

Chair-Elect Welcome Letter
Welcome to NCCS XLVI, Albuquerque, NM

Karleen Pendleton Jiménez

I would like to acknowledge the original peoples of this land. The Sandia Pueblo (other pueblo communities) and the Navajo Nation have ties and stories on this land and within the broader community that are connected within New Mexico. I am grateful to be able to work here in relationship and strengthen community on this territory.

*-Suggested University of New Mexico Indigenous Peoples
Land and Territory Acknowledgment*

Dear Colegas,

Welcome to this beautiful land of mesas, mountains, rivers, and deserts. Nuevo Mexico is also home to the highest proportion of Hispanas/os/xs, Latinas/os/xs and Chicanas/os/xs in the U.S., and the second highest state percentage of Native Americans. Indigenous peoples have lived here for at least 13,000 years and at present there are 23 federally recognized tribes in New Mexico, including 19 Pueblos, 3 Apache Tribes, and the Navajo Nation. I can't think of a better place to bring together conversations about Indigenous knowledge and Chicana/o/x Studies.

In Toronto, where I live, Potawatomi-Lenapé scholar/educator Susan Dion asks her students (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to document their autobiographies of knowledge of Indigenous peoples. The responses are family stories, secrets, stereotypes, pride, colonial lies, resistance, shame, violence, community, love, educational institutions, myths, names, dreams, and land. They are an accounting of the formation of knowledge. They express ongoing relationships. A process of learning and unlearning.

My Indigenous knowledge was embodied by my grandmother who identified as European one day, Indigenous the next, but mostly Mexican. My learning took place in California public schools where fourth graders built

celebrated Missions out of sugar cubes. My consciousness arose in Chicana/o/x Studies classrooms where I learned about the genocidal violence of those missions. My Chicana queer identity formed through Anzaludúa's *borderlands* and Moraga's *war years*, women as committed to loving women as they have been to loving the Indigenous parts of themselves and those around them. I was taught in Chicana/o/x Paradigms class that Chicana/o/x theory could cross borders, and since coming to live and teach on Anishinaabe territory on the upper edges of Turtle Island, I have contemplated my responsibility as a Chicana scholar/educator on northern Indigenous land.

What is your relationship to Indigeneity? Where and how have you learned? How has Chicana/o/x Studies excluded or encouraged this learning? How do you honour Indigenous knowledge in yourself, in your classrooms of university students, with K-12 children and youth, and with community learners and activists?

I hope NACCS XLVI is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on relationships with our own Indigeneity, with Indigenous peoples, knowledge, and land. With this year's guiding theme, NACCS takes time and space to interrogate the relationship between our collective/individual autobiographies and knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

Corky Gonzalez's "I am Joaquin" is emblematic of early Indigenous threads and reclamations in the field of Chicana/o/x Studies. Since then, our gatherings are punctuated with *Danza*, our politics are in solidarity with Indigenous water activists, and our teachings informed by Indigenous talking circles and story-telling. Yet, questions of mutuality, reciprocity, artificial boundaries, and quality of engagement with Indigenous communities remain.

How do we know when our work involves deep and respectful teaching and learning? How can we build and maintain good relations between Chicana/o/x and Indigenous communities? How can we avoid the traps of cultural appropriation? How do we incorporate Indigenous knowledge into our conceptions of ethical research? How might Chicanas/os/xs acknowledge Indigenous land claims, when our own relationships with land have been fraught or severed for generations?

I am delighted by the number and quality of papers, panels, workshops, roundtables, and posters tied to the conference theme, covering such topics as Native rights, Working with Indigenous children, Indigenous cultural landscapes, The uprooting of Indigenous/Latinx communities, Latina and Indigenous women

professors, Ambivalent Indigeneity, Teaching Chicanx/Latinx literature, Two-Spirit spiritual communities, Storytelling and resistance, Mexican Indigenous migrants, Hiking the sacred Navajo mountains, Feeding the next seven generations, Indigenous Chican@x in European New World Print Culture, Queering Northern New Mexican Folktales, and Indigenous Knowledge as implemented throughout the Cycles of Life, to name a few. There are opportunities every day, during every time slot, to engage in conversations about the role of Indigenous knowledge in our lives and learning, and for the world we are offering our children and youth.

I thank you for entrusting me with the position of Chair Elect, and the honor of dreaming and planning this year's conference. I thank Professor Irene Vazquez of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at UNM for helping me design the opening plenary, Professor Tiffany Lee of the Department of Native Studies at UNM for providing the land acknowledgement, the NACCS board (Aureliano Maria De Soto, Linda Heidenreich, María Gonzalez, Francisco Villegas, Chalane Lechuga, Ernesto Colín, and Lilia Soto) for support and feedback as I worked through many layers of program planning, Julia Curry Rodríguez and Kathy Blackmer Reyes for the thousands of hours spent organizing this conference and assisting me with nuts and bolts and nuance as we work together on a welcoming and successful event.

I invite you to enjoy these early days of April in New Mexico. I hope they will be meaningful, energizing, challenging, and affirming.

Karleen Pendleton Jiménez
Chair-Elect, NACCS
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