

RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE AMERICAS

UC SANTA CRUZ

Annual Report

2020-2021



RESEARCH
CENTER
FOR THE
AMERICAS
UC SANTA CRUZ

<https://rca.ucsc.edu/>

FROM THE DIRECTOR

"The RCA brings together scholars from multiple departments, disciplines, institutions, and countries to share research and insights about some of the most pressing social issues facing our world. We mentor students to become the next generation of leaders and we support research that makes a valuable contribution to our society."

Thanks to supportive faculty and staff colleagues, as well as students, we managed to have a successful 2020-21 academic year, which was unlike any other in the center's history. It was undoubtedly a very difficult academic year as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, devastating so many of our communities and families and moving entire universities online. The attempted coup on January 6, 2021 at the U.S. Capitol added a new level of stress and concern about the fragile state of U.S. democracy. And yet somehow, we continued.

As you will see in this annual report, the RCA provided continued research support to faculty programs and several initiatives, including successfully administering the final year of the Tinker Foundation research grants to support early career graduate students with research projects in Latin America. We hosted some excellent webinar programs based on the theme "Memory Studies in the Americas" and on various professional development topics. We also published research reports, including one on COVID-19 and disinformation in Latin America, and secured external funding for our Human Rights Investigations Lab *for the Americas*.

The RCA maintains its record of advancing cutting-edge research, analysis, and public programs on subjects that matter to the world.

-Dr. Sylvanna M. Falcón, RCA Director



Our sincerest thanks to the Dean of Social Sciences Katharyne Mitchell, RCA Program and Events Manager Darío León, the RCA faculty Steering Committee members, and Graduate Student Researchers Monica Mikhail, Alejandra Watanabe-Farro, and Marina Segatti.

Thanks also to Chris Benner, Nathaniel Deutsch, Mykell Discipulo, Saskia Nauenberg Dunkell, Kristy Golubiewski-Davis, Nick Gonzales, Rebecca Hernandez, Scott Hernandez-Jason, Ned LeBlond, Susan Moran, Christina Navarro, Ursula Oberg, Marcia Ochoa, Irena Polić, Virginia V. Rivera, Allison Soergel, Daniel Story, Daniel White, Kristin Palma, Nichole Torres, Nichole Silva, Diana Hogue, Paulina Fisher, and Joni White. We also want to thank our 13 campus and community cosponsors for supporting our events.



THANKS TO OUR 2020 – 21 PROGRAM & EVENT COSPONSORS

American Indian Resource Center, Bookshop Santa Cruz, Digital Scholarship Commons at McHenry Library, Latin American and Latino Studies Department, Graduate Division, Oakes College, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Office of Research, Special Events, The Institute for Social Transformation, The Humanities Institute, University Relations, and the UC Santa Cruz Foundation.

AT A GLANCE

RESEARCH GRANTS

18



To support students, faculty, and research clusters in any Division.

STUDENTS SUPPORTED

116



Through professional development, scholarship awards and research internships.

EVENTS

9

Online discussions, and webinars.



PROGRAMS

11

Tinker Foundation Awards, Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program, Human Rights Investigations Lab, and Publications



In the News

The RCA wins funding for public interest technology.

The RCA is a UC MRPI award recipient.

Funds Raised

Grants & Donations \$249,741
Campus Support \$27,950

We would like to thank the Division of Social Sciences for supporting the RCA with a general operations budget and part-time staff support.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

MEMORY STUDIES IN THE AMERICAS

Dr. Sylvanna Falcón ~ The Evolving Practice of Human Rights Accountability: The New Terrain for Justice

As part of the “Slugs & Steins” monthly lecture series for alumni and community members, [Dr. Sylvanna Falcón discussed](#) the founding of the human rights investigations lab, how human rights accountability has shifted in the digital realm, and why a new generation of human rights activists are needed with critical digital literacy skills in search for the truth.



Brazilian Resistance to the Reactionary Wave Series

As Brazil faces the deepest political crisis of its recent history, marked by the election of a neo-fascist president and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic that has killed over 150,000 Brazilians, two webinars in Fall 2020 brought together scholars and activists engaged in researching and resisting this complex political scenario: “[Domestic Workers’ Resistance and the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil](#)” and “[LGBTQ Resistance in Brazil: From the Military Dictatorship to the Current Reactionary Wave](#)”.



Dr. Pascha Bueno-Hansen ~ Dissident Genders and Sexualities in the Andes: Transitional Justice Otherwise

Dr. Pascha Bueno-Hansen provided a [webinar lecture](#) on the modalities of resistance of people of non-normative genders and sexualities to armed conflict, political repression, and authoritarian regimes in Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia.



Sites of Memory, Spaces of Dispute: Missions and Monuments in the United States



Panelist:

Dr. Catherine Ramirez
Professor, Latin American
and Latino Studies



Panelist:

Dr. Kate Jones
Associate Professor,
History



Discussant:

Dr. Rebecca Hernandez
Director, American Indian
Resource Center

Our final event in our “Memory Studies in the Americas” thematic series explored how markers or symbols of memory are imagined and disputed. Dr. Catherine Ramirez presented on the San Gabriel mission in Tovaangar (known as Los Angeles today) and Dr. Kate Jones discussed Confederate monuments in Virginia. Both panelists weaved the personal with the scholarly to explore the contested terrain of memory in the United States. Dr. Rebecca Hernandez, Director of the American Indian Resource Center at UC Santa Cruz, was the event’s discussant.

Julia Alvarez in Conversation with Sylvanna Falcón



Bestselling author Julia Alvarez (*In the Time of the Butterflies*, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*) was in conversation with RCA Director Dr. Sylvanna Falcón about Alvarez’s most recent novel, *Afterlife*, which explores maintaining faith in one another and ourselves, especially when grieving the transition of a loved one.

RESEARCH GRANTS

FACULTY



DR. MARK AMENGUAL

Languages and Applied Linguistics

"Listening to sounds that you no longer pronounce: perceptual and processing benefits for indigenous Mexican heritage speakers."



DR. FELICITY AMAYA SCHAEFFER

Feminist Studies

"Tracking Footprints: The Militarized Science of Surveillance Bordering Sacred Indigenous Land."



DR. CATHERINE RAMÍREZ

Latin American & Latino Studies

"Precarity and Belonging: Labor, Migration, and Noncitizenship."



DR. AMANDA SMITH

Literature

"The Vortex and the Border Line: José Eustasio Rivera and the Venezuela-Colombia Border Commission."

GRADUATE STUDENTS



VALERIA ALONSO BLANCO

Psychology

"Exploring Cultural and Family Strengths among Undocumented Community College Students to Create an Inclusive Campus Climate."



KATIE LIGMOND

History of Art and Visual Culture

"Imperial Key: Andean Textiles as Elite Codes"



MICHELLE PARRA

Sociology

"Re-examining Heteronormativity in the U.S: How (Upwardly) Mobile Latinas Negotiate their Sexual Subjectivities."

RESEARCH CLUSTERS

Congratulations!

TO THE 2021 RECIPIENTS

We support independent research clusters comprised of UC Santa Cruz faculty and graduate students.

Critical Cultural Political Economy of Extractivism

Co-coordinators: Dr. Fernando Leiva and Alejandra Watanabe Farro, Department of Latin American and Latino Studies

Cuir/Cuier/Queer Studies in the Americas

Co-coordinators: Mario Gómez, Department of Latin American and Latino Studies and Emily Padilla, Department of Feminist Studies.

Researching and Resisting Brazil's Reactionary Wave

Co-coordinators: Dr. Patricia Pinho, Department of Latin American and Latino Studies and Marina Segatti, Department of Feminist Studies.

LIONEL CANTÚ MEMORIAL AWARD

ABOUT THE AWARD

The Lionel Cantú Memorial Award celebrates the life and work of Dr. Lionel Cantú (1965-2002), former Assistant Professor of Sociology at UC Santa Cruz. Professor Cantú's scholarship bridged and advanced Latino sociology, immigration studies, transnational/cross-border studies, gender and sexuality studies, and the study of gay men and masculinity. We collaborate with the Sociology and Latin American and Latino Studies Departments on this graduate student award.

Gloriana Lopez Leon, Psychology

"The Role of Social Media on the Identity Development of Latinx LGBTQ Emerging Adults."

Karina Ruiz, Latin American and Latino Studies

"Kids and Care Work: Emotional Labor in Latino Mixed-Status Families."



TINKER FOUNDATION AWARDS

Field Research Grants to Latin America

About the Award

In partnership with the Latin American and Latino Studies Department of UC Santa Cruz, we are very proud to introduce the second cohort of Tinker Foundation award recipients. These grants are for early career graduate students with research projects in Latin America. Additional support for this grant comes from the UC Santa Cruz Foundation's Board Opportunity Fund, Graduate Division, and the Office of Research.



Nathan Edenhofer, Politics
Mining, Power, and Contention Across Central America: Movements, Elites, and the State
Advisor: Dr. Kent Eaton
Countries of research: Honduras and Nicaragua



Tamara Ortega Uribe, Politics
Localizing postneoliberal politics and extractivist patterns of global environmental problems in Latin America
Advisor: Dr. Kent Eaton
Country of research: Chile



Ana Flecha, Latin American and Latino Studies
Secular spirits: a comparative study of the Santo Daime bailado and the popular Festa Junina in the Northeast of Brazil
Advisor: Dr. Patricia Pinho
Country of research: Brasil



Andrea Paz-Lacavex, Coastal Science and Policy
Green gravel for kelp restoration in Baja California
Advisor: Dr. Mark Carr
Country of research: México



Pedro Juarez, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
*Local adaptation to pollinators and pollinator isolation in Neotropical *Costus**
Advisor: Dr. Kathleen Kay
Country of research: Costa Rica



Amy Reid, Film and Digital Media
Coastal Connections: Nation Building and Third Cinema through Peruvian and American Filmmaking
Advisor: Dr. Irene Lusztig
Country of research: Perú



Latin American
& Latino Studies



Alejandra Watanabe Farro, Latin American and Latino Studies
Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice: The Politics of Policy-making in Peru and Colombia
Advisor: Dr. Sylvanna Falcón
Countries of research: Perú and Colombia

Human Rights Investigations Lab for the Americas

The Human Rights Investigations Lab was able to continue its research uninterrupted even though 25 students were working remotely. Fortunately, it was safe enough to gather at the end of year picnic. Though most of our work is confidential, we are able to share that we completed six investigations and many of our students volunteered to verify the social media posts about the January 6th insurrection in support of investigations led by external organizations. Like last year, the students spent hundreds of hours engaged in research and are also securing employment after graduating using skills learned in the lab. Go Slugs!

RESEARCH FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Below are hyperlinks to some of our public reports this year:

- [2019 Colombian Indigenous Defenders](#)
- [Disinformation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Latin America](#)
- [Social Media Report on Black Lives Matter](#)

We are very proud of our graduates who have secured jobs using the skills learned in the Lab.



The Lab's end-of-year picnic. **Top photo:** Professor Falcón (far left) with researchers from the Lab. **Bottom photo:** GSR Alejandra W. Farro with undergraduate student researchers.

About the Lab

Launched in Fall 2019, the Human Rights Investigations Lab *for the Americas* offers digital verification support to NGOs, news outlets, and other advocacy partners that are initiating open source investigations. Our Lab harnesses digital technologies to address alleged human rights violations in order to achieve accountability for communities adversely affected by these abuses.

Website: <https://humanrights.ucsc.edu/>



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DIALOGUES WITHOUT BORDERS

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