



## Dr. Rick Bonus Oral History

March 1st, 2025

Length of Interview: 1:04:30

Speaker: Dr. Rick Bonus

Interviewer: Catherine Quan Potmesil

Transcribed by: Catherine Quan Potmesil, Samantha Pagdilao

[Generating and Reclaiming our Wisdoms \(GROW\):  
A Collection of AAPI Community Stories at UC San Diego](#)

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Timestamp	Transcription
0:00:00 - 0:00:31	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> There we go. I think we're recording now. Let me double check. Yes, okay, we are recording. Okay! Alright, so let me start this up for transcript purposes. This is Catherine Quan Potmesil with Generating and Reclaiming Our Wisdom, class AAPI 198. Today is March 3rd 2025, and I am here with Dr. Rick Bonus. Do you mind introducing yourself a little bit?
0:00:31 - 0:00:39	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> My name is Rick Bonus. I teach in the Department of American Ethnic studies at the University of Washington in Seattle.
0:00:40 - 0:00:51	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Thank you very much for that. So from my understanding and why we're here today, you were a graduate student at UC San Diego, right?
0:00:51 - 0:00:52	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Correct.
0:00:52 - 0:00:55	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> When was that? And what were you studying there?
0:00:55 - 0:01:07	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh! Okay, let me see. I believe I was there from 1992 until 1998.
0:01:07 - 0:01:08	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> 1992 to 1998.
0:01:08 - 0:01:10	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> If I'm adding it correctly. <i>[laughs]</i>
0:01:10 - 0:01:15	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah. Time gets lost when you're in grad school.
0:01:15 - 0:01:19	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I know. Yeah, you can. We can verify that later if you want to.
0:01:19 - 0:01:22	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah <i>[laughs]</i> . But somewhere around the mid-90s.
0:01:22 - 0:01:25	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yes. Yes. Definitely around that time. Yes.
0:01:25 - 0:01:35	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Okay. And what were you studying? Like, what department were you in and who were you working with?
0:01:35 - 0:01:54	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I was a graduate student in the Department of Communication. And in terms of working with... I was a TA there for a while. Which is part of the program. And I was also an RA, you know, for a couple of professors. So yeah.
0:01:54 - 0:01:58	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Okay. So, in communications.
0:01:58 - 0:01:59	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yes.

<b>0:01:59 - 0:02:10</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Alright. Thank you for that! What led you to decide to study at UCSD? So, why choose the Com Department at UCSD versus anywhere else?
<b>0:02:10 - 0:02:55</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh! Well, I originally wanted to study... I wanted to be a Philippines studies expert. So I wanted to study media systems. Both corporate and state-owned media systems in the Philippines. And, sort of, compare them with other countries in Southeast Asia, like Malaysia and Singapore. So I did a little thesis on that. And I wanted to examine the ways in which media technology was used to pursue or engage with national development plans. National development goals. In terms of attaining literacy or increased literacy and all kinds of different, you know, social programs.
<b>0:02:55 - 0:03:34</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So I was... That was how I entered. And then I changed my topic. I discovered another sort of interest of mine. Not that I completely gave up on that, but I discovered... There was a time - I think it was on our 3rd year - in which we were being farmed out instead of being solely working as teaching assistants for the Department of Communication. We had to give way to the new incoming students. Our positions were being sort of given to them, and so the Department suggested that we apply to different units for TA-ships.
<b>0:03:34 - 0:04:04</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And I did apply to the Department of Ethnic Studies. They did not have a graduate program at that time, so the way they hired graduate students - or the way they hired TAs - was that they would entertain applications from different departments. So I applied. And so I belong to a group of TAs who are from different departments. You know, from Sociology, from Literature, from Economics, Political Science, History... Different places. And a couple of us from Communication.
<b>0:04:04 - 0:04:37</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And that's when I discovered - to put it shortly - that's how I discovered my interest in ethnic studies. I wanted... my interest shifted to instead of being an expert on Philippines communication systems, I wanted to study migration patterns. Immigration and migration patterns from the Philippines. And how, sort of, media channels facilitated those kinds of migration patterns. So it was still a Communication project.
<b>0:04:37 - 0:04:58</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> That's how I ended up being a TA in the Department of Ethnic Studies. And I stayed there for a while. I think I was there for a while. You know, I think I was there for like... I TAed there for, like, the next 3 years with different professors. And so, I was able to immerse myself in the scholarship of that field. Because my department, you know, obviously wasn't into that.
<b>0:04:58 - 0:05:05</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Ah. What was it like, then, to go into a field like Ethnic Studies? Where it's so interdisciplinary?
<b>0:05:05 - 0:05:48</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah! I was excited. I mean, Communication is also interdisciplinary, in a way. But I got so interested and sort of stimulated

	by the kinds of topics that they covered. They were much more meaningful to me because they resonated with my own personal experiences as an immigrant myself and my own family, right? And you know, a lot of these... I thought, were like just dinner conversations in our family. And I did not realize there was a whole sort of legitimate field of study devoted to the study of race and power in American society. Or even in places outside the U.S.
<b>0:05:48 - 0:06:13</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so, I was definitely keen on... you know, I said to myself, this is the field that I want to engage with. And so, I stayed there. You know, I found mentors there who are very supportive of the work that I was doing. And a lot of my Communication professors kind of were disappointed that I was not available anymore for them [laughs]. I hung out in Ethnic Studies more than I hung out in Communication.
<b>0:06:13 - 0:06:38</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so, yeah, understandably, you know, they felt a little bad. Because they were... You know, I still graduated with a degree in Communication. I mean, again, because there was no graduate program in Ethnic Studies at that time. Had there been, I would have you know [laughs]. My committee members, you know, came from that department as well. At least one of them came from that department. So, yeah.
<b>0:06:38 - 0:06:41</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> That's funny how familiar your story sounds. I'm-
<b>0:06:41 - 0:06:41</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh really?
<b>0:06:41 - 0:06:47</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah [laughs]. I'm in History, and same thing. I discovered Ethnic Studies, and I was like, "Oh, goodness!" This is-
<b>0:06:47 - 0:06:49</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yes. Exactly. Yeah.
<b>0:06:49 - 0:06:53</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> -this is such a wonderful space to be in. And so I'm not surprised.
<b>0:06:53 - 0:07:20</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah, it is. You know, Ethnic Studies... it sort of touches you in very personal ways. In very collective ways. And it's not something that you just, you know, separate from your life, right? Like "that is my field of study." It's actually the life that you live, right? Which is an amazing thing to do in life itself.
<b>0:07:20 - 0:08:03</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah. So leading off of that. Because, as you're saying, in Ethnic Studies is where you found... And, like, teaching for Ethnic Studies is where you found that sort of like... These research interests that you didn't think were necessarily open at the time. What types of, like... hmm. Trying to figure out how to word this. Did that change your perception on the type of community that you saw at UC San Diego? Did it change your understanding of who your community was and your place in it?

<b>0:08:03 - 0:08:37</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. Right. Well, you know, in Communication - even though there are scholars in Communication who do community kinds of engagement... It's very different from the ways in which community is conceived and practiced in Ethnic Studies. In Ethnic Studies, when you say "community," it's really like... It's more of an intimate sort of connection with the community, not just as a scholar going to the community to study them.
<b>0:08:37 - 0:08:57</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But, sort of, engaging the community in much more... I should say not so much personal as in "intimate," right? But in much more engaging ways that make them seem... That treat community members not just as objects or subjects of study, but actually partners in your study.
<b>0:08:57 - 0:09:11</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> That's what I found really appealing, you know, in the field of Ethnic Studies. In Communication, when we say studying the community, you go to the community, you interact with the people, and then you leave the community. And then you write about them, right?
<b>0:09:11 - 0:09:58</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> In Ethnic Studies, it's a lifelong commitment to a community. You don't just go in there and intrude on their environments. You actually build relationships with them before you even study them. And you sustain those relationships by building trust with them. And sort of being an agent of advocacy for them as well. Because you're in a privileged spot, and you know, and they're in another spot that's not as privileged. And so, that's what I found really appealing in Ethnic Studies. It's so different from the ways in which we sort of do scholarly work, right? It's not like, "oh, those are just my objects of study, and I don't really have a relationship with them other than they're my interviewees." And, you know, all these things right?
<b>0:09:58 - 0:10:18</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But in Ethnic Studies it's like, I don't dare enter a community and just, you know, study them just like that. You enter very modestly and humbly, and you respect their space and you interact with them in ways that are really respectful. Because you're intruding into their environment.
<b>0:10:18 - 0:10:37</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I'm not from San Diego, and so, you know, in order to build community with them, I had to, you know, like participate in many events, just to build trust and to know more about them. And not only because I wanted to use them as my subjects of study. I really wanted to interact with them because they're my community, right? I belong to that community in a lot of ways.
<b>0:10:37 - 0:11:15</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> We had similar backgrounds, even though I'm not geographically from there. And, you know, I found some friends that are - to this day, you know - they're like lifelong friends and acquaintances. And so that's what, you know, that's what was so appealing to me. It's kind of a very respectful and special way of dealing with communities. And not just, you know, ask people you can

	in a way use, you know, for your own career building, But someone who can actually be a partner, you know, with them in terms of their advocacies.
<b>0:11:15 - 0:11:18</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Very beautifully said.
<b>0:11:18 - 0:11:20</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Thank you.
<b>0:11:20 - 0:11:54</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Genuinely. I really think the sentiment of, like, being committed to a community is really wonderful. So again, on top of that, what type of... As you mentioned, being a lifelong partner with people in their advocacy work, what kind of advocacy or activism did you see around something like either AAPI communities or, like, the push for a AAPI-specific studies during your time as a graduate student? Did you notice anything? Or did you... Were you a part of anything at that time?
<b>0:11:54 - 0:12:21</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Right. Well, clearly, community members - at least in San Diego, the ones I interacted with - felt a sense of invisibility, a very strong sense of invisibility. Like, they've never heard of a Filipino professor at UCSD. They've never heard of... Like, "oh, is, like, Filipino history, you know, Filipino American migration history... is that even like a course? Is that like a... Is that even talked about in school?"
<b>0:12:21 - 0:12:45</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so I immediately... And they're not unique in that sense, right? I mean, I'm used to that as well. Coming from Los Angeles, too, is that you have these educational institutions that really are clueless about, you know Filipino Americans. Even Filipinos, right? And the whole history of the colonization of the Philippines by Spain and the United States.
<b>0:12:45 - 0:13:13</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Which people know as, you know, as Filipinos. But they didn't... They felt like a sense that this is such a marginal history that does not deserve... Or they thought that they did not deserve a spot in the university. That's the one thing I really... that was very strong, strongly felt when I was speaking with them.
<b>0:13:13 - 0:13:31</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Because they were even surprised I was a graduate student there, you know. What am I doing? Why am I studying Filipinos, right? And so this sense of non-legitimacy and, sort of, non-legibility, you know, of them. That they're not valuable enough. That was overwhelming to me.
<b>0:13:31 - 0:14:04</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so that was sort of, like, the seedbeds for a study of Filipino migration histories. Because A, you know, very few people studied that. And B, all these connections that one can make between, you know, the entry of the United States as a global empire in the 20th century in which the Philippines was a major, sort of, factor in that. In the development of a global empire, right? On the backs and feet of Filipino labor.
<b>0:14:04 - 0:14:35</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so, building from that, thinking about, you know, if one doesn't have a history that's being told and written, what happens



	to people? What happens if they're so marginal in their existence as immigrants, or even United States citizens - naturalized citizens, or even citizens. And so I became very interested in what they do in spite of their invisibility.
<b>0:14:35 - 0:14:57</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So I studied, you know, their community newspapers. I mean, they were proliferating at that time. And some of them still exist to this day, right? And so to me that was like... Having your own community newspaper devoted to Filipino affairs, I think, is a form of resistance already against invisibility. Because you're trying to make visible yourselves using your own voice.
<b>0:14:57 - 0:15:30</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So that's a Communication, you know, field of study, right? I looked at, you know, the ways in which they did politics. You know, the ways in which they empowered themselves in terms of, you know, local policymaking. And also connecting with the Philippines. The ways, you know, they did beauty pageants. They did different kinds of events that benefited, you know, calamity, typhoon victims in the Philippines. Those are little, you know, micropolitics that made sense to them.
<b>0:15:30 - 0:16:14</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So I studied that as well, right? And so, a lot of different, sort of, sides or perspectives to being an invisible Filipino. And yet, sort of, devising ways to make themselves legible. Not only to each other, but to other people as well. So it's a way of communicating to the public who you are, you know. In ways that lift not only your community, but you know... You try to engage with that challenge of being invisible in ways that are quite productive. Instead of just passively accepting that, or you know, or moping about it, they find ways, you know, to make themselves visible.
<b>0:16:14 - 0:16:39</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And not even following, you know, like textbook practices, right? I mean, they were, like, concocting these things on their own. I found that really fascinating. And also very resonant with other groups. Right? And so, that became, you know, my 1st book - my dissertation, and then later on, my 1st book on Filipino Americans.
<b>0:16:39 - 0:16:45</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> That is... Because I didn't even know that there were newspapers circulating.
<b>0:16:45 - 0:17:24</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah, you know, of course, I looked at Filipino stores or Asian stores because those are sites of community engagement. Not just commercial sites, right? Sites of nostalgia, sites of, you know, belongingness. Again, you know, publicly etching spaces that count for them that are meaningful to them. And those are different forms of what we call, you know, communication. You know, public communication in a lot of ways. Because they are indeed communicating to the public their identities and their practices.
<b>0:17:24 - 0:17:33</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Were those newspapers, or, like, those communities, were they, like, firmly established by the time you got to UCSD?

0:17:33 - 0:17:58	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh yeah. Yeah, I mean, they were already existing. They're all free, you know. They were subsidized through ads, just like any regular community newspaper. And they, you know, they covered everything from new immigration rules or policies all the way to, you know, lost and found stuff.
0:17:58 - 0:18:31	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> It's very, like, very micro, but also very macro. It connected them with the Philippines in a lot of ways. Because they also featured... They did not have links yet. They did not have online links yet <i>[laughs]</i> . But they featured different, you know, stories from the Associated Press. You know, from Philippine presses. They linked them with their own community newspaper. So, it served a lot of purposes, you know. But for the most part it brought, you know - at least Filipinos in San Diego - brought people together, right?
0:18:31 - 0:19:02	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And there were more than 1. There were more than 2. There were, like, also other newspapers. I mean, these newspapers were, in a way, competing with each other, you know. But it was like a vibrant space. It's not, like, dirty competition. But it's just like, you know, complementing each other right? And they were freely available. And again, this was a way for people, you know... I mean the traditional role of a newspaper, right? Which is to connect people with each other. So they were doing that on their own. You know, their own resources.
0:19:02 - 0:19:11	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah! That's actually that's really cool! <i>[laughs]</i> It reminds me how much I'm disconnected as a graduate student from types of community sometimes.
0:19:11 - 0:19:24	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Well, you know, just just go to National City. And in front of, you know, supermarkets, or even, like commercial places, you'll see stacks of them for free available outside. Yeah, you just grab them, you know.
0:19:24 - 0:19:24	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Oh.
0:19:24 - 0:19:47	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> That's how I knew them. I got in touch with the editors, the publishers. Yeah. And it turned out that the editors and publishers were community leaders in themselves. You know, like, they were like Filipino. So local celebrities, you know. And yeah, and they were so... happy, you know, to contribute to my work. Yeah.
0:19:47 - 0:19:49	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> That's really cool.
0:19:49 - 0:19:50	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah.
0:19:50 - 0:20:03	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Now, is that something that translated over to, like, the Filipino community at, like, in the UC San Diego? Like amongst the student body? Like, was that something that, like, they were building off of and responding to? Or is it, like, largely outside the University?
0:20:03 - 0:20:24	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Largely outside of the university. Again, you know, just



	like any ivory tower, community members think that these are forbidden places for them. They don't need to be there unless they're students there, you know. I mean, UC San Diego is on a hill, right? It's separate from the city. And so... it's even in a different city, right? [laughs]
0:20:24 - 0:20:46	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so, yeah, I think it was kinda separate, you know. Filipino students would know about them. But since they're, like, later generation, maybe they did not avail of that too much. Maybe during the times when they accompanied their parents to do grocery shopping in the, you know, in the Filipino communities. But other than that, yeah, not really.
0:20:46 - 0:20:54	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> That is interesting. Well, that makes sense, too, as you're saying. How far removed, like, in La Jolla versus like...
0:20:54 - 0:21:02	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh yeah. Yeah. And La Jolla, is like an expensive place. Who wants to go to La Jolla, you know, if you're a working class Filipino, right?
0:21:02 - 0:21:03	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah, no [laughs].
0:21:03 - 0:21:07	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Parking is difficult and expensive. And... yeah, yeah.
0:21:07 - 0:21:12	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> I was just gonna say the parking alone is enough of a deterrent [laughs].
0:21:12 - 0:21:21	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And then who wants to mix with, you know, like professors, you know. Yeah, for fun? That's not their idea of fun [laughs].
0:21:21 - 0:21:47	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Very true [laughs]! Not very interesting, I guess. We don't make good dinner conversation because we talk about this stuff. So that being said, given that, like, not a lot of this, sort of, like, community and activism work was happening on campus itself, what was the, sort of, genesis for that Filipinx studies class that you were leading? How did that start?
0:21:47 - 0:22:24	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Well, also as a graduate student, you know, ever since 1st year, I was already keen on looking for the... a collective that I can be comfortable with, right? As you know, the experience of being a graduate student is by definition, you know... it's a lonely experience, right? It's a very isolating experience. Books are thrown at you. You have to read them quickly. You have to write quickly. You're in the library all the time, and all these things. So your social life, basically 0, right? And so... But, at the same time, I was looking for community myself. I was the only Filipino in many, many different places, right? in communication.
0:22:24 - 0:23:14	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I was the only Filipino in many, many different places, right? In Communication, even in Ethnic Studies, you know, and in other places. So, I looked for other Filipinos. Well, we found each other.

	<p>Not that I was actively like, you know, seeking them, but we did find each other. I saw some Filipinos working at Groundwork Bookstore. I met some graduate students who had an interest in the study of the Philippines and Filipino Americans. I met graduate students who were interested in ethnic studies as well. So I was looking for community. I met, like, Filipino staff members in student affairs offices. There was 1 there- Or there were 2. I met undergraduate students. Of course. When I was a TA, I met them in my classes, right?</p>
0:23:14 - 0:23:45	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> And then we form like very informal groups. You know, like meetings. Like, we would... Are you familiar with lumpia? Right? So, lumpia is a favorite Filipino dish. So, we had these what we called "lumpia events," right? So, it's like, we would host, you know, at the CCC - when it was then like a little quonset hut, right? <i>[laughs]</i> We would host, like, you know, Friday afternoon lumpia gatherings, right? So in which we just talked about anything that interested us.</p>
0:23:45 - 0:24:25	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> Until it gravitated to a point in which we were applying for funding to invite Filipino scholars to campus, you know. Filipino artists, Filipino novelists. You know, Jessica Hagedorn, the author of <i>Dogeaters</i>, we invited her. You know, so, it became a little bit much more systematic, right? Because there was interest brewing, right? And there was this space at the CC- At the Cross Cultural Center. Why not, you know? Why not create, like, a little group of common interests, right?</p>
0:24:25 - 0:24:54	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> And there were staff members at the CCC, too, who were keen on, you know, embracing and facilitating, you know, such small, informal events. And then, of course, part of the discussions was about the lack of any class, you know, about our histories, right? The lack of professors, you know.</p>
0:24:54 - 0:25:18	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> Maybe, you know, even the lack of graduate students who are not merely, you know, Filipinos, but anyone who's interested in Filipino American studies or Filipino studies. And then, sort of, observing how active the Filipino students - the undergrad Filipino Student Association - is, and how we can partner with them, right?</p>
0:25:18 - 0:25:55	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so we brought our little appeals to them about, "how can we even... How do we do this?" Right? And so, a lot of these things we were really brainstorming. And then, of course, one of my dissertation committee members, Yén Espiritu... Part of her scholarship is on Filipino American migration history, right? And so when we were... I broached this idea that "Hey, Yén. If I could... If I'm advanced already to candidacy," which means you finished all the courses - you know this, right? "Is it okay if I offer a class?" Right?</p>
0:25:55 - 0:26:26	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> And then this was brought up to the chair of the department - then was George Lipsis. And he said, "Yeah, yeah! Why not?" You know? "Show me a syllabus." Right? And so I showed a syllabus. And it was just very... I mean, you know, it was professionally done, but at the same time it was like a mix match of different sort of</p>

	sources, right? You have scholarly sources. You have small documentary films. Even a feature film called <i>The Debut</i> . Yeah. So it's like different mix and match of different things that would interest students.
0:26:26 - 0:27:18	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But, it sort of... It had a very clear purpose, which is to, sort of, examine the histories of Filipino migration to the United States within larger historical contexts of U.S. Empire. Racism, you know, labor extraction, colonization, military, you know, expansion... And resistance. We made sure that we acknowledged and recognized a long history of very proactive resistance against these kinds of, you know, oppressive conditions. From resistance against Spanish rule to resistance against U.S. colonization - all the way to resistance against, you know, contemporary racisms, right? And sexism.
0:27:18 - 0:28:01	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So yeah, that was the genesis of it. And then everybody just helped out. I mean, I was the teacher on record, but I invited a lot of different, like, even graduate students who were doing Filipino American studies to do guest lectures in class. Yeah. And so, yeah, we had... We had, you know... And it's not as... We wanted to create, you know, like, a learning community that was much more interactive and, sort of, with engaged students. They're not just merely sitting there, but everybody contributed, you know, to the curriculum in so many different ways.
0:28:01 - 0:28:22	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I remember assigning a final project on any topic that we did not cover in class, but they think should be covered the next time it's taught. And so everyone, all the groups, presented different, sort of, topics from that... You know, that... Of course you cannot cover everything in one class, right?
0:28:22 - 0:29:14	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So, I remember "being multiracial" was one of them. I remember "issues of religion" was another one. Because, you know, Filipinos have a very strong Christian, you know, sort of background or upbringing. "Generational gap" was another one. Because, again, this was... these were all organically, sort of... They came up organically out of students' experiences, you know, with their parents. Students experiencing... I just provided the language for it because they were... They would be like, "I always have arguments with my parents!" And then I was like "Oh, generation gap! Yeah, sure, of course!" Yeah, you know <i>[laughs]</i> . And so they did their research. They presented on these things. And so, I told them, "this will enrich the class that will be offered next time," you know, "so thank you." Right?
0:29:14 - 0:29:53	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So, yeah, you know. I think I taught it twice, you know, for 2 years in a row, and then I graduated already. So, you know. And then I found another job. But that's an example of the ways in which, you know, that history was, sort of, advocated by students. And at the same time, you know, my hats off to those students who advocated for them, because a lot of them did not experience the class. I mean, they graduated by the time it was offered already. And so then... But they came back. Most of them visited, you know, and inquired about the

	class.
<b>0:29:53 - 0:30:15</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah, but it's just so... It was such a meaningful event for us. Because it follows the whole legacy of, you know, student movements in the 1960s and 70s about advocating for your own, you know, school transformation from the ground up, right? Not from the top down.
<b>0:30:15 - 0:30:58</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so... and that kind of strategy I eventually practiced here in our new school. We advocated for the teaching of Tagalog. I was teaching a class on Filipino American history, and it became a class project. It's like, "how do you advocate to a person in power the institutionalization of a language class?" That was the title of our project <i>[laughs]</i> . And so, yeah. We actually met with the deans and all these things, and we devised different ways to, sort of, convince the dean that this is a legitimate class. It's a legitimate field of study.
<b>0:30:58 - 0:31:37</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Students did research on peer institutions that offer Tagalog. They did a survey of what students feel about learning Tagalog. They were very professional about it. And of course, you know... And we won that advocacy. And again, this is... Nothing came out of administration in this sense, right? Educational administration. All of these were devised and fought for. And students provided evidence for the reasons why this can be.... this should be funded, right?
<b>0:31:37 - 0:31:51</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so the dean gave us funding to hire, you know. And then, 3 or 4 years later, it became a budget line item, which means permanent already, right? And so yes, and this... we don't need to advocate for it any longer.
<b>0:31:51 - 0:32:25</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So now that same... That similar strategy is being used by Khmer students here so that our school can teach Khmer language. They're, you know, rounding up students to do some research. You know, to do some advocacy planning with the deans. And it's especially difficult for them, because it's an era of, you know, budget crises and all these things... The legitimization of diversity programs, you know, they're running up against that. And so - or we're running up against that. So it's going to be a challenge.
<b>0:32:25 - 0:33:06</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But yeah, I mean, you know, it's almost like educating, you know, the institution about these histories and cultures and communities that are not seen as valuable enough to be part of the college curriculum. And so we gave them, you know, like, binders and binders of readings, you know, on what these cultures are, you know? And that they're a part of American history, you know? It's not as if they're completely separate, right? Just to make a justification, you know, that these classes should be taught. Sorry I have very long answers!
<b>0:33:09 - 0:33:15</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> No, that's... No these are all <i>great</i> answers <i>[laughs]</i> . Yeah, like, these are very informationally, like, rich.

<b>0:33:15 - 0:33:16</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Thank you, thank you [ <i>laughs</i> ].
<b>0:33:16 - 0:33:40</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> And so... I come up with, like, 4 questions in my head then you answer them all! So it's like... [ <i>laughs</i> ]. But that being said, like, it sounds like the fact that it was super collaborative, like, the nature of this class. And, like, the type of activism work that you were doing was really generative for you. Enough to carry it over to your
<b>0:33:40 - 0:33:42</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. Here at U-Dub, yes.
<b>0:33:42 - 0:33:58</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah, so... I was actually going to ask that... So, the syllabus that you presented to the ethnic studies chair, was it something that you came up yourself? Or was it, like, a collaborative effort between you and the students that were going to be taking the class?
<b>0:33:58 - 0:34:35</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> The students who were part of the advocacy group, yes. I collaborated with them. Many of those students were not able to take the class, though, because they already graduated, as I said. Yeah, but that was a collaborative sort of... And there was one entering... I think the second time I taught it, they already established a graduate program in Ethnic Studies. And so, there was a Filipino American studies student in that class - in that cohort - who helped me improve the curriculum, too. But yeah, a lot of these things were very collaborative.
<b>0:34:35 - 0:35:31</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> In ways that I should say, sort of, like because... See, the awkwardness about collaborative work - especially in an institution like ours, or institutions like ours - is that they need a person's name as the professor on record, right? And I can't put there "Professor Rick Bonus and his collaborators," right? [ <i>laughs</i> ] I mean, that goes to show how American education institutions are so... Not anti-collective, but they don't think of collective and collaborative work, right? And so I cannot put all the names of the students or everyone who collaborated with me, because that's not the way... Only one person gets paid, so to speak, right? And only one person gets to teach the class.
<b>0:35:31 - 0:35:53</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But you're right. You know, the syllabus does not really reflect the kind of collaborative work. On paper, right? But in spirit, it's collaborative work. Yeah. So, you see, these are the kinds of challenges we have to meet when we are in, you know, ivory towers like ours. Right?
<b>0:35:53 - 0:36:06</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> So, like, was the syllabus something that was, like, growing and adapting as the class went on? Or- Like, you usually changed it? Or, was it just, like, how... was it just your approach to the class?
<b>0:36:06 - 0:36:48</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Right. Well, the full skeleton was there, the scaffolding was there. But then there were... There was a lot of room for, sort of... not digressions, but other kinds of related topics that would... that



	<p>might come up, that students would introduce in class. So the syllabus is designed to be open ended in a lot of ways, right? But definitely, there had to be a spine to it. Right? Like, definitely, the first couple of weeks is all about history. The next couple of weeks would be about contemporary conditions, right? And then the final parts of the week would be funds of knowledge from the students, you know?</p>
<b>0:36:48 - 0:37:23</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so it's not a... Yeah, I mean, I really... I mean, it's a... Again, it's a legitimate field of study. There are scholars who have written about these histories, so I wanted the students to know about them, right? That there's already something written, you know, in the fringes of institutions. There are already scholars doing these things. So... I mean, they're not... As you know, they were not as available at that time. So I made copies of them, right? And so, very old school way of teaching, right? You provide them with foundations so that they know.</p>
<b>0:37:23 - 0:37:47</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> So definitely... It was not like, you know, a haphazardly designed curriculum. It's... it was organized and structured in a way that students actually, you know, learn real knowledge about, you know, what are these histories. And we had sources, not only from the U.S., but also from the Philippines, you know? Because they're very important as well, right?</p>
<b>0:37:47 - 0:37:56</b>	<p><b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> So you said that... That's also really fascinating. And you mentioned that, like, resistance was a key theme that you'd look to bake into that, like, the</p>
<b>0:37:56 - 0:37:57</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> Definitely, yeah.</p>
<b>0:37:57 - 0:38:12</b>	<p><b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Is that... Did that translate to how you operated the class? Or how the environment of the class, like... Like, was it you... Would you consider the class a sort of, like, resistive thing that you were doing? Or was it...</p>
<b>0:38:12 - 0:38:50</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. Well, I just didn't want to give the impression to students that people were just being colonized and that's it, you know? There's a long, deep, and active history of Filipino resistance movements in every generation which is not talked about most of the time. Even by their parents. Because they're figured in history books as rebels. As, you know, guerrillas. As people who did bad things, right? They rebelled against, you know, the Powers, and they lost, you know? They lost... Many of them died in the process. Many of them were martyred.</p>
<b>0:38:50 - 0:39:32</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so I want to bring them all to the forefront. That the story of, you know, of the Philippines is not just a story of horrible, you know, colonization histories and exploitation of labor. It's also a rich history of resistance, and the defiance and martyrdom even. And, sort of, you know, nationalistic pride right? And so, again, you know, I want them to think of this history as a vibrant history that is still being rewritten. You know, there are many different versions that are coming up to this day, as in every community's history, right?</p>



<b>0:39:32 - 0:40:10</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> A lot of students who were not familiar with the advocacy were entering the class assuming that this was a class in which they will learn, like, dances and songs and stuff. And I'm like, "Uh, no" <i>[laughs]</i> . I mean, we did learn some revolutionary songs, though, I remember. But, you know, it was not, like, a cultural class, right? It's not like, you know, learning how to make adobo or something like that, even though a lot of their... some of their presentations were about cuisine, you know, culinary stuff at the end, which was nice, you know. Because you can also read social history in food, right, as you know.
<b>0:40:10 - 0:40:59</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so yeah, but, I taught them how to... You know, we taught each other how to critically think of, you know, different ways of narrating history. Right? We did... I remember, we called examples from high school textbooks on how Philippine history is talked about. Usually like 2 or 3 sentences, right? You know, "the United States went to the Philippines to save them from the Spanish," right? And so that whole savior, sort of, mentality as examples of you know... If you critically read that, that's an example of, you know, mental colonization, right? You colonize their mind and think about the ways in which you give... you strongly impress upon the people that Americans were saviors. They were not there to kill people, right?
<b>0:40:59 - 0:41:38</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so, yeah. You know, I mean, resistance... I mean, again, this is from ethnic studies, you know, scholarship right? In studies of power you always have to bring up the ways in which people practice or resist or deny power. Right? And so you know, advocacies and activism are always part of the history. And it's true that they most of the time get erased because not all the time are they the victors, right? Of wars. But they need to be kept alive, because, you know, those are parts and parcels of how people live their lives, right?
<b>0:41:38 - 0:41:40</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Anyway, you know.
<b>0:41:40 - 0:41:41</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Which is really amazing as a backbone for the class.
<b>0:41:41 - 0:41:42</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah, yeah.
<b>0:41:42 - 0:41:54</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> You mentioned before, too - and you touched upon it already a little bit - but, like, the people taking the class... You said there was not just, like, Filipino students, but also, like
<b>0:41:54 - 0:42:21</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Most of them, yeah. And most of them brought their girlfriends, boyfriends... <i>[laughs]</i> to know more about their, you know, their culture. I think it was about maybe 75% Filipino heritage students, then 25% non-Filipinos, right? Or yeah, interested students, you know, who found this in the... in the <i>[inaudible]</i> .
<b>0:42:21 - 0:42:28</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> So did that, like, shape how you were approaching the class in any way? Like to like...

<b>0:42:28 - 0:42:54</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Well, you know, I wanted... Part of the arguments for teaching this class was to say that Filipino American history is important, but it's important not only to Filipinos. It's important to everybody, right? How to understand how colonization works. You know, how resistance works. How to understand imperialism. How to understand labor extraction. Right?
<b>0:42:54 - 0:44:11</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I mean, the subjects of study are Filipinos. They are... You apply these big concepts into, you know, the specific experiences of this particular group or groups. I know many of the students connected them with other groups. Right? We made it a point to do comparisons as well. There was a lot of discussion of cross-racial alliances among farm workers during the Cesar Chavez era, right? And so, Mexican labor, Filipino labor... A lot of connections made between Filipinos and not only Mexican labor, but also Japanese and Hawaiian labor, and, you know, on the islands of Hawai'i. And so it's not as if we were isolated only on those subjects. But again, part of the argument is whether you're Filipino or not, you need to learn this history. You need to learn these forms of resistances, how to critically think of contemporary conditions, right? And what Filipino perspectives you can learn that you can apply to other groups, right? And vice versa, you know?
<b>0:44:11 - 0:44:25</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Because, you know, these groups do not exist in isolation of each other. They're always interacting. Anyway, I mean, we live in... I mean, of course, we have segregated spaces. But, in workplaces, in schools, we interact with each other. Anyway. Yeah.
<b>0:44:25 - 0:44:38</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> So like, did those, like, discussions about, like that... those, like, cross, like, community coalition building and, you know, solidarity movements... Was that born out of, like, these students' own experiences? Or, like, their own histories that they're drawing comparisons to? Or...
<b>0:44:38 - 0:45:18</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, you know, they relayed, you know, they... you know, they narrated their own experiences as well. A lot of Filipino resistance movements are very cross-racial. Especially the U.S.-based ones. Very cross-racial, very cross-ethnic, you know? And so some students were surprised to hear those things. Because again, they don't read about these things. You know, they're not available to be read anyway, until now. You know? And so those are kind of, you know, surprises for them that there is this long history of coalition building among Filipinos.
<b>0:45:18 - 0:45:20</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Which is really wonderful, like...
<b>0:45:20 - 0:45:21</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah.
<b>0:45:21 - 0:45:22</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> ...content to put
<b>0:45:22 - 0:46:01</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I mean, that's also a very ethnic studies way of dealing with subject matter, right? I mean, unlike other ethnic studies programs, I don't think ethnic studies courses in San Diego offer courses that are

	<p>what we call “smorgasbord,” you know. Like one week for Italians, the second week for African Americans, the third week... As if these groups are not in contact with each other, right? And so that's old school teaching of ethnic studies. It's like you go from what... Many textbooks are like that in ethnic studies. The beginning ones, right? Because again, there was this idea that, you know, you have to know each and every group and then maybe combine them at the end if you are able to, right?</p>
<b>0:46:01 - 0:46:45</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> When I was offered a job here, I was made to teach a class like that. And I told the department chair, you know, “First of all, I'm not an expert on all groups. And second of all, I'd rather teach thematically than by population group because it assumes that these population groups are just very... not only singular, but also not in contact with other groups.” They are. You know, they live in communities together. And so, yeah. So that style of teaching ethnic studies is kind of old school that's passé already. We'd rather teach in terms of thematic or topical, you know, sort of headings, rather than geographical or race-based or ethnic-based headings. Yeah.</p>
<b>0:46:45 - 0:46:54</b>	<p><b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Was this sort of, like, push away from that smorgasbord style of class... Is that something that the faculty was, like, advocating for? Or...</p>
<b>0:46:54 - 0:46:56</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh yes. Definitely.</p>
<b>0:46:56 - 0:47:05</b>	<p><b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Like, people like Yén, amongst others... where they, like... So, was that something that you learned while hanging out in Ethnic Studies? Or...</p>
<b>0:47:05 - 0:47:41</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> So Ethnic Studies in San Diego was conceived right from the very get go - right from the very start - as intersecting and comparative. So, if you notice they don't have, I think... The Filipino American studies class might have been a rare thing for them. Because they do not offer... As far as I can remember, they discouraged faculty from offering race-based or ethnic-based classes. Unless it's really very specialized, right? And I think they forgave us for teaching Filipino American studies <i>[laughs]</i>. Because it was just an advocacy at that time.</p>
<b>0:47:41 - 0:47:44</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> I don't know. You can tell me if they still offer that class. Maybe not.</p>
<b>0:47:44 - 0:47:49</b>	<p><b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> They... Not that I'm aware of. Like, in terms of like...</p>
<b>0:47:49 - 0:47:50</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> Exactly. Yeah, yeah.</p>
<b>0:47:50 - 0:47:51</b>	<p><b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> As for undergrads, at least.</p>
<b>0:47:51 - 0:47:53</b>	<p><b>Rick Bonus:</b> It could have been a one-off for us. Yeah. Or a two-off <i>[laughs]</i>.</p>

0:47:53 - 0:47:47	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> That's what I was curious about. If you knew if it, kind of, continued on into, like, the 2000s.
0:47:47 - 0:48:37	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. I believe, you know, if I can remember correctly now... I believe I made the case for dealing with this just for now because Filipino American culture, anyways, is very intersecting and intersectional. And very, you know, collaborative with other cultures. I mean colonization histories alone, that's like several cultures already, you know? <i>[laughs]</i> It's like hybrid formations everywhere, right? Multi-ethnic formations. Every, you know, every part of history. And so I'm just... I'm appreciative that they gave us a chance. So yeah.
0:48:37 - 0:48:53	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Well, a lot of that, sort of, like, labor that you did, I will say... Like that type of advocacy for creating something like a Filipino studies class, I think, was sort of the background and, like, inspiration, for, like, the push for AAPI studies.
0:48:53 - 0:48:55	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah, absolutely. I'm glad. Yeah.
0:48:55 - 0:49:13	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah. And it's like... That makes me curious. So, what do you... What are your thoughts on, like, AAPI Studies as, like, an official program? Like, a minor that students can officially take? Including, like, all this history, that was established in 2020. What are your feelings on that? In regards
0:49:13 - 0:49:16	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> The minor was established in 2020?
0:49:16 - 0:49:17	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah.
0:49:17 - 0:49:23	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Alright. And it sits in... The minor program sits in the Department of Ethnic Studies?
0:49:23 - 0:49:31	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> It's actually its own... It's AAPI studies as its own, like, little program. But it's just a minor that students can elect to take.
0:49:31 - 0:49:36	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh! And then who... Where is the administrative home of it? Do you know?
0:49:36 - 0:49:38	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> I think it's in the Arts and Humanities building.
0:49:38 - 0:49:40	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh, so it's in the Dean's office there.
0:49:40 - 0:49:40	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah.
0:49:40 - 0:49:46	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So nobody technically... No department technically owns it. Okay.
0:49:46 - 0:49:54	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> No. So we've had in the department... The the very first director for AAPI Studies was my advisor, Simeon Man.
0:49:54 - 0:49:55	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I see.

<b>0:49:55 - 0:50:05</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> And from there, there was a couple, like... So, Simeon, he's in history. And then we had somebody from Literature be the director, and we had somebody from Comm. So...
<b>0:50:05 - 0:50:13</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. So let me ask you. That institutional formation, right? Was that the desired one? Not to be housed in a department?
<b>0:50:13 - 0:50:20</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> I believe so. It's just... It started right when I started, essentially. So like...
<b>0:50:20 - 0:50:54</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> I mean there are always pros and cons with any kind of institutional arrangement, right? Here in this department, we house the Diversity minor, right? Before, it used to be in the Dean's office. And when I came on board as Chair of the Department of American Ethnic Studies, they told me... I was the director at that time of the Diversity minor program, like Simeon. They told me, "since you're gonna be the chair, can we just house the diversity minor program in your department?" Right?
<b>0:50:54 - 0:51:30</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Part of the issue that I had as Director of the Diversity minor program is that I did not have that much control and power over the program. There were no faculty lines, you know. I had to convince different professors to be part of our program. I couldn't offer any kind of incentive for them other than, you know, increased, you know, student numbers in their classes. And so it was kind of like a department, a program that was floating in midair, right?
<b>0:51:30 - 0:52:03</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And it has its advantages in the sense that it can be autonomous, right? It can be free of politics of any department. But at the same time - because it is a floating thing, right? - it's hard to anchor it. You know, like, it's hard to have, like, a sustained budget for it. It's hard to have, you know... It's hard to, sort of, convince the institution that, you know, the... At some point this program needs to have its own faculty or its own, you know, advisor, or its own whatever, right?
<b>0:52:03 - 0:52:45</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Which is the advantage we have with the Diversity minor within the department here, right, is that we have an advisor for that, you know. I... The chair of the department - me - I protect its budget, right? I make sure that it exists every year, right? So that it's not susceptible to being... Maybe it will be in the future, because now there's a targeting of diversity programs, right? But it's not... Before the Trump era, it's not susceptible to, you know, being, I don't know, co-opted by other units or whatever. Right? So now there's ownership in it. So it's not just a floating thing, right? So anyway. So those are pros and cons.
<b>0:52:45 - 0:53:21</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So, your question is what do I think of that formation? That's my answer. It's like, on one hand, you have autonomy and independence. But, on the other hand, if it's like a one-person program like Simeon, it doesn't bode well. I'm not saying that Simeon will leave, or whatever, but tying it down to just one person is really very risky, because you know, what will happen if that one person is not available, right? And then, you know, who's going to replace or is going to take

	care of it temporarily, right?
<b>0:53:21 - 0:53:47</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> On the other hand, having one person controlling its curriculum and stuff... It's good if that person is a good person, right? But what if that person turns out to be narrow minded, or dictatorial, or authoritarian, or whatever? Then, you know, you miss the consensus of an entire unit to be able to enforce policy, right?
<b>0:53:47 - 0:54:17</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So, I don't know it's just... Sometimes it feels like it's a concession made by the institution because it's cheap, right? You don't have to invest more monies for new faculty, or, I don't know, maybe new office spaces. Right? So I say concession, because instead of a downright no, right, you offer them a halfway, sort of, answer of yes.
<b>0:54:17 - 0:54:18</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Interesting.
<b>0:54:18 - 0:55:04</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah, because schools are very wary of investing in programs that they think don't align with whatever they think is legit, you know, fields of study. Or, you know, sometimes schools - big universities - think in terms of how viable these programs... Like in terms of student enrollments, or will it lead up to careers? What kinds of careers will they be? If you can't be specific about them, they don't like it. You know? You can say, "oh, they're going to end up as lawyers." You know, how do you know that? They need a law degree for that, right? So. Yeah.
<b>0:55:04 - 0:55:18</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> That actually leads me to one of my bigger questions, because you... you mentioned a few times, like, you know, some of the students that were doing the activism work for getting this Filipino studies class off the ground graduated before they could see come to fruition.
<b>0:55:18 - 0:55:19</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yes, yes.
<b>0:55:19 - 0:55:43</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> And as you're mentioning here... If it's only, like, one individual here, like, maintaining... Or like, you know, as part of this AAPI studies minor. I guess my question is. Like, how do you sort of, like, reckon with or deal with the fact that the nature of, like, you know, the Academy is so transitory. Right? How does activism work sustain itself?
<b>0:55:43 - 0:55:44</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. Yeah.
<b>0:55:44 - 0:55:50</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> How can, like, communities - in your opinion - like, continue to do this type of activism work if people are constantly leaving and joining?
<b>0:55:50 - 0:56:36</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Absolutely. Yeah. And that's why, you know, one of the strategies is to institutionalize them - to make them a permanent budget item, right? So that it removes you... it removes the program from the risk of being cut, right, arbitrarily. Because it's already in the budget,



	so... You can still cut a budget, but seeing that on a permanent budget list, you're halfway being saved already. Right? Especially if that budget is determined by a collective, right? You have the... you have to have the consensus of the collective to remove an item from the budget.
<b>0:56:36 - 0:57:06</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But if you're just an individual being doing the budget, then you can easily cut them, right? So that's one... You know, having institutional space is very important because you need, as you said, you know, generational existence sustainability. You need a strategy of mentoring who's gonna be the next, you know, who's gonna be the next teacher. Who's gonna be the next director.
<b>0:57:06 - 0:57:07</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Let me just take a drink.
<b>0:57:07 - 0:57:10</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Oh, yeah it's okay!
<b>0:57:10 - 0:57:51</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Who's gonna be the next caretaker of the program, right? You have to build sustainability into it. As you said, rightfully, everything is transitory. But a lot of people stay. Students leave. A lot of professors, administrators stay. So you can pick... You know, you can ensure that the program lasts if the current director is able to have several people down the line who can be mentored into this position... So that when the leader is not there, there are other people who can take over, right?
<b>0:57:51 - 0:58:35</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> One thing that works for the institution is when students leave, because then histories are forgotten, right? And so they like doing these, you know, halfway concessions, because after 5 years everything will be forgotten. Because that whole generation of students have left already, right? To remind them... They're supposed to remind the administration that, "hey, you know, you have this promise, you know, make sure." Right? Those students would have graduated already. Right? And so in the Diversity minor, we made sure that all the way to the Board of Regents, the funding for a Tagalog class was gonna be there.
<b>0:58:35 - 0:59:05</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Right? And so, yeah. So in a way, that's kind of... we try to secure its permanency. Right? You know, I mean... Those are the strategies I can think of right now. I mean, it's just... it's always a challenge, because these are... In predominantly white institutions, we have policies and laws and rules that are made by, you know, dominant culture, right? So poking at that big ship is just hard.
<b>0:59:05 - 0:59:54</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> There's a lot of, you know, turnaround. There's the cycle of, you know, student activism, right? There's a cycle of student presence on campus. Right? You cannot do an advocacy... We avoid doing advocacy in the spring quarter because that's when the school year ends, right? And so a dean would just say, "Let's do this next year, because classes are ending soon." Right? So we try to do advocacies early on, right? In the fall. So it's like knowing, you know... knowing how the university works right. Knowing from past histories how other people have done it before. You know, knowing the cycles of policymaking in the university.

0:59:54 - 1:00:36	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> You know, when we did the advocacy for Tagalog, students did a lot of research on how decisions are made, actually, in terms of curriculum. What are the... what are the committees? Who sits in the committees? Right? What do the committees need to be convinced that a class is worthwhile offering, right? Like that. So you know, there's a lot of, like, hidden kinds of processes and administrative, sort of, red tape that universities have. It's a... They're massive institutions, right? And so, to be an advocate, you need to be smart about doing your advocacy. You cannot just, you know, yell, you know, in a free speech area, without knowing how the university works. Right?
1:00:36 - 1:01:35	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> You can challenge how the university works. You can do that, of course, but you have to know what you're challenging. Right? You have to know what rules you're trying to break. And so, you know, it takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of labor. And the biggest challenge in this labor is that they're all mostly volunteer labor. Nobody gets paid. People do this after class. You know, people have to do this beyond family obligations. People make a lot of sacrifices, right, in terms of time. In terms of money. In terms of energy. A lot of people get bad grades in the process. They tend to drop out of school. They get very fatigued right? It's just a lot of hard work. It's not like... It's not something that's easy to sell, you know. And the wins may not be that visible, you know, over history.
1:01:35 - 1:01:59	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so a lot of parents pressure their kids, you know... "Just graduate," you know. I mean, "just earn that diploma. Why are you doing all of this activism stuff?" You know, a lot of parents think that these are not worthwhile, you know, endeavors. They're not meaningful endeavors. And so, and I understand them. They, you know, they're spending money, you know, on their child. Right?
1:01:59 - 1:02:35	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> And so it's such a challenge to do these things... That when it happens it's just, you know, the work doesn't stop. It continues, right? It's even more work when it gets established, right? Because you have to maintain your legitimacy. You have to maintain your value. You have to constantly prove to the university that you're a worthwhile investment. Especially in universities that think... that operate like big businesses. Right? You have to keep on providing evidence to them that you're able to fill classrooms. You know, that students are graduating on time.
1:02:35 - 1:02:38	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> So it's... it's something, Catherine.
1:02:38 - 1:02:44	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> I'm sorry, what was that?
1:02:44 - 1:02:45	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> It is exhausting.
1:02:45 - 1:02:46	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> It is exhausting.
1:02:46 - 1:02:47	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> As you know.
1:02:47 - 1:02:48	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Uh, that's

1:02:48 - 1:02:54	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Okay, Catherine. I gotta go soon, so I'm... You can... we can do a part 2. It's up to you.
1:02:54 - 1:03:00	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> I actually was gonna say, like, that's pretty much all my questions.
1:03:00 - 1:03:02	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Oh! Okay, cool. Very nice.
1:03:02 - 1:03:07	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah, if you wanted to add anything, now is... Like, if you had things that we didn't cover, you can...
1:03:07 - 1:03:15	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Just email me what do you think we didn't cover and then, you know, either I answer it on an email, or we can have another session. If you want.
1:03:15 - 1:03:16	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Okay! Yeah.
1:03:16 - 1:03:18	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> But good luck with your advocacies there.
1:03:18 - 1:03:34	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Thank you so much again for... Yeah, exactly. Because a part of this class is exactly what you're talking about, like, sort of, getting that sort of, you know... It's Generating and Reclaiming Our Wisdoms. Like, so we can preserve this type of thing for students to be able to access.
1:03:34 - 1:03:37	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. Absolutely. That's very important. Thank you. Thank you for doing this project.
1:03:37 - 1:03:48	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah! Thank you for... for showing up and chatting with us. If I have things, I'll let you know, but otherwise I will get this transcript cleaned up, and also send you a copy of the recording, too, if you'd like.
1:03:48 - 1:03:50	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yeah. And give my regards to Simeon.
1:03:50 - 1:03:51	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah, I will!
1:03:51 - 1:03:53	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> He's doing a great job.
1:03:53 - 1:03:57	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> I'm sure he'd love to hear that because he is doing <i>so much</i> work <i>[laughs]</i> .
1:03:57 - 1:04:04	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yes, yeah, and make sure you, you know you... I'm sure you're already caring for him. Everybody needs care.
1:04:04 - 1:04:06	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Yeah. Aw. yeah.
1:04:06 - 1:04:14	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> As I told you, you know, as we... As we just said, it's such an exhausting, but also very rewarding thing to do. And you know.
1:04:14 - 1:04:20	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> It is. I will make sure... I'll send love from you and from me. We'll show that there's a community around him.

<b>1:04:20 - 1:04:25</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Yes. Alright, thank you. Thank you for this opportunity, Catherine. Good luck with your work.
<b>1:04:25 - 1:04:27</b>	<b>Catherine Quan Potmesil:</b> Thank you so much! Thank you for stopping by.
<b>1:04:27 - 1:04:28</b>	<b>Rick Bonus:</b> Okay, take care now.