the Faculty Coordinator for the Community Engagement subcommittee, and successfully put together a community advisory board of about ten community organizations. Many programs, panels, and events have been organized since 2016 with these community partners.

Dr. Oden's service to the university and community was inspired not only by his commitment to social justice, but also the love for his family—composed of four children, Lee Oden of San Diego, Dr. Tatia Malika Oden-French (deceased), Marcus Oden, Dublin, California, and Kofi Rashi, U.A.E; and 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchild.

Dr. Oden's legacy at Sac State and the community will long endure; but now, we are focusing on the new projects and collaborations in this new chapter of Dr. Oden's life. We know his commitment to social justice will keep him busy in this new chapter.

Faculty Spotlight: Luis Chavez

Dr. Luis Chávez is an interdisciplinary musician-scholar whose research specializes in festival music and dance from Latin America. Working within music, sound, and Native American and Indigenous Studies, Chávez's scholarship explores how individuals use music and dance to articulate ethnic, national, and gender identities. Dr. Chávez completed a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from the University of California, Davis, additionally earning a Designated Emphasis in Native American Studies.

Dr. Chávez's dissertation, "The Utopia of Borders: On Music, Dance, and Festival in Northern Mexico," examines music and dance performance in a Santo Santiago (Saint James) festival in the rural Mexican town of Juchipila, Zacatecas. Specifically, it focuses on the



Dr. Luis Chavez

process of local northern Mexican identity formation through *tamborazo* music, dance performance, and religious expression, using collaborative and ethnographic research methods, such as community-based participatory research and participant-observation, archival research, digital audio-visual documentation, surveys, and interviews. This research received support from the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, UC MEXUS dissertation research grant, and Mellon Summer Research Fellowship.

Dr. Chávez is a Lecturer in the School of Music at the California State University, Sacramento where his work focuses on music, dance, and religion in Mexico, performance studies, border studies, sound studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Native American Studies. At Sac State, he teaches Music History and Literature, World Music, and Latin American music. His current research focuses on how notions of authenticity and tradition are negotiated in Chicanx music cultures.

Student Spotlight: Ryan McMurray

CRISJ is a space that offers students the opportunity to engage in social justice issues very hands-on. Ryan McMurray has taken that opportunity to be engaged in CRISJ and its various projects. McMurray, a masters candidate in the Sociology department at Sacramento State, is expected to graduate in the spring of 2022. His current thesis research explores education-based non-profit organizations in the Sacramento region, with a focus on extant gaps in the education non-profit sector. Ryan's goal is to identify and fill as many of these gaps as possible, so that young scholars in Sacramento can thrive in their respective educational journeys.

As a member of CRISJ, Ryan has worked alongside faculty and students to help produce Building Justice, a podcast about race, immigration and social justice, which will be launching in the fall of 2021. Additionally, Ryan is also part of the CRISJ Literacy Project committee, which seeks to improve child literacy rates in the Sacramento region.

In addition, throughout the rest of 2021 and continuing into 2022, Ryan will be working with various community members and scholars to help Sacramento-area middle school students write and perform one or more theater pieces of their own choosing. The goal of this project is to empower students, through the process



Ryan McMurray

of research and writing, to tell stories and use theater as a venue to showcase these stories.

As a graduate of one of the best public K-12 school systems in the country, Ryan has always believed that every student – regardless of where they live, or how much money their family makes – deserves the chance to shine, both academically and socially. It is because of CRISJ that Ryan has a chance to engage more deeply in various social justice projects that will help him gain more hands-on experiences on how to create social change.

Events

During the 2020-2021 Academic Year, the Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) organized several virtual events at Sacramento State 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.

Trans Migracion: identidad Sin Fronteras

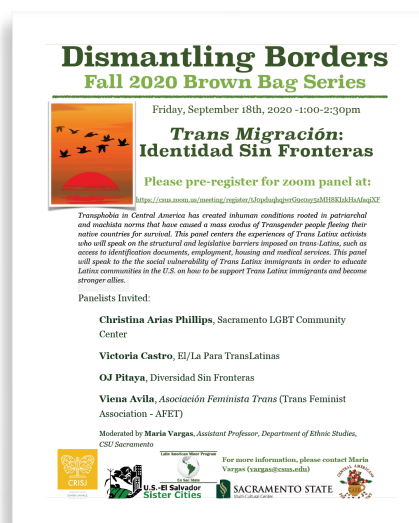
By Maria Vargas

On Friday, September 18th, CRISJ, in collaboration with the U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, the Latin American Minor Program at Sac State, the Sac State Multi-cultural Center, and Sac State's Central Americans for Empowerment (C.A.F.E.), co-hosted a panel focused the experiences of transgender migrants. I, Maria Vargas, Assistant Professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at Sac State, had the pleasure of moderating the zoom panel, "Trans Migración: Identidad Sin Fronteras" (Trans-Migration: Identity without Borders) that centered the voices and experiences of Transgender immigrant Central American and Mexican women. The panel featured Christina Arias Phillips a facilitator for the first Latinx women support group in Sacramento, Victoria Castro a health educator for El/La Para TransLatinas, a Bay Area organization and Viena Avila the director of Asociación Feminista Trans (Trans Feminist Association - AFET) based in Honduras. All panelists powerfully reminded the audience why Transgender people flee their home countries and opened up about their own brutalization experienced at the hands of police officers, military members, gang members, and border patrol.

The number of transgender immigrants fleeing state violence is overwhelming and continues to

grow. However, their experiences remain hidden in the silence of transphobic institutions such as I.C.E and the mainstream immigrant rights movement. Additionally, transgender immigrants endure extreme violence and neglect in their journey to the U.S. in their hopes of seeking political asylum. Each participant humanized this absence by sharing their stories that spoke to different issues such as the transphobia transwomen experience from other immigrants in the caravans and their social vulnerability once they arrived in the U.S. For example, Transgender immigrants face countless discrimination in their attempt to change their name and gender which can hinder them from finding employment, securing housing, and accessing medical services. Christina, Victoria, and Viena sparked a critical conversation that situated gender identity, transphobia,

and structural violence within a larger transnational context that incited urgency and called on solidarity between the larger LGBTQ and Latinx community. After the presentation, Sandra Chavez a student from the Ethnic Studies minor expressed to the women that they were her role model and inspiration for their resilience and determination in the face of such extreme oppression and I absolutely agree with Sandra.



Event flier.

You can watch the video of the event [here](#).

Uprooting Racism and Intersectional Oppression in Higher Education

By Stacey Ault and Susan Nakaoka

On September 23, 2020, CRISJ members Dr. Susan Nakaoka, Dr. Stacey Ault and Dr. Manual Barajas participated in a panel discussion facilitated by Dr. Heidy Sarabia. Rooted in Critical Race Theory, this dialogue explored the experiences of faculty and students of color at Sac State. Over 100 students and faculty attended virtually.

Dr. Barajas started the presentation by sharing quantitative data that outlined the enrollment of California State University students and faculty members by race/ethnicity. On most campuses the majority of faculty identify as white. In 2019, at Sacramento State this number was 62.9%.

Dr. Nakaoka and Dr. Ault shared their own lived experiences within the university settings as both students and faculty of color. Dr. Ault shared that she first stepped foot on Sacramento State's campus as a twenty year old transfer student with a two year old. She was also a poor, immigrant, Black single parent and these intersectional experiences deeply impacted her ability to find belonging at Sac State. Dr. Nakaoka shared her own experiences with race and racism throughout her time in higher education, including being called an intellectual terrorist in classics class during undergrad, and being greeted by "Konichiwa" during her MSW program.

Using these stories as a backdrop, the panel uplifted the trauma of racism experienced by staff and students including racialized microaggressions, isolationism and tokenism and imposter syndrome. They also discussed Critical Post Traumatic Growth, challenging the hierarchy of knowledge, and promising practices; focusing on interpersonal transformative work, classroom pedagogy & practices and implications for anti-racist policies. For example, ideas to combat microaggressions include: culturally affirming education practices, critical race pedagogy and the new Ethnic Studies requirement in the CSU.

Here are some of the promising practices that Dr. Ault and Dr. Nakaoka shared during their presentation:

Promising Practices to Embrace Critical Post Traumatic Growth

- * Challenges us to think beyond the deficit based view of trauma, into a more holistic analysis that names racialized traumatic stress and uplifts the whole person;
- * Re-examines narrative about trauma and suffering, remembering our agency and power;
- * Encourages us to understand how our complex navigation through the racialized spaces of life, enhances our ability to grow (Ault, 2017).

Promising Practices to Address Microaggressions

- * Focus on culturally affirming education (Allen, Scott and Lewis, 2013)
- * Teach critical race pedagogy
- * enhance liberatory identity development
- * Support the ethnic studies requirement
- * Hire more diverse full- and part-time faculty
- * Individually work on your own implicit bias
- * Focus on changes to system, not to students

Promising Practices to Address Isolation and Tokenism

- * Support cultural and affinity groups for staff & faculty;
- * Implement changes in criteria for new faculty that includes value for pedagogy, community service, different ways of knowing, and research/publishing;
- * Build relationships with PhD granting institutions;
- * Identify innovative ways to measure teaching effectiveness;
- * Support systemic changes to admissions, explicit and implicit curriculum;
- * Eliminate the use of biased instruments in tenure and student admission processes;
- * Support pedagogy of love and relationship.

The World on Fire: Environmental Justice Now

By Manuel Barajas

With burning fires choking life in the Sacramento region over the past few years, the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ) hosted a zoom forum with community experts and advocates on the topic “The World on Fire: Environmental Justice Now!” on October 15th, 2020. The human factor contributes to climate change, i.e., creating higher temperatures, droughts, intense and bigger fires, and social and environmental devastations. The forum examined ways that people mobilize against these destructive environmental threats at the local level and beyond. Experts with organizing backgrounds addressed the topic of environmental justice. The keynote speaker, Katie Valenzuela, a newly elected city council member in Sacramento, has served as the Director of California Environmental Justice Alliance. Herman Barahona, a lead organizer for United Latinos (UL), moderated the talk and Q & A session. After the keynote talk, there was a break with music and art that was curated by Dr. Luis Chavez, Music Lecturer and CRISJ Associate. Later, Dr. Michelle Stevens, a Professor of Environmental Studies, moderated a panel on environmental justice. Participants included Herman Barahona, Todd Sax, Chris Brown, and Nailah Pope-Harden. Over 200 people signed up for the zoom CRISJ forum.

Katie Valenzuela identified a perfect storm of fires, pandemic, and systemic oppression disproportionately hurt people of color with increasing levels of pollution, living in crowded homes, being essential workers, having no savings, and many being ineligible for public benefits. All these factors increase health risks for low-income communities of color. Katie provided a historical background of racist legalized exclusion and segregation that concentrated wealth and resources in white communities and denied them to those of color. Significantly, this inequality persists and grows as measured by income, health, and life expectancy. In

contestation to these trends, advocates push for policies that are more humane. For instance, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32 by Fabian Nuñez) identified low-income and minoritized communities needing support and required for the Air Resource Board to 1) establish an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, 2) outreach in environmental justice (EJ) communities before adopting plans and regulations, and 3) ensure the regulations do not disproportionately impact those communities. However, the focus prioritized reducing GHG emission targets, but only the electric power emissions declined and the other ones did not and some even increased, i.e., refineries and hydrogen production, general fuel use, oil and gas production. Communities of color live in closer proximity to harmful industries within 2.5 miles (making up to 65-86 percent of the people).

THE WORLD ON FIRE: Environmental Justice Now!
OCT. 15 2020 • 12:00 – 2:45pm

12:00 – 1:15 pm
Keynote Speaker:
Katie Valenzuela
Policy and Political Director of the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) and City Council Member-Elect to District 4.
Introduction by Herman Barahona, Latinos Unidos

1:15 – 1:30 pm
Art Showing
Featuring Art by:
Luis Campos Garcia, Mayra Ramos, and others.
Music curated by Luis Chavez.

1:30 – 2:45 pm
Panel
Moderated by:
Michelle Stevens, Department of Environmental Studies, Sacramento State

Panelists:
Nailah Pope-Harden, ClimatePlan's Policy Advocate
Chris Brown, ClimateChange Coalition
Dr. Todd Sax, Air Resources Control Board
Herman Barahona, United Latinos

Co-sponsored by:
• CRISJ
• Latinos Unidos
• Sacramento Services Not Sweeps
• Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival
• Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness
• Sacramento Area Black Caucus

Join us via Zoom!
Please Pre-Register Here

Event flier.

Katie recommends prioritizing equity and justice for historically underrepresented communities. Policy makers must talk to them and learn about their needs. For instance, the move to replace gas with electrical appliances or transition to solar panels must consider the realities of impoverished communities that their homes might not have the electric load capacity or strong roofs for the solar panels. To overcome shortsighted actions, it is important to have a democratic process from the beginning to design policies and actions that include and empower marginalized communities. This process moves away from top-down approaches that ignore communities in need and from tokenistic consultations that do not represent them, and moves toward approaches that partners with and empowers them with decision making in the process. This process leads to transparency, democracy, and healthier futures for all.

Following Katie's talk and the artistic intersession, Dr. Michelle Stevens moderated the panel on climate change and impacts on the local community and advocacy efforts. Herman Barahona with United Latinos (UL) focus on environmental justice in Sacramento and collaborate with other environment justice (EJ) groups. In their mission, they encourage meaningful and dignified participation in Sacramento Valley's Civic Life, including voting registration. In serving low-income communities, they found that many of the residents going to ER suffer from respiratory problems resulting from the poor air quality. The air pollution harms fetus development and creates respiratory problems such as asthma. Monitoring air quality is therefore very important. The Sacramento's Air Pollution map identifies air quality monitors, but they are non-existent in low-income/minority communities in South Sacramento. Troubling, all the main polluters in this area have permits to emit pollution and carry out their work, creating unhealthy living conditions. UL, therefore, builds coalitions with churches, schools, and other community non-profit partners to address these environmental inequities and demand social justice. Currently, UL are working to install air quality monitors in marginalized communities and to create awareness, build base support, and push for policies that prioritize equity and healthy communities.

Todd Sax works for the California Air Resource Board (CARB) since 2000, and serves as the chief in the carbon enforcer division. He also lectures in environmental studies at Sac State. CARB oversees the state's air quality and public health, and reviews local districts to ensure reasonable air quality plans, permits, and enforcement programs. Specifically, their program oversees fuel standards, vehicle and engine emission standards/certification, zero emission mandates, cap and trade low carbon fuels standard, short-lived climate pollutant programs, planning, and enforcement. Although new laws, policies, technology, and studies show better understanding of the problem, air quality disparities continue with a disproportionate environmental burdens on marginalized communities. Cal ENVIRONOsreen, a screening tool, identifies communities by census tract that are burdened by multiple sources of pollution. Communities of color are disproportionately in closer proximity to refineries, toxic industries, and heavy transportation near freeways. Therefore, the Community Air Protection Program seeks to focus on air quality improvement in disadvantaged communities, on environmental injustice, and on local solutions and community empowerment. Nonetheless, according to Todd, environmental injustice issues are substantial and widespread, and he recommends building bridges with communities to understand and address the problems more effectively.

Chris Brown, with Climate Change Coalition and civil rights organizer, believes we face an emergency in the climate and social justice. Linking these issues, Chris reflected on the Black Lives Matter movement with the killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and related the racial injustice with his experience growing up as a child in the border area. He remembered when a Chicano boy was killed by a sheriff, who claimed the boy had a knife. The border town was run by a white power structure, though 85% of the population were Chicanxs. Early in life, he learned that the knowledge from school was disconnected from the real world he lived in the 1960s. These early experiences with the abuse of power and making connections with the devastation of the environment motivated his social and environmental justice work. These intersecting systems of oppression shared the values that prioritize wealth over health and property over human life. Fighting

against this destructive logic, through his early involvement with Sac Climate Coalition, they successfully blocked the building of train lines transporting oil through the city and schools in predominately minority and low-income communities.

At the global level, Chris supports the Climate Emergency Declaration demand, because the Paris Agreement does not sufficiently address the problem of climate change and reflects the priorities of richer nations. In Chris's view, justice requires that marginalized communities be at the forefront of the planning and implementation at all levels of government, and should be the first to benefit from the move to a climate-safe economy. This social justice framework recognizes that historically marginalized and racialized communities/nations have been hurt the most by an extractive fossil-fuel economy. Simply, successful environmental solutions must be grounded with the concerns and interests of the most disadvantaged. Natural gas industries hurt the environment, and we need more incentives to move toward renewable energy and electrified transportation and buildings.

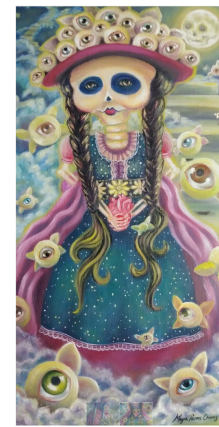
Exemplifying the bottom-up approach, Nailah Pope-Harden, an organizer and policy manager for Climate Plan addressed the question: What does environmental justice look like? She emphasized inclusivity and equity in the treatment of all people engaged in developing, implementing, and enforcing environmental rules; and this goal is achieved when everyone is protected from environmental and health hazards, and have equity in the decision-making process that shapes the health environments to live. Nailah shared personal stories of struggle for social and environmental justice. A natural gas company wanted the natural gas under her predominately community of color, but her community organized against it. They took five years to stop the gas project. During this period, her community had their public transportation removed. The nearest buses were too far away to walk to, and the walking routes had no tree shade or safe sidewalks to get the bus stops. It took 3 years of organizing and campaigning "walk one mile in our shoes" to restore public busing. From these battles, her community learned that they had to be proactive in seeking positive and constructive

improvements in their neighborhoods. Thus, they began a clean-up project to make their community more inviting, dignified, and healthy for all. Her young son has motivated her civic engagement to build a healthier future for him. To Nailah, justice is moving from the baseline and not having to fight every year against a system that places profit and power over the public well-being and bottom-up democracy. Being able to enjoy a healthy life is a human right.

You can watch the video of the keynote [here](#).

You can watch the video of the panel [here](#).

Art Showing for the World on Fire



Art by: Mayra Ramos



Art by: Carmen Avila



Art by: Rosa Angelica Sarabia

Solidarity in the Americas

By Michael Ring

During the fall semester of 2020, the Sacramento State Oscar Romero Committee organized a series of panels to encourage learning and solidarity across borders. On October 16th, 2020, the committee hosted a webinar entitled: "Solidarity in the Americas."

Organizers with groups facilitating solidarity with struggles for justice, dignity and liberation across Mesoamerica, including Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador and the US-Mexico border, shared their ideas and experiences with each other and with students, faculty and other members of the Sacramento State community.

Among the critical topics covered were how panelists became involved in the work they do now; the lessons panelists have learned from engaging in transnational activism; how the current social, economic, and health crises in the U.S. and the world have changed/shaped the work panelists are currently doing; and the ways someone interested in supporting their work can get involved.

We learned about the specific forms of resistance, and unique challenges, different communities face in Chiapas, Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, and along the U.S.-Mexico border. But we also heard about the commonalities these communities in resistance face, and in particular, the way U.S. interventionism in the region has had a profound effect on the local struggles.

The panel also addressed local resistance to global forces, and panelists share both the difficult struggles but also the beautiful and inspiring resistance local communities have mounted—highlighting the way people in the Americas continue to create "a world where many worlds fit," as Zapatistas have often emphasized.

We want to thank the organizations who partnered with the Oscar Romero committee to make this panel possible including:

- The Sacramento Zapatista Solidarity Coalition and The Chiapas Support Committee (<https://chiapas-support.org/>)
- The US-El Salvador Sister Cities (<https://www.elsalvadorsolidarity.org/>)
- The Sacramento Honduras Solidarity
- The UCLA Labor Center and Frontera Norte

Special thanks to all the representatives of the different groups who make up the Oscar Romero committee for all their efforts in facilitating these opportunities for education and action for social justice within and beyond the Sacramento State community. To learn more or join the work of the Oscar Romero committee, you can email Dr. Heidi Sarabia at heidysarabia@csus.edu

Dismantling Borders
Fall 2020 Brown Bag Series

Friday, October 16th, 2020 - 1:00-2:30pm

La Solidaridad: Transnational Activism in the Americas

Please pre-register for zoom panel at:
<https://csus.zoom.us/j/zoom/register/tJ0oc06hgzsu1tEgaVlokXMINFc1H218c359dk>

Activists across the Americas have worked and continue working on forging connections that cross and challenge nation-state-imposed borders. This panel brings together activists and scholars to explore the lessons learned from this work of transnational and transborder activism, and reflect on the challenges of caring out this work under the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Panelists Invited:

Mariana Rivera and Mario Galvan, Sacramento Zapatista Solidarity Coalition, & Mary Ann Tenuto, Chiapas Support Committee

Michael Ring, U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities

Ann Pratt, Sacramento Honduras Solidarity

Kendy Rivera, UCLA Labor Center and Frontera Norte

Moderated by Heidi Sarabia, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, CSU Sacramento

For more information, please contact Heidi Sarabia (heidysarabia@csus.edu)

Logos for CRISJ, U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, Sacramento State, and UCLA Labor Center are displayed at the bottom.

Event flier.

By Chris Castañeda and Nancy Lapp

The wide-ranging and insightful discussion examined U.S. policy in Latin America, both historical and recent, particularly with respect to the U.S. Presidential election. The participants were: moderator Michael Ring of U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities; Mario Guevara, co-coordinator of U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities; Karen Spring, coordinator of the Honduras Solidarity Network;

Dr. Heidy Sarabia opened the session and then introduced the moderator, Michael Ring. The three speakers, representing a variety of compelling viewpoints, gave brief introductory remarks and then engaged in a vibrant discussion while answering viewers' questions. Mario Guevara, co-coordinator of U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities, spoke directly from El Salvador. He discussed the background and activities of his organization, which has been working to help the Salvadoran people in numerous ways since its formation during the El Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992). He was followed by Karen Spring, coordinator of the Honduras Solidarity Network, who was speaking from her base in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. She described her organization, originally formed after the 2009 military coup in Honduras, which currently works with more than thirty community-based organizations located primarily in Canada and the U.S. Next, Dr. Kendy Rivera, a Senior Public Administration Analyst with the UCLA Labor Center and Frontera Norte, discussed her policy work through the Center, and its involvement in developing cross-border solidarity and support for worker organization. She elaborated on commercial and labor policies affecting migrant workers and struggles at the U.S.-Mexican border.

Due to the recent hurricanes affecting Latin America, panelists also discussed these and related environmental issues. The panelists pointed out that while a change in the U.S. presidency might lead to a different tone from the U.S., long-standing U.S. policy was not likely to change.

You can watch the video of the event here.

Community Empowerment Faire

By Stan Oden

The Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice, in conjunction with the Sacramento State University Community Engagement Center, held the second Community Empowerment Faire at Sacramento State University. This event unlike the first Community Empowerment Faire in 2019 was virtual, due to the COVID pandemic. This event was assisted by the staff of the Community Engagement Center who helped plan and coordinate the logistics of producing this event virtually. Their staff also assisted in the on-line event by student staff members who monitored the panel presentations in terms of time keeping as well as managing the chat room. While the event was virtual, there were seven community organizations who participated in providing vital information to students, faculty, and community members who attended the on-line event. There were over 90 individuals who observed and participated in the Faire. The community organizations and individuals who participated were:

- ✦ Poor People's Campaign— Rev. Kevin Carter, Faye Wilson Kennedy
- ✦ Women's Empowerment— Zoe Fishman, Kaitlyn Mack, Doris Cortez
- ✦ United Latinos - Daisy Pizano
- ✦ Sacramento Climate Coalition— Chris Brown
- ✦ SHARE Foundation— Ann Pratt, Jose Artisa
- ✦ Peace Action — Mario Galvan
- ✦ Sacramento ACT— Cecilia Flores

All of these individuals spoke about their organization's mission and their work in the communities in Sacramento and abroad in Honduras. The presentations were useful for students who need to understand the issues in the marginalized communities in Sacramento and abroad. There were questions asked and discussion in some of the presentations. In addition to the great

presentations there was a musical interlude during the event which featured a student jazz ensemble, Real Nice Time, from the Sacramento State University Music Department. We want to thank Dr. Stephen Blumberg, Director of the School of Music, for helping us with the jazz ensemble.

The event was coordinated and led by Dr. Stan Oden, Faculty Coordinator for Community Engagement. The Community Engagement Advisory Board created by CRISJ was also instrumental in advising on the planning of the event and being participants in the event itself. The coordination with the Community Engagement Center is part of the mission of CRISJ and we want to thank Dr. Ann Moylan, Director of CEC and Francine Redada, Senior Partnership Coordinator, for their leadership in working with CRISJ. We also want to thank the students at CEC including Anthony Fajardo for their assistance in making this event a success.

You can watch the video of the event [here](#).

CENTER ON RACE, IMMIGRATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FAIRE (VIRTUAL)
MARCH 17, 2021
NOON - 1:30PM

Students will be able to learn about community organizations and their services in two panels. Music interlude will be provided by the School of Music at Sac State

ORGANIZATIONS
 Peace Action
 Poor People's Campaign
 Sacramento Climate Coalition
 Sacramento Area Congregations Together
 SHARE Foundation
 United Latinos
 Women's Empowerment

Registration deadline: **March 14, 2021**
[REGISTER HERE](#)

For accommodations or questions contact:
 Dr. Stan Oden
 rso@csus.edu

www.csus.edu/crisj

Co-sponsored by:   

Event flier.

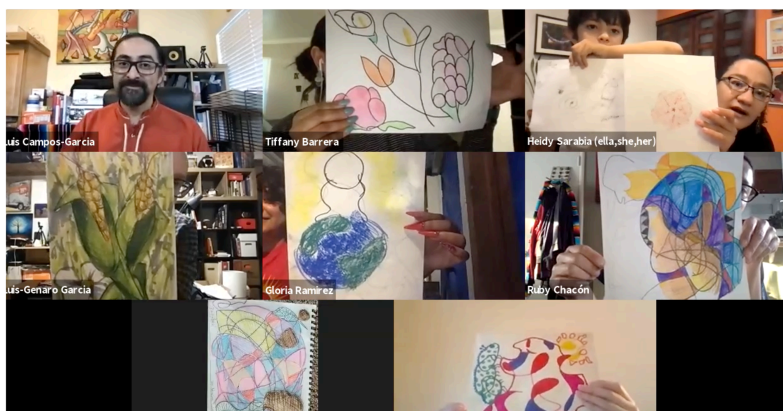
Art and Movement Virtual Art Workshop

By Heidi Sarabia and Luis Garcia

In collaboration with Sol Collective, the Sac State Chicana/Latinx Faculty and Staff Association, and the Sac State One World Initiative, CRISJ co-hosted an art workshop titled “Art and Movement: Justice, Resistance, and Residency.” The art workshop was led by artist Luis Ramón Campos García (Lurac), an interdisciplinary artist, graphic designer, cultural worker, educator, and migrant from Mexico City and current Arts Education Director at Sol Collective. The workshop, facilitated by Dr. Luis G. Garcia, professor of art education, engaged the artist and participants in conversations about their own art experiences and cultural backgrounds. The engagement allowed the artist, Lurac, to present examples of artists—both in Mexico and the United States—that were influenced by social justice dilemmas. For example, he showed the work of Mexican muralists, art from the artists of the Taller de

Grafica Popular (TGP, Popular Graphic Arts Workshop) in Mexico, the transnational work of Rini Templeton, and Chicano Art in the U.S. Lurac guided the participants on a series of art techniques to create art via quick sketches, a way to process current events and topics into visual interpretations. For example, Lurac also demonstrated how he could cut his mini sketches and create collages. The participants created art pieces with accessible materials such as ballpoint pen, graphite, and colored pencil. Their art reflected a symbolic image that showed the funds of knowledge of participants as a representation of social justice. Overall, Lurac showed participants how we can use art to document our perspectives on justice, represent it symbolically and continue to resist the challenges we face, by embracing our resiliency in the face of difficult times.

You can watch the video of the workshop [here](#).



Art created by the participants.

APRIL
1

Art and Movement:
Justice, Resistance, and Resiliency
VIRTUAL ART WORKSHOP

With Luis R. Campos Garcia (LURAC)
5:00pm-6:30pm

Join the Chicana/Latinx Faculty & Staff Association (CHLFA) in partnership with the One World Initiative, the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ), and Sol Collective, to learn about art and social movements while creating artwork! The workshop includes a brief introduction to the relationship between art and social movements in different parts of the world, with an emphasis on North America. Also, a guided drawing and collaging activity, designed to help you connect your personal experience with the experiences of other people, their communities, and your ancestors. Get inspired by social justice artwork, and their history, while you have fun awakening your creativity and critical thinking! No experience required. Join us to enjoy a space to nourish creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression to empower yourself and your communities!

Zoom meeting link: <https://csus.zoom.us/j/82121340215>

Materials:

- Paper to draw (copy paper works)
- Pencil
- Pencil sharpener
- Colored pencils or crayons, or markers
- A black marker (a Sharpie works)
- Construction paper (different colors)
- Scissors
- Glue stick, or white glue (Elmer's)

Extra materials:

- Decorative paper
- Old magazine you can cut
- A utility knife (X-Acto, or box cutter) if you already have one
- A cutting mat if you already have one, if not a piece of cardboard, or cardboard

For more information, please contact Dr. Heidi Sarabia (heidi.sarabia@csus.edu) or Dr. Luis Garcia (luis.garcia@csus.edu). Visit our website at: <https://sacstatecfsa.wordpress.com/>

Event flier.

Too Close to Slavery: Essential Labor in California Agriculture

By Manuel Barajas

On April 7th, 2021, the forum, “Too Close to Slavery: Essential Labor in California Agriculture,” addressed the savage inequalities in the production of food in the nation. Significantly, California agriculture feeds the nation producing over 1/3 of the vegetables and 2/3 of the fruits/nuts for the country [1]. In 2019, farms and ranches received over 55 billion in cash receipts. The backbone of this production are about 800,000 farm workers, mostly undocumented, some documented, and fewer guest workers. Most are Mexican-origin of indigenous ancestry who maintain their ethnic identities. These essential laborers make California the fifth largest economy in the world, yet they are among the most exploited and impoverished workers in society.

In the context of COVID 19, farm workers were recognized as essential workers, because without their foundational role in the food-supply chain the nation crumbles. Simply, no one can work without food [2]. However, farm workers were hit the hardest by the pandemic; partly because they live in small and crowded homes, take rides to work packed in cars, and work in close proximity to each other. As essential labor, they had no choice but to go to work and expose themselves/families to greater risks of getting the corona virus. In 2020, a two-trillion dollar pandemic financial package [3] excluded most farm workers from unemployment insurance, health coverage, and affordable housing. Farm workers are incorporated in a labor system whose history and culture are closely linked to slavery [4]. In the Americas, colonists’ laws and acts enslaved Indigenous people and then stole lives from Africa. Almost 100 years after the abolition of slavery, Civil Rights outlawed *de jure* racism in the United States. However, illegality and/or criminality — proxies for race, gender, and class— continue to produce unequal freedoms and justify exploitation. Today like in the past, the ethical solution is to extend citizenship and

full human rights to these workers. In 2021, the Biden Administration supported the proposed house bill, Farm Workforce Modernization Act (HR 5030) which is terrible for all farmworkers. Thus, CRISJ hosted the forum to illuminate the normalized oppression faced by farm workers, who remain disposable commodities and excluded from equitable membership in the nation.

Dr. Maria Vargas, Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies, moderated the forum and introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Ann Aurelia Lopez. Dr. Lopez is a distinguished scholar, advocate for farm working families, and author of the book, *The Farmworkers’ Journey* that illuminates the plight of forced migrants with labor exploitation, inadequate housing, and poverty. She also founded the Center for Farm Worker Families in the Central Coast of California that advocates for/attends to the basic and urgent needs of farm laborers. Dr. Lopez thoroughly outlined the global context of abuse and violation of human rights by neoliberal acts that force their migration and ultimately exploitation in the fields of California. Once independent farmers producing their own food in their homelands, farm workers are forced to migrate as undocumented, exploitable, and disposable workers to the United States. The symptoms of this global inequality—e.g., corrupted governments, poverty, and violence...— are blamed, yet the root causes are ignored: foreign investors, multinational corporations, and military interventions. In addition, the hidden legalistic infrastructures—e.g., denying them legal residence, labor/environmental protections, and access to housing —redesign slavery for modern times, trapping human lives in the most exploitative, dangerous, and lowly paid jobs in the nation. Comprehensive with evidence, insight, and compassion, Dr. Lopez calls on the nation to re-evaluate its values and activate its moral compass and to prioritize human and environmental rights for all people within and across borders.

The keynote speech was followed by an art exhibit and then by a panel of community and university experts. Regional artists addressed the forum's subject, "Essential Labor in California agriculture." Dr. Luis Chavez, music lecturer at Sacramento State, curated the selected art, documenting farm workers' experiences in the fields through visual, poetic, and musical expressions. The art was insightful and visionary illuminating the pathological economic relations in agriculture and offering visions of healthier relationships with food production, in which the environment, workers, and plants relate in harmony and not, in exploitation and domination.

The panelists also addressed farm workers' labor conditions, offered policy recommendations, and provided information/resources for farm working families. Irene de Barraicua, with *Organización de Lideres Campesinas en California, Inc.*, reported a growing use of guest workers (H2As) across the nation. Their labor contracts are unenforceable and keep them vulnerable to abuse. At the same time, ICE raids increased and targeted unauthorized local workers, who are replaced with guest workers that are more manageable. The guest worker programs have historically been abusive of labor and human rights. The proposed Farm Work Force Modernization Act would secure such a labor force, and provide narrow pathways to legalization for a few after laboring 5 to 10 years in farm labor and paying high fines.

Ruth Ibarra, with Nor-Cal Resist and Coalition of Labor Union Women - CA Capital Chapter, shared about her

family's experiences as migrant farm workers. They moved from crop to crop, lived in labor camps, spent extensive and uncompensated time preparing for work (getting up at 3:30 a.m., preparing the meals for work, dressing appropriately for work, traveling great distances...), faced hardships picking fruits, and at times *la migra* [INS, now ICE] showed up traumatizing children and families. She now works as a labor and immigrant

organizer, assisting through know your rights workshops, legal representation, filling out forms, fixing brake lights, helping with basic and urgent needs, etc. Luis Magaña, with *Organización de Trabajadores Agrícolas de California* (OTAC), has been a farm worker and an organizer for over 40 years, and often gets called by researchers and media news across the nation for insights on farm working conditions and policies. Luis provided an over view of the changing farm labor force: from the Braceros (1940s-1964), family farm workers (1965-1980s), and the *jornaleros* [day laborer farm workers], who became landless by the neoliberal acts

of the eighties (1990s-on). These workers' labor conditions reflect changes in the power structure, from when farmers were in control of the land and production to today when corporate investors far removed from the fields are in control of production and labor conditions. He proposes that farm workers do not need charity but the right to exist with dignity and equity and to own land to produce their own sustenance.

SACRAMENTO STATE

Too Close to Slavery: Essential Labor in California Agriculture

Wednesday, April 7th
Register in advance for event
[Click this link to register](#)

Noon-1:15p.m. Keynote speaker: Dr. Ann Aurelia Lopez
Founder of the Center for Farm working Families and author of *The Farmworker's*

1:15-1:30p.m. Expressions of social justice from local and regional artists
Curated by Dr. Luis Chavez, Assistant Professor, CSUS

1:30-2:45p.m. Understanding and Resisting Systems too Close to Slavery Panel
Irene de Barraicua, Public Relations Manager for *Lideres Campesinas*
Ruth Ibarra, Nor-Cal Resist and Coalition of Labor Union Women
Luis Magaña, Organization de Trabajadores Agrícolas de California (OTAC)
Eduardo Levanos, PhD candidate at University of Colorado, Boulder
Moderated by Dr. Maria Vargas, Assistant Professor, CSUS

Contact Dr. Manuel Barajas, crisj@csus.edu
for accommodation requests & questions
by April 2

Presented by CRISJ in partnership with:

SACRAMENTO STATE
CRISJ
CAMP
SACRAMENTO STATE
CFA

Event flier.

Eduardo Leivanos, Sacramento State alumni and Ph.D. candidate at University of Colorado, Boulder, comes from a family that still works in the fields. His first-hand experiences and scholarly work with farm labor helped conclude the panel presentation. He reflected on the historical and systemic relations of exploitation that have grown more sophisticated and powerful. In his research, workers today report experiences that mirror those of earlier times when farm workers were excluded from New Deal's labor laws (NLRB 1935 and FSLA 1938). The systems of exploitation, he highlighted, include racism, capitalism, and patriarchy that were born and/or universalized in the history of colonialism. People of indigenous ancestries remain subordinated disproportionately by these systems. Coloniality persists, and it is not an abstraction, but a historical, material, and continuous violence against humanity and environment. In his conclusion, no solution is too radical to end modern slavery.

References

- [1] CDFA.]<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Statistics/>
- [2] NPR. Subject: COVID-19 Threatens Food Supply Chain As Farms Worry About Workers Falling Ill. <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/18/816644358/covid-19-threatens-food-supply-chain-as-farms-worry-about-workers-falling-ill>
- [3] VOA News. <https://www.voanews.com/usa/trump-signs-spending-bill-pandemic-aid-package>
- [4] The Guardian. "While the coronavirus stimulus package contains billions to support agriculture businesses hit by Covid-19 shutdowns, there will be no bailout for the essential workers who still pick the nation's strawberries with their bare hands." <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/31/us-coronavirus-outbreak-california-farm-workers>

You can listen to the music featured on [Spotify](#)

You can watch the video of the keynote [here](#).

You can watch the video of the panel [here](#).

Expressions of Social Justice from Local and Regional Artists



Art by: Valeria Ortiz



Art by: Maria Martino



Art by: Carlos Mares



Art by: Christopher Ruiz

Teach-in with CRISJ and CFA

By Elvia Ramirez

On April 27, 2021, the California Faculty Association (CFA) and CRISJ jointly hosted a virtual event titled, "Teach In: Systemic Racism at Sacramento State & Higher Education." The purpose of the event was to discuss enduring patterns of racial inequality in higher education. Panelists included Drs. Manuel Barajas, David Moore, Stan Oden, and Elvia Ramirez. The panel was moderated by Dr. Margarita Berta-Avila, president of the Capitol Chapter of the CFA.

Dr. David Moore shared his personal experiences with systemic racism. Dr. Moore recounted his experiences with a faculty colleague at Sacramento State who called the cops on him in 2018, an experience recently documented in a *Mother Jones* story. Dr. Moore provided incisive critiques of the grievance process and overall inadequate institutional responses to systemic racism.

Dr. Elvia Ramirez reviewed institutional statistics and CFA reports outlining faculty and administrator demographics at Sacramento State. Statistics reveal that faculty of color are severely underrepresented, which results in cultural taxation for faculty of color.

Furthermore, despite being officially designated a Hispanic Serving Institution, Sacramento State has few Latinos/Latinxs in campus leadership roles.

Dr. Stan Oden provided a critical overview of systemic racism in faculty hiring practices. Dr. Oden recounted his experiences with an anti-racism panel he participated in several years ago where he critiqued the lack of faculty diversity in his department. Dr. Oden discussed the impetus for the formation of CRISJ and critically assessed the institution's response to Dr. David Moore's case.

Dr. Manuel Barajas reviewed faculty experiences with systemic racism. He shared preliminary findings from his qualitative study of Chicana faculty at Sacramento State. Findings from his study reveal that Chicana faculty experience hostile institutional

climates, salary disparities, isolation, and intersectional forms of inequality. He concluded by presenting recommendations for policy and practice.

The event concluded with an engaging Q&A session.



Event flier.

You can watch the video of the tech-in [here](#).

Un/Equal Freedoms: Expressions for Social Justice

By Monicka Tutschka

Setting foot in the public square to expose social injustice and to chart pathways to a better future is something civic-minded residents across the Sacramento Region from all walks of life do regularly, and with gusto. Too often, however, their messages go unnoticed, their plans fail to materialize, and their individual names are left unsung.

In Fall 2020, CRISJ faculty joined with municipal leaders, community activists, non-profit organizations, regional artists, Sacramento State students, administrators and staff to generate collective power for social justice, and to honor artists who perform social justice work for the community. The CRISJ arts subcommittee was born from this union. Members met weekly from October until May.

The subcommittee aimed to support artistic expressions for social justice, and to bring diverse communities together to offer responses to problems that cannot be avoided indefinitely. The subcommittee also wanted to help artists deeply impacted by the COVID19 pandemic.

On May 13, 2021, CRISJ launched an online art exhibition titled, *Un/Equal Freedoms: Expressions for Social Justice*. The exhibition is free to the public. Receiving almost 90 proposals, the selection committee chose roughly a third of them. The final exhibition contains 32 works created by professional and emerging artists, 25 from the Sacramento Region, 7 from Sacramento State. The subcommittee worked to create an inclusive artist call, and it performed extensive outreach to encourage diverse artists from across the university and the Sacramento Region to participate.

The art on display in the *Un/Equal Freedoms* online exhibition exposes the unequal freedoms within our society and offers visions of a better future. Various artistic mediums are represented, including digital media, mixed media,

UN/EQUAL FREEDOMS: EXPRESSIONS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE



"THE DREAM IS NOT FOR YOU" MIXED MEDIA PAINTING,
BY JOSE GUERRERO @THEGFXMECH

The artworks in this exhibition reckon with the unequal freedoms embedded in our social structures. These pieces were made by professional and emerging artists, individuals and groups, students, and community members. Viewed as a group, these works offer artistic expressions for social justice, laying bare these unequal freedoms, giving marginalized voices a space for expression, representing forward action, and ultimately offering a vision for an improved society with greater equality and freedom for all.

VIEW THE EXHIBITION ONLINE
www.csus.edu/crisj



SACRAMENTO STATE
Redefine the Possible

csus.edu/csus.edu/crisj

Event flier.

sculpture, painting, poetry, dance, spoken word, oral history, and print. The launch of the exhibition was celebrated by a lively online party that can be viewed on CRISJ's YouTube channel.

As expressions of solidarity and appreciation, CRISJ distributed \$500 to individual artists, \$1000 to art groups who participated in the exhibition. The generosity of the Sacramento Regional Community Foundation, the City of Sacramento's Office of Arts + Culture, NextGen Policy, ASI Inc., the College of SSIS, private donations, and CRISJ made these small artist grants possible. Reducing the exploitation of artists was part of the subcommittee's mission.

The online exhibition also contains 31 written reflections by scholars, artists and social justice activists. Twenty-one faculty from various academic departments at Sacramento State, and 10

activists from the Sacramento Region wrote these reflections. Their thoughtful ruminations disseminate critical knowledge about the various social justice themes in the artworks. Almost all reflections were composed in collaboration with the artists, reinforcing the CRISJ's effort to build solidarity between people situated differently across the university and the community.

The CRISJ arts subcommittee thanks everyone who participated in the *Un/Equal Freedoms: Expressions for Social Justice* online art exhibition. It was truly a collaborative effort. We intend to distribute tokens of appreciation at a summer potluck celebration.

To view the exhibition, go to www.crisj.org. For more information about the exhibition, contact CRISJ affiliate, Professor Monicka Tutschka, tutschka@csus.edu.



MADU, KACHISIDE "I CAN'T BREATHE"

UN/EQUAL FREEDOMS: EXPRESSIONS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The artworks in this exhibition reckon with the unequal freedoms embedded in our social structures. These pieces were made by professional and emerging artists, individuals and groups, students, and community members. Viewed as group, these works offer artistic expressions for social justice, laying bare these unequal freedoms, giving marginalized voices a space for expression, representing forward action, and ultimately offering a vision for an improved society with greater equality and freedom for all.

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SACRAMENTO STATE
Redefine the Possible

www.csus.edu/crisj

Event flier.

You can watch the video of the opening party [here](#).

Public Statements

CRISJ is a network of individuals committed to social justice; therefore, we are deeply engaged in working toward creating a better society. When necessary, we use our voices and expertise to engage in public discussions around issues that affect our communities.

Advocacy Work

By Manuel Barajas

This past year, CRISJ wrote and joined advocacy statements in defense of human rights and social justice. Specifically, xenophobic nationalism and fascist forces aggressively and violently fought to secure a supremacist social order as the demographics of the nation become more diversified. The former President, Trump, proposed and changed the procedures for establishing a credible fear for asylum, denying victims of violence/persecution (e.g., domestic abuse, gang violence, sexual orientation, political views...) their human right to pursue a safer and healthier life. The changes to asylum complicated the process and excluded most applicants. His administration also shifted the location to petition for asylum, requiring Central American asylum seekers to first petition within their neighboring country, which very often is no more safe than theirs was. CRISJ wrote to state senators/house representatives asking for their intervention and highlighting the United States' role in dislocating people from their homeland via its political-economic policies like NAFTA/CAFTA and/or military interventions.

CRISJ also asked congress leaders to block Donald Trump's executions of Brandon Bernard, Dustin Higgs, Lisa Montgomery, Alfred Bourgeois, and Cory Johnson. These lame duck executions expressed cruel and inhumane abuse of power by the former administration. In the context of the pandemic, economic downturn, and manifest systemic racism, the executions scheduled between December 10th and January 14th, 2021 projected the image of a nation that is insensitive to the lives of struggling communities that

have already been dealt much suffering and loss. Therefore, CRISJ joined other advocates and asked government officials to block the lethal abuse of power, and help build a democracy that works for all people. Although not a successful effort, inaction certainly guarantees failure.

CRISJ has collaborated with advocates of the homeless, hosting community partners on campus to create awareness of the inhumane conditions the unhoused face. The Sacramento Homeless Union, Poor People's Campaign (SPPC), Regional Coalition to End Homelessness (SRCEH), among many others call the war on the poor immoral. CRISJ agrees and supports this long and difficult struggle for equity and justice for people who are denied dignity, equity, and healthy lives and homes in the capitol of the richest state in the nation. The normalized coldness and selfishness is manifest in the denial of affordable housing and living wages, in the persistent removal of homeless encampments, and the misattribution of fault to individuals hurt by systemic-institutional failures in the larger society. How can it be that California produces more wealth like in no other time in history, yet more people are impoverished, unhoused, and struggling to breathe fresh air? In the coming years, CRISJ commits to support bottom-up efforts to create a democratic and healthy world that leaves no one behind.

One of the advocacy efforts, in collaboration with CFA, focused on equity and representation for faculty of color at Sacramento State and CSU system. Two years ago, Dr.

David Moore, a Black Professor in Sacramento State's Business school, was wrongfully removed from a classroom with students by police officers called by a former Dean of the College of Business. [Mother Jones](#) exposed this disturbing story, "A Black Professor's Colleague Called the Cops on Him. What the School Did Next Made it Much Worse" (December 17, 2020). Accordingly, as a faculty adviser who had recently stepped down from that role, Dr. Moore attended a class-club hybrid course in a supportive role, but a former Dean Varsheny—who was a guest speaker for the students—didn't want him there. When Dr. Moore refused to leave, Dr. Varsheny called the police, who immediately arrived. Dr. Moore explained the situation to the officers, who then left it for the professors to discuss the issue with the dean. This incident traumatized Dr. Moore, who is well aware of the dangers Black men face in the hands of police. The case underwent a university review process; and the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity determined the incident did not constitute racial discrimination. The problem is deep and historical, systemic and widespread, and demands transformational leadership and courage to change the institutional legalistic process that has secured an unhealthy and toxic work place for Black and Brown people. Like the George Floyd tragedy, this case illuminates a widespread shared experience among faculty of color, particularly those who have been historically and continuously marginalized.

The faculty hiring/retention trends clearly show Sacramento State and the CSU system have been closed

and unwelcoming to faculty of color, particularly Black and Brown (of indigenous ancestry). At Sacramento State, for every 36 Asian American students there is 1 Asian faculty; for every 30 Black students, 1 Black faculty; for every 120 Chicanx students, 1 Chicanx faculty; and for every 10 White students, 1 White faculty. Sacramento State has the second worst diversity gap out of 23 campuses (CFA Equity Report 2020). The racial-cultural taxation [exploitation] and hostile environment are the norms for minoritized faculty in whitened departments/colleges. The gap in diversity among students and faculty creates extraordinary challenges to minoritized and first-generation students accessing quality education.

Dr. Moore's experience is not an isolated incident to the Sacramento State campus; this is a systemic problem across the CSU. CRISJ called on Chancellor Castro and his office to investigate this case and others on this campus and system wide. A critical review of the process is warranted, because those involved in the process—lacking diversity and values of equity and social justice—have failed too many people, like Dr. Moore. Specifically, the review should examine the procedural outcomes when faculty of color file a grievance and when they are charged with one. The process is not objective but reflects hierarchies of power along race, gender, class, nationality. Grounding the process in these historical realities and affirming the standpoints of historically marginalized communities will help us reduce the gaps in the ideals and practice of social justice.

Projects

CRISJ continues to work on and develop innovative projects to serve the Sac State University and Community. We want to share and showcase some of the upcoming projects we are working on. We encourage faculty, staff, and students to contact coordinators and join us in our efforts to build a just, equitable, and accessible society.

Book Drive

By Susan Nakaoka and Kristina Victor

The Center for Race, Immigration and Social Justice coordinated a book drive for students impacted by school and library closures due to COVID-19. Social Work's Undergraduate Program Director Susan Nakaoka, Political Science's Assistant Professor Kristina Flores Victor, and undergraduate Sac State students Bowen Neumann (Social Work) and Amber Franks (Psychology) helped to collect, sort and deliver over 2,100 books to Walnut Grove Elementary and Bates Elementary schools, which are located in the Sacramento River Delta. The book drive targeted students from farmworker families that live in rural areas in the Delta area - an area that has limited internet capacity which makes distance learning extremely difficult.

The book donations came from Sac State faculty and staff from across campus, who were willing to arrange for pick-up and drop-offs of books during the pandemic.



Donations to Walnut Grove Elementary School.



Donations to Bates Elementary School. Elementary School.

Professor Nakaoka, whose father is from Walnut Grove, stated "we were fortunate to get a huge outpouring of support from the Sac State community in terms of book donations. Our students worked hard over the summer months to organize the donations, and we just made the final drop off of books in March. The school principals were thrilled to get more books in the hands of their students, since libraries are still closed and internet options are out of reach for most."



Former site of Prof. Nakaoka's family bait/home in Walnut Grove.

Building Justice Podcast

By *Monicka Tutschka*

CRISJ members know how to excel as professional academics. We submit articles and book manuscripts to academic presses. We present our formal research papers at discipline-specific conferences and serve as panel discussants. We deliver scripted addresses to large audiences. We advise political, social, cultural, economic and scientific elites. We take pride in these pursuits. But we also acknowledge that these pathways for disseminating knowledge—like all structured pathways—have their limitations, their constraints.

A diverse and interdisciplinary group of committed CRISJ members spent Fall 2020/Spring 2021 reflecting on these limitations, and imagining how a podcast could disseminate knowledge to the Sacramento State community and Sacramento Region differently. Active participants met weekly over zoom and included: Professors Basia Ellis, Danielle Slakoff, Heidy Sarabia, Kristina Victor, Luis Chavez, Manuel Barajas, Mark Brown, Monicka Tutschka (chair), and graduate student Ryan McMurray.

The committee took various concrete actions over the 2020-2021 academic year. Most importantly, it recorded and edited 9 podcasts, and CRISJ plans to launch them in Fall 2021. In preparation for launch, the committee

completed a myriad of administrative tasks. It settled on “Building Justice” as its official podcast name; it paid a local artist to produce the podcast’s signature mark (\$500); it purchased a podcast channel; it worked with university web services to learn how to connect the channel to CRISJ’s official website; it took a training session on Microsoft Teams to facilitate communication between members; it held a community-wide music competition, selected the podcast theme song, and paid the winner a small stipend (\$500); and it crafted a podcast best practices “tool-kit” to help future participants record and edit quality podcasts.

Substantively, the podcast committee deliberated extensively about the provisional shape of the ‘Building Justice’ podcast. At the most general level, the committee strove to impose a structure that would guide podcast participants without over-directing them. It aimed to create some unity and continuity across podcasts without unnecessarily

stifling difference and diversity. The committee always acknowledged that the shape of the “Building Justice” podcast will alter over time, as the committee matures, new members join, new conversations begin, priorities evolve and different social justice issues move to the



Podcast logo.

center of public debate, and work to obscure other equally ultimate concerns.

To date, the committee has decided that each podcast will include at least a pair of interlocutors. Together, they will decide the conversational roles they wish to play. They will record an informal “dinner table” conversation, preferably under 40 minutes with breaks. Each intimate dialogue will focus upon significant matters of public and academic concern that align with CRISJ’s mission. Generally speaking, the academic conversation will be delivered through language that is accessible to students, community members, and academics working in diverse disciplines. Interlocutors may imagine the campus community as their target audience, or they can imagine a broader audience.

Interlocutors are encouraged to discuss their personal and professional history, and their social standing. They are invited to narrate how these variables shape their

research, their place within the profession and the community. Interrogating how their research questions emerged, why they selected particular research methods, and how interactions within and outside the academy nourished, shaped or impeded their intellectual and professional progress is welcome.

The CRISJ podcast committee will resume its work in Fall 2021. We will be making decisions about how best to continue producing quality podcasts, how to recruit and empower new podcast interlocutors from the university and the Sacramento region, how to effectively market the “Building Justice” podcast, how to raise funds for the project, and how to support ourselves as busy academics who are committed to the podcast project, but who also play numerous other professional, political, and social roles. If you would like to join the CRISJ podcast committee or if you want to learn more, please contact committee chair Monicka Tutschka tutschka@csus.edu.

Upcoming Podcasts

Upcoming Building Justice pláticas/talks with:

- ❖ **Danielle Slakoff**, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Stan Oden**, Professor of Political Science, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Monicka Tutschka**, Professor of Political Science, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Manuel Barajas**, Professor of Sociology, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Basia Ellis**, Assistant Professor of Education, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Luis Chavez**, Lecturer of Music, CSUS Sacramento
- ❖ **Kristina Victor**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Mark Brown**, Professor of Political Science, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Heidy Sarabia**, Associate Professor of Sociology, CSU, Sacramento
- ❖ **Erik Ramirez**, Dreamer Resource Center Coordinator, CSU Sacramento
- ❖ **Ryan McMurray**, Graduate Student of Sociology, CSU Sacramento

CRISJ Mentoring Program: Research for Social Justice

By Elvia Ramirez

During spring 2021 semester, members of the CRISJ Mentoring Committee met to discuss, plan, and develop the CRISJ Mentoring Program. The goal of the CRISJ Mentoring Program is to provide undergraduate students at Sacramento State with quality research experiences and faculty mentorship. According to the Association of American Colleges & Universities, undergraduate research is considered a “high-impact educational practice” that positively impacts students’ educational experiences and outcomes. For example, undergraduate research programs can help increase student retention and persistence and increase students’ competitiveness for graduate school. Unfortunately, not all students have access to undergraduate research opportunities. Historically underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation college students often lack access to these resources. Furthermore, studies show that comprehensive colleges and universities, such as the California State University (CSU) system, typically lack institutional environments and resources that promote and facilitate undergraduate student research and scholarship (DeAngelo, 2010). The CRISJ Mentoring Program will thus help fill a void in the higher education landscape.

The CRISJ Mentoring Program aims to provide students with research experiences, faculty mentorship, and opportunities for developing research skills that can be employed in academic and community settings. Most

importantly, the CRISJ Mentoring Program strives to cultivate critical scholars and advocates for social justice.

The CRISJ Mentoring Program will be structured as a year-long undergraduate research program. The pilot program is set to launch during the 2021-22 academic year. During fall 2021 semester, students in the CRISJ

Mentoring Program will enroll in a research methods course taught by Dr. Elvia Ramirez. During spring 2022 semester, students will join research teams led by CRISJ faculty mentors. These faculty mentors will guide students through their research projects.

A special thanks to all members of the CRISJ Mentoring Committee for helping design and implement the CRISJ Mentoring Program. The CRISJ Mentoring Committee is comprised of students and faculty,

including Manuel Barajas, Elizabeth Contreras, Alma Flores, Ricardo Grijalva, Amy Liu, Ryan McMurray, Elvia Ramirez, Heidy Sarabia, and Debra Welkley.

References:

DeAngelo, L. (2010). Preparing for the PhD at a comprehensive institution: Perceptions of the 'barriers.' *The Journal of the Professoriate* 3(2): 17-49.

Faculty can apply to be a mentor [here](#).



Art by: Rini Templeton(riniart.com)

Literacy Empowerment Project

By Araceli Feliz

Virtual meetings of the CRISJ Literacy Empowerment Project subcommittee were held on February 19, 2021 and April 22, 2021 to discuss empowering marginalized youth in Sacramento through the use of multi-modal literacy. In this framework, students' cultural wealth is highlighted by showcasing their literacy abilities gained in the home or community in forms such as storytelling, singing, artistic expressions, etc. The goal is to create a connection or bridge between school campuses and the community with the objective of developing academic and social empowerment in students through literacy.

The CRISJ Literacy Empowerment Project subcommittee chair is CRISJ Faculty Associate, Dr. Araceli Feliz. The subcommittee members include CRISJ Director Dr. Manuel Barajas; Dr. Susan Nakaoka, CRISJ Faculty Associate; Julius Austin, Promise Zone Coordinator; Sac State Students Michael Brim, Diana Suarez, and Ryan McMurray.

The subcommittee identified storytelling/ counternarratives and artistic expressions as the two focal strands for the project's efforts. These two strands will expand CRISJ's efforts to address the topic of literacy empowerment. The inaugural CRISJ Literacy Empowerment Project centers on developing lyrical expressions in the form of a playwriting workshop culminating in a performance during the 21/22 school year. The intended target population is 6th -8th graders focused at one school site as an after-school enrichment opportunity. While the

school site is yet to be determined, the Promise Zone was discussed as the intended focal area for the project's efforts. Funding sources and partnerships are being explored to support the project. Project planning will continue in early fall. The subcommittee will resume meetings in August.



CRISJ Literacy Empowerment Project

Please Join Our Efforts!

Empower marginalized youth and highlight cultural wealth through community and home literacies. Our inaugural project centers on lyrical expressions through an afterschool enrichment playwriting workshop and culminating performance during the 2021-2022 school year.

Meetings resume August 2021



Contact CRISJ Faculty Associate Dr. Araceli Feliz for more information: feliz@csus.edu

Project flier.

CRISJ Research Collaboration with UC PromISE

By Mercedes Valadez and Heidy Sarabia

Dr. Mercedes Valadez (Department of Criminal Justice), Dr. Heidy Sarabia (Sociology Department), and Dr. Basia Ellis (Education Department) served as the CSUS campus liaisons to Principal Investigator, Dr. Laura Enriquez to collect data that seeks to better understand the experiences of undocumented college students in California 4-year public universities. This research is part of the UC Collaborative to Promote Immigrant and Student Equity (UC PromISE), and survey data was collected between March and June 2020, with a total of 1,277 participants. CRISJ supported this collection of data at Sac State among undocumented immigrants. You can see the finding from the survey [here](#).

In addition, a special issue in the *Journal of Latinos and Education* has been published with various articles informed by the data collected from the surveys. For example, one article explores the factors that shape the use of academic resources (Sarabia et.al. 2021). This article was written by CRISJ Faculty Associate, Dr. Sarabia, and CRISJ Affiliated students, Laura Zaragoza and Sonia Tinoco. Another article in this special issue, co-authored by Dr. Valadez, will focus on the extent to which legal vulnerability, campus climate, and resource

use are associated with positive and negative academic engagement (Valadez et al., 2021).

CSU Sacramento accounted for 30 survey participants. The next stage of the research project, which is also partially funded by CRISJ, focuses on collecting qualitative data. Dr. Sarabia and Dr. Valadez, along with some Sac State students will be conducting in-depth interviews to get more details on the experiences of undocumented immigrant students at Sac State.

More information about this and related projects can be found online at: <https://ucpromise.uci.edu/>

References:

Sarabia, H, L. E. Enriquez, V. E. Rodriguez, L. Zaragoza, and S. Tinoco. (2021). What Helps Students Get Help?: An Exploratory Analysis of Factors that Shape Undocumented College Students' Use of Academic Resources. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. 20(3).

Enriquez, L.S., Valadez, M., Ayón, C., & Jefferies, J. (2021). Legal Vulnerability and Campus Environment: Assessing Factors that Affect the Academic Engagement of Undocumented College Students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. 20(3).

Highlights from the survey data:

Respondents have sometimes or often heard or witnessed faculty, staff, students, or surrounding community express negative feelings about undocumented immigrant communities.	CSUS Respondents (N=30)	All CSU Respondents (N=610)
Faculty	10%	9%
Staff	10%	7%
Community	20%	21%
Students	43%	26%

These findings suggest that the students at Sac State experience learning or witnessing faculty, staff, or students, or surrounding community express negative feelings about undocumented immigrant communities at higher rates than other campuses, which means that Sac State should continue its work towards creating an inclusive campus climate by expanding trainings and workshops as well as creating student peer specific trainings.

Join the CRISJ team and work with us on building a more just world through our academic, activist work, in our classroom and communities!

To learn more about our upcoming programs, visit our website: www.csus.edu/crisj

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We also want to specially recognize Ana R. Gutierrez, Administrative Coordinator II ANTH, for her exceptional contributions and support to the CRISJ mission. Her expertise, dedication, and compassion were foundational to the