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*Patricia Zavella:*

*Professor of Latin American and Latino Studies, UC Santa Cruz*

**Interviewed by Susy Zepeda**

**Edited by Irene Reti and Susy Zepeda**

Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2014

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## **Interview History**

Patricia Zavella was born in Tampa, Florida in 1949, the oldest of twelve children in a working-class family and often cared for her siblings. Her mother and father were both born in the United States and the primary language spoken in her family was English. She spoke English to her maternal grandmother who was born in the U.S. Her father was in the air force and they moved frequently when she was a child. Zavella was often one of very few Mexican-American children in the schools she attended. Teachers were often “surprised” at Zavella’s stellar performance in the classroom. When she was ten years old, the family settled in Ontario in Southern California. It was here that there were more Mexican-Americans in her classrooms; this prompted her critical thinking about race relations and the Spanish language.

In 1968, Zavella went to Chaffey Community College, in Alta Loma near her family’s home. There she heard both Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez speak and became involved with the Chicano/a movement, developing into a student activist supporting some of the first classes in Mexican-American studies. Her recollections of these early days of the movement are a vital part of this oral history. Zavella participated in the Chicano Moratorium in August 1970, a demonstration of about 25,000 activists who protested in East Los Angeles against the Vietnam War. She joined MEChA [Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán] and began to claim an identity as a Chicana.

Zavella went on to complete her BA in anthropology at Pitzer College (one of the Claremont Colleges) and then attended graduate school at UC Berkeley, where she earned her PhD in anthropology in 1982. As a graduate student, she continued to be deeply involved in and inspired by the Chicano/a movement. Her dissertation *Women's Work in Chicano Families: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley* developed into her first book. Through Zavella's reflection we learn of the influence social movements had on her identity formation and search for community-centered knowledge. Zavella was one of the first scholars to analyze the intersections of race, gender, class for Chicana women workers, a research approach that emerged from feminist of color activism of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Before coming to UC Santa Cruz, Zavella taught courses at California State University at Hayward, UC Berkeley, and UC Santa Barbara and worked as a postdoc researcher at Stanford University with the Center for Chicano Research. In 1983 she was hired by UCSC's community studies program, first for a temporary position and after a year for a permanent position. Later she transferred to the Latin American and Latino Studies department. Zavella directed the Chicano and Latino Research Center from 1999 to 2003 and was a founder of both the BA and PhD program in the Latin American and Latino Studies Department at UC Santa Cruz. She has also served as UCSC's representative to the UC Committee on Latino Research.

Zavella considers both her scholarship and her teaching forms of activism. Her research focuses on migration, gender and health in Latina/o communities, Latino families in transition, feminist studies, and ethnographic research methods. She has worked on many collaborative projects, including an ongoing partnership with Xóchitl Castañeda with whom she has written four articles, two in English and two in Spanish. In 2010, the Society for the Anthropology of North America awarded Zavella the Distinguished Career Achievement in the Critical Study of North America Award. She has published many books including, most recently, *I'm Neither Here Nor There, Mexicans' Quotidian Struggles with Migration and Poverty* (Duke University Press, 2011), which focuses on working class Mexican Americans' struggle for agency and identity in Santa Cruz County.

Susy Zepeda interviewed Pat Zavella in her home in Santa Cruz. The three interviews took place on June 20, June 24, and June 25, 2013. Irene Reti transcribed the interviews. The transcript was returned both to Zepeda, who audited it for accuracy of transcription, and Zavella, who edited it for flow and accuracy. It was an honor to interview Pat Zavella and listen to her story, which encompasses both childhood struggles and professional successes, and illustrates her dedication to marginalized communities.

Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Elisabeth Remak-

Honnef, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and Interim University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

*—Irene Reti, Director, Regional History Project, University Library*

*—Susy Zepeda, Interviewer, Regional History Project*

*University of California, Santa Cruz, June 1, 2014*



## Early Life

**Zepeda:** We're here with Pat Zavella. It's June 20, 2013. I'm Susy Zepeda with the Regional History Project. Let's start with the basic question of when and where you were born?

**Zavella:** So I was born in Tampa, Florida on November 28, 1949. And the reason we were in Tampa was my father was in the Air Force. He met my mother in Colorado Springs where he was stationed and then got transferred to Tampa. So they were out there, living on an air base.

**Zepeda:** Wow. And so how would you describe your family background. And who was in your family?

**Zavella:** Since my dad was in the military for fourteen years, he got transferred a lot. So my childhood is an experience of moving all over the place. I'm the oldest of twelve children. The first nine of us—we were born in all these different cities. So: Tampa, Colorado Springs, Florida again, Maine, South Dakota, Colorado Springs. My father kept getting transferred and brothers and sisters were getting born (laughs) in different places.

And then the whole family moved to Southern California when I was ten. And that's where we sort of settled. And after that everybody was born in California.

So it was a disrupted childhood. It wasn't until I was in sixth grade that I spent the entire year in one school. It was always moving all over the place.

**Zepeda:** Wow. That's amazing. And so how would you describe your socioeconomic background growing up?

**Zavella:** Very working class. My father was in the Air Force and he got promoted as high as a sergeant, but in the military you're not paid very much. And we had a growing family and my mother didn't work for wages. So we were dependent on his income. And then when he got out of the military, he would start these little small businesses and do television and radio repair—which always took a while to get going. And long periods of unemployment. Eventually he started a lawn business and he would make my brothers go work with him. And then after a while he got a job at General Electric and that was when he was most economically stable. So we were completely working-class, with periods of things being really challenging financially.

**Zepeda:** And were you also connected to extended family, or was it mostly your brothers and sisters and mom and dad?

**Zavella:** My grandmother lived in Colorado Springs. That's where my mom grew up. So she was our home base. In between the different moves we would always come back to my grandma's house. She was like the matriarch of the extended family and that's where aunts and uncles and cousins lived. So even

though we were always the isolated ones, we very much kept in touch with my grandmother and with relatives. We have this big, extended family and that was really important to us, to keep in contact with family.

**Zepeda:** What was the language spoken within your family at this point?

**Zavella:** My mother and father were both born in the United States, as were my grandmother and grandfather on my mother's side. On my father's side, they were born in Mexico. But I never met them. They died when my father was young. The extended family was always on my mother's side. And we were all English speakers. I spoke English with my grandmother. She was born in Trujillo Creek Colorado. She went to school in the United States. Her first language was Spanish but she got married at fourteen in an arranged marriage. But up until then she went to school in the U.S. So—English speakers. And that's the case with all my brothers and sisters and all my cousins and even some of my aunts and uncles. They were English speakers--English-speaking Mexicans in Colorado.

**Zepeda:** How would you describe your relationships with your brothers and sisters? You were the eldest, you said. That must have been a lot of—

**Zavella:** Yeah. I really felt like a second mother. My mom—we just found out, after she passed away we got close with her younger sister; she was very close to my Aunt Francis. And apparently, my mom said at a young age that she loved

babies and she wanted to have twelve children. She actually *wanted* (laughs) twelve children. I always assumed—you know, they were very strong Catholics. I always assumed that it was what happened when you were a strong Catholic family but apparently this is what my mom wanted.

So my mom was really loving. She was a very special person. But she was also a little—like, she would get very flustered over crises. So if something happened, my mom was freaking out and I was the cool, calm, let's-take-care-of-this kind of person. That very quickly became my role. And as the oldest I learned to cook and clean and I always had all of these responsibilities. My major responsibility was to take care of the younger kids. They weren't allowed to cry. If they cried, I got in trouble (laughs).

So I was on top of things at a very young age. I remember, I was nine years old the first time I was put in charge of the whole family while my mom went to the hospital to have my brother Jessie. I cooked; I sent the kids to school. I took care of everything. It was a heavy responsibility. And it wasn't until I told my teacher what was going on and she was so shocked that I realized, oh, okay, (laughs) this is unusual. Because that's what my life was like. You just pitch in. You just do it.

**Zepeda:** Yeah. And in your school setting were there other Mexican-American kids?

**Zavella:** No. No, it wasn't until we got to California that there were a lot of other Mexican kids. So it was always an experience of being the only Mexican family, or one or two Mexican families. And being the new kid. So the teachers were trying to figure out where you stand academically. And always feeling very marginal, very isolated, and determined to show the teachers I could do my best. And then they would be surprised when I did well. And it was always like, "Oh, you're different. You're different than the other Mexicans," (In what little experience they had.) That always felt weird, like I never knew what that meant because there weren't very many Mexicans around.

So it wasn't until we moved to Southern California, and then there were a lot of *Mexicanos* in my classes, that I began to get a sense of a different way to think about race relations. And then part of the dynamic was they were all like, "Well, why don't you speak Spanish?" So there were those questions from them and always my teacher giving me the, "You're so different from the other Mexicans," which felt really weird. It was very odd.

**Zepeda:** Mm-hmm. And I would imagine you were sort of a buffer for your brothers and sisters, who maybe experienced a similar—

**Zavella:** (pauses) I think so. We didn't really have explicit discussions about race or class or gender, except for gender expectations. But I was definitely the oldest and the one that people looked up to and talked to. So there probably was a lot of

that. I remember, my mom was very explicitly open about the importance of being tolerant or accepting of people of other races and specifically African Americans, when we moved to Southern California. There were a lot of blacks in the neighborhoods that we lived in, low-income neighborhoods. They were in our classes and in the neighborhood. I remember she was very clear about that.

And she was also really clear that we needed—my family, as poor as we were, they used to tithe. They would give money to the church. And there was always a lot of language about our Christian duty, “You help the poor. You give to the poor.” And so every once in a while, especially at one point when we first moved to California we lived in this motel complex right next to the train tracks and so there were a lot of guys riding the trains who would come and ask for food. And I remember when we first saw them we were scared, “Who are these bums? What do they want?” And my mom was always, “No, no, no. We have to give them food. This is part of our duty as Christians.” So there was this real sense that you have to look out for the poor. She was very instructive, despite having lots of things going on in her life.

**Zepeda:** And do you have an idea of where that influence for her came from?

**Zavella:** Well, part of it was she grew up on a farm in Southern Colorado. My grandmother and grandfather owned a little farm, and it’s actually still in the family. My grandfather died when my mom was about six years old and it was

this devastating loss. But their family was very involved—this is during the Great Depression—so very involved in extended kin, sharing with one another. So it was like, we look out for one another kind of thing. And then after he died, my grandmother had to go on welfare and she was so mortified. She was really ashamed of that. It was basically they had nothing to eat and things were really desperate.

So eventually—there's this story that gets told over and over again about the great move to the city. So my grandmother sold the farm to my uncle, in exchange for a stove, a wood-burning stove, loaded up the Model T and took her children to Colorado Springs and eventually found a job. So her goal in life—she had five kids—was to make sure they got an education. All of her kids went to Catholic school. She worked in factories; she worked cleaning homes. You know, very working class.

And so my mom and my grandma had this really strong Catholic training. You know, like every holy day of obligation we would go to church and Lent we would do the rosary. All of that. We would observe—Fridays no meat. All of that. So it was a really strong Catholic tradition but it was also sort of this mixed bag. Very, very religious but also my mom really didn't like the Catholic schools, in part because she got punished for speaking Spanish. One time she got punished for speaking Spanish on the school grounds; the nun rinsed her mouth out with soap. That's where *she* lost her Spanish. And she said, "My kids are not

going to go through that.” She got a job at a very early age to help pay for a Catholic education. So it was always this mixed thing: We have to be charitable because that’s what we’re supposed to do as good Catholics. But also, the Catholic Church is kind of repressive and mean and we need to look out for that.

**Zepeda:** Wow, that’s super interesting. And you mentioned that sixth grade was the first time that you were in a school for a whole year?

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm.

**Zepeda:** So how would you describe your elementary schooling and relations with other students and teachers?

**Zavella:** So relations with teachers was always—after that initial them checking me out and being so surprised that I did well—I got a lot of reward from doing well in school. I often became the teacher’s pet, you know, like, clean off the chalkboard or whatever. Little chores. And since, for the most part, until sixth grade most of my classmates were not *Mexicanos*, it was sort of like I was the little teacher’s pet in the class.

I really liked school. I did well in school. My family praised me for doing well in school. And it was an escape. I really used to love to read. If I wasn’t doing chores, then I was reading. My sisters say they remember me always having my head in a book. Yeah! That was how I dealt with things.



Once we moved to Ontario in Southern California, things got much more complicated. Lots of responsibilities still. And there were some tensions by the Latino and black kids in my classes for doing well. I remember in junior high I got picked to learn how to play the violin. And they lent me a violin because, of course, we couldn't afford to buy one. So there I go to school with my little violin (laughs). And I would get teased for being a nerd.

**Zepeda:** (laughs) Oh—

**Zavella:** So I had these very mixed feelings. I wanted to fit in with my friends. But I also liked the violin. I liked my classes. So I was always navigating, like trying to hang out with my friends but also trying to find some pleasure in learning.

**Zepeda:** Mm-hmm. That makes sense. So when you moved to Ontario that was sixth grade, seventh grade. So do you remember the name of the school?

**Zavella:** Euclid School was the school I went to and then De Anza Junior High for seventh and eighth. And then Chaffey High School.

**Zepeda:** Chaffey High School. So did that sort of same dynamic continue on through high school?

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah (laughs). In my first year of high school I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was put in college prep classes but they weren't very interesting.

Like, I remember taking a world history class and being bored to tears. We had to write a paper and I went to talk to the teacher, “I don’t know what to write about. None of this is interesting to me.” And he finally talked me into writing a paper about the Roman emperor Nero, who listened to music while Rome burned, some weird topic.

And so I felt very alienated at school and my high school counselor had—it was a large school and he had way too many kids to help. So he wasn’t very helpful. He suggested I take a typing class and so I took a typing class and okay, I learned to type. So he said, “Well, why don’t you take a stenographer’s class?” So I took that, learned stenography. And then he said, “Well, why don’t you take a business math class.” And by then I figured out, “Okay, he thinks I’m not going to college.” I somehow had this idea that I wanted to go to college. So I ended up not taking that business class.

But my first year I managed to get a 4.0. So there was a picture in the yearbook, like three or four kids who got 4.0’s. So I’m, of course, the only Mexican. It was both this great this reward and this—nobody thought I was going to college kind of thing. I had to figure it out myself. The college prep courses I took I was always the only person of color, the only *Mexicana*. I took two years with this one teacher who sat us alphabetically. So I was always in the back corner, you know (laughs). Never said anything. I felt totally alienated. And it was this odd experience of the college prep courses and then during the breaks I’d hang out

with my friends who were not in college prep courses and they weren't planning to go to college. It was a lonely place to be, definitely.

**Zepeda:** Yeah. So you don't know when the idea of college entered in for you?

**Zavella:** You know, it must have come from my father. My father was an alcoholic. And one of the things he would do is he would come home really late, drunk, and he would sort of have these heart-to-heart talks with whoever. I remember one talk. I was really young; it must have been in second grade. And he said he would give me a dollar for every A that I got. So I thought, okay, here's a challenge. In elementary school they give you lots of grades and I got fifteen A's. And he was like, okay. And he never paid up (laughs). I was like, wait a second. But in that little heart-to-heart challenge he said he wanted me to be a scientist. He was really into airplanes and fast cars. So I think that was his vision, that I was going to somehow become some kind of scientist. He was drinking and I was like, "Sure, sure. Whatever." But I wasn't interested in science. I didn't see myself as a scientist in the making.

**Zepeda:** Wow, that's profound. And I wanted to go back to—because you said that your sisters were always saying your head was always in your books—so how did you gain access to those books?

**Zavella:** Oh. Oh. So my mom subscribed to *Redbook Magazine*. It's sort of a housewife kind of magazine with recipes and stuff. But there were always these

articles by Margaret Mead. And she's hanging out with young girls in the South Seas. I thought, wow. That was so interesting. So I'd follow her. But mainly it was going to the library. Every week we would walk because, of course, my dad had the car and he was gone. And we would get books and we would come back and I would read them cover-to-cover. And we'd go back. It was both the pleasure of reading but also church and the library and school were the only places we were allowed to go. My father was very strict. So library—here we come! (laughs)

**Zepeda:** That's nice that you were able to get a lot of pleasure out of that. And then my next question is how did your social environment influence your pursuit of higher education?

**Zavella:** That's kind of a hard one. I think probably it was in high school where the idea that I was going to go to college—my mom got that idea. My mom was always very supportive, very sweet. But I remember my counselor, at one point I had a conversation with him. I couldn't imagine going to UCLA, a big school where I had to move away from home. That just didn't compute. So he said, "Well, why don't you apply to LaVerne College." It was, I don't know, five miles away. It was a religious school. So I applied and I got in. Then I started getting this religious material, "When you pack up your stuff be sure to bring a blanket," and whatever. And I just had this vision of going to a Protestant school and my grandmother would hate that. She's a real strong Catholic. I felt like, I can't do

this. And all my friends who were going to go to college were going to the community college. So I said, okay, that's where I'm going.

### **Chaffey Community College**

I actually got a scholarship to go to four years of college and I put it on hold while I went to a community college for two and a half years, which is not a good idea but my counselor didn't say anything and I didn't know that it was really wasting my scholarship. So that's what I did. It was—too bad.

But going to the community college was actually really good for me because I got to live at home. I had a little car by then, so I would drive. And Chaffey College is sort of up the hill in Alta Loma from Ontario and in those days there were a lot of grape fields. So I remember driving past all of these farmworkers and sort of like, oh, people are out there working. Chaffey was great because I got politicized. I got involved with the United Farm Workers and I figured out what was going on with the farmworkers I had been passing that I knew nothing about. And we would go on the picket line. I heard Cesar Chavez speak. I heard Dolores Huerta speak. I got involved in the Chicano movement. And what was so great about Chaffey is that there was actually a critical mass of Mexicans who were smart, who were interested in school, who took classes. They were peers. I felt like I finally belonged. That was really, really nice.

**Zepeda:** Oh, that's so good! There was a commonality that you found with them.

### **Early Chicano Movement**

**Zavella:** Mm-hm. I started at Chaffey in 1968. So, (laughs) the Chicano movement was going full blast. We organized a group of people to go to the first Chicano Moratorium, which was a large demonstration against the Vietnam War and the ways in which Chicanos were dying at disproportionately high rates. It is remembered as a police riot—the police moved in pushing us out of the park using batons and tear gas. We got tear-gassed.<sup>1</sup> It was a very collective process, where all these Chicano students were all getting politicized and learning. We petitioned for a community center for students of color and we got it. We actually had a little demonstration asking for Chicano Studies classes. I took the first Mexican-American studies class offered at Chaffey. We got a counselor—Erma Welsh is a Chicana who ran the student center and I eventually got a job there as a secretary. Chaffey went through this major transformation while I was there. It was part of Chicano politics. It was really great for me.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Chicano Moratorium was a gathering of about 25,000 activists who gathered in East Los Angeles on August 29, 1970 in protest against the Vietnam War.

**Zepeda:** So do you remember when you first started to use the term *Chicana* to identify?

**Zavella:** I do! It was at Chaffey and I remember having a conversation with my boyfriend at the time. And we both said, “You know what? We’re not really Mexican-Americans. We’re Chicanos.” I can’t remember if that came after I started taking this class, or I was involved. First we formed United Mexican American Students [UMAS] and then we changed and became MEChA [Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán]. And it was somewhere in that process where I decided I wanted to claim a Chicana identity. I got involved in the Brown Berets for a brief period and it was this whole transformation.

**Zepeda:** Amazing.

**Zavella:** Yeah.

**Zepeda:** That’s really powerful. I wanted to go back a little bit to before college, or maybe leading up to there, and ask you, what were your goals as a young person?

**Zavella:** It was very unclear what my goals were. When I started at Chaffey College I thought, okay, I could last for two years, right? (laughs) I thought maybe I wanted to be an elementary school teacher, maybe a social worker, but that would require four years of college, and I didn’t know if I could do that. I

had this idea that I needed to finish at Chaffey and then get a job. I ended up staying at Chaffey for two and a half years. I actually really liked it a lot. I had a good time there.

**Zepeda:** And who were your mentors during your youth, or who do you see as an inspiration for you?

**Zavella:** So one was in high school—a man whose name I’m forgetting. I’m remembering that he had red hair, really short red hair. He was running a study on high school dropouts and I got hired to be his research assistant. It was sort of grunt work, but every once in a while he would sit me down and say, “Well, this is what I’m finding. What do you think?” And it turned out that the biggest predictor of young people dropping out of high school was if they smoked. So I would give my high school perspective. And at one point at the end of the year—I worked for him for a long time—he said, “You know, you really have a knack for this. You should think about becoming a researcher.” And I was like, “What?” It totally blew me away. But I think the idea sort of stuck in the back of my mind. So he was one.

And then at Chaffey Community College, Erma Welsh—she was a community activist. And she was part of the community demonstrations with the students to get the student center. I remember being at meetings with the school board in



which she would speak in front of a crowd and administrators and say, “We *demand* a student center!”

And also Delia Segovia, who became the first Chicana counselor who was hired at Chaffey, was an important mentor. They sort of took me under their wing. So they would take me to demonstrations or meetings. At one point Irma was taking a Chicano literature class at San Bernardino State College and she took me with her. So I got to just listen to people talking about Chicano literature. And they would always drive me places. They would take me to dinner. They were just so sweet. It was an incredible mentoring process. I always say, when I work with my students, that I was so lucky. (chokes up) They really saw something in me that no one else had. I will be always grateful to them. Erma has passed now. She got really sick. I think Delia probably has retired. I haven’t seen them in years but it was great to be mentored by them.

**Zepeda:** Yeah, that’s amazing. Should we keep going or pause?

**Zavella:** I’m okay.

**Zepeda:** Yeah? Any time you need a pause.

And so I wanted to ask you, you mentioned reading books and really being in tune with books. So was there any particular book or movie or music that really influenced you?

**Zavella:** I think Margaret Mead was one piece. At Chaffey I took an *Introduction to Anthropology* course. And the professor who taught the course, I think her name was Bernice McAllister. Anyway, she happened to have been a friend of Margaret Mead's (laughs).

**Zepeda:** Wow! (laughs)

**Zavella:** I know. So she was telling stories. You know, "Margaret Mead would do this." And I was like, oh, my gosh. So I think the idea of studying the exotic was something that was implanted very early and the idea that women could do this. Field research was very hands on. You got to know people; you became part of the community. I think that was something I was really drawn to early on.

**Zepeda:** Mm-hmm. And you sort of already alluded to this, but I wanted to ask you a little bit more about how you would describe your coming to political awareness and social movements?

**Zavella:** Well, getting involved with the UFW was definitely a piece of that. So at the time it was the grape boycott and we would go picket Safeways and other places. It was the Gallo boycott. That went on for *years*. I'll never forget; there were some good friends involved with MEChA and this one, we used to call him Indio, José Hernández. I remember when the boycott was over he came up to campus and he had this big crate of grapes and he walked in carrying it on his

head and he said, “The boycott is over!” (laughs) And it was like, “Yay!” But to this day I have a hard time drinking Gallo wine because it was such a big thing.

So it was definitely the UFW and student organizations. At Chaffey we had a group. And then when I got to Pitzer College, we founded a dance group, Ballet Folklórico, and I danced for about a year and a half. That was really important.

**Zepeda:** Had you done dance before?

**Zavella:** No.

**Zepeda:** You were probably aware of dance.

**Zavella:** No. It was a totally new—I had no idea what Folklórico dance was about. So I *learned* how to dance. I learned how to—we made costumes. I still have my skirt. We learned how to put the makeup on. We had these little performances. And it turns out Benjamin Hernández was our instructor. And it turns out he’s a player. He’s in Olga Nájera-Ramírez’s film.<sup>2</sup> I know, small world.

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<sup>2</sup> Reference to Olga Nájera-Ramírez documentary, *Danza Folklórica Escénica: El Sello Artístico de Rafael Zamarripa* (Mexican Folkloric Dance: Rafael Zamarripa’s Artistic Trademark). 2010.

**Zepeda:** Amazing.

**Zavella:** I know. So, dance. And for a very brief period I was in the Brown Berets. We started a women's chapter of the Brown Berets. I got frustrated with them very early because they wanted to talk about what we were going to wear, you know, what our uniforms were going to be, as opposed to the politics. So I ended up leaving.

When we all went to the Chicano Moratorium<sup>3</sup>, that was the first one, and it was this amazing experience. They estimate 25,000 Chicanos, marching in East LA. I remember marching past a church and a bride and a groom were coming out and all the *damas*. They joined the procession and we marched to some park. I was there when the police started sweeping and throwing tear gas and we all ran. We could see the looters going down Whittier Boulevard and smashing things. We all ended up at people's homes and they would let us drink water and wash out our eyes because we got tear-gassed. It was terrifying.

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<sup>3</sup> It was at this Chicano Moratorium, held on August 29, 1970, that activists protesting the Vietnam War due to the disproportionate number of Chicano and Latino soldiers, were tear-gassed by police, including journalist Ruben Salazar, who was shot and killed instantly.

So that was a really important experience. It definitely politicized me. It definitely gave me a very healthy fear of the police.

I went to this one conference that Comisión Femenil organized on Chicanas in Higher Education that Maylei Blackwell writes about.<sup>4</sup> I was there. I remember having all these talks about La Nueva Chicana. People would circulate mimeo forms of different pieces that women were writing at the time. And they would read them—wow, what an amazing set of ideas. It was just going on everywhere. My whole life was school and the Chicano Movement. It was great.

**Zepeda:** It sounds amazing. And what was your family's reaction? Were they aware of what you were involved in?

**Zavella:** They weren't really aware very much. It was more like I was going to school and I was really involved. At some point my dad got an inkling and he sort of sat me down and said he didn't want me to be too radical, that it could be dangerous, I should be careful. And I was dutiful, "Okay, Dad." But he really

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<sup>4</sup> El Comisión Femenil Mexicana celebrated over thirty years of Chicana feminist leadership in 2003. See <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/special-collections/cema/cfmnsymposium>.

didn't know a lot of what I was involved in. I don't think my mom knew much either.

**Zepeda:** I want to ask you more about Pitzer, but before we go there I wanted to ask you, were you already in tune with your writing as a young person?

**Zavella:** No. So in high school I always got very mixed comments on my writing. I did really well but on my writing, in particular, I always got sort of mixed comments. One high school teacher who was really good, at one point he said, "When you're passionate about something you write really well. So you have to write about what you're passionate about." I thought, okay (laughs).

**Zepeda:** (laughs)

**Zavella:** You know, because sometimes they make you write about these really boring kinds of things and I didn't do so well on those (laughs).

### **Pitzer College**

**Zepeda:** Yeah, that makes sense. So taking us to Pitzer College, what was the climate there for Chicanos and Latinos?

**Zavella:** So at that time Pitzer had some recruiters and they went to Chaffey and they met with a bunch of the Chicano students. They were encouraging us to apply to Pitzer. So several of us did and got accepted. One woman in particular,

Belinda Reyes, was a recruiter and we became a very good friend. So I sort of had an *entré*.

And then at Pitzer at the time they had a Chicana suite in one of the dorms. It was six rooms around a living room and there were two bathrooms. It was all Chicanas. So I got to live in the Chicana suite. It was this amazing experience that helped me make the transition. It was really hard to transfer. Because Chaffey was fine but Pitzer was really a step up, in terms of how hard the classes were. I had a difficult time adjusting. Plus, Pitzer was private and so 95 percent of the kids going there paid for it and they came from very wealthy families. For Easter break they would go skiing in Switzerland kind of thing (laughs). Their parents would drive up in a Jaguar. It was just like, oh, my God! And all the Chicanos, we were all first generation, working-class, wondering how did *we* get here? So it was great being in the Chicana suite. It was social. We had a lot of parties. But also, every night we would have these discussions about what we were learning and what it meant and what the movement was doing. So it was really great to have that happen.

And then at Pitzer, there was a Chicano Studies Program that actually still continues. I got to go back be a reviewer a couple of years ago, of the Chicano Studies Program. And the woman who was the secretary is still there. It's been a long time. So I took Chicano studies courses. I just ate it up. I really loved it.

**Zepeda:** At that time how was the gender dynamic in those Chicano Studies courses? Did you feel heard in terms of your feminist critique?

**Zavella:** I was this nascent feminist. And all the instructors were men. One of my very important instructors was José Cuellar, who you may know from the Dr. Loco and the Rockin' Jalapeño Band.<sup>5</sup> He taught Chicano anthropology classes. And it was great, in the sense that he always required papers based on field research. The first class was *Death and Dying in the Chicano Community*. And he made us find a wake or a funeral service and go. And we were like, what? So how do you do an observation and be unobtrusive and be respectful and be a part of the community? Once I got over my initial shyness, I *loved* it. People were so warm and welcoming. I learned a lot. And we would write papers and we'd talk about it. So at one level, it was this amazing learning experience. But at another level—José was a hang-out-with-the-students kind of a professor. So we partied with him and at one point he wanted me to hit him up with the feminist

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<sup>5</sup> José Cuellar, also known as "Dr. Loco" is the founder and director of Dr. Loco's Rockin' Jalapeño Band.



critique of something so that he could develop his counter critique. And I was so offended that he would even ask me that.

I was developing my critique of the masculinist politics. Another professor, David Sena was very hip—you know, he drove a cool car, and he was trying to be a player. The women would always critique, you know, who are these men and what are they about?

It was a really good experience. They were very supportive of me going on to graduate school. At that point, I had come to terms with needing to complete four years of education (laughs). What I thought I wanted to do was become an elementary school teacher. Then I really got into the research. I remember at one point being in the basement of the library and looking at some article from 1944 about Mexicans and assimilation and being really outraged and thinking, this is racist. I mean, the things they are saying about us and about my people—you know, this is outrageous. So I wrote this scathing critique.

And I remember José saying, “Sure it’s racist. But a more powerful critique is to take them on in their own terms, to make an academic critique.” He helped me do that, over the course of the courses I took with him. And so I really liked the research. I really liked going out and doing field research and writing a paper about it and trying to think about, not only the theory and the analysis and the methodology, but also the politics of doing scholarship. So at one point we were

discussing my future and I told him, “What I want to do is become an elementary school teacher and save up some money and pay off my loans and then apply to graduate school.” And he said, “That’s not going to happen. If you become a teacher, you’ll be gone. If that’s what you really want to do, you should apply straight out.”

### **Graduate School at UC Berkeley**

So I did. I applied to two graduate programs in anthropology, at UCLA and Berkeley. I got accepted to both, thank goodness, got financial aid at both but it was a better offer at Berkeley. And Berkeley was where I wanted to go anyway. So that’s where I went. And it just so happened that my partner at the time, Regino Chávez, also got accepted at Berkeley, also got financial aid, which meant he could go. So we both moved to Berkeley to go to graduate school (laughs).

**Zepeda:** That’s nice you had someone to do the transition with.

**Zavella:** It was really nice, yeah.

**Zepeda:** And so you also did your BA in anthropology. So was it through the Chicano anthropology classes that you decided on anthropology?

**Zavella:** Yeah—I was also taking the straight anthropology classes and really enjoying them. I had a good instructor, Lorna Levine, who left Pitzer. But she

was great. She was a feminist and a very good teacher. So I started to take all these anthropology classes and really got into it.

**Zepeda:** It was like your calling there.

**Zavella:** Mm--hmm.

**Zepeda:** Definitely. So the pursuing of your Ph.D., how did that come about? I know there's a story there.

**Zavella:** Oh, gosh. So in José's classes we did a lot of reading of some of the early literature coming out of *El Grito* and other Chicano journals, critiquing anthropology. And José would always say he's a behavioral scientist. He was embarrassed to say he was an anthropologist because there were all of these critiques being written up by Chicano scholars. And one of the people who wrote the most compelling was Octavio Romano. So I wanted to go to Berkeley and study with Octavio. I arrive at Berkeley and I got selected to be involved in this mentorship program over the summer so I arrived early in Berkeley and I called him up wanting to meet with him. And he said that he didn't have anything to do with the department of anthropology anymore, and therefore he didn't work with any anthropology students, and good luck with your life kind of thing (laughs).

And I was like, oh, my God. Now what do I do? Because none of the other professors were really all that interesting to me. And then I had this mentorship with Herb Phillips, who at the time had been working with Thailand and had really been critiqued for doing research that some people felt was inappropriate. So there was all this critique going on in anthropology about, which side were anthropologists on? He had done work in Thailand and the Vietnam War had been going on and people were sort of wondering if his research had helped the American forces resettle, or whatever.

So I meet with Herb Phillips. To get to know me he wanted to read my senior thesis, the first thing I'd ever written on Chicana Studies. And it was this internal colonialism analysis of women's, Chicanas' experiences.

So he read my thesis and the first thing he said was, "I don't like students like you who come from schools like Pitzer." I was like, "What did I do?" So it was a series of him trying to undo all the Chicano Studies and train me as a good anthropologist. It was very painful. I stuck it out and I wrote a paper for him at the end. But it was a big shock. It was a big slap in the face.

Anthropology at Berkeley was not a fun place to be. There were two other Chicanas—one who entered with me and one who had been there the year before. It felt very white, very alienating. The critique that was going on in anthropology was sort of playing out among the professors. Rumor had it that

so-and-so wasn't speaking to so-and-so. There was a book that was published called *Rethinking Anthropology* that captured the debates going on in the department. They really didn't want to hear the colonial critique of how anthropology had been all about colonialism.

My first quarter I took a theory class that was required and my entering cohort was thirty-three students. It was huge and I felt very overwhelmed. We had to write a paper a week about the readings and we had to circulate them to all of our fellow students. It was so intimidating! It very clearly became the case that there were the good students, mainly the white, middle-class kids who had traditional anthropological training, and then there were the feminists and the students of color. We got the lower grades and we got critiqued.

It just felt horrible. At the end of my first quarter I was like, I can't do this. I am leaving. So I literally took the paperwork out. I was going to transfer to sociology. There was a critical mass of Chicano graduate students in sociology, about ten of them, mainly men, but not entirely. They would get together. They had a little organization and they would socialize. I would hang out with them because my husband was a graduate student in sociology. And I felt like anthropology—nothing is happening. Nobody wants to hear about Chicano studies. They don't like it. So I thought I was going to transfer. And my friend, Velia García, sat me down and she said, "You're just going to be wasting your quarter here. It's not going to be any better in sociology. Just do what you have

to do to get out. And then once you get out and you get your degree, you can do the kind of work that you want.”

So I always say that Velia saved me for anthropology. And that’s what I did. I just sucked it up and did the best that I could. By the end of that year, all the papers were sounding alike. Like, those of us who had started off with a sharp critique became more muted. We tried to emulate the students who seemed to be doing what the professors wanted. Several people dropped out. My friend Velia got called out in class, “Anthropology is not about social change. If you want to enact social change go someplace else.” It was very clear. So I just kept my mouth shut, just do what I have to do.

Eventually I found an advisor. At least I felt like he read my work and gave me critiques. So he was someone that I would work with. But it was a very lonely place, in anthropology.

**Zepeda:** And were there resources outside of the anthropology department that you were able to—like, you mentioned this organization in sociology that you were able to hang out with them, Chicanos in Sociology. Were there other locations or organizations at Berkeley?

**Zavella:** So the Chicanos in Sociology formed the Chicano Political Economy Collective. I was a part of ChPEC for many years. That was a really good experience because we would read things, a lot of Marxism, or Neomarxist

theory. We would read each other's work. It was also a place of very harsh politics. The collective would read somebody's work and tear it apart and then the person would be left devastated. It wasn't a very supportive place. And it also wasn't very amenable to a feminist perspective.

So the women sort of branched off and we formed our own Chicana Colectiva. And that was a really great experience. We started reading stuff. We started mentoring and supporting one another. And eventually we produced a slideshow about Chicana history that I think is still around. Clementina Duran was one of the leaders of that project and Lupe Frias. It was a good experience. Eventually that group of women would form Mujeres en Marcha after I left and they produced a pamphlet that articulated the need for a women's space.

**Zepeda:** So that slideshow highlighted the collective work that you all were doing.

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm. I TA'd in Chicano Studies. I actually TA'd for my friend, Velia, who was teaching there. And I TA'd a class in Environmental Studies also. So I found little places around campus that felt more welcoming than anthropology.

**Zepeda:** And what was your research like during graduate school?

**Zavella:** I moved to San Jose, California to do my field research. And that's what ended up being my dissertation and my first book *Women's Work in Chicano Families: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley*. And that was challenging. That was really hard work, in part because of the logistics of doing research in San Jose. I moved my family. By then Laura was born and she was two and a half or three when we moved. I was running around doing interviews and participant observation and trying to figure things out.

It was also hard because Chicano Studies was in formation and at that point I started having relationships with people at Stanford. So some of the women at Stanford got involved in the Chicana Colectiva, Antonia Castañeda, Laurie Coyle, and Vicki Ruiz in particular. So that was really cool. There were different things going on at Stanford. I remember going to Stanford several times. And getting involved with NACS, National Association for Chicano Social Sciences, at the beginning, and then later we changed the name to the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies. So that was good.

At one point Vickie and I actually did an oral history together with this one elder, Lucio Bernabé, that I got to know in my research. He was this really amazing activist that I found through the Cannery Workers Committee, that I got involved with when I was doing my field research. Vicki and I both interviewed him for our respective dissertations. So I was finding ways to do my research. And also, at the time things were starting to come out. I remember Albert



Camarillo's book came out.<sup>6</sup> That was very influential. Some other Chicano historical works were coming out—Tomás Almaguer's work was very influential for me.<sup>7</sup> So I feel like I grew up with the field of Chicano Studies. It was happening around me.

**Zepeda:** That's amazing to have that collectivity. And how you all grounded this field to take off. It's powerful.

**Zavella:** So I remember, I had moved to San Jose and I was doing my dissertation research. And I heard Vicki Ruiz was also doing a dissertation on cannery workers. And I was like, what! (laughs) She finished before I did. Of course, Vicki is one of those—she really takes a project and runs with it. Our books literally came out the same year.<sup>8</sup> Hers came out a few months before mine. And we both won the National Women's Political Caucus Distinguished Achievement

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<sup>6</sup> Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios* (Harvard University Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Tomás Almaguer, "Toward the Study of Chicano Colonialism." *Aztlán* 2 (1971): 7-21.

<sup>8</sup> Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry* (University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Patricia Zavella, *Women's Work and Chicano Families: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley* (Cornell University Press, 1987).

Award for our first books. So I feel like Vicki and I have been neck-in-neck for quite a while.

**Zepeda:** Wow, that's amazing! So thinking about mentors once again, at UC Berkeley who would you point to? Was it other students? Was it professors? Staff?

**Zavella:** So an important set of mentors were students in ChPEC and students in the Chicana Colectiva, and Velia García in particular. Velia and I took a reading course with John Ogbu. I remember John and I learned more from Velia than I think we learned from John (laughs). So that was great. Troy Duster was a mentor. He ended up being the outside member of my committee. He was really very sweet and very helpful. I really appreciate his work on my committee.

But I didn't have strong mentors in anthropology. I eventually ended up moving to Albuquerque, where I wrote my dissertation. That's where I met Louise Lamphere. And I feel like Louise Lamphere was really my mentor. And at one point she was hearing about my experience and she said, "You know, Pat. You really sort of trained yourself." And I was like, "Yeah. I know, with the help of some friends" (laughs). But Louise was great. Because I was finishing my dissertation and she hired me as a part-time research assistant on a project that eventually became a book that we coauthored together. She was an amazing

mentor and she taught me a lot about anthropology. We remained friends over the years. So I think she was my real academic mentor.

**Zepeda:** And then, was it for work that you moved to Albuquerque?

**Zavella:** My partner at the time, Felipe Gonzales, got a job there. I first went to Santa Barbara. I got one of the Chicana Dissertation Fellowships that they continue to offer in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies. I spent a year there, and did some work on my dissertation and then ended up going to Albuquerque. That's where my son was born.

**Zepeda:** So do you mind if we take a little break?

### **First Years Teaching**

Okay, if we could pick up now with your transition from being a graduate student and starting to teach. You started to teach at a few different schools before you went to UC Santa Cruz. So maybe if you could just tell a little bit about that process of teaching.

**Zavella:** I had the opportunity to teach a course on the Chicano family at California State University, Hayward. That was an evening course. I commuted from San Jose, so that was exciting. It was hard. I think that was my first course and since it was at night, it was all professionals, people who were much older than I. I feel like I got pushed maybe a little more than some other instructors

might have been (laughs). But it was a good experience. I learned a lot and I think my students learned a lot too.

After we moved back to Berkeley, I taught a course on La Chicana with Beatriz Pesquera in the Chicano Studies Department. That was fun. It was a little bit intimidating because Alex Saragoza, who by then had moved to Berkeley, he was teaching Chicano Studies. He audited the course. So every day, there was Alex, with all his questions. And you know, we were student instructors. We were trying to figure it out. But it was a really good experience. We learned a lot.

When I was at Santa Barbara, at that time the Chicana Dissertation Fellowship asked you to teach two courses. So I think I taught a Chicana course. I can't remember what else I taught; small classes, which was good. But (laughs) at that point Laura was probably about four or five and I remember at one point I didn't have day care, so I took her with me while we were teaching. And she was supposed to sit there and color and be quiet, and of course she didn't. (laughs) So at one point, she was drawing on the board and she decided she needed to clean the board. And she got the two erasers and she was banging them together, raising all this dust. So (laughs) I had to cancel class because my kid was falling apart. I still tease her about that one.

**Zepeda:** (laughs)

**Zavella:** But it was good experiences, I mean, definitely challenging. At Berkeley, when I was a graduate student, there was no TA training. It was sort of like, “Okay, you’re TA’ing for so-and-so. And here’s your section. Go to it.” So there would be TA meetings and we would check in with the professor. I TA’d for Ron Takaki, which was great.

**Zepeda:** Wow.

**Zavella:** And Velia García, the woman in Environmental Studies whose name I’m forgetting, and Mario Barrera. So you got to see different teaching styles. But you basically learned it on your own. And so, when I taught my own courses, I was just trying to figure it out on my own. It wasn’t until I got to Santa Cruz that I actually got a little bit of mentoring about how to be a teacher.

But that teaching experience was really helpful. And then I was finishing up my dissertation in Albuquerque Carlos Arce contacted me out of the blue. He was running a Chicano Dissertation Completion Project out of the University of Michigan. Basically, it was this process where they would bring you in for a summer, and you could finish writing your dissertation, and they would enter it on the computer. In those days, it was a mainframe computer. Like, I was literally using a typewriter! (laughs)

**Zepeda:** Wow!

**Zavella:** They would have copyeditors and social activities. So at that point, my son was born. He was a tiny baby. And I had a daughter. So I couldn't really take off for a long period of time. So I ended up going, I think for a month, maybe five weeks. I took Anthony with me. He was maybe eight months. He was a baby. And the person running this program was Aida Hurtado. That's where I met Aida.

**Zepeda:** Oh—

**Zavella:** And Chris Sierra was there, some other women--I think Norma Cantú, Laura Rendón; Tomás Almaguer was there. Anyway, so we're all in our little cubicles writing away and they would enter it in the computer and they would give us a printout and we would copyedit and then someone would look at it. So a bunch of us finished our dissertations. It was great. It was a *great* program.

After I became an assistant professor, they would continue that. So I got invited to Claremont to be involved in a Dissertation Completion Project. Some of the women who had been my fellow students at Berkeley were finishing up their dissertations. So it was this really nice to continue the mentoring process. So that was really great.

**Zepeda:** And it was Chicano or Chicana-focused?

**Zavella:** Chicano-focused. Yeah, all the graduate students were Chicanos.

So I finished my dissertation and I got another call out of the blue from Albert Camarillo at Stanford. (At that time there weren't a lot of Chicano graduate students so our stories circulated and he heard from Tomás Almaguer that I was finishing my dissertation.) And he said they had this postdoc at the Center for Chicano Research and was I interested in applying? Well, of course I was interested in applying! I hadn't even thought about what I was going to do after I finished. So I applied and I got it.

And so I moved my family to Stanford and I spent a year at Stanford. At that time Albert was on leave and so Armando Valdez, who had been the Associate Director, was running the center. And the postdoc was—you needed to get involved with a project that they were doing. And they did a Chicanos in Mountain View project. So I had a lot of meetings and a lot of looking at interview guides and those kinds of things. It was a little bit distracting. But it was really great to have a postdoc and have time to think about, how do I begin to turn my manuscript into a book? And it was also at that point I had done enough work with Louise [Lamphere], we had enough interviews done, that we were beginning to think about what would that book look like. So I published, I think, my first article at Stanford, on the New Mexico project. It looked good on my vita and that's what made me competitive for applying for jobs.

### **Coming to UC Santa Cruz**

And that's how I got my job at Santa Cruz. The first time I came to Santa Cruz it was for a visiting assistant professorship. It was a one-year job and I applied and I got offered a job at Denver University to teach anthropology, or Santa Cruz to teach in Community Studies. So I called up Santa Cruz and said, "Look, I've got this job offer. What's up with your search?" Carter Wilson was the person running the search. He said, "Well, I don't want to lose you." So they speeded up their process and I ended up getting hired at Santa Cruz. And then while I was here, that first year they did a search for the regular position and I applied for that. And I ended up getting that position. It was kind of scary. (laughs) But here I am.

**Zepeda:** So that was in 1983.

**Zavella:** I got hired in 1983.

**Zepeda:** And it was in Community Studies.

**Zavella:** It was in Community Studies, yeah.

**Zepeda:** So for you, coming from an anthropology background, but also being politicized in the Chicano and Chicana movement, how was it to enter into Community Studies at UC Santa Cruz?



**Zavella:** When I first got the job I felt like, this is the perfect job for me. It was interdisciplinary. And I had always been—I used to call myself an agnostic anthropologist because of that whole critique that we went through. And Chicano Studies has always been very interdisciplinary. And Community Studies was focused on social change. So I felt like I was with fellow travelers. And there were people there who worked on different kinds of issues—labor, or Nancy Stoller was there working on feminism and health. Social activism. So felt like, okay, I'm here with some fellow travelers. I have a contribution to make. I gave it my heart and soul. It was a really good job for me.

**Zepeda:** And while you were at Community Studies you were involved with the Watsonville Cannery Strike. So I'd like to ask you to talk to me a little bit about your involvement with the Watsonville Cannery Strike in the mid-1980s.

**Zavella:** So the Cannery Strike happened in 1985 through 1987. It was about an eighteen-month strike. At first it was more like we were just hearing things about it. And eventually I decided I really wanted my students to see firsthand what was happening. I know Elba Sanchez had taken her students down there. So we went and we walked the picket line, talked to workers, and tried to get their perspective.

Some of my students got really involved. I wasn't that involved. It was more like I was part of the general supportive community. They would ask for donations

and we would donate stuff. Or I was really talking a lot to Jon Silver about all this. He was making a film that ended up being *Watsonville on Strike*, this award-winning film that I showed in my class many, many times.<sup>9</sup> So I wasn't as directly involved at that point. But I was definitely part of a supportive community.

**Zepeda:** A supportive community. And could I ask you about what courses you taught in Community Studies?

**Zavella:** I taught *Preparation for Field Study, Analysis of Field Materials, Senior Thesis*. I taught a *Feminist Theory* course and *Theories of Social Change*. At one point when I was chair, we restructured the curriculum and we started doing seminars that focused in on our areas. So mine was *Theories of Race, Class, and Gender* and I talked a lot about labor, family, and immigration.

I enjoyed my classes in Community Studies. The students were great. They all went out and did these amazing six-month full-time field studies in a social

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<sup>9</sup> *Watsonville on Strike: A Documentary*. By Jon Silver. Migrant Media Productions, 1989. Watsonville, California.

change organization and wrote up these senior theses. You got really close to the students because you worked with them on their theses. There for a while we were actually reading their field notes. So you would start off with *Preparation for Field Study*, six months of reading their field notes, and then writing a thesis. You really got to know the students. It was good.

**Zepeda:** That sounds powerful.

So we're starting oral history number two with Pat Zavella. We're here in your home, Pat, welcome. And it's June 24, 2013, and I'm Susy Zepeda with the Regional History Project. Last time we were speaking a little bit about your time at UC Santa Cruz. So we'll continue from there.

It seems that from looking at your CV and from knowing you, that you've made it a priority here at UC Santa Cruz to build community spaces for faculty of color and students of color. I'm thinking, to name a few, of the Popular Cultures Cluster, your participation in *Revista Mujeres*, where I know you sat on the board, and I brought this to show you.

**Zavella:** Oh, my gosh! I forgot all about this.

**Zepeda:** So you were featured in volume I, number 1, 1984 [in *Revista Mujeres*], with your story.

**Zavella:** [Looking at the issues.] Wow, memories. (laughs)

**Zepeda:** So I was wondering if you could just talk a little bit about that, creating community spaces for faculty and students of color during your time at UC Santa Cruz.

**Zavella:** So this story in *Revista Mujeres* came not too long after a story happened in *City on the Hill* with me. And at that point, I forget exactly what the reporter asked me but it was something to the effect of, “So how are you finding Santa Cruz?” And I sort of blurted out, “Well, it’s kind of surprising because there aren’t very many people of color here.” I got my degree at Berkeley and then I went to Santa Barbara and then to Albuquerque. So I was really used to a lot of people of color and Santa Cruz was *so* white back in those days. There were very few faculty of color and we sort of gravitated to one another. So whatever space there was that I could get involved in, it really seemed important to do that.

Frankly I don’t really remember how this story in *Revista Mujeres* happened. I do remember that we had some kind of gathering to celebrate the inauguration. And maybe Rosie Cabrera was there. I think she and I arrived the same year. So I do remember some celebratory thing around *Revista Mujeres*. But how I got interviewed, I just really don’t remember.

But I think it’s absolutely correct to say that I really want to try to create safer spaces for students of color and faculty of color. Sometimes that means you work institutionally and sometimes it means you work informally behind the scenes.

Like, for a while we had a *mujeres* breakfast, where all the Latina faculty would get together once or twice a year and just check in, hang out, and just support one another. And sometimes it's something more formal like *Revista Mujeres*, where they were trying to create something that over the years has been able to put out publications.

**Zepeda:** That's wonderful. That's wonderful that you had that space with other professors, an informal space to check in, and hold space for each other in the institution.

**Zavella:** Absolutely.

**Zepeda:** I wanted to ask you about Aida Hurtado. Do you remember Aida being part of *Revista Mujeres* as well?

**Zavella:** I do remember. Aida and I arrived the same year. And it just so happened that she lived either next door or two doors down from me in faculty housing (laughs).

**Zepeda:** Oh. That's amazing!

**Zavella:** I know. So sometimes our little informal get-togethers were literally hanging out on the weekend. But we bonded right away. And one of the things that happened when we first got hired, was Pedro Castillo and Gini Matute-Bianchi organized a little reception in our honor. There was a small number of

Latino faculty on campus came. And we got to meet everybody. That's where I met Frank Talamantes and Gene Cota-Robles. So it was just really welcoming and people were really reaching out to us. Gini became an informal mentor. She happened to have her office at Merrill when I did. So that helped a lot. I remember when I got tenure she gave asked me what my hobbies were and I was like "what?" Finally I said photography. So she gave me a stack of books on photography and told me now that I got tenure I needed to spend more time away from work! And Pedro was always very supportive. So you just felt like you arrived to a small community, and that was part of what you did, was you tried to keep it going.

I feel like Aida and I grew up together. She has some old photos of when we first got here, and I swear we look like we're about seventeen (laughs): Really young looking. And back in the day, they would have these little teaching workshops. So she and I took one together. And there were, I don't know, six or eight women faculty; they were all women. They had somebody come in and we had to do little presentations and then they would critique us and help us try to do better. It was totally great to be part of that mentoring process, institutional mentoring, in addition to the informal mentoring.

**Zepeda:** Last time we spoke about how you really came up with the formation of Chicano and Chicana Studies, how that was really central to your scholarship

and to who you are. So do you feel like you were able to be present as a Chicana at UC Santa Cruz?

**Zavella:** Absolutely. So as a graduate student, one of my field statements—I was told in no uncertain terms that it had to be on Latin America, that Chicano Studies wasn't a legitimate field of inquiry (laughs). But within that, I could have a section on Chicano and Chicana Studies and I had a section on Mexico. I thought I was going to go do ethnographic research in Mexico for my dissertation.

I always felt very marginal in anthropology. But when I got here, I remember asking Bill Friedland, "So why did you guys hire me?" And he said, "Because of your work; we liked your work." And it was the first time anyone had said unequivocally that they liked my work. So that felt really good.

When I got hired in Community Studies, John Borrego was there. He has always been Mr. World Systems. But at that point he was focusing a lot of attention on Chicanos in the Southwest. So I felt like I had someone to talk to. I felt like my work was validated. And then there were little pockets on campus where we were beginning to build institutional support for Chicanos and Latinos. So that aspect of my work has always been central to who I am and how I've evolved over the years.

### **Chicano and Latino Research Center [CLRC]**

**Zepeda:** That's wonderful, to have been able to keep that center and present. So now, if we can move into thinking about how the development of Latin American and Latino Studies department happened on campus, if you could share the story that you know of that formation.

**Zavella:** Okay. So it began with the Chicano/Latino Research Center. Norma Klahn and Pedro Castillo and some other folks were trying to figure out, how do we get this research center going? And at the time there was funding from the UC Committee on Latino Research. Actually, before that it was called SCR43 where literally a bill passed in the California legislature directing the University of California to conduct more research on Latinos in California. And basically it was seed money to start research centers focused on Chicanos and Latinos. So Pedro and Norma wrote a proposal. They sent out this call—who wants to get involved? They started having meetings and right from the get-go the theme, the mission was “Cross-Border Perspectives linking the Americas.” So that, of course, included Chicano/Latino Studies, but Norma Klahn's work was really in Mexico and Latin America, and she was just beginning to look into Chicana/Latina literature, and Pedro's work was in California history while the state was still part of Mexico. So they were rethinking Latin American Studies even while we were rethinking Chicano and Latino Studies.



So we had a bunch of meetings. I remember we got little grants to have study groups. We applied for a big grant, the Hemispheric Dialogues Project from the Ford Foundation. And over several years, we would invite in scholars and we would have little workshops and roundtables, talking through different issues and reading each other's work. I remember the first meeting, we all were supposed to nominate an article out of our field. I had them read Esteban Flores's piece on Marxism and Chicano Studies.<sup>10</sup>

**Zepeda:** Wow.

**Zavella:** Yeah, yeah. So I think we felt like we were colleagues and fellow travelers politically. Because the Latin Americanists were all critics of U.S. imperialism and different kinds of processes here that affected people in Latin America and were very supportive of the few of us working in Chicano/Latino Studies. And out of that, somebody began—I think it was actually Pedro [Castillo]—began to list all of the courses—what are the Latin American Studies

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<sup>10</sup> Flores, Estevan T. "The Mexican Origin People in the United States and Marxist Thought in Chicano Studies." In *The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship on American Campuses*, edited by Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff, 103-38. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1986.

courses; what are the Chicano/Latino courses? And so every quarter there'd be a list. And we began to talk about—well, let's put together a program. And initially, it was a Latin American Studies program. But it always had this cross-border framework that came out of the work we were doing in CLRC.

### **The Formation of Latin American and Latino Studies at UC Santa Cruz**

So the program, I think it started in 1991. And ten years later, 2001, was when we became a department. So as a program we did some searches. That's when we hired Manuel Pastor and Jonathan Fox, and we had hired Suzanne Jonas and Guillermo Delgado as full-time lecturers. Manuel was the first chair and then Jonathan came to Santa Cruz at the same time. And he was the second chair, but he was the first chair of the department. He wrote the proposal to become a department of Latin American and Latino Studies.

So in both of those processes, people were like, "Well, send us a little blurb on what your research is about so you can become a part of CLRC. Send us the kind of courses that you'd like to teach." And at the time that they were forming LALS, Marty Chemers was the dean. And he sent out this call and he said, "We're going to make a department. We're open to people moving half or full FTE. So if you're interested, let me know." So that's when Wally [Goldfrank] moved half his FTE and John Borrego and I moved our full FTE's to help with Manuel and Jonathan and Julianne Burton to put together a department. We got

approved. They moved my office and I started teaching courses in LALS. I've been really happy in that department. It's been a really good move for me.

**Zepeda:** So the vision of the department, then, the hemispheric vision, was always a part of it because of the CLRC?

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm.

**Zepeda:** So was it during the hemispheric dialogues that the conversation—because I remember as a graduate student coming to talks and seeing those conversations happening. So I was wondering if you could say more about how those collaborations and conversations happened. I remember graduate students and faculty developing syllabi together.

**Zavella:** Oh, right. So I think initially it was a very informal, bring your article, and we'll read each other's work, and we'll have conversations, and try to figure out how can we do this? What do Latin Americanists and people working in Chicano/Latino Studies have in common? And I think we were pretty careful and we were very sensitive to some of the tensions that can happen between those two fields. And then we received the Hemispheric Dialogues grant, which enabled us to bring in outside scholars.

I think it was in phase three of that grant where we were able to fund partnerships that you are referring to. Several faculty got to work with an activist

and we got resources to produce something. So that's when I began, literally, working closely with Xóchitl Castañeda. I knew her before but we hadn't been able to work together. And then there were also fellowships for faculty to work with graduate students.<sup>11</sup> I got one with Veronica López-Durán. We were both supposed to work on designing a cross-border syllabus. She was going to do it for if she were ever to teach in sociology as a professor. And I did one for a course that I was going to teach in LALS. And then the culmination of that was that we had this big conference that Juan Poblete organized, and that's where a bunch of us presented our work in process—this is what cross-border work looks like for us.<sup>12</sup> Later he published an anthology that came out of that conference.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> "Hemispheric Dialogues 2: Bridging Latin American and Latino/a Studies Through Curricular Innovation and Action-Research Partnerships," Grant submitted in conjunction with the Chicano/Latino Research Center to The Ford Foundation, Co-Principal Investigators Sonia Alvarez, Jonathan Fox, Manuel Pastor, Juan Poblete, and Patricia Zavella, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Patricia Zavella, "Hemispheric Links, Missed Conversations: Conceptual Approaches on Mexican Migration, Gender and Identity," Paper prepared for the conference, "Reflections on the Future: Hemispheric Dialogues on the Intersections of Latina/o-Chicana/o-Latin American(s) Studies," sponsored by the Chicano/Latino Research Center and the Latin American and Latino Studies Department, UC Santa Cruz, February 20, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Juan Poblete, ed. *Critical Latin American and Latino Studies*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

And out of that also came, in LALS, the thinking around how do we begin to put together our core courses. So I remember we had a department retreat in which brainstormed, what are the themes that cross cut all our disparate research interests? And that's where we came up with the four themes that we still use today—Transnational Migration, Social Inequalities, Cultural Politics/Cultural Flows, and Collective Action/Social Movements. We invited a bunch of the participating faculty and it was always sort of the usual suspects (laughs)—Pedro Castillo, Norma Klahn, Juan Poblete. The people involved in CLRC overlapped with the people involved in LALS. So we had an LALS retreat and in the afternoon meeting we invited all these participating faculty, who were also CLRC folks. And we sort of brainstormed—what would go into a core course on cross-border perspectives on the Americas? We put together some ideas. I decided, okay, I'll volunteer to design what was then called "Bridging: Latin American and Latino Studies" and later became "Theories and Concepts of Latin American and Latino Studies." I think you TA'd for one of those versions.

**Zepeda:** I did. Yeah. I remember that.

**Zavella:** So it was a very collaborative project. We really bounced ideas off of each other and got feedback. It was really good.

**Zepeda:** So in terms of the collaboration—it just sounds so dynamic the way that it happened and a really amazing process. So thinking about it, was there also

conflict in that conversation in terms of positions, or was it more people just trying to understand each other, where people were coming from and then working from that point? Or how would you describe it?

**Zavella:** There wasn't conflict over the approach. I think all of us had been in situations where there had been conflict between Latin Americanists and people working in Chicano/Latino Studies. And we really didn't want to go there.

**Zepeda:** Nice.

**Zavella:** So I think we were very careful: We were very—okay, you get to talk and explain the development of your work, and vice versa. And when we did that, it allowed us to get out on the table how—I think the Latin Americanists very much felt like they were seen as sort of marginal within Latin American Studies, to the extent that the history of Latin American Studies has a history of formation out of cold war politics and the United States trying to figure out what people are organizing, and what kinds of communist-leaning organizations are happening in the Americas, and how can we keep control of that, and where are our trade partners? Those kinds of questions.

**Zepeda:** So more like area studies.

**Zavella:** It was very much about area studies and about the interests of the United States. The Latin Americanists were studying revolution in Chile, or

feminist social movements, or things that were critiquing that area studies approach. So they felt like they had a lot in common with those of us in Chicano and Latino Studies that are also critiquing the power of the U.S. state and global capitalism. So there was never any real conflict around that. It was always, what can we bring to the table?

Wally Goldfrank always tells a story about how when he first got to Santa Cruz—his field research was in Chile—and he said at one point a professor came to him and he said, “Well, has there been any worthwhile literature produced out of Latin America?” And it was just this dismissal of a whole hemisphere! So he literally felt very marginalized, not only in Latin American Studies, but also at Santa Cruz. And this idea of building a Latin American Studies program, that seemed kind of out-there. And then you’re going to do it with Chicanos and Latinos? It just—it raised lots of questions.

But it was also—you know, Santa Cruz was where they founded the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies and Community Studies departments. They were very interdisciplinary programs where there hadn’t been a precedent and where people were creating new fields. So at some level, I think Santa Cruz was a really good place to put together LALS.

**Zepeda:** That's amazing. I just got chills. And thinking about, how you described it, the sort of opposition to the state or the resistance to the state, is what brought the conversation together and allowed for that collaboration among faculty.

**Zavella:** Yeah. I won't say that there wasn't conflict. But the conflict was around hiring. So there would be search committees and some people favored one candidate and some people favored the other candidate. And sometimes it got a little, you know, sharp debate.

**Zepeda:** Yeah.

**Zavella:** And then, personality stuff. Some people were not as sensitive as they could have been (laughs). But there never really was conflict over the substance of putting together Latin American and Latino Studies. I think it was because we were so careful—how are we going to do this in a way that respects where people are coming from and the histories of the formations they're coming from?

So we try to teach this history in the course *Theories and Concepts of Latin American and Latino Studies*, so that it doesn't become this, oh, we were all in solidarity together. There are very real differences. When we go to the Latin American Studies Association [LASA] meetings, those differences are evident. We like to call them the suit and tie guys who study global economics in Latin America. They don't have much in common with some of the colleagues who are studying leftist social movements.



And then, I'm sure you heard the story at LASA, where at one point the Latino Studies section was suspended temporarily.

**Zepeda:** Oh, I haven't heard about that.

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah. This happened when we were in Brazil. I don't really know why it happened. I just remember hearing people saying, "They've suspended the section and we have to rally and show them there are lots of people interested, so come to a meeting." And it got turned around. But I think that was a real reminder to folks that studying Latinos isn't necessarily part of mainstream Latin American Studies.

**Zepeda:** That's interesting. And that's the remarkable and groundbreaking part of Latin American and Latino Studies here, is that it intentionally does that work to keep that tension existing.

**Zavella:** Exactly. There are other programs around the country that are Latin American and Latino Studies. We always feel like we've been on the cutting edge. But we're learning from one another. So the folks at the University of Illinois in Chicago—have a really interesting program. They offer a master's degree. So we keep on tabs on them and they keep tabs on us. We know colleagues from going to conferences, especially LASA conferences. And so I think there's been a real learning from one another and a real support in trying to figure out how to do this carefully. And then, I don't know if you saw—I just

saw an email today—there's going to be a conference in Chicago in July of 2014 to try to put together an international Latina/Latino Studies Association.

**Zepeda:** Oh, wow.

**Zavella:** And it was interesting, Frances Aparicio is one of the leaders in doing that. She had a blog on MALCS [Mujeres Activas En Letras Y Cambio Social]. And that founding goes back to the moment in LASA when they disbanded the Latino Studies Section. Apparently there have been other disciplinary professional associations where the scholars working in Latina/o Studies have felt marginalized. So there's both a real interest for a very interdisciplinary conference and more than a few panels that we get to put together in LASA. I think that also is an expression of these tensions. Latin American Studies and Latino Studies have very different histories and purposes. You can bridge them carefully, as I think we've done here, and I think other programs have. But sometimes people are just like, why would we do that? Let's just have our own space.

### **Launching the Doctoral Program in Latin American and Latino Studies**

**Zepeda:** And now the Ph.D. program, the doctoral program, is being launched.

**Zavella:** Yeah. And we were really careful about how to do that. It was literally our last external review, right before that, was when we said we wanted to have

a doctoral program. And so in our self-study we had a one-paragraph statement about that. And when the external reviewers arrived they were like, what? This sounds really exciting. So they were all over it and they were asking us all of these questions. We hadn't really gotten very far in our thinking.

Since then, we wrote a proposal that got approved and we now are ready to launch. We are going to invite applications in the fall. And we've done a lot of work every step of the way. This year we brainstormed what our core courses would look like, so that when our entering cohorts come in they'll have a curriculum. We've also done something that I think is really good. We have what we're calling a disciplinary spine, which means that students not only take our core courses and our graduate courses in LALS, but they also have to take some courses in another discipline that helps them build them expertise in particular methodologies—ethnography or survey research, whatever—so that when they graduate then they can go on the market not only in interdisciplinary programs, but in disciplinary searches.

**Zepeda:** That's wonderful.

**Zavella:** Yeah, because we're very mindful that this is new and people are going to go, "A Ph.D. in LALS? What does that mean?" (laughs) So we're trying to think ahead of what our students might be facing.

**Zepeda:** Wonderful. And so do the core courses that you all have outlined reflect the core courses of the undergraduate program?

**Zavella:** They're pretty similar, yeah. We have LALS 200, which you took, which very much problematizes transnationalism and how you put Latin American and Latino Studies together. And we have the faculty come in and do these autobiographical talks—this is my discipline and my research and this is how I navigated cross-border, interdisciplinary work.

**Zepeda:** And that one was called *Bridging*.

**Zavella:** It was called *Bridging* but we changed the name to *Theories and Concepts*. And then we have LALS 200A, which we are calling Power and Society; it's the equivalent of 100A at the undergraduate level. It's focusing on social science approaches. And then we have a 200B, which mirrors 100B. We're calling it, Culture, Power, Epistemologies.

**Zepeda:** Oh, wow. Nice.

**Zavella:** Yeah. So all our students will have to take those core courses. And then, of course, they'll specialize in one or the other.

**Zepeda:** That's so exciting that that's happening. And I wanted to ask you, because you served as chair for a while in the Latin American and Latino Studies

Department. So I wanted to ask you if you could speak about your experience of being chair, being Chicana, and doing a lot of this amazing work.

**Zavella:** For the most part, I really enjoyed being chair, I think in part because I had been chair before in Community Studies and that wasn't so enjoyable. That was harder work. The Community Studies department was going through a real major reorganization at that time and it was hard to figure out how to do that. In LALS, when I was chair we were in building mode. So we got to hire. We hired Shannon Gleeson, Hector Perla, and Flora Lu the first year that I was chair. And when I came in as chair, we had just hired Ceclia Rivas. So yeah, we increased in size dramatically. They are all really good, very collegial. So there was a lot of from the ground up—how can we fine-tune our courses and our requirements? I think that was really good for them and it was good for us as a department.

And then, I worked quite a bit on the graduate proposal. Now that I think back to it that was a lot of work. But it was a good process, in the sense that we used what we call a graduate program affiliates model, which basically says that we're going to augment our faculty resources by drawing on the expertise of faculty

whose courses very much resonate with our curriculum. It's very much like at the undergraduate level. We have ten graduate program affiliates who agreed in the next three years to teach at least one graduate course that will be relevant to our graduate students and they are willing to serve on students' committees.<sup>14</sup> We have an executive committee and the commitment was that at some point they would also sit on that executive committee. So it greatly expanded our faculty resources and the courses that our students could take.

**Zepeda:** Excellent.

**Zavella:** Yeah. And this was happening at a time of budget cuts, so at that point we knew that asking for more faculty probably wasn't going to get us very far. So it was really nice—if you send out an email to all the Graduate Program Affiliates, “I need the syllabi of all of the graduate courses that you teach,” and everybody just sent it in. It was a very collaborative process. It was a lot of nagging online—get your stuff in please!

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<sup>14</sup> The graduate program affiliates include: Mark Anderson (anthropology), Jeff Bury (environmental studies), Cynthia Cruz (education), Kent Eaton (politics), Lisbeth Haas (history), Matt O'Hara (history), Juan Poblete (literature), Barbara Rogoff (psychology), Olga Nájera-Ramírez (anthropology), and Felicity Amaya Schaeffer (feminist studies).

**Zepeda:** (laughs)

**Zavella:** But it really came together, so that worked out well.

**Zepeda:** That must have been one of the highlights of you being chair, seeing the launching of this program manifest.

**Zavella:** Oh, yes.

**Zepeda:** And is there anything else around the Hemispheric Dialogues? It seems like that was a really significant— Because you said there were three phases.

**Zavella:** There were three phases.

**Zepeda:** And also, it seems like that was a time to bring in community people to work with graduate students. Is there anything else that was really important about that?

**Zavella:** That was also a time when we would bring in outside scholars. I can remember we had a workshop on race in the Americas, and we brought in Stefano Varese. It was like: Let's think about this important issue and talk to people who have done work in this area, and let's learn from one another. So every step of the way it was very focused and just great. We really learned a lot.

I should say that the Ford Foundation funded the Hemispheric Dialogues Project and at the time they had what they called their Crossing Borders Initiative. So

they were very much looking for people to reflect on area studies or ethnic studies. So ours fit perfectly. We were rethinking, how do you put Latin American Studies and Chicano/Latino Studies together? So they funded us. It was a generous grant and it enabled us to do some things.

And then our final conference, [Juan] Poblete was the main organizer. And we brought in very well-known scholars, Arlene Davila, for example. Arturo Arias, Alejandro Grimson from Chile—people who were really well known and who had done a lot of work. We put them all on a panel—what are your thoughts about putting together; what are the future directions of Latin American and Latino Studies? It was just so great to hear people say, “Well, you know its uncharted territory. But if I were going to do this I would do *x*, *y*, and *z*.” Or, “Don’t forget this.” Or, “There are interesting precedents where people have tried to do this, so let’s think about that.” So I feel like we learned a lot through this process. It was really helpful to have those grants.

**Zepeda:** And it feels like that benefitted not only faculty, but also the students and community members.

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm.

**Zepeda:** That project of thinking out loud together was beneficial for everyone.



**Zavella:** It had a profound affect on my research. The book that I wrote would have been a very different book if I hadn't been involved in all of this. I definitely feel very comfortable with a transnational perspective now in a way that I wasn't in my previous research.

That's a point of debate within Chicano/Latino Studies—do we focus on what's going on in the United States, or do we use this transnational perspective? And I'm on the side of, we really have to look beyond the nation-state, and look at different kinds of transnational processes and ways in which the international boundaries are porous, the way in which discourses travel and people pay attention to what's going on in their home countries. I think my work has really benefitted from my being involved in this.

**Zepeda:** Wow. And I'm thinking also about how graduate students have benefitted from entering into a space where faculty are already on that cutting edge. It's a foundational stance that you can enter into and build with. That's really powerful.

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm. And you can come in and you can see the debate happening right around you (laughs).

**Zepeda:** (laughs) Right. Exactly. I remember that about the conference, Juan Poblete challenging the kind of border that was being spoken about; that's what I

remember very significantly. So it made me reflect on, what does it mean—the U.S.-Mexico border and there're other borders.<sup>15</sup>

**Zavella:** Yeah. That was a really important thing for all of us to think about. And at least for my work, I come back to focusing on the U.S.-Mexico border and prioritizing the processes that happen there. But it was really good for me to think about other borders. And especially in my teaching—one of the things that comes up in LALS is students feel we're very Mexico-centric and very Mexican-centric. The Salvadoran students, in particular, the Central American students, have really wanted us to be aware of that. So over the years, I definitely try to teach about other subjects in the Americas, but also, increasingly, as I try to use this transnational framework, to get away from this U.S.-Mexico border.

So in my *Families* course last winter I taught a book about Ecuador and migration from southern Ecuador to New York City. And it was really interesting to see a whole different part of the world. You've got a different set of gendered

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<sup>15</sup> At the Hemispheric Dialogue Conference Juan Poblete argued that we had to think of other borders, such the border between Central and South America, or nation-state borders between Chile and Bolivia, for example, instead of only the U.S.-Mexico border and we need to think of border imaginaries.

processes happening in families, but very interesting kinds of parallels. You can put in conversation the Chicano experience with the Ecuadorian experience.

**Zepeda:** I remember when I was a TA for your class, I remember seeing there was an emphasis on Colombia and other locations.

**Zavella:** Yeah, Central America. We have a critical mass of students whose origins are from Peru. And so twice a year we have these little get-togethers with the faculty, where students can come and share their concerns, or their appreciation. And one of the concerns was they wanted more work on Peru. And it just so happened that right after that we hired Sylvanna Falcón, who is a Peruvian-American and does work in Peru. So it totally worked out.

But I think we take seriously this idea that a cross-border perspective means you look at the Americas. And so eventually we would really like to have more emphasis on Brazil, on the Caribbean, Canada—there are Latinos in Canada. If you're talking about the Americas, it's a very big space.

### **More on the Chicano Latino Research Center**

**Zepeda:** Wonderful, well I think that's a great segue into thinking or speaking more about the Chicano/Latino Research Center.

**Zavella:** Okay.

**Zepeda:** Which you were the director of from 1999 to 2003. You mentioned that it was Pedro and Norma who put in the grant. So could you say more about the formation of it and your experience working there as director.

**Zavella:** I was the second director. Norma and Pedro were co-directors for quite a while, four or five years. They really established the mission; they organized the research clusters; and we would give mini grants to graduate students and faculty and hold conferences. I think there were two conferences that happened in Mexico.

**Zepeda:** Really!

**Zavella:** Yeah. I remember we went to Mexico City. And out of that they edited a volume, *Las Nuevas Fronteras*,<sup>16</sup> with the papers we presented in Mexico. We had a book launch in Guadalajara.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Norma Klahn, Alejandro Álvarez Béjar, Federico Manchón, and, Pedro Castillo, eds., *Las Nuevas Fronteras del Siglo XXI: Dimensiones Culturales, Políticas y Socioeconómicas de las Relaciones México-Estados Unidos (New Frontiers in the Twenty First Century: Cultural, Political and Socioeconomic Dimensions of US-Mexico Relations)*, México DF: La Jornada Ediciones y Centro de Investigaciones Colección: la democracia en México.

And when I first came on, I sort of shadowed them for two quarters. So I got to see how they worked, all the decisions that were made, how things were put together, how they would put together the Steering Committee meeting and prepare the materials and have a discussion and help them make decisions. It was really good to do it that way. And then I think I was director for one or two years, and then I invited Olga Nájera-Ramírez to be co-director for a year or two, and did the same kind of process.

I really enjoyed directing CLRC. At that point—now we look back and it was the golden age (laughs) because we had enough resources from the systemwide UC Committee on Latino Research that we could run the center. We had enough resources that we had a full-time staff person. We hired Evelyn Parada, who was really, really good. We had all these great conferences, and activities, and colloquia, and receptions. So I really enjoyed that.

Unfortunately, the budget cuts started happening after I left. We were at the point where last year CLRC was on hiatus. It will open again next year.

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<sup>17</sup> This book launch was hosted by El Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social de Occidente.

**Zepeda:** Oh, good. That's great news.

**Zavella:** Yeah, Cat Ramirez has agreed to be director for three years.

**Zepeda:** Wonderful.

**Zavella:** And the Social Sciences Division has patched together some resources. There was a little bit of money banked. So it looks like it will open and it will get to sponsor some events. So it's really great to see it coming back.

It was a really good space because we would have all these colloquia and all these events. On this campus—unlike other campuses, I'm finding out—we have a real colloquium-attending culture. So lots of people would come to the talks. And then, you have a little reception afterwards and you get to check in with your friends. It was a real community-building kind of space. I can't tell you how many times people have said they miss CLRC, to the extent that we launched a colloquium series in LALS with CLRC last year, even though they didn't have any staff and were closed. But we organized things and used some of their resources. People were really appreciative, "It's so great to have talks and people get together. You can have conversations and learn things."

So it's a really important space and now that we're going to have our graduate program we want to make sure that it's very vibrant and can be a place where, not only do our graduate students get to attend talks and get to apply for mini-

grants, but they get to be a part of research clusters. At Rosie's event<sup>18</sup> where we were all taking pictures of the Transnational Popular Culture folks, it reminded me—we had some great meetings and we were together for many years. We all learned a lot during that process. We read a lot of stuff. We read each other's work. We went to conferences together and we did presentations. So that's a really great mentoring process for graduate students. It's a great way to create a sense of belonging for faculty and graduate students. And it retains folks.

**Zepeda:** Yes.

**Zavella:** I mean, people feel like you have a reason to be here, both for students and for faculty. So we really are happy to see CLRC get back to what it was.

**Zepeda:** I love that idea, or that concept, that it retains people. I think you're absolutely right. Because you do have a community; you know when you go to a colloquium who is going to be in the room—you don't know what the conversation is going to be, but you know it's going to be a good conversation,

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<sup>18</sup> Rosalee Cabrera retirement party after thirty years of dedication to the UC Santa Cruz campus community. Celebrated on June 21, 2013.

and you'll get something from it. So you're absolutely right. I had never thought about the clusters as a form of retention, but I think you're absolutely right.

**Zavella:** Yeah. I know firsthand of people, faculty who got outside offers who decided they wanted to stay at UCSC and CLRC was a piece of that. It was like: here's my community. Here's my intellectual and social community. And on other campuses, I'm finding out the culture is, nobody goes to talks or if they do go, you sort of lay into the speaker; you do these scathing critique kind of questions. You don't see that happen at Santa Cruz. It's always very, thank you for your talk and now what about this?

**Zepeda:** A building.

**Zavella:** Yeah. People will be critical but in a very supportive, constructive way. I really appreciate that we have that space here.

**Zepeda:** Mm-hmm. I'm trying to think about what other clusters exist. Because there was the Transnational and Popular Cultures Cluster and that shifted or transformed into Bodies, Borders and Violence.



**Zavella:** There was a Latinos in California Cluster. There was the Chicana Feminisms Cluster that resulted in our book, *Chicana Feminisms*.<sup>19</sup> I think there was one on the border.

**Zepeda:** Was there a literature one on the border? I think I remember something like that.

**Zavella:** Yeah.

**Zepeda:** And then I remember John Brown Childs being in one of those.

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah, Comparative Ethnicities.

**Zepeda:** So do you want to speak about the Chicana Feminisms Cluster and the producing of that amazing edited collection?

**Zavella:** It took a long time. And it started off—Aida had a course on Chicana feminisms and she organized a colloquium series. The cluster cosponsored that and we had all these speakers come in. And we decided to ask people to write

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<sup>19</sup> *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, Edited by Gabriela F. Arredondo, Aida Hurtado, Norma Klahn, Olga Nájera-Ramírez, and Patricia Zavella. Duke University, 2003.

chapters based on their talks and that we would edit the book. And we were just at the point where, I think we had drafts of the papers when we hired Gabriela Arredondo. So she came in and we asked her to join the cluster.

So it was a long process of reading the papers and editing them, giving feedback, and having people revise their papers, and brainstorming what would go into the introduction. I wrote the first draft and then passed it on to one of the coeditors and they added something, and so it went around and around.

All the logistical details: Aida was the contact with Duke University Press and worked on getting us a contract; doing presentations once the book was out. The format was that we would give talks and we would have somebody write a written response to the talk, which sort of paralleled what happened when people literally gave talks—we would have somebody respond. That turned out to be a really fun part because we tried to be very creative in inviting someone to comment on the work, choose someone from a different discipline. So we had dialogues built into the book itself. And the book has done well.

**Zepeda:** So going back and continuing our conversation around the Chicano Latino Research Center at UC Santa Cruz, what would you say, Pat, was the central focus of the CLRC? From your perspective, what was the glue there?

**Zavella:** The glue was the framework of cross-border perspectives linking the Americas and the sense that we wanted to be very interdisciplinary. I remember

one of the tensions with CLRC was that the systemwide funding was supposed to be related to policy. So periodically we would have these discussions—how does transnational popular culture relate to policy? Or, how does Chicano literature relate to policy? We had some really good conversations about the way in which policy is about institutions that regulate culture, such as the Federal Communications Commission. Or, it's about policies around language use—who gets to be bilingual and how languages are valued. We were so strong in the humanities and cultural studies at UCSC and we felt it was important to keep in mind that policy relates to culture as well. Some of the other centers at other universities were very social science-y, very policy-oriented, which is fine.

I think that cross-border perspectives, the interdisciplinarity, the valuing of humanities and cultural studies *with* social sciences, the valuing of creating a culture that was about appreciating scholarship and mentoring graduate students and creating a sense of community that was good for faculty as well as graduate students. I think all of those were central to how CLRC worked.

Eventually, when I was director, we designed the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program. And in part, that developed out of a critique of the Faculty Mentorship Program. A bunch of us weren't happy with how it was running at the time. So we had several Steering Committee meetings where we brainstormed—well, what do we want this to look like? And we had resources and we applied for more resources on campus.

So we ran a URAP for a number of years. I think it's been a really good program. Part of what's great about it, is it directs mentoring toward undergraduates, and identifies underrepresented students who, maybe are not the stars who you know are going to graduate school, but who have potential. And so, learning how to do the research, and doing the work, and being mentored, and taking them through the process of applying to graduate school can give them a little boost. I think it's been very successful. We've had a number of URAP students actually go on to higher education.

So that sense of intellectual community—I think that was the glue that held CLRC together.

**Zepeda:** Thank you for that response. And you mentioned that you were able to gather resources, for example, for URAP. How was the CLRC supported financially?

**Zavella:** Well, it depends on which phase, but when I was director, the bulk of the money came from the UC Committee on Latino Research. That was the base funding. And the Social Sciences and the Humanities Divisions both contributed a significant amount. And then for URAP, I applied for funds from the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. And she allocated some money for a URAP. Then we had donor funds. People would donate. We had this couple that donated a significant amount of money. And we even had people who would send in little

\$35 checks every three months or so. It was really interesting. We put together a lot of different kinds of resources.

Since the budget cuts, the University of California has reorganized the Multi-campus Research Units, the MRU's. And when they did that, they basically stopped funding for all of the CLRC equivalent centers at other campuses, and they invited proposals for new Multi-campus Research Units. The new CLRC wasn't funded. The chair of the UC Committee on Latino Research at the time sent in an application but it wasn't funded. So other campuses had given quite a bit of resources to their CLRC equivalent, but UCSC hadn't given as much, and over the years, with the budget cuts, they've cut back more and more. So that's why we've been so strapped for funds. Berkeley and UCLA and Santa Barbara—they receive lots of campus resources.

**Zepeda:** So is that reflective then, maybe, of administrators not being super supportive, or seeing the importance of the CLRC? Or is it more of a budgetary line—

**Zavella:** You know, it's sort of both. I remember when I was director, we wrote a proposal for a Rockefeller Foundation grant. They had these prestigious grants where you could set up these visiting scholars programs, which brought a lot of visibility to your center. It was around a theme and you would have people apply for postdocs and they would be in residence. And so they would give talks

and you'd have a series of activities around the themes. So we applied for one. Our theme was "Transcommunal Formations: Neo-regional Constructions of Identity and Place," related to the mission about cross border perspectives linking the Americas.

And I remember the reviewers really liked our proposal and they graded us very highly in the competition, but we ended up not getting it. The reason we didn't get it was the vice chancellor for research at the time—we were asking for some campus matching funds. You can't just apply to the Rockefeller and ask for this big grant, they want a show of commitment by the campus. And he wasn't willing to do it. He literally said, "That's not very much bang for my buck. What we're going to get from Rockefeller doesn't justify the kinds of resources that they're asking us to contribute." So we didn't get it. It was a big disappointment. UT Austin got one and I forget who else got one, but friends and colleagues that I know. So there was that disappointment.

The Social Sciences Division has been the most consistent in support, but it has decreased. You know, it's just the budget cuts. They've withdrawn support from other research centers, some entirely. They still maintain a little bit of support for CLRC. If we ever get a turnaround in the budget, I think things will look better. I know the current dean is very, very supportive of CLRC. He's contributed more resources for next year than he has for this year. He understands that if you have a doctoral program, you need to have some kind of research center. So hopefully,

it will revive. One of the things we'd like to see is, whoever is director start to apply for external grants to bring in more resources for the center.

**Zepeda:** That would be good, to have that funding. And so, can you help us name some of the key collaborators and allies to the project of the CLRC, like who would be in the room at those talks?

**Zavella:** You mean in terms of faculty attending the talks?

**Zepeda:** Yes.

**Zavella:** Oh, well, LALS faculty, So Jonathan Fox, Rosa-Linda Fregoso, Sylvanna Falcón, Shannon Gleeson, Hector Perla, Cecilia Rivas. People don't come to every talk but, for the most part, you can count on LALS faculty to be there. People in other departments, especially in Feminist Studies, Marcia Ochoa, and Felicity Amaya Schaeffer—they came to a lot of our talks. Beth Haas would often come to our talks. And then, it sort of depended on who the speaker was. Gabriela Sandoval would come once in a while. Olga Nájera-Ramírez and Mark Henderson from Anthropology, Barbara Rogoff from Psychology. So, those were the usual suspects (chuckles).

**Zepeda:** The usual suspects. Yes, I love that, (laughs) wonderful. And then, what would you say were some of the contributions that the CLRC made to the larger campus community?

**Zavella:** I think that CLRC and the Humanities Research Institute very much were fellow travelers. And so, after CLRC started losing resources and cutting back, some of us went to the Humanities Research Institute and applied for funds. Under Cat Ramirez's leadership, we applied for funds and that's how *Borders, Bodies, and Violence* has been able to survive.

We have events, and the CLRC folks and the Humanities Institute folks come to our conferences. That symposium we had about migration and ethnic studies,<sup>20</sup> we got a good turnout. Feminist Studies folks came to that as well. I think CLRC has been part of the intellectual community in a way that differs from other places on campus, like the Center for Cultural Studies. They have regular talks, and you get their newsletter, and you know who is going to be there all quarter long. I've gone to their talks occasionally and they're usually not that well attended, certainly the CLRC/LALS folks don't go very often. I was invited to give a talk one time and I think one person from our community came. And at the time, the questions I got I felt like were very uninformed. Like, people just

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<sup>20</sup> "Migration and Ethnic Studies," sponsored by the *Borders, Bodies, and Violence* Research Cluster of the Institute for Humanities Research, April 13, 2012.



didn't quite get what I was trying to do. So I think we overlap with particular kinds of communities here on campus.

**Zepeda:** So the CLRC is a site of building scholarship and collaboration amongst different scholars.

**Zavella:** Absolutely.

**Zepeda:** Very powerful. So now, is there anything else we should cover around the Chicano Latino Research Center? Oh, the working paper series.

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah, yeah. So when I was director I was carrying on the tradition that Pedro and Norma had started, of issuing working papers. Basically they were unpublished, a think piece that you put together that would be advertised on the website. And in those days people would literally call or write in and ask to be sent a hard copy. Eventually we moved towards having something online that you could download. And it was really cool. I did one of them and I remember a professor started teaching it in her class. So, for two or three years she would order thirty copies. It was great to have her students read that. And eventually I published it. That was the whole point—you get something out there right away.

But there are still working papers, even this year, even though CLRC is on hiatus technically, we still have sort of a ghost of an operation running. Jonathan Fox produced a couple of working papers, as did Cat Ramírez and Kent Eaton.<sup>21</sup>

**Zepeda:** That's nice. So those are scholars from UC Santa Cruz who are connected to cross-border thinking.

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm. And put together a short research-based paper/think piece, and it's open for circulation, and people start to respond to your work, and maybe teach it. It's good for you, when you're in the middle of a new research project to pull your thoughts together. John Borrego and I did a working paper together and it was really helpful for us to do that.<sup>22</sup> So it serves multiple purposes and we want to continue to have that happen.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://clrc.ucsc.edu/about/reports-papers.html>.

<sup>22</sup> John Borrego and Patricia Zavella, "Policy Implications of the Restructuring of Frozen Food Production in North America and Its Impact on Watsonville, California," 1999.

**Zepeda:** That's wonderful. You mentioned your own work is highly influenced by the cross-border thinking in LALS and CLRC. Do you feel that that was also true for other scholars on campus?

**Zavella:** I think it is true for other scholars on campus. I'm thinking of Olga Nájera-Ramírez, for example. Her first book was set in Mexico and since then she's produced two films and a number of articles that look at transnational processes. Again, the debate about whether you emphasize transnationalism or not, is very much represented on this campus. So not everyone does transnationalism, but they have thought about it, and they've had to come up with a rationale of why they don't, and I think that makes their work stronger.

### **Research Interests: Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice**

**Zepeda:** Is there anything else you want to share about your own work?

**Zavella:** Well, I'm starting a new project that is not going to be literally transnational, but the transnational framework very much influenced how I look at this material. So I'm looking at women of color organizing for reproductive justice. And a number of them are working with immigrants, so that means they have to take into consideration: how do you train young Latinas around reproductive justice, when their families from El Salvador or Mexico or Peru or wherever have very different notions about what sexuality and reproductive health is all about or different policies related to reproductive health care? Some

of these organizations are really comparative. Forward Together works with Chinese Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Filipinos, and South Indians. It's like transnationalism on steroids. They really have to think about lots of different kinds of issues. So even though transnationalism isn't central to this work and how people think about it, it really is helpful to *me* to think about it in those terms, and to look at how people talk or don't talk about transnationalism. Sometimes it gets a little coded in the way that people talk about it. So that will be part of my analysis.

**Zepeda:** That's exciting. Now let's speak a little bit about diversity work on campus and university climate. So I noticed, Pat, that you served on the statewide committee of Latino research. And so I was wondering if you could speak a little bit about either serving on this particular committee, or serving on committees like this as a faculty at UC Santa Cruz?

### **UC Systemwide Committee on Latino Research**

**Zavella:** So the UC Committee on Latino Research—I was the Santa Cruz representative and then I was elected to chair UCCLR. It was made up of representatives from all the nine campuses and then UC MEXUS [University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States] and the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute based in Santa Barbara had a

representative also. So, I think it was four years as the representative and then maybe four years as chair.

It was a lot of fun. I enjoyed it. We would meet in Oakland at the Office of the President several times a year. And basically, it was establishing policy for how the CLRC's were run and how to establish accountability—because they were run very differently it turned out. At UCLA, for example, the resources were in the hand of one faculty member and not everybody knew about it. So I remember, at one point as chair, I would go to different campuses and talk to faculty involved in these projects. And I was talking to this one colleague and he didn't know anything about it. I told him, "Well, go talk to so-and-so. There are resources that you can apply for." And at other campuses, it was a formal research center and there were all kinds of rules and regulations of how the funds were dispersed. So it was all about governance and about policy.

**Zepeda:** Okay. And building a consistency, also, among the campuses.

**Zavella:** Building consistency—and some campuses—where did you spend the money? We need to know how it was used and what the campus contributing funds were and what the UCCLR funds were and how they were used and what the research purposes were. And what were the products?

And then, my last year as chair we had to put together a self-study because the UCCLR was going to go through a fifteen-year review. So we had to figure out a

matrix—what do we want people to report on? We tried to put together our best efforts and then we had a conference, in anticipation of the review, where we highlighted what we've been doing in UCCLR. The conference was held at Riverside at the Mission Inn. It was a two-day conference. It was a really good conference and out of that came *Mexicans in California*, the anthology that I coedited with Ramón Gutiérrez.<sup>23</sup> It was a way to showcase that in the UC system you've got all these research centers and all these faculty receiving research funds for their projects, and this is what it looks like, panels and talks. It was really good. It was a great conference.

And then the following year the review went well and the recommendation was to increase the resources. That had been the perennial struggle. They never gave us as much funding as they should have.

This whole project started by Chicano legislators saying, the state of California is becoming predominantly Latino. We need to understand the Latino population.

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<sup>23</sup> *Mexicans in California: Transformations and Challenges*, Edited by Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Patricia Zavella; with the assistance of Denise Segura, Dolores Trevizo, and Juan Vicente Palerm. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

We need research done on Latinos. So they set aside Senate Concurrent Resolution [SCR43] funds that would go to all the campuses to study Latinos. And eventually we formed a committee called the UC Committee on Latino Research. So after fifteen years, we had of all this research but we also never got the kind of funding that they initially envisioned when they set up the committee.

And then they did that reorganization process, where they basically didn't fund all the Multi-campus Research Units and they opened up invitations. And now we have different kinds of Multi-campus Research Units in the UC system.

### **Faculty Equity**

**Zepeda:** Thank you for that. And what other type of race, gender, and sexuality-centered projects have you been involved with as faculty at UC Santa Cruz?

**Zavella:** Well, one of the things I've been involved with was the Member of the Special Committee on Merit Equity in 2003. There was this process where the Academic Senate compares faculty salaries to other UC campuses. And it turned out that UCSC faculty are paid less than a lot of faculty at other campuses. So there was analysis—why does it happen? Well, it turned out there were several things going on. One of them was that step five was a glass ceiling and women were not putting themselves for promotion to Step VI. Step six is a big promotion. Tenure and then full professor and step six are the big promotions.

And a lot of people weren't going up for step six—a lot of women and a lot of people of color.

So they decided to put together this equity committee, and basically our charge was let's invite anyone who feels like they've been, either discriminated against, or there was a chilly climate in terms of their personnel progress. And were there institutional or departmental mechanisms that were preventing people from going up through the ranks? And the thinking was, this is an opportunity for women and women of color in particular, but also men of color—actually anyone could apply to go through it.

A number of people did put forward their cases and it was like the Committee on Academic Personnel—you read the entire bio-bib and this person's statement and try to figure out what happened. We made a recommendation on every case and for some it looked like people should have advanced further. So that was good work for increasing diversity among the professoriate.

And then, in the academic personnel process we now have the opportunity to remark on people's contributions to diversity. So it can be in your research, or the courses that you teach, or the service that you do. I didn't really have anything to do with that new policy, but I do feel like all of my work is about diversity (laughs)—my research, my teaching, my service is all about making the university a more diverse place. So I was really glad when they instituted that



policy, and I feel like for some of us it means recognition of work that prior to that didn't really matter as much as the standard research, teaching and service.

I remember as an assistant professor, at one point writing a little blurb in one of my personnel statements: "This is all the service that the university recognizes that's on my bio-bib. But there's a lot of service I do, like mentor underrepresented students, graduate students and undergraduate students, or assistant professors. It's all about the late night phone calls, or having coffee with somebody, or at a conference you have lunch with somebody. I've had phone calls with people I've never met, who are interested in my work and want to begin thinking about their own work. That never makes the bio-bib but it actually is very time consuming and it's also work that I want to do. It should be recognized. Anyway, I remember that as an assistant professor feeling very strongly that a lot of my diversity work wasn't recognized. And over the thirty years that I've been here, things have changed quite a bit. More of it gets recognition.

**Zepeda:** That's great news. That's good to hear, that it feels like the climate of recognizing that work is shifting.

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah. It's shifted, I think, dramatically.

**Zepeda:** Because it almost feels like that makes it more sustainable also, if you're being recognized for it. Because, as you were explaining before, if you're doing

all this work of mentoring and guiding and being present, but you're not being recognized for it, then it's kind of like, well, what's the point? Even though, like you said, you want to do it.

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm. So on campus they have a Diversity Award. I don't know if you've ever seen that.

**Zepeda:** Yes.

**Zavella:** CLRC got a Diversity Award. This was after I left. They were looking at the work that I had done. And then LALS got a Diversity Award while I was chair. We totally deserve those awards. It's nice to get that recognition. It's also really nice to see diversity happening in lots of other places. Sometimes they'll honor an individual faculty member who just works with a lot of students of color, or some unit on campus. So I think it's a great program.

### **Spanish for Spanish Speakers**

**Zepeda:** That's important, for that recognition to happen. And I know you worked a little bit with Spanish for Spanish Speakers, and I wanted to ask you about that. I know that was part of something that was really important early on.

**Zavella:** Yeah. That must have been my first or second year on campus. It was really early on. I remember Clara Lomas was the director when I first got here. She's great. She's amazing and we struck up a friendship. Elba Sanchez was the

second director. I remember going to executive committee meetings and we would talk about things like, is the funding going to continue? At that point, they were right at the beginning of a real culture shift in terms of recognizing what we now call Heritage Learners, where you need to provide different kinds of training to people who come from a heritage in which the language they're trying to learn was part of their growing up. Apparently they teach heritage courses in, not just Spanish, but in other languages. But at the time, we weren't quite there yet, and so it felt very much like we had to make the case for why this was important for Latino students. It felt like inventing the wheel, in some ways.

I remember meetings where Elba or Clara would talk about—we have all these Chicanos, and yeah, their grandmother spoke to them in Spanish but they can't read and write and they really need to develop their analytical skills. I also remember knowing students who went through the program, where it totally changed their lives. Because the quality of the analytical work was really high, so not only did you have to learn to read and write, but you had to learn to *think* analytically in Spanish. I remember hearing lots of really powerful testimonials from students that it was great that they had those classes.

**Zepeda:** Thank you for that. I wanted to follow up for a second around the LALS doctoral program. Will that one have a language component?

**Zavella:** We will. People have to have a language other than English that's spoken in the Americas—Spanish, Portuguese, or an indigenous language—depending on their project. They'll have to demonstrate proficiency.

**Zepeda:** Wonderful.

**Zavella:** And there will be different ways to do it. Like, there's a literature course taught in Spanish in the summer in the Literature Department at the graduate level that we'll recommend our students take. And they can always attend a language institute. Or, if they have native proficiency, we have to figure out a way for them to demonstrate that. We're thinking some of our graduate students may have to demonstrate proficiency in an indigenous language. So we're going to have to figure out how we're going to figure that out. But it's not just going to be in English.

**Zepeda:** That's wonderful. And that's very connected to the research.

**Zavella:** The research and also the undergraduate requirement, where our students have to take two upper-division courses in Spanish or Portuguese for LALS. It's hard.

### **Diversity Work and Ethnic Studies**

**Zepeda:** Yeah, it is. So I wanted to ask you, in terms of diversity and the university climate, from your perspective what has been the role of white faculty and staff as allies in this work?

**Zavella:** We have really great faculty and staff who have been allies. The first person who comes to mind is Bettina Aptheker, who was the chair of the Academic Senate Committee on Diversity, I think it's called. And there are so many others. Barbara Rogoff, another psychologist, Craig Haney, lots of folks, Diane Gifford-Gonzalez. There are lots of people on campus who work with people of color in their research, who bring youth of color into their labs, who support LALS, who are truly committed to the goals of diversity. I think Santa Cruz is a special place in that there are lots of faculty like that. It's a good place for interdisciplinary work. It's a good place for diversity work and people who are interested in critical scholarship.

**Zepeda:** Thank you. You've been here since 1983, so you've seen ethnic studies and this idea of ethnic studies ebb and flow.

**Zavella:** I remember my first Academic Senate meeting, Michael Omi came and spoke for the ethnic Studies breadth requirement. At that point, it wasn't policy. It was a packed Senate meeting and he spoke very eloquently about how he had come to UC Santa Cruz as a student, and how hard it was to be a student of

color, and the importance of having some kind of ethnic Studies [E] requirement for all students, regardless of their major. And it passed, with a very wide margin.

Of course, most of my courses qualified for the E requirement, as did most of the LALS courses. When I was chair of LALS, we went through a process of rethinking the breadth requirements. So there are a bunch more codes now and the E changed to something else—cross-cultural analysis, ethnicity and race and others.<sup>24</sup> I can't remember what the codes are anymore, but it was like unpacking the ethnic Studies requirement, unpacking all the requirements. In many ways, that felt like a good thing because it wasn't just the courses taught by faculty of color, or by a few liberals, like Michael Brown always teaches this course on black politics that used to count. It meant a little broader way of thinking about what diversity means and thinking about the courses that fulfill that requirement. It was a very tedious bureaucratic process to go through that rethinking but I think it was actually a really good thing. When I taught my

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<sup>24</sup> As of fall 2010, UCSC has a cross-cultural analysis general education requirement (CC) and an ethnicity and race requirement (ER)—Editor.

lower-division courses, I would often get students from other departments there for the E requirement. And you still see that happening but I don't think there's as much pushback as it felt like there was back in the day.

The ethnic Studies program that just got approved recently—that's been a two or three-year process of trying to get that organized. I think it's a really good thing. It comes in the wake of disbanding the American Studies department, which was where a lot of ethnic studies content courses were being taught. American Studies and LALS were two of the main drivers, with Feminist Studies and certainly places like psychology and anthropology and sociology would offer some courses. But there was no really department focused on ethnic studies and I think the conversations that happened around setting up the program were really good, and from what I gather it was a very collaborative space.

The Dean of Humanities was really supportive and at one point he made appointments with different faculty on campus and he just came and he talked to me— what's the field of ethnic studies and who are the players, and what are the debates, and what are the issues? I really appreciated that he did that. Because I felt like I've been doing this for a long time and these are my thoughts. So he was both very supportive, but also he became informed in the process himself, so that when they brought a proposal he could ask good questions and help direct it in a thoughtful way.

I think they're moving towards a department eventually, although that will probably take a while, because to have a department you need to have at least six faculty with FTE located, and we're nowhere near that place yet. It's probably the worst time ever to try to set up a new program because of the budget cuts. But the last I heard there were two faculty positions that are going to be allocated to this new program.

**Zepeda:** Wonderful.

**Zavella:** Yeah, yeah. So it looks like it's on its way and I think it's a really good thing.

**Zepeda:** Wonderful. And I wonder if there's any student organizing that you've witnessed, or even faculty organizing that you've witnessed, that contributes to the climate around ethnic studies?

**Zavella:** There are lots of student organizations, some of which, like e<sup>2</sup> started off as a student organization and now I think they actually have an office and staff.



Border Stompers<sup>25</sup>—I mean, it's hard to keep track of all the different student organizations. So that's been really good, and some of that gets connected institutionally, like the Practical Activism conference that happens every year, that's funded by College Nine and Ten. I know it started off as a student conference and now Helen Shapiro was telling me that she funds it. So you see that happening, where student organizations start and then they actually become part of the institution.

Sometimes that doesn't happen. There was some organizing around undocumented students and an effort to get some kind of office that was devoted to undocumented students. I remember Jonathan Fox and I met with them a couple of times, and I don't think that ever went anywhere institutionally—they wanted a center devoted to undocumented students. But there're plenty of resources on campus for undocumented students, maybe not enough, but there are staff people who are trying to figure out how to help undocumented students—how many students we have. Alma Sifuentes came to an LALS

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<sup>25</sup> Border Stompers Collective is a media-based organization on the UC Santa Cruz campus.

department meeting one time to talk about what they can do and what they're trying to do. Students from SIN, Students Informing Now, came to an LALS meeting to talk to us about what they were trying to do. I think it's great that there are all these student organizations happening, or even Latina sororities and I think a fraternity, too.

**Zepeda:** Amazing.

**Zavella:** Yeah. But it's all good.

**Zepeda:** And I feel like this conversation really reflects what you said earlier around the changes around diversity and race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality being addressed in a more concrete way, where we can see the changes, rather than before, when there were a lot less people, and it was more challenging to make things happen.

**Zavella:** And I think there's a real sense of solidarity—maybe “solidarity” is kind of a strong word—but there's a real sense that we need to support each other in our struggles. So, as you were talking, I thought of Deb Abbott and the Cantú Center. I remember when Lionel died—we had a task force and we got some resources and we were trying to catalog his office and eventually donated his books to the Feminist Studies library. But also, what now is the Cantú Center was a real center for mourning his loss but also keeping alive his vision and his legacy. And that continues. Deb was saying they have their own graduation

ceremony and they have an intern. One of my students was one of their interns. And if they put out a call for help, of course, CLRC or LALS—we'll be there, and vice versa. It's not like people are off in their own corner doing their own project.

**Zepeda:** That sounds really important. And actually, I was going to wait until next time but it feels really important here. I wanted to ask about the founding of the Lionel Cantú scholarship fund.

**Zavella:** Okay. We raised resources to deal with his office but also to honor his work by having a speaker every year. And from what I gather, sociology decided to go to every other year, so they're not doing it every year. I think they're going to not necessarily do it at the end of the year but they're going to do it earlier. Over the years they've had a number of people come and give talks. It's been really great. A bunch of the students who were there when he was there have graduated. So I feel like people who directly remember what it was like to work with him, they're moving on. And those of us who were here who worked with him—I still teach his work and I still talk about him, but it's—it's not as prominent as it has been in the past.

**Zepeda:** So the speakers part, that was the colloquium?

**Zavella:** Mm--hmm.

**Zepeda:** And then, there's also the funding that's offered to graduate students?

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah. I was never involved with that. I think that's internal to sociology.

**Zepeda:** Okay.

**Zavella:** That's great that they do that.

**Zepeda:** So welcome back, Pat. This is oral history interview number three with Pat Zavella. And today is June 25, 2013. And I'm Susy Zepeda with the Regional History Project.

### **Scholarship and Teaching as Activism**

I'm really interested to know how your own scholarship intersects with your activism. When we met the first time, you spoke a lot about your early activism, and how you're part of Chicano and Chicana Studies. I know now, through exposure to your work, that you've done work with the farm workers, cannery workers, HIV work, Binational Health Week. You don't have to speak about all of that but maybe some of how your scholarship intersects with your activism.

**Zavella:** So I think there are two pieces. One is I very much see my scholarship *as* a form of activism, particularly coming from a discipline where my advisors literally believed that Chicano Studies wasn't a legitimate form of scholarship. A lot of things that I've published have been at the intersection of Chicana and Chicano studies and feminist studies and anthropology, using ethnographic

methods. I've been part of a movement to change what is valued as scholarship. I think there are lots of us doing that kind of work. But that is definitely a piece of it.

And then the other part is teaching. I very much see teaching as a form of activism. There are professional constraints on teaching. I think it's very inappropriate to go off and share your own personal, philosophical, political, religious views. But I do very much organize my courses around a pedagogy that's about critical inquiry. And so, providing readings and providing a framework, and providing lectures that ask students to think critically about the material and to always ask questions. I'm hoping that they come away with a new perspective, a new critical consciousness, and a different way of thinking about scholarship and academia and the world. I'm very happy to see that that does happen regularly.

**Zepeda:** And so, for example, the Binational Health Week and the HIV work—how did you come across that work? How did that become part of your interests?

**Zavella:** It started out—I was on a review committee for UC MEXUS and we reviewed a proposal by Xóchitl Castañeda. It was really interesting but there were also questions about her methodology. She had planned an ethnographic project. And so the committee empowered me to have a conversation with her

and just get some clarity on some things. We were happy to support her but we just wanted to know a little bit more about how she was going to do her research.

So I called her up and she said, “Well, are you going to the Latinos in California conference?” (the first one that Juan Vicente-Palerm organized). She said, “Are you going? Let’s meet there for lunch.” So we met. I remember at the conference, this beautiful venue, there’s Xóchitl in her pearls and her pale pink suit--beautiful (laughs). And I’m like, whoa, who’s this? And she had migrated from Mexico and had done a lot of work in public health there. She used to work at the Instituto Para Salud Pública. So we were talking about her project and she invited me to collaborate with her. So I said, sure.

So that (laughs) spring it just happened: something showed up in my mailbox, and it was a call for proposals by the Transborder Consortium, which were three universities, one of which was the University of Arizona, La Universidad de Sonora and COLEF<sup>26</sup> And they were looking to fund projects that were about immigrants and were about health. So I said, okay, let’s apply for this. Xóchitl

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<sup>26</sup> El Colegio de la Frontera.

happened to be going back to Guatemala, where her grandmother was very ill. So basically it was through email, "Let me send you this attachment and you tinker with it and you send it back." And we got our proposal in. It was kind of stressful but we managed to get it in.

And they funded us. It wasn't until a year later that we presented our findings. They had this big conference in Tijuana. It was amazing and we presented, along with a bunch of other people who received grants. It wasn't until much later that I actually looked at the flyer I received in the mail and it wasn't addressed to me. It was addressed to Nancy Stoller and someone had put it in my mailbox by mistake. (laughs) So it was a total out-of-the-blue, the cosmos wants this to happen kind of thing!

**Zepeda:** (laughs) Exactly.

**Zavella:** But out of that research that we did together, we have written four articles together, two in English and two in Spanish. It's been a great collaboration. Xóchitl, at one point we met for lunch and she said, "I have this idea. I would like to set up something where my people, undocumented immigrants, have access to health care." And she explained the whole process that she envisioned, of what later became the Health Initiative of the Americas. At first I was really skeptical. I told her, "*Estas loca, mujer,*" because it was just so ambitious and so amazing and so hard. I mean, this 2001 was the first year that it

happened. But I told her, “Well, if you’re interested—” She had an appointment with someone from the California Endowment. She was going to have lunch with somebody. And she needed a place to house the project. I suggested she go to the California Policy Center that Andres Jiménez was running.

So she met with the funder; they were very excited. She met with Andres; he was very interested. Long story short is, she got the resources that she continues to receive to this day. It was housed there. Eventually they moved to the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley, but they were at the California Policy Center for many years. And we had our first Binational Health Week, our first Binational Scholarly Forum. And all the activities that became the Health Initiatives of the Americas happened.

She organized this delegation of folks from California to go to Los Pinos, to go to the Mexican White House to meet with a representative of the Vicente Fox administration, because she wanted it to be truly binational and she wanted the Mexican government to buy into it.

I remember we met with Dr. Juan Hernández who was a cabinet minister related to people abroad, something like that, in a little conference room at Los Pinos, which is the Mexican equivalent of the White House. It was kind of intimidating. There were about twenty of us that went, academics like David Hayes Bautista, Andres Jiménez, María Chacon, who worked in Andres’s shop. A bunch of us



went and we met with Juan Hernández. Some people were working in community-based organizations or community health clinics. Xóchitl pitched the idea to him and then we all jumped in and made little comments here and there. And by the end of the conversation, he was like, "Let's do it." He was really excited about the idea. People started getting very poetic. They were talking about, "The sun and the moon are aligned, and this is meant to happen." So we agreed to do it. That was before 9/11 in the spring. And then when 9/11 happened I asked her, "Are you still going to do have Binational Health Week?" She said, "Yeah, we're going to move forward." And so it happened anyway, despite 9/11.

Xóchitl has done this amazing job of getting more countries involved. So now besides Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, and Peru are co-sponsors. It moved from a few counties in California to now there are all these states involved. They changed the name to Health Initiative of the Americas and they have a great website.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <http://hia.berkeley.edu/index.php?page=about-us>.

They've had different kinds of programs. Like, they used to have an exchange where medical students would get to go to Mexico and spend several months in clinics doing hands-on medical care but also brushing up on their Spanish and getting their Spanish skills together. There were programs—the scholarly forum would happen every year and there is a call for proposals at PIMSA [*Programa de Investigación en Migración y Salud*] I actually applied a couple of times and got funding for other projects. So it has increased dramatically and Xóchitl is at the center of all of this.

Out of that collaboration, we did some ethnographic research with immigrant women, *Mexicana* immigrant women, and looked at young women and changing constructions of gender and sexuality, and we published some articles. It was really great work. I think it was very groundbreaking at the time but it was also fun. We had a lot of fun collaborating.

**Zepeda:** What an amazing opportunity that came from your work with UC MEXUS but then it sprung open this other field.

**Zavella:** This whole new path. It was like a snowball. It just kept going and there were all kinds of little side snowballs that came out of it.

**Zepeda:** And I could see how that would be so beneficial in terms of your work and teaching because of how it's transnational, binational in this whole other way. And then with community organizers.

**Zavella:** Mm-hm. Xóchitl is an amazing person. One of the things she did was she sat me down at one point—so I teach this course *Migration, Gender, and Health in the Latino/a Community*. And every year I invite her to come and give a talk about Binational Health Week and Health Initiative of the Americas. It's always the highlight of the course. And one of those times when she came by, we sat down for dinner afterwards or whatever, and she asked me if I would please be the coordinator of Binational Health Week for Santa Cruz County. I was like, "What?" (laughs)

**Zepeda:** Wow.

**Zavella:** And it turned out that she had somebody that she knew from Fresno who had moved to Santa Cruz County, Javier Carrillo, who she was asking to also be coordinator. So we were going to do it together. So I said, yes. But not too long after that I was at a reception up on campus and I was talking to Carmen Alicia Robles and I was telling her, "I don't know what I got myself into." And she offered to be one of the other co-organizers. So the three of us organized it for the first time and we called together a meeting of different community-based organizations and safety net clinics that's how Binational Health Week started in Santa Cruz. This was 2006 when we had our first one.

**Zepeda:** Wow. So who benefits from Binational Health; who are the participants?

**Zavella:** It's the Santa Cruz County Health Department and a community-based clinic, Salud Para La Gente. Dominican Hospital has been involved at different points. Second Harvest [Food Bank] was involved the first year. California Diabetes Organization, different organizations like that. They benefit because the purpose is to provide health education and outreach to immigrants, to Spanish speakers and indigenous peoples and we're not paying attention to legal status. So they benefit because that's the kind of clientele they want to reach anyway. And we organize two health fairs, one in South County and one in Santa Cruz and they become a part of that. Organizations table and we have a radio DJ in Spanish, music, games and people come and they literally hear about the services that these organizations provide.

And then people benefit. The first year when we were organizing this, we were brainstorming, like how do we do this and what do we do? And somebody said, "Well, we don't even know who's here, who the immigrants are." We had an impression that there were more women immigrants and more families. So we decided we needed a needs assessment—who are immigrants, what's their socioeconomic background, how do they access health, how do they learn about health? Do they go back to Mexico or wherever? I was the only academic in the room and so I said, "Okay, well, I can help do this." So we put together a survey and different organizations offered input about the questions to ask.

**Zepeda:** Oh, excellent.

**Zavella:** Yeah. They looked at a draft and I said, “Well, ask them this and ask them that.” I wrote a grant to the Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community here on campus and got resources and hired a graduate student, Rebecca Hester, who was great. And we put together this survey. We asked for student volunteers. We got twenty-two students who volunteered to administer the survey. We had a little training up on campus, bought pizza and soda and trained them. At the health fairs there were all these students doing the survey, mainly in Spanish, but occasionally in English. And we hired two Mixteco community members, who translated it verbally into Mixtec or Triqui, and they would administer it through their social networks. So we got 151 respondents. It was really an amazing piece of work. And then we put together a summary and we shared that with different organizations. It was a great project. It was really good.

**Zepeda:** Yeah. When we think about how do academics work with community, this sounds like it’s that opening, an amazing example of how it’s possible.

**Zavella:** It was very organic. I took the lead in the project, but people were like, “Yeah, this will help us. This is what we want to know.” Especially Salud Para la Gente was probably the most invested in this and they even, at one point, had some of their staff administer some of the surveys at Salud. Rebecca gave them a copy of our report and I heard that they now have *promotoras* who are reaching out to the Mixtec and Triqui community.

**Zepeda:** Wonderful.

**Zavella:** Yeah. So it was really great. I was co-coordinator, I think one more year, and then after that I was just a member of the task force. So I've been involved every year except once, since that first one; we did our first one in 2006. And it's been great. It's very easy for me. I'm the only person from UCSC who is on the task force. (laughs) But basically when we have our meetings, it's like, well, what are we going to do this year and who's going to do what? And my job is, I'm going to organize an event on campus. That's easy. So we bring academics to talk about—Steve López talked about mental health last year in 2012. Gabriela Valle from California Latinas for Reproductive Justice talked about reproductive justice in 2013. So it's educational and it's totally a good project.

**Zepeda:** Wow, thank you for sharing that. That sounds super amazing and inspiring.

**Zavella:** It's been good.

### **Sustenance at UC Santa Cruz**

**Zepeda:** So moving into the next question, I wanted to ask you, what has sustained you as a woman of color, as a Chicana faculty at UC Santa Cruz?

**Zavella:** There are a lot of things that have sustained me. I've had actually three different job offers where I've had to think very seriously and practically—do I go or do I stay? Every single time I decided to stay.

What sustains me is the Santa Cruz mission. We talked about the interdisciplinarity. This is a university that values undergraduate teaching, which is really important to me. I spent a semester at the University of Michigan and I remember one time at a cocktail party overhearing a faculty member brag that he had just received tenure even though his teaching evaluations were terrible. (laughs) And I was just like, how can you hold your head up? (laughs)

**Zepeda:** (laughs)

**Zavella:** That is not something to brag about.

**Zepeda:** And share it with people.

**Zavella:** That's just weird. But at Santa Cruz I've served on the Committee for Academic Personnel, so I get to review faculty's files. And we have some great researchers; we have some great instructors. The mission of Santa Cruz is something that I believe in. And you know, all the work around diversity that we were talking about last time, I think that gets taken seriously here. Maybe not as much as it *could* be, maybe we need more resources, but I think people have a commitment to that core value. So that's part of what sustains me.

I've always had really good students in Community Studies and in LALS. I love my students—they're smart and they have an interesting perspective on things. I learn things from my students. I especially like working with graduate students; I feel like we're in a co-seminar where we're all sharing with one another. So it's really vibrant intellectually and that's very important to me.

I love Santa Cruz, the place. When I was an undergraduate, I actually came to summer session at UC Santa Cruz and I fell in love with it. I thought, this is where I want to be. In the Chicana Feminisms Cluster we all had a little moment where we disclosed how we got to Santa Cruz and it turned out that for a bunch of us this was our dream job and it ended up happening.

I love the beauty of Santa Cruz. I love the lefty politics of the city of Santa Cruz. I think this is a good place to live. And then, I have all these great colleagues and projects, like with Xóchitl, like the *Chicana Feminisms*, like CLRC, like LALS. And so you know, a lot of times work is very stressful and you don't have a lot of contact with folks, but you know people are there and you can reach out. And occasionally, we *do* get to get together and we do get to commiserate and share and celebrate. So that's an important part of being here. I hear of colleagues who are in universities where they are the only women of color, or they feel like nobody takes them seriously. I've been there, so I can totally understand that and I feel very lucky, in a lot of ways, to be here.



**Zepeda:** Wonderful. I'm so glad to hear that.

And so thinking about new faculty who are just arriving, or will soon be arriving, what would you suggest to them, as a reflection, to continue these kind of networks around women or color or Chicanas and Latinas?

**Zavella:** I would really encourage them to be proactive, not to wait for someone to organize something but to try to reach out to people and get to know people and go to talks, go to events, just try to become a part of the community. Especially for assistant professors, it's a very intimidating process to try to understand what it takes to get tenure, and get to know your colleagues, and what the departmental ethos is all about. So I really encourage people to try to develop mentoring relationships within the department, but also outside. And so especially for me, my colleagues outside of my department, at different points in time were really important. And the get-togethers where you get to blow off steam and vent a little bit—those were always really helpful.

**Zepeda:** (laughs)

**Zavella:** I would really encourage people to get involved in research clusters. Clusters have been these amazing spaces for me. I know we don't have as many now as we used to but sometimes you don't need a lot of resources. Sometimes you need the commitment to spend the time together.

I would echo the advice that Gini Matute-Bianchi gave me way back when. You need to have a life apart from your work. And that's really hard to think of when you're an assistant professor and you're just trying to publish and learn how to teach and do everything. But you need to have something that sustains you outside of your job, whatever that is—a hobby, a vocation, whatever, your family. You need to nurture that and allow it to nurture you, so that when you're back into work mode, you can hit it full steam.

**Zepeda:** Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. The work is important but it's not your only—

**Zavella:** It's not everything in your life.

**Zepeda:** Because it feels like you can get sort of taken by it, if you allow it.

**Zavella:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

**Zepeda:** That's great advice. Thinking more widely about the campus, how would you—you've been here for thirty years—

**Zavella:** Thirty years! (laughs)

**Zepeda:** So thinking about how to build a sustainable campus, especially around diversity, and especially for faculty of color and students of color—what kinds of

recommendations would you offer to continue to build a campus that's more sustainable?

**Zavella:** Some of it is related to resources. So we definitely need to jump start CLRC. I think that was an important way of creating community on campus. I think the CRES, the ethnic studies initiative, is another one really good one, and hopefully we'll get some faculty hires out of that. I think that will help.

Santa Cruz is a great place for Chicano/Latino faculty but it's not so good for African American faculty. Gina Dent is now the *only* African American woman faculty on campus. That's just crazy! So there is a lot of work to be done there. There's a lot of work to be done in terms of Native studies. So hopefully when we get past this budget crisis, we will have more resources to hire more faculty, and to support research centers, and to really keep supporting the student centers. El Centro, that Rosie Cabrera runs and all the other student centers are so important for students and for the programming that they do. So that really needs to continue.

We're about to launch our doctoral program and there are a lot of unknowns around that, a lot of things we have to do. We have this vision of having a lecture series every year that will be a place where our students will learn and will be part of the intellectual community. We need to find a space for our students to have offices and a little lounge. We need to partner with CLRC so our students

apply for and get those little mini-grants. So there's a lot of stuff to be done around the graduate program that I think will be really great to see happen.

**Zepeda:** I like it because it's continuing what organically has already begun and sustaining it. I kept thinking about how you shared yesterday that Helen Shapiro was funding the Practical Activism [Conference]. That's amazing. More people need to be aware that things like that can happen.

**Zavella:** Yeah.

**Zepeda:** Because often there's a division, or students imagine a division between themselves and faculty. And in reality the vision is a lot closer.

**Zavella:** Totally. Students are often intimidated by faculty and they don't come to their office hours, or when they do they're very shy. And (laughs) I always feel like telling them, "You know, we're people too. Let's just do the work. Let's just have a conversation." You get there with students but sometimes it takes a while.

**Zepeda:** Yeah, I almost wish there could be a boot camp training in the beginning, like, just be as real as you can. Because we do get intimidated, but that's something that's outside. We don't really need to fall into that. That's the intention of the structure, almost, to keep us divided.

**Zavella:** Yeah, and I've heard stories about what jerks some faculty can be. So you have to be careful about that, too.

**Zepeda:** That's very true. But it's not everybody.

**Zavella:** (laughs) Some people are really too much but students are smart. They can figure that out. But for many of us, we don't know a lot of what's going on with students because we're so busy doing our job. And students don't know what's going on with us. It would be nice if there were better communication.

**Zepeda:** Exactly. That would be wonderful to have a space for dialogue that didn't feel—you don't have to be super vulnerable or feel like you're pouring out your heart, but at least a connection can grow in a good way.

**Zavella:** Yeah.

**Zepeda:** Yeah. So thinking about your own future plan or vision, I wonder if there's anything that you'd like to share? You shared a little bit about your upcoming research in the interview yesterday. So thinking about your own future plan or vision as a scholar, ethnographer, and writer—what do you see for yourself as next steps?

**Zavella:** Well, I'm right in the middle of this research and it's really exciting and I'm really enjoying it. It was really hard to write my book, in part because the stories that people shared with me were so sad and so heartbreaking—stories of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and literally crawling through a tunnel trying to cross into the United States. I mean, just things that people shouldn't

have to go through. And when you hear story after story—there were times when it was just very hard.

So I decided that I wanted the next project to be something about activism, and something about women of color activism in particular. So I managed to find this project. So I'm right in the middle of that. And it's so inspiring to see what people are doing. This organization I'm going to go hang out with in Denver, they do legislative advocacy. They go talk to legislators. They have two sets of trainings—for thirteen to fifteen year olds and then sixteen to twenty year olds. So they have two groups of young women who are getting trained around reproductive justice. Reproductive justice is very broadly defined, so it includes immigrant rights, and women's rights, and queer rights, and civil rights. They talk about lots of different kinds of things.

And then you have one organization, Forward Together, in Oakland, they had these young sixteen, seventeen, eighteen-year-old high school kids put together a survey and they did this research project where they surveyed over 500 high school kids about their knowledge around reproductive health and sexuality and what they wanted and what they needed. And they put together a report that now they're going to send to the superintendent of schools and city council members. They went to lobby their representative in Washington, D.C. And there are these sixteen year olds telling about the research they did, and the

policy recommendations they have. It's amazing! So I'm enjoying the research so much.

I'm starting to get a glimmer of an idea for a book that will come out of this. A lot of these organizations collaborate on what they call the Strong Families Initiative. And of course, they very much define family very broadly. They include chosen family members. They're very queer-friendly, pay attention to people with disabilities. So they've had two campaigns. One is sort of an alternative Mama's Day and an alternative Father's Day. And they do these nice images. And so the Strong Families Initiative very much sees itself as taking on strong family values discourse.

**Zepeda:** Nice.

**Zavella:** Yeah, yeah. Which is powerful. So they not only have this notion of imaginaries of family that should be very diverse, but they also have notions like: we need real policies that will help real families. So, I'm starting to think that maybe the Strong Families Initiative might be the framework for plugging in all the different organizations that I'm doing work with and trying to talk about what reproductive justice looks like. So it's fun and it's exciting and we'll see where it leads me. (laughs)

**Zepeda:** One of the themes that's been present as we've been doing these interviews, Pat, is your intention around policy. There've been different ways

that you've interacted with policy throughout your career, or even your activism, and scholarship.

**Zavella:** That's interesting because I always feel like I don't understand how people change policy. Until quite recently—I mean, part of this research with Reproductive Justice is—like tomorrow I'm going to Sacramento and there's going to be a training: this is how you talk to your legislator. These are the six bills that we're supporting and these are the reasons why, and then we're going to talk to legislators and their staff, and we're going to tell stories, and try to convince them to support key bills. In the process of preparing for this, this organization, California Latinos for Reproductive Justice, they do trainings: this is a bill and this is how it starts and these are the twenty-six steps it takes to get to the end. It's Civics 101 but I don't remember that stuff that I learned in high school and most of us don't pay attention to that. So I'm getting a much more grounded sense of what policy and the policy process looks like and that's been really interesting. So we'll see.

**Zepeda:** Yes, and how amazing to enter into it in this way, a research-framed way, and then to be able to bring that to an intellectual communities. I think that's one of the things about policy, it feels outside of the intellectual sphere, even though it's so much a part of what shapes the discussion.



**Zavella:** What shapes the discussion. *And* the academic work that people do shapes what becomes policy. So they're very interconnected but we don't always see those connections.

**Zepeda:** Exactly.

**Zavella:** I think part of what drew me to this reproductive justice set of ideas was that people involved in this see policy as a key part of what they're doing. So we don't want to just train kids how to use condoms. I mean, that's just like a little tiny piece of it. We want them to understand the structure of poverty and race, class, gender and sexuality, and how that limits access to certain subjects. And how certain people are subjected to discourses that totally deny who they are, much less the kind of relationships they want to have. They very much see their advocacy work related to policy that happens and real laws that happen and get implemented or not. And they also very much see that connected to research. So they want very community-oriented research that will inform, not only their advocacy work, but their advocacy work at the policy level. So for me, it comes together in a really interesting way.

**Zepeda:** And the contributions are going to be multiple, very collaborative, very communal.

**Zavella:** Mm-hmm.

**Zepeda:** Wow, that's powerful.

So I wanted to ask you, Pat, is if could share a little bit about what you see as Lionel Cantú's contributions to UC Santa Cruz.

**Zavella:** Well, in the short time he was here, Lionel was really a force on campus. Part of it was his personality. He was so open and fun-loving and warm, so people were drawn to him immediately. He started a series of open conversations about gender and sexuality, masculinity, queer subjects, that was really refreshing. I know that he talked about these issues in his courses. I actually took over two of his courses when he passed away so I saw that firsthand.

But also, he and I were involved in a research project together. We spent months writing a proposal that we literally sent to the National Institute of Health three weeks before he passed away. And it was this intense—it would have been this great project. It would have been transnational, so located in Jalisco, in the city of Guadalajara but also in rural areas, and then located in Santa Cruz County. And it was going to be male and female, and heterosexual and homosexual. It was going to be a survey and ethnographic research.

**Zepeda:** Amazing.

**Zavella:** At one point we were going to do this—we had this hypothesis that people who come from rural areas and without much education wouldn't know much about their bodies, literally. So Lionel found some guide to teaching about the body and we were going to actually ask people to talk about what they knew and what they didn't know. So it was going to be very multilayered and complex. It was a lot of work to put it together. It would have been great. We ended up not doing it. After he passed, I seriously considered trying to find another scholar to take his place. I talked to a few people but I just couldn't bring myself to do it. It just didn't make any sense. So I certainly learned a lot from him that process and I think we learned a lot from each other.

Putting together his library collection and his files; Sarita Gaytán was part of that. She was the research assistant. We got to glimpse inside his work and his working process in a way that you rarely do with anyone. I think it's fair to say that he really affected so many people. You can still go to the Feminist Studies library and see his books. His legacy is still here on campus.

**Zepeda:** Definitely. A lot of the students that he worked with were in sociology. But would you say that he also worked with students outside?

**Zavella:** He did work with students outside but sociology was his strength. There were a lot more sociology students. That probably would have changed. He was already in the process of getting people who wanted to work with him as

postdocs. I think after people got to know him he would have had more students.

**Zepeda:** And now his book is out, so that's also available for people to access. So that's good news.<sup>28</sup>

**Zavella:** Yeah.

**Zepeda:** Thank you. So now, just to wrap up, I wanted to see if there's anything you want to return to, or speak about, or a person, anything that we haven't touched upon?

**Zavella:** (laughs) we've talked about a lot.

**Zepeda:** It was very thorough. (laughs) I made sure.

**Zavella:** I can't think of anything.

**Zepeda:** Okay, good. Thank you. So we'll stop there.

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<sup>28</sup> *The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men*, Lionel Cantú, Jr.; edited by Nancy A. Naples and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz. New York University Press, 2009.

**About the Interviewer:** In 2012, Susy Zepeda earned her PhD in sociology from UC Santa Cruz, with a designated emphasis in Feminist Studies and Latin American and Latino Studies. She is currently Visiting Assistant Professor, Women and Gender Studies at the University of California, Davis and is a Social Justice Initiative, Mellon Fellow.