

# ByDESIGN

An Online Journal of Exceptional Achievement

**EDGAR A.  
LOPEZ,  
AIA**

**Architect  
for the  
City by  
The Bay**



**TECHNOLOGY:  
Latinos at  
Google,  
Facebook, Twitter  
& LinkedIn Hold  
Panel**  
Lauren Hernández

**Architecture and  
Design:  
A Morality Play?**  
Charles Higuera, FAIA

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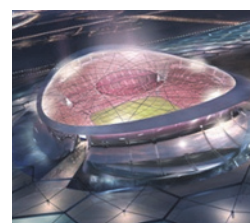
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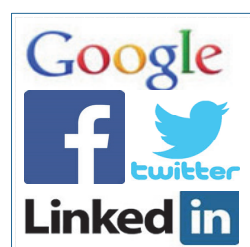
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Call for Entries

“Latinos in Architecture” (LiA), a committee of the San Francisco Chapter AIA, is proud to announce the first “PERSPECTIVAS 2014” an opportunity to showcase built and unbuilt design work to the Bay Area community at large.

The exhibit aims to showcase the work and talent of Hispanic architectural professionals, landscape designers, urban planners, design professionals, artists and students practicing in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

PERSPECTIVAS 2014 is part of the Architecture and the City Festival programs presented by the AIA San Francisco and the Center for Architecture + Design.

**Hosted by Alter Space gallery during first 3 weeks of September.**

Call for entries Submission Deadline: August 1st, 2014

**Questions Email us at:**  
lia.sfcommittee@gmail.com

**Registration Online at:**  
Eventbrite

### Preliminary Entry Submission

- Deadline August 11th.
- Submit digitally the final board, photograph, image or weblink of work to be submitted.
- Biography.
- Written Statement.

**Email information to:**  
lia.sfcommittee@gmail.com

### ON THE COVER:

The cover photo was shot in on Angel Island with the San Francisco skyline in the background on July 24, 2014 by freelance Los Angeles based photographer Michael A. Hernandez. He received a BA Fine Arts from the Pasadena Art Center.  
dearlhernandez@gmail.com

## Achievement, The Courage to Aim High

By Roy R. Hernández, Editor

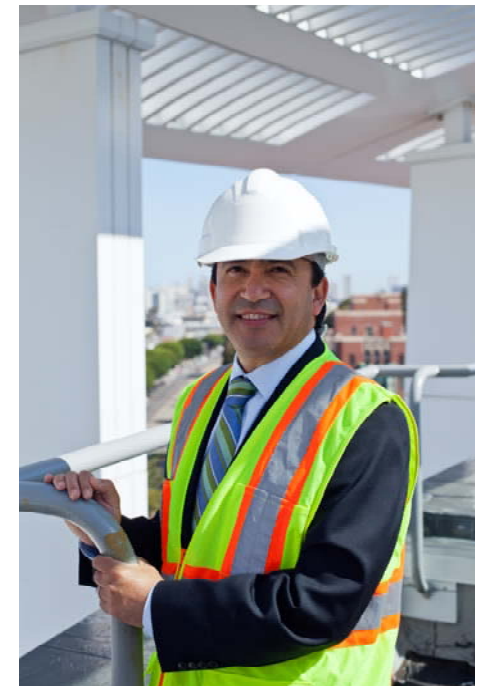


Michelangelo said: "The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark."

Achievement is defined as the final accomplishment of something noteworthy, a thing done successfully, typically after much effort, courage or skill – often in spite of obstacles and discouragements, and Edgar Lopez's career embodies this definition. Contrary to the belief of some, the American Dream is not dead for immigrants; it is reinvigorated with the passion, dreams and hard work of each new generation of immigrants.

In this issue we are privileged to share the story of Edgar A. Lopez, AIA, an immigrant from Guatemala City, raised by his grandmother while his mother immigrated to the US to create better opportunities for his brother and him. Arriving in San Francisco at 17, learning English in time to attend UC Berkeley, he succeeded in becoming the Architect for the City & County of San Francisco. Mr. Lopez currently manages a public works portfolio of \$3 Billion: what a story of achievement!

This issue offers stories of those helping our communities "aim high." We have the UC Berkeley alumni working for social media giants reaching out to Latinos to pursue tech careers; the ACE mentoring program, exposing high school students to design/construction professions, and lending his wisdom on the practice of architecture, Charles Higuera, FAIA, offers a thought provoking piece on the morality of architecture. Aim high!



**Edgar A. Lopez, AIA**  
City Architect and Deputy  
Director of Public Works  
San Francisco, CA  
July 24, 2014  
Photo: © 2014  
Michael Hernandez

## CONNECTIONS

### ByDESIGN Posted on the College of Environment Design, UC Berkeley, Website Publication Page

By Jennifer Wolch, Dean CED



I'm so pleased that the CED website now offers all of our visitors access to ByDESIGN, the CASA Alumni Association's outstanding newsletter.

ByDESIGN offers alumni and students all the news about current students and their accomplishments, the impressive achievements of alumni, and larger trends in the design world.

The ByDESIGN editorial team is also inclusive - and always interested in stories and news from members of the CASA community and beyond.

ByDESIGN can be accessed at:

<http://ced.berkeley.edu/events-media/publications/bydesign/>

[http://casa-ucberkeley.org/ByDESIGN\\_Newsletters.aspx](http://casa-ucberkeley.org/ByDESIGN_Newsletters.aspx)

<https://www.facebook.com/casaalumnuicberkeley>

The screenshot shows the CED website's navigation menu and a featured section for ByDESIGN. The navigation menu includes: CED HOME, PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, CURRENT STUDENTS, FACULTY + STAFF, ALUMNI + FRIENDS, GALLERIES, and a search bar. The featured section for ByDESIGN includes a list of events and media, a grid of ByDESIGN covers, and a download link. The ByDESIGN description states: "ByDESIGN is a quarterly online journal (e-zine) produced by the Chicano Architectural Student Association (CASA) alumni from the College of Environmental Design (CED). ByDESIGN is a first in online design journals dedicated to showcasing the academic and professional accomplishments of minority and women design professionals. The e-zine is published by CASAalumni in collaboration with CED CASA students and CED and is published quarterly. ByDESIGN showcases the extraordinary work and contributions made by CASA architects, designers, planners, academics, and students to the build environment. The e-zine also highlights work of CED Alumni, and non-alumni contributors, in various professions, including development, art, education, information technology and entrepreneurial accomplishments in Fortune 500 corporations and the public sector. ByDESIGN invites students and faculty from CED, other universities with design profession programs and practicing design professionals to contact them regarding contributions."

# CASAalumni at Work

## Graduates Pursue Their Dreams

By Issac Alcantar & Sylvia Perez

Graduates from UC Berkeley represent the cream of the crop from the academic community. Armed with an impassioned appreciation

for design and the built environment, these graduates are beginning to realize their professional promise.



**Issac Alcantar**  
Medical Architect + Planner  
Kaiser Permanente, San Francisco  
BA Architecture 2012, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley

**How I got the position:** My job started as a one-year internship in 2013, which I got through a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) at Berkeley. My performance and work ethics allowed me to move up the ladder to become a permanent full time employee as a Medical Architect + Planner earlier this year. .

**My role and responsibilities:** As a Medical Architect + Planner at Kaiser Permanente, you are not the typical architect in an architecture firm. I am more of the liaison between the client, the architecture firm and other consultants. I am currently in charge of writing the Design Excellence Tool, which consists of guidelines for consultants to use when designing our facilities across Kaiser Permanente. This tool provides guiding principles and design objectives along with actionable elements and attributes to design to and internal tools and resources to thrive our portfolio. Other responsibilities include creating room templates, design criteria, master planning, signage program, lighting performance guidelines, life cycle metrics, building assessments, pediatrics design guidelines and innovations for Kaiser Permanente facilities. Our goal is to make the member experience a more pleasant one on their journey through any of our facilities across the seven regions.

**What I like most about my job:** I like to be part of an organization that treats its members more than just patients, we strive to make every experience unique and make them feel they're home rather than a hospital or medical office building. I am happy to plan and design for a healthcare system that is not for profit and instead cares for the well-being of the 9 million health plan members it has. I enjoy researching new ways of thinking and delivering healthcare to people of all people despite their socioeconomic status, cultural background and levels of health. Oh, I also like my health benefits as an employee at Kaiser Permanente.

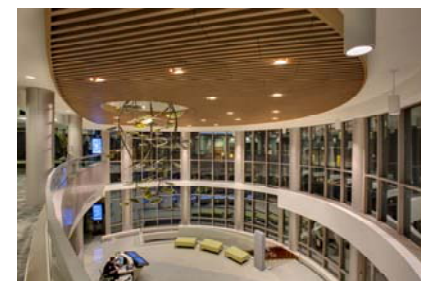
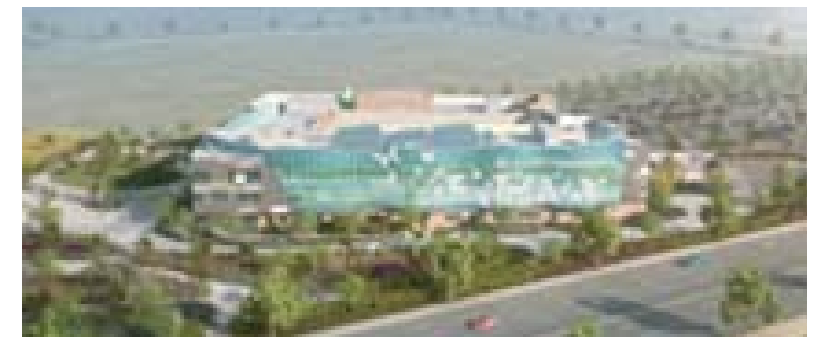


**Sylvia Perez**  
Designer  
McCall Design  
BA Architecture 2012, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley

**How I got the position:** I applied for an intern position at McCall Design Group through Cal's Career Center and started working with them in February 2013. Once I finished my architectural education at UC Berkeley, I was offered a full time position to become a Designer. Since then I've been part of the group.

**My role and responsibilities:** As a designer, I participate in the production and execution of projects from start to finish. I do from field surveys & code checks to DD & CD sets and obtain landlord & building permits. I also help with 3-D modeling and presentation packets for various projects around the office.

**What I like most about my job:** The opportunity to grow individually and professionally. Being part of McCall Design has giving me the opportunity to experience the built environment from visions to real inhabitable spaces. Also, the mentorship and care my coworkers give me is something I really appreciate.



T: San Leandro Medical Center, San Leandro, CA  
M: Antelope Valley Hospital, Lancaster, CA  
B: Westside Medical Center, Portland OR



T: Umpqua Bank, San Leandro, CA  
BL: Silf Coffee Shop, Berkeley, CA  
BR: Silf Coffee Shop, Berkeley, CA



# COVER STORY: EDGAR A. LOPEZ, AIA

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

Volume 13

August 1, 2014

## Architect for the City by The Bay

By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer



*Edgar Lopez is the defining example that a first generation immigrant cannot only succeed in America, but he is also part of a steady movement of people of color who are exceeding successful in prominent positions in the professional arena. Lopez, who mastered the English language late, as a young adult, was admitted to one of the premier architecture programs in the country at UC Berkeley, which opened the door of opportunity.*

Through perseverance and performance, he moved on to become the City Architect and Deputy Director of Public Works for one of the most iconic cities in the world, California's financial and high-technology hub, the City and County of San Francisco.

### Can you tell us about yourself and family background?

I was born in Guatemala City and raised by my Grandmother, while my mother immigrated to the United States to create better opportunities for my brother and me. When I was 17, I joined her in San Francisco, where I learned to speak English while I finished high school at Balboa High School. I then started college at San Francisco City College before transferring to UC Berkeley as a sophomore into the School of Environmental Design.

### What interested you in studying architecture? What has sustained your interest in architecture?

I am fascinated by buildings. Since I was little I loved playing with building blocks and sketching houses and buildings. When I was in middle school I took a drafting course that inspired me to want to learn more about how to draw using a T-square and triangles. The drafting training and my interest in buildings continued as I grew older.

When it was time to decide what to study in college, I had a clear vision that I wanted to be an architect. Although I had no role models in my family who were architects, I couldn't imagine studying anything else.



Mr. Lopez confers with the onsite Project Manager at the new San Francisco General Hospital.

### You are the City Architect and a Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works for the City and County of San Francisco; of what significance is this combined role in the delivery of public projects for San Francisco? Is the probability for a higher quality built environment improved as a result?

Architecture is a part of the Public Works portfolio. As a Deputy Director, my responsibility is to ensure that landscape architecture, construction management, architecture, project management, and project controls work in an integrated way to improve the quality of life in San Francisco.

As the City Architect, my responsibility is to ensure that building renovation and new construction are designed and delivered for this generation and the future. My role is not only to conceptualize great spaces; it is also to enable our teams to deliver excellent work while being good stewards of the taxpayer's resources.

My role is slightly different than many other Public Works agencies across the country, as we are an agency that not only provides the traditional Public Works services; we are also an agency that manages a large portfolio of capital projects worth over \$4 billion. We also have in-house architectural and engineering design capabilities.



In 2008 San Francisco voters approved a \$887.4 million dollar bond to replace the existing, primary hospital building with a newly constructed acute care / trauma center. San Francisco General Hospital Rebuild is planned for occupancy in 2015.

## Architect for the City by The Bay Continued



Most of DPW's large-scale projects in excess of \$30 million are designed by consultants and managed by our staff, and our own architects and engineers design small to medium size projects.

This situation is unique to San Francisco Public Works; we have a workforce of about 60 architects, 20 landscape architects, 30 construction managers and about 200 engineers. Our staff is responsible for designing a wide range of projects that include recreation centers, branch libraries, firehouses and renovation and seismic upgrades of multiple facilities.

Because our agency oversees most of the public building projects in San Francisco and we have a large staff of architects and we have a City Architect who is also a Deputy Director.

**Can you share some of the challenges of working as the City Architect and Deputy Director of Public Works for a major metropolitan city? How does your skill set and training as an Architect help you face and solve these challenges?**

The biggest challenge for me, or any other Architect in a similar position overseeing a large portfolio of building projects, is setting clear client expectations around scope, budget, and schedule. Before we assign staff architects or consultants to design or renovate public buildings we spend a considerable amount of time working with neighborhood communities and client departments defining the projects to make sure they meet their expectations and the established budget. The challenge then becomes making sure that we develop building design solutions that can meet the budget, get built within our schedules and not create unanticipated problems to neighbors and visitors during construction. As architects we are educated to apply critical thinking to problem solving and work in teams. Having this background I find it useful to work with colleagues from different disciplines in engineering, planning, finance and law to develop solutions that can meet the opportunities of building projects in San Francisco.

**How do you assure the taxpayers of San Francisco that capital projects for which you are responsible are run efficiently and with little capital waste?**

Delivering capital projects on-time and within budget is one of the most critical parts of my job. Client departments and taxpayers expect us to exercise good judgment when we are spending their money, and we take this responsibility very seriously. We start capital projects by carefully creating the budget to account for all anticipated costs. We pressure-test the budget against various building schedules, where we drive focus on enabling the critical path: time equals money. It is easy to concentrate on the construction cost, but it is not the only part of the budget. Items such as utility fees, moving expenses and building commissioning are often times overlooked and can create unpleasant surprises at the end of a project. We are mindful of the maintenance costs of the finished project and work with our clients to anticipate and plan for them in their own operating budgets. Once we establish a budget and schedule with our clients, we sign a memorandum of understating to document our commitment to deliver the project within a specific budget and schedule. We measure our performance against the signed agreement.

**What do you most like being the City Architect of San Francisco? What fulfills you?**

I love San Francisco and the responsibility that comes with the overseeing the public projects that have a direct impact in our residents and visitors. Each time my wife and I take our children to a playground, library, or the Academy of Sciences, it gives me tremendous satisfaction to have been part of defining and overseeing the places that we enjoy as a family.

**DPW has architects in staff - can you describe the differences of an architect working for the public sector versus the private sector?**

We have architects on staff that are 100% dedicated to public projects, and they tend to work in our office because they enjoy the commitment of public service and making a difference in San Francisco. Their work ranges from small renovations in buildings that are not accessible to the public, but are critical to the City, such as water treatment plants, to new construction of our General Hospital. Aside from being focused on public projects, one of the main differences between private architects and DPW architects is that they have to take into account that construction will be performed by contractors who submit a low bid rather than a negotiated price and therefore their drawings and specifications have to be extremely thorough to avoid expensive change orders.

**In what way can architects in the public sector make a contribution that they might not be able to provide practicing architecture in the private sector?**

Architects in public practice have the opportunity to influence projects in their local communities that have a direct social and economical benefit to their city. For example, the design or renovation of a fire house will have a significant impact in how fire fighters use the building where they spent a significant amount of time. It will also impact their operations and can save time when they respond to emergencies.

**“ Keep your options open and think about the type of work you would like to pursue. Public architecture is highly rewarding, it serves all levels of society and is built to last for generations. ”**



**What is your professional advice to those recent architectural graduates who are debating whether to pursue their profession in either the public or private sector?**

Keep your options open and think about the type of work you would like to pursue. Architecture is a career of problem solving. Even if you start your career in private practice doing residential work, or commercial tenant improvements, you can eventually choose to work on public architecture by working for a firm who specializes in this type of work or working directly for an agency like DPW. Public architecture is highly rewarding, it serves all levels of society and is built to last for generations.

# Sidebar: EDGAR A. LOPEZ, AIA

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

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August 1, 2014

## City Architect and Deputy Director of Public Works Department of Public Works City & County of San Francisco

Mr. Lopez provides executive leadership to a division of 200 professionals including architects, engineers, landscape architects, construction managers and project managers who are responsible for delivering a wide range of capital projects and programs totaling \$3 billion.

### Lead Building Design and Construction Division:

- Develop clear expectations for senior Managers for their work and contributions to the PM Division and Department.
- Implement delivery strategies for capital improvements ranging from single recreation centers to a portfolio of improvements for various client departments.
- Implement project controls to oversee the on-time and on-budget delivery of capital projects

### Provide direction / oversight of major capital projects:

- Assist project managers develop project budgets, schedules, obtaining project approvals, building community support, negotiating complex contracts and change orders.
- Maintain hands-on approach on major capital projects in design and construction including:

\$887 million	New acute care hospital at San Francisco General:
\$500 million	Moscone Convention Expansion
\$239 million	Public Safety Building
\$130 Million	Veterans Building Seismic upgrade
\$120 million	Cruise Ship Terminal and new 2-acre park at Pier 27
\$72 million	Neighborhood Fire Station improvements
\$52 million	Laguna Honda remodel
\$53 million	Office of Chief Medical Examiner,

### Provide direction planning major projects:

\$1 billion Justice Facilities Improvement Program, which includes:

New \$250 million jail,

\$475 million to house Police Investigations Unit, District Attorney's Office, Adult Probation and Demolition of Hall of Justice,

\$139 million Forensic Laboratory

### Education

BA Environmental Design, UC Berkeley in 1988, and Project Management Certificate, UC, Berkeley Extension in 200.

### Professional

Licensed Architect, State of California C26341

### Professional Associations

Board Member, San Francisco Parks Trust 2002 - 2007

Board Member, American Institute of Architects California Council (CCAIA) 2000 - 2001

Board Member, American Institute of Architects San Francisco Chapter (AIASF) 1997 - 1998

AIA member since 1992

**\$887 million, Acute care hospital at San Francisco General**



**\$500 million Moscone Convention Expansion**



**\$239 million Public Safety Building**



**\$130 Million Veterans Building Seismic upgrade**



**\$120 million Cruise Ship Terminal / new Pier 27 2-acre park**



**\$72 million Neighborhood Fire Station improvements**



**\$52 million Laguna Honda Remodel**



## Architecture and Design: A Morality Play?

By Charles A. Higuera, FAIA



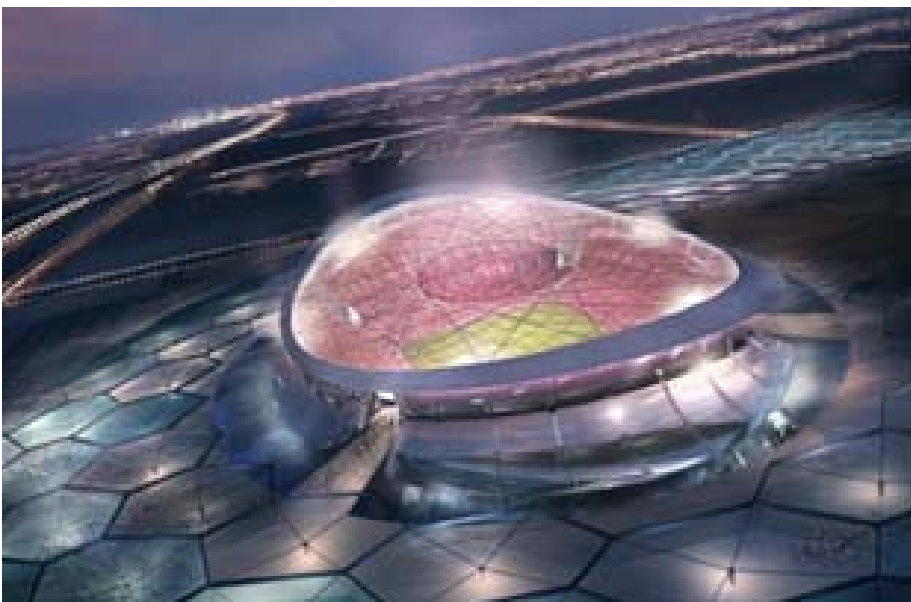
The excitement over the 2014 World Cup has in some quarters been overwhelmed by the very costly impact of the improved and new stadiums. Together with the investment that must be made for the Brazil Olympic Games' venues for 2016, Brazil will have dramatically diverted financial capacity away from social investments critical for any third world country.

In another example of lavish spending albeit in a place that is able to afford it, Qatar is preparing for the 2022 World Cup.

When recently asked about the 500 Indians and 382 Nepalese migrant workers who have reportedly died in preparations for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, Zaha Hadid the architect behind the al-Wakrah stadium responded:

**"I have nothing to do with the workers. I think that's an issue the government - if there's a problem - should pick up. Hopefully, these things will be resolved."**

If death isn't an inevitability, the situation for the largely immigrant labor force who build such projects is often thoroughly miserable, including not only poor working conditions, but compensation in the form of work agreements that constitute indentured labor, as well as inhibitions/restriction against going home whenever one would choose.



An artist's impression of the proposed stadium

What's a design professional to do? It is a vexing matter - design a career milestone project or allow another the opportunity? A veritable Sophie's Choice, because in fact lives are at stake and association with endeavors that place people at risk should not be easily deflected to the "hope" that someone will successfully resolve the challenges and conflicts.

There are many ways to rationalize these circumstances to recommend a design professional's participation, but they are often inconsiderate of the human toll that such projects cause.

Aside from the weak response that someone else will do it if I don't is the assumption that the projects while nefarious in the execution, offer great benefits over the long-term. This assertion has been roundly rebutted as it regards world-wide sporting events like the World Cup and the Olympics - they simply do not deliver the very rosy projection of benefits represented at the outset.

“ There are many ways to rationalize these circumstances to recommend a design professional's participation, but they are often inconsiderate of the human toll that such projects cause. ”

Charles Higuera,  
FAIA



Foreign construction workers queue up for the bus in Doha, Photograph by STR/Corbis



## Architecture and Design: A Morality Play?

Continued

“Architects are pretty much high-class whores. We can turn down projects the way they can turn down some clients, but we've both got to say yes to someone if we want to stay in business.”

Philip Johnson



Philip Johnson with the Sony Tower, formerly the AT&T Building completed in 1984.



Daniel Libeskind  
Photo: © Ishmael Orendain



Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto  
Photo: © Ishmael Orendain

Are we design-professionals simply mercenaries/guns for hire? Are we sufficiently isolated and immune from any responsibility by virtue of our lack of power to influence the process? Is it ever acceptable to seek out these opportunities for fear of loss of project backlog and/or livelihood?

***"I'm not interested in building gleaming streets for despots; I prefer making work in the challenges and constraints of a democracy than working in a homogenous system," he added. "I can't separate the formal geometry from the context of who they were commissioned by and the morality of those states." - Daniel Libeskind***

In truth, on such large, foreign projects we are part of a much larger enterprise and have no true influence on the means and methods – but this is faint absolution for knowing of the most egregious practices to follow our participation. Can design professionals practice according to not only the standards set by professional ethics, but by the rules of basic decency and regard for others, even those far away from us? The answer most certainly is yes.

“Can design professionals practice according to not only the standards set by professional ethics, but by the rules of basic decency and regard for others, even those far away from us? The answer most certainly is yes.”

Charles Higuera, FAIA

We obsess as we should regarding the impact of our industry on climate change – we seek out free trade products – we donate to micro-financing across the globe - why not be comparably concerned about the ramifications of our designs among those called upon for their construction?

Most of us will never face the proposition described here, but in smaller ways, closer to home and among our own communities, we will often find ourselves faced with dilemmas of economic and social justice relevant to a project for which we are providing services. In very much the same way we must critically consider with whom we are involved, the alignment of our values with theirs in regard to the impact of built form, and the opportunity for the true betterment of the directly and indirectly affected. Such opportunities are abundant among both public and private sector clients.

It is a basic tenet of environmental design that as with the doctor's oath, that first we do no harm. It may be that upon closer examination we find that we cannot accept a project's impact and choose to decline – but look closely we must – we should be selective.

To look away is simply beneath the dignity of our calling and our practices, and will not elevate our need for an identity and credibility as a profession genuinely invested in the health and welfare of our fellow human beings.

“All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.”

Thomas Jefferson

## Latinos at Google, Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn Hold Panel

By Lauren E. Hernandez, Staff Writer



Approximately forty high school, summer bridge program, and current Cal students, in addition to friends of the Chicano Latino Alumni Association, filed into the Victorian house-turned **Center for Latino Policy Research** to listen to Cal Alumni discuss their high-tech experience with social media leaders on Sunday, July 13th.

According to Cal Alumna Oscar de la Paz, the panel discussion aimed to enlighten students of the accomplishments of Latino professionals in the technology industry.

Silicon Valley harbors the largest technology companies in the world in addition to blossoming start-up companies, all of which offer potential employment opportunities for students.

"It's important for students to know that there are a lot of opportunities for you out there, all you need to do is ask that question, 'what do I need to do to get into Linked in? What do I need to do to work at Facebook?'" said de la Paz.

The panel of four Cal Alumni hailed from **Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Google** and armed themselves with years of anecdotes and expertise in their respective fields to the room filled with eager minds.

Arnoldo Avalos, recent appointee to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, tackled recent statistics published by major technology companies that displayed low Latino representation.

Approximately three percent of the Google workforce are Latino, according to workforce demographics released in late May. Similarly, Yahoo and Linked in also revealed that their workforce is approximately four percent Latino.

"Unfortunately, that's the reality that I lived at Cisco, at Google, and at Facebook. One of the things I wanted to do [today] was that we recognize that we need more representation in high-tech," noted Avalos.

The low representation that currently pervades the high-technology industry was the catalyst for the Chicano Cal Alumni to connect and offer their personal stories and counsel to those interested in technology.

"That's why we came up with this [panel discussion] idea, to start the voice. When I was at Berkeley, it was all about social justice. It was about political struggle and diversification of faculty," said Avalos. "Those issues are important, but they're also important to diversify high-tech in corporate America. Each one of us can play that role."

“**Hector Preciado, Content Campaign Strategist from LinkedIn, emphasized the importance of giving back to the community by helping Latinos enter the field.**”



Lorena Flores Chatterjee, a Senior Technical Recruiter at Apple, maintained that taking an active role in changing these statistics is imperative, as opposed to merely wallowing in the low numbers. She suggested that the students in attendance should consider enrolling in coding classes in an array of computer programs, so that they may arm themselves with the skills necessary in various high-tech companies.



“That’s the great thing about technology now - the point of entry has now been reduced so that you don’t need a college degree to get into technology,” said Chatterjee.

Hector Preciado, Content Campaign Strategist from Linked In, emphasized the importance of giving back to the community by helping Latinos enter the field.

“There is no me without an entire village of people holding me up. So for me, I have to give back,” said Preciado. “I know the great opportunities that exist in tech, and I want to bring everyone along with me, as many as I can. We need to be here.”

“There is a technology revolution every nanosecond, and we’re not apart of it. And it’s unacceptable. You’re here at Berkeley, you’re the cream of the crop,” said Preciado. “You’re somebody, you’re talented, you’re big-time. Play the biggest stages. That’s what we need to do.”

Avalos also tackled the common misconception that one must possess a computer science degree or be technologically savvy in order to thrive in the technology industry.

“There are jobs in marketing, recruiting, human resources, operations, sales, and legal,” said Avalos. “In tech, computer science is only 25 percent of the company. 75 percent is everything else. We have a place in those companies.”

Avalos delved into his extensive employment history that ranges from being a Cisco recruiter, a systems analyst at Anderson Consulting, and a global compensation manager at Facebook, to remind students that their professional paths may not be linear.

## Latinos at Google, Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn Hold Panel

Continued

“Remember that just where you start, isn’t where you’re going to end. When we’re young, we get fixated on something and we think that’s it,” said Avalos. “Redefine yourself.”



*Woman standing center (welcome message): Lupe Gallegos-Diaz, Director and Community Liaison, Chicano Latino Academic Student Development, Multicultural Student Development*

“Life is not linear,” said Avalos, his hands dipping up and down in the air, reminiscent of a roller coaster.

“Once you get a degree, then life begins. How do you find mentors? How do you find people that will help you transition? When I made my transition to one job to another, they’re taking a risk on me,” said Avalos. “It’s having those mentors within the companies, and the people you can leverage outside the companies that help you through those transition points in your life.”

Chatterjee, who also exhibited a varied professional path, was the director of her first start-up before the age of thirty and boasts experience at Adobe and Google. She recognized a love for technology when she worked with semiconductors and carried over that passion through positions as director of staffing for start-up companies.

Now with three start-ups under her belt, including her own start-up Leap Commerce, she focuses her attention on giving back to the community through connecting with young minds eager to enter the technology field. Chatterjee, who is an advisor to Latinas in STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, also reiterated the importance of building bridges with people one meets in their professional life.

“Every single time you meet someone, it’s an opportunity to open a door,” said Chatterjee. “Get out of your comfort zones because there are other opportunities outside of your comfort zones.”

Preciado, an alumna of Haas Business School at Berkeley, maintains the immense importance of establishing connections with peers and potential employers.

“Forty percent of my classmates are Silicon Valley professionals, so I built those bridges that allowed me to go from public policy to technology,” said Preciado.

“When people think about innovation and the future, they think about Silicon Valley. What they don’t think about is people who look like me, people who look like you,” Preciado said gesturing to the room filled with guests of different ethnicities.



*Some of the forty high school, summer bridge program, current Cal students, and friends of the Chicano Latino Alumni Association who attended the Center for Latino Policy Research event to listen to Cal Alumni discuss their high-tech / social media experience and career opportunities.*

“We’re here to change that. Part of how we’re going to change it is to convince you to just think about it,” said Preciado. “Maybe it’s not for you, but maybe it’s for your roommate, for your sister, or your primo.”

Laura Gomez, who was the first Latina member of Twitter’s International Team, was undocumented through half of her educational career at Berkeley.

The magna cum laude graduate was hired from YouTube and sent to Google Brazil as part of the team that helped expand their operations to Latin America.

Following her time at YouTube, Gomez moved on to work for several start-ups, and eventually moved on to Twitter.

“One thing that goes about with humility, about bridges and about understanding your roots,” said Gomez. “While I was working at Twitter, the only people I could speak Spanish with was the janitors and cleaning ladies.”

**“When people think about innovation and the future, they think about Silicon Valley. What they don’t think about is people who look like me, people who look like you. Preciado said gesturing to the room filled with guests of different ethnicities. We’re here to change that.”**

Gomez restated the importance of celebrating Latino accomplishments and the fact that there are Latinos in the professional world that are making great strides.

“I love Twitter because I realized on the cash perspective you can get wealthy, but also on the impact perspective. You can do your own. I’m an entrepreneur right now.”

Gomez is in the process of gathering investors for her own start-up, citing the Gallo Family Vineyards, one of the largest producers of wine in the country, as one of her potential investors.

Gomez, a Mexican native, has joined forces with another foreigner to create a start-up company and discussed the importance of such diversification in various professional disciplines.

## Latinos at Google, Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn Hold Panel

Continued



**L to R:** Lorena Flores-Chatterjee, Oscar de la Paz, Lupe Gallegos-Diaz, Hector Preciado, Laura Gomez, Arnaldo Avalos

“My co-founder is Palistinian-Canadian and was born in Geneva. He’s Muslim,” said Gomez. “There is not enough of [people like] he and myself in technology.”

“I am a woman. I am Latina,” said Gomez. “What I represent doesn’t mean that I represent all women and Latinas that work in STEM, but I do try to give back.”

Cal third-year Cognitive Science Major Yizel Vizcarra expressed pride in listening to the two female panelists perspective on being women in the technology industry, saying that it fueled her interest in the field.

**About the Author:** Lauren Hernandez is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer. Her articles have appeared in ByDESIGN for three years, Mountain View Patch, Los Altos Patch, San Jose State Spartan Daily, and the Santa Monica Mirror. dearlhernandez@gmail.com.

“It gave me a lot of confidence in the sense to where I can end up, and I don’t necessarily have to know where I’m going,” said Vizcarra. “Prior to coming to this event I had no idea what I was going to do and now I have a lot more confidence.”

All panelists reinforced the importance of establishing a network early in their educational career at Berkeley, so that they may maintain relationships that last through their professional career.

In addition to building a network, the panelists recommended that upon entering the professional realm, one must consider potential future opportunities that a job may offer.

“It’s important to continue to build your skills, continue to challenge yourself, and keep moving forward,” said Avalos.

***Note:** This event was sponsored by: Chicano Latino Alumni Association, Chicana Latino Student Development, Center for Latino Policy Research, and the Raza Recruitment and Retention Center. The opinions expressed by the panelists are their own personal opinions, and in no way reflect the opinions or positions of the companies or organizations they affiliate with.*

## Sidebar

### Social Media Panelists Comment on the Event

**Lupe Gallegos-Diaz, Director and Community Liaison, Chicano Studies and School of Social Welfare, Lecturer and Instructor:** We had highschoolers, Cal students and the community people, I thought it was a great combination of students and the community. Our aim was to get 20 or 30, but we hit 40 so I was really happy. The speakers had diverse experiences. I loved that the alumni were articulate about not just being business majors, but their background being diverse. We all need each other and bridge building is a crucial part. To be able to have these transferable skills in technology, to what we’re going to do, is awesome that we’re able to take advantage of for those of us who are able to get into the technology industry. To give back, to pay it forward because of a commitment of not only advancing themselves but also advancing ones family and our community, is key.

**Hector Preciado, Content Campaign Strategist, Linked In:** It’s inspirational to see a room full of young, aspiring, bright Latinos who are in the point of their lives where they’re thinking about what they want to do, and that we’re invited as tech professionals to talk to them and influence those decisions. Personally, there is more of us that are needed in tech. Until more of us make the decision to move to tech, we’re going to continue to have a shortage in tech. And all the benefits that we see from a personal, professional and a global perspective, that Silicon Valley is bringing to everybody. I’m not seeing enough coming to us, and so being a part of this was an amazing experience. I hope that people continue with it and follow in our footsteps.

**Arnoldo Avalos, California Community Colleges Board of Governors:** It’s really important to make sure that we continue to give back as alumni of Cal, that we help others bridge the gap from where they are right now to where they might be in the future. For me, its important to invest my time to help others, to alleviate the situation, to be more knowledgeable, experienced, and to be better prepared for what the future has for them. It’s rewarding for me to do this, at the same time it’s important to continue to do this. It feels great. I think giving back starts it; you don’t have to be a professional to give back. College students can give back to high school or junior high school students. Giving back doesn’t mean you have to be at a certain level or platform to really be involved to help others. It can be at any point of your life. It’s satisfying for me, at least, the concept of giving back. Why are we on this planet? At the end of the day, when it’s all said and done, when you look back on your life, what have you done? Have you made this place better by being here or not? And that’s a question everyone should fundamentally ask themselves.

**Laura Gomez, YouTube/Google Brazil:** It’s amazing to see the dedication and commitment to learn about what tech is. I love coming back to Berkeley. The architecture, the students, and seeing so much of me in the younger kids. Having such a diverse room, we had students from Berkeley, we had students from everywhere. That is the true Berkeley spirit. We have resources, we don’t cut off resources to others. We’re givers, the panel was a primary example of that.

## ACE Mentor Program: Enriching the High School Experience with Architecture, Construction & Engineering

By Diana B. Marquez, Staff Writer



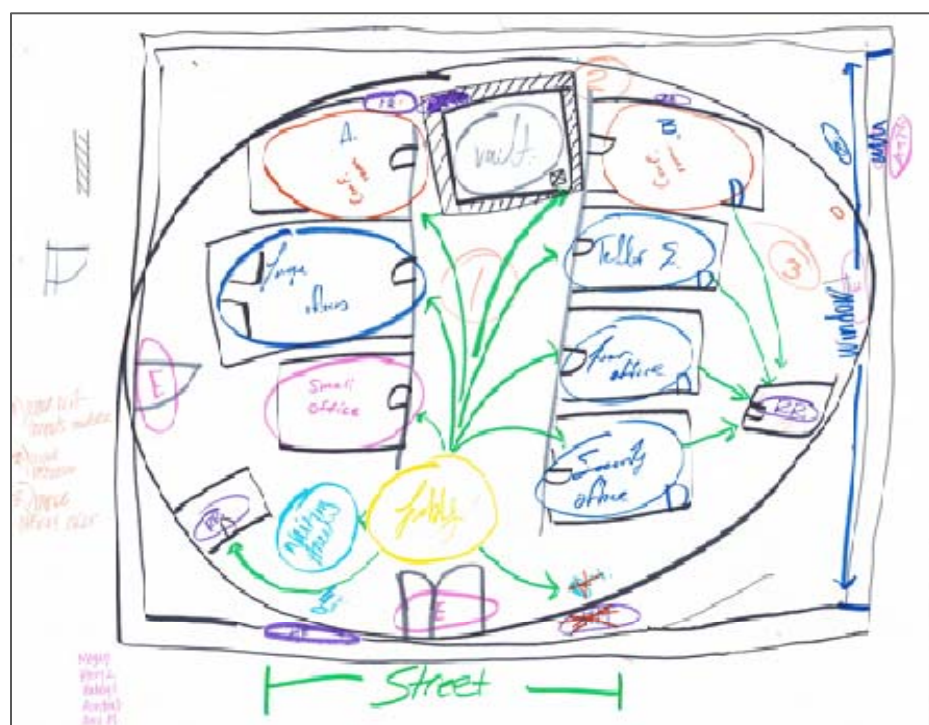
It's 3:10pm and Mr. Jose Rivas, a teacher of Lennox Academy is putting away books as students come in and out of his classroom. The room is noisy and chaotic. After a couple of minutes, several adults wearing slacks, polo shirts and holding briefcases and giant rolls of drawings, walk in.

Suddenly, the attention of the room shifts towards them. The students surround the newcomers, asking questions, showing them cardboard models and sketches. The room begins to sound a bit like a design studio: "Not sure if this is ok for the structure"; "I don't know how big a car is"; "The glue keeps warping my cardboard walls" are heard around the room.

After settling in, one of the newcomers starts speaking "Good afternoon, my name is Ricardo, and as some of you know, this is the ACE program. If you are here to learn all about Architecture, Engineering and Construction, you are in the right place." This was my first day as an ACE volunteer (ACE stands for Architecture, Construction & Engineering).

ACE is a group mentorship program which focuses in the enrichment of the high school experience through the exploration of the three fields. The mentorship is done through a main design project that gets assigned to the entire group of students and mentors.

All ACE groups have a leader and several volunteer mentors. The mentors are instructed to work together with the students as one big comprehensive design group.



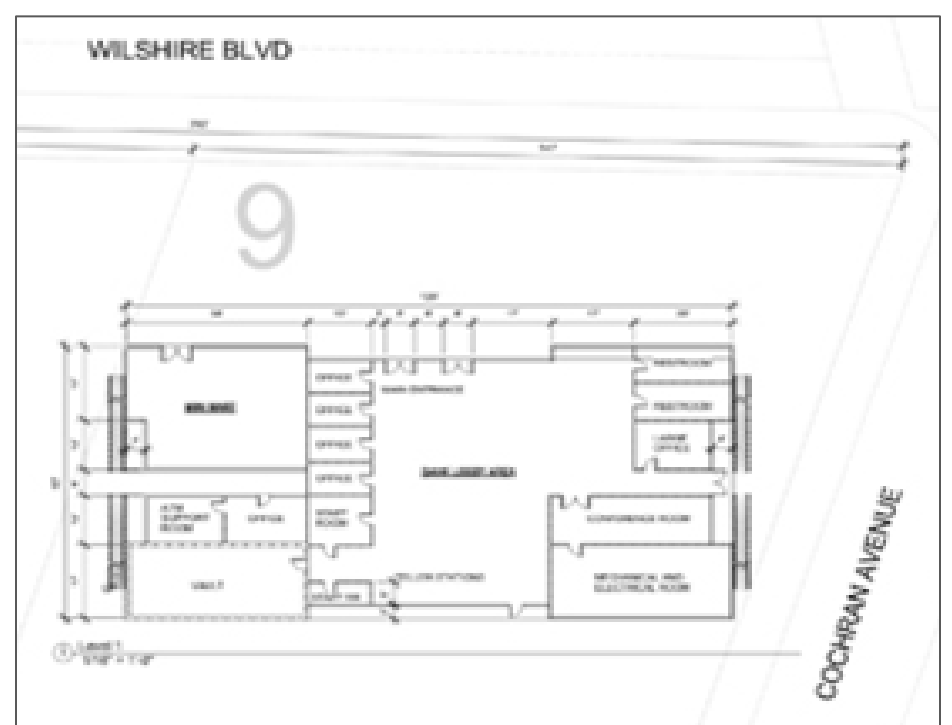
**Schematic Plan:** This bubble diagram was the first group exercise led by the Architecture Mentors. Students used the diagram as a basis for the rest of the drawings and models.



Yajaira Perdomo presents Lennox Academy project for the Cochran & Wilshire intersection at the ACE Awards Ceremony in Los Angeles.

Last school year, Lennox Academy was assigned a site in Los Angeles, CA and given the task of designing a park, a hotel and an apartment building. The students took the project from Schematic Design all the way to Construction, along with a construction estimate and a model to go with it.

**“ ACE is a group mentorship program which focuses in the enrichment of the high school experience through the exploration of the three fields. The mentorship is done through a main design project that gets assigned to the entire group of students and mentors. ”**



**Floor Plan:** Floor plan of the 2013 ACE Program by the Lennox Academy ACE students. "New Los Angeles Bank" project on Cochran & Wilshire in Los Angeles.

## ACE Mentor Program: Continued

Throughout the year, you can see the students go from shy and unsure of the "right" answers, to confident and almost silly when they start exploring above and beyond the metaphorical "box" that we are all supposed to think outside of.



ACE Mentor Program participants graduate high school at a higher rate\* than their non-ACE counterparts.

As a designer, I was surprised of how much I keep thinking "inside the box" and how the students kept bringing me out of it. My fellow mentors and I have changed each other's understanding of how we design and make decisions as much as the students have.

ACE is a national organization, seemed a bit too "corporate" to me, with their sponsors and their agendas and meetings. However, once I started volunteering, I realized that it is the everyday work that the mentors do what gives it its identity. The ACE program is nationwide, so I highly encourage you to find your local chapter. If they do not have one, they provide you with the tools that you need to start your own.

### **About ACE**

*Founded in 1994, the ACE program helps to mentor high school students and inspires them to pursue careers in design and construction. It's now the construction industry's fastest-growing high school mentoring program, reaching over 8,000 students annually. Their mission is to "engage, excite and enlighten high school students to pursue careers in architecture, engineering, and construction through mentoring and to support their continued advancement in the industry." The ACE Mentor Program of America, Inc. financially supports each student's continued success through scholarships and grants. Since 1994, ACE has awarded over \$14 million in scholarships to promising participants. [www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org)*

### **About the Author:**

*Diana Marquez received her BA in Architecture from the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley in 2006. She currently works as a Job Captain at CSDA Architects in Los Angeles ([dmarquez@gmail.com](mailto:dmarquez@gmail.com))*