# Jorge Garcia, Track 3

Tape 2, side A

JG: Ok, there used to be actually two EOPs on campus, it was a Chicano EOP, and a Black EOP. And that's how it was at virtually every CSUC, and the same kind of conflict over equal numbers, parity. And we define parity as one for one, Dave Benson used to tell us, "You guys are crazy, it ought to be two to one, ought to be three to one, because when you look out there, what the population trends are." And we said, No. We made and agreement. Back when the program started, it was parity, and we—one of the things that we try to do is stick to our word, if we give you our word, even if it hurts us, we will do our damnedest to stick to it, that's(??) been our position. And, so we always argue for parity, and when we marched it was because we were actually there were a couple of years there when there was two to one—two Black freshmen come in for every Chicano freshman. We said, What the hell is this? I mean given what's out there, this is ridiculous. While up at—I think it was San Jose State, you had the same kind of conflict going, but what happens is that instead of keeping it on campus, they went to court. And when you go to court, when Chicanos going to court against Blacks because of this lack of parity, the judge looks at it and says, "What the hell is this? Separate ethnic programs?" Anyway there was, under the court—with the court pushing the chancellors, directed to consolidate, so it became one EOP program. Now one of the, I think, bad effects of that, is that there was a professionalization if you will, taking place over there where—that's when we started thinking of—there is outreach retention, or outreach transition and recruitment over there, and then there's faculty here. They got to go get them, bring them here, and then we teach them. And we started pulling back, and in that process too, with the changing social conditions out there, in the sense of, there's not the student activism at the high school level, there's not the high profiles of people like Cháve—Chávez would come and go and you'd see it every couple of years, there would be another issue, another proposition or whatever, but in the end, it(??) disappears. Corky Gonzalez, who did Crusade for Justice is still around, but it's not the kind of—well the whole social climate has changed, and there's not that feeling among not just Chicanos and Blacks, but even among many Euro-Americans that—who are going to change society, that—we dropped that, something—reality crashed in on us I guess, or something. But we stopped getting as many blue-collar kids, and what we start getting is more and more, a higher percentage of them, even though they're still coming in special admits, in the same, about fifty percent, tend to be not from the poorer sectors of our community—they're a little better off. This is one of the reasons for example, why we got involved with the GM coalition, to keep the GM plant over in Van Nuys open is that, you go into classes three, four years ago when GM was running a couple of shifts, and you say, "Does anybody here know anybody that works at GM?" And among the Chicanos, there would always be somebody.

JB: Um-hm, um-hm.

JG: Because that was the kind of job that allowed people then to send their kids to university. The other thing that happens, see EOP started out—the state said ok, there will be what, a thousand dollar a year grant for EOP students. You know, that was in 1970, or 1969, when EOP was established. Today in 1990, the EOP grant, is still one thousand dollars. (laughs) So, a thousand dollars to a kid back then would pay a lot of things—when registration was fifty dollars, when registration was a hundred dollars, a thousand dollars was a grant. Today, they say, Ok, we'll take you into EOP, give you a thousand-dollar grant. If you're going to live on campus, or even if you're not living on campus, you figure it's going to take about six thousand dollars, so you're still five thousand short of what you need.

JB: So that's why the class base is edging up?

JG: Yes, yes, and that's one of the very noticeable things you see.

JB: Are those students still coming through Chicano Studies, or do they tend to dissipate out to the business and pre-business areas, engineering and so on?

JG: A good number of them are sorting out probably—not probably, I've seen the statistics. They do sort out very much like the Euro-American students, so about half of them are either in engineering, computer science, or accounting—or want to be in those areas. Where—or contention was that we were not going to have a lot of Chicano Studies majors, because what the heck are they going to do with it? That there are certain things that you can do, we would encourage certain people—in some ways it was almost like a major of last resort, if you will, not that I want to put it down, just saying that the reality is that—what do you do? You have an interdisciplinary degree that you have to go and sell yourself with, which is the same kind of situation that virtually anyone in the social sciences, humanities, would have to do. And the thing is that we were, in the early days, we were putting out a certain number of people every year that were intending to go out and work in various agencies, the poverty agencies, the youth agencies, and so on, so that was working nicely, but it's not a professional degree.

(00:05:10)

JB: Yours, then, was a service department very heavily, to acculturate students into this setting, and to give them their general education.

JG: And that's what we continue to do very heavily—and it's interesting that it varies from year to year, it really depends on for example, there's SHPE, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers—because the engineers, the minority engineering program is extremely successful, but one of the things they do, is they tell people, You are now going to be an engineer, you will eat sleep and drink only with engineers, and don't even party with non-engineers. And I had some trouble with that, but they have a ninety-two percent success rate with their first-time freshmen. I mean they come back for the

second—ninety-two percent is phenomenal. They also start now with the cream of the crop too, but depending on who the leadership of SHPE is, there will be more or less contact with MEChA and with the department. The same way with the LBA, the Latino Business Association because over there, the program there is not as lock step in—the minority business program doesn't—what they share in common with, or one of the things they share in common with minority engineering, is that they also start—they want 4.0s, then they go to 3.99s, and they just, they're not really interested in people that—I mean they use econ, the basic econ to screen people, they're not interested in people who are not going to make it—who can't even qualify to get into the basic econ course. So it depends upon the leadership, and that will vary, some years there are people who are more interested in and closer to, and other years there's a little—and you get—LBA, (laughs) LBA publishes an informal recommended professor list among Chicano Studies professors, (John laughs) and some are recommended positively and some of us are recommended negatively.

JB: Do you see that list?

JG: I've seen it, I've seen it, and I got on the questionable list one time—it turned out I had given a couple of LBA people lower grades then they thought that—I said, "What the hell, what's the basis of this?" So I wanted to find out, and one of the people in LBA was quite open about it, she said(??) it was based upon two people who had been in one of my courses, and they felt that they didn't get the grades they should've gotten. I said, "Wow, that's unfortunate (John laughs), but if that's what puts me on a questionable list, I'm happy to be on a questionable list." Because, I think one of the things is students, both Chicano and non-Chicano, are frequently surprised with, is that the classes aren't pushovers. There's a lot of material we're going to cover, and while we tend to be informal, or we tend to enjoy what we're doing, there's a certain rigor there to, to what we do.

JB: The students themselves—I used to have an office just across the hall from yours, so I was an observer of your students and your interaction with your students for a number of years in the early and mid '70s. I also had Pan-African Studies to be responsible for as associate dean. I don't know whether conditions have changed; my impression then was that there was a tendency, a very pronounced tendency, for Black students more or less to congregate with Black students, or Latino students more or less to congregate with Latinos. There wasn't that much interaction between, um, Euro-Americans, ah—

JG: Um-hm. It's hard to come up with a term isn't it?—

JB: It is.

JG: —You don't want to say Anglo, because—an Irishman will shoot you if you call him an Anglo, with reason and—you know. (John laughs)

JB: So, everyone suddenly is an honorary Anglo, including Italian-Americans, Polish-Americans—

JG: Armenians, I've had Armenians saying, What are you talking about Anglos? I say, "Well, you know it's just, now the current euphemism or the current catch-all is Euro-American, but even there are Armenians who can argue whether or not that's Euro-American, right?

JB: It's pretty tough to make a case.

JG: Yeah.

JB: In any case, whatever the term might be—none of them quite fits, is the tendency toward congregating within those groups an accurate perception in your eyes, and is it a tendency that continues if it is?

JG: I think the student population and those kind of behaviors mirrors what we see going on in our society today, I mean, there's never been a time that I know of in Southern California where we've had more integration. I mean you can't go into a neighborhood now anywhere and not find ethnic mixes, including Latinos—but on the other hand, there's never been a time when we've had so much residential segregation and the school segregation then at that(??). That—I don't want to say creates, because that's kind of—the residential segregation already is a byproduct, it seems to me, as product, not cause.

(00:10:06)

JB: Um-hm.

JG: And, so there is a lot of isolation, I mean for a lot of our students coming here, this will be the first time they've been on a campus that has a majority non-Latino, the majority, not minority. And so there is a tendency to clutch together, pool together, but there are others who have been in suburban situations that are integrated, and they tend to go very nicely, you see some in student government, you see some in—personally I could never understand why, some in the Greek organizations (John laughs) or whatever. But I think by and large, reflecting on what's going on out there, there is that isolation, and I think it's from lack of contact, lack of—ignorance is a horrible thing, not knowing about each other—you know, it takes an incredibly strong person then to reach out, and put yourself in a situation where you're likely to, if not be rebuffed, be ignored, which in fact is being rebuffed, because you're not being dealt with as a human.

JB: Yeah, it's virtually worse.

JG: Yeah, and I think one of the other things that I always try to point out to people when you're talking about isolation, is—we have a tendency to think somehow isolation is

bad, but many times—and I feel it personally, the need to withdraw, to heal. Because it's—I've just relayed a couple of things to you, now I hear I'm supposedly a dean now, and I guess I am, I can see the sign on the wall and all that, and I get the mail addressed to me, and you call me a dean, but—I was on the way to a meeting Friday evening, I stayed late Friday and took off going down to South Central, and I decided to stop and take some cold drinks, because we were meeting in a small little room that's not air conditioned that we meet in every other Friday night, and it's always hot and people complain it's always hot (unintelligible), so I pull into the Vons over here on Reseda—no, Nordhoff, Nordhoff. And I get the cart and I'm going through, and I get three six-packs of soft drinks, and I have to go get some ice, and just as I get to the ice containers—these clear glass door—freestanding icebox type things, two people walk up, and the way I would describe it—if these people were any wetter, they would be dripping. (Unintelligible) they're undocumented, mojados, wetbacks, whatever you want to say, I use the term "mojado," but I said—you just look, and you know—and they're speaking in Spanish, so they got there, so I wait. Now, this—I refer to as, "Northridge lady," comes along, they're talking in Spanish, they grab their bag of ice, they bang it around to loosen it up because it's kind of frozen, and breaking it up. And she makes a very interesting assumption, that the three Mexicans at the icebox are all together, because she cuts in behind them, I'm standing with a cart, they don't have a cart, and so as soon as they pull out, she goes into the ice, and then so I just look at her and she says, "Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you were with them." Now, if three Euro-Americans were lined up at the icebox, it seemed to me that person would come and get in line fourth—you wouldn't make that kind of assumption, see well that's no big deal except it happened, and I said, "No no it's alright, it just takes two seconds for you to get your ice." But just prior to that, we were meeting over here, so I go charging out of here about 5:45, going down to the First Interstate Bank at the corner, that's where I bank. And what I've got is a—it's my trust fund right, it's the dean's trust fund, reimbursement to me for some people I took to lunch, I wanted to cash that, figured I could get it before the weekend's over and I can just make it, so I scoot down there right in line at six o'clock, and the nice lady there at the bank looks at this and looks at me and says, "You're a dean?" I said, "Yes, Dean of the School of Humanities at Cal State Northridge." She says, "Oh." Because you know, it says on it, it's made out to dean Jorge Garcia reimbursement—those are funny checks from the trust fund, they print on the damn thing what it's for. And she says, "Well, my daughter is a student at CSUN." I said, "Oh what is she studying?" She says, "Well she's having a little trouble now." I says, "Well, what kind of trouble?" She says, "Well, do you help non-Hispanics?" I said, "I'm the Dean of the School of Humanities, even if it's not a humanities related program I'd be very happy—send her to Sierra Hall door 318." She says, "Well I just thought that maybe you only took care of Hispanics." So I told her, "No ma'am, I'm the Dean of the entire school—" By this time I'm getting kind of pissed, because I was in a rush anyway because I had to be down in South Central by seven thirty. And so I told her, "You know, there's enough racists out there to discriminate against people, that I don't have to, so I'll let those people do the ugly things, and I'll try to work with people and help them because that's my job." She says, "Oh, that's a very noble philosophy." And then she gives me my

money for the check. Now you put those two back to back, and this is just normal everyday life of your first Chicano dean in the history of the university, once you step off campus. If I was contended—we have very interesting institutional power relationships here, if we want to really know where we are, let's go to the supermarket. (Unidentifiable sound)

(00:15:17)

JB: (laughs) (Unidentifiable) when you cross Reseda or Nordhoff, you cross to another planet.

JG: Yeah, yeah.

JB: You had to something that was very difficult. You secured your PhD in 1986—

JG: Um-hm.

JB: —by which time you had been teaching here a decade and a half, you had all the responsibilities that a five day a week, tenure track, assistant, associate professor has—all the counseling, all the committee work, all the expectations, and you were working on a PhD—tell me about that.

JG: (laughs) Well, I was sitting down in the office one day early summer, working on the thesis that I had started at Fresno State I had never finished, and I had that little seven year thing, went through all my course work in one summer and one year, got to thirty—well to twenty-six units whatever it was, I was short—no twenty four units, I was short six units for the thesis. And then went to work over there, I never did another thing that year we were teaching, because it was just all hell (unintelligible) up there, so then I came down and I said, Well I better finish that, and then I know I had to go on and get a PhD, so I was in there working and a couple of colleagues were there and they say, What are you doing? I said—I explained to them—they said, Don't waste your time, go get a PhD, forget the MA, it's worthless if you're going to stay on around here. So I—oh, that makes sense, so I contacted UCLA and they said, Oh sure, we'd love to have you—Poli Sci, but we don't really want part time students, so what we want you to do is come over full time. I said, "I can't afford it, I'm married now and I have a child—expecting a child." And they said, Well, we'll give you a scholarship—some help. And it turned out that the money they were going to give me every month was just a little bit more than my car payment. (John laughs) So I told them, I said, "Look, that'll cover my car payment." They said, Well, what you need to do is sell your car and move into the student housing over here. And I said, "No no, I can't do that." So I said, "Oh shit, so it's back to the MA and see what I can do." And at that point, José Hernández had been out of Riverside for I guess a year, and he told me, he says, "Forget UCLA, go to Riverside, I mean they're small, they're—" at that time Riverside only had what? Forty-eight hundred students total? And they were threatening—and in those days they were—every couple of years they would threaten to abolish all the graduate programs at

Riverside, and turn it into an undergraduate institution, so the graduate programs were hungry for students. So I went out there and talked to them, showed them my record and my GRE scores and all that, and they said, Tell you what, we'll take you in as a second-year doctoral. I said, "What does that mean?" They said, That means you don't have to take our methods course, but you've got to take everything else. And I said, "Güey(??), that sounds good." You know a second year doctoral, but all it meant was one four-unit seminar I didn't have to take, I said, "But I don't care," (laughs) "I don't care." Actually it wasn't a methods, it was an introduction, some kind of introduction overview—I never took it I'm not quite sure, because I ended up going through a four quarter sequence in methods. But they waived that one, and I felt real good about that, so I said, This is the place I want to study—at that time gas was cheap, that was—'73 I started, so all of '73, and what I did, is I got the department to move all of my courses—I still had the twelve course load and I moved them all to the mornings. Living in east LA, I drive out here, and the seminars at Riverside were from two to five, or seven to ten, luckily most of the ones I took were from two to five, so I would get all my twelve units in between eight and twelve, leave if I—everything worked right, no problems on the freeway, I could get to UC Riverside by about a quarter to two, ten to two, and then go on to these seminars. So I was taking two, sometimes three seminars—in '74, stupidly ran for office, you know, political scientists are supposed to practice what they preach, right? The incorporation election in East LA, had a second child, and (laughs)—anyway, in '75, passed my exams, and then immediately asked for a leave from the program, said I want to take a year off, and that was a horrible mistake. Everybody told me, my advisor says "Don't do it," says, "You've got a prospectus approved, you've got every—just jump into it, crank this thing out, you're out of here in one to two years maximum—you'll be done." I said, "Man, I'm tired, I got two kids that—" And I told myself that I would never study until they went to sleep, and oh some nights I regretted it. What we used to do is, my wife and I used to like to go to the show, we like to pride ourselves that by the time the academy awards came around, we'd seen everything that was up for nomination, so what—Thursday nights we'd get a baby sitter, and she and I would go out to dinner and go to the show, and during the course of the show, I'd always drink two, three of the biggest Cokes I could get my hands on, and then come home and have a pitcher of iced tea, and I would study all night. Because I figured all I had to do was work through Friday, and I could go home and crash, I mean—my wife must've hated Friday nights because I would get home, and go to sleep. (John laughs) But that's what I did for three years of course work, never slept on Thursday nights—never. And typically, by about—when the kids are little, if you're lucky, by about seven, seven-thirty they're down. And so then I could study till midnight, and then I'd get up, then I would be down here—that's when I started coming to the office by around five, because I could sit there and prepare for my lectures, and sneak in some extra time for reading and so on—the papers were—I got the first incompletes of my academic career, and I went in there, and it's one of the most humiliating experiences I've ever gone through in terms of an academic situation—to go in and ask for an incomplete, I'd never done anything like that, and it turns out worse, I walk into the poor prof who's my major—the main advisor, I walk in there with twelve of us in the seminar, I says, "You know, I've never

done this, but I've got to have an incomplete. He said, "Hell, that makes it a hundred percent, you're the twelfth one to come in and ask for an incomplete." (both laugh) And I just was stunned. He says, "Go ahead, might as well, I'll sign, if I signed for the other eleven, I might as well." (both laugh) Anyway so—and then I used the summer, and I used to take directed readings during the summer, so I'd drive out—that was an interesting experience because of the couple of people that I knew I had to deal with on exams, I just went to them and said I wanted to do a directed reading, because they didn't offer any graduate seminars during the summer. So I would just make arrangements, and I remember in one case in particular, where the nice older gentleman we talked about, his opening line is, "I don't like nationalism of any kind, whether it's Irish, or Chicano." And he just stops and I said, "Ok." He said, "That doesn't bother you?" I said, "No, because I don't think we're going to study nationalism (unintelligible). He says, "No, but I just want to make that clear." (John laughs) Fine, so then he grabbed the book off of his shelf, it was a directed reading in the politics of Great Britain—one of my areas was comparative—comparative politics, so he gave me a book, he says, "You read this and come back next week, this time." So I did, and we sat there, started asking me questions, we talked about it, and he said, "This is a real pleasant surprise, you read and understood it." I said, "Yes." He says, "Ok, take these two books and come back in two weeks." And then the rest of the summer I only had (unintelligible) ten weeks, I only come back every other week. But, once again, those kinds of experiences where you say, now would he have done that with a non-Mexican or a non-Black, I don't know, I can't tell you, but I know that's the experience I had. But I took the year off, that's when I says "Hell, I'm going to do something for me," that's why I sat through Fermín Herrera's two course sequence of Nahuatl, which was a fabulous experience, I'm glad I did it, but basically I sat there on leave from UC Riverside dabbling—gathering material, gathering research, just getting—typical graduate fashion, going to write the study of the—that incorporation election I was involved in, turned into a political history of unincorporated East Los Angeles, and finally I left the university so it looked like nothing was going to happen, I said, I don't need a PhD to go back up there and work, but then I got bored when I went up there, so I came back and kind of dabbled with it again and then—so it was late '84 early '85, anyway, I got a letter from UC Riverside saying, There are a dozen of you riding around ABD [all but dissertation], and you've been that way for ten years, and you're a disgrace to the department and you have one year to finish, or we're kicking you out. And that's when—what happened is that I started teaching that semester at the Ventura Center, so that the way my schedule was set up, I had three courses Monday, Wednesday, and Friday—the fourth one was Thursday afternoon, four to seven at Ventura. So essentially what it is, is I stayed home on Tuesdays all day, I took my kids to school, then went home and wrote, till I had to go get them at around two thirty, three o'clock in the afternoon, and then on Thursday I did that except at about two o'clock, I took off for Ventura, and that's how I wrote the dissertation, and then got the degree in '86.

(00:25:05)

JB: That's quite a story—

JG: Well I always felt that I couldn't compromise, not with my family, not with the department, but that just—you have certain commitments and you had to balance it all out.

JB: You had left in '81, and had gone back to the San Joaquin Valley.

JG: Yeah, working with(??) my dad and brothers.

JB: Uh, had you ever planned to return here?

JG: No, no I resigned. Everybody said, Don't sell your house, rent your house, don't resign, just take a leave. And I said, Eh, you know, Cortés burned his ships for some reason, I—I firmly believe in going after what you want. You don't always keep looking over your shoulder and saying, Gee, maybe you just—you go, if things don't work out, then you go from there, that's just—just a trait I guess. And so I said, "No, I'm leaving." So I resigned. In a move I could never understand, Rudy claims it was because they knew I would come back, the department never hired anyone to, on a permanent basis, they went lectureship and part-time. So that—the first year, I went back and now my dad and brothers are farming on a large and mechanized scale, and so I was running large crews for them and—actually with them, (unintelligible) for them is incorrect. And that was a real different experience, all of a sudden you'd be walking around, a hundred and fifty men are on ladders, and you're the boss, and these are the crew.

JB: Your family was in a different position—

JG: Oh yeah, very very very different, and since I left home, things had gone very well for my family, I don't put any cause and effect on that. (both laugh)

JB: I wasn't going to say anything. (both laugh)

JG: I just want to clarify, let me clarify one thing, perfectly clear, there's no cause and effect that I know of there. But the first year was a learning experience, learning how to run those kinds of crews, learning how to gauge when, how many bins you need for the way the fruit looks, and when to send the crew ahead to the next field because we'd pick sometimes three, four places in one day, so we had to keep moving the equipment and make sure you send your reserve—what were your reserve tractors now become your advanced tractors with the bin trailers, they got to go first and they got to be there otherwise you move a hundred men, and there's nothing to pick in—they sit there, and that's all on the clock and so you have to coordinate all that, and so that was a real learning experience—well it started out the second year and then the pruning—pruning always(??) very slow. So you go out there and sit there in an orchard for a week, (unintelligible) used to get the crew settled down, and what I found out is that even in harvesting, you got a hundred, hundred fifty people, there are maybe five, six people

that are—we always pick size and color. That's the American food mania, size and color right, that's what you're going for all the time, and there's maybe half a dozen people that can't give you the size and color you need. But no matter what, you can get up there, you can show them, you can count them, you can—I don't know whether you could, maybe beat them with a stick—I never did, never threatened. But they never seem to get it. It turned out in one case a guy was literally color blind, of course the (John laughs) most common color blind is red and green right, which is critical if you're picking fruit.

JB: What are you picking in this case?

JG: There's peaches, plums, and nectarines, so if you can't tell red and green, you've got—but the only that would be worse would be apples.

JB: In the wrong job.

JG: Yeah, you're in the wrong job, so he ended up an irrigator. (John laughs) And we thought—when we finally found out what was going on, but it took us a season or two to figure out what the heck was wrong with this guy. But then you basically say ok, I know the problems I have, so every time you walk through the crew, you run into them and they're there and they're consistent, so at some point you basically settle for certain—better a known problem than constantly throwing those people out and having to train new people, so at some point you settle for it. Uh, it got boring. I'd find the second year that I'd get a book and wander off, settle my crew in and wander off, sit under a tree and read. (John laughs) My dad or brother would come by and, "Oh, what are you doing?" I says, "Oh, just reading," you know, I felt guilty and they would say, "No no, your crew's doing fine." Or, "The fruit is rolling in, everything's fine." I had a radio on my hip all the time, so communication was no problem. They'd be like, "That's fine, as long as your crew's running, we're not going to tell you what to do." But I just one day, during about the middle of that second year, said if what I really enjoy—what I find satisfying is sitting under a tree and read a book, then I ought to go back to where that's part of my job—where it's part of the job description, so I contacted the department, and there was some interest in getting me back, but things didn't work, so I had to go through another—and the third year was absolutely boring—just—horrible. So I came back in fall of '84, August of '84.

JB: Do you have time for another round—

JG: Sure.

JB: —perhaps twenty minutes, a half an hour?

JG: Sure.

(00:30:00)

[END OF TRACK 3]