

Saludos! The conference theme for the Sixth Annual LatCrit Conference in Gainesville, Florida on April 26-29, 2001 will be Latinas/os and the Americas: Centering North-South Frameworks in LatCrit Theory. We encourage you to respond to this Call for Papers, Panels and Participation with your ideas. After reading this Call carefully, please complete and FAX back the enclosed Program Proposal Form as soon as possible – and no later than the due date of October 20, 2000.

This Sixth Annual LatCrit Conference--"LatCrit VI"--will seek to look back at our short but rich history, and to move forward with the development of theory and praxis in our diverse communities, specifically in light of the globalizations that are increasingly blurring national borders in the Americas. During the past five years, the annual LatCrit conferences have focused on domestic and international sociolegal issues through several distinct though inter-related lenses of critical inquiry: (1) Latina/o pan-ethnicity and multiracialism, including intra-Latina/o issues of sameness and difference as well as non-Hispanic Latinas/os, including mestizaje, Indianess and blackness in Latina/o communities and societies; (2) identity - religion, culture, gender, sexuality and heteropatriarchy; (3) immigrations, migrations, and citizenships; (4) coalition, democracy, and community; (5) class and economic equity, including trade, labor, and environment. These conference themes have deployed sociopolitical categories that help to delineate status, opportunity and power both in the United States and beyond it, and which in part are constructed formally and actually by law. Returning to these five previous conference themes as a set, this year the conference theme focuses critical attention on inter-American issues of law, justice and society.

This year, the conference theme – Latinas/os and the Americas: Centering North-South Frameworks in LatCrit Theory – is designed to encourage exploration of the links that bind Latina/o communities in the United States to their homeland societies, cultures and economies. These links help to explain why Latinas/os in the United States constitute transnational groups and communities, typically retaining strong material connections to, and cultural identifications with, their homelands' traditions, issues, concerns, hopes and aspirations. These links, while oftentimes noted in prior LatCrit programs and texts, have yet to be explicitly thematized and explored in a programmatic way; this year, we take up this pending challenge collectively.

This year's program is designed to encourage papers and panels that adopt specifically inter-American approaches to social and legal issues. Our hope is that you and other scholars will consider undertaking some comparative critical studies of "domestic" issues and their counterparts throughout the Americas, using one or more of the five lenses or categories employed in prior years' conference themes – ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexuality, class, etc. The basic concept is to encourage critical inquiry of the five broad areas thematized previously (and noted more fully above) in ways that illuminate and elucidate the North-South character of Latina/o transnationality. Underscoring the inter/national nature of LatCrit theory to date, this year's conference planners generally hope to turn the gains and insights of the past five years toward a better collective understanding of the diverse hemisphere we share: the Americas.

As always, the conference program will be designed to accommodate panels and papers that do not directly reflect the conference theme – as always, the Conference Planning Committee invites and welcomes all papers and panels that expand and deepen LatCrit theory. To facilitate LatCrit theorists' wide range of interests, past LatCrit conferences have sought to feature and

balance four basic guideposts in organizing the substantive program. This year, we once again encourage you and other scholars to consider these four additional factors as guideposts for your paper or panel, and to return your response to this Call as soon as possible – and no later than October 20, 2000.

These four additional factors or guideposts are listed below. They have, during the past several years, served as useful lenses for papers and other program events. The following four guideposts are offered, therefore, as possible points of reference for thinking in new ways about familiar issues (like affirmative action and bilingual education), as well as for encouraging critical forays into new substantive areas (like communications or antitrust laws):

1) Papers or panels that focus on Latinas/os as a distinct but diverse and transnational social group, and the group's relationship to law or current legal regimes/practices. The idea is to "center" Latinas/os qua Latinas/os in legal discourse, but to do so in a way that recognizes and accounts for the many axes of difference that help to define Latina/o heterogeneity, both domestically and internationally.

2) Papers or panels that bring a regional focus to the conference, corresponding to the region or locale of that year's conference. In this case, in varying degrees of generality, these papers or panels would help focus the conference or topics historically or currently associated with Latinas/os in the Northwest or the West or the Pacific Rim. The idea is to rotate centers within LatCrit discourse, in part by using the annual geographic rotation of the conference to promote awareness of different conditions at different sites. This effort also helps to ensure a built-in means of substantive variety in conference programming from year to year.

3) Papers or panels that explore or elucidate cross-group histories or experiences with law and power, such as those based on class, gender, race, sexuality and religion. The idea is to ensure that each conference program, in addition to incorporating intra-Latina/o diversities also contextualizes Latina/o issues in inter-group frameworks.

4) The fourth and final guidepost from the past relates to the preceding one: papers and panels that connect or contrast LatCrit theory to other genres of scholarship, and in particular the various strands of outsider jurisprudence (critical race theory, feminist legal theory, queer legal theory) that critique class, gender, race, sexuality and other categories of social-legal identities and relations.

Everyone is encouraged to use these four guideposts, as well as the following considerations, to help draft a proposal, and then to complete the attached Program Proposal form and FAX it back ASAP, and in any event no later than October 20, 2000.