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Fall 2010 Newsletter

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XICANA/O GRADUATE COUNCIL

San Jose State University

LETRAS Y MACANAS: October 26, 2010



Members of XGC at this Fall's Carne Asada Get-Together 9/04/10

Barrios and Ballots: Propositions, Measures, y el Chisme!

We would like to invite you to think about this for a minute: if voting, especially for local measures and propositions, holds real changes for our communities, good and bad, should we be involved in the process? We say, “¡Claro que sí!”

Obviously voting is not the only solution, but it is one way to ensure we are involved in the process of decision making for our communities. Our current system has made decisions without us that have hurt our women, children, poor, and communities of color. Changes are not always immediate, especially when it comes to changing the structure of how things get done. At the same time, we should not be so patient that we forget the promises made by suits

and ties with a plan for “change” or the local work we must continue to do in our communities. Like all things it is a delicate balance.

Please join us in helping maintain this balance by being informed about the upcoming measures and propositions and how they affect our communities. By doing this, you will make better decisions at the polling place and encourage others to be a part of the decision making process. We do not expect you to be out there campaigning to “Rock the Vote,” but instead do it the way that we know best: by talking and sharing with our families and friends. If you are really good you would get abuelita talking to everyone in the family about the issues on the ballots! Let us keep these beautiful ways alive within systems that do not always find

them valuable. The same system that hopes we do not use these ways to organize, because they know its power to change history. In doing that, we ensure our communities continue to thrive!

Welcome to the Fall 2010 semester XGC Newsletter, Barrios and Ballots: Propositions, Measures, y el Chisme. It will feature several pieces written by Chicana/o graduate students on the many upcoming propositions, local measures, news, stories, and of course some fun. So find the right spot, sit back, and see if we can send you some love through our words.

¡Pa' delante gente!



We criticize and separate ourselves from the process. We've got to jump right in there with both feet.

-Dolores Huerta

Giving kids clothes and food is one thing but it's much more important to teach them that other people besides themselves are important, and that the best thing they can do with their lives is to use them in the service of other people.

- Dolores Huerta

<http://www.doloreshuerta.org>

“Organize, Organize, Organize!”

By Ana Angel

On September 23, the legendary Dolores Huerta came to San Jose State. It was a moving experience as she encouraged students to create change by organizing. She stated that mobilization gives people power. What does this say for the Xicana/o Graduate Council?

We must work together to create change and realize our potential as people. We have the power in our hands, but we must organize for our community. XGC is creating change by providing a safe space for us Xicana/os in higher education. While, most views on activism are radically extreme: images of picket lines, walkouts, and sit-ins; we are activists too. We do work that seeks to engage students in critical thinking and social justice. We fight the Xicana/o educational pipeline that holds back our fellow brothers and sisters. We encourage retention. Through our Circulo de Estudios, we foster educational success.

We speak out! We say what is on our minds and create history through publications like this newsletter. During the 1970s, there were magazines like *Que Tal* and *La Voz Estudiantil*. We are bringing back la Raza voice through this newsletter, and we hope that you can contribute to this way of mobilizing. With Huerta's words in mind, XGC will not stop organizing! One way that we are applying what we learn in our graduate courses is by being part of this group. We practice the importance of giving back to our community. Huerta reminds us of the significance of unity. XGC is united with the Mexican American Studies department and other graduate departments where Raza are present. As members of XGC, we implore you to explore the ways you can apply what you learn to our common community.

Join our Circulo de Estudios, Social Outings, and meetings!! Let's put our power as people to work!

The Unfound Importance of the Minority Vote

By Luis Chacon

Among minorities, it is no secret that a significant percentage of eligible voters either do not register to vote or do not turn out to vote if registered. In 2008, voter turnout amongst Blacks and Latinos actually increased from 2004 (60.3% for Blacks and 47.2% for Latinos in 2004, against 65.2% and 49.9% in 2008, respectively). Essentially, three million more Latinos voted in 2008 than in 2004 (19.5 million versus 16.1 million) but when compared to the number of Whites that voted in 2008 (76.3%) the numbers of Latino and Black voter turnout can be discomfoting. Although it is important to increase the number of Black and Latino voters for presidential election, the reality is that Black and Latino votes may not be game changing. Yet, even though presidential elections may or may not be greatly impacted, the impact can surely be evident in state and local elections.



With the low number of Latino and Black voters, state legislators may not focus on minority interests and will either put low effort into obtaining the minority vote or will not gear their agendas towards addressing issues that affect Latinos and Blacks, and other minorities for that matter. For example, my hometown of Richmond, California belongs to the 7th congressional district. In addition to Richmond, this district includes other cities like Concord, Benicia, Martinez, Vallejo, and Vacaville. With the exception of the latter two, the other cities are relatively considered as communities of higher income and class than Richmond, Vallejo, and Vacaville. The end result with districts like this is that because communities of lower income and class--communities that may be overwhelmingly populated with minorities--do not turn out to vote as much as communities of high income--communities that are typically made up of a White majority--the voice and needs of minority communities may not be addressed. Representatives of the 7th district may instead cater to those that will vote for them, which essentially are more likely to be the White voters.

With minorities not voting in significant numbers, unfortunately, their voice may not be heard. Yet, from the visible increase in Black and Latino voters from 2004 to 2008, it's evident that perhaps, minorities simply need a reason to vote. The increase in 2008 may be attributed to a large number of reasons--high hype around the presidential election, the worsening economy, or interest in other particular issues. This momentum should be used to increase or at least maintain the numbers of minority voters. However, for this to be achieved, voter registration and turnout will obviously have to increase, but for that to happen, it is important that extensive outreach is performed. Many minorities and people in low-income communities do not vote for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of interest to lack of time. However, if outreach is performed, perhaps people may learn why they should vote and can be informed that they can vote by mail if they can't make it to the polls.

If minority voting turnout is increased, politicians would be foolish to ignore them in their political agenda and thus minority needs and issues would be more likely to be addressed. Further, it goes without saying that with a larger minority voting turnout, the power that minorities have cannot be ignored. It important for you, the reader, to become involved. Although it may now be too late to get the word out so people register to vote, there are many that are registered but may not be planning to vote. Think about putting your efforts into encouraging those people to exercise their right and get their voice heard. It is possible that naturalized US citizens may not even be aware that with their citizenship comes their right to vote, as was the case with my father. An effect can thus be had simply through having conversations with family, friends, and even strangers. A formal campaign isn't necessary for you to get involved. Simply help spread the word on why and how people should and can vote. If you work at a school or community center, take some time out of your day and get some voting guides out or have those conversations with people and encourage them to either vote or tell others to vote. If you're on face book or a social networking website, post a reminder for people to vote, or encourage people to ask you for help if they need guidance when voting. You'd be surprised that through these ways, a difference may be made. In this country, sometimes the only voice we have is our vote and if its not exercised, than we are simply remaining quiet.

It is that time again for us.....

By Robert Unzueta

It is that time again for us Chicana/o voters to elect a new governor for the state of California. This, for me, is an opportunity to undo the disaster of electing the Governor in 2003 and reelecting him in 2006. This election brings us Attorney General Jerry Brown squaring off with former CEO of eBay Meg Whitman, which like most elections I am eligible to participate in, I am not too thrilled with my options. And like past elections, I find the amount of slandering campaign ads more entertaining than my excitement over education reforms put forward by either candidate. We are again forced to choose between the lesser of two evils, which makes it easier to decide who will get my vote--the lesser of the two evils!

As a product of the public school system I understand first-hand the substandard education a majority of our students receive. Now, as an educator at the community college level, I see how the lack of services and preparation that I experienced has been passed on to the next generation of our students. This issue of second-rate education is something that is dear to my heart, and is always a hot topic for the gubernatorial debate. Based on my experience with our public education system and what I see now, it seems that both parties have done a lack luster job of addressing equitable educational access in our communities.

Again, this election year is no different and Meg Whitman stands because she has proposed educational reforms that contribute to our marginalization. According to Meg Whitman's website, "*Meg is opposed to bilingual education. She will defend Prop 227's English-immersion requirements. English is America's national language. Immigrants should be required to learn it as part of obtaining legal status in our country*" (www.megwhitman.com/platform). What? Are you serious? Let us break this statement down gente!

By defending Prop 227, which states that all instruction in public schools be in English, Meg is hurting students not proficient in English. English Language Learners have a limited time frame to become proficient, get tracked into special education, lower performing tracks, and/or get labeled as deficient. She plans to attack Brown bodies who come into the United States undocumented, through xenophobic

policies (also found on her website), attacking all of our children no matter their legal status.

Meg is against aiding our undocumented youth and assumes that only undocumented youth come into schools lacking proficiency in the English language. In doing so, she neglects to consider other students who are residents and citizens that grow up in bilingual or monolingual households speaking languages other than English. This is not an issue of legal status but rather a ploy to deny Brown youth (and others) access to resources that will eventually bar them from access to various spaces we have already been historically denied (i.e. higher education and voting). According to Meg, a child who is educated in our public school systems, becomes proficient in English, and excels in their academics would still be denied into society.

Meg's stance is not about protecting scarce resources or about trying to help English Language Learners become assimilated into the US. Her stance is simply racist. For Meg, it is not important that any Brown body learn English or be educated if all they are here to do is fuel the various industries that exploits their economic, physical, and social status. I am sure that when pondering the value of literacy and access to higher education in our community, all that comes to Meg's mind is: "Does the person who picks my fruit, cleans my office building at night, washes my car, and/ or provides me some other inexpensive service really need to know how to read?"

Meg Whitman is not interested in our educational needs as a community, and attempts to exploit legal status to maintain our community's limited access to education. Meg wants to turn back the clock in the state of California prior to Mendez v. Westminster, which was a time when it was constitutionally legal to keep Brown students separate from White students based on their future career options. Today, we are engaged in the same battle except the new battlefield is the upcoming gubernatorial race. But both Republicans and Democrats in the state of California who 'represent' our political interests have continuously pushed plans to limit our access to equitable education (i.e. Prop. 13, Prop. 187, Prop. 209). Regardless of who is running for governor, I urge all of us to take a hard look at each candidate, their policies proposed and passed, and what it all means for our gente.

Santa Clara County: The Case for Measure I

By Victor Vasquez

Did you know that California ranks last amongst all U.S. states in teacher to student ratios? According to the California Budgets Report on School Finance (2010), California averages “21.3 students for each teacher in 2009-10, more than 50 percent larger than the rest of the US, which averaged 13.8 students per teacher.” The California Budgets Report also states that California ranks second to last with an average of 809 students for each guidance counselor!



These overwhelming facts should be a concern for everyone in California, especially Chicana/o student. According to the article *Leaks in the Chicana and Chicano Educational Pipeline* by Tara J. Yosso and Daniel G. Solorzano, “Of the 100 Chicana and Chicano students who start at the elementary level, 54 of them drop out (or are pushed out) of high school and 46 continue on to graduate.” Too many young Chicana/o’s are pushed out of the educational process because of the lack of resources, academic guidance, and lack of engaging enrichment opportunities. Ultimately, this capitalist society expects Chicana/o youth to take up low wage service jobs (i.e McDonalds) or work in the underground economy (i.e slanging drugs). However, we should not take these numbers and/or expectations in a hopeless state of mind.

In San Jose, California, parents, school workers, and community organizers from the East Side Union High School District have launched ballot Measure I to combat the state budget cuts on education. On November 2nd, 2010, Santa Clara County residents will have a chance to improve the educational conditions of all students in the East Side Union High School District through Measure I.

If passed, Measure I also known as The East Side Union High School District Parcel Tax ballot, would generate a \$98 parcel tax per year for the next six years. This parcel tax would benefit the East Side Union High School District by raising nine million dollar annually for teacher/counselor salaries and college-prep classes in science, art, music, athletic. If the measure

does not pass, the East Side Union High School District would face a \$9.4 million deficit in 2011-2012.² Opponents to Measure I argue that specific parcel taxes will be used mainly for salary raises without needing to provide specific services.³ However, the official language of Measure I states that revenue produced by Measure I cannot be used “...for administrator salaries.”

Passing legislation like Measure I is needed at all levels of the state. California’s spending “per student trailed that of the rest of the country in 2008-09 and 2009-10 by more than \$2,400, a larger disparity than at any point in the past 40 years in inflation-adjusted dollars.”⁴ Passing Measure I can help us begin to address these economic disparity impacting working class Chicana/o students.

Yet focusing only on the budget technicalities of Measure I divert us from the human element and impact to Chicana/o students in San Jose, California. In a district where Chicano/a youth constitute approximately 48% (12,592) of all high school students,⁵ **a meager 370 (20%) Chicano/a students will graduate with the UC/CSU required courses.** In contrast, white students make up about 10.1 % of high school student population yet 34% will graduate with the UC/CSU required courses.⁶ Evidently, there are gasping institutional disparities in the educational outcomes. While Measure I does not change the structure leaks or problems affecting our Chicana/o youth, the nine million dollars generated yearly could restore the *basic* resources needed by all East Side Union students. Revenue created through Measure I can be used to hire additional counselors, maintain high quality teachers, maintain art, sports, and music programs.

While Measure I can be labeled as a “band-aid” solution, we need all the “band-aid” solutions until we create systematic change! If one is truly concerned about the educational equity of low-income Chicana/o communities we must begin to invest our local dollars in our children’s education. We must therefore vote “Yes” on Measure I. However, if Measure I does not pass, Chicano/as in San Jose must begin to think beyond the ballot and move towards more drastic methods of educational change.

1 <http://www.esuhd.org>

2 <http://noeastsidetax.org>

3 <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us>

4 <http://data1.cde.ca.gov>

5 <http://riniart.org> (image)

Hasta La Vista Arnold!

By Juan Pablo Mercado

It is very important that we consider the experience and track record of the two candidates this November when we vote for our next Governor. Now more than ever our community needs a candidate that is committed to k-12 education, higher education, and meaningful and thoughtful immigration reform and believes in the guiding principles of social justice. As we anticipate and brace ourselves for a new regime change in Sacramento, I wanted to give proper credit to our beloved out-going governor. Here are just a few, believe me just a few, of the highlights (or low lights) of his two terms as governor

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed legislation that would have allowed Mexican-American victims of the depression-era deportation campaign (repatriation) to seek damages for being forcibly sent back to Mexico. Advocates of the bill estimate that some 400,000 Californians of Mexican descent were sent back to Mexico during a nearly two-decade period beginning at the onset of the Depression in 1929. Senate Bill 1765, by Sen. Martha Escutia, D-Norwalk, would have allowed victims and relatives to seek damages through 2016, extending a statute of limitations that expired long ago

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger mandated that state worker pay be reduced to the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour in a drastic attempt to force the Legislature to pass the state's budget. The governor unveiled a revised budget plan that shreds a vital safety net for some 1.4 million needy Californians: the CalWORKS program. In part, the program allows single mothers to find childcare while they go to school to learn new skills. One million CalWORKS beneficiaries are children. Of the remaining 400,000, 75 percent are women, most of them former victims of domestic violence

The governor vetoed a measure that would have forced hospitals to disclose infection and death rates. He vetoed the bill—deemed to be one of the most effective and least expensive ways to improve patient care—despite having previously endorsed the bill's approach. The California hospital lobby, one of the most powerful interests in the state, opposed these disclosures on the grounds that they might lead to “frivolous” lawsuits. Schwarzenegger receives the maximum yearly contribution of \$44,600 from the hospital association.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a watchdog group, have included Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in a report on the worst state leaders in the country. Schwarzenegger was dinged for ethics violations including nepotism, using non-profit and campaign funds for personal enrichment and maintaining overly cozy relationships with special interests. CREW highlighted charges that Schwarzenegger “relentless[ly]” pressured the Air Resources Board to be less aggressive in its regulation of greenhouse gases, eventually firing former head of the board, Robert Sawyer. The same governor who has happily accepted laurels for the state's environmental leadership was actually aggressively lobbying against it.

“HASTA LA VISTA...MEXICALIFORNIA...”



Summary of State Propositions

Since we were not able to cover all the propositions and local measures on the ballot, we decided it would be best to at least provide short summaries of them. Please make sure to do extra research on how they may impact our communities and get the people you love who make up those communities involved in making wise decisions!

Proposition 19 would allow people 21 years and older to possess, transport, and cultivate one ounce of marijuana and hemp for personal use. Local governments (City and County) would regulate and tax marijuana and hemp in business transactions. Marijuana and hemp would be decriminalized in a small way.

Proposition 20 would amend the California constitution to allow the Citizen Redistricting Commission to determine and draw the districts for the U.S. House of Representatives. Currently, the Citizen Redistricting Commission determines and draws districts for California's Senate, Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts (all these entities represent us and make decisions for us in Sacramento). This proposition would ask the Citizen Redistricting Commission to also work on and decide the districts for our representatives in Washington.

Proposition 22 would stop the state of California from asking local governments to borrow their tax revenues that fund transportation and/or local government projects and services. It would amend California's constitution and restrict the state's ability to use and borrow from local and state tax revenues to balance the budget.

Proposition 24 would change a recent law that allows businesses to use losses for tax breaks, share tax credits, and lower their taxable income. Businesses would be taxed the way they were prior to the 2008 and 2009 changes. California would receive roughly \$1.3 billion in revenue to use for the state.

Proposition 25 would amend California's constitution to reduce the vote required to pass the budget from 2/3 to a simple majority. It would also put a hold on

legislators getting paid until a budget is passed. This proposition is intended to help with timely passage of the yearly budget.

Proposition 26 would amend California's state constitution and require a 2/3 vote to propose new fees or increase fees. Currently, fees require only a simple majority vote to pass and taxes require a 2/3 vote to pass. This proposition would make how fees get voted on like how taxes get voted on. But, not all fees would be affected. The ones affected are ones related to public services like health, the environment, and other societal or economic services.

Proposition 27 would amend California's constitution to return the redistricting process to the legislature instead of the Citizen Redistricting Commission. Every 10 years districts need to be redrawn to make sure everyone in that district is fairly represented. In the past, legislators had the job of drawing districts with little input from citizens. In 2008, that law was changed so that citizens would be a part of the process. This proposition would make legislators the people who redraw districts again.



Preparing for Graduate School: Four Simple Steps

By: Isidoro Guzman

Know What type of Program you want to Pursue

Once you have decided to pursue a Graduate degree your next step needs to focus on what program you are interested in. It is important to remember that as you move up the educational ladder so does the specialization found within your studies, try and find a program that will cater to your specific academic and/or research interest. College counselors are an invaluable resource and you should take advantage of their knowledge of the application process.

Find a Program that Best Fits your Specific Interests

Every school and program are different so it is imperative that once you know what you want to study, the next step is to make sure that program specializes and corresponds to your areas of interest. For example, if you are interested how gender and race affects women's upward social mobility, then you would want to be sure to choose a program with professors who specialize in race and gender studies. Your applications will be read by actual professors who need some sort of evidence that you will be able to make an academic connection to their own work.

Start Building Social Networks

One of the most important things one can do to better their chances for Graduate admission is to develop relationships with their undergraduate professors. It is never too early to start building those social networks that can be crucial to

getting letters of recommendations. An easy and effective way to do this is by taking the time to visit them during their office hours.

Another key thing to keep in mind is the fact that many professors have professional relationships with professors from other universities. Seeing your initiative and drive can absolutely lead to a personal endorsement and better your chances of being admitted.

Graduate school programs receive at times hundreds of applications and admissions essays. A great way to separate your self apart from those hundreds of essays is to actually visit the campus ahead of time. Email the department head and ask to meet with them during your visit. This allows department chairs to not only see your genuine interest in their program but also lets them see the person behind the application.

Writing the Admissions Essay

This essay will be one of the most important essays you have ever written. This portion of the application process must also be looked upon as an area where one can interject personal experiences or anecdotes. This section also allows you to open up and reveal your passion for whatever area of study you are interested in. Many times personal experiences, positive or negative, are the driving force



behind what has pushed you to study a given subject or field of study. Therefore, you want to give the admissions panel a good sense of who you are and what lead you to your current state. Equally vital to stress is how this program is not only a great academic/professional fit but also how this program will help shape the person you strive to become.

Although this whole process can be a very time consuming and stressful, remember to take your time and enjoy the process. This is a great way to reflect upon your life and can prove to be very therapeutic when it comes time to make that next big step in your evolution as an academic.

Get started as early as possible, it is NEVER too early to start preparing yourself for Grad school.

The Ballot or...¡No Pasaran!

By Jose Garcia

November 2 is turning out to be a decisive election for the country, and for Raza, in particular. What is at stake this coming election is the possibility of the most extreme and reactionary sectors of the right of taking over the House of Representatives, and eventually the Senate and White House in 2012. This would open the doors to a return to the obscure years of the Bush era but turned up a notch.

This is not an endorsement for any Democratic Party candidate. It is a realistic assessment of the gravity of the current situation. Staying home and not voting because of ideological reasons is an act of irresponsibility and lack of compromise. Taking the road of righteousness and refusing to vote for "the lesser of two evils" will grant a victory to the extreme right. Realistically, we are not in a situation to stay home on November 2 or to break with the two-party system. As of now there is no visible organized national movement that is ready to challenge the two-party system.

The rise of right wing extremism in government as evidenced in the passage of laws such as SB 1070, gubernatorial candidates like Meg Whitman who have financed their campaigns with their own checkbooks, or even better, the rise of candidates supported by the Tea Party, requires that everyone goes out and vote against this type of candidate. Not doing so will have an effect that will shape national and local policies to come. In short, this election will shape the national and local policies that will affect everyone.

November 2 is battle between the extreme right and the peoples' movement. It is a battle that will be fought in the ballot box. Due to the proto-fascist rhetoric of the likes of Glenn Beck, this election is turning out to be an anti-fascist struggle. A defeat in the ballot box will send the extreme right the message that No pasaran! The message of hate and the possibility of dismantling what is left from the victories of the Civil Rights Revolution of the 1960s no pasara. For Raza, it is a time for unity and for those that can to exercise their right to vote and perhaps provide the decisive weight in the balance of power. Let's give the extreme right the boot!



In 1964, Malcolm X made a speech in which he pleaded African Americans to exercise their right to vote. He stated that African Americans could be the swing vote in upcoming elections. Malcolm explained, "(when) Black people have a bloc of votes of their own, it is left up to them to determine who's going to sit in the White House and who's going to be in the dog house." Our vote, as Raza, then becomes crucial on November 2 as it could decide the outcome of this election. But more importantly, showing to the polls in record numbers will also send the extreme right that their anti-immigrant discourse no pasara.

We marched for immigrant rights, now we vote against those that proselytize an anti-immigrant, which is the same as saying anti-Mexican, message.

Our vote is our weapon in this struggle!

Proposition 21: State Parks

By Ricardo Agrendao

California's Proposition 21 asks the voters whether we should add an additional \$18 vehicle license surcharge (a fee) in order to get funds to maintain California state parks and support programs that try to save wildlife environments. A "yes" vote would allow this extra fee to be added annually to the license fee we pay when we get our "tags" at the DMV. A "no" vote would not let this fee be charged.



Those of us who are lucky enough or able to get out of town and go to the mountains or other state parks will like this because all vehicles that pay into this fee will be admitted for free. The parks, however, can still charge for camping and tours. That still takes a little off the cost when you want to go with friends and family to enjoy nature a little bit. And, it may even encourage us to want to go! What about those of us who do not visit state parks regularly? It may not be worth it to pay an extra fee a year for something that is hard to support during these hard economic times.

There is always the overlooked issue of who gets to use state parks, or mother nature altogether. Us poor city dwellers, and even some poor rural dwellers, almost never get the opportunity to get up and go to a state park. The biggest reason is because we do not live reasonably near them (reasonably meaning that they are not too far from home and will not cost us that much time and money). Of course this is not the case for everyone, but access to parks and nature more often than not becomes an issue of access for poor communities of color.

Another part of this proposition that has been overlooked is how the money will be spent. In other words, who will be recruited for the jobs that will be created? If you go to the California State Parks website, you will see that they are hiring for different positions in parks maintenance and conservation programs. Our unemployed family members and friends could benefit from these newly created jobs. The problem is that there is nothing written anywhere in the proposition that says it will recruit from poor communities of color struggling with unemployment.

Finally, the proposition does not have anything written about preserving Sacred Sites. Many of us know

that our antepasados (ancestors) were stewards to many of the lands we live on and enjoy today. Through a long history of broken promises and genocide, however, our Native brothers and sisters have been forced onto reservations. Their ancestral lands, especially places that are as sacred as any church, have been disrespected and built upon or now part of state parks. Conservation programs should also include taking care of and paying respect to these special places that remind of us the beauty of nature and of being a part of it.

There may be great benefits to funding California's state parks. It could make them easier to access and create new jobs. They may also be better maintained and we may also do good work preserving the environment for our children. If this proposition passes, however, we must be ready and willing to ensure that our communities benefit from it directly. Ways we can do this:

- Let family and friends know that if they have a car with current DMV "tags" that they have free access to state parks.
- Let your family and friends who are looking for jobs know about the openings with California State Parks.
- Organize with family and friends around ensuring poor communities of color have access to state parks, jobs in parks and conservation, and that Sacred Sites found in state parks get respected by being included in conservation efforts.

Let us make sure our communities get the full benefits of this, and any, proposition whether they pass or not.

Proposition 23

By Alberta A. Jimenez

With so much money funneled into smart television campaigns it can be difficult at times to decipher between what's good and bad for California. Proposition 23 is a no brainer. For starters, it is a proposal by two Texas companies: Valero and Tesoro, that want to suspend clean energy and air pollution standards.

Each year air pollution contributes to the premature deaths of 19,000 Californians and costs taxpayers millions in medical expenses. Can we really afford to allow two Texas oil companies to reduce our state to a cough of premature death and high medical



bills? Proposition 23 is bad for public health. The fact that this bill is sponsored by two oil companies is a big tip off of the motivation of the bill's sponsors.

The Union of Concerned Scientists Citizens and Scientists for the Environment Solutions sum it up best, "The California Air Resources Board, the agency mandated to

implement the law, is on track to meet the law's requirement to reduce the state's global warming pollution to 1990 levels by 2020. The agency is now developing a package of clean energy regulations, such as a renewable energy standard and low carbon fuel standard, to cut emissions by about 12 percent from today's levels in the next decade".

Help California to breathe easy. Vote NO! on Proposition 23. Don't allow Texas oil companies to repeal our state's landmark clean energy policies.

Proposition 22

By Robert M. Gutierrez

"YOU MUST CHOOSE!"

Why must someone die because of me?
 the hands I squeeze are slippery
 my grip is dangling
 beyond is gone
 only two pairs of eyes
 staring
 each brother wishing the other will die

my left hand shakes
 my friend implores me to remember
 together we rode the bus
 together we drank fresh water
 together we safely walked our neighborhood
 like a firefighter
 we put the fires out
 How can I lose my local friend?

If I say NO
 There will be shit everywhere.
 my right hand is a state
 of crisis
 my friend implores me to remember
 my children's education
 the funds given for my college degree
 the healthcare for my family
 the food stamps
 the elderly care
 the hope when I had none
 How can I let my state friend die?
 If I say YES
 my community will be treated like shit.

"YOU MUST CHOOSE!"
 My muscles strain to hold onto both
 Greatly I feel the Recession

of my friends
 dangling over the abyss
 slipping into fear
 two pairs of eyes desperately implore me
 to kill
 the other
 Shit.



Without Reservations: Semester at Sea with Ozzie

By Osvaldo Mendoza

At one time or another, when we tell our family and friends that we are pursuing a graduate degree in Mexican American Studies, the common question that is asked of us is: "What do you plan on doing with that degree?" I'm currently on a journey around the world and I'm going to tell you what I'm doing with my degree as a staff member on the 2010 Semester at Sea Fall Voyage. This is an opportunity for me to see thirteen countries in three continents over the length of one semester. There are over six hundred undergraduate students from various institutions and faculty members from various disciplines on board. I have engaged in many "interesting" conversations with various individuals in a wide array of topics, which has been a truly educational experience for them and me.

There have been many instances where I heard students utter comments without knowing that those comments are stereotypical and racist. I have heard faculty members state pejorative statements about various ethnic groups without even thinking twice. There have been both subtle and overt occasions of prejudice on the ship. I witnessed situations where race played a role in student conduct because the outcome negatively impacted a student of color. I've witnessed administrative leaders and faculty give culturally insensitive and sexist presentations about upcoming destinations. Yet despite all of this negative energy, this voyage hasn't been all bad. These experiences have been enlightening and they motivate me to continue the struggle of reaching and educating the ignorant.

The streets and the public universities of California have provided me with the skill set necessary to combat the racist and sexist sentiment on the ship. The professors at San Jose State University, for example, enhanced and developed my critical consciousness by pushing and challenging my thought process. The graduate coursework I completed has prepared me to handle life's obstacles with confidence. The conversation and discussions with my classmates gave me insight on how to deal with life's social, political, and economic ills and how to respond to all of the -isms that we face as communities of color. I found that teachable moments are everywhere on the ship. And, as a former high school teacher, I also found that working

with college students is a lot like working with high school freshmen. They are both groups of people beginning to form their ideas about the world and you can make a considerable difference in their life if you reach them early enough.

I have pro-actively engaged undergraduate students in discussions when they make bigoted remarks or when their actions clearly display a heightened sense of entitlement and privilege. My objective is confronting their prejudicial way of thinking and challenging it by "checking 'em" in such an "articulate" manner that they feel ashamed of themselves and/or of their actions. I thank my graduate work for developing a hypersensitive sense that allows me to quickly identify culturally insensitive, sexist, and racist comments. More importantly, my degree equipped me with the tools, vocabulary, and tactics needed to engage in the intellectual warfare in defense of my community of color.

I have also challenged a few of the older voyagers on the ship. One lady asked what my profession back home was and she seemed shocked and bewildered to know that I was a high school teacher. She responded, "you don't look like a teacher." Rather than brushing off her comment, I engaged her in a conversation because I knew there was more to her comment than meets the eye. After making her feel a bit awkward and guilty of her privileged thinking, she left knowing "not to judge a book by its cover again!"

There are some voyagers on the ship who are culturally aware and critically conscious of issues affecting communities of color. I have made alliances with these voyagers. Yet, we are few and far between to have a critical mass on the ship. Earning a graduate degree in Mexican American Studies is a worthwhile undertaking as the department places incredible value on knowledge and knowledge-creation so that we can transform the world in our own respective ways and means. We are encouraged to put our theory into practice. In the high school and/or the university classroom. Through our music, art, or films. Running a youth or cultural center. When we acquire positions of power, we must make just and equitable policies and question policies already in place that are not just and equitable.

MAS NEWS: Important MAS Dept. Dates & Info...

By MAS FACULTY

We want to encourage all MAS students to be involved in the department in any way that is meaningful and possible for you. You all can help out with undergraduate classes, attend faculty meetings (the next one is 12/1) or join us at the MAS lunches/dinners (11/3, 5:00pm, 4th St Pizza, and 12/8, 1:30pm, Cafe Pomegranate).

The MAS Graduation Ceremony this Spring will be 5/26 at 6pm in the Cultural Heritage Center. We always appreciate help from those who aren't graduating. Those who are graduating need to submit the **"Application for Award of Master's Degree"** **by February 14.**

We'll be doing recruitment for the Fall of 2011 soon. The application deadline is March 4. Tell your friends and prim@s.

We're hoping to hire a new tenure-track professor in the near future. We'll be putting in a request next week.

We hope all MAS students are planning to attend NACCS in the spring (March 30-April 2). Let us know how things are going for you in the program!

~MAS Faculty

What is XGC? Xicana/o Graduate Council

The Mission of the Xicana/o Graduate Council (XGC) is to create a community based on social justice, engaged in critical thinking, and raising conciencia to promote a safe space where action and dialogue can be explored.

-XGC Constitution



Thanks for reading!

Contact information:
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Become our facebook friend! Search "Xicana Graduate Council"