

The Woman's Issue

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Spring
2012

CASAalumni

Chicano Architectural Student Association
College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley

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MEMO from the Editor

By D. Oswaldo Lopez, AIA

CASA alumni's fundraising efforts continue to grow in our efforts to highlight student scholarship for academic achievement, excellence / professional promise from minority communities.



This issue of ByDESIGN is a unique edition highlighting promising young minority women in environmental design who are striving to make a difference:

We honor in this edition a new scholarship fund in memory of a very special woman who influenced the life of her grandson, a distinguished CASA alumni member, thus the Woman's Issue. Enjoy!

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COMMENTARY

"I'll Never Forget Who I Am" by Roy R. Hernandez

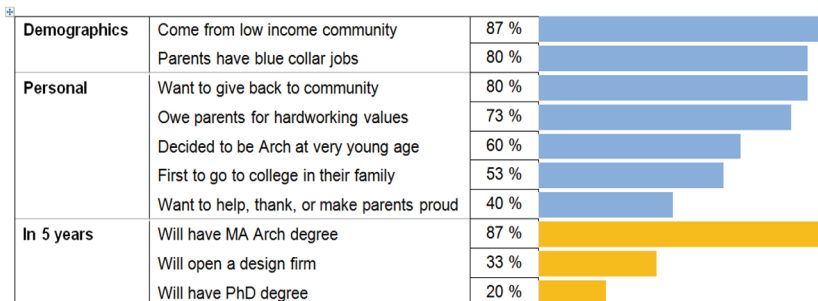
"I'll never forget who I am, where I came from, where I'm at, and who put me there." the words of James Brown, known by soul music enthusiasts as the "Godfather of Soul." What most may not know is that Brown was born into extreme poverty in the segregated South during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Brown was so impoverished that he was often sent home from grade school for "insufficient clothes," and was thrilled when he got his first "drawers" at the age of 10!



The hardest working man in show business worked his way to the top of funk and R&B music, and when he passed he left his sizable fortune to educate poor kids. He never forgot.

I write this a few days after the CASAalumni awards ceremony on April 20. Recognizing talented students is always uplifting. The event was icing on the cake after reading the heartfelt Personal Statements contained in the prize applications where a number of common themes surfaced, e.g., overcoming the momentous challenges of poverty, hard work and extraordinary work ethic, the importance of family, sacrifices made by parents, and giving back. Also evident, students with superior intelligence whose focus resulted in extraordinary achievement, often surmounting substandard inner city schools and racial discrimination.

The unshakable will of these students to achieve a better future is nothing less than inspiring. Their quest for a professional career is forged in the fire of adversity, and a desire to thank the persons who put them in CED - their parents. Not forgetting where they came from, they long to improve their communities; most are giving back already! These CED students of color will go on to address problems of scale and complexity that will face the built environment over the next 40 years. They will become thought leaders, armed with a multi-disciplinary problem solving toolset acquired at CED. The figure below provides a subset of responses provided by students, echoing the words and sentiment of the "Godfather."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Antonia Escobar Prize for Women in Design, by Charles Higuera, FAIA

Inspired by the CASAalumni prizes, a CED CASA alumni establishes a memorial prize for women in design. The following statement was read to the recipient of the first Antonia Escobar Prize in a recent award ceremony.



"I'm sorry that I cannot be with you tonight for this very special event, but believe me when I say that I am very much with you in spirit. I am very happy to see the resurgence of CASA as a source of affirmation and support for Latino students. My time at Cal was enhanced by the friendships formed at CASA that have carried through over the last 30 plus years.

When Roy Hernandez reached out to make me aware of the new CASA, I was greatly enthused by the new possibilities of the organization, particularly around connecting students with architects in practice or otherwise in careers that can inspire you. When Roy, Oswaldo, Carlos and I were students there were very few role model Latino architects. Martin Del Campo was one and he took great interest in mentoring Cal students. Throughout his life he was always available to counsel and as possible, hire Latinos to work in his office.

Martin's example is one we honor this evening with the memorial prize in his name - Martin has served to inspire me to initiate the **Antonia Escobar Memorial Prize**. Antonia Escobar was my maternal grandmother, an immigrant from El Salvador who helped to raise my sisters and me, living with us until her death. She was the quintessential grandmother - loving, wise, and always with kind words for others. Best of all, she inculcated us with language and culture that may have otherwise been hard to acquire, as we were raised in a largely non-Latino neighborhood.

I've chosen to focus this prize on recognizing woman students to further honor the significance of strong, inspirational women throughout my life - my grandmother, my mother and my wife - to name but a few.



I am honored to award Leslie Valencia with the first Antonia Escobar Memorial Prize. Her application provides ample evidence of what I would expect to be a very promising career. It will be my great pleasure to meet her at some point in the future, but until then, I wish you Leslie the very best as you finish your academic year."

Charles Higuera, FAIA, is a Project Manager for the City & County of San Francisco, Dept. of Public Works. He received a M Arch '81 and BA Arch '79 from CED at UC Berkeley.

On the Boards, exceptional CED Student Work posted on the CASA Website

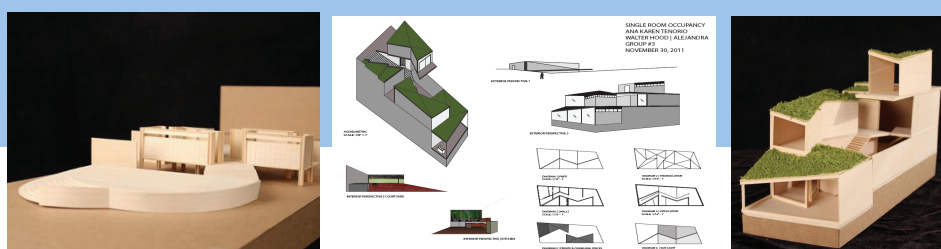
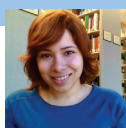
Silvia Rojas
BA Arch 2011



Leslie Valencia
BA Arch 2012



Ana Tenorio
L. Arch 2014



Non-CED students, alumni and professionals are encouraged to post your content at: casa-ucberkeley.org. Please forward this to others!

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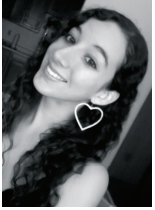
FUTURE PROFESSIONAL PROFILE: GRADUATE STUDENTS

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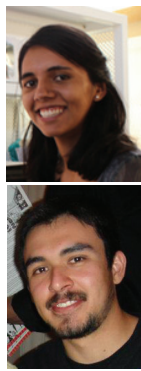
A Match Made in CASA – Part 1, by Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer



As rain barraged the concrete sidewalk on a damp March morning in Los Angeles, Celeste Rodriguez and her husband Ivan Rodriguez swiftly entered a hole in the wall café for our interview. This highly talented pair of Master of Architecture students met on the CASA soccer team while attending Undergraduate school at UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design (CED). This is Celeste's story. (Ivan's will appear in the next issue of ByDESIGN.)

Rodriguez's humble nature is immediately apparent, which might account why she excelled at UC Berkeley as well as USC. Instead of gloating about her numerous accolades, Rodriguez delves into her upbringing in Fairfield, California and details how her desire for architecture was born at just thirteen years old.

"My dad worked in construction, so I would be at my dad's site all day just watching him," Rodriguez recalls "and when I was thirteen he let me design a house that he was going to do, and it ended up being the house that we are living in now." Rodriguez claims that the time spent observing her father on construction sites ultimately led to her intrigue in architecture. Rodriguez's initial interest rapidly grew to passion in high school at the age of fourteen, where she took advantage of drafting courses offered as elective classes. As a freshman in high school, Rodriguez learned how to draft and became proficient in AutoCAD and numerous other software programs.



Celeste's inherent passion for architecture did not cease following high school. On the contrary, her enthusiasm steadily grew as she acquired more knowledge about the field. Upon completing several semesters at a community college, Rodriguez transferred to Undergraduate school at UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design (CED).

Rodriguez's first encounter with CASA took place on the first day of school, when she approached an information booth about the club. CASA is renowned for providing students with support and guidance, and Rodriguez concluded, "If they were able to do this I can do this... it was nice having people to look up to."

Further validating the belief that CASA is an organization based on offering support, Rodriguez recounts one semester when a fellow architecture student suffered a loss in the family: "We all came together and built her model from her drawings... we were all there to help each other."

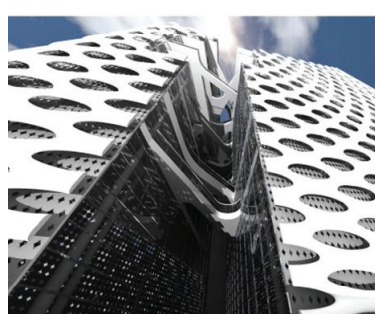
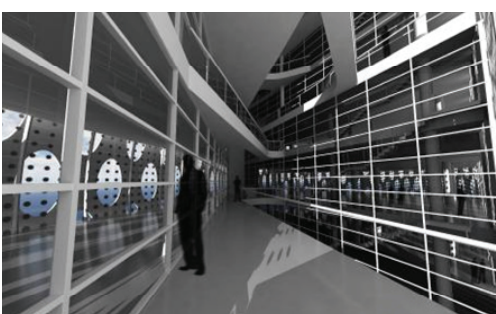
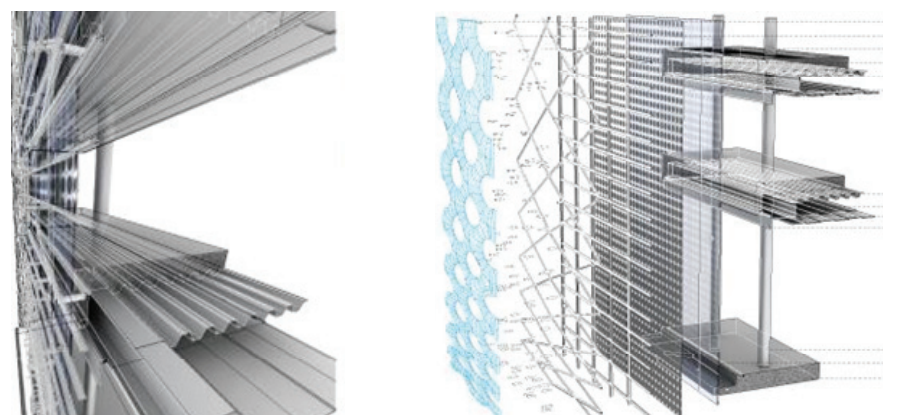
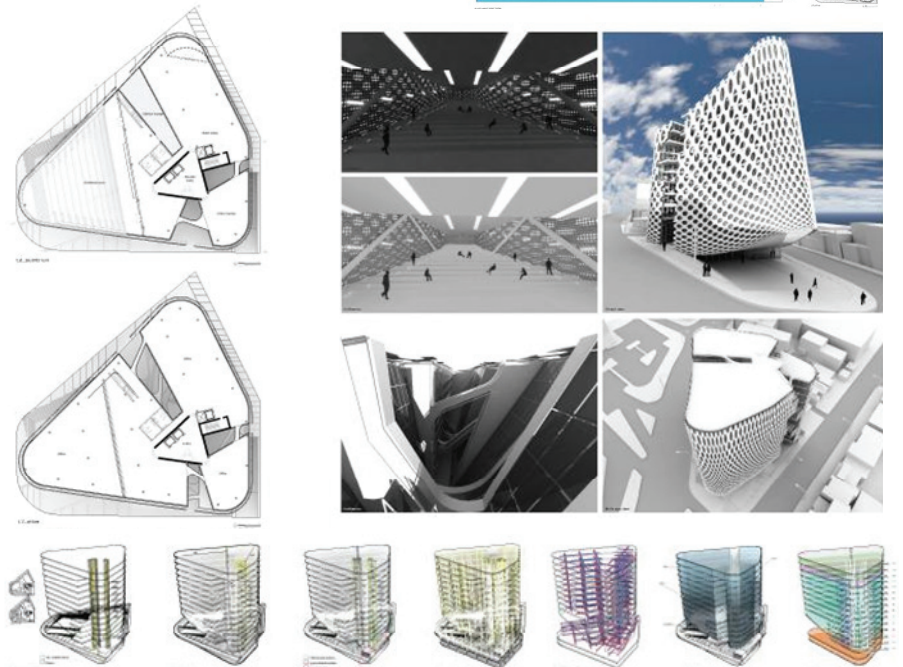
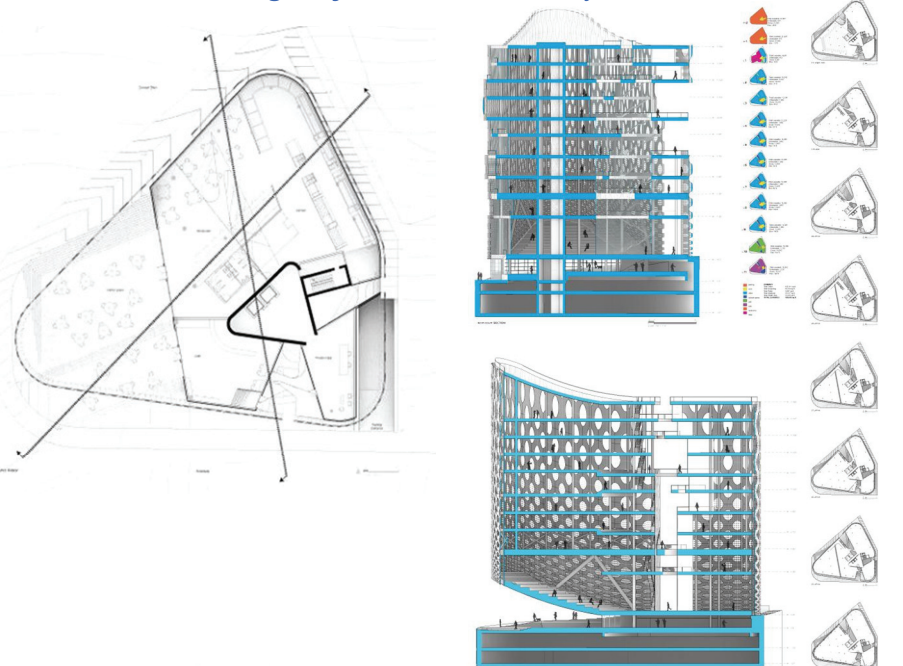
Rodriguez maintains that her successful academic career at UC Berkeley was directly attributed to the counsel and teachings of Virginia San Fratello and Sudthida Cheunkardee. "They helped me apply for scholarships and graduate school," said Rodriguez "they were really hard on me, but it helped me more."

Utilizing the knowledge she acquired at UC Berkeley, Rodriguez was accepted to graduate school at USC and continues creating exceptional work. Her diligent and profound desire to practice architecture can be found in her work itself. Last semester, Rodriguez designed a mixed-use talent agency meant to be located on Sunset Boulevard. Her renderings are reminiscent of work executed by large architectural firms and Rodriguez's understanding of the field is evident in her work. "All of the reviewers said 'thank you for being here (at USC), thank you for having such an amazing project,'" observed Rodriguez "I was actually being thanked for doing what I'm supposed to be doing."

In regards to her professional career, Rodriguez established an architectural firm with her husband Ivan Rodriguez. The firm is called **Cirod Design** (www.ciroddesign.com). Upon graduating USC, she hopes to base their company in Santa Barbara and expand thereafter.



Mixed-use Talent Agency, Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA



Celeste encourages current CED undergraduates to pursue their professional dreams and strongly suggests that they attend graduate school. Unlike undergraduate school, "Everything you're doing is architecture based," explains Rodriguez "you're more focused, and you know what you want."

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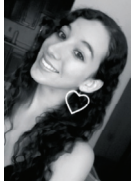
SPECIAL FEATURE, Martin Del Campo / Bob Esparza Award Ceremony

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Investing in Our Communities, By Lauren E. Hernández, Staff Writer



Nearly 35 students, staff and family members entered the quiet corridor of Wurster Hall on April 20th, filing one by one into the CED Design Gallery for the second Martin del Campo / Bob Esparza Scholarship Awards Ceremony. Eagerness hung in the air as attendants sat expectantly while Dean Jennifer Wolch welcomed attendees to the recently refurbished gallery. **CASA** Co-chairs, Cecilia Cardenas and Albert Orozco graciously acknowledged **CASA** members for their participation in the awards process. The evening was moderated by two **CASA** alumni members, Carlos Rodriguez, AIA (M Arch 78, BA Arch Honors 76) and Roy Hernandez (M Arch 78, BA Arch Honors 76) and supported by the **CED Alumni of Color**. With a 37% increase in donations from last semester, the evening was a great success. Thanks to all!

How does it feel to get this recognition?

Ivan Cisneros: I didn't expect it. It was a big surprise when my picture came up. I didn't originally come to Berkeley for architecture, so to receive this award re-inspires me. It motivates me to keep pushing forward.

Cecilia Cardenas: it's a really big honor, for all of us, not just for myself. Just having been in **CASA** for so long, and having this happen in my last year, it definitely feels great.

Albert Orozco: It feels awesome, I think it feels better just to know that the alumni and Roy has been helping us so much. Its just really good to see that **CASA** was built in the 70s and we have these same people coming back.

What will you do with your scholarship?

Ivan Cisneros: First, pay the materials that I haven't paid for this semester. Its going to go help me. I'm not going to be so worried when I have to invest in materials or prepare my portfolio, like to turn in my portfolio for an internship.

Cecilia Cardenas: I'm still saving up for graduate school. I would love to go to Colombia, that's my dream school. I mean of course, anything better than Berkeley or Berkeley, that's what we aim for. Fingers crossed!.

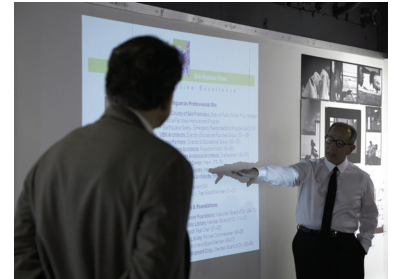
Dean Jennifer Wolch

What are your thoughts on this event?

I'm really delighted to be here and see the students doing high quality work and being recognized by their elders. Its also really heartening to see the **CASA** Alumni who have been out of school for a long time still very much engaged with whats happening in the college and the life and the welfare of the students and their careers. We just hope that they can go to graduate school and get good jobs and interesting careers. And I think that given with what I've seen tonight, it seems like they are well on their way.

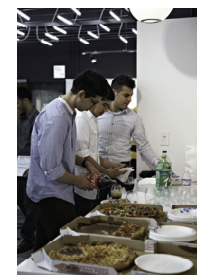
What are your hopes for **CASA**?

I would like to see **CASA** get larger and stronger, and integrate across the departments. Because mostly now **CASA** members are from architecture, and yet there are certainly Chicano/Latino students in City Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture, and I think the next step **CASA** may be to actually work to reach out to those students and those Alum's so that the organization is more robust and more powerful in terms of it's ability to make opportunities available to students.



(L to R) C. Rodriguez, AIA, A. Orozco, J. Ugalde, J. Barajas, I. Cisneros, C. Cardenas, C. Rodriguez (M Arch USC), I. Rodriguez (M Arch UCLA), R. Hernandez, Jennifer Wolch

(L to R) I. Paz, A. Orozco, J. Barajas, R. Andrade, G. Guzman, J. Ugalde, E. Siliezar Jr., I. Alcantar, I. Cisneros, L. Ochoa, M. Valdez, C. Cardenas



Prize recipients presented their projects to the ceremony attendees, demonstrating a wide range of designs.

Ivan Cisneros, Ramon Andrade, Gerardo Guzman and Manuel Valdez take a pause to get their "grub on."

Donors & Recipients

Roy Hernandez	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 76 Honors, M. Arch 78	1,000
Carlos Rodriguez	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 76 Honors, M. Arch 78	1,000
Charles Higuera	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 81, M. Arch 79	500
Sara Ishikawa	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 63, Professor Emerita CED	500
Dan Esparza	UC Davis	BS Env Biology / Management 94	250
David Esparza	CSU Sacramento	MA Criminal Justice 82, BA 75	250
Joe Esparza	CSU Sacramento	BA Business Administration	250
Viviana Arellano	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 94, M. Arch 97	200
Gerardo Guzman	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 11	100
Maritza Delgadillo	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 76 Honors, M. Arch 78	100
Kitty Hoover	UC Berkeley CED	MA Arch, J.D.	100
Babette Jee	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 76	50
			4,300
Martin Del Campo Awards			
Celeste Rodriguez	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 09 / USC M Arch 12	600
Ivan Rodriguez	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 09 / UCLA M Arch 13	600
Bob Esparza Awards			
Cecilia Cardenas	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 12	600
Ivan Nicholas Cisneros	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 12	600
Antonia Escobar Memorial Prize			
Leslie Valencia	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 12	500
CASAalumni Merit Awards			
Jesus Barajas	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 13	200
Albert Orozco	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 12	200
Joaquin Ugalde	UC Berkeley CED	BA Arch 13	200
			3,500



Cecilia Cardenas, Ivan Cisneros and Izvet Paz enjoy some pizza and refreshments.



Dean Jennifer Wolch serves students pizza and refreshments to top off a great evening.

How does it feel to get this recognition?

Jesus Barajas: It's really cool because I worked really hard. My family is really struggling right now, my dad sells respados just to make a living if its summer. If its winter he has no job, so when I talk to them, they're really struggling, so I knew I needed to pick it up. I feel proud of myself that I got this recognition for them too. I really appreciate the donors, the Alumni, the people, Roy, that still keep coming back to **CASA** and helping out the minorities represent.

Celeste Rodriguez: Awesome! It feels good, just knowing that I have to be less stressed out about money for a little bit. I'm really thankful.

Ivan Rodriguez: It feels amazing. Knowing Roy is a really big thing, we've been talking about business plans ... getting to know all of these people has been a great experience. Besides that, the money is going to be a lot of help.

What will you do with your scholarship?

Jesus Barajas: This is printing money for my final review. I'm struggling, my parents don't have much, so whatever I can get my hands on is basically going back into my projects

Celeste Rodriguez: Paying for rent and a month of student loan payments. **Ivan Rodriguez:** Most likely its going to be used for rent and saved up.

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From the Halls of Wurster

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Ambassador Program, Promoting Inclusion by Susan Hagstrom & Donna Vivar

CED is committed to promoting inclusion, social justice, and equity within the environmental design disciplines. In alignment with this commitment, CED's Office of Undergraduate Advising developed the Admissions Ambassador Undergraduate Internship Program, a leadership opportunity for current undergraduates to aid in the college's efforts to increase visibility of CED-related fields, especially to underrepresented communities, and to encourage prospective students to apply to CED's degree programs.



extraordinary training, and provides hands-on experience working with potential students and parents. The Ambassadors help the college recruit talented students from a variety of backgrounds, making the college a lively and welcoming home for undergraduate environmental design majors." - CED Dean Jennifer Wolch

Undergraduate Adviser Donna Vivar oversees the program, along with student co-leads Justin Panganiban and Katie Sipos. 16 students are carefully selected each year and participate in a year-long training curriculum designed to provide valuable career development activities and to support the students in their efforts on behalf of CED. Aside from professional development skills, ambassadors have very personal reasons for participating:

"Everything I do is for my family and community back home. They have supported me as a student my whole life sacrificing their time and energy so that I can have a better future. In turn, I wish to give other students the same support my family and community have given me because I want a better future for them." - Leslie Garay, Architecture major and member of Casa Magdalena Mora

"As a CED Ambassador I have the opportunity to reach out to students from different backgrounds and empower them to pursue design and an education at Cal." - Ana Tenorio, Landscape Architecture major, CASA member, and CalSO counselor

Ambassador outreach efforts include high school and community college visits, phone banking to newly admitted students, hosting programs for Cal Day and more. Employing a partnership strategy, the Ambassadors collaborate with UC Berkeley's Center for Educational Partnerships, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, the Bridges Multicultural Resource Center, the Transfer Alliance Project, and a plethora of other schools and organizations.



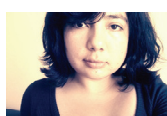
"The Ambassadors are a key component of our commitment to increase the diversity of our undergraduate student body. The program attracts a wide range of student participants, gives them

- (L) Preeti Talwai: BA Arch (13) Minors in History of the Built Environment / Sustainable Design
- (M) Justin Panganiban: BA Landscape Arch (14) Minor in City and Regional Planning
- (R) Sosseh Valentine Taimoorian, BA Urban Studies (12) Minor in Global Poverty and Practice

CASA Now!

CASA Professional Portfolio Workshop, by Isvet Paz & Cecelia Cardenas

For an undergraduate architecture major intending to go out into the professional design field, creating a first-rate portfolio is a paramount step.



Isvet Paz (BA Arch 13)



Cecelia Cardenas (BA Arch 12)

The way a portfolio is composed speaks not only to an individual's design abilities, but also to their personality.

Since CASA knows the importance and great weight a portfolio carries in advancing ourselves towards a higher education or a well paid job, we put together a Portfolio Workshop in which John Ishtar and Francis Garcia were so gracious to join us and provide us with their insight.

John Ishtar was very forthright in his presentation, providing us with the employer's perspective. The bottom-line was that less is more when creating a portfolio, a resume and a cover letter. Imagine a scenario where you are the employer, and

you have been looking at applications for several hours. When you come across a portfolio that is not clear you might not even bother to look at it because it requires effort you don't have. His honesty was appreciated as he went through portfolio examples pointing out important elements that will either work for you or against you.

Francis Garcia added to the conversation by explaining that, employers do not expect for recently graduated students to have tremendous amounts of experience. Above all, employers appreciate honesty. This is a very important point. Promising a more advanced skill set than what one actually has is not a good idea because sooner or later the employer will find out. Garcia ended by expressing how clean, consistent, and simple work is appreciated. Most importantly, demonstrating that you are extremely interested in a position may get you far.

Towards the end of the meeting both John Ishtar and Francis Garcia looked at CASA member portfolios providing them with information on how to improve their compilation of work. CASA members found

their advice extremely useful. We thank our speakers for taking their time to help us.

(Below) Francis Garcia reviews student portfolios and provides advice for success.



(Below) John Ishtar reviews CASA student resumes and provides valuable feedback.



Website News

New & Improved Website Branding by Roy Hernandez

The CASAalumni website homepage has been rebranded to reflect a strong professional design theme. The new design underscores the exceptional contributions made by designers of color to the built environment. The Donate Page was also completed and went live on April 15.



Recruitment News

CASAalumni Supports Latina get into CED Grad School by Roy Hernandez

The excitement was palpable at the CED Welcome Reception for Newly Admitted Graduate Students on April 1st. Co-hosted by CED, the CED Students of Color, and Alumni of Color, I was invited by Yeri Caesar-Kaptoech (CED Diversity Officer) to encourage undecided students of color to choose CED as their school. There I met Maira Sanchez, a UCLA student wait-listed for the Masters in City Planning program.

Ms. Sanchez' superior intelligence quickly became evident. The daughter of "loncheros" (food truck workers) from Boyle Heights (Los Angeles) she noted an impressive list of academic honors and awards underscoring her scholastic achievements. Impressed, I subsequently sent a letter of support to Graduate Admissions on April 15. On the 16th we received a rejection email. Undeterred, I responded the same day encouraging CED to reconsider Maira's application. On April 25, when Graduate Admission provided CED more grad school slots we got the good news; Ms. Sanchez had been accepted!

Why CED was her only choice for grad school.

During the graduate school application process I selected to apply to universities where the strength of their city/urban-planning program stemmed from academic community engagement, research and excellence in faculty. These aspects are crucial to me, since I am interested in gaining the skills of a practitioner as well as that of a researcher. Additionally, CED not only outshines other universities in these characteristics but my interaction with current students, alumni, and faculty strengthened my certainty in the program.



On family members in higher education.

I am the second in my family to receive a college education, but the first to attain a Masters degree. My parents are originally from Cuapiaxtla De Madero, Mexico, where they both attained a third grade education before moving to the Mexico D.F and later immigrating to Los Angeles in the early 1980's. They both worked in lower sector jobs, until finally becoming informal and late formalized loncheros (food truck operators) in East Los Angeles.

On CASAalumni.

I cannot say enough of the support that I received from CASAalumni! Although I was waitlisted for MCP, Roy Hernandez and Oswaldo Lopez spoke to me about their experiences as alumni and students of the program. After a quick interview with Roy Hernandez and conversation with Oswaldo Lopez, they agreed to support my application. From then on they were consistently supportive of me as a perspective student. The generosity and support I received during the application process, lets me know that CASAalumni are active in their efforts to increase diversity in the field.

Thanks to Dean Wolch for seeking new paths in recruiting excellent candidates to supplement the diversity of CED!