“LA ESCUELITA DE VENUS”

“It’s a social justice issue,” Jack Rivas stated while others on Adelante Charter School’s governing board murmured in agreement. “That’s what first caught my interest in the school and that’s why I’m serving on the board.”

Formerly Cesar Chavez Charter School, Adelante Charter School (ACS) is a bilingual immersion school in Santa Barbara’s east side. Several UCSB students, faculty, and staff are involved with the school: on the board (Jack Rivas (Student Affairs), Brianna Aguilar (Gevirtz School of Education), Monique Limon (Graduate Division), me (CHST and CSI)), as educational collaborators: Richard Duran (Gevirtz School of Education); and as consultants Lisa Figueroa (EAOP). The 5th and 6th grade classes at ACS also participate in UCSB’s Kids In Nature program.

During the Winter Quarter 2011, the CHST Department joined the collaboration, through “La Escuelita de Venus,” an event put on for all ACS students by the undergraduates enrolled in CHST 150 “Mesopotamic Technologies.”

“When hicimos los centros con los estudiantes de UCSB era increíble!” – Diego

Students in CHST 150 combined ancient Mesopotamic cultural expressions with modern science concepts to create culturally relevant learning activities. On March 17, 37 UCSB students interacted with over 200 Adelante students through six different small group activities.

At one station, a team of UCSB undergrads introduced ACS students to Mayan architecture and then invited them to work in groups of three to create Lego replicas of specific structures from Tikal, Palenque, and Chich’én Itza.

“A mí me gusto cuando hicimos el pirámide porque yo hice la parte de arriba.” – Johan

“Me gustó que pude hacer muchas cosas con el pirámide.” – Deseree

“A mí me gusto cuando hicimos un pirámide de lego porque era divertido.” – Diego

Another station found ACS students acquiring Nahuatl vocabulary through a game of lotería. Aztec calendric terms were combined with various elements of everyday culture to replace the familiar characters of traditional lotería.

“Me gusta la lotería y también la ropa de usted.” – Angela

“A mí me gustó jugar lotería porque yo gané un bate de béisbol.” – Richard

(continued on Page 7)

inside:

Chair’s Message
NACC 2011
Faculty Spotlight
Honors Colloquium
Mayan Sudoku
It has been a very difficult year for the field of Chicana and Chicano Studies, Raza Studies, and Ethnic Studies. As part of the overall political attacks on immigrants, Latinas/os, Mexicans, and Chicanas/os, Arizona’s governor signed the controversial law (HB2281) banning Mexican American Studies in K-12.

There is no doubt that HB2281 will prove to be detrimental to the well-being and intellectual development of Chicana and Chicano students. In fact, a series of research reports have been generated documenting the positive effects of the program that the bill eliminated—the Mexican American Studies program—on the educational achievement of Chicano/as students. As summarized below:

“A Tucson Unified School District report issued March 11, 2011 concludes that TUSD’s Mexican American Studies program give students a measurable advantage over non-MAS students in passing standardized AIMS reading and writing tests, and that MAS students graduate at higher levels than their non-MAS counterparts [http://www.saveethnicstudies.org/proven_results.shtml].”

Debates over the value of programs like the one eliminated in Arizona often overlook the positive effects that Mexican American Studies and Ethnic Studies have on students who may not be familiar with students of Color, or their culture or history. As the most recent U.S. Census reminds us, Latinos/as are the fastest growing demographic group in the country. In California the majority of students in K-12 are Latinos/as. Mexican American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Raza Studies and Chicana and Chicano Studies will benefit all students, as they are prepared in higher education to take professional roles making them more likely to take leadership positions giving them considerable decision-making power in all social and economic arenas. The future of California and the rest of the country will depend on having educated citizen-leaders who understand and appreciate our diverse constituencies. Contrary to the claims of its opponents, Mexican American Studies will not lead to ethnic conflict and divisiveness; ignorance surely will. Fear and hostility are fostered by a lack of knowledge. Learning the history, culture, language, and struggles of different groups in the United States leads to mutual respect, greater civic unity, and more effective political engagement.

Learning the history, language and culture of the dominant group—whites, especially privileged white men—was the single unquestioned standard to which all other groups in our society were required to adhere. The educational success of People of Color depended in part on their ability to assimilate into the dominant cultural paradigms. However, the United States has become a truly multicultural nation where all students now need the skills and flexibility to understand a multiplicity of worldviews and, most importantly, not be threatened by the diversity. White students, too, will be disadvantaged by an educational system that provides them with anything less. Furthermore, technological advances and increasing globalization require educated citizens to be adroit at engaging diversity and navigating multiple social realities, languages, and cultures. As college educators, we should all urge university students of all backgrounds to take as many Ethnic Studies courses as they can, regardless of their majors. The skills and understanding they provide are rapidly becoming prerequisites for professional success as well as real political effectiveness.

In solidarity,  
Aída Hurtado  
Chair of the Department of Chicana/o Studies and Luis Leal Endowed Chair

Look for our Department Colloquium Series to continue next year:

“Come Take a Sip of Knowledge”

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Urbana  
TRIBAL STUDIES  
Department Faculty  
Gerardo Aldana  
Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval  
Edwina Barvosa  
Dolores Inés Casillas  
Mario García  
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JEANNETTE MARTINEZ and JOSÉ CAMERO presented their Chican@ Studies Department Honors thesis research at our annual colloquium on May 24, 2011.

Ms Martinez worked with Professor John S.W. Park (Asian American Studies) to investigate the experiences Latina/os have had with immigration officials in the Inland Empire. Ms Martinez interviewed government representatives from enforcement officers to politicians as well as members of her neighborhood who have been in contact with immigration officials. In her presentation, Ms Martinez described how federal agencies work with local law enforcement to provide incentives for the deportation of greater numbers of undocumented persons. During her research, she encountered various forms of community activism countering these pressures, but Ms Martinez was surprised by the degree of legal runaround she experienced in seeking data. This she attributed to a continuation of immigration policies prevalent throughout the twentieth century.

Mr. Cambero worked with Professor Gerardo Aldana to investigate the meaning of graffiti to individuals who engage in tagging. Mr. Cambero conducted a series of interviews with a friend from elementary school who left behind tagging on public architecture; “Pedro” now only produces “pieces” on paper using a variety of media. Mr. Cambero found that Pedro intentionally changed his artistic production so that he now only produces artwork for two reasons: either a friend or acquaintance requests that he create a piece using that person’s name; or he creates pieces on his free time as an escape from the pressures of everyday life. Mr. Cambero suggested in his presentation that his friend was engaging an Anzalduan Tlilli Tlapalli consciousness through tagging, outside of any higher education training.

Both honors projects demonstrated the critical role that Ethnic Studies scholarship plays in the academy today, giving voice to citizens who otherwise go ignored or are actively silenced by traditional scholarship.

The Department of Chican@ Studies wholeheartedly congratulates Ms Martinez and Mr. Cambero on their outstanding Honors projects!
NEWS: Another question that is somewhat related is: do you think there are any intellectual fads that have passed their limelight? Things that you think now just need to be either discarded or rethought.

RAS: Well, I think the irrational model is recognized as passé. I think maybe some focus on identity politics, which was a big fad too in the 80s and 90s. There was a field called new social movements, too, where people were sort of organizing. And there was a discourse around strategy or identity, and even though obviously folks are still organizing around identities it’s not the end-all/be-all of what they’re doing. Possibly that moment has not become passé, but is not as important as it used to be.

NEWS: And they feed into your project? The perspective that you have on these things fading away?

RAS: The movements I’m studying around hunger strikes are led by Chicano students, and so I think they have some [basic questions.] Who am I? Who are we? Where have I come from? What do we want to build? That kind of thing. Some of the people that are talking with me—that were on strike or that were involved in the strikes—[t]he notion of indigeneity was really important for a lot of [them]. Not for the majority of people, but for a lot. I think that lots of different factors—maybe the alternatives of the Soviet Union and socialism—had collapsed and something new was emerging. In ’94 things came to a head with the Zapatista movement. And oh, by the way, that happened to be a very strong moment in the Chicano Movement too. So it’s hard to characterize what these movements were about. Yes it was about identity. It was about something more than that. And what was the identity? I’m not really clear. Because I think they were unclear themselves.

NEWS: Who were two unique contributors to your academic aspirations and formation?

RAS: They’re both teachers. Undergrad I had a favorite professor, a political scientist, John Warner who did his thesis on C. Wright Mills. He looked at political power and political sociology and was somebody that was just very, very formative for me when I was an undergraduate. So I was a political science undergraduate major, and taking his classes really opened my eyes. It was exciting to come to class, buy books, read them. Underline them. Take notes.

Then my grad advisor, grad mentor, was Edna Bonich, a leading Marxist sociologist on race. She developed a notion of how racism and capitalism intersect and interlink with one another. And she was studying the garment industry too, in the early ’90s. It wasn’t just the garment industry per se. It was labor, which fit into the whole kind of Marxist motif that it’s going to be the people that are leading the revolution. Which is what Mills derisively called the labor metaphysic. It’s some kind of non-religious faith that there was going to be a new world that was going to be created and was going to be led by the working class. It really turned me on to the further development of my incipient Marxism that came from the underground.

NEWS: You have a couple of kids and a partner who also works full time? Do you have any rituals or anything that help you keep some kind of balance, or do you worry about balance?

RAS: We’re unbalanced. [Laughs] So, you know, it’s something to aim for, some kind of elusive thing. On a personal level as well. You know, can I be personally balanced as well as our little micro-unit of four people? In the evening, one of the things that we do is we try to read a couple of books. Try to find out where everybody is at. We watch TV a little bit, a kids’ video. It’s good to have (continued on Page 6)
Actor Eva Longoria joins NACCS President Professor Devon Peña and President and General Counsel of MALDEF Thomas Saenz in a session on the attacks on immigrants in Arizona.

UCSB Chicana and Chicano Studies Scholars Conference Presentations

UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT ACTIVIST ROLES

PERFORMING THE LATIN@ BORDERLANDS: TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL PERFORMATICS
Chela Sandoval. “Towards a Decolonial Performatics”

SPACES OF (RE)CONSTRUCTION AND GROUNDED PEDAGOGIES: TRANSFORMING EDUCATIONAL SITES FOR LATIN@ STUDENTS
Aida Hurtado. “Grounded Pedagogies: Madrinarie/Padrinarie as a Radical Intervention in High School Students’ Educational Achievement”

LISTENING TO LEARN AND LEARNING TO LISTEN: MEXICAN CUSTODIANS’ MUSIC LISTENING PRACTICES

AT A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY
Jose Anguiano “The Soundscape of Work”

EMBODIED CULTURAL RESISTANCE
Carisa Cortez. “Identity in Ink: Chicana College Students, Tattoo and Embodied Resistance”

ADALJIZA SOSA-RIDDELL: SCHOLAR, INTELLECTUAL, MENTOR, ACTIVIST AND FRIEND
Dolores Inés Casillas. “Becoming Feminist, Becoming Chicana”

PLOTTING A FUTURE FOR CHICANA/Q STUDIES: TOWARD 2025 AND BEYOND
Discussant: Aida Hurtado

LOCATING HIDDEN HISTORIES WITHIN EXPRESSIVE CULTURE OF AGGRIEVED COMMUNITIES

Tomas Carrasco. “Oppositional Performance: A Social Historical Analysis of Avant-Garde Comedy Troupe Chicano Secret Service”

ROUNDTABLE: CHICANA CULTURAL ACTIVISM AND SPACES OF BELONGING
Amber Rose González. Discussion of Mujeres de Maíz
**RECENT DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY**

(Not an exhaustive list)

Aldana, Gerardo. “Fewer Than You’d Think: Records of Venus observations in Classic Mayan hieroglyphic texts.” Presented at Maya at the Lago, Davidson, North Carolina, April 15, 2011.


**FACULTY SPOTLIGHT (cont.)**

A partner that you can check in and find out how they’re doing.

Sometimes we’re able to go on little trips. We’re able to go on little vacations to kind of get back together. But it’s a challenge.

NEWS: Are you reading anything “for fun”?

RAS: I recently read this book that’s apart from what I’m working on. Manning Marable’s new book on Malcolm X. He wrote this magnum opus, supposedly, of Malcolm X that took him twenty years to do. It’s about five hundred pages long. So I read that.

I’m also reading this book *The Origins of Altruism* by George Price, who is a biologist, I believe.

NEWS: Sociobiologist?

RAS: Yeah. You’ve heard about this? So I’ve just picked that up and I’m on page fifty. It’s really interesting the debates of the late nineteenth century about Darwin. People are always asking me in class: if somebody’s really being altruistic, they’re really being selfish, aren’t they? There’s so such thing as [being] selfless. Even if you’re being selfless, you’re being... still being selfish. So I wanted to pick that book up and read it.

I read this LA writer named Nina Revoyr. She wrote this book called *Wing Shooters*. That was a little lighter read than Manning Marable and evolution and [Laughs] altruism. But it was about this bi-racial woman—Japanese mother, white father—who grew up in Wisconsin around the seventies, early eighties. Gen X people that are tweeners, so to speak, between Baby-Boomers and Millennials. So a lot of her pop culture references were helpful and interesting and the bi-racial [aspect] speaks to me too.

NEWS: Where did you grow up and do you think it has an impact on what you do today?

RAS: Well, I grew up in Ontario, California. I think that I got interested in labor because my dad was a retail clerk. Basically working in a grocery store in the sixties and seventies. He got fired from his job for slashing a guy’s tires that was a scab. Crossed the line. It was a very intense struggle. Nineteen-seventy-eight; something like that. I was ten years old. Evidently it was confrontational. And got my dad thrown in jail. And he wound up losing his job, as a result of that. A result of him losing his job in part caused us to have downward class mobility, increased financial and marital stress at home. Folks split up, eventually, a couple years after that. So I think that made me attuned to labor issues. Of course I didn’t know that at 10, 11, 12 years old. But I knew something was wrong. And I knew I appreciated my dad’s courageous move to do this. I don’t know if it was his wisest move. But he did say “okay, well, you’re supposed to do something.” Even though it threw our whole family into chaos.

And I think the other big thing is that I come from an intersection of two worlds. So Ontario was always and pretty much still is—even though it is more so today brown and white, Mexican and white—it

(continued on Page 8)
ESCUELITA (cont.)

A similar activity had ACS students learn Mayan numbers and calendric hieroglyphs through matching games. ACS students had to match the (Arabic) numeral representations of the numbers 1 through 13 with their bar-and-dot Mayan representation.

“Yo y mi grupo ganamos a las otras personas en el juego de memoria. Me gustó hacerlo con números pero no con los meses porque era más difícil.” – Ellis

Yet another activity made use of the portable planetarium acquired this year by the Nepantia Techn Calpulli of the UCSB Chicano Studies Institute through a Pearl Chase grant, ‘U Chan Oton Chak Ek’ or ‘La Escuelita de Venus,’ giving the event its name, the inflatable globe houses a fish-eye digital projector so that students can look up at a hemisphere of celestial bodies. One group of CHST 150 students adapted an Aztec myth to introduce ACS students to the Mesoamerican conceptualization of the birth of the universe.

“Me gustó cuando yo me metí en un globo y nos sentamos en el suelo. Nos contaron una historia donde un mono se rompió en dos y su cabeza fue arriba y su pies fueron abajo. Se llama Tlatecuhtli.” – Leonardo

Completing her first year as principal, Juanita Hernandez appreciated that the activities were delivered in Spanish and English, matching the school’s theme, and that:

“Along with learning more about math and science from an ancient time, the experience gave the Adelante students an opportunity to see themselves in the future - university students sharing their knowledge and love of learning in the community.”

Rosa De La Torre, ACS Sixth Grade Teacher said of her class that:

“The kids really enjoyed [La Escuelita de Venus] and we had a great discussion about it in class after.”

After the event, Mary Alvarado, CHST 150 student and UCSB graduating senior, said that she sees a role for the material she learned in class for outreach programs (continued on Page 9)
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT (cont.)

was majority white. Today it’s majority Mexican, or Latinos. So it created all these weird
dynamics. Do I be with the white side of my family? And somebody invariably would
say something that was not too flattering about Mexicans. [Laughs] And I would be
present, saying: “hello, I am here.” I didn’t have any
wherewithal to explain all this—to put it in context as a
sociologist. And then the
other [Latino] space, it
wouldn’t be necessarily things
that were anti-white,
although that certainly came
up too. But feeling like my
Spanish was very poor at that
time. It’s marginally better
now. Just feeling like I don’t
belong here; I don’t belong
there. Which later I came to
find out is the Chicano
condition. But I didn’t
understand that. I guess that
feeling of being not home in
either location, not be
welcome in either area. But
also there’s some strength
that comes from that too.
Because you can kind of forge
your own way. It was a little
bit lonely at times, but it’s not
exactly totally lonely, because
you find some other people
that are like that too, some in-
betweeners. Goes back to
that thing about Gen X.

NEWS: When did you realize
you were a Chicana/o Studies
scholar?

RAS: I think that coming here
in ’98 I had been totally
imbued in sociology. Of
course I knew some debates
better than others in Ethnic
Studies. Chicano Studies was
my minor, too, at Long Beach
State, way back when. But
that seemed way far back in
the recesses of my mind. I
think it’s just a continuing
evolution for me. I think I was
a sociologist who got a job in
this department. And I think
that by virtue of

conversations with people
here, people like you, Guisela
[Latorre], Jonathan [Inda],
other colleagues, and reading
more deeply and talking to
other students about these
kinds of issues, it’s become
more apparent to me that
that’s who I am.

NEWS: What was your
favorite class in graduate
school?

RAS: Graduate school’s a long
time ago now. I don’t know
what the title is; I think it was
a class on race and ethnicity.
We read some really great
things in there. We had some
really, really deep debates. I
still remember one of the
seminars, how charged it was
and how good it was. How
people weren’t yelling at another,
but they were very,

very passionate, very angry. It
was one of those
transformative moments
for people. Crying, people are
shouting, people are laughing,
but eventually we kind of
came together as a unit.
About 10, 12 people who
really became friends as a
result of that. So it wasn’t
only the content, although the
content was there. That’s
what drew us together. I
mean it had some really good
books. Maybe it had one or
two clunkers in there. We
surveyed all the leading race
theories at that time.

NEWS: I’m wondering if you
teach something like it now?
Either at the graduate or the
undergraduate level?

RAS: Racism in American
History.

NEWS: You can trace it back
somehow?

RAS: One of my first classes I
was a TA to was very
formative to me. I was TAing
with Edna. This class was
called Racism in Western
society. That class intersected
a long time ago with the LA
Riots back in 1992. Her
predilection was race/class,
origins of imperialism,
Europe’s colonization of most
of the world in the fifteenth
and sixteenth centuries.
That’s how I first started
teaching that class here. But
it morphed into something
else, which really focuses a lot
on reconciliation and
forgiveness. Which is born
out of some of my fascination
with South Africa and what
they did in terms of trying to
move from apartheid to a
post-apartheid society, having
this truth and reconciliation
commission. I was thinking,
at one point, toying around
with the idea of: we need to
do something like that here.
When are we going to
actually, as a society, come
clean if you will?

NEWS: What do you think
some of the critical issues are
that confront Chicana/o
Studies today.

RAS: I think that part of it is
trying to figure out how to
deal with this on-going crisis.
What kinds of tools do we use
to respond to the devastation
that we’re seeing right now. I
read that in California, our
unemployment rate is still
13%. So there’s a jobless

crisis. There’s the housing
crisis. Education is a mess. So
one of my biggest influences
too is this notion in El
Salvador of something called
“the national reality.” Ignacio
Ella Curia, was a liberation
theologian, a university rector
and chancellor at the
University of Central America,
and was assassinated in
November of 1989. He was
penning these essays talking
about: we have a national
reality. There is a truth, and
the truth is millions of our
sisters and brothers are being
killed, and being liquidated
standing up for their rights. I
think there is a national
reality that exists in the
United States. I think that in
addition to being involved
with various intellectual
debates, that part of my
understanding of Chicano
Studies is that it’s incumbent
upon us “as scholars,” to try
to do what we can to respond
to that. To try to mitigate it
as much as we can. How to
do that—I’m not really clear.
It’s depressing as all hell.
What’s happening right now.
It seems to me as a field, at
times, we’re not doing
even about those various
interrelated crises.

NEWS: At some level, that
situation that kind of
fomented the department
itself and field, is coming back
to a head and you don’t see
that we’ve necessarily set up
that space or set up that
means of interacting with it?
Engaging it?

RAS: No. And it’s timely
because at the K - 12 level,
Ethnic Studies is being
threatened with demolition.

NEWS So the Tucson...

RAS: exactly. What’s going to
happen there? The earliest
targets, I think, in the college
system will be us. Right? I
mean, they’re not going to get
rid of physics, chemistry, or
math. Because I guess they’re
still useful.

NEWS: What do you think
the role of activism should be in
academia?
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT (cont.)
RAS: Well I think it needs to be a central component of it. My question is always how much?
NEWS: Of academia as a whole? Or Ethnic Studies?
RAS: Yes, of academia as a whole. Yeah, it’s a debate that’s driven sociology for over a hundred years. The very beginning of sociology, of people being sort of madrins of power, someone who’s going to be challenging those with power. Kant, and Marx, and Weber, Durkheim, and all these people in the nineteenth century... if you go back to that book. I think that they were all debating those kinds of issues. Like what do we do here? If there are these objective immutable laws, there’s nothing we can do about it. Survival of the fittest. Spencer came along and applied Darwin to a social world. Marx said, “well no that’s not really the way it is.” Again, the metric that was used in El Salvador, which is not obviously appropriate and applicable here, is people were evaluated not only on the terms of their production, of articles, but what they did in order to transform the reality. You get called to task, so to speak. I know that we’re not existing in that kind of reality. But I do think that more needs to be done, not only in terms of direct engagement with organizations, but from the topics that we choose. And how to make sure that they do some good. And again, how much do we do of that?

MAYAN SUDOKU, 04

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With community or alumni news items, to provide comments, or just to get back in touch.

ucsbchstnews@gmail.com

SUPPORT US!
In this time of budgetary crisis, any contribution is welcome, from $5 toward student scholarships to $10,000 toward an endowed professorial chair.

Mail checks (payable to UC Regents) to:
CHST Support
Department of Chicana/o Studies
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

ESCUELITA (cont.)
directed at children who have suffered from domestic violence in her community in Los Angeles. “Seeing Adelante’s children ecstatic to play loteria, to do Mayan math, to know Mayan architecture, made me think and strive to give back what I have learned in the UC System.”

“Once I graduate I will be returning back home to Los Angeles; however, I would like to take what I have learned from [CHST 150] to my community’s children.”