

Narrator Name: Bryan Najarila
Interviewer: Almario Hipol
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00:00:03.810

Almario Hipol (he/him): So hi my name is Almario Hipol, my pronouns are he, him, his, and I'm a third year undergraduate student attending [University of California, San Diego], where I major in psychology with a specialization in human health. Today, I will have the honor of interviewing Bryan Najarila for the Race and Oral History Project. Thank you for taking time out of your day to be here. It is good to have you today, can you please introduce yourself?

00:00:29.340

Bryan Najarila: Hi my name is Bryan Najarila and I'm a senior for class of 2022 and I'm an incoming student for UCSD too. I'm heading over to Warren.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Cool cool cool, So how are you doing today?

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Bryan Najarila: Pretty good, it's a Sunday, I'm chillin.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah that's great. So your high school career is like coming to a close as you said, graduating senior, and how do you feel about graduating from high school?

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Bryan Najarila: hmm. Well, this year-- this like-- all of the school year for these past two years was kind of tough because well covid obviously, but like there's more to it than that because ummm-

00:1:26:00 - 00:1:32:00 [Portion redacted for privacy]

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Bryan Najarila: yeah that's that's fine so um yeah Well he got surgery, and then we also were in the process of moving houses, so while covid was going on, we pretty much had to do like three things I want, and I was pretty much like running the house while he was out. But, other than that, like I'm happy to be out, I'm happy to be out of high school and now because it's been- it's been pretty tough I'm- [pauses] like pretty much been grinding for four years straight. And yeah I'm just happy to get out, like I'll probably look back and think that- Oh, I miss it I should have gone back, but at this present time I'm over it like, I'm ready to just take a break.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah you know college, or- high school is pretty tough like, it's a pretty big accomplishment so you should be proud of yourself for that. And do you have any plans for the summer, before you head off to college?

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Bryan Najarila: Ummm, just your average like- get a part time job, help out around the house and stuff and just, relax because- what the school year starts in September right? So.

Almario Hipol: Yeah

00:02:49.320

Bryan Najarila: Yeah just like get some time in before they [we start?] getting in.

00:02:55.740

Almario Hipol (he/him): Yeah, most definitely. So the reason why we're able to have this interview is because you are part of a BLCI, which is the Barrio Logan College Institute, and their goal is to prepare underserved students to be like the first in their family to go to college. So, since you are graduating it also marks the end of your time with BLCI. So can you tell me like when did you first join [Barrio Logan College Institute], and can you like speak on your experience attending [Barrio Logan College Institute] for the first time?

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Bryan Najarila: So for [Barrio Logan College Institute] when I first joined, I think it was sophomore year right before covid hit. Somewhere around there I was a freshman-I can't remember exactly but- I do remember going in there and seeing a room, there was some classmates that I had back in my elementary school, and they've been in it for a while, so it was nice seeing some familiar faces. There was also some new kids too that I never met before, so it was kind of like getting to know people. That's just how it was for the first time. And, I was kind of excited because like these guys are going to help me understand college and- yeah they've been pretty good at that.

00:04:22.530

Almario Hipol (he/him): Cool. Or like, oh yeah that's pretty cool like college is very important. How did like your family like find out about [Barrio Logan College Institute] in the first place?

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Bryan Najarila: How they found out? So what happened was in elementary school— this was like how long ago? I had a brother first, he's younger than me and he was able to get in and I guess— I don't really remember how because I was in sixth grade— I think third grade? But it was— [pauses] I don't really remember. But they kind of— they put themselves out there and they told us like, “Hi we're a new club [Barrio Logan College Institute] and we're interested in tutoring and teaching your kids about how college works,” and all that stuff so that's how it started— because my brother first joined and I joined like in high school. I was kind of late to it because I wasn't offered so yeah.

00:05:31.770

Almario Hipol (he/him): Forsure. So like how did [Barrio Logan College Institute] like prepare you for college?

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Bryan Najarila: Oh, they prepare you for college— for my brother i've been seeing him— [pauses] like they have these workshops and they pretty much tell you— [pauses] they give you the lowdown of how things work in college, like the difference between a [California State University] and [University of California], quarter [system], trimesters, semesters, and then sometimes they tell you about financial stuff— about how grants, loans, and then scholarships— how that stuff works. And they also helped me out with my applications actually. They they kind of helped me go over and review my applications and that pretty— that helped me a lot because like— [pauses] as a first generation student like— [pauses] I'm not trying to throw shade on my parents or anything but it's like— it's hard to get them to help you read your stuff, because they're kind of there, they're the ones that raised you so like, it's hard to have your parents understand your struggles, so when you have [Barrio Logan College Institute] and their staff help out, they pretty much like help you to better your grammar and really drive the point across of what you're trying to— what do you call it [pauses] what they're trying to portray, so that way you can get the best out of your admission, yeah.

00:07:21.570

Almario Hipol (he/him): Yes, most definitely valid. Yeah I know for me personally, like I didn't ask my parents for help with that either.

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Bryan Najarila: Yeah.

00:07:31.980

Almario Hipol (he/him): What are your like most memorable moments at [Barrio Logan College Institute] since you were there? I know you're there during like for like most of the time during covid so i'm assuming everything was– or most of it was through zoom but you like got some experience doing in person.

00:07:45.720

Bryan Najarila: Yeah actually, we once had this we had this field trip where we went to [California State University] Long Beach and [University of California] Irvine and it was pretty interesting to see like how the vibes of the campuses were very different. That was one of the most memorable things that I've had to do too, because um– [pauses] it pretty much introduced me to like– [pauses] what colleges actually looks like. Like they're all different, but they're there for you to learn and that's like something I kind of learned.

00:08:20.880

Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah, cool. Is there like anything that you're gonna miss about [Barrio Logan College Institute]?

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Bryan Najarila: I'm going to miss how dedicated the staff are. Because they're there to help you, and when you really need help, they'll– they'll be there for you like, I remember when people were getting their– their applications set for college and they were there- they wouldn't they wouldn't go until like they were sure you were going to complete your applications. Because the requirements for us were to have around 10 applications. It was four [University of California], four [California State University], and then two privates right. And so being that there's [University of California], [California State Universities], and privates [applications], you need different like– different application websites and stuff, so they were there to help you out with all that stuff and they wouldn't go– I remember for common app, for privates I remember seeing that some students needed help with their stuff and they wouldn't leave until they made sure that they got their application set because that was like right before– not right before the deadline but, it was cutting it close and they were there to make sure that everything was going to go through. So, yeah.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): And that's really– that's really dope of them. Were you one of those people cutting it close?

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Bryan Najarila: No actually, actually I was setting my time– that's something too that they teach you; they teach you on time management. Because they have they had set dates– well of course they're flexible and whatever, but they do have dates that you're supposed to follow through with your applications and scholarships and stuff like that, but yeah I usually follow through with that and it helped me to get used to time management that's– that's like something that you're going to need in college so.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): I think yeah time management is like very essential to college like I think there's a very essential skill to like life in general. Were there like any like other like skills that, like [Barrio Logan College Institute] taught you like while you're there?

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Bryan Najarila: Applying yourself. They pretty much taught me that– not pretty much taught me like– [pauses] they helped me to understand that– [pauses] there's no such thing as a dumb question. Like if you need– if you have a question, you might as well go out and ask it, because who will? And no one else is going to ask it for you so who's going to do that? And to apply yourself to your teachers. Like get to know them, so that way you can get your letters of recommendation, network, pretty much. Like, yeah don't be afraid to put yourself out there, because if you don't, then who will? And it's going to be good for you in the future because you're going to need that stuff or whatever. Even if it's just like a computer science major, anything– you still need to talk to people so, it's just really getting yourself out there.

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yeah. yeah, especially in college too because you know you don't really talk to your professors when you're in lecture, it's more that like there's teachers assistant, that are kind of like your go to's like, if you want like letters of [recommendation] if you go to something like grad school, you're going to need those– like you're going to need to network with those professors and that's, the only way you could really do that is by reaching out to them. It's good that you have that like locked down in your mind already, along with like time management. But, is there anything you are going to miss about [Barrio Logan College Institute] –or did I ask that question already?

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Bryan Najarila: Yeah you asked that.

00:12:31.890

Almario Hipol: My bad [laughs]

Bryan Najarile: It's all good [laughs]

00:12:34.470

Almario Hipol (he/him): So now that like your time with [Barrio Logan College Institute] is finished, you know, like they pretty much accomplished their mission— their mission in like you being the first in your family to go to college. So what is— what is like being the first one in your family to go— to go to college like mean to you?

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Bryan Najarila: Yeah that one is one I've been thinking a lot of. [laughs] So, when it comes to being a first [generation] student and having parents that well like haven't gone to college in America— [sips drink] like— [pauses] when— [pauses] when it comes to your parents like— I feel like I was there— and honestly I feel good about it, but at the same time— it's realizing that like even— let's say 10 years ago if you even if you just had two years in college, you would have been like— you would have had good job security, you would have had so much already, but in times like this, like— I realize now that even just two years or bachelor's is not enough. Like there's a lot of job competitiveness around and there's more. You need— there's always another step so like— [pauses] it's not the same, because when— when your parents think of college, to them I feel like it's a goal and a reward, but for us it's a requirement to continue on over here. That's that's pretty much the best as I could phrase it I can't really— yeah.

00:14:32.610

Almario Hipol (he/him): Yeah, most definitely. Like in terms of like your like feelings about going to college, like are you like proud of yourself, or like do you feel like there's more work to be done?

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Bryan Najarila: When I first got admitted, I was really happy right, because I made it, I pretty much— I did it; I finished high school. I did what was asked of me, but then now I thought— like for myself, it felt like it was gonna be more work, but because there's always going to be more work. Once you finish, there's always another route because— you finish college, once you finish college you got to go to a job, and then after the job we keep going up. That's pretty much all I feel and— that's probably— [pauses] shoot, what was the question? [smiles]

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Oh it's like you're like feelings about being the person that goes to college--.

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Bryan Najarila: Oh yeah yeah yeah I was happy, I felt proud like– I felt pride, but there's always more to do so. [pauses] And you know– [pauses] I did feel like I did the best I could though. And that's pretty much it. [Dad walks in]

00:16:06.090

Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah, you're good [laughs] [dad leaves] But yeah, just going off like the questions about like being the first– a first [generation] college student, do you think– do you feel any pressure that comes with being the first in your family go to college?

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Bryan Najarila: yeah cause, I feel like it's just something that has to be done like– because I'm the first, I have to finish it, I have to follow through and, I have to get successful like, I feel like there's no room for error, so that's pretty much it like. [pauses] Having two other brothers too, I have to set an example. I feel like there's– there's more to it than just succeeding, you have to be an example to be an example too. You need to show that like– to not just people here and not just your family here, but over in– over in your country of origin, like– This is what, this is what success looks like. That's pretty much what you get to. Show to them like– if you work, if you're– if you get smart, if you get like everything up, it's pretty much how you get successful in life. You set yourself up by working hard and getting an education. That's like the pressures.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Cool, yeah like did you feel that pressure like coming from your family or was it just like more of an internal thing?

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Bryan Najarila: Is it a– like I feel like that's something that manifested in me. Because over the years, like from middle school to high school my parents– my mom mostly– not mostly, like both of them would always try and push me to get to the highest I could be, so I'd be taking honors classes and this and that. And I feel like it comes from both, both sides like that pressure and like– because for my mom like– let's say my parents right. If you were to succeed and become rich you're pretty much like setting yourself as an example. And when you put yourself in that mindset that you're supposed to be an example, you're always setting yourself up to be perfect, you know. Right so it's hard sometimes to stay perfect you know so.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): When your family like found out about to like– or like found out that you got accepted, how were their feelings towards you, or just about that?

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Bryan Najarila: Yeah, my mom was going crazy, anytime I got an application that I accepted— not accepted, but that I got accepted my mom would just be, "Yes!" She'd be all screaming, like to be happy and everything and then my dad would just kind of just be there kind of stoic, and until like [University of California, San Diego] came through and then he's like he— it was either in the car or like an hour after, he would just be there like, "I'm happy because you made it." Like if it's my mom she's more vocal and like more showing of it, if it's my dad he just says it, that's it, it's done.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Mhm.

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Bryan Najarila: yeah I was pretty happy too so.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Cool cool. I know you mentioned two brothers, like do they think— like do they like understand like what this means for your family or do you think they just like just like they're kind of too young to like comprehend that?

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Bryan Najarila: it's funny because I really don't know. [laughs] Because my mom did tell me-- my mom did tell my brother, like— I have a brother who was a freshman right now and then another one who's in sixth grade. And so-- the one that's a freshman right now he, he told my mom like once like, "Now I see now why Kuya works so hard and like whatever because it gets you places." And then my youngest one is like— is like, "What? You made it?!" But like I don't think he understands like the importance of it. So he's like yay, but he doesn't know why, but then the youngest one is like— the middle one, the one that is a freshman is like is he's getting to understand it, but at the same time, like— i'm not sure if he really like wants to follow i'm not sure so.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): You just set up too high expectations. [laughs]

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Bryan Najarila: Maybe, I guess so [smiles]

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Yeah so you did mention that you were like– that you are going to be attending [University of California, San Diego], can you like speak on like why you decided to go there?

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Bryan Najarila: Why? mostly because well– [pauses] my reasons are the same as my dad's. Cause, I really didn't like– [University of California, San Diego] is closer. It's, it's closer than UC Irvine because I got accepted to Irvine and [University of California, San Diego], and so we were thinking about it: Irvine or [University of California, San Diego]? [University of California, San Diego] is just closer and well, I don't really think it's a prestigious thing, just like distance it's closer and that's pretty much it. But actually, I do remember now, that I used to talk about how my aunts, from [the?] extended family or like cousins and stuff; they also went to use [University of California, San Diego] and it's pretty much like the solid choice like– that's the one you go to for– it's pretty much good at everything. That's how I feel, so it was a solid choice, yeah. yeah.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah definitely and, so I like– well what made you did you declare for and like why did you decide to pick that major?

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Bryan Najarila: Oh yeah major. I'm undeclared so. [laughs] I'm just trying to branch out as much as I can, like I've been thinking for three years now, I still don't know what to do, still like– yeah maybe somewhere in [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics], but I really don't know at this point.

00:22:45.480

Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah but like– so you mentioned like [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] so like why is that, like– so why were you thinking like [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] versus like any other major?

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Bryan Najarila: Because it's kind of like what I've been doing all my– my whole life because my classes– they're [pauses] [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics] because of math like for math– the math part of stem. I've been doing accelerated math programs since like, I guess freshman year so it's just kind of the first thing I jumped to. But, it's also with the

[expectance?], of the salary that comes after. Usually things are like– if you go to stay and get money so, yeah.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): That's valid, like kind of goes back to like that purpose of [Barrio Logan College Institute], just like creating some generational so yeah. [pauses] I don't remember– like how do you feel about like going to like going through college?

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Bryan Najarila: It's needed– [pauses] it's needed, but it's also going to be competitive. So, if you really, really, really want to get to a successful job, I feel, you got to really dedicate yourself to college. But at the same time, like there's always the other side of the coin, where, if you just finish high school and you continue working and you build yourself up that, that could also get successful in a different way, so yeah.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah college is like– there's like a lot of emotions you're gonna like experience for sure so like do you have any worries about college?

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Bryan Najarila: Worries. [pauses] Well, just like pretty much everyone, money. It costs money. College does cost money. And then, opportunity cost. And imposter syndrome. Like I've been feeling imposter syndrome a lot recently because I've been feeling like-- Was it a fluke, was it this and that, but then like– the reassurance is there cause– [pauses] recently I just got to an awards assembly, and I– they say I graduated with honors so that's got to see something right? So I thought about it, I'm like– Okay I should be proud of what I'm doing right now, like don't put yourself down because you're not– like the top people in your school that got like half a million dollars and a scholarship or something, like your– your value's not the same category as theirs or something so. And then, with the money part. [Pauses] Because– cause we're first [generation] right, they don't really know how college– like the money side, the technology side because I'm going through it like I've never had– nobody kind of guided me through that except for like CVCI– I mean like [Barrio Logan College Institute] like, they kind of walk you through it, but then after that I kind of– I kind of just– [pauses] have to figure it out for myself, figure things out. Because yeah, my dad was– I'm pretty sure I'm getting some sort of financial aid because he was military but, like because he hasn't gone to college– like because hasn't gone the college or has experience, I'm pretty much walking through and have to figure out how to apply, where I should send the right stuff, and everything because I didn't have any advice from anyone, so I kind of have to figure it out.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): You did like a lot of like navigating it sounds, like it sounds like you had to do, being like the first one to go to college. But like, on the other hand, is there, like anything exciting, or you are excited about for college?

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Bryan Najarila: Oh yeah yeah excited about?! Like, yeah If I get into an on-campus dorm, I'll be free. Like I can literally do whatever– I don't have to worry about my parents saying whatever, I could just go out whenever I want to. And then my brothers won't be around; that's a plus and a minus because I'll kind of miss them. I'll probably miss them, but like at this point right now, I kind of just want to be alone, kind of like branch out, figure out who I am.

00:27:48.990

Almario Hipol (he/him): Most definitely.

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Bryan Najarila: yeah.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): Cool. So yeah, we were talking about like– this whole interview speaks on your first [generation] experience, so what advice would you give to like other first [generation] students or even like those, like incoming seniors next year that'll also be first [generation], whether it's from like your school or even from like [Barrio Logan College Institute]?

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Bryan Najarila: Some advice I would be giving is to not be afraid of applying yourself anywhere. The second thing would be to– the second thing would be to shoot– [laughs] I just blanked out because I just– [pauses], Don't be afraid to apply to yourself, don't be ashamed of your heritage, and then don't be– don't let imposters syndrome get to you, because no matter where you go, you're there for a reason like– don't, don't put yourself down because you compare yourself to other people, like bring yourself up because you– look at what you've done you so, yeah, yeah.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): That sounds like some great advice, like I wish like back when I was in college– or back when I was an incoming first [generation] student I wish I had the– the advice that you just gave.

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Bryan Najarila: Yeah. And I say don't be like– don't be ashamed of your heritage, because some people, just like– I don't know, they can't be really who they are, depending where they're going to like– I don't know, that's just how I feel.

00:32:30.030

Almario Hipol (he/him): Like was there anything like that you want to like expand on like in reference to your heritage as well, or if you're not comfortable with that–

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Bryan Najarila: I'm like– expanding on heritage, I mean i'm just– I'm Filipino so like, we're kind of like the Mexicans of Asia. I don't know how to say like– I don't know how else to say so, that's like, I don't really think there's any stigmas or anything about it, it's just like some people don't like to show that. Like the bless, you know.

Almario Hipol: yeah, the "Mano Po,"

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Bryan Najarila: Some people don't like– Yeah, it's just a thing you're used to like– you don't have to hide it.

Almario Hipol: Most definitely

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Bryan Najarila: And then, it doesn't have to be just like it be just like specifically Filipino either like– embrace your heritage. Like you don't need to put it away because someone's going to judge you for what you do. And that's it that's culture like– it's there so.

00:33:47.400

Almario Hipol (he/him): yeah most definitely. Cool yeah, so we're kind of reaching the end of our interview. Well one I want is to express my gratitude for you being here in this whole time, and like, being present with your answers. And Is there anything else you'd like to share or anything regarding [Barrio Logan College Institute] or just like being a first generation college student?

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Bryan Najarila: I feel like I said everything. I do want to thank [Barrio Logan College Institute] for helping out because you know it's, it's pretty— it's pretty tough to like guide, let's say 10, 15 students, through their applications. Let's say you're guiding 15 [students], that times 10 [applications], you got to like watch their applications for everything. That takes a lot of time, so yeah thankful for them for that. And then for being first [generation] student [pauses] It's tough, but just like remember you're not the only one going through it too, so it's not like you're alone in this— there's other people who are going through the same thing as you. And then— yeah that's pretty much it, so.

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Almario Hipol (he/him): So is there anything else you'd like to say to the folks tuning into this oral history? Anything you would want them to remember you by? Or Anything?

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Bryan Najarila: Nah I mean— just keep it genuine, Like— keep it authentic. I don't know that's that's pretty much it. Thanks for having me, though, so.

00:35:51.330

Almario Hipol (he/him): Appreciate you for coming out. Yeah this was a great interview, you're like— I was very impressed with like the way you handle yourself and the perspective you offer. And yeah so thank you again.

00:36:07.830

Bryan Najarila: yeah Thank you, bye bye.