

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH SASKIA LEO CIPRIANI

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

AZIEL ROSADO

and

LUZ SANDOVAL

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

JUNE 20, 2019

TRANSCRIPT BY

AZIEL ROSADO

Aziel Rosado: This is Aziel Rosado and ...

Luz Sandoval: Luz Sandoval.

AR: Today we will be interviewing, ...

Saskia Cipriani: Saskia Leo Cipriani.

AR: It is currently 10:41 AM, and we are at the Center for Latino Arts and Culture at College Avenue. Let us begin. We are going to start off with some basic questions. When and where were you born?

SC: I was born on May 14, 1980, in "La Isla del Encanto," Puerto Rico, in a city called Santurce where many, many Dominicans migrate to.

LS: How long did you stay on the island?

SC: I was back in the States by the age of one. I was literally born there, and then we came to the States.

LS: What are your parents' names?

SC: My mother's name is Rosario Leo, that's her maiden name. Her married name was Rosario Augustine. My father's name is Bernardo Augustine.

LS: How did they meet?

SC: It's really hard to know that story because I'm only getting it from one lens, meaning my mother is the only parent that I have that contact with. According to her, he met her, fell in love with her, [laughter] and brought her to Puerto Rico. I'm not sure if my father was already in Puerto Rico. I don't know if he was there for work, that's unclear, but he brought her there. That was her access; that was her entry point into the United States. That's where they got married, and then came back to the States with me and my sister.

LS: Was your sister also born on the island?

SC: Yes, she was. She was born in Ponce.

AR: You said that he brought her to Puerto Rico. Where did she come from?

SC: The Dominican Republic.

LS: Do you know anything about your grandparents on both sides?

SC: Mother's grandparents, grandfather was a Chinese grandfather, migrated to the Dominican Republic around the Chinese American War. That's all we know as a family. He married my

mother's mother and had--it's either seven or eleven. I'm the youngest sibling, so I always get numbers confused, children. I think at that time they just saw each other. My grandparents on my mother's side saw each other as a support system. They made a commitment to have kids, and I guess build their family in DR. Father's grandparents, grandmother is living in Philadelphia, and that's all I know.

LS: Where did you settle in New Jersey?

SC: Passaic, New Jersey, so Passaic, New Jersey was where we came. I was one. My sister was almost two because we were eleven months apart. We're Irish twins. I also have an older sister who is a half-sister. She came when she was eleven to Passaic, and that's pretty much where we learned about our identities here in the US, and also where we got our support systems.

LS: What would be some of those support systems?

SC: Neighbors, so Margarita, who was our neighbor in our building in Passaic, she was the person that welcomed my mom into the United States. She became sort of *comay*. She was the person that helped to get her transitioned. That's where she learned about factory jobs, that's where she got work. She babysat her kids. Everything happened through the relationship of community. That's how my mother found how to establish herself in this country, same with my dad.

AR: What was your neighborhood like growing up?

SC: The hood? [laughter] Passaic, I lived on Washington Place. Washington Place was around the corner from the projects, the State Street projects in Passaic. It was, you know what, ghetto back then was different because I felt very protected by the people in the ghetto, so it's weird to look at it as dangerous. I never felt like I was in danger, even though from the outside it actually was, just crime, drugs, you know the whole thing. School systems were interesting. We went to daycares that were affiliated with church organizations because they were the cheapest. Then, after that we got into preschool, which was also compensated by government programs and got into Saint Nicholas, which was the Catholic school that was there at the time. It's no longer there.

AR: Could you explain or go a little bit further in depth into your experience in school, growing up with different types of schools?

SC: Dominant language at home was Spanish. Dominant language at school was English, so it was very difficult to figure things out in a mental way. I didn't think that created any delays or anything like that. I remember lots of Filipinos because a lot of women that were working in that school were all Filipinos for whatever reason. I had a lot of support academically. Where I think things started to change was when I was expected to do more and not have the help because Mom had three jobs. Mom wasn't there. Plus, Mom only has a high school degree from DR, so there wasn't much that I could get there, and Dad was working.

AR: What jobs was your mom working?

SC: Many factory jobs, none that I remember. The last one that I remember that she retired from was American Food Seal, which was a company that literally created seals for food products.

LS: How about your father?

SC: A chandelier maker.

LS: Was your house political?

SC: No. What do you mean by political?

LS: Did it have any affiliations to any political parties?

SC: No, ma'am.

LS: Did he do any union work?

SC: Nope.

LS: Was your house religious?

SC: No, I would say faith-based. My father's family is Pentecostal. They're rooted in Pentecostal Christianity, which was very overwhelming, but that was only something I experienced when I saw Grandma. That wasn't something I saw a lot. Then, Mommy is more spiritual, so she believes in God. She believes in faith, but she does not subscribe to religion.

AR: I know you mentioned this prior, but was education something that your family really emphasized?

SC: It's why my mom, I don't know, it's hard to determine whether or not she fell in love with that or she fell in love with the idea of what that could do. That's really hard to discern, but she had three kids with him--well, two kids. There had to be love there, or maybe it was a tax thing, I don't know, [laughter] but I think that they made the sacrifices they made so that we could get an education.

LS: What subjects did you learn in school that you really liked a lot?

SC: In Catholic school, you had a different academic structure. I remember there's two. There's only one teacher I remember most and that was history, but I don't think I remember him because of history. I think I remember him because he was just an attractive teacher. [laughter] Favorite subject, I can't say that I had one because learning was such a task. You know what I mean? It was Mom and Dad always working, and then this is what I had to do. I never really looked at it from, "Oh, what do I enjoy?" It was more like, "Ugh, school." If I did have to say something

that I was good at, I would say penmanship, writing. I was really interested in writing, but I can't tell you that that was a favorite.

LS: What Dominican traditions did your parents influence you with as a child?

SC: Well, I mean, I don't know if it's traditions; I think it's more like the Dominican way of life. We have a lot of family that we have to support that were also coming to the States for different opportunities. That was interesting because it's something you have to do as a community, but I felt like there was intrusion [laughter] from these strangers that were called my family. Uncles I never met, people had to come and stay with us because they were also trying to figure out life for themselves at that time. Cooking was big. Dominican food to me, that goes all the way back, back, back. That literally marks an identity point, Dominican food. How we do things in the Dominican way is a lot of community. There is a lot of support in that way, so I saw those two things as the most prominent growing up, food, community.

AR: What food do you remember eating as a child?

SC: *Platano*, salami, *huevo* in times that were hard, and you had many of them, hot dogs, rice.

AR: Were you involved in any extracurricular activities such as sports or clubs prior to going to college?

SC: No, I couldn't. [Editor's Note: Ms. Cipriani starts crying.] You don't have to stop. This is part of it, right? When you have parents that work all the time, you have to, as a kid, negotiate. You have to ask yourself, "Do they want to be around, or is this really about work?" I struggled with always having to ask myself, "If my parents don't come to this function, is it really about work?" I always had to negotiate with all the jobs that they ever had, so high school graduations, like really momentous celebrations, they weren't there. Parents were not there because they had to work. It was always awkward to be in celebratory times as a young girl and see all the parents around except mine, so that was difficult. That was difficult, but it was our life. Mommy had to make things work. Dad was doing what he was doing. Obviously, things didn't work out eventually, so my mom became a single parent. Things got even harder, but it was just really difficult.

AR: Do you feel that your mom was the one that pushed you to pursue a higher education? Was that something that you wanted to do for yourself?

SC: What we found at home was: "Make sure you go to school because that's how you're going to get a good job," and, you know, "That's how you're going to get out of this poverty." It was always ingrained in us, "Pay attention in school; pay attention in school." School was more of a thing for my mom. My dad was trying to get his work life established. I always knew I had to prioritize school, but I didn't really like school. You know what I mean? It wasn't like, "Oh, school!" It was more like, "School." I didn't come to really learn about or just learn in a way that was invigorating to me until, I would say, junior year of high school. Junior year of high school was when my mind started going into, "Oh, if I like this, then maybe I can do this as a job." I started doing that a lot in junior year of high school.

LS: You said you had siblings. How was your relationship with them?

SC: Good, three sisters--two sisters, it's three of us all together. I'm the youngest, then comes Jessica. She's my Irish twin, so she came. Literally, we're eleven months apart, so we share the same age for a month and a half. Then, Cynthia is my half-sister or my part sister. We share the same mother, not the same dad, and she is a little older than me. I would say great. I think the sisters, *las mujeres*, the women in the family, we learned how to bond and work together in ways that I think the men do not. My sisters have always been sort of parents part two, except Jess. Jess to me, we're closer in age, so that felt a little bit more sisterly.

LS: Who were your friends as a child? Did you grow up with a lot of *Dominicanos* too?

SC: Passaic at that time was very Latinx. Now, it's predominantly Mexican American, maybe some Ecuadorians and Salvadorians. Back then, it was very Dominican and Puerto Rican. It's what I remember most, and my friends were of those cultures. I learned about African Americans through the school system, and I had some. When I think of my people, I think of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans as the community that I grew up with.

AR: Where do you live now?

SC: Somerset, New Jersey for now. [laughter]

AR: How long have you lived there?

SC: I've lived in Somerset for a year and a half now. Before Somerset, I lived in East Brunswick for about four years. Before East Brunswick, I lived in Highland Park for about three years. Before Highland Park, I lived in North Arlington for four years. Before North Arlington, I lived in Bloomfield. Before Bloomfield, I lived in Hackensack.

LS: Did you interact with the Latino communities?

SC: Everywhere, it's almost like, it's sickening because I think that I've chosen to just affiliate [laughter] with the Latino identity in my life. Until I met my husband, because my husband is Jewish and Israelian, that is when I started to really dip into other cultures outside of my own.

LS: What were your influences to go to Rutgers?

SC: Oof, the Rutgers story, so I always wanted to go to college, even though I didn't know how I was going to pay for it. Being that my mom became a single mom, she always came under the bar to allow me to get into programs like EOF [Educational Opportunity Fund] and stuff like that. But before that, high school, Clifton High, I just remember being one of five or ten Latinas at that school. I remember not liking high school too much. From there, from high school obviously, I talked to guidance counselors. My academic report wasn't too strong, and just like many counselors do, they were telling me to go to community college. That's what I did. I went

to Passaic Community College for one semester. I was in the EOF program there, straight A's obviously.

Then, from there, I transferred to what was University College at Rutgers because I was coming in between the spring and the fall, so incoming, I wasn't able to compete with all the other colleges, Livingston College, Rutgers College, Douglass College, whatever. So, I had to become University College, and I came under University College with a full-time schedule in spring of '99. I remember when I came to Rutgers for the first time, I was like, "This is a whole new world." I felt really excited. I felt like I needed something different than what I was used to up north, and I wasn't at all intimidated. I was more like, "I have to make sure that I take advantage of everything." I was very hungry to make sure that I got all the resources that I needed, and I was taught that at the EOF program at Passaic Community College. From there, I transferred into Livingston College and graduated from there in 2004 with a degree in Spanish. That was not my intended major. My intended major was business, but it was crazy for me, not because of the actual subject, it was because I was finding myself at Rutgers. When I came to Rutgers-New Brunswick, I lived at New Gibbons, that was my first dorm. My dorm was facing the bus stop. I'll never forget. I had my first roommate, (Darmesta?) Patel. I don't know where she is. Hopefully, she is good in life right now. I was in love. I was like, "This is a whole new world." I felt like I was out of the ghetto and into some new stuff, and I was just going to change the course.

I quickly became involved in everything. I didn't come to CLAC [Center for Latino Arts and Culture] until later, but it's coming. I got involved with *Casa Boricua*. *Casa Boricua* is now *Casa Hispana*, and the interesting story about that is that I'm going to be the new professor for that course this coming fall. It's going to be a really nice circle back to the beginning. Anyway, *Casa Boricua* was the *casa* that I used to chill at. This was before I became Greek, this was actually where I learned about LTA [Lambda Theta Alpha]. That's where you used to chill; all the Latinos used to chill at *Casa Boricua*. Everybody used to chill at *Casa Boricua*. We used to dance salsa, cook, and then I was introduced to LASO, the Latin American Student Organization. LASO was only on Cook at that time. I was about to say that I danced a lot. I was in all these parades, Peruvian parades, Puerto Rican parades, Dominican parades, I was in all parades, so I had an affinity for dance. Someone saw me dancing in the club, and then said, "Why don't you come and teach salsa in LASO?" I was like, "Sure." [laughter] I came and taught a salsa lesson, and there were some LTAs. That's how I got introduced to LTA.

Then, once I could, the minute I could--I think the reason I get emotional with this, because we don't realize the power that we have in our network until way later. You know? I say this now because I get it, but when I was the little Saskia, I had no idea what I was so attracted to when I met my sisters. The reason why I was so impressed was because they emanated women that have their shit together, that's all that I'm saying. Out of all of the sororities, the women who had their shit together were these women. I met them, and I was like, "This is it. My life is going to completely change once I join this sorority," because I told myself, "If I join, I graduate." I told myself that because when you come to Rutgers, you get lost. I was lost. My first year I got a 1.8, and I was like, "What the fuck? (I'm going to die young today?) It's going to be crazy. My mom can't know this." I was on full financial aid. I had mad refunds. It was the time of my life, but I had to get my shit together. In my mind, if I subscribed to my sorority, I would be in check.

That's exactly what happened. [Editor's Note: The Epsilon Chapter of Lambda Theta Alpha is a Latina sorority that was founded in 1987 at Rutgers-New Brunswick.]

LS: What responsibilities did you take on in your sorority?

SC: Oh, my gosh, LTA is a different beast, so I can't talk too much about my experience. Well, I should because that's where I evolved as a person, but what I was attracted to most was honestly the professionalism. When I became a part of the interest group, this is a running gag in the sorority because I was a part of the interest group for like two years, which is a really long time to be a part of an interest group. Usually, you are a part of an interest group for a semester, and then you pledge the next semester. I became, "The interest." [laughter] When I moved off campus, I lived off of College Avenue on Guilden Street. There, I met some awesome women; none of them were in sororities. They're all doing great right now in life. When I was living in Guilden, that is when I started to interact more with the sorority. I became the interest group president, and I made sure all the interests in New Jersey knew each other. I was like mega interest, okay.

Fall 2000, I thought was my time. I had taken summer classes. At that time, the GPA requirement to pledge LTA was a 2.3. It's now a 2.7, and a 2.3 was really hard to make, just to let you know. I was at a 2.2 something, but I was already knowing that with my last summer course, I was going to pass it and then get to pledge. I went through the process. Unfortunately, I was not able to go on for fall 2000, but the person that told me I wasn't able to go on ended up becoming my pledge mistress in fall 2001. I had seven line sisters. It went from what could've been a really rocky semester with two other women in that process, to waiting one more year and having the process of my life. Then, I was forever changed after that, forever changed academically. I think when you achieve something so big--it was big because back in the day, we used to do a whole lot more--but I felt like I was invincible. It was because I haven't ever, I don't think I was ever that *pobrecita* Kia anymore. I found my voice. I found who I was. It was so empowering. [Editor's Note: Ms. Cipriani begins to cry.] It was so empowering. Now, as an advisor, I feel like I need to do that for them, try to not think about the business so much and think about the movement, think about what you guys are doing together, because that shit later on, you'll see. That's kind of where my story is with them. Yes, and here I am, three degrees later--well, two degrees later. Hopefully, one more degree, and I'll be done.

LS: If we could go back just a little bit, can you explain a little more about *Casa Boricua*?

SC: Yes, what about it? What do you want to know?

LS: Where was it? What did it do?

SC: *Casa Boricua* is a part of a collective group of houses on the Douglass Campus. They're all on some sort of U-shaped area by the bookstore, what used to be the bookstore. The bookstore is not there anymore. *Casa Boricua*, as I said, there were a couple of women who actually lived there. Some of those women I knew, some guys, too. I mean, guys used to come over all the time, so [laughter] I remember there were a lot of men at that time, too. It was just fun. It just reminded me of a home away from home, so very similar to CLAC. The CLAC story will come

I guess when you start asking me questions that are post-LTA. That was the house that felt the most familiar to me being so far away from home.

LS: Of your line sisters, of the community overall, what kind of identities did you see?

SC: All right, so I was in school from 1999 to 2004. Most of the identities that I came across were Latina, and it's a comfort thing. When you come to a school that's so white, you feel so separate automatically. I was automatically just, I know I was closed to white people. [laughter] I may have some aspects of that today, but I felt safe connecting with people that looked like me, so Black people, Latino people, not so many Asians, but I did have Asian roommates, yes.

LS: What were your classes like?

SC: My classes at Rutgers, so you have to take your core requirements. I took my cores. In the initial years of Rutgers, I attempted a business degree, so I took a lot of classes that were interesting to me that were business related, hoping that I could apply the program and graduate. In those requirements, we had to take a language. I took Spanish, and that's where I met--damn. He's no longer alive, but he was the amazing Spanish chair. He was a very small man, and I forget his name. Other than him I met someone else that is still here and is still very influential, and that is Camilla Stevens. She was one of the first people I met in my Spanish major, and we still work together today. [Editor's Note: Dr. Camilla Stevens is a professor in the Latino and Caribbean Studies Department and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.]

LS: How did she influence you?

SC: First of all, she's very young. Today, I told her, "You know you still look the same." She said, "I guess that's a good thing." She was very young, and she was very friendly. Even though she's passing white, because we have the Spanish language connection, I think I was able to see past that and just build a really nice professor-student relationship. I would feel empowered by her. She would always positively support native speakers in the classroom, so she would have us engage in ways that would help others also open up. It was really nice. Everything about Camilla was very sweet.

LS: Do you know any other factors that influenced your experience at Rutgers?

SC: That's where the CLAC comes in. My story with the center starts with my second year. I think I was a sophomore, and I was looking for a work-study placement. I was at the Student Center giving blood. I turned to my right, and I was talking to or had met Rocio [Castro]. Rocio was the person that I had met through this blood drive, so Rocio started talking to me about the CLAC, told me that that would be a place that I could work at. I took her advice, and I transferred. I later learned that Rocio was one of the founding sisters for LTA. As you can imagine from my small reality, at that point I was just like, "This is way too coincidental," that I, one, met someone, a Latina; two, that she happens to be an assistant director at the CLAC; three, that she happens to be a founding sister of LTA, and those three factors brought me to the CLAC. That is where I met Vilma Perez, who was the first secretary of LCS [Latino and Caribbean Studies Department], and she was the secretary for us at that time. I met Isabel

Nazario, who is now the VP for Strategic Initiatives here. [Editor's Note: Sandra Rocio Castro, the Dean of Students for the Busch Campus, served as the associate director of the Center for Latino Arts and Culture (CLAC) and co-chairs the Advisory Board of CLAC. Isabel Nazario, now Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives in Diversity and Inclusion, founded CLAC and served as the director for twelve years.]

LS: What did the Center for Latino Arts and Culture do for Latino students?

SC: I met Silis [Silismar Suriel] and Richard [Morgan?]. I can't forget them. The CLAC really was my home away from home. Once I realized that outside of what was being offered on the Cook/Douglass Campus because, remember, I lived there, so where you live, you interact where you live. Once I came to work-study, I was more on College Ave, and I started learning more about the resources over here. Everything was more siloed because all the colleges were separate. This was Rutgers College, whereas Douglass was Douglass College, and Cook was Cook College. When I realized what the center was--and at that time we were under Academic Affairs, it was designed very differently--but it didn't take away the home-away-from-home feeling, which was coffee always brewing in the kitchen. I smelled coffee. Vilma always used to make coffee. People talking the language, so people would go in and out of Spanish and English. It was crazy loud all the time. [laughter] I loved it. Isabel would always say, "I have a conference this weekend. Do you want to work at the registration table?" Isabel, every moment she had to infiltrate with student support, she would always tell me, Silis, Richard, (Gi?), that was the crew, the work-study crew, and we would go to all of these events, these galas, conferences, everything. We were just getting more and more immersed in CLAC culture. [Editor's Note: Silismar Suriel is a program coordinator for the Center for Latino Arts and Culture. In 2007, Richard Morgan curated an exhibit for CLAC featuring the works of Guatemalan artist Felipe Ujpan Mendoza.]

LS: What were some of the other organizations that you participated in?

SC: We know that by being a part of the LSC [Latino Student Council], you are the LSC, so I would say that I was a part of the Latino Student Council. I was definitely involved with Latin American Womyn's Organization, LAWO. All of our sisters have always had an influential role in LAWO since its inception. LAWO, LSC, really only the two that I remember the most, besides LTA.

LS: Did you hold any positions in them?

SC: I think that for LSC I was the rep [representative] for my sorority at one point. All my positions were with LTA because I became involved through Greek life. With LAWO, we were doing programs together because we were a sorority and because their mission is also to empower women. There was a lot of that, so I would say social chair was probably doing events with them. Then, LASO, obviously I was dancing. I was an instructor for them for a while. [laughter] We used to meet like every Thursday or something in the evening in the MPR [Multi-Purpose Room] at Cook, and I used to give lessons there. It was cool.

LS: What influenced your path leaving college?

SC: See, that's the story that makes this interesting. I'm struggling because as a professional, I realized that in order to grow I might need to leave this place because of exactly what I'm about to answer. Having come up the pipeline as a student, there was only a short gap where I worked in the private sector. Most of my time has been in higher education. Coming up through the pipeline of what was my experience here at Rutgers, coupled with my experience at the CLAC, the learning that I felt I should've gotten earlier in life, I was getting here. I think what happened was that I got attracted to the fact that I was finally learning, right? There is no one thing. It's the women, Isabel, Rocio, never giving up on me, always making sure that I kept up. They were my moms away from home, so they would say, "Kia, you're acting a little crazy." They would just be my boundaries. The resources I was getting, the money that I would get to go to conferences, the food I would get when I was hungry, all of that was them. It was the house; to this day, we are doing the same thing. It's a struggle because I'm trying to be the advocate that they were for me at that time, but we're living in a system that's a little different. I think that people like me and Silis--and you'll interview her, and she'll give you her own story--we struggle with the histories that we own here and the vision that this institution has. When you say influential factors, it is literally from the building to the people, to the environment, to the community, the support, the listening ear, the resources, the money. It's all of that. Everything was yes, yes, yes, CLAC. Everything outside of the CLAC was no, no, no, no. CLAC was my place, my home.

LS: What did you do immediately after college?

SC: After Rutgers, here we go, let's go back a little bit. My history goes like this, because I literally look at my CV every other week, so I know it. When I graduated in 2004, at that time there was a change in structure at the CLAC. Isabel left and became the director of the Intercultural Initiatives, which allowed Rocio to serve interim. Rocio then hired me because Isabel took her secretary with her as her secretary, knowing that I was looking for work out of the state. That was back in 2005. I was working at the hospital; that was my other job besides work-study. Then, when Rocio told me that they were going to be looking for a secretary, I said, "Do you think I should apply?" She goes, "Yes, but if you do, just know that I know that you might be leaving." I applied, and I did get hired. For a moment between 2005 and 2007, I was at the CLAC as their official secretary. That was my first real job out of college.

Then, I got a job at Franklin Templeton in Washington, DC. I got that because two of my line sisters got work in DC, so they were like, "If we go, then we can get a three-bedroom apartment and we can live together." I was like, "I'm down," so I left the CLAC around that time and went to work in DC for five months. Before, I got a call from Sylvia Cordero, who was my career counselor undergrad, who is now one of my best friends and serves on the board for the CLAC, she calls me, and she says, "Phillip Morris is hiring. I know you've been waiting." I said, "Hell, yes, get me that interview." I interviewed with them and basically got the position as territory sales manager for the South Bronx. Once I got that position, I left Maryland--five months I was there--I left Maryland and came to Hackensack because Hackensack was the first city out of the GWB [George Washington Bridge] and that's where I worked in the South Bronx.

That was my first real job, I felt, in Jersey, out of Rutgers, in corporate. That was a difficult transition for me because corporate America is very cold. When you come from a nurturing environment which is higher ed--I think professionally it's a very nurturing environment--to something that's very numbers driven and money driven, that can do something to somebody. It certainly did to me.

At that point, I connected with Anglebert, who is a brother of Lambda Theta Phi, that's how I came to know him. He is also married to my PM [Pledge Mistress] Frances, who I mentioned earlier about my time pledging. He was working at Rutgers-Newark for the EOF program, so he calls me, and he says, "Saskia, you should apply for the business specialist position." I said, "Anglebert, I want to get my master's." He says, "Then, you need to come." I took a forty percent cut in my salary because what I make now--let's be clear--is what I made at Phillip Morris then. That gives you an idea of the financial struggles with higher ed. Anyway, I took the cut. I went to work as a Business and Alumni Specialist for the EOF program at Rutgers-Newark in spring of 2008, stayed there for four years.

Then, I got the call about this opportunity over here. Then, I came to Rutgers to CLAC, and I've been here for six-and-a-half years. I got my master's when I was in the business specialist position, because when you work for the university, tuition is covered. I got my master's, and that's how I was able to become assistant director because you need your master's. Once I came here, after my one-year anniversary, I enrolled in Rowan University's Educational Leadership Ed.D. program. I finished my coursework three years after that. Right now, I'm in my dissertation phase.

LS: What did you do your master's in?

SC: Public Affairs and Administration, my goal with that--as you know, I told my story about being interested in business, but I realized that I was interested in business but not the business world. Public administration represents business in the public sector. That was attractive to me because I thought to myself, "Well, if I could run my own non-profit, if I could work for the federal government, if I could work for the local government, I'm good." That was the intention with that major, and it's still helpful in my coupling with this for future positions in higher ed. It's never frowned upon; it's always looked at positively.

LS: What kind of roles do you do for the Center for Latino Arts and Culture now?

SC: The CLAC is in all-in-one type of role. You wear many, many hats. You're an expert of many, many things and a master of none. That is the kind of expertise you need to support this space and the students in this institution. What that looks like is having a good understanding of the higher education system, having a good understanding of our population against that system or within that system, and then looking at resources. I work in student affairs, so student affairs is about serving the student and building the student experience by ways of programming, by ways of advising, developing leaders, managing and supervising work-studies, implementing an internship program, community partners, stakeholders, engaging them, engaging alumni. You need to know a little bit of everything, and everything professionally that has led me to this point has prepared me for this job.

LS: How so?

SC: In public administration, it's all about managing very chaotic non-profit spaces, so you're learning how to manage with less. It's essentially what public administration is. You're given a budget. You're given parameters to work with that budget, and you have to make magic happen, so I've learned how to make magic happen with what was given. That I learned from my Rutgers-Newark time. Phillip Morris gave me my corporate savvy, coupled with what I learned with LTA, so when I come into meetings, I always have agendas. I know how to run a meeting. I know how to finish on time. I know how to make sure everybody's voice is heard. I know how to do meetings using Robert's Rules of Order, and I learned that because of LTA and because of my corporate background. It's helped me tremendously. For instance, when we manage our Advisory Board, they have been raving about how well it's been managed because of that skill or those skills. Alumni engagement, engaging people is not an easy thing to do because the end goal is to engage them for an outcome. I've learned that, also during my time in Rutgers-Newark, because of the sense of community in that area of Newark, New Jersey having Rutgers-Newark there, NJIT [New Jersey Institute of Technology] there, Essex Community College there, UMDNJ [University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey], which is now Rutgers Medical School. That whole system works together for the same purpose. That's one thing that makes Rutgers-Newark very different from New Brunswick. That's how I see all of how my background compliments what I am professionally.

LS: You work for the Center for Latino Arts and Culture. Can you describe your experience working with Latino college students?

SC: Can I talk about my experience with college students? First of all, I think that when you work in student affairs, there's this underlying commitment to want to support students in their journey here because of what it was for us. The story is connected to our untold stories, so I love working with the Latino community at Rutgers, not just students. My experience with the students is so bittersweet. It's bittersweet because they have so much to give. They are learning so much in what is now Rutgers. Rutgers is very different from what it was in my day. Generations are also very different, so different students have different needs. It's forced us to figure out how to address all those needs. What I mean by that is that I may want to push a student to do something they're uncomfortable with, knowing that that opportunity will provide them with what they need. They can't see it; they have to literally trust me and make that decision. Some do and take the advice, and some don't. We are still here to rectify the consequences, so I don't know. I think Latino students are very promising, but they are absolutely coming in with the same if not more of the challenges that I experienced. So, I feel like I have to equip them for war. That's what it feels like.

LS: What are some challenges you see that are new to the students?

SC: Access, that in my mind will always be an issue if you have to pay for school. Access, I say that also for people that are documented or undocumented. Money, we are still a people that is trying to understand wealth and financial health. There's also identity issues. We're talking about a people that's very rooted in different types of religious practices. Where there's

Catholicism, where there's Christianity, and when you have students that are becoming and deciding that they are gay, bisexual, transsexual, they suffer in many ways here and at home. Those challenges are new: faith, finances, access. I think those three are the strongest three.

LS: Are there differences between the community of Latinos you saw when you were at Rutgers versus the one that you see today?

SC: No, I do not see a difference. I feel that we persisted better in those days. Maybe politically that has a lot to do with our government and leadership at that point and how they believed that the educational system should be. I felt that a lot of people that I knew graduated. There were very few people that didn't. Now, I feel like people opt out, for sure, like, "College is not for me; I got to go." For sure, retention is a problem, and persistence is a problem, especially among Latinx men and African American men.

LS: What are some of the factors you see pertaining to retainment?

SC: What factors do I think they need to be retained, or what factors do I see that's holding them back from being retained?

LS: Both.

SC: I think that men of color have a whole different set of challenges that they have to go through because of being men. They're often ignored. Men naturally do not seek help, so you have to be more willing to meet them where they are and help them work through that discomfort. It absolutely is a discomfort to hear a woman tell them what they need to do with their lives. It comes up in very different ways, but it comes up. They don't have enough advice or any people that look like them that they can get guidance from. Most students that I advise have absent fathers; that's something I can relate to. I think men of color that come to Rutgers have a deficit already, family's fucked up, finances are messed up, academically, you don't know where you fall. You have many, many questions, so when you come to Rutgers what we want to do is embrace them. Sometimes what we end up doing is challenging them more, but there are some that are no longer first generation. They are students who know the language, who know how to defend themselves in these kinds of institutions. They are academically prepared, and now they're doing very well. That's a socioeconomic issue, and it's still very prevalent.

LS: How has your identity influenced your role in your various jobs and even in your education?

SC: When I got hired for Phillip Morris, one would think, "Why would a corporate company [hire me?]" Phillip Morris was the leading tobacco company in the nation, back when tobacco was a thing. Now, we're not dealing with that, so it's different. Why would they hire me with a Spanish degree? When I realized that my territory was the South Bronx, that is when I started realizing that my culture can play a very big role in what I do. That's all I knew at that time. I was like, "Wait a minute, with a Spanish degree, I was able to land a job that pays more than I get paid now, had a corporate credit card, had a car, a vehicle." It was a lot of luxury working in corporate America, but I remember feeling like my area is a disservice to this company because no one followed the rules of contracts at that time. That has a lot to do with the bodegas, and

some of the struggles they deal with the community they address. I started making those connections in my work, I'm like, "Wait a minute, of course they are going to fail." I mean, they're serving these people. It was all just coming together, and a lot of that I was able to see and understand because of my time at Rutgers and the CLAC.

When I got to Rutgers-Newark, I was working with the EOF population. As you guys know, the EOF Program is an income-contingent program for students that need more support to basically be retained and graduate from Rutgers. I learned there that ninety percent of the people that were accepted were Latinos and African Americans. I was like, "There needs to be more of me. We need more people in this field because more and more kids need to see more and more people like us so that they can feel affirmed." Then, when it came to the CLAC, it was just a full circle. It was just serving the same population just at a different time. I just felt responsible. I feel responsible. That's the word that comes up. I feel responsible for my community. I feel responsible for the success of my community, and that's why I'm here. Sometimes I question if it's helpful or hurtful, yes.

LS: Has gender also played a similar role ...

SC: In what way?

LS: ... In your various jobs or in dealing with the Latino community?

SC: Absolutely. Professionally, I think that women will always be below men. It's a shame that I have to admit it. The earnings, just the whole culture is just really the band of brothers, and this threshold has been hard to push through still to this day. When you do this work, and it's passion related, you dismiss what you need to do the work. However, you need what you need to live, so it's this constant duality. Am I called to be here to do this work? If so, can I be fully successful? That's where I am, and I'm thirty-nine with a son and still at Rutgers. It's a question that I can't answer. It's a question that is a little bit debilitating because one could say if someone that doesn't have the history that I have could come in and literally take the community to the next level, is that the right thing for the community? Should it be someone that knows? I struggle professionally, but absolutely, my identity as a Latina is the reason why I've been so successful.

LS: Can you tell us a little about the work and your involvement with the organization Latino Alumni Association of Rutgers University?

SC: Yes, so LAARU is a product of the times. Back when I was working at Rutgers-Newark between the years of '07 and 2012, I was again tapped by my mentor, Rocio, who said that there needed to be an alumni association for Latinos. Essentially, what mentors do is always push you to do great things. I think that that conversation was just the invitation to get it done, so in 2009 I established together with Rocio and my best friend at the time, Adela Diaz, the Latino Alumni Association. It's the only Latinx alumni-chartered organization under the RUAA [Rutgers University Alumni Association] umbrella that serves all three campuses. I knew very early establishing LAARU that it wasn't just a New Brunswick thing because if you step out of this campus for just a moment and go to our sister campuses, Newark and Camden, there's a lot more of us there.

LS: What kind of programs do you guys do?

SC: When you establish an alumni association, it's like you're establishing a business. It's not something that you just get into. Then, you begin to do programming. It's more like you establish this organization and hope that it carries moving forward. I didn't think that after all of these years that I would still be running LAARU, but I think that that's what it needs because of the climate that we are in. What do I mean by that? There are many, many Latino students and alumni that are interested in LAARU, but you have to understand alumni engagement. There is no dollar attached to that. This is basically all volunteer based. That changes things when you're trying to run an association. I think that LAARU is still settling itself, branding itself, and growing. We have some plans. What we do normally, you were asking about programs, we don't do programs. What we do is meetings. We meet occasionally throughout the academic year. We have a mentorship program, so the mentorship program is an activity where we recruit alumni to mentor undergraduates, and that is also self-selected. They have to come with interests on both sides, both students and alumni, because, again, there is no money tied to this. This has to be all volunteer based, all service based. That program was established in 2010, so one year after we founded it, we started the mentoring program the following year. That's the main activity that I think draws alumni to want to come to LAARU.

The administrative side of running an alumni organization is very different because, again, when you don't have commitment, it's hard to have people have positions that they can carry out throughout a regular term. Usually, people come when they're not working or when they're in the area. When that, *este corito*, is done, they leave. It's really hard to have committed people for a long period of time. That's what I think has kept me running the show because I don't want it to fail.

LAARU, besides the occasional meetings that we do and the mentoring program, we also partner with the RUAA. They do events and programs that are attached to homecoming and Rutgers Day, the two biggest programs that bring alumni back to New Jersey, back to Rutgers. By partnering with them, we have more exposure. That's how we hope to capture people and funnel them into the mentoring program or funnel them into the administration of running LAARU successfully. We do the mentoring program a lot better. I think that the reason why it works is because they are providing a service to the undergraduate versus administrative when you're not really getting anything out of that. You know what I mean? So, that's where we are. This year we celebrate. Is it ten years? Yes, year ten, 2019 is year ten for LAARU. This particular year, this coming semester, we have some transformative programming that's going to happen in honor of our ten-year existence.

LS: Do you see a problem with dropout rates within the Latino community?

SC: Certainly, but I think that's more because of our political climate. It's difficult to stay enrolled in a four-year program when you can't essentially work and support your family. I think that our students are making decisions that are not only based on their needs but their families' needs. The whole Latino identity thing, we protect ourselves and our family, so I think that has a lot to do with it. I think times are tough, and school is a long time. If you can't afford past a

four-year, five-year, six-year commitment, because that's really how much it will take to graduate, you can't come to school.

Another thing I see a lot is that people are coming, but they don't stay. I think that is two pronged. I think the first prong is fiscal. I think that they don't have enough money to make it at Rutgers, meaning that if you're coming and taking remedial courses at Rutgers, you're paying for non-credit courses. By the time you get to the credits that you actually need, you don't really have that much money, so you have to start getting into the loans. There is such a scary rhetoric around that process that people are just saying, "If I can avoid that, I won't go to school." That's something else I'm saying. The other prong is that they are not persisting academically. When you have an EOF program, essentially what EOF is doing is giving you free subjects, free subjects that are considered strong core requirements for the university. They have a summer institute to work with you. You have to pass the classes with a C or better. If you don't pass, you don't get in. That's the reality for some of the EOF applicants. There are some applicants that can get the service and don't need the academic support because they've met those goals. EOF gives you a small stipend. It certainly doesn't give you enough to stay at school, but it gives you the support. If you can't pass, you can't stay. I think that's the other part, that they transition into their semesters at Rutgers. We have amazing faculty pushing some really intense academics on folks that are not quite prepared for it. I think all of those factors affect our population, the reason we're not persisting, even though we are the growing population in this country. So, that's the duality. We are Latinos. We need the help because we are going to be the leaders of tomorrow, but that's not quite synchronizing in this system that we call higher ed.

LS: Outside the Educational Opportunity Fund and the Center for Latino Arts and Culture, do you see any other support systems at Rutgers for Latino students?

SC: Yes, I think of social service agencies in the nearby area that do amazing work by our people. The Puerto Rican Action Board--which was called Puerto Rican Action Board way back, is now called PRAB Inc.--is about two miles away from campus. They help in tremendous ways because they are sort of the non-profit outside of this system that can do all the other things that we need them to do, so they have been helpful. It doesn't always work, but they are there. Alumni, when we do get the alumni that want to mentor our students, that's free work. That's free mentoring and job possibilities and all the other things that career services offers our students, they're getting from them. So, I think alumni do a big service to our community. I think church organizations have become allies through centers like us because, again, access is a thing. Where we might not be able to, let's say, embrace undocumented folks in that way, churches can because they're protected. Churches have become very supportive. I think social service agencies and churches, I think those are always the community resources that people go to. Outside of Rutgers, I think those two things are very important.

LS: You mentioned you have a spouse.

SC: I do.

LS: How did you guys meet?

SC: We met online. When I graduated from Rutgers, I was twenty-two, and my time at Rutgers was really all just fun and play. I never ever thought about getting romantically involved in college. In fact, because of my absent father issues, I knew I needed to do some more work. After Rutgers, I went into counseling for two years to really get to the root of what was blocking me romantically. Out of that two-year relationship with my therapist, I was given some tasks, and one of them was to start dating. I started dating, [laughter] and that was interesting. I met my husband specifically on a site called Jdate. J represents Jewish. I was not Jewish at the time. I was interested in dating Jewish men because in my mind--I'm just going to be completely honest--if I decide to be with someone that prioritizes faith or prioritizes God, then the issues or the concerns that I have about fathers being absent and not enough money would kind of fall. You know what I mean? Now, we have a faith-based relationship. That's the way I thought about it, and that's what made me go on Jdate. I tried eHarmony. I tried all the other religions, and that didn't quite work. [laughter] This one was the one that worked. What's funny is that when I was interacting with my husband, he was physically in Israel because he was going to Yeshiva at the time. I didn't think that anything would come of it. It turns out that his message was that he was in Israel, but he was really in Brooklyn. Then, we went on a date, and that's history.

LS: How long have you been married?

SC: We got married in 2016, but we met in 2012. What's that, what's the math? You're a math person. It's a couple years married, a few years married, a couple years together. When you do it at an older age--I didn't really get into seriously committing until my late twenties, early thirties, actually. I met him when I was thirty-one, but I was dating in my late twenties. Yes, it went very fast. It went from dating, where it was not really authentic or quality conversations, to meeting someone that was absolutely where I was and wanted to envision a future the same way I wanted to envision a future, but the caveat was that I would have to become Jewish. I say become, not convert, because I'm not giving up something for something else, so I'm very careful with the language. I was completely on board with becoming Jewish if it meant I would have a good man that would be a good father and that would provide a good life, and so I did that.

LS: Do you have a son?

SC: I do. His name is Noah. He's adorable. Because this is about identity and thinking about the journey, and the one story I'll share with Noah is--he has two parents that will hopefully obtain doctoral degrees, so that's very different from my upbringing and his upbringing. His parents graduated with, I believe, father, high school; mother, high school and a little bit of college but didn't finish. My mother, high school from DR; father, I don't really know. It's a very different dynamic, and we want Noah to be super, one hundred percent ready. I'm doing things with him like early intervention, or whatever I have to do to get him prepared for what will be a different journey than mine. But living in the State of New Jersey and working for Rutgers does not work. It does not work. If you want to put your kids through school, we are going to need serious increases, salary increases, or we need to leave. That's just it. That is the bottom line. That's four years in of looking and trying, because when you can't pay for daycare, or once your *problemitas* start, that, "Oh, I can't afford this," then I'm literally telling the story of my parents. That's how I feel. If my fate does not change from what it was for my parents, then

what I am in? We were able to afford his daycare, but that's still on shaky grounds. I am willing, with all of my intersecting identities, willing to leave if it means a better life for everybody. That's what I'm in right now, for him.

LS: How old is your child?

SC: He is twenty-one months.

LS: Do you plan to have your Dominican background influence his upbringing?

SC: Dominican, Jewish, Black because I consider myself to be Afro-Latina. It's not something that can be separate. The reason why it cannot be separate is because my mother, who is his grandma, who is still very present in his life, only speaks Spanish. I feel like that was considered a debilitating thing for Mommy because she feels like she was never able to be her full self with us. To me, it represents the key ingredient to remaining Latino. I actually love the fact that she only speaks Spanish, so he's getting the Spanish language. He's getting the Spanish food because Grandma only cooks Spanish food, same thing with me. I'm very clear about who I am. Because I'm so woke in all of me, there's no way he can come out of this not being. You understand? He has siblings and cousins and everybody else who has that same mentality, so he's being molded in a different way. I think culture is at the heart of his molding.

LS: How did you come to identify with the Afro-Latina identity?

SC: Because of my visible look. I think where it really hit home was, honestly, the ASB [Alternative Spring Break] trip, when I went for the first time with Silis when I came here in 2012, and I saw what we did on that trip and I saw how I was perceived on that trip. That was my first time going to DR. Never in this interview did I ever discuss me being in the country outside of my mother being born there, my father being born there. To have learned about my identity kind of backwards through this trip, again, you can't come out any other way but woke. I realized that I'm Afro-Latina after that trip, so that's where it settled in. I always looked it, but I never owned it because I never knew how. After that trip, I owned it. My son looks like me, so he needs to understand who he is and always because he is visibly white, but when you look at him, he looks like me. [laughter] I want to make sure he embraces his African curves, while also embracing his Jewish identity and his American identity as it develops. My father's Black. I see my father, my father is Black Dominican, so that's also the reality. We come from Africans. That's what I'm about.

LS: Did you go on the trip as an authority figure or as a helper to Silis?

SC: Yes, as the assistant director. The way that that trip was always coordinated, it would be the assistant director at the CLAC with the program coordinator over in the DR side with our partners there and then come back and do what we've got to do. At some point, I had to release that because it's evolving. It's becoming something, and Silis is really, she really treasurers that role. She's been empowered to take more ownership over it. What was the question?

LS: What was your role in it?

SC: My role, yes, so I was helping her with the travel, passports, all the pre-planning on this end. Then, when we flew and we got to the other side, she would take the active role and engage the students, while I did all the administrative hiccups that might come up, the communicating last minute, the clinic visits, the emergencies, all that. Silis used to translate, so she used to be really exhausted by all of that and all these other things with records and stuff, so I had to support her in bigger ways. I was also experiencing that for the first time, so that was very interesting going there.

LS: Do you and your husband engage in politics?

SC: Yes, we're Democrats, I think. [laughter] My husband is very political. He comes from a very politically involved family, so I became more aware of my political identity through my relationship with him. I've also become politically aware because of the bracket of income that I fall into. I am a tax-paying citizen without tax benefits, so it kind of changes the way that you think about politics because now I'm looking at leaders that literally affect my life. I know that now, so I am more inclined to be more informed about things like that. Yes, he is political.

LS: Do you see the Latino community at Rutgers as being political?

SC: Sure, absolutely, there is no way it can be separate, not if you're Latino and you're awake. In this institution we call Rutgers, there is no way it can be separate.

LS: Did you see that also when you were at Rutgers as a student?

SC: It's never changed. It's why it's hard for people like us because while we can measure progress--and that's also important, I'm not saying that we haven't made some good progress--at the root of this institution is some crazy shit, so it's going to take a little bit more than advocacy to change this system if we want to see it changed. Everything is the same in how we practice, how we practice in this field. Leadership, I think it has a lot to do with leadership.

LS: Outside of Rutgers, what other ways do you involve yourself in Latino communities?

SC: I've been on boards. Everything I do is with my community at heart, so all my community service has been for my community. All my volunteer engagements, Aids Walk, everything that affects our community health wise, I'm involved in. My sorority, I give back. My leadership is free; that I've committed to for life. I'm working with some folks that have different leadership roles in the state and support their endeavors, some political, some not, some educational. There has never been a separation between me and my support for my community.

LS: Looking back to your life up until this point, what do you think are some of your biggest takeaways?

SC: I think that my biggest takeaway is that I think we're all really trying to do our best given the circumstances and what I say by our best, any Latino leader. I know most of them here at Rutgers. We're trying to do the best given the circumstances. Rutgers is a great institution. I

have zero regrets getting my degrees from this institution. In fact, my pride is what keeps me here. As I interview at places like Virginia Tech and institutions in Texas, institutions in California, institutions in the South, Deep North, Midwest, I always come back knowing that we are leading in many, many ways. From that point, I'm very happy, but we're still struggling as a community. My takeaway is that this has literally been a home away from home. The CLAC has been a home away from home. Rutgers has been a home away from home, has given me a lot of purpose, a lot of clarity in terms of who I am as a professional. All my supports come from this institution, everybody, so I can't come out from this institution without having like a lot of gratitude, but we're still backwards in many of the things that we do. I also learned that Latinos need a little bit more support around healthy living. I think we need to increase support around counseling. We need to increase support around financial management because we learn about money way too late. We need a lot of support with health, and I see a lot of those pillars aligned with student affairs and where we're about to go. That's the great takeaway is that we are looking and we are toying with all of this and trying to figure out the best path forward.

I also come to realize that maybe it's not mine to do, and it goes back to the whole pipeline history. Am I helping or hurting by having the history that I have with this institution? When students share their advocacy plans, am I helping or hurting them knowing the history I know with this institution? I always question that. I think a big takeaway, and this is something that one of my mentors has told me in the past, is sometimes you need to go to grow. It's bittersweet because I love what I do here, but I might need to take my talent somewhere else to see if it's one, in fact, talent. Can I bring what I do here anywhere? Also, where's the commitment? Where am I going to see the success in what I am trying to do? People that were once my colleagues are now leaders here, that's good. Maybe they can bring their stories into their areas and make informed decisions, maybe. Rutgers is not accessible. I have friends that have kids who can't come here. It's really sad, but at the same time, I know that's making Rutgers more notable. Rutgers is the leading institution in the state, but not everybody can come. Those are just some takeaways in terms of my personal story and how it melds with my professional story and how it melds today in today's climate. I would say it's positive and challenging at the same time.

LS: I do not know if you had mentioned this previously, but what were some of the influences as to why your parents picked Passaic to settle in?

SC: I don't think they picked Passaic. I think--again, I'm the youngest sibling, so I don't know the story--but I think that the relationship that my mom had with Margarita was not established in Passaic. I think it was established before, which is why she became sort of the welcoming unit to us. That is what I think brought us there. My aunt was also living there. She had brought her kids at some point. I don't know if that was before or after my mom got here. I think family was what brought her to Passaic and also that advice from trusted people that she knew while she was in DR and PR.

LS: Do you know why your aunt came to Passaic?

SC: Everyone came for access to a better life, whether that be work or school for the kids. That is always the story when they come, because nobody decides to stay. Ask me that question.

How many of them stay? None of them; they're all back in DR. They literally came, opened the tunnels for us to go to school, live our lives the American way, leave us here, and then go back.

LS: Your family is back in Dominican Republic.

SC: Right, my mother is back in DR. My sister is in Sweden; she travels a lot. My oldest sister is in Philly. Our family unit is fragmented, but the goal of the seniors is to go back to the country. Then, we go back and take care of them, and then we stay. You know what I mean? That's the immigrant chain. No one has purchased a house here, or if they did, they don't plan on keeping it, that kind of thing. We're here for a moment, whatever that moment might need us to do with families and such, but the end goal is always retirement back in the island of DR.

LS: What are some connections that you have to the island besides your mother?

SC: Family, so half of the family is over there, half of the family is over here. Also, we live better lives in DR. Our name is a little bit, it's just better, a better identity out there, access to money and food and all that with what we've earned over here. Yes, it's part family over there and part family over here, so that's the connection. Not to mention, it's a four-hour flight; we have a home there.

LS: I think we are done with our questions. Is there anything that you would like to add to the interview?

SC: No, I love that our students are taking these interviews. I think that that's really dope in many ways, and my hope is that these stories get in the hands of the people that can make change here. We're not too far from our goal of making sure that we are creating a healthy environment for Latinos to come, but it's very clear. I love where we're going to go. The tears come because it's nothing that we can control. You know what I mean? I hope that if this story hits someone's paper or hits someone's desk that makes a decision, that that just brings us to a better place, both as a culture and as a body at Rutgers.

LS: Thank you so much for your time.

SC: You're welcome.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----

Transcribed by Aziel Rosado
Reviewed by Carie Rael 06/11/2020
Reviewed by Lauren Smith 07/30/20
Reviewed by Kate Rizzi 9/28/2020
Reviewed by Saskia Leo Cipriani 12/22/2020
Reviewed by Kate Rizzi 1/4/2021