

CRISJ

Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice

Contents

Message from Manuel Barajas, CRISJ Director1

Spotlights

Faculty4

Community Partner6

Scholarship Recipients8

Events

Farmworker housing forum 9

Kevin Johnson Presentation... .12

Community Empowerment13

Safe Black Spaces.....15

On-going Projects

Mentoring Program17

Building Justice Podcast19

Faculty Learning Community .. 20

Farmworker Housing Bill 21

Upcoming Events

Building Bridges23

Call for artists24

Literacy Empowerment25

Acknowledgements26



Visit our Website! Learn more about our work!



Message from Manuel Barajas, CRISJ Director

Over the past eight years, the Center on Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) has worked to structure academic success and social empowerment for historically marginalized students and their communities. CRISJ offers students 1) academic programming that address issues relevant to them and their communities; 2) mentorship with faculty aligned with commitments to social justice and empowerment; 3) critical scholarship that respects and gives voice to their unique histories and cultures; and 4) community engagement that provides valuable experiences, skills, and confidence. Uniquely, CRISJ integrates all these components to amplify understandings, empathies, and motivation for social change in the areas of race, immigration, and intersectional social

justice in the region and beyond. CRISJ associates and partners organize academic forums and conferences—with regional and global experts and artists—that attract hundreds of students, faculty/staff, and community members. Seeking praxis, we produce academic knowledge and activities that challenge systemic discrimination in employment, education, policing, housing, immigration... in the context of xenophobia and fascism in the nation and world. Significantly, CRISJ is committed to academic and community engagement that empower the historically oppressed in our society and world.

CRISJ as an organic center came into existence right after the Great Recession because the university underwent downsizing and restructuring that disproportionately reduced the representation of historically underrepresented faculty, specifically Brown (of Indigenous ancestry) and Black tenure-lined faculty suffered reductions of approximately half their numbers that were already negligible. In 2013 faculty of color and allies felt particularly frustrated with the increasing gaps of diversity among students and faculty/staff, creating unfair and unequal learning and teaching environments for them. In 2014, Professors Stan Oden and Manuel Barajas began to conceptualize an academic space to welcome and empower marginalized students, faculty, staff, and their communities.

In 2016 as an interdisciplinary taskforce of faculty and staff, CRISJ wrote an organizational mission and proposal to become a university center, and succeeded after many efforts in the fall of 2020 during the George Floyd/pandemic contexts. Now, this report shares the transformational work by CRISJ associates and partners advancing visions, cultures, and practices that affirm healthier and more just relations that challenge values and practices rooted in coloniality and its intersectional pathological hierarchies along race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality... The 2023-2024 academic year was busy

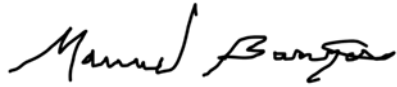


CRISJ Community Empowerment Faire 2023



CRISJ Outreach at Sacramento City College Latinx Book Festival 2024

and productive thanks to CRISJ's growing networks, expertise, and commitments. Continuing to grow, CRISJ welcomes all members of the Sacramento State community to join it in making the University a leader in addressing issues of race, immigration, and intersectional social justice (contact crisj@csus.edu). Please join CRISJ for the right to exist with dignity and equity!



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



CRISJ Co-founders: Stan Oden and Manuel Barajas



CRISJ Tabling at the Sac State Feria de Education.



Dr. Borunda delivers powerful workshop in CRISJ office.

Spotlights

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

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Brenda Romero

Dr. Brenda Romero is an Associate Professor of Spanish at the Department of World Languages and Literatures at Sacramento State University. Dr. Romero's academic journey began at the University of Utah, where she earned both her M.A. in Spanish and her Ph.D. in Latin American literature, with a special emphasis on Mexican studies. During her time at the University of Utah, she also served as editor-in-chief for the Utah Foreign Language Review, the graduate student-run literary journal.

Before joining Sacramento State, Dr. Romero served as a faculty member at the College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to teaching, she was a committee member for the college's Misericordia Scholarship, which awarded scholarships to undocumented and DACA students and provided academic mentorship. During her tenure there, she was recognized for her exceptional dedication to mentoring Latinx students, receiving the 2016 Nebraska Latino American Commission's Inspiration Award at the State Capitol. This accolade highlights her commitment to fostering a supportive and enriching environment for her students, encouraging them to achieve their full potential.

Originally from Torreón, Mexico, she moved to the United States as a teenager. As the first person in her family to graduate from college in the U.S., she embodies the values of perseverance and determination. Her story serves as a beacon of hope and motivation for many of her students, particularly those from similar backgrounds. In addition to her teaching and mentoring roles, Dr. Romero is the founder of Voces de Sacramento, a writing contest that since 2021 aims to amplify the voices of the local Spanish-speaking community. This initiative reflects her belief in the power of storytelling and written expression as tools for empowerment and cultural exchange. Through this contest, she provides a platform for emerging writers of all ages to share their unique perspectives and experiences, fostering a greater appreciation for diverse narratives within the Sacramento area.

At Sacramento State, Dr. Romero teaches a wide range of courses that cater to students pursuing a minor, major, or master's degree in Spanish. Her curriculum covers various aspects of her expertise areas, including SPAN 153 Civilization and Culture of Mexico, SPAN 113 Latin American Literature, and 130 Contemporary Mexican Literature. Her proposal to create the new class SPAN 131 Special Topics in Latin American Literature was recently approved. This course will diversify the curriculum by focusing on a



Dr. Brenda Romero

geographical area, community or literary genre usually not studied in depth in other classes. Last year, Dr. Romero received a Pedagogy Enhancement Award to develop the first SPAN 131 course that will focus on Afro-Latinx Voices, a class that will be taught for the first time in Spring 2025.

In 2020, Dr. Romero became involved with CRISJ. In addition to attending meetings and events as a CRISJ faculty associate, she interviewed author Ana Castillo to create an episode for the Building Bridges Podcast and wrote a reflection for the Un/Equal Freedoms: Expressions for Social Justice Art Exhibit. After being a member of the CRISJ Empowerment Scholarship committee for two years, Dr. Romero became chair of this committee in 2023. In this capacity, she oversees the application, evaluation and disbursement of scholarships for students from underserved populations who exemplify CRISJ's mission in their academic and community engagement.

Dr. Brenda Romero's contributions to the fields of Latin American literature and Mexican studies make her a respected member of the academic community. Her research focuses on the exploration of marginalized voices in literature and the interpretation of hybrid texts, including the study of Nahua Codices. Dr. Romero has presented her research at numerous professional conferences in the U.S. and abroad, and her work has been published in various academic outlets. Some of her recent publications include the article "Historical Invisibility: Black Migrants and Mexico's Colonial Past" and the book chapter "Afro-Mexican Women in the Northern Frontier: Subalternity, Agency, and Power Dynamics in the 17th Century". Dr. Romero's current book project explores the role of Mexican literature in overcoming instances of epistemic injustice and social silences that have excluded certain historical episodes from the national imaginary.

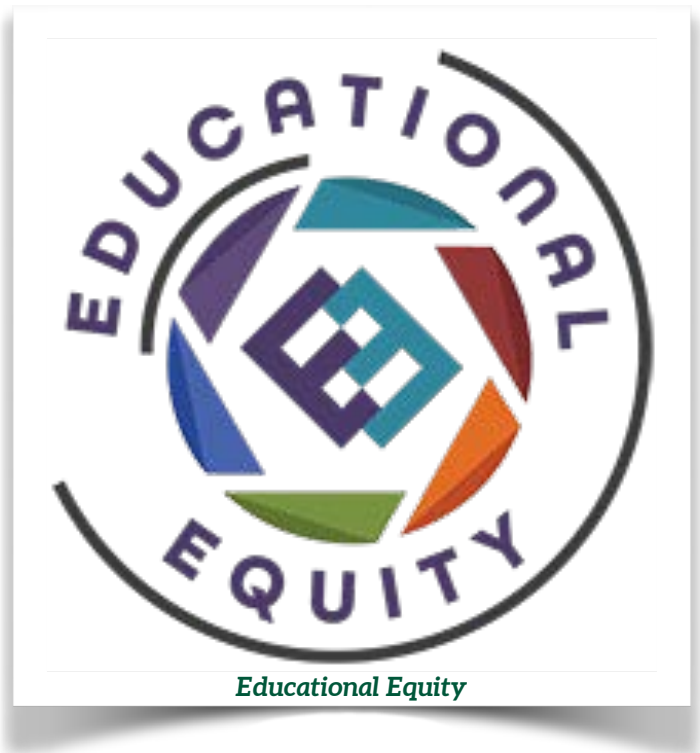
CRISJ faculty welcome high school students from the bay area (Spring 2024).



Community Partner Spotlight: Roberto Robles with Educational Equity

Elk Grove Unified School District's Educational Equity Department is engaging in work that will enhance the lived educational experience of all students and educational partners while applying an asset-based mindset to eliminate unjust and/or inequitable student outcomes. The Educational Equity Department is working towards creating a culture that engages in strategic and authentic collaboration with all educational partners as well as hold space for all truths in the hopes that we could lean into discomforts for the betterment of our district and the community beyond our region. The department is made up of 21 staff members and continues to grow. Cory Jones, the Educational Equity Director, leads 4 Program Specialist, 11 Equity Coaches, and 4 Program Educators.

In the relatively short time that department has existed, the department has been able to create impactful opportunities for staff, students, and community members. For example, the Equity Coaches have led dozens of DEI trainings available to all EGUSD Staff. As well as offered various book studies, a professional development on 'How do Disrupt the Dehumanization of Boys and Young Men of Color', and professional development on 'Dia de los Muertos: Honoring Mexican Culture, Life, and Creativity', just to name a few. The coaches also support site administrators and teachers on adopting more equitable practices and systems. The department is also rolling out Restorative Practice training to all school site administrators and staff. Restorative Practices is a field within the social sciences that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. These trainings will encourage stronger bonds between staff to staff, staff to student, and student to student.



Creating a culture of understanding and empathy.

The Program Educator lead their respective Targeted Programs. The Native Education Program provides resources, tutoring for students, and culture classes open to the district community. The program also hosts a Fall Welcome Event at the beginning of the school year and a Native Education Graduation Ceremony for all Native students graduating as well as those promoting to the next grade level. The Black Excellence Program provides support for Black Student Unions on the school sites and continues to expand its presence on new campuses. The program provides various field trips throughout the year and a Summer Summit for the BSU leaders. The Young Men of Color Program is part of the 1300 Campaign and works towards supporting all Young Men of Color throughout the district, notably with the pilot program called Young Men Rising. Young Men Rising is a group focused on creating an affinity space to help empower the young men, build leadership and team building skills, learn cultural practices, and express and embrace themselves freely.

The Educational Equity Department has been leading the way in the launch of Employee Affinity groups. Such groups have launched for Asian American Pacific Islander Employees, Latino Employees, Black and African American Employees, and there is meaningful efforts in working towards creating a LGBTQ+ Employee Affinity Space as well.

The Educational Equity Department's core values are Radical Hope, Grace, and Belonging. With these core values in mind and heart, the Ed. Equity department is putting forth great efforts to help shift the culture for every student, every staff, and every community member that comes through EGUSD.



Educational Equity Department, Elk Grove Unified School District.

CRISJ Empowerment Scholarship Recipients 2024

Committee Chaired by Dr. Brenda Romero

The Empowerment Scholarship, chaired by Dr. Brenda Romero (Department of World Languages and Literatures), recognizes students who exemplify the CRISJ mission, while demonstrating academic excellence, civic engagement, and community service. In 2024, the recipients of this scholarship were Brittany Remington, Grace Matayoshi, and Carmen Carmazzi. As their profiles included below show, these students represent the CRISJ spirit by empowering voices from the margins, building healthy relationships in the community, and challenging structures of oppression that harm society. If you want to support CRISJ's efforts in empowering students, please go to the CRISJ Empowerment Scholarship donation page and add your voice to others who have committed to making a difference.

Brittany Remington



Brittany Remington

Brittany is currently excelling in the nursing program as a first-generation college student. Her journey has been marked by significant challenges, including overcoming poverty, addiction, and mental health issues. Despite these obstacles, Brittany has remained steadfast in her commitment to serving the community. She has volunteered at Loaves and Fishes, providing meals and support to those in need, has worked at CORE, a women's rehabilitation center, and has been instrumental in helping women maintain sobriety. Her dedication and resilience are an inspiration to all who know her.

Grace Matayoshi



Grace Matayoshi

Grace is pursuing a double major in Asian Studies and Social Work. She is deeply committed to preserving Asian American history and culture while developing programs for future generations. Grace has been actively involved in projects that raise awareness about Japanese and Japanese American experiences. Notably, she has served as an ambassador for the annual pilgrimage to the Manzanar concentration camp, and she has contributed to a musical production that explores the devastating consequences of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Her work reflects a profound dedication to cultural preservation and social justice.

Megan Carmazzi



Megan Carmazzi

Megan, a scholarship recipient in the graduate Counseling program, is driven by a profound desire to be an agent for change. She has actively engaged in advocacy efforts for higher education, including lobbying at the Capitol for Proposition AB 656. Megan is dedicated to fostering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice (DEIBJ) principles in the workplace, ensuring that these values are integrated into organizational cultures. Additionally, she serves as a peer mentor through her graduate program's Society of Student Counselors Peer Mentorship Program, providing guidance and support to her fellow students.

Events

During the 2023-2024 Academic Year, the Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice (CRISJ) organized several events at Sacramento State, in-person, online, and hybrid, to bring to light the current issues that affect our community on and off campus. These events reflect our continued efforts on building bridges on and off campus with faculty, students, and community partners.

Farmworker Housing Forum: “Farmworker Migrant Housing and the Limits of Citizenship and Education” (Fall 2023)

BY AGGIE EBRAHIMI BAZAZ AND LAUREN ORNELAS

On Tuesday, November 14, 2023, CRISJ sponsored a screening of the powerful documentary *Como Vivimos (How We Live)* at Sacramento State University.

This documentary, *Como Vivimos (How We Live)*, spends a year with families and students in the Artesi II Migrant Family Housing Center. One of 24 such housing communities across California, these centers house farm working families for six to nine months each year. Once the harvest season ends, families are forced to vacate their homes, pull their children from school and move at least 50 miles away in order to be eligible to return to reside in the housing center the following year. *Como Vivimos (How We Live)* spends a year in one such community to reveal how the displacement, lost learning opportunities, and constant search for affordable housing faced by families living in migrant family housing centers, continue to limit families' access to economic mobility.

More than 120 people attended the screening which was followed by a post-screening panel and discussion. The panel included educators, organizers, and policy makers to discuss the impact of California's 50-mile regulation.

Attendees also heard from the children of farmworkers who reside in one of the state's migrant family housing centers and are thus affected by the 50 mile regulation. Some of these students were members of Sacramento State's College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP).

The documentary served its purpose by not only informing the audience of an issue many didn't even know existed but also galvanizing support to change this outdated and unjust regulation.

After the documentary screened, Food Empowerment Project Founder and Senior Programs Director Lauren Ornelas moderated a panel discussion with José Modesto, a student who was featured in the documentary and who is now a graduate of Sacramento State; Dr. Ann López, Director of Center for Farmworker Families; Luis Magaña, founder of the Organización de Trabajadores Agrícolas de California; Jacob Moss, Legislative Director for Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula; and Pablo Espinoza from the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

The panel discussed some of the inherent problems with the 50-mile regulation. José, who grew up in the Artesi II Migrant Family Housing Center, offered poignant personal insights to barriers he experienced as a student trying to graduate despite the annual displacement he and his family experienced. José is currently a teacher in the same elementary school he attended as a child. Informed by his experiences growing up in the



Moderator and Panelists: Lauren Ornelas, Luis Magaña, Jacob Moss, Dr. Ann Lopez, Pablo Espinoza, Jose Modesto, November 14, 2023.

housing centers, he's now in a position to support and advocate for students who are currently navigating the challenges of the 50-mile regulation to their education.

As someone whose father was a Bracero farmworker, Luis Magaña was able to offer invaluable context into the various issues impacting farm workers in California and ways those issues reflect historical legacies of reliance on and exploitation of immigrant labor. Luis reminded the audience that many of the children affected by the 50-mile regulation are the grandchildren of Bracero farmworkers. Across several generations, families in the migrant family housing centers are persisting in farm working occupations in

part because of the barriers youth face in accessing education.

Jacob Moss reinforced Assemblymember Arambula's commitment to farm worker justice and publicly recognized that the 50-mile regulation reflects an inequity in the education of the children of farm workers. Dr. López reflected on her years of advocating on behalf of farmworking families and called on legislators to find the political will to end the 50-mile rule once and for all.

After the panel, Lilia Contreras, CAMP Coordinator, explained the goals of the CAMP program as a federally funded program to help migrant and seasonal farm workers transition from high school to college. One of the

Sacramento State undergraduate students supported by the CAMP program, Marisol Romero, spoke to attendees. Marisol grew up in the Artesi II Migrant Family Housing Center. She bravely voiced current issues faced by families living in the migrant family housing centers, as well as the challenges she and her peers encounter when pulled out of school each year due to the 50-mile regulation.

We are so grateful to all of your support to allow us to coordinate events such as this and all the work we do at CRISJ.

For additional resources and learning, please visit:

- <https://foodispower.org/farm-workers-rights/>
- <https://farmworkerfamily.org/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Trabajadoresmigrantes>
- <https://www.humanagenda.net/campaigns/apoyo-campesino>

To learn more about this documentary film and upcoming public television screenings of *Como Vivimos*, visit: <https://worldchannel.org/episode/america-reframed-como-vivimos-how-we-live/>

(See Panel [Video](#)).



SACRAMENTO STATE
Center on Race, Immigration & Social Justice



Farmworker Migrant Housing in California and the Limits of Citizenship and Education

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 | Cottonwood Suite | University Union

6:00pm - 7:20pm - Film Screening of "Como Vivimos (How we live)"
 Presented by: Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz, Filmmaker
 Each year, hundreds of US citizens in California are displaced and Mexican-American youth miss months of school. Learn more in this documentary film about living at the edges of citizenship and engage in conversation with filmmaker.

7:30pm - 8:30pm - Panel: Alumni, Sac State students and farmworker's rights activists

- Dr. Joaquin Arambula, California State Assembly Member
- Dr. Ann Lopez, Director of Center for Farmworker Families
- Luis Magaña, Organizacion de Trabajadores Agricolas de California
- Lauren Ornelas, Founder/Director, Food Empowerment Project
- Jose Modesto, Sacramento State Alumnus
- CAMP Students, Sacramento State

Scan QR to Register






PIZZA & REFRESHMENTS | FREE EVENT
 Contact: crisj@csus.edu
 Request accommodations one week prior to event

Immigration Event with Kevin R. Johnson: “The KKK, Immigration Law and Policy, and Donald Trump” (Spring 2024)

BY DR. HEIDY SARABIA

On February 28, 2024, Kevin R. Johnson, current Dean of the UC Davis Law School, joined CRISJ on a talk about immigration. His talk, “The KKK, Immigration Law and Policy, and Donald Trump,” highlighted how the KKK and former President, and frontrunner for the 2024 Republican nomination for president, Donald Trump, have advocated for remarkably similar anti-immigrant policies, with racial animus at the forefront and always on full display. In his talk, Johnson discussed the enduring legacy of the KKK’s immigration philosophy on contemporary U.S. immigration law and politics, and the lessons to be applied as we move forward. Giselle Alvarado, a student reflected,

It is refreshing to learn and see different points of views from other educators. You can learn new things that they have experienced and learned from, expanding our knowledge.

A very timely topic given the upcoming presidential elections. For example, Jessica posted on the chat,

I'm a Jewish woman by ancestry, but was raised by a Mexican nanny until 4th grade so I hold latinx culture in my heart. I was wondering how as someone with this background should handle the stress of possibly having an evil man who doesn't like my people as president? I was genuinely scared last time he was president that he would round up the Jews again.

Dean Kevin Johnson discussed the historical connections between the Ku Klux Klan's anti-immigrant ideology and Donald Trump's immigration policies. For example, he outlined

how the KKK has long opposed immigration, particularly targeting Catholics, Jews, and later Latino immigrants, much in the same way Trump dislikes migration. Thus, Johnson argued that Trump's rhetoric and policies mirror KKK views, including calls for border walls, mass deportations, and describing immigrants as criminals.

Johnson also pointed to Trump's support from white supremacist groups and his refusal to denounce them. Johnson argued that Trump's approach to immigration is more extreme than previous administrations, treating immigrants as less than human. He emphasized how Trump's policies have had severe impacts on immigrant communities, especially Latinos.

The audience engaged with Johnson in the chat as well as the Q&A session at the end. Sociology Student, Sairah Ali for example, later reflected,

He [Johnson] inspired me to recognize my place in society, and to appreciate that I am a child of an immigrant family who has been able to adapt to the lifestyle that the American society has to offer. I believe that Johnson was able to cover very informative topics that discussed how each individual has the opportunity to realize that politics and our economy consists of racist factors, but if we do not identify and eliminate them, we will continue to face acts of discrimination and inequality simply due to our culture or color.

You can view presentation [here](#).



Community Empowerment Faire (Spring 2024)

BY DR. MANUEL BARAJAS

Over a dozen community partners participated in the fifth annual CRISJ Community Empowerment Faire that was envisioned by Professor Emeritus Stan Oden five years ago as a way of making Sacramento State relevant to the community and bridge the campus with the great work local organizations do in the service of community empowerment. This year’s co-sponsors include the Community Engagement Center, Student Engagement and Success, along with an amazing team of students and staff volunteers, and Ana Gutierrez, who made it all happen. Brenda-Joyce Newman, a Sac State Alumni and long-time CRISJ member, moderated the event, along with Professor Barajas, keeping us on track with the day’s fun program.

This year’s community partners advanced civic engagement awareness and opportunities for



Students get information about our community partners. Photos from the Community Empowerment Faire, April 3, 2024 at Sac State.

Sacramento State students and broader community. Their contribution helped students 1) feel a sense of purpose by addressing issues that matter to them, 2) motivate them to give back their communities, and 3) offer them the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in the field, providing



Brother Carter shares information about The Poor People’s Campaign with Students. Photos from the Community Empowerment Faire, April 3, 2024 at Sac State.



Herman Barahona, with the Sacramento Environmental Justice Coalition shares information with students. Photos from the Community Empowerment Faire, April 3, 2024 at Sac State.



them the biggest lessons in the service of social/environmental justice. In addition, the program offered an exciting opportunity to meet students and each other, enjoy music and food, and celebrate the spirit for social and environmental justice.

Students were able to learn about our community partners and enjoy lunch. Photos from the Community Empowerment Faire, April 3, 2024 at Sac State.



Shemida and Jessee, from Safe Black Spaces shared information with students. Photos from the Community Empowerment Faire, April 3, 2024 at Sac State.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FAIRE

SACRAMENTO STATE

University Ballroom III
Wednesday, April 3, 2024
12:00 Noon - 3:00pm

PRE-REGISTER!

FREE STUDENT EVENT!

FOOD & PRIZES!

Come join us at our annual Community Empowerment Faire and engage with community organizations addressing issues of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice.

- Learn about issues that matter to you and transform communities
- Give back and get involved within your communities
- Apply your academic knowledge in the field and make a difference while gaining experience

We hope to see you there!

Come, Engage, & Get Involved! Contact/Questions: **Working for Social Justice!**
 crisj@csus.edu



Community Partners and students meeting at the faire. Photos from the Community Empowerment Faire, April 3, 2024 at Sac State.

Safe Black Space at Sac State: A Special Reparations Community Healing Circle hosted by CRISJ

BY DR. KRISTEE HAGGINS

On Saturday, June 22, 2024, Safe Black Space, a local non-profit organization, provided an In-Person Special Reparations Community Healing Circle in collaboration with the Center on Race, Immigration and Social Justice (CRISJ). The Circle was co-sponsored by the City of Sacramento’s Mayor’s Office, Office of Diversity and Equity and provided an opportunity for individuals of African ancestry to share their perspectives, insights, and experiences related to reparations. The timing of the event is noteworthy, as it followed “Juneteenth” which commemorates when over 250,000 enslaved people in Galveston, Texas finally received news of their emancipation (freedom) on June 19, 1865.

Prior to attending, each registered guest was



and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions and families.” This was the focus of the circle on June 22nd.

Knowing that the topic of reparations and discussions around it can bring up several feelings and reactions, the circle was provided at the request of the Mayor’s Office as they sought survey feedback from local community members. It provided a safe space for Black people to engage in open conversations, deepen their understanding of reparations, learn about Black racial stress, trauma and triumph, and work towards healing. Given the mission of CRISJ, the partnership was aligned in meeting the needs of all partners included.

Approximately 40 people participated, including Sac State Faculty, Staff and Students, and local community members. It was an intergenerational cultural affair, with

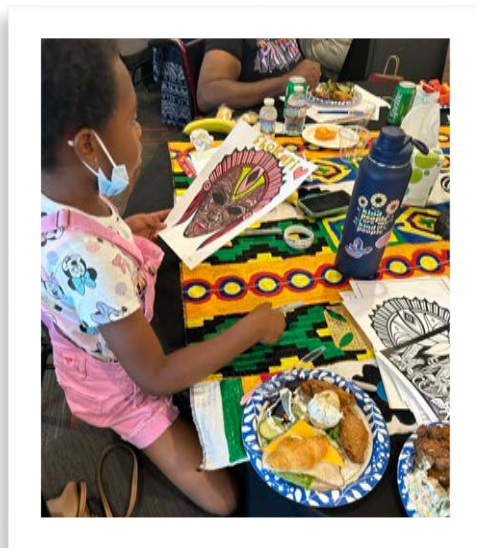


asked to complete a survey about Reparations for the Mayor's Office to obtain feedback as our city explores how to develop municipal level reparations. Attendees were invited to join the circle whether they had a personal perspective, background knowledge, or simply a curiosity to learn more about reparations. The National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA) defines reparations as “A process of repairing, healing



attendees ranging from ages 6 to 78 years old. Participants learned about local, statewide and national reparations efforts. They heard a personal story from a Safe Black Space staff member about their connection to the enslavement of their ancestors. Attendees were asked to consider their own family history and experiences and had opportunities to talk and share their stories with each other. They learned tools to cope with racial stress and trauma they may currently be experiencing, as well as identified local resources. Participants experienced a sense of support, community, and pride. Both tears and laughter were shared as Safe Black Space brought people together during this day long circle to liberate and educate!

This In-Person Special Reparations Community Healing Circle provided in partnership with CRISJ and The Mayor’s Office provided an opportunity to bring healing to our local Black community. Safe Black Space offers monthly Online Community Healing Circles on second Saturdays from 3:00-4:30pm as well as In-Person Community Healing Circles intermittently. In addition, they provide monthly In-Person African Drum Circles with



other local Black organizations on second Sundays at 5:30pm at Estate Farms. Safe Black Space also provides an annual Book Study Group, a Kwanzaa Kutoa (Giving) Celebration, as well as other activities meant to improve and enhance the health and wellness of Black people. Safe Black Space envisions a world, where in the face of racial trauma, Black communities are equipped to heal and thrive. To learn more, visit www.safeblackspace.org



On-going Projects

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

CRISJ Research Mentorship Program

BY DR. ELVIA RAMIREZ

CRISJ sponsored another highly successful Research Mentorship Program during the 2023-24 academic year. The program was incredibly successful, with 16 students and 16 faculty mentors from across campus participating in collaborative, innovative, and critical scholarly projects. The CRISJ Research Mentorship Program enhances the research culture at Sac State and provides students with a unique opportunity to conduct critical, social justice-informed research projects under the tutelage of highly dedicated volunteer CRISJ faculty mentors.

As a social justice-informed organization, CRISJ strives to open the pathway to graduate studies for historically underrepresented and underserved student populations at Sac State. The CRISJ Research Mentorship Program thus aims to provide students with quality research experiences, faculty mentorship, and preparation for graduate school.

During fall 2023, the CRISJ Mentoring Program sponsored a meet-and-greet session with student mentees and faculty mentors. The event provided students and faculty with an opportunity to network and learn about each other's research interests and scholarly projects. During fall semester, students also met with the CRISJ Mentoring Coordinator (Dr. Elvia Ramirez) and the Director of CRISJ (Dr. Manuel Barajas) for several mentoring sessions. These mentoring sessions revolved



Mentors and mentees at the Meet-and-Greet session during Fall 2023 semester.

During the 2023-24 academic year, the CRISJ Research Mentorship Program established a partnership with the Learning-Aligned Employment Program (LAEP), which allowed eligible CRISJ students to earn compensation for their research activity.

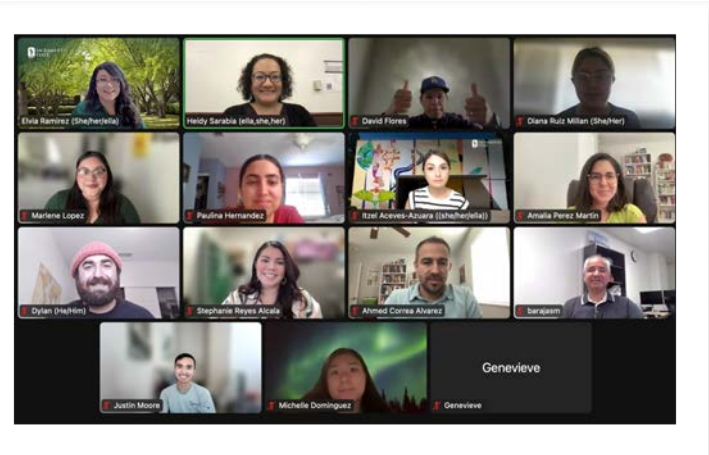
During spring 2024 semester, CRISJ mentees carried out an independent research project or served as volunteer research assistants for their assigned faculty mentor. Students and faculty had an opportunity to present their research at the annual CRISJ Research Mentorship Conference in May 2024. The research presentations were incredibly powerful and insightful. Some students and their faculty mentors also presented their CRISJ research projects at national academic conferences.

Overall, the 2023-24 CRISJ Research Mentorship Program was very successful. We hope to continue sponsoring this transformative and empowering program in the years to come.

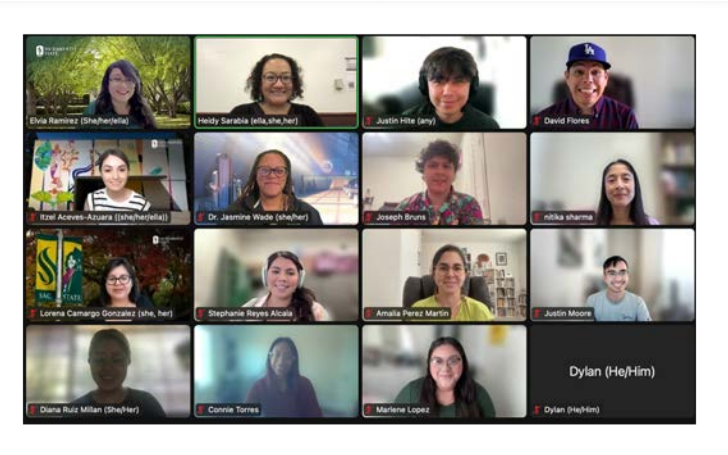


Dr. Chris Rogers and other faculty introduce themselves to CRISJ student mentees.

around themes such as quantitative and qualitative research designs, research question development, and graduate school application tips.



Online CRISJ Research Mentorship Conference in May 2024.



Online CRISJ Research Mentorship Conference in May 2024.

The “Building Justice” Podcast

BY DR. ELVIA RAMIREZ

WWW.CSUS.EDU/CRISJ/BUILDINGJUSTICE

Since 2021, the CRISJ “Building Justice” podcast has been producing podcast episodes that help inform local and national audiences about critical issues affecting all communities, particularly those that are historically underserved and disenfranchised. The purpose of the podcast is to provide individuals and organizations that have traditionally lacked access to resources an opportunity to share their needs, concerns, and insights with our listening audience. CRISJ’s “Building Justice” podcast is a wonderful educational resource for Sac State students, faculty, and staff, and we encourage all members of the campus community to tune in and participate in producing podcasts that advance social justice, equity, and inclusion.

During the 2023-24 academic year, the CRISJ Podcast Committee oversaw the completion of Season 3 of the “Building Justice” podcast series. Season 3 is comprised of 22 engaging and insightful podcast episodes that address many different social justice issues, such as politics, policing and incarceration, LGBTQ+ communities, union organizing, multicultural theatre, food insecurity, the racialization of immigrants, environmental justice, sexual violence, and school segregation. The CRISJ “Building Justice” Podcast has been incredibly successful. During the 2023-24 academic year, the podcast amassed more than 5,000 downloads/plays from listeners in 22 countries across the world! You can find the complete list of the Season 3 podcast episodes [here](#).

The 2023-24 academic year also saw some changes in the leadership of the CRISJ Podcast Committee. During fall 2023 semester, Dr. Monicka Tutschka, Professor of Political Science and founder of the

“Building Justice” podcast, chaired the CRISJ Podcast Committee. Dr. Tutschka stepped down from the committee at the end of fall 2023 semester. During spring 2024 semester, Dr. Elvia Ramirez, Professor of Ethnic Studies and CRISJ Mentoring Coordinator, assumed the position of Chair of the CRISJ Podcast Committee.

The CRISJ Podcast Committee is comprised of Sac State faculty, students, staff, and alumni. We encourage all members of the campus community to consider joining the CRISJ Podcast Committee and/or produce podcast episodes for the “Building Justice” podcast. If interested, please email Dr. Ramirez (eramirez@csus.edu).

CRIJS’s Faculty Learning: Advancing AI Literacy @ Sac State

BY DR. DIEGO BONILLA

In higher education, faculty have had to adapt to many technological changes in the last 2 decades. These ongoing changes bring promises of enhanced educational outcomes and, quite often, the proposed solutions also carry detrimental effects. One notable example is the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) movement, which gained momentum in the early 2010s. At the time, universities embraced this initiative with the hope of increasing student engagement, enhancing access to educational resources, and fostering digital literacy.

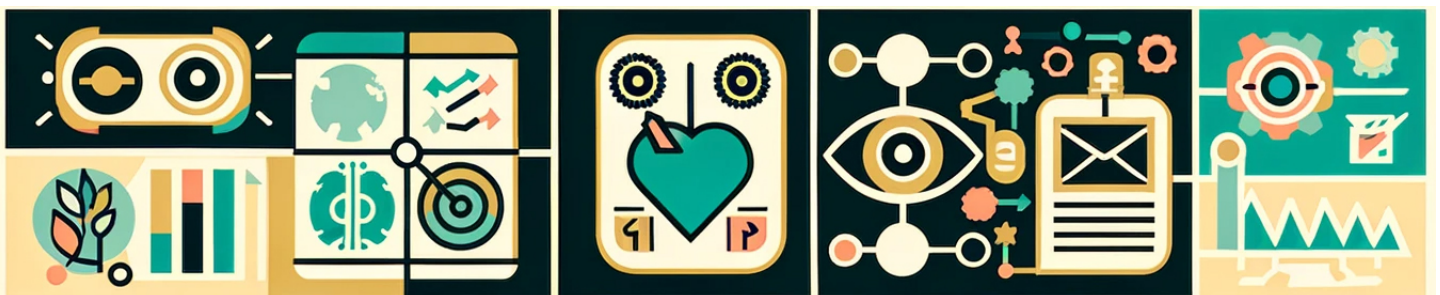
The idea was simple: allow students to bring their devices into the learning environment, thereby creating a more flexible and personalized educational experience. However, as we’ve seen over the years, the introduction of mobile devices into academic settings brought with it a host of unintended consequences. Privacy concerns, the digital divide, and mental health issues emerged as significant challenges. Additionally, the omnipresence of mobile devices contributed to social polarization, increased instances of cyberbullying, and a noticeable decline in attention spans among students. These outcomes serve as a reminder of the complex relationship between technology and education. While the BYOD movement sought to harness the benefits of mobile devices, it



also highlighted the importance of carefully considering the broader implications of technological adoption.

The CRISJ Faculty Learning Community titled “Advancing AI Literacy @ Sacramento State” addressed the transformative power of AI in education and society, without shying away from exploring the detrimental effects of the technology. The first session introduced participants to AI, covering its evolution, prompt engineering, and best practices for using AI tools in academia. The second session provided practical strategies for handling documents, data, and media using AI, emphasizing efficiency, accuracy, and creativity while addressing biases and ethical concerns. The third session critically examined AI’s role in higher education, discussing personalized learning, bias, transparency, and the importance of skepticism in evaluating AI outputs. The final session explored the broader societal implications of AI, including ethical issues, economic impacts, and the need for robust governance and public literacy to manage AI’s integration into society.

The “Advancing AI Literacy @ Sacramento State” will rest during Fall 2024 and will renew activities with renewed resources in Spring 2025. Stay tuned!



Farmworker Housing Bill: AB 2240 (Arambula) – Farmworker Housing (CRISJ Co-Sponsor)

BY DR. MANUEL BARAJAS

On behalf of CRISJ, I support AB 2240 because a harmful 50-mile rule forces unnecessary, stressful, and costly movement disrupting the overall health and futures of farmworker families.

I am a fourth generation farmworker with great uncles, grandparents, and parents who have labored in the California fields since the early twentieth century. Like those before them, my parents lived fragmented lives as a family for many years, and in 1973, they brought their four children and lived in a

farmworker center in Stockton. When the camps closed in the fall, our community was forced to migrate to Michoacan, because local housing was/is very expensive; and at that time, farmworkers were denied Unemployment Insurance (excluded from the National Labor Relations Act of 1935).^[i]

Significantly, farmworkers make agribusiness among the richest industry in the nation (\$56 billion in 2022).^[ii] California agriculture produces over half of the vegetables and fruits for the nation, and employs approximately 800,000 workers.^[iii] Farmworkers are the heart and wealth of California agriculture, so why are families forced to migrate? Responding to agribusiness’ fears of a shortage of farmworkers when the Bracero Program ended in 1964, the Office of Migrant Services (OMS) was formed in 1965 to provide



Coalition for Farmworker Housing: Human Agency, Food Empowerment, Center for Farmworker Families, Cooperativa Campesina, OTAC, and CRISJ at Senate Committee Hearing, June 22, 2024.

farmworkers with affordable, seasonal rental housing. Today, OMS operates 24 housing centers across California, serving about 7,000 people, only a very small number of the total farmworkers. At one point, an opposition to AB 2240 declared that there are existing housing resources for non-migratory farmworkers, and that farmworker housing should be for only those that are truly migratory. However, there is no longer an opposition. It made no sense to support forced migrations in the farmworker housing centers. Why not allow the current residents of the housing centers to stay year-round if over 80 percent would prefer to stay and less than 10 percent to migrate? Importantly, AB 2240 bill would ensure housing to those who choose to migrate. Both migrant and non-migrant farmworkers feel and see themselves at home in their current farmworker housing centers.

At one point and no longer the case, the opposition claimed that it is not possible to offer both year-round and seasonal housing options. Importantly, this claim is not based on farmworkers' interests, but adheres to the existing 50-mile rule that forces families to migrate in order to qualify for the low-income housing the following year. Significantly, the logic of the 50-mile rule is rooted to values and practices that should have ended with slavery, sharecropping, and the Bracero Program because they keep essential workers extremely marginalized and exploitable to the interests of those who profit from migratory labor. Again, the AB 2240 has no major opposition among those who care for the dignity and health of

farmworker families who enrich California with their essential labor.

In brief, a great majority of farmworkers include whole families with several generations who see California as their home. I come from a farmworker community that was fragmented for generations, not because we had a migratory culture, but because we were forced to migrate to survive. Providing the option of year-round housing, farmworker families can experience a non-fragmented sense of community and their children can experience year-round education allowing them to successfully graduate high school. For these reasons, I strongly recommend an AYE vote on AB 2240 (Arambula).

^[i] See Lopez, Ann. 2007. *The Farmworkers' Journey*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Barajas, Manuel. 2009. *The Xaripu Community Across Borders: Labor Migration, Community, and Family*. Notre Dame Press.

^[ii] <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Statistics/>

^[iii] <https://farmworkerfamily.org/information>

^[iv] <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Statistics/>

^[v] <https://farmworkerfamily.org/information>

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars and join us in these future events organized by CRISJ.

Building Bridges for Social Justice and Global Peace

**BUILDING BRIDGES
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE & GLOBAL PEACE**



CENTER ON RACE,
IMMIGRATION
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

October 10, 2024
5:30 - 8:00p.m.

Harper Alumni Center | Sacramento State

Join the celebration of champions for social justice and global peace



Voices of Hope and for Healthier Communities

GUEST SPEAKERS

Katie Valenzuela <small>City Council Member</small>	Ruth Ibarra <small>NorCal Resist</small>	Dr. Flo Cofer <small>Candidate for Mayor of Sacramento</small>
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SHOWCASING ART & MUSIC THAT EMPOWERS!
REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED! FREE EVENT - REGISTER TO ATTEND!

REGISTER HERE

Consider making a donation to the CRISJ Student Empowerment Scholarship. Thank you for your support!

MAKE YOUR DONATION HERE

Contact/Questions:
crisj@csus.edu



SACRAMENTO STATE

On October 10, 2024, from 5:30pm to 8:00pm, join us to celebrate champions for social justice and global peace.

Call for Artist



CENTER ON RACE,
IMMIGRATION
& SOCIAL JUSTICE

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE & GLOBAL PEACE

CALL FOR ARTIST - ON AND OFF CAMPUS COMMUNITY

from various artistic expressions to envision the empowerment of marginalized communities and a healthier future for all

**SUBMIT APPLICATION
& MATERIALS BY CLICKING
HERE OR SCAN QR CODE**



POSSIBLE THEMES

- Unequal Freedom
- Freedom of Movement, Expression, Culture...
- Social and Environmental Justice
- Dignity And Equity To The Hands That Feed Us
- Themes Aligned With Building Bridges For Social Justice
- A World without Wars/Empires/Colonialisms
- Indigenous Human Rights
- A World Without Oppressive Borders
- Social and Environmental Justice
- Sustainable Living

Looking for art submissions - visual, poetry, songs, etc. (2-3 minutes). Selected art will be exhibited by artist on October 10, 2024 at the CRISJ Building Bridges for Social Justice and Global Peace.

Awards ranging from \$100 to \$300. Deadline for submissions is July 31, 2024. For more information please contact crisj@csus.edu or mbarajas@csus.edu. Notification of selection by August 22, 2024.


* Note: Awards are tax reportable.



SACRAMENTO STATE

Call for artists to participate at the Building Bridges Event on October 10th, 2024.

Literacy Empowerment Day



Save the Date!

**2024 YOUTH LITERACY
EMPOWERMENT DAY**

**“Seeds to Roots: Cultivating healthy futures”
“Semillas a Raices: Cultivando futuros sanos”**


**~ Building student empowerment through cultural,
community, and artistic expressions ~**

WORKSHOPS & FOOD
FREE ENTRY

Friday, November 1, 2024
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Sacramento State

EVENT REGISTRATION WINDOW
SEPTEMBER 3 - OCTOBER 11, 2024


District Contact: Roberto Robles
rrrobles@egusd.net



SACRAMENTO STATE
Center on Race, Immigration & Social Justice



E G U S D



EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Event Details

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

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

Annual Report Contributors

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We also want to specially recognize **Ana R. Gutierrez**, Administrative Coordinator II ANTH, for her exceptional contributions and support to the CRISJ mission. Her expertise, dedication, and compassion were foundational to the success of all our work. Ana, thank you from all CRISJ associates!