

**Oral History Interview of  
Alejandro Huerta**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez  
March 25, 2013  
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:  
*Hispanic Oral History Project***

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### Preferred Citation for this Document:

Huerta, Alejandro Oral History Interview, March 25, 2013. Interview by Daniel Sanchez, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

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### Recording Notes:

*Original Format:* Born Digital Audio

*Digitization Details:* N/A

*Audio Metadata:* 44.1k/ 16bit WAV file

*Further Access Restrictions:* N/A

### Transcription Notes:

*Interviewer:* Daniel Sanchez

*Audio Editor:* N/A

*Transcription:* Cecilia Morales

*Editor(s):* Cammy Herman, Elyssa Foshee, Leah Blackwell

*Final Editor(s):* Daniel Sanchez

## Interview Series Background:

The Hispanic Interview Project documents the diverse perspectives of the Hispanic people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11<sup>th</sup> 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Alejandro Huerta, member of Texas Tech's LULAC organization, the League of United Latin American Citizens. He discusses LULAC's endeavor to increase voting rates among students, Latinos in particular, and the need for increased Latino involvement in politics. He highlights the importance of education and discusses future plans, including graduate school.

**Length of Interview:** 00:35:55

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### **Keywords**

LULAC, Texas Tech University, student organizations, Latino student population, Latin Americans, political activism

**Daniel Sanchez (DS):**

You can look at the camera if you want to or sideways, it doesn't matter, because I'm not going to be in the shot, it's just you. My name is Daniel Sanchez. Today's date is March 25, 2013. We're in Lubbock, Texas at the Southwest Collection with Alejandro Huerta. Alejandro is part of a student organization we're going to talk about this morning. First of all, Alejandro, thank you.

**Alejandro Huerta (AH):**

Thank you for having me.

DS:

Please state your complete legal name.

(AH):

Alejandro Huerta.

DS:

And where and when were you born?

AH:

Nineteen eighty-two in Big Spring, Texas.

DS:

Okay, and tell us a little about your family. Tell us your parents' names and where they are from.

AH:

My dad is Jose Manuel Huerta. He is originally from Mexico, and my mom, she's from the States. She's from Big Spring, Texas.

DS:

And when did they meet?

AH:

They met, I want to say, about thirty-two years ago, in Midland, Texas. I don't know how they met. I never really asked them, but they met—I know it was in Midland and then they moved to Big Spring. My dad worked in the oil fields, so they went around from Lubbock- Midland- Big Spring- Odessa.

DS:

Is that what brought him to the States, was working in oil?

AH:

Yeah, he left there when he was young, and then he started working in oil doing the roustabout things. He did that pretty much his whole life until he left the States.

DS:

Did he ever talk about what that was like?

AH:

Yeah, I mean, we got to see it first-hand, you know, some of the things that happened to him, like cleaning tanks, passing out. It was dangerous work. They got paid pretty well for it though.

DS:

They were at risk?

AH:

Yeah, it was a high-risk job, from what he said. He would work a lot. He'd only have one weekend off. We'd see him maybe one day. And sometimes when he'd get home, it'd be pretty late, like ten, eleven.

DS:

What kind of background did he have?

AH:

As far as from Mexico?

DS:

Well, like work history, to get a job like that.

AH:

He really did most labor jobs, did construction, things like that, and then one of the guys he knew—I think it was one of his cousins that got him that job doing the oil business.

DS:

So you all grew up around it, you said?

AH:

We grew up around it, Big Spring. That's pretty much what he did. He worked there, always in between Midland, Big Spring. They're right there: an hour, hour and a half away from each other.

DS:

And how about your mother? Did she work?

AH:

Yeah. She actually went to college, but she didn't finish. She did mainly mental health care. She worked there at the Big Spring State School for a very long time, and then beyond that she's kind of always taking care of people, disabled people, or people with mental disabilities.

DS:

How big is y'all's family?

AH:

It's me, my younger brother, my older brother, and then my sister, and then my mom and my dad.

DS:

And you mentioned your mother had a background in education. So were y'all brought up thinking about going to college?

AH:

Not really. She—well, somewhat, maybe. She would tell us, When you graduate high school, you're either [to] go into the military or you're going to school. But she always kind of leaned me towards the military, which almost happened and then I backed out. That was her. She always said, You're going to go to one of the two. I think she really wanted one of us to go to the military. (laughter)

DS:

None of y'all went?

AH:

None of us went. We all decided to go to school instead.

DS:

I know you came to Tech, but how about your siblings?

AH:

My younger brother, he went to South Plains, and he's going back this next fall, and my older brother graduated from Tech. My sister is actually graduating from South Plains this year and then she's going to go to the nursing program at Covenant.

DS:

Oh, cool. So what brought you to Tech?

AH:

Just, I guess—I would say because I worked on campus as a high school student. I did a co-op program. That was when I was going to go to the military, and I had people—not necessarily at school, but people where I worked—college students—I hung out with them. I was sixteen, hanging out with college students, so I kind of got immersed into the college environment. And they were the ones that told me, like, Why are you going to go to the military? Nothing against the military, but you can go to school. I was like, School's not for me; I can't pay for it. I had some people who were like, No, we'll show you how to get there if you want to go to school. I'll help you. That was really kind of what drew me in, to have that support, that rearing, that little push to go to school, and that's what I did.

DS:

You know, there's a lot of initiatives nowadays to bring minority students into campus, especially Latinos. Did Tech do any type of that outreach with you?

AH:

At the time, when I applied to school, my grades weren't great. So I got in, maybe as a—what was the term they used in the letter—it was kind of like a probationary period. But it was only if you had summer acceptance, and then you had to excel in the summer, otherwise you couldn't attend in the fall. But honestly, no. I came from Lubbock High and like I said, most of the rearing I got to go to school came from off-campus—people away from school, at my work that told me to go. I didn't have the counselors at the school. I remember the exact words of one teacher when I graduated, when he saw me, he was like, I thought you dropped out—because I finished. I graduated from Lubbock High, but I finished at Matthews because I was like, I need to work, I need to help my family. It was my mom, she was single at the time so we had to help pay bills, so I checked out to Matthews to graduate faster. When he saw me he really thought I had just dropped out. He didn't care, he was just like, I thought you dropped out. I was like, What?

DS:

I didn't know they had a program like that.

AH:

Yeah, at seventeen you can check out and then go to attend Matthews. What would have taken me the rest of the year I did in a month and a half of just hardcore studying—finish one thing, on to the next. And it really helped me because I finished my coursework in maybe January, so I sat

out the rest of the semester and just worked full-time at sixteen, seventeen years old, around there.

DS:

You think something intense like that helped you prepare for that summer of Tech, when you—

AH:

I think so, because it really got me in the mode of positive reinforcement. Like, you finish one thing, you're like, All right, good, I finished it, let's do the next one, let's do the next one. It kind of did help build a work ethic that I think I have. You work hard at something, you'll see the results.

DS:

And you're involved now with student organizations. How did you get involved into that?

AH:

I started—when I first came to campus, I got—I considered myself very selfish. I didn't really see myself—you know, Oh, you can't really make a difference. Oh well, why waste your time? But it was around the time that things started happening in Arizona. I remember I had one of my classmates, Alma Peña—she's the one that founded the LULAC Council here. I had her for a Spanish class. We didn't know each other at the time, and we just kind of got to know each other outside of class one time—during conversation, because it was a summer class so they give you like a ten minute break. And in that ten minutes, I don't know how we started talking about it, but we started talking about—I think I was reading something on my phone, I don't remember, but I brought up the conversation about the bill in Arizona, and we just started talking, and I was like—I started telling her how I felt about it, and she was like, “I think that you should consider joining this organization, because you sound like you're very passionate about certain things, so I encourage you to attend.” The meetings weren't even going to be until the fall, but I kind of fell into it. It was her. She kind of motivated me and she kind of like, Hey, are you going to come to the meeting?—when fall rolled around. So that's how I began to be involved.

DS:

And that's what the—the LULAC—what's the official name of the campus—?

AH:

Texas Tech League of United Latin American Citizens Council 4988, but it's shortened now to Collegiate LULAC, the way the shift is for young adults now, because it's normally what they call “LULACers” in college, young adults, but now it's changing to the Texas Tech Collegiate LULAC.

DS:

Okay. And so they were already organized before you became a member?

AH:

They had just been organized that one year. They had just finished, because we're in our fourth year, so we're still compared to other Hispanic organizations like Hispanic Student Society. They've been around a very long time. Some of the other ones, maybe five years out, seven years out, so we're still pretty much a new multi-cultural organization on campus.

DS:

It's interesting you mention that, because the Hispanic Student Society started off as Los Tertulianos, one of the original members of that was named Alma Peña.

AH:

(laughter) Really? Wow.

DS:

So, yeah. When I was e-mailing her this morning—

AH:

I'm going to share that with Alma, that's very interesting. I hear the stories from the adult council. They always tell us how it came to be, and how it started. That's interesting. I've never heard that part.

DS:

And I think she probably knows a lot about the—because you know people from the community organization here, LULAC, right?

AH:

Correct.

DS:

And a lot of those guys were here at Tech back in their day.

AH:

They always talk a lot about it, yeah.

DS:

So what have y'all done with that campus group? What type of activities?

AH:

Most recently, like right now, we have the West Texas Young Adults Summit. When Alma started—like I talk to her about once or twice a week, and she always kind of reflects, like, where it started and where it's going. She's like, "It really brings tears to my eyes to see people carrying the torch." Because, United to Give, for example, an event that feeds close to a hundred families—from then, when they started, they fed maybe sixty, then the next year, seventy-five, then the next year, a hundred. This year we fed a hundred and twelve, I believe. So it's grown every year. We have two main events. That one and then the West Texas Young Adults Summit, which is a conference geared at kind of inspiring and encouraging Hispanics, Latinos—everybody.

And it's not just a conference for Latinos. We want to be inclusive of the whole community, so it really touches on some of those issues that are going on: turning Texas blue, Latinos in the media, immigration, border security, the DREAM Act. We touch on all those little things. A lot of people are like, Well, it's for Hispanics. It's for anybody who wants to be more knowledgeable about the current situations, the current issues that are affecting a huge demographic. And aside from those, we do little things. Last year we did the Spirit of Cesar Chavez out here on campus. We've been involved around the community, going to schools, talking to kids about going to college, because I'm always big on it. It has a different message when it's someone that looks like them, talks like them, telling them that they can go to school. That is very impactful.

And I've seen the impact it has in schools, and other things like little community social things. We try to collaborate more with the other student groups, because as Latinos on campus it seems there's always a competition, like, "Who's better?" We always had within the group—we always say, It doesn't matter what your mission is. Your mission in life should be to be better, to be educated. We can all co-exist. Not one group is better than the other. It's just you have different missions, promoting Hispanics, culture, education. That's what you should do.

DS:

You know, you mentioned that community outreach. And you being from the city, even though you started off in Big Spring—but you're here now. So what's it like to get out there and tell other kids about it?

AH:

To me, it's one of those—you don't think that you're going to make a huge difference. But I was at another event one time, and then these kids came up to me and were like, "Hey!" I felt so bad [because] I didn't know who they were. They were like, "They remember you." Their mom came up to me like, "They remember you were the one who told them that they could go to college. You went and spoke at their school." And I was like—I mean, that was really moving to me, to think that maybe you planted a small seed in somebody that way. That means a lot. So for me, it's big to go back and talk to kids. I'm always a big proponent of that. Anybody who does it.

You never know. Kids say the darndest things, and they listen to a lot. They're very observant. They may not say it all the time, but kids are very observant. So if you go to a school and talk, you can make them realize that they can go to school, because they may not be getting that at home. So if you can kind of fill that void, mission accomplished.

DS:

You know, and you said about not at home, and you having grown up here, what did you find lacking as far as what was needed to get you coming here? You said you had coworkers who brought you here, but aside from that, what was—?

AH:

I think it was the environment. I'm a psychology major, so it's always environment, the environment you're in. It does trigger good or bad. And I think around here, I see it's parents not being educated, and I don't mean just on one thing. It's not being educated on the process of a FAFSA, of admissions, of writing. Those little things like that play into whether the kid's going to go to school or not, and I think that's the biggest obstacle, is for us—yeah, we've grown numbers-wise as Hispanics, but it means nothing if we don't educate ourselves, and educate ourselves about the process of going to school, and then educating ourselves by actually going there. But that's really the biggest obstacle.

I don't see parents talking to kids like they should be. And I'm always big, like, I always tell my nieces, You're going to college. There's no question about it. You're going. And they're five. One's five, one's eight. And I'm always like, I don't think [it's] ever too early to hear the message that you're going to go to school. Like, the sooner the better, because then they have it in their head [that] I'm going to college. It's not an option. I think that's the biggest obstacle, is not educating. The current people with kids, they don't have enough education about showing their students about how to go to school, because nobody did that for them. And I feel like that's us who do go to college. [We] can fill that void by going and doing that, whether to a school, a community event, or just in conversation. Here's our card, here's our contact. If you want to go to school, we know some people that can help you and we can help you get there.

DS:

And that kind of plays in part—you're talking about the community efforts that you've done, and we both understand that the big picture is about voting. And talk about how we need to translate that demographic into a voting demographic.

AH:

That's one of the biggest things. We had an event out here on campus. We registered a lot of people, and then most of the members in our council are deputized to get people to vote because that's important. And you want to do voter registration drives, but there's just a lot of—what's the word I'm looking for—a lot of resistance out there, especially around Lubbock. Some people

just don't care. I mean, personally, you don't try to take it personal, but I'm like, if you don't care, don't complain when border patrol's walking down the street or you're getting pulled over just for being brown. Those little things, yeah, you see them happen in other states and they haven't happened that severe here in Texas, but they could be. There's things out there now that people would probably find very offensive, that's why you need to vote—register to vote, too—because some of the legislators, [they'll ask] in conversations, Do they vote? No. They count you out right away. A lot of them won't admit that, but that's how it is. When we're a culture who doesn't vote, that's the problem.

Last year, one of the events, Viva Samuel Garcia, he came from Voto Latino. I loved his message, because his message was, "Change the culture." Change the culture, you'll change how people perceive us, the things we do, and he was like, You know, voting, like we're talking about a candidate, that's need to be in everyday conversation. Did you hear he's doing this, did you hear he's doing that? We don't have those. We have, Oh, did you watch this show last night? Did you watch this thing? He's like, We need to change our conversations, we need to change the culture within our own family, and then kind of expand beyond that. When you go to school and you're talking, talk about that. When you're talking to your friends, talk about that. You need to change your mode of thinking to really change things.

DS:

Yeah, because I think that's the big hurdle. Everybody's talking about the demographics, but numbers mean nothing unless you put them to use.

AH:

Exactly. And I mean, we see it firsthand. There's a lot of people within the organization that do vote, but there's a lot of people who are just, like, My vote doesn't count. My vote doesn't count. I was like—in my head, I mean—with that attitude, yeah. You can't lose faith in people and what they can do. You've got to challenge them. I always say, when we talk to people, just talk to them about, you know, there's something that's going to hit them close to home. That's really the trigger, and it's not to scare them, but it's really just to motivate them to do a little bit more than what they're currently doing.

DS:

I think we've covered quite a bit of what I wanted to talk about, but is there something that I haven't asked you that you'd like to talk about?

AH:

I think it's one of the things—around here, it's—I see it from when we go to conventions or other cities—Dallas, Houston. You just see, like, the level of activism here in Lubbock is pretty small. There's a few people around that we know that are active. And I think it was brought up at one of the LULAC banquets. It was the one here. They applaud the young leaders, because

there's a big age disparity between who was and who currently is. And that's one thing that's always personally affected me. Like, there's just a big gap between us and the adult counsel. And you don't want to lose the people who care and who want to be active. You need those kind of people. So around here, it's always one of the biggest things. There's a few people on campus that you know, but there's not a whole lot of them. There's not a whole lot of people who really challenge things, who speak up for things. There's a few, but maybe around ten. And to me, when I see in comparison to Dallas, it's different, they're more diverse. But I always think here [that] you got to challenge people a little bit more. Somebody may get that message and get it in them and be like, You know what, let's do this. I don't like something that's going on. Let's get people educated about it.

DS:

Yeah, in fact, you mentioned something interesting. When I started doing these interviews, thirteen years ago, it's a recurrent theme, where's the next generation? Because the old guard was still there, and they were still in the positions of leadership in all the organizations, organizations whose numbers had dwindled because just by—they weren't growing beyond the group they had started with. And they were trying to figure out, what's wrong? How can we get somebody new in, and I think your organization has given them a little bit of new blood there.

AH:

Yeah. It's something we bring up in our meetings. When I graduate, people ask me, What are you going to do? Or when so-and-so graduates, who's going to be here? And it's one of those things. It's kind of where we have to recruit and retain. And one of our members brought it up in one of our meetings. It's very important to do that. I understand what you're saying, because, if you have four people with experience leaving and they just leave and don't turn back, then who's there to bring those people up? Who's there to kind of walk them through, guide them through what they should be doing? And I always say in our organization, We want leaders, we don't want followers. We don't want the people who are like, Oh, okay. If we say something and then you challenge it, then I applaud them because I'm like, You're speaking your mind and that's part of being a leader. It's speaking up when others just [say], Oh, okay.

DS:

Yeah, there's an inherent danger if everybody just rubberstamps, because then no one's—they're leaving it up to the leadership. They're not doing their own thing.

AH:

Exactly. I always say it starts in the meetings. I always want those vocal people. You always know who has it in them from the get-go. You say something controversial that would raise a lot of eyebrows, and if people are like, Okay—I always see—there's one girl, we were talking about in an event on campus a long time ago, To Catch an Illegal. When I brought it up, a girl was like,

What? No way. And she's kind of stuck with the group ever since then, because she has it in here. She sees a wrong; she wants to make it right. You need those people. That's what being—people say, oh, all y'all are rebels—I say, It's not even like that. It was maybe back in the day, but things have changed now. You have to be wise about how you do things, [in] the way you conduct your business, the way you organize your events. Nobody wants to support something that's going to give them a bad name. You want to be represented well professionally. You want to get people involved, but you don't want them to turn your back on you because of the way you act or the way you say things.

DS:

And you mentioned the other student organizations. However, yours is different because y'all have to walk that political line amongst this campus atmosphere. How's that been?

AH:

It's always different. People see us strictly political. I say, We're more than that. We want a little bit of everything: education, immigration, culture. We want a little bit of everything. Nothing against the other organizations, like some represent culture, some strictly education, and that's kind of like—I think you get the best of all of the worlds with us. You talk about all these things, and when you go to the conferences and conventions, you get empowered on all these things, not just one. Having knowledge in each one of those is like multiple tools in your toolbox. You can talk about a little bit of everything. You know about more things than other people because it kind of gets ingrained in you in the workshops and everything. So knowledge is power. It truly is, and education is the key. Adding all those together, you can have a pretty strong toolbox by the time you get out of college and transition into the professional world.

DS:

Tell us about one of the most important things you've learned from those workshops or those other gatherings.

AH:

There were some conferences and conventions I really enjoyed because you see people sometimes advocating for things and hosting events. I always say leadership can be a lonely place. And that's true to a certain degree. When you go to conferences, you see other people doing the same things as you. It's like that little kid hearing it from someone else that looks like them. That inspires you; that really motivates you. And I always tell them, Conferences, yeah, they can be fun, but they're eye-openers if anything. I know when I went to the first one, my eyes were open, like *boom*, like, This is awesome. Like you hear people, people like Jose Angel Gutierrez; when he was one of the first speakers I saw at the conference, he really motivated me. Like, Woo this guy gets you going! He's really motivational. Things like that, you just see people doing different things, and you see the organization that you're part of operating at a

higher level. I mean, you see the network. You see people in Dallas, you see people in Colorado, California, New York. You see people everywhere. Florida. So it's good to see that it's not just our council here, there's other young adults doing the same things we do, the same events we do. They're doing a lot of different things in different states, and to me that's really motivating. And the workshop speakers, I mean, they have some of the best workshop speakers I've seen. I've gone to a few of them these past years, and I'm never let down with those workshops. They just continue to give you education on things that I didn't know before.

DS:

So when do you graduate?

AH:

I graduate in December, this coming December.

DS:

So what are your plans afterwards? Do you plan on graduate school?

AH:

I do. Our advisor, Dr. Fernando Valle, he's always challenging us to—he always says, What's next? What's the next step? What's the next step? He says that and we love him for that, because he challenges you not to just get your bachelor's and settle for your bachelor's. Because some people say bachelor's is like a diploma now, a high school diploma. Now you need to get your master's and beyond that, your PhD. And he always asks us to go, so he's challenged me. He's like, What's next, boss man, what's next boss man? I'm like, Yeah, I want to go to grad school, and I have it in me, I know. As me being a psychology major, I kind of have to, but it's not that I have to, it's now that I want to. I see a need for it. And some of the things that he focuses on is educational leadership, and that's kind of what I've kind of geared myself towards, is developing people, having the knowledge that I have, and sharing that with others. Because if it dies with me, it dies with me. I always share that with others. I do want to go to grad school, either here or at UTSA. That's really what I want to do.

DS:

I was going to ask: how are you going to take those lessons learned and put them into graduate school or the workforce? I think you already answered that.

AH:

Yeah, (laughs) it's one of those that you just learn all these things. Even on campus now, a lot of people call and text for—they need help on something. I say, Well, talk to this person, talk to this person. I always say [that] if I'm a true LULACer, I'm always going to help anybody who asks. If I can't help you, it's because I really can't. But if I can, then I'd be a resource to people and be

the support system, because you never know, they may aspire to do this, and Hey, let's get it done. Here's what we need to do. So always around LULAC, people are like, Call Alejandro. And I'm always quick to answer people's questions, because I know when mine go unanswered, I'm like, You haven't answered my question. (DS laughs) So it's one of those things I pride myself in, in giving fast response and trying to help out when asked.

DS:

And I think that's even more crucial nowadays, given how instantly we message each other and text each other, that you almost expect a response right away.

AH:

Exactly. I always get on to some people, like, There's phone, there's Facebook, there's Twitter, there's e-mail. When people see my phones, eh, but that's not the only way of communicating now. There's all kinds of ways. If you don't know them, I can show them to you. But I always tell people that.

DS:

Yeah. I'm impatient, that's how come I say that.

AH:

People tell me the same thing. I like to provide people with answers quick, and then I know not everyone is the same way as me, so I always have to take a step back. Not everyone's wired like me. I give them an e-mail and I'm like, The etiquette's within twenty-four hours, text message instantly, Facebook within eight. Sometime that day they should get back to you. And Twitter. Twitter's pretty much instantaneously.

DS:

And you know, this isn't history, but given your age and the fact that your greater years are still ahead of you hopefully—

AH:

Hopefully. (laughs)

DS:

What do you aspire to do later in life?

AH:

My goal would honestly be to write a grant and try to get my own non-profit here. It's really what I want to do because I feel like there's other groups out there, but I feel like [with] the experience I've gotten within the organization and on campus and with the network we have, I

really want to target those areas of need in Lubbock, where it's east Lubbock or the Arnett-Benson. I really would love for them to have somewhere where they can come and they can do their FAFSA. I just have a vision—that would be my vision. I don't know if you've heard of the Dream Center here? They have a beautiful building, and they have things where people can go and cut hair, they can get their hair cut, they can get their wardrobe. The Dream Center is called the Dream Center because it's helping people achieve their dreams. I fell in love with it because that would be my ultimate goal, is to do that. Of course, it's nice to make some money, but to me, their success isn't just determined by the amount of money. It's that you really have a passion for what you're doing. So for me, it'd be that, or just contributing, getting more Latinos educated. It's really what I want to do. So somewhere in there, it's going to be in education, because I feel like that's the biggest obstacle right now, is education in high school, education in college, and then getting educated about the things around you, because all those things around you affect your high school education, they affect your college education. So I want to have my hand in contributing to that.

DS:

In partnership with that is—can you talk about the importance of having someone like Dr. Valle?

AH:

Oh, he's huge, man. He's been the biggest—there's no other way to put this—he's been the biggest blessing to our council. That guy—we could not have asked for a better advisor than him. He just—he's really come alive this year. He's always been around, but every year he's always trying to step it up, and he gets us to step it up. When he's inspired and motivated, we're inspired and motivated. People within the conference, they love him. He did a workshop at one of our young adult conferences and everybody fell in love with him. They want him to do a workshop in the summer. But his schedule's pretty busy during the summer. But having him, just having someone like you, that speaks like you, talks like you, telling you, you can—and he's definitely a resource. He doesn't just help people with us, he helps his students, he helps people from other organizations, because we have a few students [who ask], Do you think Dr. Valle would help me with this? I'm like, Yeah, just go to his office. And right away he's like, Come here, come here mija, let's help you with this. And that goes with that kind of people that just, they move you forward. So having him there, it's been awesome. I really, we really cannot tell that guy thanks enough, because he's been with us since day one. He was the one that first brought Alma in—Let's get this going. And he's been with us since—

DS:

Yeah, because he's only been here about three or four years, right?

AH:

Yeah.

DS:

He's a relatively new PhD.

AH:

He is. When you see his workshops, he just takes it to a different level. He's very motivational.

DS:

And talk about your general experience at Tech. How's that been?

AH:

As far as my class and everything?

DS:

Just whatever you want to talk about.

AH:

Ah, it's been a fun ride. I'm ready to get done and go to the next level. Tech's—a lot of people say it's different. I remember my first semester here, you just—like almost *mosca en la leche*, people would say, because it's kind of the eye-opener. You're like, you see more Anglos than most people, and a lot of people that come over here say it. But I always tell people—because there's a lot of people that we know that say, Tech isn't for me. And I never for once thought that it wasn't for me. It's just something that catches your eyes, you're a minority here, but I always say, Don't let that discourage you. If anything, motivate—use it as motivation, because there's a lot of people that just kind of tuck their tail and head back home. I was never one to do that, and I tell people, Don't be that way. You just got to find your network. You got to find the people that you can talk to about the things you want to talk to. Because in conversations—our conversations might be a little bit different than other people's conversations. We don't talk about the same exact same things.

And that's one thing I've learned here—you got to find your network, you got to find your support system, but you also have to be able to talk to people like you, and people not like you. My experience here has been kind of that. [In] my classes, I'm psychology, so I kind of see the same students over and over and over. But the overall experience, just being on campus, when you walk the Memorial Circle, that's when it really hits you, like man, like I'm very blessed to be going to university when other people can't or other people take it for granted. I realize how important it is and how for granted people take things. You know what, I can't be like that. I should be—when I walk through Memorial Circle, I'm happy to be here because I know other people would kill for the opportunity to do that.

DS:

How's your mother feel about your choice of having come to college?

AH:

She's great with it. She—when I work, she always tells me, You have to find a good job, mijo, you work too hard, and other things. She's glad I did it, and my path has not been the normal path. I always consider myself not your normal college student, because I worked full-time first and then, I went to school, then worked full-time and came back. But she always—she's happy for us, and she wants me to graduate already, too. But she knows that whatever it is I do, I'm a little different. I know, Alejandro, you're going to have to have passion for what you do, otherwise you won't do it. I say, Exactly, Mom. She always just tells me, Find out, find a job that you love doing, I know that's what you're looking for. I was like, Yeah. But she's happy I came. I'm happy that I'm here, [that I had] the experiences. It's been different. Like I said, it hasn't been normal, but I wouldn't change any of those. The path that I'm on is the path I needed to be on, because the path I was on before, it would've led me to a stale job, just being there. With the people I've met, the members, the LULACers here, the people at the conferences, I would not trade them for a steady paycheck that I had. Like, I would take it—if I had to do it all over again, I would, because those people are great and inspiring, they're motivating, they make me stay that way. It's been very rewarding.

DS:

Okay. I think that's a pretty good spot to end this interview on.

AH:

No problem, thank you.

*End of Interview*