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4 UCSB Graduate Students Collaborate on Multiracial Studies Book

Four graduate students at the University of California, Santa Barbara have collaborated on a newly published book in multiracial studies titled "Crossing Lines: Race and Mixed Race Across the Geohistorical Divide."

The book comes at the subject from many angles and touches on a variety of fields. From poetry and art history to sociology and education, the chapters written by the editors and other contributors examine the subject from perspectives both analytical and personal. For example, Laura Furlan Szanto, a doctoral candidate in English from Chicago, offers a narrative about her life as an American Indian who was adopted by a white family, and how that experience affected her identity.

Although multiracial studies is a relatively new area of research, it is attracting academics from a broad range of disciplines. The subject, they say, has not just been ignored---it's been misunderstood.

"Traditionally, multiracial folks have been represented as tragic or treacherous, or both," says Marc Coronado, a doctoral candidate in English from Santa Barbara. "Such a narrow representation tends to overlook the positive aspects of both being multiracial and acknowledging the possibilities of multiracial collectivity."

In addition to Ms. Coronado and Ms. Szanto, the book's other editors are Rudy Guevarra, Jr., a graduate student in history from San Diego, and Jeffrey Moniz, a doctoral candidate in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education from Waipahu, Hawaii. The four worked together to produce a volume that, as Moniz describes it, "is truly interdisciplinary in nature."

Instead of following the traditional course of publishing, the four graduate students decided to take the initiative and produce the book themselves, so that it could be as timely as possible. It was actually published by Multiethnic Student Outreach, a campus group, in collaboration with UCSB's Center for Chicano Studies.

The group hoped their work would both inspire other students and bring new voices to the dialogue about multiracial studies.

The book was one of the products of a student-organized conference, held in April 2002, titled "Crossing Lines." The conference was a project of the Multiethnic Student Outreach, of which all the editors are members. The conference enabled professors, graduate students, and undergraduates from across the country to come together to discuss multiracial issues.

With the support of Paul Spickard, a UCSB professor of history and Asian-American studies and the group's advisor, and various other contributors, the four editors managed to construct their book from the bottom up---from the choice of articles to the cover design.

Others who were instrumental in the creation of "Crossing Lines" and provided support for its publication were Carl Gutierrez-Jones, a professor and chair of the English department at UCSB; the Center for Chicano Studies; and the Rockefeller Foundation.

A portion of the proceeds from the publication go to the Crossing Lines Scholarship Fund, which will assist other graduate students at UCSB who similarly wish to pursue research in multiracial studies. The book sells for \$10 and is available through the UCSB bookstore as well as the Center for Chicano Studies.

Self-publishing has played a crucial role in America's ethnic communities, scholars say. Since many works by ethnic writers were not considered to have mass appeal, they were simply ignored by the major publishing companies. Many authors were left with no alternative but to publish their own work.

Just because the UCSB student editors focus on similar topics in multiracial studies doesn't mean they always see eye-to-eye. As Rudy Guevarra, Jr., puts it:

"We don't all agree on how we see the field or how we should solve the problems in front of us, but open debate is a very empowering thing."

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