

# UC RIVERSIDE ETHNIC STUDIES

*Quarterly Newsletter*



## UCR ETHNIC STUDIES IN A TIME OF CRISIS

The UCR Ethnic Studies department has faced a number of challenges this year in addressing COVID-19, meeting student needs in the midst of instability and financial precarity, and the impact of racism on our students brought to light by the mass movement in support of Black Lives. We have issued a statement in support of Graduate Students organizing for a living wage and of UCR Undergraduate Students Demands to the UCR Administration. We have also begun our community engagement programs which bring together faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students and community members to address the pressing issues of our time.

Despite these challenging times, UCR Ethnic Studies faculty have found creative ways to teach during the campus shut-down. They have also produced path-breaking scholarship while engaged in diverse community organizing projects. Graduate students have won numerous awards this year. They have taken part in a variety of social Justice initiatives while pursuing innovative scholarship. UCR Ethnic studies undergraduates have organized a number of successful campaigns to improve the well-being of Riverside citizens and campus life.

***If you would like to support the work of UCR Ethnic Studies, you can donate at: <https://myadv.ucr.edu/20CHSSPEM3/200255>***



## PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM PRESENTS UCR ETHNIC STUDIES PROFESSOR GERALD CLARKE'S "FALLING ROCK" EXHIBITION

The Palm Springs Art Museum presented the first major solo exhibition for UCR Ethnic Studies professor, Gerald Clarke. Gerald Clarke is a tribal leader of the Cahuilla Band of Indians whose art contributes an indigenous perspective on issues involving identity, racial stereotyping, and the politicized history of Indigenous arts and culture. Promoting what Professor Clarke terms "creative sovereignty," *Falling Rock*, features over 80 pieces, including, sculptures, paintings, and installations. Professor Clarke argues that creativity is an Indian tradition. An artist for over 25 years, Professor Clarke rejects the notion of art for art's sake and instead grounds his work in the necessity to address the material conditions Native peoples currently face while expanding possibilities for Indigenous futures.

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

### ADRIAN FELIX



Adrián Félix recently joined the UC Riverside Faculty. His groundbreaking book, *Spectres of Belonging: The Political Life Cycle of Immigrants* (Oxford University Press, 2018), was awarded the 2019 Best Book in Latino Politics by the American Political Science Association. Professor Félix is also engaged with the UC Riverside community, organizing students to teach citizenship classes. He was awarded tenure this year and will begin serving as Director of Graduate Studies this fall.

## FACULTY NEWS

Wesley Leonard and Adrián Félix were promoted to Associate Professor with tenure.

Andrea Smith published *Unreconciled: From Racial Reconciliation to Racial Justice in Christian Evangelicalism* (Duke) and *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Black Racism* (co-edited with Tiffany Lethabo King and Jenell Navarro, Duke). *Otherwise Worlds* emerged from the Otherwise Worlds Conference at UCR Riverside.

Jennifer Najera published an OpEd in the Los Angeles Times this Fall, "[My Grandpa Was a Dreamer Who Crossed the Rio Grande](#)." This Spring she was selected as an "Outstanding Faculty Mentor" for the University Honors Program.

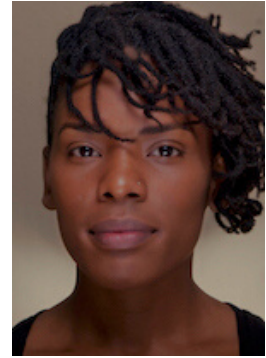
Edward Chang was awarded the Order of Civil Merit, Magnolia Medal by the Republic of Korea.

Alisa Bierria published "[Battering Court System: A Structural Critique of 'Failure to Protect'](#)" in *The Politicization of Safety: Critical Perspectives on Domestic Violence Responses* (co-authored with Colby Lenz, NYU Press).

Emily Hue published "[Fifteen Years after Buddha Is Hiding: Gesturing Toward the Future in Critical Refugee Studies](#)" in *Women's Studies Quarterly*

Wesley Leonard was awarded a \$1 million Mellon Grant to support Indigenous Studies at UC Riverside.

## UCR Ethnic Studies Welcomes New Faculty Member, Jasmin Young



Jasmin A. Young will be joining the faculty of the UCR Ethnic Studies Department this fall, 2020. Professor Young is a University of California President's Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of African American Studies. She is currently developing her manuscript, *Black Women with Guns: Armed Resistance in the Black Freedom Struggle*. This work fundamentally rethinks the history of the Black Freedom Movement by placing Black women's armed activity at the center of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements.

# ETHNIC STUDIES STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR UC GRADUATE STUDENTS - APRIL 2020

We, the faculty of UC Riverside Department of Ethnic Studies, stand in firm solidarity with graduate students across the UC system in their demands for a cost of living adjustment (COLA) and the unconditional reinstatement of all UC Santa Cruz graduate student workers who were summarily terminated and disciplined in retaliation for their participation in a wildcat strike. We support the students currently engaged in a wildcat strike, as well as future strike actions that may be authorized by UAW Local 2865. We further express our continued support of the graduate students should they vote to authorize an Unfair Labor Practices (ULP) strike. We urge the UC to engage in good-faith collective bargaining directly

with UAW Local 2865 to avoid a system-wide graduate student strike that would severely impact every aspect of UC operations. We condemn the UC administration's use of militarized policing and violent force in responding to graduate student strike and protest actions. These measures demonstrate that the UCSC administration and UC Regents set little value on the health, wellbeing, and labor of precarious graduate student workers, particularly those vulnerable to deportation, detainment, or engaged in a wildcat strike, as well as future strike actions that may be authorized by UAW Local 2865. We further express our continued support of the graduate students should they vote to authorize an

Unfair Labor Practices (ULP) strike. imprisonment because of their citizenship status.

Graduate student workers are essential to the collective mission and success of the UC system. They should be granted compensation that recognizes their contributions to the educational and research mandates that maintain the UC as a preeminent public university system, in a state with some of the highest costs of living in the country. We urge the university to make every effort to curtail the ongoing and potential future disruptions this is causing for UC undergraduate and graduate teaching, as well as campus-wide research activities, by engaging in good-faith negotiations with the UC graduate students and UAW Local 2865 members, customers, or employees.

## GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

FRANK PEREZ



Frank Perez is a 5th year graduate student in the Ethnic Studies department who has seamlessly combines scholarship with community organizing. He is a leading organizer in the campaign to bring Ethnic Studies to K-12 programs in Inland Empire school districts. He has organized a number of undergraduate organizing clinics to help build ethnic studies curriculum for K-12 schools. His dissertation, "Why We Need Ethnic Studies: Fostering family, critical consciousness, transformation with students through culturally relevant education" examines the qualitative highlights how impacts of culturally relevant education on students of color.

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Jennifer Martinez won the Outstanding Teaching Assistant award for AY 2019-2020.

Frank Perez and Lawrence Lan were the inaugural recipients of the department's Edna Bonacich Award for their community engaged research.

Cynthia Martinez was selected for the GRMP next year to further develop her project, "Freedom is a Place: Abolitionist Possibilities in Migrant Women's Refusals."

Beth Kopacz won a dissertation fellowship from the American Association of University Women to complete her dissertation, "Molecular Longing: Adopted Koreans and the Navigation of Absence through DNA."

Jalondra Davis (Ph.D. '17) was awarded a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship at UC San Diego.

Iris Blake's publication "The Echo as Decolonial Gesture" will be published in Sound Acts, a special issue of the journal Performance Matters. She will be a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow at UCLA starting in September.

Ray Pineda's "Authoritative Voice and Mujerista Mentorship of Dissonant DJs Queering Cumbia Sonidera" will appear in Chicana/Latina Studies: The Journal of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social.

MT Vallarta's "Toward a Filipinx Method: Queer of Color Critique and QTGNC Mobilization in Mark Aguhar's Poetics" will be published with The Velvet Light Trap.

Brian Stephens, "Prissy's Quittin' Time: The Black Camp Aesthetics of Kara Walker" appears in *Open Cultural Studies*.



# ETHNIC STUDIES STATEMENT IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE UCR STUDENT DEMANDS TO ADMINISTRATION-CALL TO ACTION - JUNE 2020

Ethnic Studies, as a field and as a department, was born of struggles against racial violence, settler colonialism and imperialism. It was only institutionalized because of Third-World student-led organizing efforts to hold universities accountable for their histories of exclusion, discrimination, neglect and intellectual erasure. Drawing on generations of radical thinkers, we are committed to centering racial justice in our teaching, research and community engagement. We stand in solidarity with UCR Demands to Administration-Call to Action as well as the international Movement for Black Lives. While the current crisis exposes the violent realities of systemic anti-Black racism in the United States, we recognize that institutions of higher learning have reproduced and legitimized laws, policies and practices of anti-Blackness in society. We therefore call on UCR administration to not

only address the Demands' specific concerns regarding the current crisis, but also critically confront anti-Black racism in institutional policies, programs, practices, and all aspects of university life. The UCR Ethnic Studies Department has expanded its community engagement focus and is actively working to support existing and new-found grassroots organizations that seek to end anti-Black racism and racist systems of policing, criminalization, and detention. We call on the UCR administration to institute substantive policy changes coupled with sustainable commitments to academic resources to proactively combat systemic racism and support ongoing struggles for a better future for all peoples. This would include defunding UCPD and establishing community-led safety programs. The Ethnic Studies Department welcomes continued engagement.

with the student organizations that have created the UCR Demands to Administration in order to build strong collaborative relationships towards eradicating anti-Blackness within our department, university, communities, and in the world, as we amplify Black voices and Black scholarship in all programming. We call on the UCR administration to affirmatively commit greater institutional resources and funds toward these efforts under the guidance of Black students, staff, faculty, and community members. We further call on the UCR administration to adequately fund and support Black Studies by dramatically increasing the number of Ethnic Studies hires in Black Studies with the goal of educating our students and producing knowledge for the world to contribute towards the eradication of anti-Black racism.

## Undergraduate Organizing Clinics



UCR undergraduates participated in a number of organizing clinics to learn valuable organizing skills while supporting a more equitable society. Through Ethnic Studies Critical Antiviolence Research and Action, one clinic participated in the Free Liyah Birru campaign which was seeking the release of a woman facing deportation because she had defended herself against an abusive husband. Happily, Liyah Birru was released on bond as a result of the campaign. Another clinic formed an organization, On the Rise, which provides mentorship and scholarship for low-income students in Riverside. You can support their work at <https://ontheriseucr.wordpress.com/>. Students also participated in the K-12 Ethnic Studies clinic to organize for Ethnic Studies classes in K-12 schools in the Inland Empire.

## UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Vivienne Lu won the Wilmer and Velma Johnson Ethnic Studies Undergraduate Award. She also won the Sumi Harada Award for graduating joint major with highest GPA.

Violetta Price and Alana Pitman won the Dosan Ahn Chang-Ho Award for the Junior major with the best GPA

Christina Canales won the Maurice Jackson award for the graduating major with the highest GPA.

Jazmin Jefferson Faten won the Ernesto Galarza Award in recognition of community service.

Joaquin Malta won the Katherine Saubel award for promotion of cultural awareness.

Kyra Byers and Vivienne Lu won the Barnett Grier Award for promoting ethnic awareness.

Maribel Cruz and Sofia Rivas won the Sister Rosa Marta Zarate Award for community service.