



The Library
UC SAN DIEGO

Gregory Loui Oral History

February 28, 2025

55:05

Interviewee: Gregory Loui

Interviewer: Abigail Johnson

Transcribed by: Abigail Johnson

[Generating and Reclaiming our Wisdoms \(GROW\):
A Collection of AAPI Community Stories at UC San Diego](https://knit.ucsd.edu/grow/2025/04/08/greg-loui-oral-history/)
UC San Diego Library Digital Collections
<https://knit.ucsd.edu/grow/2025/04/08/greg-loui-oral-history/>

Copyright: Under copyright (US)

Rights Holder(s): Gregory Loui, Abigail Johnson

Use: This work is available from the UC San Diego Library. This digital copy of the work is intended to support research, teaching, and private study.

Constraints: This work is protected by the U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.). Use of this work beyond that allowed by "fair use" requires written permission of the copyright holder(s). Responsibility for obtaining permissions and any use and distribution of this work rests exclusively with the user and not the UC San Diego Library. Inquiries can be made to the UC San Diego Library program having custody of the work.

Time	Transcription
0:03	Abby Johnson: All right. So good morning. My name is Abby Johnson. Today is February 28th 2025, and I'm interviewing Greg Loui through zoom for the University of California, San Diego, Asian-American and Pacific Islander Student Community Archival Project. Do you agree to grant the University permission to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes?
0:25	Greg Loui: Yes, I agreed to grant the university permissions to archive and publish this interview for educational purposes.
0:31	Abby Johnson: Alright, perfect. Thank you for joining me today, and just to kind of start with an introduction. Could you introduce yourself with your name, pronouns, and just any identities you feel are important to share?
0:43	Greg Loui: Mhm. My name is Gregory Clark Loui. My pronouns are he/him/his. And I am of Chinese Hawaiian descent, and that is — those are the 2 most important identities that I carry with me. And for the purposes of this interview, I am excited to share my Hawaiian identity.
1:07	Abby Johnson: Awesome. I'd love to hear that. [Smiles] Can you talk more about your Hawaiian identity? So were you born in Hawaii? Can you speak on your upbringing, maybe a little?
1:16	Greg Loui: Mhm. So I actually was not born in Hawaii. I was born in Glendale, California, which is a suburb of Los Angeles, so — there, there's been a gravitational pull honestly back to LA but, honestly, all of my living memories were of Hawaii, because my, [pauses] my parents moved back to Hawaii when I was 3. So honestly growing up, I never really thought of myself as, like, Californian. I always thought of myself as Hawaiian. And, though I like to tease my mom about this sometimes, is that she chose to give birth to me in California, because it always feels like I've been drawn back to California. Like I went to undergrad at UC San Diego, and now I'm doing law school at UCLA. So I- I feel like it's hard to escape the gravitational pull of California — to be totally honest.
2:12	Abby Johnson: I love that. Is there anything in particular in California that really pulls you there?

2:17	Greg Loui: I think most of all, it's the resources and being able to be in communities that have — that are like a confluence of so many different people. It's, I mean, California is the 5th largest economy in the entire world, even like it on its own. So, there's just so many more opportunities here in California to grow, to establish myself, to really become the best version of myself.
2:46	Abby Johnson: Awesome. I love to hear that. [Smiles] So you spoke a little about going to UCSD, right? So why did you — why did you choose UCSD specifically?
2: 57	Greg Loui: So I chose UC San Diego because it was the best college that I'd gotten into [smiles and laughs] first of all. But I actually was really interested in a lot of the programs at UC San Diego. I thought to myself, that you know, UC San Diego is such a massive, massive university, it would be hard to go wrong with whatever I chose at UC San Diego, and I saw that there were opportunities that I could — like I could take that would not have been offered to me in a smaller university. And I think, especially as I was researching UC San Diego, I was really drawn to the Speculative Design major, and a lot of the future-forward thinking, [pauses] underlying communities of UC San Diego-
3:51	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
3:52	Greg Loui: So I was initially drawn to UC San Diego for those purposes.
3:56	Abby Johnson: Awesome, perfect. So while you were at UCSD, you did a lot of really, like, inspirational stuff and, — could you talk a little bit about your experiences while you were there?
4:05	Greg Loui: So it- it was born out of a certain isolation, to be totally honest. Like coming to UC San Diego, away from my friends and family in Hawaii. It was a very isolated experience and that's, that's a little weird to say about a campus that has, I don't know, 30 something thousand undergrads.
4:29	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
4:30	Greg Loui: But I think the joke was, when everyone was coming in at my time, there — it was, you see, socially dead. I don't know. [Smiles]
4:39	Abby Johnson: [Smiling and laughing] Yeah, it's still still referred to as that. Yeah.

4:41	Greg Loui: [Smiles]. Yeah, so I definitely felt the need to build these communities, because back home in Hawaii, I think it's so easy to become entrenched, to become entangled with the different communities, because everyone knows everyone. So there's no, there's no privacy in Hawaii. So it's very easy to just always have something to do, always have someone to connect with, always have that sense of community. So I was really hungry for that. And that's, that's why I started building all these different communities.
5:15	Abby Johnson: Awesome. Well, speaking of those communities, too, I wanted to touch on your time with PISA at UCSD, the Pacific Islander Student Association. So was that part of your motivation for helping to grow PISA, and like, start it? Could you speak on that process a little?
5:32	Greg Loui: Yeah, I, you know, it's another cliché but absence really does make the- the heart grow fonder. So like, growing up in Hawaii, I never really felt that Hawaiian myself, because I didn't-I didn't surf as much, I didn't do Hula. I was not — I did not feel that I was Hawaiian enough, but then, coming to a place where, like, there was just generally not a lot of Pacific Islanders, I really focused on the connection I had, and like I chose to identify with this part of myself that I was uncomfortable with, because I needed a way to feel still feel connected. And so PISA was really born out of that effort to find other people who were in a similar position as me, who were maybe feeling very isolated to [pauses] bring this all together, and like, find something common. And then, [pauses] I started that by going to the formerly Hawaii Club of UC San Diego. But, this club has now been renamed to the Hula Club of UC San Diego.
6:52	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Oh, interesting!
6:52	Greg Loui: Because, [laughs] because the Hawaii Club of UC San Diego did not have any Hawaiians in it.
7:01	Abby Johnson: Oh, really. [Laughs]
7:02	Greg Loui: Yes!
7:04	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Misleading name, then.

7:06	Greg Loui: Yeah, it was a bunch — it was basically a bunch of Asians-California Asians, and Haoles, who really loved Lilo and Stitch and [laughs] Hula. Which I have no problem with, I have no problem with people just wanting to practice Hula, but I, I honestly was a little pissed off like, coming to this club and meeting people, and it felt off. It felt like they, [pauses], I mean it, it felt like cultural appropriation, because they were getting school funding to do these events, and they were putting themselves out there as the Hawaii Club. So I felt offended, and I decided to start [laughs] — I decided to start a real Pacific Islander Club.
8:00	Abby Johnson: Wow! That's amazing. Oh, my gosh! I didn't know any of that.
8:04	Greg Loui: Mhm.
8:05	Abby Johnson: So what was the process like in starting it? Did you have a group of friends? Did you recruit like some people you knew?
8:13	Greg Loui: So the, the impetus to really founding PISA was Windi Sasaki, who's a really amazing person. She wrote me a recommendation letter that got me into UCLA law. So.
8:28	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Congratulations, by the way. [Smiles]
8:30	Greg Loui: Thank you. Thank you. I always got to say thank you, Windi Sasaki, thank you so much for supporting me. You're awesome.
8:37	Abby Johnson: Aw.
8:38	Greg Loui: And so during my sophomore year, um — is she a professor, by the way, nowadays, or?
8:45	Abby Johnson: Windi? I don't believe so. I know she's [an] advisor. She does a lot of work with APIMEDA, the Asian Pacific Islander Middle Eastern Desi Association.
8:56	Greg Loui: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
8:57	Abby Johnson: I don't believe she is, but I would have to check on that.

8:59	Greg Loui: I'll just call her Mrs. Sasaki from now on. Mrs. Sasaki in — during my sophomore year, sent out this email to a lot of different people who had put down Pacific Islander on their, their application, trying to get us together as part of the APIMEDA, um, program.
9:21	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
9:22	Greg Loui: So, I actually missed that first meeting. And so I emailed Mrs. Sasaki and asked, Hey, I would really love to get in touch with these people. I want, I want to connect with my community. And so, I connected with her, and it turns out no one really showed up to the meeting in the first place. So, [smiles] I ended up contacting these people on my own, and I think that was a lot better because they were seeing a fellow student reach out to them rather than this amorphous appendage of the administration.
10:01	Abby Johnson: Yes [smiles and laughs]. Oh, wow! Okay. I think — I like what you said about the having a fellow student like reaching out to, and that kind of brings me — I wanted to ask, too, if there were like students who felt in a similar position to you, where they felt, you know, kind of estranged like [pauses] what's something that you would convey to them? Like to current PISA members, you know, like, is there any advice that you would give them, like in the club?
10:29	Greg Loui: In the club, I would say. Just make yourself visible. Honestly, it's-
10:33	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
10:34	Greg Loui: -It's hard to do anything other than that, and unless like [pauses], unless you don't feel the energy, because of course, your academics should always come first, but if possible, just make yourself visible, collaborate with the Asian American Student Association, and just show up. I, I think that's the most important thing is just being available. And if you see someone, I mean, [smiles] if you see someone who you think might have a connection to the islands, reach out. The worst thing they can do is just say like, Oh, no, I'm not actually from the islands, or I don't have a connection to the islands, but it's still a great way to make — or start a conversation and start building a connection, because even if they're not Pacific Islander, they still might be interested. They might be allies. So I would say, make yourself visible first of all. And then, just don't be afraid to start reaching out to people, asking if they wanna collaborate. If they wanna talk, if they wanna be a part of PISA. Mhm. [Smiles]

11:45	Abby Johnson: Okay, well, thank you for that. I love that. And then I wanted to also expand on your time at UCSD, apart from just PISA. So you were in a lot of other programs, too. So like you had your Speculative Design major, and then you were in the Indigenous Futures lab, and then the Cross-Border Initiative. And — could you speak more on your experiences with these programs as well?
12:06	Greg Loui: Yeah. First of all, the UCSD Cross-Border initiative was my summer before my senior year. I got that opportunity through my professor [pauses] — what's his name? Professor Teddy [Cruz], of the Speculative Design program. He was a very, very nice professor, very — he basically ran that program, and I was unsure what to do for my summer. I wasn't finding a lot of job offers, and I reached out to them. I applied, and I had a great time with it. I — it was a lot of hands-on work in the community like, trying to build these spaces. I think that's a lot of what the Cross-Border initiative was doing was building spaces where people felt safe, where they felt like they could express themselves.
12:54	Abby Johnson: [Nods] Mhm.
12:55	Greg Loui: And that really fulfilled my need for community building in a lot of ways. And then. Unfortunately my time at the indigenous future futures lab was not as long as I wanted it to be. A lot of it was born out of reaching out to Dr. Keolu Fox to [pauses] trying to get involved with some of his initiatives. So that's why I say, like, reach out to people. You never know what kind of opportunities will find you. And so, unfortunately, that was a bit of a weird experience in that — we were trying to build this program like, right before COVID hit.
13:36	Abby Johnson: Oh, yes. [Winces and nods]
13: 38	Greg Loui: We were trying to like, come up with these research grants. We were trying to come up with these projects. We were trying to recruit students, and then wham! COVID hit, and everything shut down. So, I do regret not being able to work on that more.
13:53	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm. [Nods]
13:54	Greg Loui: But yeah, it's — a lot of those are examples of things that were born out of reaching out to professors, reaching out to people that I thought they were doing interesting work. I asked if they needed any help, and they, they gave me very interesting and important work to do.

14:14	Abby Johnson: Wow! I really like that. That's really interesting. And like, in addition to the "reaching out to" — what were some ways that you found were really helpful in reaching out? If someone were to want to, but let's say they're scared, like, what kind of helped you get over that fear?
14:32	Greg Loui: I think. Well, especially in law school, I think I've really built up a tolerance for cold calling or cold emailing. So- [Smiles]
14:42	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Yes. [Smiles]
14:44	Greg Loui: If you can, like [pauses] — I'd say just, just do it. Like the worst thing that they can do is just ignore you. But if you really want to feel like you have an in, I feel like, talk to someone who like, might know them, and then say, Hey, my professor, my — an advisor at UCSD told me about you. I'm really interested. And you can always ask these people to try and connect you. That might be another option. But yeah, I think — don't be afraid of just reaching out to people just on your own, like professors are here for their students and a lot of them are very, very kind people. So they — if you have a genuine interest in working with this professor, they will definitely help you out. [Smiles]
15:41	Abby Johnson: Awesome. Well, I wanted to thank you for that, and real quick, too. You did mention cold calling in law school.
15:46	Greg Loui: [Laughs and nods]
15:47	Abby Johnson: Could you give a little, just like definition, for those who may not know, like, what is that, for those who aren't in law school and don't have the experience?
15:56	Greg Loui: So cold calling is a practice in law school, where a professor will point out in a lecture hall, to one student, and ask them a very specific question from the text that you will not know unless you have been actively reading through the readings and, and actively taking notes. So it's very terrifying, especially because, like, you might get humiliated in front of 80 people — 80 of the smartest people you've ever met. So, there's a lot of pressure. But you know [pauses] it's all in your head really.
16:32	Abby Johnson: Have you — have you ever been cold called before?

16:35	Greg Loui: Oh, yeah, definitely. Throughout the 1st semester I've made myself look like a dumbass, and-
16:41	Abby Johnson: [Smiles and laughs]
16:42	Greg Loui: It's — it gets better like, getting over that fear and anxiety that is really just in your head is important.
16:50	Abby Johnson: Definitely. Well, thank you for that. And I wanted to also expand on the fact that you're studying law at UCLA, because I know you also got an impressive scholarship revolving around your Pacific Islander identity. And I wanted to ask, like how did you learn about this scholarship? Could you speak more about it in your experience — how it's helped you?
17:12	Greg Loui: Mhm. So I am currently a Graton scholar at UCLA. So what that is — is that the Graton tribe of Northern California has given a very generous grant to UCLA law students who are working with Indigenous issues. And it is basically a full ride to law school and-
17:35	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Wow!
17:36	Greg Loui: - I cannot emphasize how crazy that is because tuition at UCLA right now is \$70,000 a year.
17:46	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Oh, my Gosh!
17:47	Greg Loui: So 3 years of law school, if you include — law school, comes out to around half a million dollars.
17:55	Abby Johnson: That is a great deal. My gosh.
17:59	Greg Loui: I got this scholarship completely by chance. I, I — and I am not even being humble with that because I did not know about this scholarship [pauses] before I applied to UCLA, and I only got this scholarship because I went to Admitted Students Day and I met Professor Angela Riley at UCLA, who is the head of the Native American/ Native Nations Department. And I met her at the Admitted Students Day reception. I came up to her and said, Hey, I'm Pacific Islander [and] I'm very interested in working with Indigenous issues. And specifically, I'm interested in Indigenous intellectual property.

18:51	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm [nods].
18:53	Greg Loui: And so I'm — I, I talked to her. I had a nice little rapport. And I mentioned very specifically that, that I was 99% there to enrolling at UCLA. But of course [pauses] that price tag.
19:10	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] The tuition, yeah.
19:11	Greg Loui: -that [was mentioned] earlier. That was, I just mentioned that that was the final hurdle, and she went out of her way and talked to the administration people. And a day later I got a phone call [smiles] from an unknown number that I nearly rejected.
19:31	Abby Johnson: Oh, no! [Smiles]
19:32	Greg Loui: [I] picked up anyway. And they said, Hey, are you interested in being a Graton scholar? And if you are, you will get a full ride to UCLA law. So yeah, [smiles] I didn't say no. [Laughs]
19:49	Abby Johnson: [Smiles and laughs], I, I wouldn't either. That must have been the best phone call you've ever received.
19:54	Greg Loui: It. It was a very good one, honestly [smiles]. It was amazing. And — I mean, my mom literally cried when she heard the news.
20:02	Abby Johnson: Oh, that's — that is so amazing! That is so impressive, too. I mean, you've done so much that [pauses] like it's deserved for sure. How did it — how did it make you feel in that moment to know that you were given this, like opportunity?
20:17	Greg Loui: I didn't think it was real in the moment, but then-
20:21	Abby Johnson: Did you have to pinch yourself? [Smiles and laughs]
20:23	Greg Loui: [Smiles and laughs] Yeah, yeah, yeah. I, I think it really solidified that part of my identity — that I wanted to work in our communities and really make a difference, and it, it gave a lot of weight to my time at law school.

20:45	Abby Johnson: Wow! When you, when you say solidified that part of your identity, could you — if you can like, elaborate a little more on what you mean by that?
20:54	Greg Loui: Yeah. I mean, [pauses] I've always had a difficult relationship with how to express my identity and how to, how to give back into my community in a, in a way that felt real, that felt true to myself. And so, being given this opportunity to learn at an amazing institution, and have all these amazing opportunities, like it really solidified that this was something that I could do, that I, I had an opportunity to do.
21:32	Abby Johnson: Oh, well, I love that, and kind of — like speaking on that more, you talked about, like, you know, bringing your identity into what you do to build that community. And I have read that a lot of your work revolves around, like, you know, Indigenous identities and something specific, called Indigenous Futurism. And I was wondering like — I know your identity kind of led you to pursue that. But can you share what that means to you and just talk about maybe how you came into it?
22:02	Greg Loui: Mhm. I mean it — like I said, I always- always had a difficult relationship with my Indigenous heritage and I always felt this push and pull between what the [pauses] the construct of Indigenous identity has always been in the popular consciousness, and what I was interested in.
22:27	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Interesting.
22:30	Greg Loui: Like, you know, I think there's, there's a certain — there's a certain nostalgia with Indigenous identity. There's, there's an attitude that the parts of indigenous identity that we express are all ancient traditions, that they're something you, you do to celebrate the past. And so I, I really felt uncomfortable with that, because — first of all, I was never really good at Hula [laughs]. I- I'm not good at surfing.
23:09	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Me neither. [Laughs]
23:10	Greg Loui: But yeah. It's, it's difficult, honestly. Yeah. I mean — I'm, I'm the worst surfer in our entire family, because I got a gold medalist surfer in our, in our family. So I would not have been able to compare, anyway. But I always loved science fiction, and I always loved this — I always loved technology. I always love forward-thinking. I always loved daydreaming. I've always loved imagining what the future could be, and I just felt like a little tinge of sadness when I thought about the future, though, because I always imagined Hawaii

	disappearing. Because, you know — first of all, climate change is one of the big dangers to-
24:04	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Yes.
24:05	<p>Greg Loui: -all Pacific Islanders, but I think fundamentally, in most visions of the future, Indigenous people just aren't represented. They aren't seen. It's almost implied that we disappear, and that all that is left is, is this strange landscape of light and steel and circuits, and [pauses] I always felt uncomfortable with that. So I began trying to find ways to incorporate my identity in something that I loved, and — I mean it also helped that in my Speculative Design classes, that really set me apart from other students like being able to say, Hey. I'm Indigenous, and I'm thinking about these things when we're doing projects that really gave me an edge. So, it really came together while I was working with Dr. [Keolu] Fox about indigenous Futurism, and like thinking, Hey, this is something that has real momentum that — you know, brilliant people like Dr. Fox and people like Mrs. Sasaki and like other professors, are really thinking about. [pauses] I think this could be something. So, I — yeah, it's something that I'm really developing, that I think would be really amazing to develop through the law because we have a lot of artists. We got a lot of creatives, but we don't have a lot of legal scholarship/scholars thinking about the future of Indigenous people through a legal lens.</p>
25:48	Abby Johnson: Oh, exactly! I- I never thought of it like that. But that really is true. What are — so I'm interested in — what are some ways that you're like specifically thinking of that? Like, you're thinking of incorporating that into your like passions, legal wise? If that makes sense.
26:08	<p>Greg Loui: Yeah. Well, one of the big things is Indigenous Intellectual Property. I think, just from a practical matter, I could probably start a practice around representing creatives of color. And you know that's a nice little intersection between what I'm interested in, in like a practical matter.</p> <p>And then, also, there's a lot of scholarship, and there's a lot of momentum right now within the legal field to think about the future of indigenous people, from treaties, from — from legal frameworks within tribes. There's a lot of push to not just [pauses], not just improve, like, not just to maintain the structures that Indigenous people already have, but improve them and push them forward, so that we can not just, like, take what works from all these other fields, but, like become leaders.</p>
27:09	Abby Johnson: Yes. Wow.

27:12	Greg Loui: Yeah.
27:13	Abby Johnson: I love that I love the part about becoming leaders, especially. So I have a question then. At UCLA right now, do you have any courses that really help you maintain that kind of Indigenous culture aspect? Or did you have any courses maybe, at UCSD that helped you feel a little more connected to that aspect?
27:32	Greg Loui: UCSD, I took a course in Native American history. That was okay. I, I mean, it was nice to learn about and I — but no, not really at UCSD, to be totally honest. And my major, it was mostly through my own, my own entrepreneurship really bringing in my indigenous heritage.
27:59	Abby Johnson: [Unclear].
28:00	Greg Loui: As for UCLA, first year is a little — there's not much chance. I will say that much, because all the courses for the 1st semester are completely — they're completely chosen for you. But [pauses] there's opportunities, especially in the 2nd and 3rd year to take Federal Indian Law, which is a year-long course. And, so I am planning to take that. And there are clinics, which are the main method that indigenous students will be working with — their heritage, with their identity, with, like, their commitment to their communities. The Native Nations clinic will be the primary way that I will be working and interfacing with my community. [Smiles]
28:51	Abby Johnson: Oh, well, that is so interesting and cool. Oh, my gosh, okay! And then one more thing about UCSD, too. I wanted to bring this up earlier, too, as well — was the Jim and Julie Lin Breaking Barriers award. So you were awarded that by the Cross Cultural Center [CCC], and I wanted to ask like — how did, like, earning that feel like to be commemorated? Could you speak on that a little more, cause that's amazing. I mean.
29:20	Greg Loui: It felt great honestly. [Smiles] It, it felt good to be recognized, though I didn't feel like I deserved it, of course. I, I felt like I was just doing what I was supposed to do to help build my community. I got it for first of all, founding PISA, and then I was also running these writing workshops for underrepresented youth, teaching them how to use science fiction to express their identity. Like, like I said about Indigenous Futurism. I think there's power in being able to visualize the future. And so, I got those — I, I got the Breaking Barriers award for that. And honestly, it did feel pretty good. [Smiles] I definitely think it helped with my application for law school, and I still have the award, though it is back home in, in Hawaii.

30:21	Abby Johnson: Are your parents — do your parents have it with them? Is it on like a mantel?
30:27	Greg Loui: It is in my room somewhere. I haven't been back since winter. I haven't really kept track. [Laughs]
30:36	Abby Johnson: Do you have any plans to go back or visit soon, or no?
30:49	Greg Loui: Yeah, I got my 10th year high school reunion coming up, so it'll be fun. I know a bunch of my high school classmates have kids so.
30:46	Abby Johnson: Oh, wait! That's so cool. [Smiles] What high school did you go to?
30:51	Greg Loui: Punahou.
30:52	Abby Johnson: Punahou?
30:53	Greg Loui: Punahou. It is the big high school of Hawaii. It's the one that Barack Obama went to.
31:01	Abby Johnson: Oh, wow!
31:02	Greg Loui: A bunch of- a bunch of other very accomplished people. [Smiles]
31:07	Abby Johnson: And you'll be one of those accomplished people.
31:09	Greg Loui: Yep.
30:10	Abby Johnson: You already are. You're on your way already.
31:12	Greg Loui: Thank you.
31:13	Abby Johnson: Of course. Well, that's, that's amazing. So all right. So I think we can start — I wanted to ask, thinking back at your experiences like while you were specifically also at UCSD as a student. And then, maybe, you know, as like you're doing these workshops you were talking about, how do you feel that shaped you as a person today? Whether it grew your identity?

31:38	Greg Loui: I think it really made me actively choose what I wanted to be, I think, you know, growing up with — growing up in a fairly standard household, I think there's not a lot of opportunities or really choices you really make until you get to college. So, having to make choices, having to really choose like, what's important to me. What do I want to spend my time, energy, and money on, was immensely important to my — to me. And a lot of the connections that I formed out of making those choices, I mean — I still talk with tons of people from my undergrad days, I mean, I talk to Mrs. Sasaki pretty regularly. I talk to most of the PISA members not quite as regularly, but we still keep in touch, so at some point we will have to get back together.
32:35	Abby Johnson: Oh, I love that. [Smiles] So, so when you say PISA members, you mean the members that were there with you, who helped found it with you at that time? So what were — can you say, what were their names? How did you meet them? Did you know them previously, or?
32:50	Greg Loui: So the 4 founding members were Teini, CJ, and Tim.
32:57	Abby Johnson: Mhm.
32:58	Greg Loui: It first started with Tim [smiles] because he's a big old Samoan dude.
33:04	Abby Johnson:
33:05	Greg Loui: It was really hard for him to hide the fact that he was Pacific Islander.
33:07	Abby Johnson: Haha, yes. [Smiles and laughs]
33:08	Greg Loui: And then, after that, CJ ,we found through Mrs. Sasaki, and Teini, we found through Mrs. Sasaki, and we just started hanging out.
33:17	Abby Johnson: Aww. [Smiles]
33:19	Greg Loui: So yeah, at some point, I, I really do need to —we kind of, you know, after undergrad, we kind of scattered to the winds. So it- it's been hard trying to find time to come back together, and plus, I mean I was in Hawaii, so I was the most isolated from everyone ever. I think CJ and Teini are still in California.

33:42	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Hmm.
33:44	Greg Loui: Tim is in [pauses] Utah.
33:49	Abby Johnson: Oh, I heard it's beautiful over there.
33:50	Greg Loui: Oh yeah.
33:52	Abby Johnson: Mhm. Wow, okay. So, so there was those 4 founding members, including you. So what was your, like — what was one of your roles in like founding it? Were there different, you know. roles that each person played?
34:06	Greg Loui: Mhm. I'm trying to remember. I think we elected Teini as the President, and then everyone just kind of — well, okay, so for the Constitution, we did need to specifically assign roles. I don't quite remember who was who. I think, it — don't, don't hold me to this. I think CJ was treasury. I think Tim was outreach, and I was secretary. And then Teini was present, I'm pretty sure.
34:43	Abby Johnson: Oh, okay, amazing. Do you remember — I know it was a long time ago, so I understand if not, but do you remember the timeline, like roughly what year it was founded? Was it before COVID? After COVID?
34:48	Greg Loui: It was definitely before COVID, because I graduated in 2019, which is a year before COVID and it basically started in Fall of 2017, and it started building from there. I think throughout the fall of 2017, I was like trying to meet with people. I was trying to like, set- set up like times we could just all get together and talk. And those were the first couple of meetings, were just us sitting down and talking about our experiences, talking about like what was going wrong, what was going right, what we're excited about — what we wish UCSD could do more for the Pacific Islander Student Association. Then, yeah, it just snowballed from there.
35:45	Abby Johnson: Wow! I love it so like building, you would say, just, you know, community building and getting that closer bond was the first few like steps in forming it.
35:56	Greg Loui: [Smiles] Mhm.

35:49	Abby Johnson: Wow! That's so interesting, too. And I wanted to kind of reflect just a little more on your time at UCSD, and I wanted to ask, like looking back, what's something that you wish that UC San Diego had done in your time there, while you were a student there?
36:14	Greg Loui: I mean, it's, it's hard to say anything they could have done really would have helped. Because, like I said earlier, it's just hard to get students really responding to the administration versus, you know, a student going forward and like saying, Hey, I'm I wanna meet up because I feel a connection. But you know, that said, there's a lot of things that the UCLA Law School was doing, that, I felt were very, very helpful, comparatively. Like they arranged for a Zoom Meeting before the semester even started, where they just introduced everyone who was part of the Graton Scholarship on a Zoom Meeting. So we already had those connections. And before we got too bogged down with schoolwork, that's the important part is that — yeah, I wish UCSD had done something before the school year had started, I think.
37:18	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
37:19	Greg Loui: Because otherwise, the Admin trying to do stuff while students are rushing around trying to complete schoolwork prepping for tests — especially on the quarter system-
37:28	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Yes.
37:29	Greg Loui: -is impossible, basically.
37:31	Abby Johnson: Oh, that with the quarter [system]. So I can see how that would definitely be like a problem. That's — I can understand that. So with UCLA Law school, then, you mentioned how one of the things they did well was like the Graton scholarship and the zoom, so were there — are there any other programs or anything like that that you're in at UCLA law that, like, helped you find community there?
37:58	Greg Loui: Yeah, there, there's the APILSA, which is the Asian Pacific Islander Law Student Association Group, of which I am the only Pacific Islander student.
38:08	Abby Johnson: Really!
38:10	Greg Loui: No, it's- it's always a problem with AAPI groups, is that you have — it's almost like 99.9999% Asian. And so, the Pacific Islanders always feel

	like a little bit left out. So like, it's API in name only. But there's that. There's also, also the NALSA group which is a Native American Law Student Association. And there's a couple of other practice-area focused law student associations that I'm a part of, like Intellectual Property, Environmental Law, Business Law and Food Law. [Smiles]
38:50	Abby Johnson: Food law?
38:54	Greg Loui: Yeah, I mean, we still haven't figured out how not to eat yet. So, as long as that is a condition of humanity, we are forced to eat, and we are forced to regulate food. [Smiles]
39:06	Abby Johnson: Wow! That is true. I guess I've just never heard of that term before. I never knew that was like a thing. [Smiles and laughs] My gosh!
39:12	Greg Loui: It's a big practice area. And — but like, it's not as sexy as other areas. So it just does not get as much focus while people are students.
39:23	Abby Johnson: Wow! That is, that is definitely interesting. Oh, my gosh! And then, I thought it was interesting too how you brought up how like in AAPI a lot of the time, it's- It's you know — the PI is in there in name only, and not a lot of representation. I wanted to ask, could you speak a little more about that?
39:43	Greg Loui: Yeah, that's another impetus of why I started PISA is that I went to a couple of the AAPI Student Association events and, I mean, UC San Diego is — has so many Asians. I, I cannot stress that enough.
40:00	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] I think about 50%.
40:01	Greg Loui: Yeah, it's — I mean, half of those are like international students. But there's still so many Asian-American students. So I definitely felt a little lost in the crowd.
40:15	Abby Johnson: Oh, for sure!
40:17	Greg Loui: And that's just — it's an interesting isolation problem of like, having so many people that you can't feel like you form real connections. So that's one of the reasons why I formed PISA. I, I definitely think the Asian American Student Association was — it was very helpful. I mean — I loved, I loved, loved, loved a lot of their events, like the night market. I loved going to a lot of events. But yeah, I did not feel like I built — I- there was not as

	enough opportunity to community build unless you were part of the board, which is a whole separate thing.
40:58	Abby Johnson: Mhm. Okay, well, that's so interesting. I, I completely agree with that too, and I thought that was really interesting, how you brought that up. So I just wanted to hear more about your, your thoughts on that. So thank you for that. And then before, like, you know, we wrap up, too — I wanted to ask if, just in general, you had any advice to UCSD students currently, just like any advice with what's going on?
41:25	Greg Loui: Oh, yeah, I mean, first of all, the law is really scrambling with current events. So if you're referring to that, I think the most genuinely helpful advice that I've gotten from a professor about everything that's going on is really [pauses] focus on what is stable and what gives you strength and peace, because with all the chaos going around, you — we [pauses] we cannot succumb to the despair. So I think — she mentioned action is important. So community build where you can. And I think in general, that's important- just not to be consumed with feeling like you can't do anything. You can take action. You can, you can make what you want out of your time at UC San Diego, but you have to put in the work. You have to put in the hours. You have to make — you have to be consistent. You have to — if you want to get opportunities from professors, you have to reach out to them. If you want to get job offers, you have to send in an application. You have to—you have to put in the work. And it — I mean, it's not going to be easy, but if you want something, you have to, you — first of all, you can ask as much help as you want from the administration. Mrs. Sasaki is great for figuring out that stuff, she and there are so many other resources. They will tell you — they will break down what steps you need to do to reach your goals. But from then on, you need to diligently and consistently put in the work.
43:18	Abby Johnson: Yeah, well, I love that. So definitely like, like, take advantage of all the resources you have available. But keeping in mind that it's your life. It's your responsibility.
43:30	Greg Loui: Don't let this time pass you by. I mean, time is the most precious resource. If you can just make — I don't wanna say like, make schedules, but consistently make time to do things that you're interested in.
43:47	Abby Johnson: I like that. And then to add on to that, too. You talked about, you know, like doing things that you're interested in, and then also finding stuff that gives you peace and comfort. So I guess I'm just wondering, like, what are some things that just give you peace and comfort when you're, you know, feeling overwhelmed, especially in law school? Like, what are some things that you do to like, just calm down?

44:10	Greg Loui: Yeah, I really love going on walks. I mean, UCLA is a very beautiful campus. So I love walking around just seeing-
44:16	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] It's very walkable.
44:18	Greg Loui: Oh, yeah, very much so. UCSD, not so much. I mean, y'all are-
44:21	Abby Johnson: [Laughs] Haha, there's a lot of walking you can do here.
44:25	Greg Loui: There's a lot of walking, but y'all are just on one giant hill, which is — it's always a little funny. So that's one big thing. I think [pauses] I have segments of my life where I can go and like — if I go to the gym, I'm not around law students, I'm just around my gym folks, and that's a nice little separation from the stress of law school. I think recognizing that I'm a fully realized human being outside of law school who has community that has people that I connect with with stuff that's like outside of the things that give me stress is very important, and just making that time to do things I enjoy. Like, I like writing. I like reading fiction. I like- I like listening to music. So yeah, there's things that give you joy. I mean, just setting out blocks of time to do them.
45:31	Abby Johnson: Yes, I love that. And speaking of writing, that does bring me to another point. I know that you also have self-published a book. Did you wanna talk about that at all, or speak on that?
45:44	Greg Loui: Yeah, I can- I can speak on that a little bit.
45:46	Abby Johnson: I'd love to hear more about it.
45:48	Greg Loui: It's definitely something that I've been passionate about since I was a child. I wanted to be a published author. I still want to be a published author, so I've just always kept writing. And when I was a freshman in- in undergrad, I was obsessed with the idea of publishing before I was 20. So that's why I went through the self publishing route, where I basically spent a year writing, drafting, editing, and polishing up a novel as much as I could, and then I published it. Amazon's self publishing program is pretty self-explanatory. You- you put in a PDF of your book, then you put in a title, and you upload some cover art.
46:41	Abby Johnson And boom! Did you do the cover art yourself, or did you like, have one of your friends do it?

46:47	Greg Loui: Yeah, I paid one of my friends to make it.
46:50	Abby Johnson: Wow! That is so cool. [Smiles] So wait! What's it called? Can you give - give a little shout out for it?
46:57	Greg Loui: Yeah, it's, I — it's <i>21st Century Orc</i> . It's, it's really silly. But it was a fun story about a modern fantasy world, but there's like fantasy races everywhere. And there was — there — the main character was basically participating in underground drag races.
47:24	Abby Johnson: Oh, that that sounds really cool, actually. [Smiles] Oh, my gosh! That sounds so cool like underground drag racing. Kind of reminds me of like <i>Fast and the Furious</i> .
47:34	Greg Loui Yeah, it was a lot like — it was basically inspired by <i>Fast and the Furious</i> , but with Orcs. [Smiles]
47:41	Abby Johnson: That is so cool, and Orcs are?
47:45	Greg Loui: If you're thinking about fantasy races, they're usually the ones with green skin and tusks.
47:53	Abby Johnson: Alright, perfect. Well, that is so amazing. Wow! Thank you for that-
47:57	Greg Loui: It was not a very good book.
48:00	Abby Johnson: Huh?
48:01	Greg Loui: It was not a very good book. [Laughs] I was 19 when I wrote it, so just be warned. It's just not very good.
48:07	Abby Johnson: But hey, it's the first of many right.
48:09	Greg Loui: [Laughs] Yes, yes.
48:11	Abby Johnson: Exactly, we — I mean, we all start somewhere.

48:12	Abby Johnson: Alright. Well, that is so cool. Thank you for talking on that. And then I wanted to ask, is there anything else that we hadn't covered, that you wanted to talk about or speak on at all?
48:26	Greg Loui: No, unless you want to ask more about what I think undergrads can do to prepare for grad school. I can speak a little bit more on if anyone's interested, like, I know you're interested in law school. I can tell you that grades matter, so don't let them lapse just because you think you've applied...you've gotten into, y'know a really good college-
48:53	Abby Johnson: Mhm. Yes. [Smiles]
48:54	Greg Loui: [Cross-talk] -and so you can slack off little bit.
48:57	Abby Johnson: Alright. Wow, yeah. So you're saying like, grades matter a lot. Would you say more than like extracurriculars, or-
49:06	Greg Loui: I think-
49:07	Abby Johnson: -should you have a few extracurriculars as well?
49:11	Greg Loui: It shouldn't just be grades. I, I will say that much, and not like, you know — if someone has a 4.0 [Grade Point Average], but like, did not have a life outside of undergrad school, law schools would not look at that favorably. They want to see someone could do like a — graduate Summa Cum Laude, but also be like the- the president of a club. They usually — big schools, like top law schools like UCLA, want someone who can do everything. Like I'm just — I'm gonna be straight with y'all like they want the best of the best.
49:49	Abby Johnson: Best of the best. Wow. So wow, thank you. So would you say they, you would say, like, they want someone who can juggle it, like juggle it all almost — just like wear all different hats?
50:01	Greg Loui: Mhm. Yeah, because time management is a humongous skill for lawyers. It is- It is the number one problem that all the lawyers say they have to deal with is just time management, because there's just not enough hours in the day to get all the work that they need to do done.
50:18	Abby Johnson: That's — I've- I've heard that as well like it's just so difficult. But I mean, I'm sure- I'm sure if it's — you know, relating so much with your passions and your identities like you are, does — do you find that that's

	made it easier at all to deal with it, knowing that it's something that you're really, really passionate about in pursuing?
50:40	Greg Loui: Of course. I mean, it's always easier to put in the work if you believe it's worth it. And you know, if you personally feel that your identity is something you want to invest in, that's — yeah, put in as much time as you can without letting your grades slip.
50:56	Abby Johnson: Yeah. Well — and then one more thing, too, because I am curious, like specifically with you, have you felt like your identity has expanded or grown as you've kind of gone through these steps and these processes, or do you feel like it's still just a never ending kind of, you know, journey?
51:17	Greg Loui: Yeah, I definitely think it's a never ending journey, especially when [pauses]- when I talk to other people who are Indigenous and like I, I find out some of the struggles they have, some of the insights they have, but I definitely feel like I've grown. I've come to a certain peace where I'm not actively beating myself up over not being Hawaiian enough. So there's that. [Smiles] But now it's just positive growth.
51:48	Abby Johnson: Exactly just positive growth from here on, out. [Smiles]
51:49	Greg Loui: Hopefully, fingers crossed. But you know, you never know. You never know. [Smiles]
51:56	Abby Johnson: Exactly. Well, I love that. I think- I think that's all that I like, you know, had planned. I wanna thank you again for doing this with me. and like, for just — for joining me. But I think that's all that I covered. Was there anything else that you wanted to speak on or no?
52:17	Greg Loui: I want to give a- you know, at- at the possibility of sounding a little didactic, a little pompous. I-
52:29	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Of course. Go ahead.
52:30	Greg Loui: They like, you know, if you're struggling in undergrad, I think — it gets better. Like, you know, it's a tough- it's a tough job market right now, so don't be discouraged. I think if you just keep doing something, you won't — as long as you, you don't allow yourself to defeat yourself. I think you'll always find opportunities. Don't be the one to [pauses] to decline or to decline opportunities. Let- let the HR [human resources] recruiters — let the

	administration officers, be the one to say no to you, because that is actually their job. They are getting paid to do that.
53:17	Abby Johnson: [Cross-talk] Yes. [Laughs]
53:18	Greg Loui: Yeah. So if you have the opportunity, if you feel like there's even the slightest chance to apply for something, if — to get like the job you're really interested in, if there's a grad school opportunity, or if there's like a, a grant or some some kind of opportunity, just- just send in the application. At least try, and then you'll have — you'll have less regrets than if you never tried.
53:47	Abby Johnson: I love that, I think. Wow! I love that piece of advice, too. Just like, do it. And then, you know, just don't regret it.
53:58	Greg Loui: Yeah, I've had a lot of failure in my life. I've been fired from multiple jobs. But the thing — I, I would much rather let someone else be the one to say — to close the door, then myself — then, making myself do the — close the door. I'll say that much. Yeah.
54:25	Abby Johnson: I like that. I really love that quote, too. Just like, do- do the best that you can, go the furthest that you can, and then your life will be a lot better, basically.
54:36	Greg Loui: You'll have a lot more inner peace. I'll say that.
54:38	Abby Johnson: Yes, inner peace, and I think “better” is definitely a subjective term.
54:43	Greg Loui: [Cross-talk] Mhm.
54:44	Abby Johnson: Wow! Well, I think that's- that's like the perfect, I think, place to end. That's amazing. Thank you so much for joining me and for agreeing to this interview. And yeah, wow. So I think I'll stop — so I'll stop the recording now.
55:05	Greg Loui: Sounds good. Thank you for having me.