

Acts of Kindness

Hello,

I am Hanni Jalil Pier, a 2015 Ph.D. in History from UCSB and now Assistant Professor of History at ICESI University in Cali, Colombia. My journey from undocumented high school graduate at Reseda High in L.A. County to my doctorate was far from what people would consider smooth or financially easy. Yet today, if asked to do it all over again, I would without hesitation. In each stage I've had passion, drive, perseverance, discipline, qualities those of us who decide to pursue graduate work must have. In this regard, I am rather unexceptional. But there is one way in which I feel rather exceptional and lucky. From the moment I decided to pursue a university degree all the way through the completion of my doctorate, I've had the emotional and financial support of family members, friends, departments, and for my doctoral work, the Graduate Division, History Associates, and the History Department at UCSB. Getting my Ph.D. was a collective effort, from start to finish.

Now that I am starting my career as a professor and stop to think about my journey, I am convinced that without all the individual and institutional support I've had, I'd probably not be writing this. Listing all the sources of support would turn this into a much longer exercise in



gratitude. However, I'd like to acknowledge that without countless acts of kindness, the loan my best friend gave me to pay for my first semester of college, the donations secretaries and fellow student assistants made anonymously to help me pay subsequent semesters

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and cover book costs during my years as an undergrad, the grocery money my mother, sister, and other good friends sent to cover living expenses during my graduate work, the travel and research funds that the History Department gave me to attend conference and seminars, or

cover part of research costs, and the department's unconditional financial support to cover tuition and living, earning my doctoral degree would have been infinitely more difficult.

The Department of History at UCSB works tirelessly to provide intellectual, emotional and financial support for its students, and give them the opportunity to fulfill their career goals. As I look back to my years at UCSB, I am filled with a sense of family and community. During some of the darkest and most difficult times in my adult life, times of loss and grief, peers, friends, professors, and staff showed me that compassion, understanding, and the occasional hug, coupled with the chance to let time heal worked wonders. I am deeply grateful for these acts of kindness, for their love and support, for providing the space and support to heal, and for the opportunity I had to pursue doctoral work in history.
