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November 9, 2020

Re: "Lonches con CCAS"—Proposal for CCAS Graduate Student Brown Bag Events

Dear Graduate Student Adviser Dr. Charlene Villaseñor Black;

The 2020-21 academic year is well underway, and as we continue to work from afar due to the circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to ask for your support in building a virtual space where the César E. Chavez Department of Chicana/o and Central American Studies Department can gather together, get to know our new faculty and graduate student colleagues, and engage in an exchange of intellectual ideas. With this in mind, we envision launching a virtual series of afternoon Brown Bag gatherings or "lonches" the first Tuesdays of the month, starting this upcoming winter 2021 quarter.

We envision these Brown Bags as low-stakes "open mics" where CCAS graduate students will sign-up (in advance) to casually share or formally present their doctoral research or related intellectual projects to the CCAS graduate student body and faculty. Each Brown Bag will have a CCAS faculty host who will welcome attendees and casually facilitate the presentations, discussions, brainstorm sessions, moderate Q&As, and offer insights. Again, these Brown Bags will be low-stakes gatherings where we will come together to build and sustain our relationships as CCAS graduate students and faculty through thoughtful engagement of our research and projects. We want to emphasize that we see these gatherings and the participation of our faculty hosts as crucial opportunities for our recently admitted graduate students to get to know the faculty and graduate student body while we are all sheltering in place.

In addition to these monthly "open mic" Brown Bags, we envision every third month to have the continuation of the previously initiated *salones* through "themed" Brown Bag workshops guided by CCAS faculty. Themes will depend on the needs and interests of the graduate student body. Three potential themes we hope to undertake as part of this series are: 1) "What is mixed-methods, and how do you know if it's right for you and your project?" 2) "What to keep in mind when blending social science, humanities, and/or arts methodologies," and 3) "Doing Community Engaged Pedagogies in CCAS: Practices, Ethics, and Concerns." The first quarter of "themed" Brown Bag implementation will be coordinated by the organizers. Following this initial winter quarter, we will implement a virtual bulletin board for graduate students to submit their requests for themes and corresponding faculty.

Goals of Chicana Graduate Student Brown Bags:

It is our goal that these Brown Bags will create a space wherein we come together as graduate students to share our scholarly and personal work within our own graduate student body, faculty, and staff. Below is an outline of intentions and goals for the Chicana Studies Brown Bag project.

This 1.5-2-hour, monthly Brown Bag and occasional salones will be opportunities for graduate students across cohorts to share and receive thoughtful feedback on their scholarly essays, scholarships, fellowships, job applications, proposals, conference papers, book/essay ideas, data collection, poems, performances, visual art, and other forms of creative and scholarly expression. We imagine this to be a continuous learning space of: information and skill sharing (i.e. workshops on data collection, map-making, teaching activities, etc.), brainstorming of ideas, cross-instruction, and community building. Ultimately, we will share knowledge, workshop materials, and investigate the many ways to approach and learn from our work and each other. We will ask, what is possible for the scholarly and personal work that we are doing? We hope these Brown Bag will increase engagement and motivation during these unprecedented times of distance-learning, distance-research, and distance-relations as well as provoke debates and reflections in ways that continue to unsettle the disciplinary mechanisms that sediment interdisciplinary fields such as Chicana/Latinx Studies.

As graduate students in the César E. Chávez Department of Chicana and Chicano and Central American Studies, the growth and wellbeing of our department is very important to us. Given the current political climate, racial injustice, and public health crisis, we strongly believe that small gestures like the one outlined above can enhance our intellectual merit and community commitments to care for one another as scholars, students, and persons.

We hope to count on your support to help us identify CCAS faculty who would like to participate as hosts or workshop facilitators in this series. We also hope to have your support securing modest research funds (\$150/person) for the students who present their intellectual work as part of this series. We understand that these research funds must adhere to the university's research funding guidelines.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to being in conversation with you concerning our proposal.

Sincerely,



Lucia Leon



Alana de Hinojosa

Lonches con CCAS Organizers