

- Gloria Sosa: [00:00:00](#) Thank you for being here with us today. We're very happy to have you all. This is my team. We are part of the Disruptors Project, and the official title of the project is Disruptors Undocumented Working Class Youth Activism. So, uh, this project is a digital archive, and what we are seeking is to document all the oral histories of you all, who play a huge role in the undocumented student-led activism at Cal State LA. I'm Gloria. This is Jessica and Jorge. <Applause>
- Gloria Sosa: [00:00:35](#) So today, we're—the title for the event is Disrupting the Dream, Undocu-Leaders United, because we are disrupting the dream. We are no longer sitting down and waiting for things to happen. We're actually taking action. And I hope that today you live with that spirit and with that urge to build community and to create change, no longer will we stay and do nothing about it.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:01:07](#) So I really hope that you'll take that knowledge and share it with the community members. It's really important that we stick together. And thank you to all our allies who are here today. Thank you so much, without your help this wouldn't be possible. And for the students who are here, let's, let's get together. Let's get back to organizing, and let's work together to make changes. So we'll get started with the event. So we'll have the lovely panelists come out here as we call their names. And at the end, we'll have a break, and you all can have some snacks. We have some snacks, and we also have drinks over here. So we'll get started.
- Gloria Sosa: [00:01:46](#) Oh, before we get started, I just wanted to say this is a crucial time for us to be here. As you all know, DACA is still going a legal battle. Unfortunately, it doesn't look promising. And this is why I'm urging everyone to take action. Doesn't look promising. As you all know, some of the folks who came as freshmen, they do not have DACA, right? And most of the freshmen next year who apply for the Dream Act, they do not have DACA. So it is our duty, our duty for the ones who—we have DACA, which can be taken away any time, and our allies, to build community and build a movement again. This happened in 2006, we can do it again. So I hope that we live with that feeling of wanting to do something today. So thank y'all and I hope you enjoy the evening. <Applause>
- Jose M. Leanos: [00:02:43](#) All right. So I'm just gonna read off. So first, we have Enrique Ochoa, our moderator, they/them pronouns. They are professor of Latin American Studies and History at Cal State LA. In 2013 to 2014, they were named President's distinguished professor, and from 2006 to 2008, Enrique held the Walter and Michi Weglyn Endowed Chair of Multicultural Studies at Cal Poly Pomona. A

community based public historian, Enrique works to lead community struggles through their teaching and research. The author and editor of multiple articles and several books. And Enrique research focuses on Mexican and Central American history, food studies, Latinx studies, immigration and teaching history and intersectional ethnic studies in K-16 classrooms and communities. Enrique is a past member of the board of directors for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. <Applause>

Jose M. Leanos: [00:03:46](#)

And then, next we have David Sandoval, the former director of CSULA's, educational opportunities program, or EOP. He holds a BA in Chicano studies and an MA In Education from Cal State LA, where he began studying in 1969. David was a student activist and member of UMAS, MEChA, and the Brown Berets. He has traveled throughout Mexico, Cuba, Europe, and former Soviet Union. He took, CSULA students on study trips in Mexico, Cuba, and Selma, Alabama. He has worked through—He has worked in music and film production, co-producing Los Lobos' first album. <Applause>

Jose M. Leanos: [00:04:21](#)

Next I have Steve Teixeira. In 1967, he entered in Cal State LA as a 17-year-old, strongly influenced by movements for equality and justice that were taking place around him, especially the civil rights movements led by African Americans and the Farm Workers' movements, led by Mexicans and Filipinos. He participated in the struggles and won EOP admissions and assistance for low income students of color. In the mid 1970s, the inequality of immigrants have begun stir people into action. This led some of Steve and his peers to engage in a two-year-long effort that convinced the United Farm Workers to stop asking immigration officers to deport undocumented campesinos working during the strikes. During his campus work as a student services professional, [inaudible] Led students to form SURGE, which is Students United to Reach Goals in Education, which he agreed to be the club advisor. [inaudible], marching in high school graduation robes attracted the attention of Erica Glazer, who met with him to create a scholarship. State legislation provided undocumented students with access to state assistance. She redirected her donation into the creation of the Campus Dreamers Resource Center, of which he was proud, active supporter until he retired in 2019. <Applause>

Jose M. Leanos: [00:05:56](#)

Next, we have, uh, Jorge Alvarez. He is a professional in accounting and non-profits. He graduated from CSULA in 2008, was a member of SURGE from 2006 to 2009. He holds a Bachelor's degree in economics with minors in finance and

accounting, and a Master's in Business Administration, which he got last year. Congratulations. He currently works as a finance manager for Central City Neighborhood Partners. Jorge's vision is a world where people are treated by the quality of their character as persons. [UNCERTAIN:] If I had any local coffee shop reading tax code, personal development readings, or dances ensemble readings. Jorge. [Applause]

Jose M. Leanos: [00:06:41](#) Next I have Yohana Barajas Hinojosa, MFTTPCCT [UNSURE]. She is a MS counseling psychology graduate student at California Baptist University. She graduated from CSULA in 2013 with her BA in social Work. She was a member of SURGE from 2008 to 2013 and continues to be a social justice activist. Yohana's obviously includes spending time with family, and her contact information's on there if you guys have any questions for her. [Applause]

Jose M. Leanos: [00:07:11](#) Next I have Luz Maria Borjon as a counselor, lecturer and administrator Cal State LA for 25 years, working in various positions with EOP, Summer Bridge, Latino Students Office, ASI Inc, the Civil and Social Innovation Group, the Career Center and Dreamers Resource Center. Luz is an advocate for students, especially undocu-students, EOP students, students with disabilities and LGBTQ students and all students navigating higher education while trying to uplift themselves and their communities. Luz believes in education as a form of social justice and a way to empower students and their communities. She has professionally dedicated her career to advocacy and activism together with undocu-students and faculty since the passage of AB 540 legislation in 2001. Luz. [Applause]

Jose M. Leanos: [00:08:09](#) And next we have Norma Castañeda, the first member of her family to attend college. She immigrated at the age of 15 from Michoacán, Mexico, Norma holds a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in marketing management from CSULA and three associate degrees from ELAC, as executive assistant, accounting, and real estate. Norma cofounded SURGE's AB 540 support group in the summer of 2006. She has worked in voter registration programs, political campaigns, and led two outreach and application assistance efforts for the DACA 100 Task force. Norma was an entrepreneurship fellow with Immigrants Rising from 2018 to 2020. And Norma is licensed as a California Real Estate Agent and a commissioned Notary Public. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, as well as attending concerts, dancing, and cultural events, and her contact information is on our form. [Applause]

- Enrique Ochoa: [00:08:57](#) Great. Well, thank you. Thank you all. Thanks. Really, it's amazing to be here with everyone, to see all the folks here, SURGistas, past and present, undocumented students, and DACA-mented students, allies, staff, faculty. Really great to be here. I mean, it's very important because as we know, as what Gloria said from the beginning, the importance of this moment, of DACA and the movement that's happening now and what's going on in the legislature, and— I'm sorry, in the courts, DACA, TPS, and— these are important times when we need to stand in solidarity and continue the movement. So again, it's great to have this really esteemed group of panelists, who've long been involved in SURGE and undocumented student struggles and student struggles on this campus.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:10:12](#) 'Cause we know it's the movement that created all this. It's the movement and the organizing that's been going on for a long, long time, that is what brought AB 540 on board in 2001. It's the movement and the organizing that led to the creation SURGE. It is the movement and the organizing that led to the California Dream Act. It's the movement and it's the organizing, um, that got the Glazer Foundation here. It's the movement and it's the organizing that got the DRC. It's the movement and the organizing that got director at the DRC. It's, it's come from the movement, that movement of the students, undocumented, DACA-mented students-led with allies from the staff, from the administration, from the faculty.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:11:00](#) And when the university isn't doing what needs to be done, the group kind of comes together. Task forces form, students begin to organize and staff and faculty and faculty allies, jump in. And so we're here with you, and it's, again, great to see everyone here, and I want to begin by having our panelists— we already intro— everyone already introduced themselves. And I want to begin maybe by having Norma, please tell us a little bit about SURGE, how it started, its origins, what some of the context was, and then— again, I know there are other people that can also talk to us, but if you could begin, that would be great.
- Norma Castañeda: [00:11:41](#) Yeah. So, hi everybody. So, SURGE started in 2006, the spring of 2006. So it was a group of students that, we came, came together, we shared our experience. We were meeting—
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:11:57](#) Norma, can you hold that a little closer? Is it on? Can you see if the green— Yeah, closer. Yeah, sorry.
- Norma Castañeda: [00:12:05](#) We were meeting, um, in [inaudible] in the spring of 2006, and we were having a meeting and we got invited that afternoon to go impromptu— <Enrique walks over to hand Norma a new

microphone> We got invited to go impromptu to the second annual, banquet for IDEAS. And we met some of the ideas students at the moment, and that brought us to really mobilize organizing some of the students here, some of the alumni. It's really great to see that you came. So we met, um, during the summer of 2006 to organize. I'm really proud of what we did during that summer. I had already transferred to Cal State LA in the winter of 2005, so I was here for a year and a half at that moment.

Norma Castañeda: [00:13:01](#)

And what got us mobilized and united to organize was in campus at that time AB 540. It was 2006. AB 540 had passed into law implementation in 2002. So it had been already four years. We all had a situation where we all got bills coming into our mail, that the system, somehow, at the university bumped us into international students. And we got a big old bill of \$4,000 to pay at that time. So we knew that we needed to do, advocacy internally within the campus. We needed to train and educate or administration or cashier's department or department of finance. And 'cause we were rolled back and forth between the process of what it meant to be an AB40 student and to pay in-state tuition at the university. So that was one of the main causes that we had as a reason to organize.

Norma Castañeda: [00:14:09](#)

Aside from passing or pursuing, advocating, organizing for comprehensive immigration reform, we all wanted all of our families to get a pathway for legalization, and obviously, at that time, there was no financial aid. All of us were struggling. I, myself, personally, I was working since the age of 18. I worked full time throughout my, my college years. I have gone, as you know, as you heard on my bio, I have four college degrees and all of them, I paid with my own salary, working as an immigrant in this country. I myself don't have DACA. I didn't qualify for DACA. So today, I'm coming to share my experience because it's possible, even when you didn't qualify for DACA, to get ahead, to get college degrees, to get a commission from the state, to get licenses from the state and to build businesses. But at that point, we needed to organize in three main areas. And that's what are the core components of SURGE.

Norma Castañeda: [00:15:16](#)

So SURGE, we started, we met together through the summer of 2006. We decided on a name. We came together and created bylaws, which— none of us had worked in a non-profit. What are bylaws? And we created like a platform of bylaws with three main components: we're gonna have a fundraising component, we're gonna have an outreach component to educate our campus and to go back to community colleges and to high schools and promote for other students to have the same

opportunities, And we also have to do the same thing, to go and pass policies that will benefit the immigrant community overall. And so those were the main reasons that we organized. And we met that summer, and we were together working on bylaws throughout the summer.

Norma Castañeda: [00:16:10](#)

We came together with a plan. We had to do a [UNSURE:] charity, and we had as a group, we were having discussions. Nobody wanted a form of president, vice president and titles and, and goals. And we had to do that for the university. 'cause it was a requirement. The first semester, the fall of 2006 is when we officially, the first day on campus, we turned in the documentation. We wanted to be recognized as student-led organization. We went and created flyers and promoted all over campus. And, surprisingly, a lot of students identified with the movement. I mean, our outreach was grassroots. You would see our flyers on the pathways coming from the parking lots to the campus, in the restrooms. You will close the door, and we were in your face, we were in the hallways of all the buildings on campus, where you put the postings about books and items for sale or rooms for rent. We were right there, "come to the meeting." And so our organizing was very grassroots in that sense. And then as a group, we built community. We understood each other. So for me, and I know that it's gonna be another question, but for me, SURGE is a family that we made by choice. <Applause>

Enrique Ochoa: [00:17:46](#)

Maybe we can have Yohana add, maybe expand a little bit on what were some of the roles of allies in that process? So you all are kind of organizing it, you're creating it, in the midst of the Sensenbrenner Bill and the growing mobilizations on campus. So there's all these attacks on campus, but also the mobilizations in the city. What role did allies play in that formation?

Yohana Barajas ...: [00:18:10](#)

The role of allies, especially at Cal State LA were crucial. You see some of them here in front of you. These were our biggest allies, our supporters, for me as well, when I came into SURGE, another big ally who's not here no more—he retired—was [NAME]. He was from [PLACE], and he was the one that connected me to SURGE. He's like— I came in and I met him. He's like, "you need to go to SURGE." And I was 17 years old, like, "okay, but I haven't graduated high school." He's like, "but you need to go meet SURGE." <laugh>. And, um, ever since, um, I came as an undocumented student, and the support that our professors gave us, I can name every professor in every department just by saying— and I know it was never great.

- Yohana Barajas ...: [00:18:54](#) I came from the generation of SURGE that, there was AB 540, and we were labeling our status as, "oh, I'm an AB 540 student" so that nobody knew who was undocumented. I came in, I was like, "Well, I'm undocumented. I ain't care." <laugh>. And I just— For me, it was empowerment, for me. I knew my rights. I'm coming from South LA, and I knew that being undocumented was just part of my status. I wasn't afraid of anything. And my dad always told me, "Nobody can ever take away your education. They can deport us and do all of that"— because they deported him three times—"but they cannot take your education. So don't be afraid to say that, mija." And I remember just speaking in classes and saying that I'm undocumented, I was part of SURGE, and when we would have events, when we would have fundraisers, we would sell tamales by King Hall, we would sell pan dulce, cafe, we would sell— we would fundraise on campus.
- Yohana Barajas ...: [00:19:51](#) People knew who we were, especially in the fall, 'cause that's when the cold season was coming. <Audience laughs> And I remember going to the classroom with professors and letting them know we have a fundraiser, and they would come and they would support us in our grassroots movement. Events like this, we were promoting classrooms to get extra credit. So we would have events like this packed, because these were not just for students who were undocumented, but we wanted to raise awareness at the Cal State system and in our university that they wanted— we wanted to have allies with us because we couldn't fight the battle alone. Just 'cause you're undocumented, you shouldn't just be fighting the battle alone, right? We wanted our brothers and sisters who did have papers to speak up for us, to help us in their voting process.
- Yohana Barajas ...: [00:20:35](#) So that was one of the biggest movements. Another ally that we had were through the other campuses, through the California Dream Network. So there were other organizations at other universities, so Dominguez Hills had us speak through UCLA ideas, and so forth. And we would come together once a year in the summer to organize. To organize nationally, statewide in California, and look at what's going on, what bills are under attack. At that point it was the California DREAM Act and the federal DREAM Act. So we had two different forms of DREAM Act. And in that year, we also had, ugh, Arnold Schwarzenegger as the governor, who kept vetoing the California DREAM Act. So it kept becoming a battle for us. So we didn't quit. So our allies were here, our professors, our friends, our brothers and sisters who had papers, who were legalized, and who were able to help us in promoting, not only the organization, but our movements, our community members and other organizations that we were

a part of as well, 'cause we weren't just organizing on campus, we were organizing in our communities. And for some of us, we were in other organizations like [inaudible], um, and [inaudible] El Barrio and other organizations that were a part of our communities that were also transparent in this movement for immigration rights.

Enrique Ochoa: [00:22:03](#) Great, thank you. <Applause> Jorge, do you mind— You wanna add a little bit more about the organizing, about the connecting with the different organizations, or maybe a little bit as well on the sales and the entrepreneurial-ness, of SURGE? Raising funds for the group, but also—

Jorge Alvarez: [00:22:23](#) Yes. Well, definitely as I'm listening to Norma and Yohana, and as I see everybody here in the room, I realized one thing: that SURGE is really the product of the contributions that everybody here made at that time. So, I want to first acknowledge all of that because everybody saw the problems and wanted to pitch in and really create a solution. To begin with, our allies and administration, David Sandoval, Steve Teixeira, Luz Borjon, and, I would say Frank [LAST NAME] as well. They were always supporting us there and believing in us. We also had the Erika Glazer scholarship that came in, that was another component that came into SURGE, and also the students that were coming in, you probably don't remember, but Yuni Muñoz, she's she's a student— she was a student, who was US citizen, but because of the legal status of her parents, she was, she was classified as undocumented student at the CSU system.

Jorge Alvarez: [00:23:21](#) So different experiences like that were the ones that contributed to SURGE and to create this group. Now, I remember joining Suge in 2006. I was alone. I was transferring from, a community college here in East LA, and really I was looking for a community that I could join, somebody that could really understand where I was coming from and somebody that could share my experiences. So, as Norma was saying, I actually did find this flyer at the parking lot, and that's when I joined. <Audience laughs> Now, in terms of the organizing, yes, we realized that we needed to— because we couldn't get the national aid, we needed to find fundraiser money. And one of the components was really selling whatever we could— tamales, coffee, or anything. And I remember clearly talking to the groups and the students saying like, today, we're gonna make sure that <inaudible> goes bankrupt. <Audience laughs> That's what we kept saying, because, and we would ask everybody to come and support us, right? Now, there was this— I think that ASU still funds all the student organizations. So we would request funds from the student building, I believe.

So we were able to get a reimbursement for everything that we would invest. We were able to get a full reimbursement.

Jorge Alvarez: [00:24:34](#) Now, the scholarship that we were giving out, there was this component. We didn't want students that had not participated in the effort to just come and take the resources that we had gathered and just walk away. So one of the components, the rules was the student had to be part of SURGE. The student had to participate in events, whether it was promoting the AB 540 among the high schools, or participating in the fundraisers. And after that, we would actually decide who, actually, was gonna be receiving these scholarships. The scholarships that we would, that we used to give out were about \$500 scholarships, I believe. And we had a committee in our meetings. We had a committee from SURGE that would evaluate all of these applications. I know we wish we had more money to give out to the scholarships, but that was also an incentive to keep going forward and to keep fundraising and fundraising.

Jorge Alvarez: [00:25:27](#) But something that I cannot forget is the family that we were able to create within students, within the supporters, and I think it's because you saw the ganaz, you saw how passionate we were about where we wanted to go. So that's another thing that I wanted to share about SURGE. That SURGE is not just me, that I'm assuming there was at that time, or you, SURGE is everybody. Everybody that saw it at that moment, everybody that contributed, you are part of SURGE. It's not just the students, but you also as allies and also members of the community.

Enrique Ochoa: [00:26:06](#) Great, thank you. <Applause> Norma, you wanna add anything else about that? The conversation that stimulates your thoughts.

Norma Castañeda: [00:26:13](#) I would just like to extend that, in that first semester, at the end, in December of 2006, we formed one of the partnerships with the LA Chamber of Commerce and we started partnering for the high school presentations. So we would reach within the team—the group—to see how many schools we can potentially go and do presentations. And we were part of the big cash for college, super Saturday, that was like one Saturday in February. And then we would try to outreach to as many, so we will have one or two members going to each one of the high schools to do the presentation. Obviously, the presentations evolved. Originally it was AB 540, know your rights, sharing about SURGE, that if you decided to come and join Cal Sate LA, we will have a support group here waiting for you. With the years, obviously we expanded into going to California DREAM Act, pero—

DREAM Act, DACA, different options, when financial aid passed for California, so it was California DREAM Act in terms of finance. Obviously we had to educate also the community in terms of DACA. So the presentations evolve, and some of us continue to volunteer with the— I mean I nowadays, I still get— 15 years later, 16 years later—I still get invitations to participate as a speaker. And obviously now my presentations have moved into, aside from going to college, you can also start a business. You have options, and so that was another additional partnership that we continued for a lot of years. Me personally, I stopped, temporarily, participating in this presentations. 'cause for three years I was running a DACA task force to try to get non-traditional Dreamers, people that never came to college, that never had an affiliation with a member that had college-level experience to obtain a work permit. And so that was the reason that it took me away. But I was like, "I still need to return to the high school presentations, 'cause that's important for our community."

- Enrique Ochoa: [00:28:28](#) Great, thank you again <Applause> So, now we get to the fundraising, especially in this time, going back to 2006—I'm a historian, I have to do that—going back to 2006, that is when we're seeing the— I mean, for 10 years before that, the rates of tuition were going up, were significantly going up during this period. This is Schwarzenegger, you mentioned, Schwarzenegger wanted to make students pay for 50% of the overall cost and wanted to raise it every year. So this, on top of the fact of, as you said, no scholarships, no ability to get scholarships in that same way before the California DREAM Act, that becomes essential.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:29:08](#) I kind of wanted to move a little bit to talk about and ask a little bit about this within a larger history of student organizing, undocumented student organizing on campus. And I think, if I could maybe have David kind of begin with that and then we can go to Steve? Okay. Alright.
- David Sandoval: [00:29:26](#) He'll remember more than me.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:29:27](#) Alright, so Steve will go first and then David will fill in the gaps.
- Steve Teixeira: [00:29:34](#) If I understand the question, it's the undocumented organizing— student organizing within the context.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:29:39](#) Exactly.

Steve Teixeira:

[00:29:40](#)

Well, in that, I'd like to commend the organizers because this thing's called the Disruptors Project. So I hit Merriam-Webster dictionary with "disrupt." And the second definition is "to interrupt the normal course of something." And I think that's what was happening then, that there had been "undocumented" since forever in this country, there had been a certain approach. Like, I worked with farm workers for 10 years in Modesto, and there [were] a lot of powerful people who looked the other way about undocumented immigration 'cause it was super exploitable labor. And that was okay. That changed with the mechanization beginning to get into the field, and more and more people were considered expendable. So we see that disruptions make something change, good or bad. SURGE came about, and undocumented students across here— I think we have to recognize the Dominguez Hills Espiritu Para Nuestra Cultura, the first undocumented student organization in the state.

Steve Teixeira:

[00:30:48](#)

And this whole period was undocumented people coming out of the shadows and standing up, and it peaked in— We keep saying 2006, how many students here know about May 1st, 2006? [Jorge Alvarez, Yohana Barajas Hinojosa, and Luz Maria Borjon raise their hands] So I can see some of the younger people— It's understandable, nothing wrong, but look that up because literally millions of people took to the streets, undocumented, not against a particular law, the Sensenbrenner law, but calling for justice and equality. And it is not a coincidence that that kind of disruption actually improves things. Those who tell you that organizing disruptions, "Well that's the old days. We don't want to do that now." I'm not saying any kind of crazy locura, but I am saying when Fermin Vasquez over there—could you raise your hand?—is wearing his Belmont High School graduation robes at a rally and a multimillionaire person talks to you about why, and others were telling her, and Erika J. Glazer ended up giving that money—that I mentioned in the bio along with mentioning him—and later, that money goes into the creation of the Dreamers Resource Center. It was disruption that got this multimillionaire to give resources. Her family ultimately gave \$1.6 million to this campus. But something happened that disruption itself of that type became the normal course, the natural course. And you've heard these students talk about all the activity, all the mobilizing, all the fundraising, et cetera. And there became a normal course that you activate and you could win something. You know, not just AB 540, not just DACA, but a number of things.

Steve Teixeira:

[00:32:34](#)

But in 2017, something else happened, right? A new president calls— Well, 2017 is when he called for the termination of DACA and set things in motion, it ultimately expires, then it's in courts. And I think it's critically important, if we're talking about reigniting student energy, staff and faculty energy, to help today's undocumented who don't get DACA, who cannot work legally like those students could. We're back where we were. And I think it's important we look at this thing stopping to look for what happened and why. One part of the two-part explanation, everyone knows: an increase in white supremacy. You see it in all the hate crimes against people of color. LBGTR [sic.] people, it, a lot of this we know about, and I'm not saying 'cause we know about it, we don't have to fight it. But I wanna be a disruptor right now and disrupt our thinking. 'Cause I think if we try to mobilize minority movements and separate things to serve separate populations, we're gonna lose, and a recording of city council people talking in that way: "these Latinos against those blacks against those white people, that- why can't you just get-" [Unsure] That is the ultimate reward of an era of ethnic politics apart from the politics of class and need.

Steve Teixeira:

[00:34:08](#)

So that one of the heroes of the struggle around undocumented, Gil Cedillo, ends up one of the people in that room, doesn't say anything, and had just lost his position to a young soldier table [unsure], Eunisses Hernandez, who said, "we have to talk about the poverty of Latinos, undocumented status of Latinos. We have to talk about the rising poverty of white people in America. 'Cause if only Donald Trump and people like that are gonna talk about white poverty, we are going to lose 'cause they're the biggest group of poor in the United States." I get very frustrated when I see so many of my wonderful white colleagues, before they open the mouth, they have to do the obligatory self-flagellation: "I know I'm just white, but-" I think it digs us deeper into the kind of thinking we gotta get out of. When you have siblings in a family of different colors, you don't call 'em different families. You love them for their particularities. If they have special needs, you meet and address the special needs in a family. Class isn't opposed to race. Race isn't opposed to class. It's the merger—the "clace," maybe we should call it—that is what's critical to getting to this next stage 'cause if we try to rebuild ethnic movements in the old way, there are folks moving here saying: "See, they don't care about you. Come to me, mijo." And what you saw January 6th is a warning of how dangerous that can be.

Steve Teixeira:

[00:35:37](#)

But why? There was a time when industrial economies produced enough employment and discrimination produced enough of a social bribe and housing and higher wages and

better jobs. Mass of [unsure] white people weren't on the battlefield. People of color have been left out, had to fight. We know about the civil rights movement. We're talking here about the undocumented starting to fight. But we're in a different economy. This digital economy cannot employ the mass of people it did. That's what the MIT study showed. People don't know what's gonna be done about it. But one thing you know is the total impoverishment of people in Central and South America has led to open marches of thousands saying, "We're going to cross the border and break the law." Is that true? The caravanas? Never been done before. We're not screwing around, we're not working through [Toy up this UNSURE]. We're gonna march through that border- No hay mas. That's new.

- Steve Teixeira: [00:36:38](#) So I just want to do some disrupting. And we think we have to rebuild and have to do those things again. But if we do it in a way that strengthens those who are against us, we are gonna be lamenting the death of DACA, the death of ethnic studies. A lot of things are going on in this country. Or [we] can find a way to meet particular needs like the worsening needs of many undocumented in the way that deals with the needs of everybody. I think it can be done. I think students want to have that technical world. Maybe when we discuss things, we can hear from some of you.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:37:15](#) Great. [Applause] Well thank you for discussing that, Steve. [UNSURE] No, that were disrupted. [takes microphone] Alright. I need it, I guess. Great. No, I appreciate that. And so again, coming out of- even- I'm gonna kind of take us a little bit back into the campus because I think a lot of that early organizing, that multi-ethnic kind of class-based organizing that was happening on campus early on, as David was introduced-the importance of by working with the Black Student Union, working to create EOP, and the role of the Black Student Union in that, connected with UMAS and MEChA. Maybe, David, you can talk a little bit about kind of that historical context, but also about the role that you all were able to play in EOP, to create a hub for folks to be able to-
- David Sandoval: [00:38:09](#) Steven already did <laugh>.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:38:17](#) You're messing with me [UNSURE]
- David Sandoval: [00:38:17](#) I was fortunate for being on the campus since '68. '68, '69, when the activism really began because we were- I was a 21-year-old freshman, you know, having transferred from East LA College. But over the years, as these issues came up, first of all, before there was a Chicano movement, there was a Black Civil

Rights Movement. And many of us participated in that. And people were all, "How did you- Well, why would you want to be in that movement?" I said, "Well, there was no Chicano movement before the Civil Rights Movement." So because of that, I was involved in taking many students to Selma, Alabama, where I sat on the board until I think two years ago. And I'm still on an advisory board, but it gets hard to travel and stuff like that. But I think one of the things that we did on campus here is we kind of- I was allowed, I was fortunate under James Rosser, you know, African American president. I had two relationships with him: the presidential relationship and a friendship relationship.

David Sandoval: [00:39:38](#) 'Cause when he came here, they were protesting him coming here. You know, they wanted somebody else to be here, but it was either him or Julian Nava and Julian Nava- we knew what we might expect with Julian Nava. So the relation I have with Rosser is that I would be able to do stuff on the edge. So what I mean, "on the edge," many times when we work with the undocumented students ... most students have financial aid ... immigrant students didn't have it. 'Cause they were here, supposedly, illegally. So we would stretch the resources. Students wouldn't spend all their money, but they would buy books and we'd keep 'em in the office and we'd give 'em to the undocumented students 'cause they had no money, no financial aid, no nothing. And the same thing would happen when we did some of the resources and certain grants and stuff like that. In later years, I was fortunate enough to, because of, not of my salary here, but because of other holdings, to be able to donate money.

David Sandoval: [00:40:48](#) Up until two or three years ago, I think there was at least a hundred thousand dollars—not an endowment because endowments don't work. You know, some of us don't have the Erika Glazer type of money where you can drop a million dollars and then make money off that money. If you drop- Back, then if you drop a million dollars in account, you don't even make 4 or 5% on your investment, you know? So, many times, we'd have to give larger amounts of money that wasn't an endowment. But I think the thing that helped us is that we included all the students, the African American students, I would take African American students to Mexico. I would take Asian, African-American, and other students to Selma, Alabama.

David Sandoval: [00:41:43](#) After a while, the education was automatic 'cause the African-American students, they go [UNSURE] "Pops, I wanna go to Alabama, they kind of, like, eat the same food that they do in Mexico. They just cook it different, you know?" So they began

to see the conditions that it wasn't a competition thing, it was a thing of helping each other. And, and I think that's what we were able to do with the book loans with- students would bring back their books and put 'em in a library, and then we'd pass 'em out to students in need. There were a lot of other things that, when I traveled, to be able to explain to folks that never got a chance to leave, many of us never went past certain streets in our neighborhood, then when we started traveling we saw that [UNSURE] there was a whole world up there.

David Sandoval: [00:42:36](#)

But I think the important part was, it wasn't me, it was the activists and students because they automatically came back after this. And then this fool here [pointing at Steve Teixeira], he dragged me in one day. He said, "There's a woman that's gonna come, and she's heard about what we've been doing." And I said, "What have we been doing?" He says, "Somebody in the community told her." And we were- I forgot what building we were in, and he starts kicking me under the table. And he didn't tell me who she is. It was Erica Glazer. So, uh, [laugh], next thing we know, I said, "Oh man, she's talking about 'a thousand here, a thousand there.'" And I said, "Maybe I'll match her." "Don't say that- don't say- She's talking about a million!" [Audience laughs] "You ain't got a million dollars, brother!" [More laughs] So, so that's how I got drug along by this guy.

David Sandoval: [00:43:32](#)

And, it's been my curse and my fortune all these years to have this guy with me to be [gestures towards Steve Teixeira] able to put stuff in a dynamic that it's impossible for me to do. But anyway, the important part was that we brought a unity, folks, without telling people that- look- We all need that help. I think if you read today's LA Times- it was yesterday's LA Times- if you go into depth and read about ... the one that's running for gov- ... Man, what's her name?

Audience member: [00:44:15](#)

Caruso.

David Sandoval: [00:44:15](#)

Yeah. Not Caruso, Karen Bass. But if you hear her story, her children- her adopted children, to this day- she had lunch with Ariano, the columnist, and he got to meet all the family, and her family, her adopted family, and to this day ... [UNSURE] which count. Mexican American. And it's an interesting story, it's not about- And she- To this day, she- they asked Caruso, "Hey, can we follow you around?" And she says, "No, you can't follow me around 'cause I'm gonna be going to church, and that's a very private thing." So who knows when Caruso wanted to hang. But when she- when Ariano the LA Times reporter asked about her, she said, "Oh no, come along." And he spent an hour and a half until the campaign people say, "Look, we spent an hour and a

half, we gotta run." But if you look at her story, it's about her first biological child with the Chicano she was married to, who died in a car crash.

- David Sandoval: [00:45:30](#) But it's an interesting story because they were talking about- they weren't talking about color or race or stuff. They're really talking about class in a way, because that's how she described it, because my only anger is that the grandkids I have now, who are Chicano, you gotta teach 'em how to speak Spanish. [laughs] So that's kind of what we did on the campus here of bringing people together. And it wasn't me, it was a group of people because we were all there. [Points at various audience members] You were there, you were there. There's a few of them here who were here from the beginning. I was just fortunate enough to, like I said, be dragged along by my brother here [looks at Steve Teixeira] to this day, to contribute whatever we could.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:46:22](#) Great. Now, thank you, David. Thank you for that. [Applause] No, I think that's right. Again, you- it's [the microphone] getting over to Luz. Yeah, right? The importance of the spaces that were created here, the spaces that were pushed open so that administrators who were definitely empathetic and down for the struggle could find ways to nurture and to find ways to make things stretch, as David said. But at the same time, find ways to get other monies on campus. And again, you make- when you said about the donation- You all gave a hundred thousand dollars that covered DACA renewals. What else was it covering, this?
- Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:47:11](#) DACA renewals and- well, that's from the endowment. And then there's the- our emergency grant.
- Enrique Ochoa: [00:47:18](#) Oh, the emergency grants, right. Which again, comes because of federal law wasn't able to happen, but because of the connections were able to come. Maybe Luz, we can have you talk a little bit about your role and your experience, as well with- through EOP and then, all up, and again, that you and Steve were, a long time as well, advisors for SURGE, Could you talk a little bit about that?
- Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:47:44](#) Absolutely. Um, but first I wanna say, can I just see- I'm looking around the room and I- what I see around the room is family, like what I see around- And so, I just want, can you just stand up if you were ever part of SURGE, you're part of SURGE, you're part of it now, you ever once were, please stand up. [Applause] These are folks- [gesturing at audience members] I'm looking at Francisco. I'm gonna put you on the spot, Francisco, because

you are our current president of SURGE, okay? So you're gonna get a bunch of love today from alumni, right? And I look at that Fermin back there, I look at Elizabeth sitting over there, and I think I saw Angie with her kids over here and- right there and her family, and I see Donovan over there. Alright, Donovan! And of course Rocio over there in the corner.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:48:40](#) So like, when I'm looking at is generations of SURGE, right? So like over here, we're looking at 2006, <laugh> that's Fermin, right? And everyone at this table, right? All y'all, Roberto, everybody. And, and then I'm looking at 2013- 2014 with Rocio was the president, 2014, when we opened- Raise your hand, Rocio!- When we opened the Dreamer Center and then Donovan was there right before, around that time, when we were still part of EOP. And I'm forgetting somebody, but- [Jorge Alvarez gestures towards audience] Oh, yeah, Theo, [UNSURE] actually! Yeah, there we go! Alright! Hey! So look around the room and I see folks and it makes me think of love and it makes me think of family. And, yes, it's- We're talking about politics and we're talking about deep stuff. That's why I love Steve. 'Cause he always puts everything into that political perspective, right? He's your political Nino right there, political godfather, right?

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:49:36](#) And David, you know, David's a strong silent dude [UNSURE] over there. But when I look getting back to love, right? What I see is family and what- the way that Norma and Yohana and Jorge put it into context- There would be no organizing, no coming together, no raising money if it wasn't for that love like a family. I'm getting [INAUDIBLE DUE TO AUDIENCE COUGH]. But because that is what I felt as the EOP counselor working with the students. And I was the one that kept the list of the books. So we would- EOP would buy some books and extra books and students would have books they would give 'em, and then I would have it in my office and I would check off the names of students. And we would lend out books. Sometimes, you know how the book companies really screw everyone over because they changed the edition, it's the same thing, it's just a different page. So we had to deal with that with our students.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:50:28](#) But like, what it was about was family. Because I remember SURGE all the years- the best graduation, the best college graduation- I guess, other than my own- the best one I ever went to was right here in this room.

Yohana Barajas ...: [00:50:41](#) Mmhmm.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:50:41](#) You remember?

Yohana Barajas ...: [00:50:43](#) Yes.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:50:43](#) What year was that? 2009? I don't-

Yohana Barajas ...: [00:50:46](#) it was '11, '12, and '13. Three years.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:50:48](#) Yeah, it was, yeah. And it was here. And all the mothers of the students made the food. So here comes the moms with cazuelas of the best food you can imagine, just everything, right? Everything from our cultures. And I remember it was- it was, oh- I'm thinking of- Oh, Melendres why am I forgetting her name? [snaps]

Audience member: [00:51:11](#) Martha.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:51:11](#) Martha! And so- remember Martha? And so she brought the band, right? I'm thinking of Marisol- what's the name of the band? Um, it's Marisol-

Jorge Alvarez: [00:51:21](#) La Santa Cecilia?

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:51:21](#) La Santa Cecilia! Oh yeah! [points at audience member, laughs] Roberto! Remember that year? When you guys all came, it was La Santa Cecilia. If you've never heard of them, you must listen to them. I think Grammy winners, they're out there, everywhere. And you all came and I said, you remember? And we had a graduate student that graduated in math, with a master's degree in math, and it was just the most beautiful graduation, and it was just us. It was just SURGE students, friends, family. And, you know, I- that couldn't happen now. 'Cause you can't bring outside food. You have to get permits and go through all this stuff. But who's gonna tell moms no, right? Who's gonna tell a mother no? And it was just so beautiful because it was just really grassroots. It was really just- the love, the organizing. We didn't have budgets. We didn't have those things.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:52:11](#) And that's what really- to me, over the years, I've seen SURGE, I've seen it before- You know, I look at Yohana- I always think of Yohana when I think about folks that didn't have- 'Cause some people had the Glazer Scholarship, you know, looking at Fermin, and others had it, you know. And I remember Yohana working so hard, always working hard, always organizing, doing what you had to do and, and coming up with that money. It's hard to believe there was a time when people didn't get the financial aids. It seems almost criminal, right? It was. It was really crazy. But, what was it that kept people moving forward? Despite

every wall that came down, right? What was it that kept people going forward?

Luz Maria Borjo...:

[00:52:55](#)

And it was that community, it was that sense of strength that you find from your community, right? And what happened with folks like me being a staff member, I was here to open doors, right? I was here to make something happen when everybody said no. And, Rocio remembers, I used to tell Jose- I said this all the time- "Don't take no for an answer until you hear it at least three or four times. You do not take it for an answer. You gotta ask a lot of people. Let them all say no because one person's gonna say yes." And I always tried to do that. I always tried to be- to find the one that could say yes for one of my students. For myself, for my students.

Luz Maria Borjo...:

[00:53:32](#)

And a lot of it had to do with EOP. Having the strength of a program as EOP could open so many doors for us. And I remember we would bring in- at the time it was against the law to have undocumented students under EOP. It was- God, isn't that crazy? Because the DREAM Act is what opened up state funding. Before that, there wasn't the state funding. And so, you know- But we still found a way. As David said, we stretched it, right? And I think as a staff member, as myself, you might feel like, "Oh, you don't have that much power. You can't really make things happen. I'm just behind the- You'll have to listen to people above me, all the layers that are above me." But there is a way. There is a way. And that's by building community on the staff side, right? Building community on the staff side, and also with other faculty. Because I use the faculty. I use them because they could say things that I couldn't say. Well, I used you all. <laugh> I used you all because you can be in spaces and you could push the line in ways that staff can't because staff, we- We're here ... Yeah, some staff have unions, others don't. But I think it's a lesson in how to use the resources and the power around you. Make that power analysis. Who can I go to, who can open these doors? And sometimes you gotta go to a lot of people. But we built a network. We built a network of folks. And I have to give it up to the students because everything I did, I followed what the students were doing. You know what I mean? And as a staff member, I didn't know- All of us were doing this- We didn't know what we were doing. But I followed what the students were doing 'cause I saw that's where the power was.

Luz Maria Borjo...:

[00:55:13](#)

And I know- Jorge keeps talking about Docilis[?] Nobody here knows about Docilis, Jorge. [Audience laughs] Docilis used to be- It's a coffee shop. Yeah. It used to be- It's a coffee shop that used to be where you guys have nothing now. Students have nothing there now. It's in front of King Hall. It was

Enrique Ochoa: [00:55:30](#) It was bought out by Starbucks.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:55:31](#) Yes.

Enrique Ochoa: [00:55:31](#) And the corporate UAS [UNCLEAR]

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:55:32](#) Unfortunately. Yes. And so- But Docilis was awesome because they would hire our students. They would hire the students. Docilis really- They would hire our students there. And it was a good place to go. And I would always give 'em extra tips 'cause I knew it was my students there, you know. And I know some few people worked at Docilis that are sitting in this very room right now [gesturing towards audience, audience laughs]. I know Angie, she gave me the best drinks. But you know- not for free. But the point is that there were- We found a way. We found a way to make it happen.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:56:09](#) And when- Once DACA passed and people were able to work. And then it was rescinded, then it was halfway put back. And so now what we have is fragments, right? We have a fragmented- But we can't break- I don't think they could break the spirit because I was just talking to Yohana about the quinceañera, about SURGE's quinceañera. And so, for me, what it was was about building community and- but more than just building community, it was really about love. Because I even remember when you [pointing at Yohana Barajas Hinojosa, who nods] organized one of the graduations and it was out of the community, and we all went over there, and it was over there by Centro [unclear] Lake.

Yohana Barajas ...: [00:56:47](#) Yeah. Centro Cultural de [unclear]

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:56:47](#) Uh-huh, the Centro Cultural. So we went out there and- And then I remember one year it was in someone's backyard. It was in- Yeah, remember it was in- So when I think about that, and I think about- Yes, we have this institution, things have changed. Some doors have opened up and there's a lot of allies. We do the ally trainings now. We have hundreds of faculty and staff who have gone through ally training. That's where folks like me will talk to faculty and staff about the history, about the laws, about how we can make things happen. So things have gotten better. Things have gotten better. But at the same time, on the national level, they haven't. They've gone backwards. And-

Luz Maria Borjo...: [00:57:27](#) But also, we still need to push for things. And one of the things that the students—Francisco—to share at some point is that we need to get our students paid, whether or not they have

documents. Students need to get paid on this campus. Our non-documented students. We have to find a way to pay our students to do student jobs on campus. And I know there's a lot of rules and regulations, but I know UCLA made announcement the other day, right? They just made the announcement that they're finding a way to make it happen. Yeah. For me it's like, "Yes!" And so I know Cal State LA- SURGE, when you guys—back in '06 through '09—led the country, okay, I'm not just saying here, but the country. I remember folks going- I remember Fermin taking the bus to Washington, D.C. I remember all y'all going to Sacramento before there was driver's licenses. I remember all you going up to Washington State, folks driving up there in caravans, right? To get the licenses. [laughs]. So, you know, I think as a staff member, you have to have courage to work with our students who have been criminalized. Who have been criminalized. And you have to- You have to have the courage and you have to be willing to stick your neck out because that's the only way things are gonna happen. And you have to be an accomplice to your students. We always say that we're allies, but you also have to be an accomplice. And there's a little bit of risk in that. There is, but if you got the union, then take the risk. But once you're an administrator, you don't have a union, so it's a different level. But the point is- The point is that love is what brought people together. Love for family, love for self, love for community. And knowing that this is justice, what we're working for, what we're all working for.

Luz Maria Borjo...:

[00:59:17](#)

And, anyway, just to end it on—since Steve brought it up—in terms of our diversity, SURGE has always been a diverse organization. SURGE has always been- We don't see a lot of our Asian brothers and sisters. At one point when we were in EOP, because one of my students was a foster youth, and we had the foster youth program, we would have the foster youth come in, and majority of the foster youth were Black. And they would come into the Dreamer Center to print. And so when we were all in one office, there was- and some of the EOP peer advisors were part of BSU, the Black Student Union. And so- and I think Rocio remembers, right? There was a lot more togetherness between SURGE and BSU at the time. And also our Asian students, there's- there were- there's different groups of Asian students. And we all know there's cultural competence, right? We have to understand different cultures express things differently. But there's- it's always been a diverse group. And I just think of Fermin, 'cause I know you work for Community Coalitions, we were talking about Karen Bass. And a lot of our students went on to graduate and become organizers, right? Because union- [unclear] I think of- Why am I forgetting his name? I think of one of the early SURGE year-

Norma Castañeda: [01:00:32](#) [inaudible]

Luz Maria Borjo...: [01:00:32](#) Yes. Working with the car wash- organizing the car wash workers. So, anyway, I could go on and on about SURGE, but I just want to say that to me, it's really love as a whole. [unclear]

Enrique Ochoa: [01:00:52](#) Alright, thank you, Luz. [Applause] Again. The power of who's in the room? The power of the allyship and the connection between different groups on campus, making ally connections with other folks outside the campus. The power that organizing is so important. Yeah, and I've really had the pleasure of working right with Luz, as well. As a faculty ally, along with my fellow faculty that are here now that are allies. Raise your hand please, faculty, if you will. There they are. [Applause, inaudible speaking] Claudia [unclear] Good. Good. Alright. So with that, I'd like to open it up, and maybe we get a few comments and questions from folks that are out there. We have a few minutes. And so let's do that. We can, I know there's a lot of folks out there.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [01:01:44](#) I think we need to hear from Fermin. [gestures towards audience, laughs]

Enrique Ochoa: [01:01:46](#) Go ahead, Fermin.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [01:01:51](#) Sorry, Fermin, to put you on the spot. [unclear].

Enrique Ochoa: [01:01:51](#) Can we take the-

Fermin Vasquez: [01:01:51](#) What about it? Y'all did great.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [01:01:56](#) Summer Bridge, Fermin, Summer Bridge!

Fermin Vasquez: [01:02:00](#) Oh yeah, Summer Bridge.

Audience member: [01:02:01](#) There's a chair right there...

Fermin Vasquez: [01:02:02](#) Well, I think it speaks to what Luz was saying, being an accomplice, because I remember, I didn't have papers at the time, and somehow I ended up in this program called Summer Bridge, which didn't allow undocumented students to be in the program. Summer Bridge was a program that you would do coming outta high school to come into college so you get accustomed to the campus, and then you would do remedial classes if you needed to. And it was just a transition-into-college program. And I ended up in this program, and I remember taking this class, it was called "Race, Class, and Gender in the

United States." And it was the very first time that I've learned about all the "-isms"—racism, homophobia, Islamophobia—all the "-phobias" and all the "-isms." And xenophobia. And I remember thinking, "Wow, this is-" it opened up a whole new world that, you know, we didn't learn about these things in high school before.

Fermin Vasquez: [01:03:09](#) So I- we didn't have ethnic studies in the past when I went to school. And I think it was just an opening of- just to a whole new world and looking at the organizing that we were doing through the lens of racial justice and through the lens of building an organizing model that works, that expanded the definition of what it means to be an American. That it wasn't just because you had papers, you were an American, that it was really about bringing different people together, different coalitions together. Like Yohana was saying, different organizations from the community together and building a movement that started, not just on campus, but it expanded to the entire city and working with allies at the state level and at the national level. And I think that's something that's an organizing model that still works, and that has helped us to get to this point.

Fermin Vasquez: [01:04:09](#) Even though social justice sometimes... you make, you take three steps forward and you take two steps backwards, right? But it has to do with building power and building the leadership of students on campus, and the leadership of staff who took risks on us to- for us to be here, and standing for us to be here, really, for all of us to be in this room. And I just want to thank everyone up there because I felt like- I mean, Steve and I will have conversations all the time, and I felt just so inspired and blessed that I had the opportunity to- I just felt smarter when I talked to Steve [Audience laughs]. And I was like- And that helped me really to provide leadership to SURGE and to be able to, like, speak in public and do a lot of things that I've been able to do. So I just want special shout out to Steve, but to everyone else who helped us. And he reminds me of this Underground Railroad, you know, that we have those people that help us along the way. And I think it continues to today. And I hope it continues for a lot more. So, yeah. [Applause]

Enrique Ochoa: [01:05:27](#) Thank you, Fermin. Any other- Anyone else have a question or want to comment?

Steve Teixeira: [01:05:29](#) Disrupt! To think. [unclear].

Enrique Ochoa: [01:05:33](#) [Noticing someone in audience] Yes!

Gloria Sosa: [01:05:33](#) I'll go over there

Donovan: [01:05:35](#) [Coughs] Sorry, my voice. I'm teach- I work with kids all day, so you know [laughs] I'm- It's so good to be here. When I got this email, I wanted to be here. I just- My memory's just- [unclear] My- so quick! One of my- I have a question. As you know, this is an election year and the next Congress, if, the Republicans made in [unclear] power- What are the- ... because they have some agenda that is- that is- Going a different direction. A lot of the rhetoric, a lot of, kind of, Paul McCarthy. Mr. McCarthy will hopefully be- get elected to speak of the house. What, moving forward, what, what agenda is Republican taking power, especially an immigration issue... I don't have the words to say... What's going to be- What's gonna happen?

Steve Teixeira: [01:07:10](#) So if the Republicans-

Donovan: [01:07:10](#) If the Republican take power ... in the House [of Representatives], what's going to be moving forward? What's going to be the next agenda?

Steve Teixeira: [01:07:22](#) Donovan, you wanna-

Donovan: [01:07:22](#) What are we to do to organize and to help people that are probably gonna face a different situation?

Steve Teixeira: [01:07:30](#) Is there anyone in particular you wanna ask?

Donovan: [01:07:32](#) Uh ... I'll ask ... [laughing] I'll ask Steve. [Audience laughs]

Steve Teixeira: [01:07:47](#) I think we all see that the Republican party today is being built-

Donovan: [01:07:52](#) Yes.

Steve Teixeira: [01:07:52](#) As a party to the most awful values to people of color, especially, et cetera. But let's also be objective. That's what the university's trained us for. Was it not a Democrat named Manchin who torpedoed the whole trillion dollar plan to help the American people? Now, the Poor Peoples campaign, Reverend Barber's got certain amount of fame. You should look up the Poor People's Campaign online, an amazing organization nationally. They met with Biden's team and said, go to West Virginia, fill up auditoriums and stadiums and have a debate about what people need. He's saying the poor people in West Virginia, some of the poorest Americans, and a lot of them are white. Most of them are white. He's saying they support him on this stuff. So he said, "Call him on that." Biden wouldn't do it, 'cause that's not how the game's played. Just like in that room,

in LA you got the Latino franchise, that person has a black franchise.

- Steve Teixeira: [01:08:54](#) You got the Oaxaca fran- that's old politics as usual. And that's why this president would not challenge this one senator who torpedoed on this whole thing. And that means a lot of people got hurt. So yes, if the Republicans get reelected, it's going to be worse, but there is a creeping motion within the Democratic party. It's hard to see it in LA. One of the hard things about LA is in the past period, we are the cutting edge of all these issues of equality and justice. We don't know about so much of the Idaho or West Virginia, et cetera. And it's a rough thing, we have to figure, I think, how to help the particular populations we love and serve, and are among in a way that it connects. But how many students are ever asked to research white poverty in the Midwest and white groups there- student groups there, and find out what they're doing? Tell us, and like-
- Steve Teixeira: [01:09:48](#) We sent students to Mexico, we've gone- we sent students to Selma. Maybe it's time to send students to go meet some poor white folks, like Appalachia, which has been poor forever. So I do share the concern about the Republicans, but if we keep digging this way, is the Democratic party going to be our trench to defend us from Republicans? Or if we just keep digging in separate enclaves, we just dug our own graves? We didn't- We don't know how to get out of it. So I have concerns right now that national leadership for both parties is much more impressed with corporations than with poor and working people. Just my opinion being a disruptor. [Laughs].
- Donovan: [01:10:31](#) Well, thank you
- Enrique Ochoa: [01:10:33](#) Anyone else wanna add? None of us?
- Jorge Alvarez: [01:10:34](#) I'll add. In my experience as a- My experience as an undocumented person? One of the things- One of the biggest lessons that I learned is that we, here, if you travel on the plane, it says, when the mask come down, put the mask first and then help the person next to you. I learned this the hard way. So the- What I'm trying to say is that there's different levels in which we- How much influence we can have. In terms of the national level. My work can have certain influence, or maybe not at all. So I start by- I will start really by changing the things that I can change now and influencing now to create an environment that can replicate and help others. So yes, there's some machinery happening that started many years ago that is happening. And as a person myself, I will not be able to stop it.

- Jorge Alvarez: [01:11:32](#) However, I can start changing and influencing things here at my local level that are gonna help me to protect or to defend against that machinery that is working. And if I'm successful doing it myself and replicate it with others around me and creating that community, we're gonna be able to influence and probably stop, or have some sort of influence against that machinery. So yes, it is important to know what's going on at the national level. It is important to know what's going on in other states, but it's also very important to address the issue that we're going- that we have right now, right here. And to make sure that we are able to influence and to change what is happening in our city, or that affects us directly, before challenging that. Because when we start doing it the opposite, it's just- You're just like working, working, working, and not much change happens, or you don't see the how you are moving forward. That's my opinion.
- Enrique Ochoa: [01:12:33](#) And Yohana? You wanted to say something?
- Yohana Barajas ...: [01:12:33](#) Yeah, I wanted to say that organizing change over the years before we were in the streets protesting, Getting chained [unclear], cap and gown, everything. You know, we were in the newspaper. That's how you knew about us. There wasn't Facebook, there wasn't TikTok, there wasn't Twitter, there wasn't any of that. We're not that old, either, but [Audience laughs].
- Steve Teixeira: [01:12:53](#) Some of us are [Audience laughs].
- Yohana Barajas ...: [01:12:56](#) But, even now when I see what's going on on TikTok, the generation that's coming behind us, they're not shutting up. They're- they are being their own disruptors. They're challenging the politicians, they're not kissing up to nobody. And I believe that we need to organize in this new era with the new technologies and social media that we have. Many of us have different- [Are] now in different professions. We are- we have, now, different degrees, as well.
- Yohana Barajas ...: [01:13:30](#) And we have- We've been able to not only use the pressure that we've had as student organizers, DACA-mented, undocumented. And some of us were able to change our immigration status. We have different power- sources of power that we can use our voices to outlet and to be able to create changes in different communities and in a different settings as well. And we have podcasts, we have TikTok, we have different ways to educate and to influence different movements and to use our voices to disrupt. And I believe that as we continue to do this, we're gonna continue that momentum, that nobody's

gonna forget about it. I attend Cal Baptist University, it's a private institution in Riverside. Majority white institution, right? But when I'm in there and I talk and I go over the mental health issues that affect undocumented immigrants, the trauma, the dehumanizing language that affects us, everybody looks at me like I'm the first undocumented person they ever met.

Yohana Barajas ...: [01:14:35](#)

And I'm no longer undocumented. But that's my identity. Because for the past- I've only been a resident for, like, four years. So I've been more undocumented than legal. And when I come into these spaces—that are privileged spaces to be in—and institutions, I'm in there, and I'm shaking it up, and I'm making sure that they know that we do continue to exist, that there needs to be more resources and more language and spaces for us to be able to heal our own mental health, that mental health crises are different within our communities as well. And there's so much to do, and I'm excited 'cause I'm excited to be a part of this project, but I'm most excited for this generation of undocumented students because you guys have so much power with utilizing the social media outlets you guys have. You guys have to just know how to use it in the right way. [Applause]

Luz Maria Borjo...: [01:15:41](#)

I just wanna thank Donovan for asking that question because I definitely think it goes beyond the party politics because Democrats haven't done anything, sorry. They have not moved an immigration agenda forward at all. So I think- And I do remember when the- a lot of undocu-folks were organizing with Republicans, and a lot of them were listening, like in Nevada and other states. So, I think that we have to look definitely beyond that. But I really want to thank Yohana, for what you said, because I think that yes, there's like all those social media and other things, and definitely there's power there. And I love how you go into spaces, go into spaces and be that disruptor and be that person to take that leadership.

Luz Maria Borjo...: [01:16:24](#)

But also, you all are leaders now. You all are in positions, right? Of power, you know, you are all in positions. [Gesturing towards Norma Castañeda] I think of you as a business woman, [gesturing towards Yohana Barajas Hinojosa] you and mental health, [gesturing towards Jorge Alvarez] you also as a businessman, you are all in those positions. And then, I was just thinking about Juliana Nascimento, I don't know if you all remember Juliana, what year? But I just remember her going into the financial aid office with the bullhorn when they didn't want to give the DREAM Act money [unsure]. Remember 2011? It was 2011, in the fall. In June, it had passed. And Cal State LA- [laughing] Cal State LA was like, "Oh, you have to wait 'til winter

quarter." She's like, "Nuh-uh." And guess what? People got their money that semester. But when I think about Juliana, she is working for United We Dream in Washington. She's a national organizer. And so, I know that we can all name just- not just all you that are here and what you are all doing, but don't look at your- Don't forget to look at yourself.

- Yohana Barajas ...: [01:17:21](#) You know, you're in those positions now, and I'm putting Francisco, and keep putting Francisco on the spot. But students that are coming up, Francisco and others in SURGE that are coming up right now, they need you all. They need you all. And they need you all to- They need to shadow you. They need to go with you to work. They need to see what you're doing. If that's something that SURGE, the alumni are interested in, you have students right now that need you, and that's where your power- that's where you can start to build that power, in that way [unsure].
- New Speaker: [01:17:53](#) Alright, thank you. [Applause].
- Gloria Sosa: [01:17:56](#) So, we'll do one more and then we- [inaudible] Oh.
- Yadira Ramirez: [01:18:06](#) I just have a comment-
- Steve Teixeira: [01:18:08](#) Could you identify yourself for people who don't know you?
- Yadira Ramirez: [01:18:11](#) My name is Yadira. I was a part of SURGE, very briefly, 2006 to 2007. Hello everyone. And I wish- Well, I hope that, if we come across Rosie—she was the manager at Docilis, so Docilis—that we can thank her. She really opened the doors to a lot of the students here, both—some of the students here—with a job and also with 50% off on food [Audience laughs], which was really a lot of help. I remember that in those days I was- I started working for Docilis in 2001, and I finished in 2006 with them, or I left. But it was- With them, I was able to pay my education and with them, I was able to get food that was quite expensive here on campus.
- Yadira Ramirez: [01:19:15](#) And just to know that I had a place to go where I could eat and work and just get the support from the people there, it was really great. So if you ever get the chance, I know- Ever since they closed, I know some of the staff still works here at Cal State LA. If you ever see her, just say hello and thank you. And hopefully one day we can recognize her as well, since, uh, she did a lot. That's it- Oh! And then, I remember that- Norma, we met at my house, right? To come up with the name for SURGE and to come up with everything that needed to be done, and

that was not an easy task, but I think it was Jose who came up with the Phoenix as a symbol, um, for our group. And I think that's how we moved forward. So it was nice. [Applause]

- Gloria Sosa: [01:20:17](#) So I wanna ask the panelists just one more last quick comment. So I do know DACA is probably going to end, right? What's your advice for undocumented students. Not only for DACA recipients, but for those undocumented students who hadn't had the chance to get a work permit, so they had no experience applying to work in any place, and you have experience with that, right? So what advice would you give those undocumented students?
- Jorge Alvarez: [01:20:51](#) I'll go first. So, the very first thing that I will advise is that- take a deep moment. Go to your most private place that you enjoy, and think about what you want to do in life, and what's the ultimate goal? What is that you want to accomplish? Dream and dream big. Write it down and then be creative and start drafting the plan and how you're gonna accomplish that. Everything's possible, as Yohana mentioned, we're living in a moment in which doors have been opened, and more and more opportunities are out there. The reason why I say be creative is because that's gonna help you to develop and knock on all the different doors that are gonna get you to where your dream is.
- Jorge Alvarez: [01:21:34](#) Number two, do not give up. Continue, continue, continue draft plan A, plan B, plan C, plan D. Four plans of action. And always be willing to change gears at any moment. Be aware of what's going on around you. And whenever you feel that it's a necessity to change gears and move to plan B, do it. Don't hesitate. The worst thing that can happen is not work- that plan B will not work. Well, then go to plan C. That's what I was mentioning.
- Jorge Alvarez: [01:22:07](#) And definitely keep dreaming because that is what's gonna keep you focused on the road. Don't compare yourself with any other people. Compare yourself with who you were yesterday, because that's the only way in which we continue. And make sure that you always create that community. If you happen to see the same person every day on your commute, smile and say hi. And that smile, that hi can start creating that sense of community. You never know what that person's gonna be- what that person can do for you, or you can do for others. The sense of community is very, very important, especially in a culture in which- that really insists that if you wanna succeed, you're gonna do it by yourself. Yes, it is possible, but you have to work together. And whatever you put out there in the world, it always comes back. No matter what. And it always comes back.

If you put some good things in the world out there, it will come back. Maybe next- maybe not next day, but in a couple of years. And whatever that you put out there- any negativity that you put out there in the world, it will always come back. But the most important thing is to create that community. [Applause]

Yohana Barajas ...:

[01:23:28](#)

My biggest thing for anybody now that's undocumented or DACA-mented is never settle. You know, DACA for me was- I never wanted to settle. It was never something permanent because it's always been a domino effect. Because it plays with your emotions, it plays with your mental health, it plays with everything, and it plays with your dreams. "Can I do this if I don't have this [unsure:] social? Can I do this if I don't have that?" We have lawyers that are undocumented, who run their own businesses. We have people who work in non-profits and in different settings who have found, like Jorge said, a creative way to do it. I call it "hustle." [unclear]. We hustled. You're gonna hustle. I was undocumented and I worked in the fashion industry, and that's- if you've worn prom [unsure] dresses, that was me! I worked there for 10 years and I managed two stores.

Yohana Barajas ...:

[01:24:24](#)

Two stores. I had no managerial skills, but I managed two stores. I was able to work under the table, get my money, pay for school. 'Cause I had to make it no matter what. For me, DACA was never my solution. So I always- I had to figure out a way to become a resident because I didn't want to fall back on that. If [you] are able to find a way, if you're able to find a loophole with DACA against parole, do it. Do it. Play the game that the government's playing. Play it, and play it well. Do it, if you have that. If you don't, if you're undocumented, there's many of us who were in your position, who had to pay out of pocket, who had no DREAM Act. The DREAM Act passed the year I was about to graduate, 2012. And [came] into effect 2013. I graduated in 2013. I remember Luz telling me, "Apply." I said [unsure] "Okay, why? I'm about to graduate." I didn't work, and I was only the little grain of salt, part of the Dreamer movement.

Yohana Barajas ...:

[01:25:21](#)

But it wasn't for me. It was for the generations behind me. That was why I was in the movement. It wasn't for me, it was for the generation behind me, the kids that looked up at us when we went to the high schools, and the only reason we did that, too, and we would say we're undocumented, is because we wanted them to see themselves in us. We wanted those little brown girls and boys to know that there were students like them, there were people like them who were at higher institutions. It doesn't matter that we were at Cal State LA. It doesn't matter that we didn't go to- from Berkeley or UCLA. To them, we went

to a university and that was big. So you need to continue to create the momentum. Who are you doing it for? But don't settle, and find the creative way to do it. Again, you are in an era of social media, of different ways that you can generate money. Work on it. Don't let your undocumented status define you. But also, let it be something that will continue to push you and be the fire behind you. [Applause]

Norma Castañeda: [01:26:30](#)

So for me, I will basically expand on and share the same thing that they just shared. The mentality will be, do not set yourself to have limiting beliefs. Do not think that "pobrecito de mi," "poor of myself." As you know me, all these years, I never have come- Or everybody that knows me, that has met me, I never come with this mentality of "I'm undocumented, pobrecita de mi [unclear]." I learned- I have my character, my work ethic, my experience, my professionalism, my ethics. That's what defines who Norma is, not my immigration status. Like Yohana mentioned, hustle. And we have to hustle more. On my bio, it's a partial bio. I also do consulting for nonprofits, and I do bookkeeping and accounting for another nonprofit. Nowadays in the budgets, when I do writing for foundations to give money to nonprofits that I'm consulting with, I'm suggesting to do stipends to bring undocumented talent, to make sure that we continue expanding and mentoring students, either they have DACA or they don't, 'cause they need to build all those skills that are valuable and that [are] essential for the workplace. And yes, you cannot work legally. I didn't have the means to, but I worked. Since the end of the age of 18. My full-time job paid for my college degrees, and I was helping, in my home, with 50% of the expenses. I paid rent, I paid food, I contribute to my home. I'm the first one in my family to go to college. I'm the first one in my two sides of the family, my dad and my mom. I'm the oldest of three. There was no excuses. Like it was my mentality that I had to make it.

Norma Castañeda: [01:28:23](#)

When I was here in college, I started selling on eBay. I was an entrepreneur. I was selling whatever I could. I would keep my books really good- in really good format, so I could resell them and I can buy the books. Books in business are expensive. They're like, like law books. They basically are \$130 to \$200. One single book. My accounting books were almost \$200. And I still managed somehow to pay for school, to do all the things. I worked, and I went to school, and I had different groups. And another thing: networking. You have to build those relationships. You have to get to know other professionals, either in your industry, right here with SURGE, with other student groups. Volunteer, do community service, get involved, get paid or unpaid internships. Obviously, I couldn't afford to go

and do an unpaid internship, but I had a lot of years working. I worked in the manufacturer industry. I work in the warehouse and storage industry before I transitioned to the non-profit sector, before I went into politics, before I went into start my own businesses.

Norma Castañeda: [01:29:40](#)

So you have to hustle. Unfortunately, for us, it's not a choice. You have to make it happen. If I was able to go to school in the evenings, work a full-time job, and then try to hustle doing an online business. Nowadays is not- I have no excuse that I cannot do two or three or four jobs at the same time. Recently I went to finance a car. It's really a struggle out there. Like, even on finances. They want to give you a 15 to 20 something percent interest on a car loan. I can get a mortgage with under 8% interest as an undocumented individual nowadays, with a 5% down payment, something that was not available in the past up until this year, it required an undocumented person with a 19 to get- to have 20% down California, like a house for 500,000. You needed to have a hundred grand for down payment, plus 5% for closing costs. So how feasible is really to like- affordable to live-buy a home for an immigrant in this country. Or in California- which, prices are high.

Norma Castañeda: [01:30:49](#)

But, returning to everything. The mentality is compare- Like Jorge said, don't compare yourself with others. It's not something that you have to be fighting about, about what others have done. Compare yourself with, who were you yesterday and are you better today than yesterday? Set standards. Do the research. Figure out what you need to do to achieve that goal. I, from the beginning, I knew that I wanted to be in business at the age of 15, I knew that. At the age of seven, I was selling- in Mexico City, I was selling beer and soda, and my aunt had a store. And at the age of 11, I was selling mangoes and peanuts and different fruits. I knew how to talk to people, and I knew how to manage money. So at the age of 15, I already knew that I wanted to be in business. And not because of the money, because I love talking to people and because I like to make connections.

Norma Castañeda: [01:31:48](#)

Nowadays as an entrepreneur, it's all about building trust. A person would not come and trust me that I can find in my home if I don't build the trust that they can- that I will have their back, that I will be there for them. The same thing for any other situation. You need to build that trust with people, with people that are gonna recommend you. And then think outside the box, for those that have DACA. If DACA gets stopped, you have the skill, the expertise, and think how you can use those skills that you have, that experience. And how do you move forward

without having that work permit now? Because it was temporary, at the end of the day. So, I think that wraps up for me. [laugh].

New Speaker: [01:32:35](#)

Great, thank you. [Applause]

Steve Teixeira: [01:32:42](#)

I think tonight you're hearing the two legs that you will have to walk on. The one that takes the most effort, the most time is all the self-help, all the practical- And you have [gesturing at audience], I'm really glad to be in your court 'cause there were so many specific things that could be done again, that need to be done again for all the people who can't work, that's the one leg. Maybe that is a lot bigger.

Steve Teixeira: [01:33:03](#)

The other leg is a collective action, and we cannot forget what that does. The almost a million people May 1st, 2006, downtown LA, Erika J Glazer ends up putting- her family now has put over 2 million, the first 36 scholarships, and then the 1.6 that led to the Dream center. We don't, we can't say that didn't do anything. Look at all the things that helped do. It doesn't mean you stopped doing the self-help. It's not either-or, like race/class, it's not either-or, self-help and collective action. It's the appropriate mixing [unsure]. Here's another thing. To- June of 2012, undocumented students start sitting in, in a certain set of offices across the country because those campaign offices for the reelection of Barack Obama were targets, 'cause they start to call him the "deporter-in-chief." Because despite all the promises- And it's not that he didn't want to do- We know it's how you maneuver in Congress, but that's where you run to come up with answers or go to the people and mobilize them. He was doing neither. They start- Do you guys remember that, sitting in Obama's office? They started in June. When did DACA get announced?

Audience member: [01:34:17](#)

[*speakers overlap*] *July*

Steve Teixeira: [01:34:17](#)

June. It was June. So never accept if someone tells you that you help yourself but don't work together. Help yourself and work together, and then when you work together and make a breakthrough, then it helps more people, it helps more others, and you got more tools. But if this movement of undocumented stops being a movement, and I think what happens a lot of times with professionals, we're so much better at looking back and writing about something, and "Wasn't it great, The Civil Rights Movement? Wasn't it great, the farmers movement?" And students say, "We can't take this anymore!" A coordinator gets hired for the DRC and students don't even get consulted in the process? And people- So you've gotta decide what you're

gonna do. There are people writing their doc dissertation about collective action, getting promoted, and then not motivating students to do any collective action! That is reprehensible. And you know who some of the people are that I'm talking about. You need to talk to them.

- Steve Teixeira: [01:35:20](#) The last thing I'd say, in terms of Gloria's question- Because yes, there's things you do to help you, but I can feel the pain. You can't work! And other people could work 'cause of [unclear] DACA, right? So one thing [that] can come out of things like this is the mentoring that the project wants to do. And there are some of you [points at part of the audience] and there are some of you [points at another part of the audience] and the LA Times, La Opinión doesn't get the stories today I don't see the story of the past DACA recipient who's now a professional, and this is Gloria, and she's just as smart and she's working just as hard, she doesn't get to work legally. Stir up the press! When I say "disrupt," it doesn't have to be a protest, or a sit-in- But that's gonna have to be part of it. I'm sorry, it's going to be. Some of us stand ready to be out there with you. But disrupt. As Yohana was saying that, with media, let's get these stories out. Just the people here, if they buddy up, veterana and current student, you could stir up so many community newspapers, TV shows, radios, and most faculty do not know what's happened to DACA. Most don't. They think it was taken care of 'cause when they were students, they remember, then I got my PhD, and I'm teaching. You have to tell 'em the change. So, yeah, you can do something. You must do something. You don't have a choice. [Applause]
- Enrique Ochoa: [01:36:58](#) Great. Well, again, I think Steve wraps it up, brilliantly kind of brings it together that the beauty of what's in this room, that this multi-generational group of folks, the plans to try to connect it and do something larger and connect is so important. So again, let me pass it over to Francisco, but should we thank the group first? Or...
- Gloria Sosa: [01:37:21](#) [unclear] We're not done just yet
- Enrique Ochoa: [01:37:25](#) Oh, okay.
- Francisco: [01:37:25](#) So I just wanted to say thank you so much for this presentation. You know, it's not only a presentation, it's my story. It's being portrayed. And it's my reality. That's something that I want everyone to know. It's not just like, "Oh, let's just keep it to this moment." It's not. This is the reality of a lot of students who are gonna come in, who don't have anything. Just their brains, their knowledge and their will. The thing is- And this is- How can we

get those students to be motivated? I got motivated. I've been motivated. For my whole life, I've been motivated, and I've been put in that corner, like you need to do something for yourself. But what about everyone else? I don't want the new generation to be a conformist [unsure], to just be like, "Okay, we have DACA, we have this." That's just banding [unsure]. We need something else. And it's been- With DACA, that's what a lot of my colleagues, a lot of my peers got that sense of [unsure]. And it's frustrating because, at the end of the day, we know that DACA could be ended any moment. And then what's gonna happen? Then what's gonna happen with all of us who had the opportunity to work? What about those who never got that chance? So it's just frustrating. And my question is, how can I start that? How can we start that stir-up, that movement again? For students to realize, "Hey. This is your reality, let's get to it." And the DRC, I'm gonna start- gonna be taking advantage of those resources, gonna be going out, over there, printing out a bunch of flyers, and I'm gonna be posting them. I don't care what the CSI system says about, "Oh, you're not allowed to do this and that." You know what? Eff it. Because they're betting [unsure] with our lives. And that's it. You know that's the reality? If they don't wanna do anything about it, I am. So, that's it. [Applause]

Jorge Alvarez:

[01:39:22](#)

So Francisco, I wanna say something. You were asking me, like "How to do it? How to do it?" Well, you just said one of the first things is to announce it, make it public so everybody knows. But the other important thing is that you also have to share your dream. You have to share what is that you are aspiring, what is that you want to accomplish. Now in this road, in this journey, you're gonna have students that aren't gonna be willing to join and be with you all of the journey, just like you're gonna have students that are gonna be just peek, see what's up for them, and decide to leave.

Jorge Alvarez:

[01:40:00](#)

There's a story of a student, and some of you remember, we invited the student to be part of SURGE. And he said, "I don't need you guys. I don't need to be hanging around with the illegals because I'm already legal, so I don't need you guys. I gonna hang out with those that are not." Okay. This student was invited to the UN event in New York. And he decided to take the train to go to New York. And again, he said, "I don't need you guys. I don't need SURGE or anything." My understanding is that the student got detained somewhere in New York or along away, and he end up in a detention center. By the time that he ended up in the detention center, he was calling for our help. At that moment, it was too late. We couldn't do anything for him. So, it was his decision. We could only, you can only invite them,

but you cannot force them. Those that really want to dream and want to follow their dreams and want to do it with you, will do it. We have to just share with them what [it] is that you're offering and they'll join.

Yohana Barajas ...:

[01:41:06](#)

And with that, don't- Organizing is community, not Cal State LA. Your movement is not just gonna be in Cal State LA, it's community. We will meet in people's houses. We will meet- Remember, we didn't have enough money, we would be hungry? Okay, let's move to the SURGE meeting. We're gonna go to Subway. We'd literally cut a sandwich and we would sit down and meet. We would- For the summer, we, I remember, Jorge, we had [unclear], I believe, who sponsored that retreat. And we got a hotel, they sponsored it, we got the rooms and we organized for that moment. And around the spring or the fall, we would book hotel, we would book the cabin in Big Bear, and we would do a full retreat. We would take the students that were part of this institution, our colleagues, our friends out of the community 'cause many of them never went to Big Bear. Many of them had never gone to the beach, to a lot of these places up north. I remember going to Fresno for the California Dream Network. So don't look at just Cal State LA, ASI and everything. You have to play the politics, but when you're the disruptor, you're gonna disrupt it in the right way. And you have to start in ways where you create the momentum, you work on that dream, they hear your passion. What is the goal? And you don't have to be on campus for that time.

Yohana Barajas ...:

[01:42:24](#)

I don't know who it was, I think it was Beltrán, when some of us, we got locked in the library because we were meeting, we were studying, remember? And they locked us in there. We had to sleep in the library [Audience laughs]. But, again, we had different spaces. We would just go into whatever room was empty, and we would meet up there. But we would go into different locations. We would be in different parts of the community, at home, in our backyards, wherever. To meet. Because the meeting wasn't just: You come to SURGE, you meet on Thursdays, and then you left. No. It's: You met to just go over what was gonna happen in the next month or week of organizing, of events, of everything, and then we would continue to meet up in different spaces. So that began to see [unsure], because all those movements: Chicano movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, all of that starts in the community. But they need to bring it up here, you know? So that's my point.

Enrique Ochoa:

[01:43:25](#)

Thank you. Yeah. So again we get a- [Applause] The power of kind of hearing the connections and, and remembering, as well,

that these things come- I mean, again, student organizing, student organizations come in waves. There's- They cycle in, and of course we had the pandemic. And the pandemic was devastating in so many ways, but in terms of our building community in general, in terms of organizing, in terms of all kinds of things. And I think, we have to recognize that, and that's important to recognize, and beginning with this beautiful event, beginning to make the connections, beginning to strategize of how do we make- again, create a mentorship, connect with faculty and staff and say, "Okay, let's do classroom visits, let's find a way to find the folks that are out there." 'Cause they're out there. And you know, they're out there, and it can't be carried by just a few.

Enrique Ochoa:

[01:44:21](#)

And so again, I think throwing that call out is so important to begin to do. And remember your allies. You have allies. We're allies. There are things we can do that sometimes others can't do. There's things you can't do. We have to draw upon our strengths and what we all bring in a unique way because, again, you're right. This is a hard struggle. And, because of the great victories of DACA, the California DREAM Act and the Dream Resource Centers, those brought a lot of institutional support, but at the same time, it also brought professionalization and institutionalization, which means it's much harder now to get money from the ASI, it's much harder now to be able to do events on campus. It's much harder now because there are also professional staff, again, which is so important. But at the same time, there's a whole layer of bureaucracy that goes up. And so, sometimes, again, we need to strategize of what we do and what we don't do, of what- how to hustle through that system, and understand how that power works. Because yeah, there's certain things that we can't do in the universe by following the rules. Just not. Because the rules are meant to give us the space, but they're also meant to contain us and contain the organizing. ...

Enrique Ochoa:

[01:45:55](#)

Well, again, please join me in thanking, our panelists, [Applause] And I'll turn it over back to Gloria.

Gloria Sosa:

[01:46:08](#)

Thank you so much. Thank you, Francisco, for that. Thank you to all the panelists for being here. And this conversation can go on for days. And, but, with that said, we'll take a 10 minute break and then after we come back from the break, we'll have some time to mingle around among ourselves. And, yeah, we'll take it from there and then we'll get some more instructions at the end. But thank you so much. Again, [Applause]