

Message From the Director

—*Javier Cervantes*

A Trauma Re-Experienced and a Hope That This Time, We Learn From History

Twenty-seven years ago, Los Angeles erupted and was ablaze. The city was in shock after four LAPD officers were acquitted of beating an unarmed motorist, Rodney King. The city and parts of the nation exploded into chaos and violence for days. I remember this because I lived in East Los Angeles at the time. I remember driving up Lorena Avenue to the intersection of Brooklyn Avenue—now Avenida Cesar Chavez—and actually seeing a military tank parked in the middle of the street.

There were curfews. Armed National Guards. Helicopters flying by. It was martial law. It was madness.

Does any of this ring a bell? I am seeing this and reliving that trauma through my television all over again, with all the manifestations taking place due to another violent police encounter with another unarmed black man. This time, his name is George Floyd. Rodney King barely survived in 1992, whereas George Floyd died a slow, suffocating death at the hands and a knee of those sworn to protect and serve. Sadly, the common denominator in both of these instances that sparked wave after wave of protests, uprisings and national fervor was the police and their tactics of over-aggressive-combative-escalation of power over another human being.



As I revisit this trauma of 27 years ago, some things are different. In those moments I recall walking outside of my home, I actually could feel a palpable edge in the air mixed with the smell of smoke and a thick haze that stung my eyes. Today, unlike 27 years ago, I am an established member of my community, living a comfortable middle-class lifestyle, whereas then I was merely a poor student transplanted into the barrio, attending East Los Angeles College trying to figure out my life.

Both of these violent instances sparked an outcry from over-policed, minoritized communities from around the nation asking “When is enough enough?”

The other day I attended a BIPoC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) meeting on Zoom just after the first weekends of the current pro-

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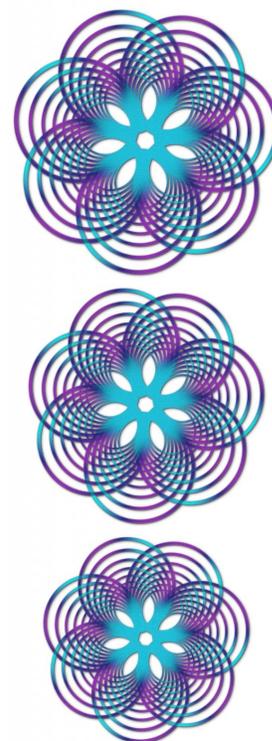
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tests. One of the opening questions was, "What is on your mind after the upheaval?" I asked then, as I ask now, do we as a society not learn from history? Do the police not learn that brutality only breeds mistrust of uniformed authority? Do people in the streets expect police not to be hyper-reactive when they feel threatened, not matter how justified the public outrage may be?

Willful blindness, cover-ups and ignoring history only leave our communities in more peril and searching for answers. I am afraid that no matter the outcome of our current state of affairs, these wounds will take a very long time to heal. I must also admit that they may never heal. Who knows? There is a reckoning our society must come to terms with or we will not heal fully. Until then we must continue to work towards some form of reconciliation.

Nelson Mandela once said, "We must strive to be moved by a generosity of spirit that will enable us to outgrow the hatred and conflicts of the past."

Wise words. I hope we heed them, because I am afraid what will happen if we do not.



Outreach In Action

—*Tania Mendez*

Every year I connect with the staff at OSU's College Assistant Migrant Program (CAMP). We work together to ensure students learn about the different opportunities available to them. This year we decided to switch things up and do a two-part workshop. The first part would include providing information about the Degree Partnership Program (DPP) at the OSU campus. In part two, we extend an invitation to visit LBCC and learn about our campus' resources. During winter term I was able to meet all 35+ CAMP students. Rick DeBellis, LBCC students and I all shared with them the benefits of enrolling in DPP. I was able to connect with a few of them after the presentation and I was looking forward to providing a tour during spring term. We later learned spring term would be online and all gatherings were no longer possible due to COVID-19.

It was a great opportunity meeting the students in person during winter term prior to the pandemic; I am grateful for the face-to-face interactions with all of the students. This helped build a bond that makes me more approachable and resourceful to them. In early spring term, I was excited to have received various emails from CAMP students regarding the dual-enrollment program. Many of them expressed interest in registering for classes

at LB for both the summer and fall terms; one of the deciding factors for them to do so was the personal stories told by our LBCC students.

I am grateful to have met the students when I did; the experience and connections I make when meeting in person are priceless. This proves to be the case every time when doing outreach in the community. I like facilitating workshops like these because meeting students from across the state of Oregon is amazing! I look forward to meeting next year's CAMP cohort to continue providing support.

Lastly, I just want to congratulate the class of 2020. Six members of the Estudiantes del Sol Club graduated this year, and I am extremely proud of them for their success. Felicidades a ustedes y sus familias. ¡Si Se Pudo! (See following page.)



Congratulations, Graduates!



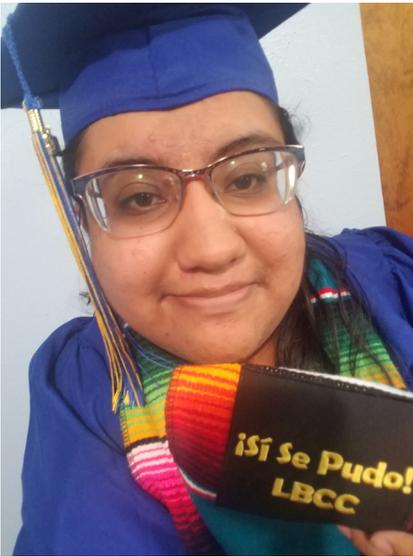
Imara Hernandez Rodriguez, law



Leena Mohammed, computer science



Yulissa Gonzalez Dominguez, human services



Patricia Simon, communications



Isai Aguirre Hernandez



Catherine Stevens, computer science

¡Sí se pudo!



I'm With the Birds—And the Humans Who Love Them

—Heather Morijah

I'm a bird nerd. There, I've said it. Now you know. Birds see me coming with my binoculars, confer with their friends and take off. I'm totally okay with them laughing at me behind my back. It comes with the territory.

Birds and humans have something very important in common: we see color. However, whereas birds rely on their color vision to choose mates, find food and scan for predators, whether or not we're conscious of it, humans use it to make snap judgments about other humans. We've been conditioned to do so almost since the day we were born.

We receive messages about the meaning of skin color from our families, our friends, our teachers, movies and TV shows, magazines, newspapers, advertising, you name it. We're immersed in this conditioning. It is quite literally impossible to be unaffected by it.

That being said, we **can** work on recognizing it when it happens and redirect the resultant thoughts and behaviors we may have.

Example: you're walking in a park with your (unleashed) dog. A Black man with binoculars asks you to leash said dog, citing park regulations. Should you:

A) apologize and immediately leash your dog, wish the man a enjoyable day and continue on your walk, or

B) go all Mt. St. Helens on this poor guy and call 911, screaming and feigning that an African-American man is

threatening your life, while you strangle your still-not-leashed dog and simultaneously demand the man stop recording your antics.

Seems like a no-brainer. I would choose option A, but some women, like [Amy Cooper](#), use their White lady fairy dust for evil rather than good and unfortunately, inexplicably choose option B.

Don't be that White person. Be the one who sees color, acknowledges that Every. Single. One. of us is different, appreciates and embraces that diversity, and knows that **all** of our lives are vastly better because of it.



Photo credit Jeffrey Ward/Bird Collective.com

Reflections On Mindfulness

—Juana Estrada

I like the quote you shared "We are perfectly designed for the results we are currently getting." The quarantine life has definitely brought out the best and worst in us. As your quote illustrates, living a restricted life has brought out both good and bad habits. But I guess we don't find the need to change *hasta que estamos "entre la espada y la pared"* (until we are between the sword and the wall). In other words, not until we are at risk of losing something we value are we are willing to be proactive. And maybe that's why race and ethnic relations are complicated, because as long as you have the upper hand, why change?

But as we are seeing with this pandemic, we are all interconnected, and we should strive to be better people for the good of all humanity. The problem also exists when we become stuck in the defensive stage.

As for your prompts "Contemplate how you cope with defensiveness in your own work relationships? Do you have strategies to help deescalate when either you or your colleague become defensive?"

To answer your question, I feel like on the surface we all do cope with our own and others' defensiveness because we need our jobs—so we have share and play

nice! I would say that the world is hopeful that this pandemic will allow us to grow as a society to make those institutional changes that will make a difference in people's everyday lives.

I am hopeful and pray each night for my friends, neighbors, family and strangers, that even though the world is not how we want it, at least they have one positive thing in their life that day (food, love, warmth, shelter).

Thanks for making me think and helping me process these stressful times.

Javier Cervantes, Director
Tania Mendez,
Latino Outreach &
Retention Specialist
Heather Morijah,
Program Assistant

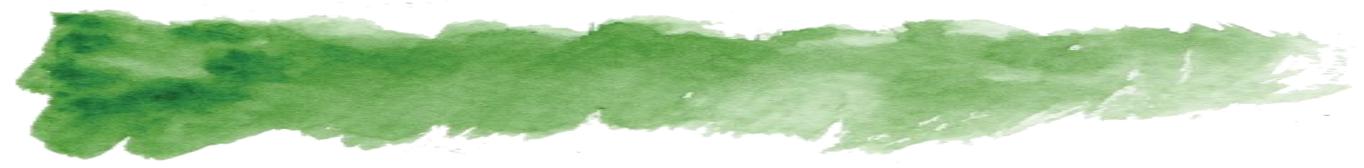
Student Staff:
Katie Bieker
Nathali Coyazo
Yulissa Gonzalez
Yanci Hernandez
Julie Narvaez

**Institutional Equity,
Diversity & Inclusion**



Visit our
[online
programming
web page](#)
to see what we
did during
Spring Term!

Visit [Audubon online](#) to read
about Black women who bird.



Don't Worry Too Much

Wherever you are, there you are.
You're not too close or too far.
Don't worry too much if you're not where you thought
you'd be.
Wherever you are, there you are.

Traveling down the road of life can cause lots of stress,
Especially if you're not where you wanted to be.
Accepting where you are for now really is the best,
And you can move on eventually.

Whenever it is, it is now.
Try to enjoy it somehow.
Don't worry too much about tomorrow or yesterday.
Whenever it is, it is now.

Worrying about the future never helped anyone,
And dwelling on the past can bring you right down.
Living in the present can be much more fun,
When your eyes are open to what is around.

Whoever you are, you are you.
To thine own self be true.
Don't worry too much about what others think of you.
Whoever you are, you are you.

Pretending to be someone else is not the way to go,
Especially when you do it just to please other folks.
Accept yourself and be yourself, don't put on a show.
It's the real you that we want to know.

Now you are starting to grow.
Don't be afraid to go slow.
Don't worry too much about much of anything,
Just relax, and go with the flow.

And wherever you are, and whenever you are, and
whoever you are, follow your star.

—lyrics by Douglas Hambley, LBCC Library

