

# ByDESIGN

An Online Journal of Exceptional Achievement

Dan  
Esparza

**TGE's Ingenious  
Top Down  
Technology  
Delivery System**

**COVID-19:  
A New Reality for  
Design Professions**

**For Graduates, A  
Time Like Never  
Before**

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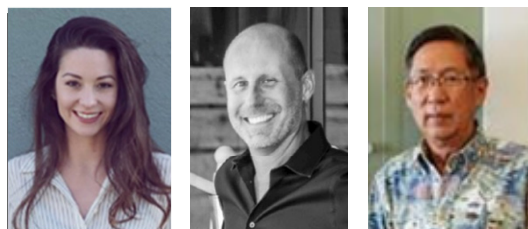
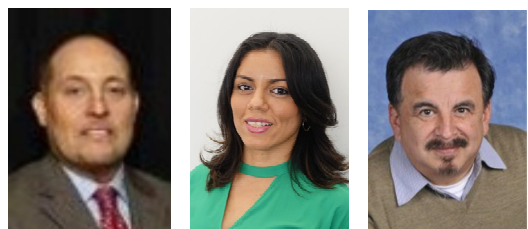
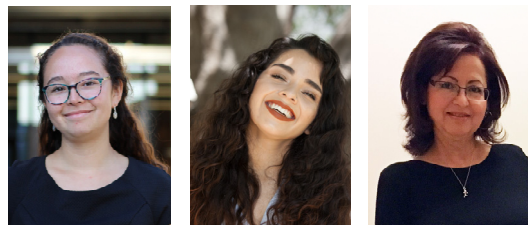
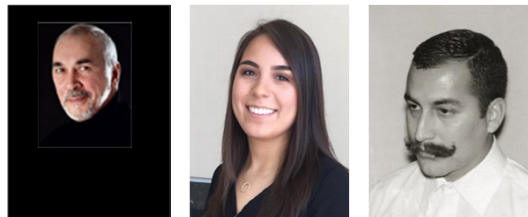
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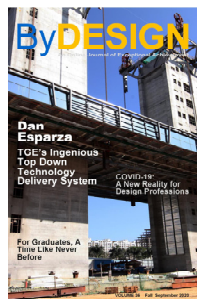
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Adan Novoa

### ON THE COVER

This is a \$112-million, 10-story, 621,000-sq-ft office building in Bangalore, India constructed employing the TGE top-down building system. Photo courtesy of TGE, LLC.

## Building a New Model for a New Normal

Rogelio Roy Hernández

Volume 36

September 2020



Buckminster Fuller, American architect, systems theorist, author, designer, inventor, and futurist once said: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

As this issue goes out, our "existing reality" presents unprecedented challenges that will beget formidable impediments to how we live, work and play. The future is sure to never be like the past.

As California forest fires rage up and down the state, a pandemic ravages the country, the nation confronts economic contraction – and racial justice is once again in heated deliberation. The present reality will test the resilience of new educational, societal, professional and economic models. This issue of BD focuses on how creative minds are responding to adversity, and the new models they are building to foster continued growth, progress and extraordinary achievement.

In his article, "For Graduates, a Time Like Never Before," **Charles Higuera, FAIA**, offers insights on changes in design professions and the construction industry, and offers positive counsel on how graduating students can adjust to that change.

The cover story spotlights **Dan Esparza**, founding executive of TGE, a global leader in high-rise construction projects. We learn about a man with humble beginnings, imbued with an entrepreneurial spirit and strong work ethic as a boy by his father - co-founder of CASA at UC Berkeley. Inspired to "dream, create and build," Dan went on to establish himself as leader in the global construction industry applying a new

model to high-rise construction reducing delivery time and costs, enhancing ROI while improving sustainability.

The "Community Design" article by **Itzel Torres** highlights the innovative work of **James Rojas'** Latino Urbanism framework, which weaves research, urban planning, advocacy and art. He has a new model for exposing and mentoring Latino youth on urban planning.



Dan Esparza, Founding Principal, TGE Construction

In the "Design and Development" article, **Oswaldo Lopez, AIA**, speaks with world-class design firms (**G70, AB design studio, and Rebecca Walker Interiors**) on how COVID has impacted their design practices, and their new operating model.

In the "CASA Alumni at Work" **Aymee Barajas** speaks with **Joyceline B. Martinez** and **Adan Novoa**, Cal and CASA alumni. These young professionals represent the best and brightest from Latino communities who are building a new base of accomplished design professionals. And **Michelle Hernández** introduces the new CASA (Chicanx/Latnix Architectural Student Association) board in the "CASA Now!" article. These students are pursuing an education while furthering a new model of access, equity and racial justice – employing a new virtual educational model.

Stanford Professor Albert Bandura once said: "In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life." As Mother Nature makes old models obsolete, as designers, we must respond with creativity and resilience to build new models. Adelante!

## Perspective America's Apartheid Justice System

On August 29, 2020 the front page story of the LA Times covered an event which took place on August 29, 1970. "The Chicano Moratorium – 50 Years Later."

On that day, 20,000 Chicanos converged on East LA to hold the Chicano Moratorium, lending their voice against the Vietnam War. The biggest demonstration of Mexican Americans in U.S. history protested the disproportionate number of Latinos dying in the war. It started as a peace march but turned into the biggest Latino rebellion in Los Angeles since the Watts uprising five years earlier.

Chicanos had experienced police brutality before, but never at this scale. When LA County Sheriff's brutality stormed Laguna Park, indiscriminately clubbing men, women and children, firing tear gas - - widespread chaos erupted. Patrol cars and buildings were set on fire. When it was over, three were dead, including civil rights activist and reporter for the Los Angeles Times, Ruben Salazar.

50 years later systemic racism and police brutality persists, illustrating America's apartheid<sup>1</sup> justice system. (The story to the right of the cover story, which read: "Insider speaks on Deputy Gang," is a story of white supremacist sheriff gangs inside the LA County Sheriff's Department.) The latest examples are the disparate treatment of Jacob Blake and Kyle Rittenhouse. The fight for equality continues – oralé!



<sup>1</sup> "A policy or system of segregation or discrimination on the grounds of race."

## For Graduates, A Time Like Never Before

Charles A. Higuera, FAIA



It's abundantly clear to all of us that as we overcome COVID, life will be very different from before this nasty virus wreaked havoc on us. For new graduates in the next 2-3 years, your career track will be greatly challenged. COVID has dramatically diminished our national state, and local economies.

What that means for the design and construction industries are fewer projects occurring in the governmental, institutional and corporate sectors. Project types that may be exceptions to the downturn are housing and healthcare - they are generally seen as essential investment towards society's pressing needs in both regards. Another project type that may be less affected is private residential - there is abundant financial capacity among many unaffected by the diminished economies that the rest of us confront. Market sectors are in upheaval as the characteristics that defined them are changing.

Design firms are now re-examining their practice, e.g. their desired markets, quality of office environment, and necessary staff. Reconciling these to successfully align with the COVID and post-COVID era is key to survival. As a new graduate, choosing your career path for the next 5-7 years must consider this dynamic environment. Even with a vaccine or beneficial therapies that may emerge in the next 6-12 months, you must apply a heightened attention to the changing landscape of a career in the design industry.

### City, Suburb or Country?

Shelter-in-place and working from home has created a sea change in attitude of what is sensible for an employer to offer as employee accommodation. Heretofore, it was an exception to the rule - during COVID *it's been the rule* for those who could do so. For the foreseeable future it will remain the norm. Significantly, staff productivity has remained high. In my conversation with my public sector colleagues and with many architecture firm executives in the private sector, there has been no worrisome drop-off in the expectations of staff. The underpinning of this has been the technology we have at our disposal without which the design industry and many others, would have lurched to a disastrous stop. It's now common knowledge that working from home is acceptable to the company, whether home is 2 miles away or 200 miles. A government agency human resources officer told me that she was stunned at how readily the government accepted working from home as it was nearly heretical to have imagined it ever happening.

This concession in both public and private sectors is an amazing opportunity. If it continues (and all indications are that it will) lifestyle choices that were not previously available will abound. It will be a boon to those who seek to afford a home away from the expensive real estate of the city, even if they must commute into the office once

“ How our society expresses its vision of the future is now - both daunting and exciting - and you are at its threshold. Be wise, be kind, and be strategic. ”

Charles Higuera, FAIA

or twice a week. Since being in the office for the foreseeable future will be dramatically reduced for most, there will be no negative ramifications associated with not being present in the office more often - because no one else will be!



### Impact To Your Career

First and foremost, cities are not going away and neither is the abundant professional opportunities typically found there. Cities have been throughout history the places where the most innovation and cultural expression occurs, and where the professional realm thrives, accordingly they are where very large numbers will continue to seek to work and live.

But I predict that cities will lose population to the suburbs and the countryside for the previously mentioned reasons, helped by the fact that current low mortgage rates are driving a suburban buying frenzy. The impact of closed (never to return) businesses and relocated corporations will cause a drop in the tax base of cities, and elected and appointed officials will need to seriously examine as never before how that revenue is spent to serve the greatest number of residents well. This will obligate the fiscal prudence that has been sorely lacking in many places and is essential to establishing a more sustainable future.

Employers seeking to respond to the new paradigms that sustain their enterprises may seek to establish a decentralized and less costly approach to doing business, for example in lieu of a single primary city office venue, instead accept staff at suburban or even rural locations where they can provide a right-sized touchstone place for employees who've chosen to work far away from the city. As regards to your preparedness and attractiveness as a new hire, the same expectations you've known remain true. What is different is that you must assess a whole new array of circumstances and choose your prospective employer *for how well they appear to be charting their own future*. The most promising opportunities will be with firms that are very evident and forthcoming in the evolution of their business and social agenda.

*We live in interesting times* and not just because of COVID. The pressing need for better environmental stewardship remains as urgent as ever, and now in an echoing of the

tumult of the 1960's, we must respond to the resurgent demand for social and economic justice sprung from the BLM movement. How our society expresses its vision of the future is now - both daunting and exciting - and you are at its threshold. Be wise, be kind, and be strategic.

Charles Higuera, FAIA

Acting Director of Project Management  
at San Francisco Public Works

## Dan Esparza, Principal TGE's Ingenious Top Down Technology Delivery System

Roy R. Hernández



Dan Esparza is truly an exceptional individual, Latino, professional and executive.

Imbued with a generational entrepreneurial spirit, coupled with intelligence and a fervent work ethic learned at a young age from his father, his professional achievements in the construction industry have been nothing short of extraordinary.

Mr. Esparza established his first construction company at the tender age of 26. He consistently and methodically grew his subsequent enterprises to execute larger federal construction projects. At this point in his professional trajectory, he is part of a rare species: a Latino sitting as member of an executive team in a major corporation. He is a remarkable example and role model for the next generation Latinos in the construction industry.

### Tell us a little about your background.

That is always a fun and nostalgic journey. I have been in construction so long it is all I know – passed down from my father, I guess it's in my blood; however, I feel more like a banker or finance executive or corporate attorney than a builder at this stage of my career.

I come from a long line of entrepreneurs - my paternal grandfather, grandmother, and both my parents; each has inspired me to dream, create and build something larger than myself. Post WWII my grandfather was a successful business operator as a self-employed entrepreneur and restaurateur until his death in 2006. My grandmother created the first non-profit healthcare system targeted to migrant farmworkers and their families in the 1970's in Northern California centered in Solano County, providing free healthcare for the largest underserved population of the State's community until it closed in the 1990's.

My father, Bob Esparza, was probably my single largest inspiration and guiding force in my career. For those who do not know, Bob, or Robert Esparza, is one of the founding members of CASA and Graduate of UC Berkeley School of Architecture. I remember running the halls with my brother as a child during his time at the University. Berkeley will always have fond memories for me.



**Dan Esparza, Principal and Co-founder**  
TGE, LLC

My father loved architecture; however, I suspect his desire to get paid (with a wife and two small children to feed) outweighed his penchant to design and he gravitated to his second love – the creativity and ability to build (*that and the money*). Therein the Genesis of **Esparza Construction** (and Esparza Environmental Services) and the start of my passion and career in the AEC space.

To be frank, I have worked in this industry for as long as I can remember. In the early years – it was for free – to be blunt it was a family expectation. My dad loved to roll in the 'life lessons' – as my brother and I were never paid; his favorite saying was "what does the name say on the door of the truck....."Esparza Construction", You own this – you're not getting paid, you eat every night with a roof over your head." We would complain at the time – but looking back, those were valuable life lessons and I thank him for it every day.

There are too many stories to list, and they all bring a smile to my face.

After graduating from UC Davis – I worked for a large engineering firm for a short stint and then went into business for myself in 1996 at the age of 26.



“ I come from a long line of entrepreneurs - my paternal grandfather, grandmother, and both my parents; each has inspired me to dream, create and build something larger than myself. ”

**Far Left:** Bob Esparza and his two-year old son, Dan, enjoying a fun moment.

**Left:** Bob Esparza with his father.

## Dan Esparza, Principal TGE's Ingenious Top Down Technology Delivery System Continued

The business was a civil engineering construction, general construction Design/Build firm, focused primarily on Federal Contracting. We built that company for 12 years and I then moved on to leadership roles within Alaska Native Corporations (ANC). Working from a home base in Seattle, Washington, as President, worked through building subsidiaries for corporate development for construction operations for large ANCs – focused primarily on Federal Department of Defense contracting, but also commercial and development programs. Through those years, we developed programs throughout the United States, building a program outside Alaska into the lower 48 as well as international US Embassy development/operations.

Working throughout the United States and various international projects has been incredibly rewarding, I have had the opportunity to work with extremely talented people.

**You matriculated from UC Davis with a BS in Applied Sciences, in Environmental Biology and Management. What led to your career in construction management?**

At UC Davis – my focus was more on my tailored approach to environmental sciences related to the support and work I could assist with our family business. Esparza Construction had a division, Esparza Environmental Services, for remediation, at the time I was evaluating a degree based on civil and environmental sciences to support construction and operations.

At that time, UC Davis did not specifically have a program for Environmental Engineering as the degree was still new. The BS Environmental Management was sufficient for my approach to environmental services; knowing I was always continuing with construction and operations.

**In 2009 you were a founding member of Sealaska Constructors targeting Federal Construction projects. What experience prepared you for that entrepreneurial move and position as Executive/General Manager?**

I formed an 8(a) construction company in California in 1996 with a partner from Portland Oregon. That company was in operation from 1996 to 2008, then moved to the Pacific Northwest to begin developing ANCs and growing larger DoD program work.

**As President of an ANC you were responsible for overall company operations and development. What were the most significant projects carried out?**

The most memorable were the military construction program work – that were provided as Design/Build and for rapid response in support our military warfighters and their families, both for quality of life facilities, but also for critical support services. However, the most significant were the ones that had the greatest impact to our country. Those were probably the most memorable. The ones that were either mission critical to the Pentagon or had direct impact to troop security overseas or for intelligence reasons.



“ TGE has pioneered the TD delivery method and we continue to improve on structural innovations for Tall Building programs. In short, this delivery methodology and proprietary engineering model allows for the construction of an entire mid/high-rise tower where all floors can be built safely at ground level and no worker needs to be more than 6 feet off the ground. ”

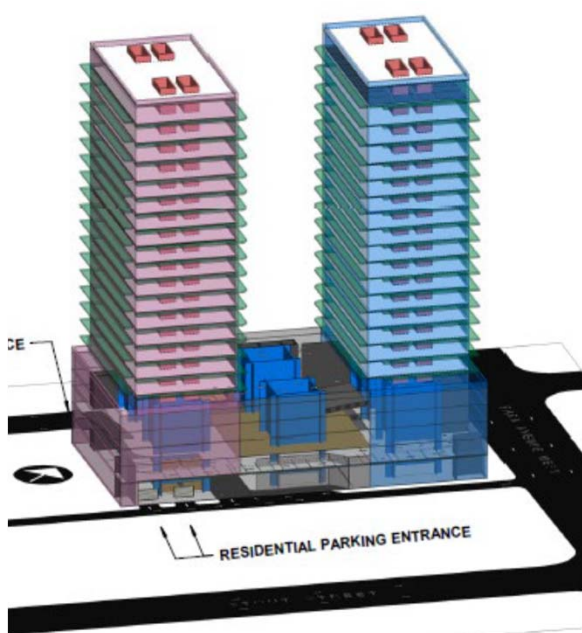
## Dan Esparza, Principal TGE's Ingenious Top Down Technology Delivery System Continued

Specific to that would be the construction of the MQ-9 Unmanned Drone SOC Whiteman AFB in Missouri, which had mission critical applications and rapid response requirements for a construction completion deadline. The project was completed in 120 days expedited delivery schedule required completion to support troop movement in Afghanistan with fly over support

**You are a founding principal of TGE (Thornton, Grillo, Esparza) Construction, LLC, established with Dr. Charles H. Thornton and Jeffery Grillo. Can you describe The Top Down System and its benefits?**

We are immensely proud of this this revolutionary system. It is truly game changing to the AEC landscape and will forever alter how developers look at tall building construction and sustainability models in the future.

I hope that this information is helpful for the CASA audience to see a new and more innovative approach to tall building design and flexibility for structural systems - where the lack of interior and exterior columns opens up the design palate and allows for an endless amount of design opportunities.



**Evolve, Denver  
Tower and Podium**  
Owner: Ubuntu Partners

TGE focuses on a wholistic structural design for tall building development that is integrated to a construction delivery process; to include a vertically integrated Industrialized Construction model. We referred to this system as TGE Top Down Technology. The Top Down (TD) building process brings a new approach to construction, with both Lean practices and a proprietary structural delivery solution to the traditional building model (conventional buildings with columns).

TGE has pioneered the TD delivery method and we continue to improve on structural innovations for Tall Building programs. In short, this delivery methodology and proprietary engineering model allows for the construction of an entire mid/high-rise tower where all floors can be built safely at ground level and no worker needs to be more than 6 feet off the ground.

The TGE building process eliminates the use of a high-rise tower crane, and is designed as a total system, substantially reducing the total structural weight, construction

performance schedule (schedule acceleration), and dramatically reducing overall construction capital interest and insurance costs.

### Building Metrics and Overall Construction Benefits in Building Technology:

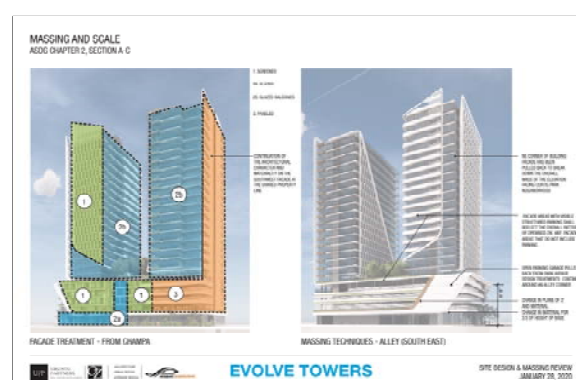
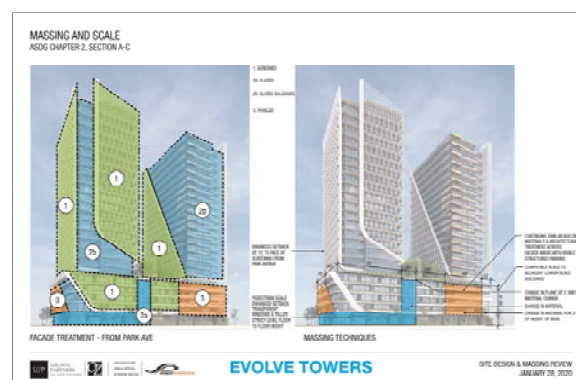
**Accelerated delivery and time savings).** Reduced schedule: 30+% project delivery

- Reduction of General Conditions Costs – Reduction in Overall Schedules (General Requirements Impact)
- Improves Financial Capital Costs – Early Completion = Reduced loan costs

### Early to Market = Increased ROI

- A Manufactured Building Process (Mid-Rise / High-Rise Construction = Ground level construction) = predictable workflow
- More predictable schedules.

**Elimination of tower crane** (insurance/mobilization, schedule/permitting). No scaffold drops and the elimination of non-value added time with crane delays.



## Dan Esparza, Principal TGE's Ingenious Top Down Technology Delivery System Continued

### Reduction of Overall Structural Building Materials

- Sustainable Construction, Reduced Steel 20-30%, Reduction of Concrete 15-25%, less structural weight.

### Carbon Embodied Variation, 50% Reduction in Carbon

- (Improved Sustainability)

**Lower overall cost of construction.** Reduced general conditions (total duration), material costs, reduction to core and shell

**Offsite construction & modular prefabricated construction** – tailored to meet Top Down requirements, lowering cost of off-site

- Material Resource Planning & Logistics (improve construction productivity and schedule by 30%)
- Modular Design Assemblies and Kitting (Assemblies) Interior construction

**Improved Safety.** No workers at elevated heights.

- Greater design flexibility
- No interior column(s). Free space planning/increases building occupancy by 5-10%
- Column-free perimeter walls
- Higher productivity for overall build – all trades

We would invite your readers to view our delivery methodology and building time-lapse/simulation models online at our website [www.tgetopdown.com](http://www.tgetopdown.com).

**Your father was a co-founder of CASA (Chicano Architectural Student Association) in 1971, a student organization at UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design. What influence did you father have on your professional trajectory?**

In short – everything.

I have had many business mentors in my career and worked with some very talented people, however, my father is by far the single largest influential person in my life and in business.

I have provided some anecdotal notes from my upbringing in our company, working with him in my career and the basis of the Esparza spirit being the entrepreneurial backbone of our family. However, my dad was (and still is) everything to me.



All photos courtesy of TGE LLC

Bangalore, India, this is a 13-month project to build a \$112-million, 10-story, 621,000-sq-ft office building. It was constructed employing the TGE top-down building system. Each level was built on the ground and raised by strand jacks and hung from the trusses.

### Charles H. Thornton, PH.D., P.E., Hon. AIA, Hon. ASCE

TGE, LLC (Thornton, Grillo, Esparza)

### Exemplary Corporate Citizen & Preeminent Structural Engineer

Charles H. Thornton is one of the preeminent structural engineers and educators in the world; he served as cochairman of Thornton Tomasetti until 2004. He has been involved in the design, construction and analysis of billions of dollars worth of projects worldwide, including hospitals, arenas, high-rise buildings, airports, transportation facilities and special structures. His award-winning work has set industry standards for innovative thinking and creativity. Thornton has led the structural design of some of the world's most significant and monumental structures, including two of the tallest: Taipei 101 in Taiwan and the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur.

<https://tgetopdown.com>

### Founder of the ACE Mentor Program

Thornton founded the Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program, a non-profit organization that since 1993 has offered guidance and training to more than 40,000 inner-city high school students in 106 cities across the United States. ACE has awarded more than **\$6 million in scholarships** to date. In recognition of his founding and cultivation of the program, he received the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Hoover Medal, which recognizes engineers as humanitarians, and the Award of Excellence from Engineering News-Record.

### Educating Future Generations

Thornton has taught structural engineering for many years as a visiting and adjunct professor, and held visiting faculty/lecturer positions at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Princeton University, Manhattan College, Pratt Institute and The Cooper Union.



## Dan Esparza, Principal TGE's Ingenious Top Down Technology Delivery System Continued

His work ethic, love of people, generosity, kindness, smile - and gift for loving life; are all things that I carry with me and have influenced who I am as a person. Having that as a father has been more than special – it was the ultimate lottery of life (my parents)!

He always taught me to create something larger than myself. To dream big and be confident in myself and own my decisions (and the consequences) – for that I am forever grateful. He was the ultimate influencer - “el oso major”!

**As an e-zine written, in some part, for the next generation of architects, planners and builders, what advice would you give students who might pursue a career in construction management**

Put in the time and be patient.

I have seen way too many student and young professionals enter the AEC space (as well as small companies) and expect to advance too quickly in the business – either through a sense of entitlement or expectation. Learn as much as you can about the multifaceted verticals within the industry, how they are all interrelated and work together.

If working in Construction Management or as a General Contractor, make sure you clearly

“**Whether you are an architect, designer, engineer, or builder – you must be collaborative. You must understand that the project is the most important goal and you need to work collaboratively to provide value.**”

understand the field and the office where the various communication and collaboration points are made, and understand that fundamentally architecture, engineering and construction is a people business. In our industry, sometimes I think we forget that.

I would also stress a core focus on business expectations – for yourself and the organizations you work for. Functional business is based on trust, mutual respect, learning and an understanding of how to build a common deliverable. For when building an efficient Construction Project this is fundamental for success. Egos, working in silos and being destructive to the build process is counterproductive to the building process – and does not have a place on a productive team dynamic.

Whether you are an architect, designer, engineer, or builder – you must be collaborative. You must understand that the project is the most important goal and you need to work collaboratively to provide value. If you miss that focus, you fundamentally have missed why you are building the project – too many times I have seen conflicts between Owners, Design Professionals, and Contractors result in missed value resulting in over-budget or litigated projects.

Additionally, Many companies miss this and put profit before doing the right thing. Do not allow yourself to be a follower – your gut will always tell you what direction is the right one, always lead, do not follow.

The last thing I would leave you with is be a student of LEAN, especially for the construction space. Both for your professional and personal life. It will help you achieve and maximize the most out of your day and help you be as productive as you can.

LEAN principles are a process of continued improvement and with that you can never go wrong! What I love about the LEAN process is you never perfect it; you only learn, grow and improve – it's a journey – not a destination!

Hope these tidbits of advice find you well.

The logo for TGE, consisting of the letters "TGE" in a bold, serif font, colored in a reddish-orange hue, set against a dark rectangular background.

TGE was organized and founded by Dr. Charles H. Thornton along with Jeffery Grillo and Daniel Esparza (Thornton, Grillo, Esparza, TGE). Dr. Thornton is one of the preeminent structural engineers and educators in the world; co-chairman of Thornton Tomasetti until 2004, and as Honorary Chairman/Founder of the ACE Mentor Program, a non-profit organization that, each year, offers guidance and training to inner city high school students in architecture, construction and engineering in cities across the U.S. Pioneering innovation in tall building construction.

TGE is first to market with revolutionary and game-changing innovations providing a vertically integrated structural construction and technology-based solution to mid/high-rise buildings.

### TGE, LLC

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Phoenix, AZ

## SIDE BAR

Dan Esparza

Principal, TGE Construction, LLC

ByDESIGN<sup>®</sup>  
a quarterly e-zine

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TGE

Daniel Esparza is a Co-Founder Principal of TGE Construction, LLC, together with partners Dr. Charles H. Thornton and Jeff Grillo. TGE provides a first to market innovation strategy and building solution for tall building construction that revolutionizes the time, cost and environmental sustainability of a project delivery. TGE's vertically integrated end to end solution for structurally holistic technology-based system will forever change tall building development.

Mr. Esparza is a senior executive with domestic and international construction experience in operations and development for General Contracting, Design/Build, and Civil/Infrastructure related projects. Esparza focuses on Lean principles for project execution and operational development, as well as overall company growth and strategic planning. He works closely with clients and supply chain partners to further develop the Top Down integrated value proposition. Mr. Esparza also manages all market development, venture capital and strategic planning technology-based assets for research and development initiatives with the company.

### PROFESSIONAL

**TGE Construction** (dba TGE Top Down Technology), Nov 2016 to Present

Principal and CO-Founder, Area of operation: Global

**Tunista Construction, LLC, Jan 2013 - Oct 2016**

Subsidiary to Calista Corporation

President, Seattle, Washington & Anchorage, Alaska

Area of Operation - Continental United States

**Sealaska Constructors, LLC, 2008-2013**

**Kingston Environmental Services, Inc 2008-2013**

Subsidiary of Sealaska Corporation

General Manager, Founder of Subsidiary Firm (Sealaska Constructors) President (Kingston Environmental)

Concurrent Executive Roles

Seattle, Washington, Kansas City, MO & Juneau, Alaska

**Doyon Project Services, LLC/Cherokee General, 2007 - 2008**

Director of Operations & Program Manager, Business Development

Portland, Oregon & Fairbanks, Alaska

**EAI International, 1996—2006**

President & CEO, Richmond, California

Area of United States, International

### EDUCATION, LICENSES & ASSOCIATIONS

**University California at Davis, B.S. Environmental Biology Management, Davis, California, 1994**

**Clark Atlanta University, Business Executive Program, Business Administration, Atlanta, Georgia, 2001**

**California State, Contractors License (A, B, ASB, HAZ (Inactive) 1996 - 2006**

**State of Washington L&I, Contractors License (License Holder), 2009-2016**

**Association of General Contractors, LEAN Construction, Last Planner®, Washington 2016**

**Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), 2005 - Present**

**Association of General Contractors, (AGC of American), 1996 - Present**

**LEAN Construction Institute (LCI), 2012 - 2016**



**Left:** 300 Atlantic is planned and designed by renowned Pelli Clark Pelli Architects (PCPA), and is located in Stamford, CT. It will be a mixed use development offering hotel, service apartments and premium residential suites with street level restaurant access and services. The 38-story, +400.0' height building with typical rooms at 10.0' Floor to Floor. Top Down<sup>SM</sup> construction is proposed for construction with core design for column free interior space planning.



**Top:** Commercial / Lab Office Buildings, 1.2 Million GSF

**Left:** 838 Park Avenue, Denver, CO is in the design phase for a design/build project, a twin 23-story, 18-level apartment towers over 5-levels of mixed-use amenity, retail, and parking podium.



**Above:** A Procura development, planned and designed by PCPA, located on a site adjacent to Century Park LRT Station. The development will offer premium residential suites in three towers (11, 20 and 22-story) constructed using the Top Down building system, 424,137 GSF

**Top Left:** Tower Plaza, San Mateo

**Left:** Tisch Tower, San Jose



**Above:** Pacific Northwest Tribal development for a new hotel in Auburn, Washington - 16-story, 400-room hotel tower.

## James Rojas' Latino Urbanism

Itzel Torres, Staff Writer



It was an honor sitting down with James Rojas to talk about Latino Urbanism. We spoke of the importance the built environment in inspiring us to pursue design/planning careers, and how those built spaces harbor core memories with our families. Front yards with rose bushes, an assortment of fruit trees, chiles, home facades built with arches, some painted in vibrant

colors. We spoke of our front yards used as communal spaces to gather, with extended family and neighbors. James has come to understand that these types of places collectively gather memories and culture. Through community engagement of his Urban Tool Kits, he has hosted workshops, walking tours, and forums where landscape, structure, street and culture intersect to bring life to many community narratives -- giving Latino youth insights into urban planning -- inspiring future careers.

### What led you to become an urban planner, activist, and artist?

I wanted a dollhouse growing up. However, in those days' boys didn't play with dolls. Instead, I built a mini, scrappy, 3-story dollhouse out of popsicle sticks I picked up off the schoolyard. I used nuts, bolts, and a shoebox of small objects my grandmother had given me to build furniture. When I completed furnishing the dollhouse, I wanted to build something spatially dynamic.

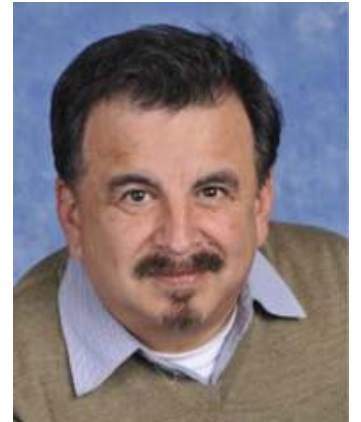
My father would take me on drives to see LA's rapid urban transformation, which became my muse in my childhood. I saw hilltops disappear, new skyscrapers overtake City Hall, and freeways rip through my neighborhood. For hours I laid out streets on the floor or in the mud constructing LA's hills, imaginary rivers, developing buildings, mimicking the city I saw around me. Through these early, hands-on activities I learned that vacant spaces became buildings, big buildings replaced small ones, and landscapes always changed. My satisfaction came from transforming my urban experiences

and aspirations into small dioramas. Most children outgrow playing with toys - not me! Building small cities became my hobby as I continued to find objects with which to express architecture and landscapes in new ways.

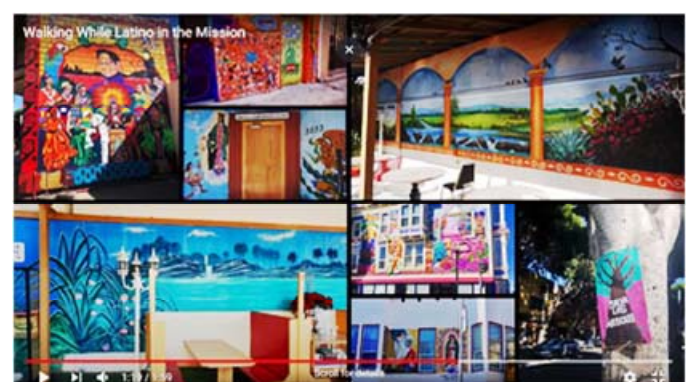
Black plumes of smoke covered LA as far as the eye could see as I drove on Hollywood freeway fleeing the city to the San Gabriel Valley. LA's 1992 civil unrest rocked my planning world as chaos hit city streets in a matter of hours. Civil unrest represented disenfranchised and disconnection of working-class populations.

While I worked for LA Metro, the agency was planning a \$900 million rail project through Latino communities. There were about 75 low-income Latino residents at an Eastside transportation meeting. These residents had the lowest auto ownership, highest transit use in LA County, and they had more on-the-ground knowledge of public transit use than most transportation planners. Yet the residents had no comments. That's when I realized urban-planning community meetings were not engaging diverse audiences, visual and spatial thinkers, or promoting collaboration.

It was not until I opened up Gallery 727 in Downtown LA that I started collaborating with artist to explore the intersection of art and urban planning. Art became my new muse, and I became fascinated by how artists used their imagination, emotion, and bodies to capture the sensual experience of landscapes. Through this creative approach, we were able to engage large audiences in participating and thinking about place in different ways, all the while uncovering new urban narratives. I began to reconsider my city models as a tool for increasing joyous participation by giving the public artistic license to imagine, investigate, construct, and reflect on their community.

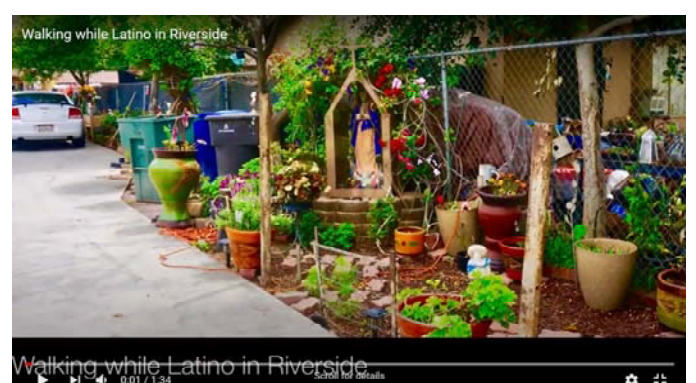


**James Rojas**  
Urban Planner, Activist,  
Artist



### Part of Walking by Latino suite of online videos, clockwise:

Walking by Latino in Brownsville, TX, Walking by Latino in the Mission, San Francisco, Walking BY Latino in Philadelphia, PA, Walking by Latino in Riverside, CA



Photos © James Rojas

The street grid, topography, landscapes, and buildings of my models provide the public with an easier way to respond to reshaping their community based on the physical constraints of place. Words can sometimes overlook the rich details of places and experiences that objects expose through their shape, color, texture, and arrangement. I begin all my urban planning meetings by having participants build their favorite childhood memory with objects in 10 minutes.

### **What are you currently doing to advance visibility, knowledge and access around Latino Urbanism?**

The US-Latino Landscape is difficult to articulate because it combines indigenous practices with the US commodification of land. This forms a new hybrid planning approach that I call **Latino Urbanism**.

My professional urban planning career has focused on the advancement of the understanding of Latino Urbanism. My career is interwoven in research, advocacy, planning, and the arts. I use interdisciplinary means to access this knowledge and make it visible.

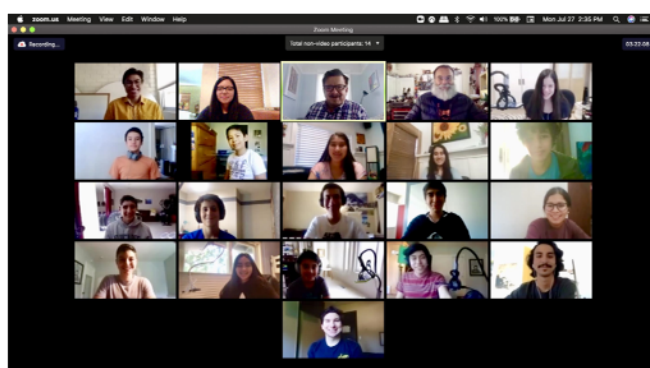
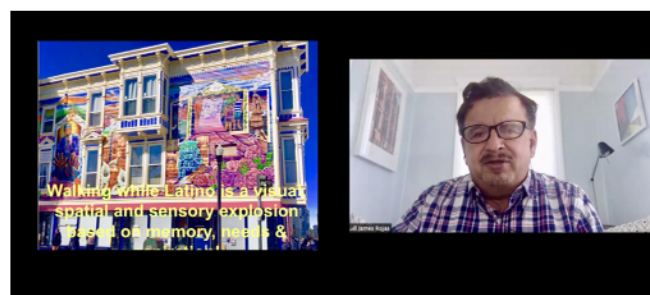
Because of the general lack of Latino participation in the urban planning process, and the difficulty of articulating their land use perspectives, their spatial values can be easily overlooked by mainstream urban planning practices and policies. I help Latinos articulate their intuitive knowledge and their feelings for urban space through using visual, spatial, and tactical experiences. My Latino community engagement Tool Kit consist of 3 activities:

#### **1. Sensory-Based Latino Walking Tours**

I lead Latino walking tours to capture the gentle pulse of the landscape, and community narratives. Latino communities comprise more than simply structures, streets, and sidewalks but equally encompass the way Latinos use space in between buildings. Walking helps uncover these less-tangible, but no-less-integral, elements of the community that transforms mere infrastructure into place.

These tours allow participants to explore, understand, and appreciate the innovative design interventions of the community. Participants connect physically and mentally with these intimate details through the senses and sometimes memories of Latin America

By seeing, listening, and documenting these urban design experiences we become aware of the importance and value of the Latino built environment. Therefore, we can develop plans that are rooted in their lived experiences and aspirations.



DaVinci Camp "Walking while Latino" virtual workshop with students, the next generation of Latino urban planners.

#### **2. Latino Urbanism Presentations, Videos and Open Forum**

30 years ago, I walked my childhood streets of East Los Angeles and photographed them as part of my MIT research. These images helped me articulate my community and write my thesis called the "Enacted Environment: The Creation of Place by Mexican American and Mexicans in East Los Angeles." Since then I have been documenting Latino neighborhoods across the US. I developed a presentation of images to trigger in-depth conversations about the built environment. Images of people, places and activities tell a story of survival and identity every Latino in the US has created or experienced.

Showing images from Latino communities in Los Angeles, Detroit, San Francisco, and other cities across the country illustrates Latinos are part of a larger US-Latino urban transformation. For many Latinos, this might be the first-time they have reflected on their behavior patterns and built environment publicly with others.

#### **3. Latino Urbanism Place IT! Workshop**

Many Latinos have limited English speaking skills, or might be shy to speak in public, let alone understand technical planning terms. I developed a hands-on community outreach tool called Place IT! for Latinos to easily and effectively express themselves, in the visioning and urban planning process.

By using their hands, objects, and imagination, Latinos think holistically about themselves, others, and their community. They deconstruct spatial inequalities using their hands and also build creative solutions. For Latinos Place IT! does the following:

- Removes language, both technical and verbal, politics, racial, gender, income, and professional barriers
- Creates a safe space for Latinos to translate their emotions and experiences into negotiable outcomes
- Allows Latinos to express themselves in different ways beyond words
- Reinforces social cohesion by bringing Latinos together to bond and collaborate.
- Encourages Latino self-determination

Thus, by changing the tools of engagement for Latinos we are able to excite them and increase their participation in urban planning.

“ My professional urban planning career has focused on the advancement of the understanding of Latino Urbanism. My career is interwoven in research, advocacy, planning, and the arts. ”

## James Rojas' Latino Urbanism

Continued

Volume 36

September 2020

### Advocacy: Latino Urban Forum

The Latino Urban Forum was an offshoot of my research. In the late 1990s at community venues in Los Angeles, I presented a series of images and diagrams based on my MIT research on how Latinos are transforming the existing US built environment.

Many of the participants were children of Latino immigrants, and these images helped them to reflect on and articulate their rich visual, spatial, and sensory landscape. After the presentations, they asked me, "What's next?" We all wanted to be involved in city planning.

A group of us began to meet informally once a month on Sundays in LA to discuss how we could incorporate our professional work with our cultural values. We ultimately formed a volunteer organization called the **Latino Urban Forum (LUF)**. The majority of the volunteers were professional Latinos in the fields on urban planning, engineering, architecture, health, housing, legal, interior designer, as well as students. They worked for municipalities, companies, elected officials, education, arts institutions, social services, and for themselves.

Through this interdisciplinary group, LUF was able to leverage our social network, professional knowledge, and political strategy to create a dialogue on urban policy issues in mainly underserved Latino Communities, with the aim of preserving, and enhancing the livability of these neighborhoods. Because we shared a culture, we were able to break down the silos from our various jobs. We were also able to provide our technical expertise on urban planning for community members to make informed decisions on plans, policy and developments.

As a volunteer organization, LUF achieved a successful track record in developing projects in immigrant communities and collaborating with other organizations throughout Los Angeles on housing, transportation and open space. Like my research our approach was celebratory and enhanced the community.

Due to our interdisciplinary and collaborative nature, were able to be involved with a variety of projects. We worked on various pro-bono projects and took on issues in LA. We advocated for the state of California to purchase 32 acres of land in Downtown LA to create the Los Angeles State Park. We advocated for light rail projects such as the East Side Gold Line Rail and Expo Line. We organized bike and walking tour of front yard Nativities in East Los Angeles.



Photos © James Rojas

### Tell us about your work with the DaVinci Camp in Pasadena?

I collaborate with youth from the DaVinci Summer Math Camp on various techniques to engage and excite them into an urban planning career. One of the goals of the summer camp introduces students to a wide variety of professions and fields they may not otherwise have been exposed to. The camp works towards building not only a technical background, but also cultural and social awareness to compliment math and sciences. Educating young Latino scholars in this way enables them to link a multitude of subjects to create their own unique intellectual path, improving technical and cultural knowledge.

Latino youth are often times knowledgeable about their built environment because many of them spend hours exploring, and playing in it.

They know the Latino neighborhood they live is different from non-Latino neighborhoods. Yet many of them do not have the words to describe these places and their experiences. They many also feel lost in urban planning and architecture school.

It's important to educate these youth on the design of their built environment so they can derive knowledge and power from it. While we think of design as a physical intervention, it's also the ability to see the familiar differently.

This Latino urbanism knowledge also gives these students an advantage in studying urban planning, architecture and design. These Latinos think differently about space because they do not come from the traditional middle-class suburbs.

Engaging them in walking tours, presentations or model buildings helps them understand their intimate connections to the built environment.



“ To trigger their interest before my presentation I sent them twelve, 1-2 minute videos to watch from Latino neighborhoods across the US. My 30-minute Latino urbanism presentation explains in greater detail the transformation of neighborhoods by Latinos through images. ”



These types of reflections and conversations are important to have with Latinx youth to help them understand the beauty and power of their landscapes and rich contributions to US urbanism.

Oftentimes these interventions are never talked about or studied. Therefore, many Latino communities can't be preserved, or enhanced, and are easily erased. Youth can become their own urban planning and design advocates, and/or, potentially community leaders.



**Walking while Latino:** James Rojas leads a group of middle/high school students to a Walking while Latino tour. These educational tours expose the next generation of Latinos scholars and professional to Latino Urbanism planning issues and principles. And there is nothing like a cool ice cream cone at the end of the walk.

Photos © James Rojas

Because of COVID-19 I could not conduct the walking tour for the youth this summer. Instead I created a virtual “Walking While Latino” presentation highlighting what we would have seen and experienced.

To trigger their interest before my presentation I sent them twelve, 1-2 minute videos to watch from Latino neighborhoods across the US. My 30-minute Latino urbanism presentation explains in greater detail the transformation of neighborhoods by Latinos through images. Many of students may have been familiar with these images, some students might have lived in Latin America, or traveled there to understand the cultural significance.

The personal connection to these ubiquitous places raised lots of questions, ranging from pedestrian safety, shade, to gentrification. This discussion highlights the importance of social cohesion in their community, as well as how the traditional plaza found in historic Latin American cities has a new form in suburbia.

Students learn about Latino urban patterns that transform and shape their community many did not notice before -- or were not able to articulate. For many students this is the first time they critically examine their streets and landscapes.

**What are the Latino Urbanism Kits and how do you hope these kits are an impactful educational experience for Latino youth?**

I would like to develop a LatinXurban kit that allows youth to put together their landscape to go along with my virtual Latino urbanism presentation.

This will allow students to think with their hands and build with others. The kits can be a front yard landscape with fence, fountain, porch, or street vendor, mural wall, or store front. The kit will be a laser cut pattern out of wood and mailed to youth, teachers to put together themselves. For more info contact me at [jamestrojas@gmail.com](mailto:jamestrojas@gmail.com)

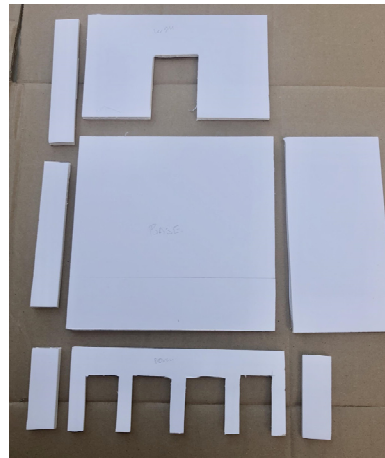
**What advice would you give students interested in becoming urban planners?**

For Latino students interested in urban planning I would tell them to examine their built environment because you are a spatial healer.

### Latino Urbanism Kits

**Right:** Prototype of Latino Urbanism Kits, which will allow students to “think with their hands and build with others.”

The kits can be a front yard landscape with fence, fountain, porch, or street vendor, mural wall, or store front. The kit will be a laser cut pattern out of wood and mailed to youth and teachers to put together themselves.



### Letters from the Da Vinci Camp Students



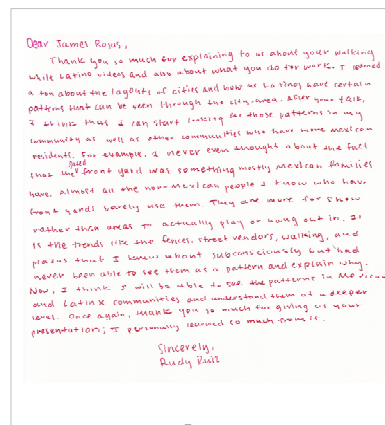
Dear James,

All of us here at DaVinci Camp would like to thank you for your brilliant presentation on our colorful Latino neighborhoods. Watching your “Walking While Latino” videos was the perfect way to introduce the students to the diverse Latino communities across the country and to build interest in learning more. Your talk opened their eyes to the details and cultural subtleties that many of them experience but had yet to appreciate. The DaVinchos especially liked the “gym” in East LA as well as the different instances of architectural transformations of homes. It’s always great to hear your perspective on the specific urban planning details and nuances of our communities most people overlook.

One of the goals at DaVinci Camp is to introduce students to a wide variety of professions and fields they may not otherwise have been exposed to. We work towards building not only a technical background but also cultural and social awareness to compliment the math and sciences. Educating the young scholars in this way enables them to link together a multitude of subjects to create their own unique intellectual path. Thanks to you, they now have one more link to connect.

Thank you once again for sharing with us your invaluable expertise on urban design within the Latino community. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

Muchísimas gracias,  
DaVinci Camp Team  
<https://davinci-camp.com/>

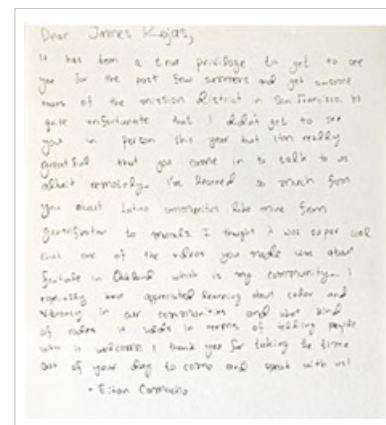


Dear James Rojas,

Thank you so much for explaining to us about your walking while Latino videos and also about what you do for work. I learned a ton about the layout of cities and how us Latinos have certain patterns that can be seen through the city area. After your talk, I think that I can start looking for those patterns in my community as well as other communities who have more Mexican residents. For example, I never even thought about the fact that the gated front yard was something mostly Mexican families have. Almost all the non-Mexican people I know who have front yards barely use them. They are more for show rather than areas to actually play or hang out in. It is the trend like fences, street vendors, walking and plazas that I knew about subconsciously but had never been able to see them as a pattern and explain why. Now I think I will be able to see the patterns in Mexican and Latinx communities and understand them at a deeper level.

Once again, thank you so much for giving us your presentation, I personally learned so much from it.

Sincerely,  
Rudy Ruiz



Dear James Rojas,

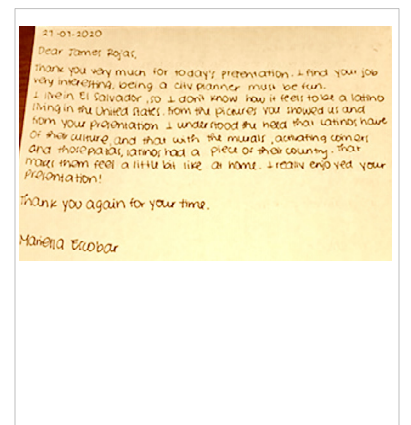
It has been a true privilege to get to see you for the past few summers and get awesome tours of the Mission District in San Francisco. It's quite unfortunate that I didn't get to see you in person this year but I'm really grateful that you came in to talk to us, albeit remotely. I've learned so much from you about Latino communities like mine from gentrification to murals. I thought it was super cool that one of the videos you made was about Fruitvale in Oakland, which is my community. I especially have appreciated learning about color and vibrancy in our communities, and what kind of codes it leads in terms of telling people who is welcome.

I thank you taking the time out of your day to come and speak with us!

Eitan Comacho

“As urban planning, architecture, and design mentors, the most important thing we can do for our youth is erase their self doubt of who they are, and where they come from. We need to help youth articulate their experiences, and feelings they have about their community. We have to transform their self-doubt into new ways of solving problems in the built environment.”

James Rojas, Urban Planner, Activist, Artist  
626 437-4446 [jamestrojas@gmail.com](mailto:jamestrojas@gmail.com)  
[enactedenvironment.com](http://enactedenvironment.com) [www.placeit.org](http://www.placeit.org)



Dear James Rojas,

Thank you very much for today's presentation. I find your job very interesting, being a City Planner must be fun. I live in El Salvador, so I don't know how it feels to be a Latino living in the United States. From the pictures you showed us and from your presentation I understood the need that Latinos have of their culture, and that with the murals and those patios, Latinos had a piece of their country, that makes them feel a little bit like a home. I really enjoyed your presentation!

Thank you again for your time.  
Mariena Escobar

## COVID-19: A New Reality for Design Professions

Oswaldo Lopez, AIA, LEED GA



The world as we knew it has changed. This change is profound among practitioners of architecture, planning, engineering, landscape architecture, construction professionals and clients. The Coronavirus and its impact on the world is like nothing we have ever witnessed in our generation.

I took this situation to reach out to some of my colleagues for their assessment as to how the impact of COVID-19 has affected their respective practices as design professionals. The following perspectives are important in understanding the future of these successful firms across many spectrums of our profession.



**Norman G.Y. Hong, AIA**  
Vice Chairman, Chief Executive Officer,  
G70

### How has COVID-19 virus has affected your firm?

COVID19 has affected our firm only in terms of operations. Approximately 80% of our staff has been working remotely from home and we have not found any reduction in productivity. In terms of revenue and cash flow, it has not had any impact to date. Many of our loyal clients, who have been with us for decades, have continued with their projects and have continued to pay their fees. However, we are beginning to see a slowdown in the hospitality sector of our practice due to Hawaii's continued shutdown. Other sectors such as military, planning and civil engineering continue to be strong.

### What affects do you see happening that will change the professions in the future?

In the future, the profession will be changed because a large percentage of design professionals will continue to work remotely. We recently surveyed our staff and approximately half have indicated that post-COVID, they



would like to work totally remotely, or only 2 to 3 days in the office with the rest of their time from home. Due to the communication technology, this will be the new "normal". Communications with clients will also change – more of the meetings will be held online, although there will still be a preference for some in-person meetings.

### Will COVID-19 change your approach to how you provide design services; will these changes be the norm for design professions in the future?

Providing services to our clients will change somewhat. As mentioned above, more client interactions will be held online, although there will still be a preference for some in-person meeting (e.g. on the golf course). So, there will be a reduction in business travel. However, the basic services provided to clients (design and contract documents) will stay fundamentally the same. There will continue to be an expectation of providing excellent professional design services. Another change is that because of the improving technology of communication, there will be a greater globalization of providing such services. For example, on one of our projects, weekly calls are conducted online with participants in Europe, Asia, as well as in continental US.



### Grand Waikikian, Honolulu, O'ahu

The Grand Waikikian is the latest major addition to Waikiki's famous Hilton Hawaiian Village. A base of retail shops, public spaces, the grand lobby and porte-cochere serve this 38-story, timeshare condominium. A new super pool with waterfalls, slide and swim through grotto extends from the Waikikian's second floor lobby to the newly reconditioned Hilton lagoon.



### Hilton Hawaiian Village MP, Honolulu, O'shu

Hilton's 2010-2020 Master Plan adds two new timeshare towers for 550 timeshare units at the 22-acre oceanfront resort, with a redeveloped Rainbow Bazaar retail complex. The Main Entry and Rainbow Drive are improved, with a renovated open-air Front Desk, and a new Super Pool.



## COVID-19: A New Reality for Design Professions

Continued



**Clay Aurell, AIA, LEED AP, NCARB, Ultimate Strategist**  
Principal Architect, Co-Founder,  
**AB design studio, inc.**

### How has COVID-19 virus has affected your firm?

In mid-March, our firm had to quickly pivot. We took about one week to assess our workload, staffing and our technology aspects. Within that week we were able to set up a large portion of our firm on remote working. For those, whom that was a challenge, we spread people out in the office(s).

We have increased our use of online collaboration tools and have become even more facile with online meeting applications (zoom, meet, etc.). This actually forced our group into MORE collaboration and more structured meetings. Without the opportunity of popping over to someone's desk, we have become more intentional about looking out ahead and scheduling collaboration sessions. This could be the silver-lining in all of this, but this heightened level of intentionality and collaboration has really brought our office staff together and helped people understand how to work with and rely on other people to support design and production efforts.

### What affects do you see happening that will change the professions in the future?

I believe that the office environment will change. How drastically, I do NOT know. People need connection with other people and while online meeting tools are great, I believe that people still need the human connection. That being said, I do think that the concept of remote working, whether down the street or on another continent is becoming more of a possibility for any architecture firm.



**Sugarbug Dental, Oxnard, CA**

Sugarbug Dental is the recipient of several awards, including the 2008 AIAVC Design Honor Award in the Commercial/Institutional category, the 2009 AIA|Santa Barbara Design Merit Award in the Commercial/Institutional category, and the 2009 California Home + Design Award for Commercial Design.

### Will COVID-19 change your approach to how you provide design services to clients; could this be the future norm for design professions?

This has been going through a transformation even before Covid, but certainly now, we are having design meetings remotely, using BIM to walk clients through designs and even having virtual site visits. The biggest differentiator for us, is that the clients become experienced in these tools as well and their sophistication level is increasing.

It is highly likely that remote meetings and site visits will become more prevalent in the future. We are seeing City Inspectors use this inspect projects and are hearing more and more clients in remote areas using technology to great effect. As the general public becomes more accustomed to using these tools, we will certainly see a shift in how we start up new projects and deliver for our clients for the foreseeable future.

I do think that as these tools progress and technology improves, it could be very feasible to have boots on the ground in many parts of the world all collaborating together. Larger firms have done this for years, but this is now becoming available to the small and mid-size firms as well.



**Zaca Creek Wine Country Resort, Buelton, CA**

A sprawling wine country resort in California's Central Coast. A main hotel provides lodging for large groups staying for events, such as wine tours, corporate retreats, and weddings. A collection of casita-style accommodations surrounds the hotel. Onsite facilities feature a range of activity-based amenities to foster a communal environment. A new amphitheater supports a range of entertainment options. A rustic barn with expansive views of grassy fields and grazing livestock further evokes the site's historic farmland heritage.



**Shipping Container Residence, Santa Barbara, CA**

The studio strategically maintained a collaborative relationship with key stakeholders at every level to realize this high-end, container-based dwelling in Santa Barbara County — the first of its kind to be permitted in the area. The owners wanted a sustainable and elegant contemporary home. The result is a two-story residence, seamlessly integrating five reclaimed shipping containers, nestled into the lush Santa Barbara hillside.

## COVID-19: A New Reality for Design Professions

Continued



**REBECCA  
WALKER  
INTERIORS**

Rebecca Walker  
Principal  
**Rebecca Walker Interiors**  
Los Angeles, CA

### Can you tell me from your professional point of view how the COVID-19 virus has affected your firm?

In the residential world, clients are being more conservative about spending money during this time. Projects that had potential of full remodels are now being designed in phases, or one area at a time, rather than fully gutted and redesigned. I'm getting loads of little 2-month projects rather than a few large 9-12 month projects. I am constantly looking for new projects now and I've had to rethink my marketing strategy to keep afloat.

### What effects do you see happening that will change the professions in the future?

At large, the use of office space will be somewhat unnecessary now that everyone is able to work from home, leading to limited collaboration.

Within the way we do design, I see changes in safety measures in job site visits or client meetings, increasing estimated timelines for completion due to longer lead times and wait times at showrooms; space planning will be affected by a reduction in seat counts, in corridor widths, in parking lot spacings, etc.

### Will COVID-19 change your approach to how you provide design services to clients; could this be the future norm for design professions?

As residential design is more personable and intimate than hospitality design, the process in which we present or review projects will change.

Making virtual services an option will be a huge change—from virtual design presentations to mailing finishes samples for simultaneous over-the-phone reviews. Some of these ways have been prominent in hospitality design as we typically work in different time zones from consultants, clients, etc. But they are new to residential design, and we'll need to shift our services or up our communication to keep up with the client's expectation of more personal connection.



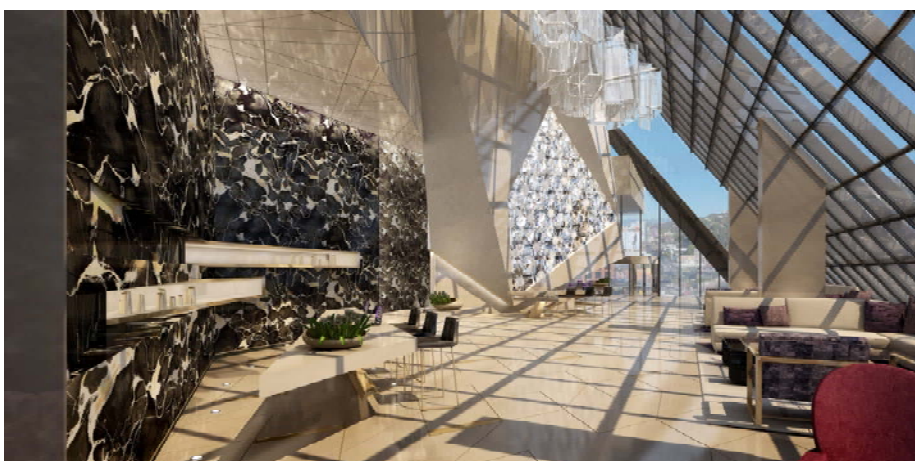
### Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts, Kona, HI

(In Collaboration with Meyer Davis)

Mauna Lani's grounds are some of the most stunning landscapes in Kona, and for the first time in 30 years, the 348 room hotel is catching up to its home's beauty. This design overhaul takes inspiration from Hawaiian history, culture and its surroundings.

Condé Nast Traveler's 2020 Hot List

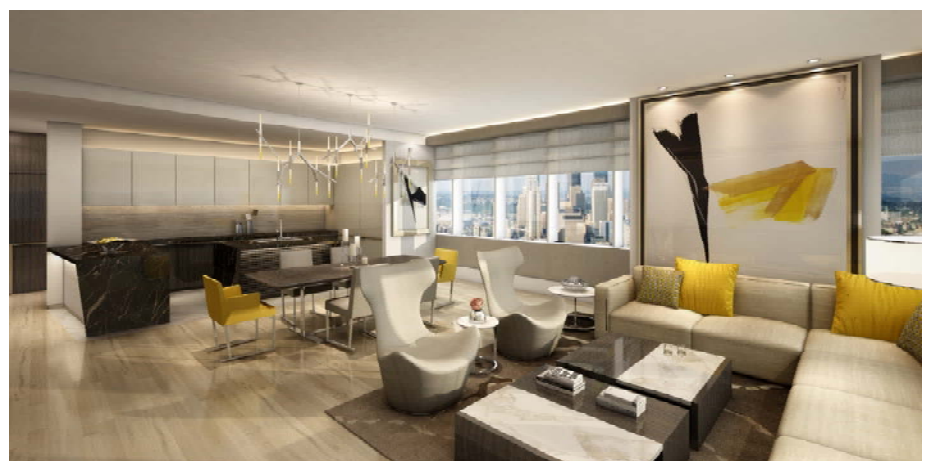
2020 Ahead Award for Best Hotel Renovation & Restoration



### JW MARRIOTT, DOHA, QATAR

(In Collaboration with Hirsch Bedner Associates)

A luxurious 297-room property joining the JW Marriott family, standing 53 floors high and featuring a cantilevered pool deck. The hotel also has 120 serviced apartments, ranging from 1 to 4 bedrooms.



The tower's amenities include a large ballroom, a conference hall, a spa, gym and fitness center, and two food & beverage venues. Involvement includes design development, custom furniture design, coordination of art installations, casegood construction, lighting fixtures, finishes, plumbing fixtures, and material selection, and more.



*Moving to another country, especially at a young age, is no easy feat, but Joyceline Martinez surpassed those challenges, pursued her dreams, and is now a successful architect. After graduating from UC Berkeley, she worked at Pfeiffer Partners Architects, where she participated in repair and rehabilitation projects, among others.*

*This sparked a passion within Joyceline and she was inspired by her work and boss to continue her education. After receiving her Master's in Architecture with a certificate in Historic Preservation, Joyceline joined Pfeiffer once more and is now a licensed architect.*

### Tell us a little of about yourself.

I was born in Nicaragua and moved to Los Angeles, CA when I was in High School. I was a first generation college student at Cal and graduated in 2008. Right after graduating from Berkeley, I started working at Pfeiffer Partners Architects in downtown LA.

The most important project I worked on right out of college and my boss were the biggest inspiration to pursue a career in Architecture Historic Preservation. Consequently, I went back to school to get a Masters in Architecture with a certificate in Historic Preservation at Cal Poly Pomona.

Ever since finishing grad school in 2012, I went back to Pfeiffer Partners Architects and have been enjoying my job.

I became a California licensed architect in 2017 and have a 5 year old daughter who just started kindergarten last week. Life is great, the architecture profession can be difficult at times but all works out as long as you have a passion for what you like doing.



**Atascadero City Hall Repair & Rehabilitation** - This historic building suffered severe damage from an earthquake in 2003. We had the opportunity to restore the structure and reprogram the building. This is the project that got me interested in historic and existing buildings.

### How did you get your job?

I applied by searching on the firm's website and emailed someone from the staff (randomly). She was nice enough to pass along my resume and they called me in!

### What is your role and professional responsibilities?

I am project architect and project manager for 3 current projects in the office. One is for a 16 person team, a 3 person team and a 4 person team. Responsibilities get tough when managing a large team, just to make sure to track what everyone needs to be working on in order to issue a successful project and meet the clients' needs.

### What do you like most about your job?

I like working in teams! I love it because I get to learn from my teammates since all of us have different talents. There are multiple resources in my office and we know who to go when we have questions.

I also enjoy working on existing buildings and trying to dissect old drawings to figure out how buildings were built. 1910's drawings are so fun to read!



**Joyceline B. Martinez, AIA, LEED AP, Architect**  
Pfeiffer



## Joyceline B. Martinez, AIA, LEED AP Continued

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**Self Realization Fellowship** - International Headquarters Building Rehabilitation - This project involves the rehabilitation of the existing building to meet anticipated needs of the SRF religious organization, providing required upgrades and restoring some lost architectural features. The scope encompasses structural improvement, grading and drainage, site improvements, ADA upgrades, new MEP systems and enhanced finishes and fixtures.



**Mount Washington Education Center,**  
Established by Swami Yogananda in 1925, Headquarters of Sat-Sanga and Yogada

**Harvey Mudd College Residence Hall** - New 3 story U-shaped structure following the campus typology. It houses 130 students with amenities such as group study rooms, lounges and collaborative work spaces.



**Westmont College Institute for Global Leadership Center** - This project was designed to house 4th year students providing a living and learning environment. It includes two residence halls and a central building with student amenities such as commons with multipurpose room, business center, fitness center, and communal kitchens. The buildings were designed as "tree houses", nestled among the site's native oak groves, using materials from its surroundings such as stone and wood.



**University of Nevada, Reno - Nye and Argenta Residence Halls** - Rehabilitation/Reconstruction of two residence hall buildings that suffered a gas leak explosion in 2019. Nye Hall just opened for the fall of 2020 and Argenta Hall is scheduled to open in 2022.

“ I became a California licensed architect in 2017 and have a 5 year old daughter who just started kindergarten last week. Life is great, the architecture profession can be difficult at times but all works out as long as you have a passion for what you like doing. ”

## pfeiffer

Pfeiffer is a U.S. design firm whose projects for cultural and educational clients marry smart planning with unusually effective client and team engagement for imaginative architectural solutions.

### Pfeiffer Partners Architects

700 South Flower Street, Suite 1150, Los Angeles, CA 90017  
pfeifferpartners.com

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# CASA Alumni at Work

## Adan Novoa Sr. Project Manager

ByDESIGN<sup>®</sup>  
a quarterly e-zine

Volume 36

September 2020

### Tell us about yourself:

My interest in architecture came from my dad. He is a construction worker and he used to bring me to the site all the time. Eventually, I started working with him and for him on construction jobs. That exposed me to the field and I fell in love with architecture, which led me to go to UC Berkeley.

### What has your professional career consisted of?

I started working with Gansek Design Build Firm and an architecture firm doing architecture design. Then I worked for a developer, which gave me a whole different view of the design process. Afterwards, I went into retail and entertainment, which I fell in love with it because of the design freedom. Then I was recruited into Torrid as their store planning manager. I managed architects, provided design ideas for store layouts, managed projects, and implemented changes to construction documents.

After Torrid, I was recruited by Cinépolis, a Mexican movie theater company. I was one of two members of the design and architecture team. This really broadened my experience; I was doing everything from assisting with real estate and dealing with polices, to doing punch lists in construction. I analyzed potential projects all the way through to when we were given the keys to a General Managers start construction. After a couple years, I joined GAP where I focused on designing the store layout, getting permits, and assisting during construction.

At the present I'm doing a lot of freelance work, like remodeling or assisting in electrical permits. I'm also exploring opportunities in construction and opportunities with Tesla and Levi's.

“ My interest in architecture came from my dad. He is a construction worker and he used to bring me to the site all the time. That exposed me to the field and I fell in love with architecture, which led me to go to UC Berkeley. ”



**Adan Novoa**  
Sr. Project Manager  
BA Architecture,  
College of Environmental  
Design, University of  
California, Berkeley



Top: Store planning manager.  
Left: Cinépolis, a Mexican movie theater company.  
Right: Athleta store design.

## Adan Novoa Continued

### What do you believe led you to getting these jobs? What made you stand out?

LinkedIn helped me get my last three positions. I maintained my LinkedIn profile up to date and recruiters reached out to me through the platform. The retail architecture industry is also very connected, which helped me in the hiring process. I've learned that people end up being connected one way or another, so it's important to keep an open network. In all my jobs, I knew somebody that knew the person that was hiring.

It's very helpful to have someone put your resume in front of all the other ones that came in from the job posting. It's very important to keep professional relationships open and not burn bridges because you never know who's going to be connected to who.

### What would you say you've liked most about your jobs or positions?

I've enjoyed all my jobs for different reasons. When I was designing movie theaters, I loved the work I was creating and being able to see theaters go from the ground up.

In Torrid and GAP, the teams were so awesome because they were always willing to step up, help, and work together. There was always someone who would say, "let me help you out because I see that you're struggling," or "don't worry about that, I'm going to take care of it."

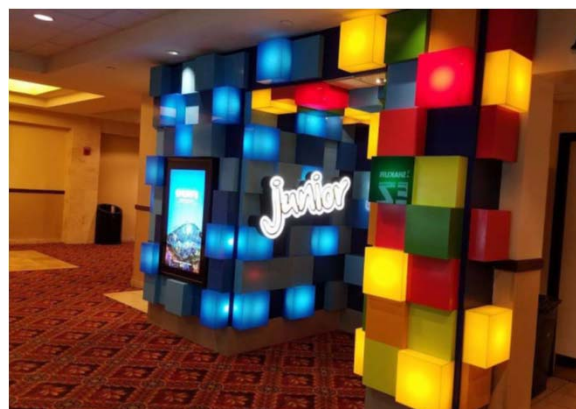
Those kind of team environments really make me enjoy my job. The day to day activities are great, but the people, the leadership, the teammates, receptionists, etc. is what really matters.



### HOPA Mix-Use Ground-Up Project - Berkeley, CA

Designed and permitted this 3-story LEED-Certified mix-use building with about 10,000 square feet. My responsibilities included construction documents, design input, 3D digital models, physical scaled models, preparing AHJ Design Review Committee documents/presentation.

Unique project challenges: The site was a rectangular shape with the only access from the 'short' side, zoned for mix-use but was adjacent to residential properties on one side which resulted in a lot of challenges with the community residents and therefore the AHJ.



### Cinépolis Junior Auditorium Remodel - Pico Rivera, CA

Project Manager on Design and Construction for the remodel of a traditional movie theater auditorium into the first-ever kids auditorium with play areas in the United States.

Project challenges: This project required significant detailed planning and coordination because this was the first time AHJ, GC, Vendors, Architect, and Engineers, and internal owner partners had ever attempted to contribute to a project such as this one. Clear and constant communication/planning was essential with all stakeholders, in particular the internal business partners to mitigate risks in all aspects of the project.



### Cinépolis Luxury Movie Theater, Pacific Palisades, CA

Managed project from concept (prior to Pre-LOI agreement with Landlord) to Permit Approval. This is a 13,000 square feet, 4-auditorium flagship movie theater.

Project challenges: This was the first flagship project that Cinépolis built in the United States. The project timeline was compressed to about 18 months. Extensive coordination with the Landlord was required during the entitlement phase to ensure the theater fit the site parameters. The odd shape of the site required creative design to maximize the number of seats to make the project feasible as there was only room for 4 auditoriums and 1 main entrance point.

## CASA Community Goes Virtual

Michelle Hernandez, College of Environmental Design  
UC Berkeley

As the Chair of CASA this year, my main hope for a virtual CASA is to maintain the level of community for underrepresented design students that we established last year, and maybe even go beyond that level.

With classes still being remote and many students living at home for the semester, I am sure many are looking for a way to connect with their peers, whether that be for academic or professional guidance, or simply for staying socially connected. It will be a challenge to switch our events to solely an online platform, something we did not really attempt at the end of last spring semester because there was so much chaos and uncertainty.

It did not feel fair to ask our board members to transition all that we were doing online while trying to adapt to online learning and deal with their own personal circumstances.

I am optimistic that as a board, we will be able to try out different types of methods of keeping our members connected while also continuing the professional development workshops that were successful last year.

To our Alumni reading this, we are always happy to connect with you and learn more about your own personal journey through CASA, CED, and your careers!



**Michelle Hernandez**  
(President)

Provide leadership, conduct meetings, establish annual agenda, ensure operation effectiveness and achieve objectives



**Samantha Andalon**  
(Vice President)



Chicanx/Latinx Architectural Student Association



**Jennifer Recinos**  
(Community Service Co-Chair)  
Organize community enrichment services, promote community contributions



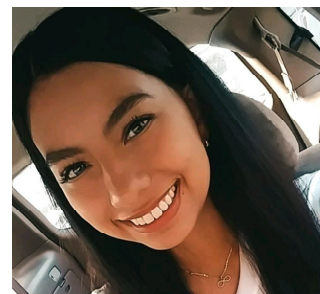
**Sulem Hernandez**  
(Outreach / Public Relations)  
Recruit new members, promotes community event awareness, communicate with other organizations



**Nayeli Santos**  
(Academic Chair)  
Plan professional events / workshops to educate members on design opportunities, financial and mental health resources



**Leslie Gonzalez**  
(Community Service Co-chair)  
Organize community enrichment services, and promote member contribution to our communities



**Kelly Medina**  
(Finance Chair)  
Provide financial management oversight; financial budgeting, fundraising and spending



**Jovany Vallejos Martinez**  
(Historian)  
Photograph CASA events / activities, maintain data bank of CASA activities and materials



**Cindy Gutierrez**  
(Alumni Chair)  
Maintain contact with CASA/CED alumni on upcoming events, maintain records / network of professional / academic contacts



**Angelica Ruiz**  
(Internal Chair)  
Organize and facilitate social events, maintain strong relationship, professional and personal, amongst members



**Juan Jose Ramos**  
(Digital Marketing Chair)  
Propagate events through visual representations (flyers/brochures), facilitate software meetings and workshops



**Stephanie Machuca**  
Digital Marketing Co Chair  
Propagate events through visual representations including flyers and brochures, facilitate meetings and workshops regarding software



CASA Students are able to:

- Gain leadership and professional skills
- Obtain and get experience to different design-related professions and work environments through field trips, tours, shadowing (externships)
- Build relationships with professionals
- Attend Workshops and presentations led by mentors focusing on:
  - Software/Programs (i.e. AutoCAD, Revit, Sketch-Up, etc.)
  - Graduate School Application Process
  - Cover Letters & Resume
  - Portfolio Development
  - Research & Employment Opportunities
  - Interviewing techniques

We are currently looking for highly motivated, volunteer mentors with enthusiasm to help these Latinx and minority students excel.

If you are interested, have any questions, or would like to know more please email us at [casauacademic@gmail.com](mailto:casauacademic@gmail.com). We look forward to receiving emails from any CASA/CED alumni who would enjoy serving as mentors within the Greater Bay Area!

### Michelle Hernandez

BA Sustainable Environmental Design, Class of 2021  
College of Environmental Design,  
University of California, Berkeley

**CASA (Chicanx / Latinx Architecture Student Association)** is a student organization founded in 1971 with the expressed purpose of promoting access, diversity, and success for Latinx/Chicanx students at the College of Environmental Design at the University of California, Berkeley. It is the oldest Design Latino Student Organization in the US.

### About The Author

I am truly a Bay Area kid - born in Berkeley, lived and went to school in Oakland, and now back in Berkeley.

As a 5th grader, I decided I wanted to become an architect, but interests change and in high school I thought I wanted to be a civil engineer. During senior year, I began learning more about sustainability. After reading the description of Sustainable Environmental Design (SED) and seeing how it combined all of my interests, I applied to UC Berkeley.

I'm now studying SED at UC Berkeley, a school that was always so close but felt so out of reach when I began learning about college applications and acceptance rates.

The SED major in the College of Environmental Design is relatively new. The area of study aims to provide an interdisciplinary approach to sustainability and urban design, a major that seemed innovative and combined all of the topics I had become interested in when I was younger: my intended major architecture, city planning, urban design, and landscape architecture are all interconnected.

When professionals of all disciplines come together, amazing projects are created, projects that take into account the effects on the surrounding community and environment. This results in creating a better version of the built environment.

Though it has been intimidating to be passionate about sustainability when there is no set career path I can follow after graduation, like what many architects and landscape architects have, I have been able to push through with the confidence that my parents support all of my academic decisions.

Both of my parents are from El Salvador and my father was the first in his family to attend and graduate from college. He has gone on to earn a Masters degree and work as a Spanish teacher in Oakland's public high schools. His involvement in education has always pushed me to do my best, knowing that schoolwork is my main responsibility, and that going to college has the power to change my life.

## CASA Members, future Latinx thought leaders

