

Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are delighted to present our most recent publication, the seventh volume of the *California Sociology Forum*. The journal is student-led and features the works of many current Cal State LA students and alumni, with guidance from the Department of Sociology. One of the goals of Volume 7 was to showcase creative and meaningful works to a wider audience. The articles feature a variety of themes, including: experiences of integration at a commuter college; child physical abuse; homelessness; perceptions of disability; Marxism applied to Palestine; and Durkheim applied to K-pop fandoms. Our creative works and reviews take a sociological look at identity, gender socialization, agency, how cultural expectations shape transgender experiences, the meaning of interpersonal relationships, the symbolic role of animals as family, how different cultures interpret death and belonging, and beyond.

The 2024-2025 academic year has seen many significant events causing a range of emotions, starting with the change of U.S. presidential administration at the end of 2024. Then, 2025 started with wildfires sparking in Southern California and causing massive devastation due to environmental factors from global warming. The largest two fires in the Pacific Palisades and Altadena burned for 24 days, impacting the homes and communities of many Cal State LA students and staff. LA County already has a massive rate of unhoused individuals; the fires have all compounded the situation.

This turbulent year has included major increases in evictions, deportations, and raids aggressively targeting immigrants, regardless of legal status. As of Fall 2024—according to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI) page on student demographics—Cal State LA officially has a student body made up of 75% ‘Hispanic ethnicity/race,’ which underscores the population dynamics of LA; however, this ethnicity is also one unfairly targeted by accusations of ‘illegal immigration’ to the U.S. The anxiety and uncertainty around immigration raids on educational institutions has been one factor in a noticeable shift

on campus toward less community camaraderie. Another factor is the Department of Education being dismantled and canceling funding, as well as trying to eliminate programs like DEI; all of this is pointing to a rise in misinformation and authoritarian rhetoric in the U.S. that is harmful to the very core of freedom of speech. Our students deserve to focus on their education without fear of being deported or having members of their families deported. From a sociological perspective, these policies are deeply rooted in systemic racial and economic inequalities and have a strong chance of negatively impacting long-term family structures and community cohesion. It's important for everyone in the U.S. to know their rights and unite with supportive community as we all navigate and persevere through these trying, scary, and chaotic times.

An encouraging community is very important as we persist in the unfolding present. CSF members came together to enjoy Korean barbecue in the spirit of family and community during this year's Taste of Korea event, generously supported by CSF founder Dr. Hyojoung Kim with Dr. Jongwook Woo and the Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies. This shared meal reminded us of the power of connection and care. In times of uncertainty and challenge, these moments of gathering allow us to affirm our identities, find a sense of belonging, uplift one another, and build solidarity.

In Community and Solidarity,
The CSF Editorial Board



Image Description: Some of the Department of Sociology's CSF 2024-2025 Student Editors, Alumni Advisors, and Faculty Board during the Taste of Korea outing.