

ByDESIGN

An Online Journal of Exceptional Achievement

David
Salazar,
FAICP

Long Beach
Community
Design
Center



LIASF
LATINX
VOICES

**Design,
Advocacy,
Equity & Building
Comunidad**

Andrea
Hernandez &
Omar
Martinez-
Zoluaga

**UC Berkeley Latinx
Arch Students Shine**

"DON'T CALL
ME GEORGE"
Don Houston

COVER STORY

David Salazar, FAICP

ByDESIGN®
a quarterly e-zine

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Long Beach Community Design Center

Aymee Barajas



Abraham Lincoln said: "Achievement has no color." If he were alive today, he would be immensely proud of David Salazar and his extraordinary lifetime of achievements. It would not be an exaggeration to say there are few living persons that have made the difference in the California State University System than David Salazar, Facilities Planner.

The California State University is the largest four-year higher education system in the country, with 23 campuses, 53,000 faculty and staff and 486,000 students. One in every 20 Americans holding a college degree is a graduate of the CSU. Alumni are 3.8+ million strong. For the last 30 years a Chicano born in East LA has implemented numerous campus master plans and built hundreds of modern educational facilities worth more than \$4,702,260,000. But this was not end of this Latinos' achievements!

You were born in East LA and grew up in Pico Rivera. What were those early years like?

My early childhood growing up in Pico Rivera was happy and warm, even though we lived in poverty. We lived in the northern part of the city and there were still patches of former farmland, a local dairy with cows, and the semi-natural San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers. We had dogs, chickens, and a beehive (real suburban-country living). My dad was a truck driver, and my mother was a stay-at-home mom (she was a strong Indigenous-Mexican woman and didn't take anybody's mess). I was the youngest of a family of 6 (3 boys and 3 girls).

We lived on a street that had no sewer system, streetlights, or sidewalk, curb, and gutter. Our house was two-bedroom, one bath (about 1,200 sq. ft.). My mom and dad and the girls each had a room. The boys slept in the garage. I slept with my brother Alex in one bed (like two puppies) and my brother Johnny, the eldest, had seniority and his own bed. We had no insulation, heat, ventilation or air conditioning and we always kept a coffee can close to pee at night.

I slept in the garage until I was 8 years old. We moved at my mother's insistence to a bigger house in a new subdivision close by (joining other working class Mexican families from East LA).

I never thought anything bad about the house and the garage that I lived in, and it never entered my mind we were "poor Mexicans". Of course, I had no understanding of urban planning, but I did have a yearning to learn and go to school. The love of learning and adventure has remained a mainstay of my life.

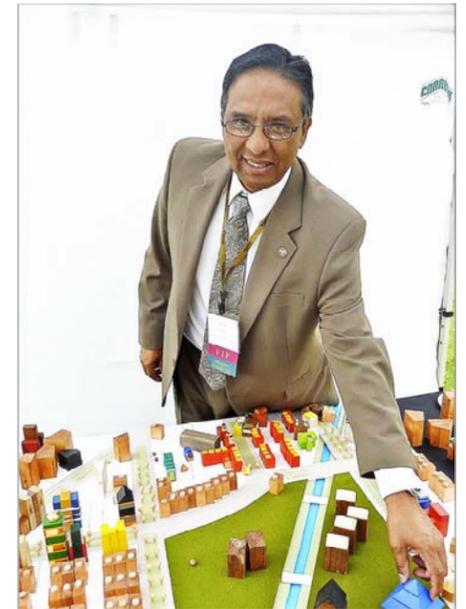
You're a Southern California native, a region rich in Chicano activism. Were you involved in the Moviento?

Yes, my brother Alex got me interested in politics in the late sixties/early seventies, after the East LA student walkouts and the onset of the Chicano Movement (I was around 13-14 years old).

As a result, I entered the realm of the Chicano Movement and marched in the National Chicano Moratorium in 1970 (the war was raging in Viet Nam and Chicanos were dying in disproportional numbers). At El Rancho High School, I was a leader in a Chicano student organization Brown Union. The Chicano Moratorium experience was a watershed moment for me and shaped my world view. It became abundantly clear to me what social position I occupied in American society and solidified my ethnic identity as a Chicano-Mexican American.

I also learned the painful lesson that law enforcement was not the friend of my community, after I witnessed how the LA County Sheriffs broke up the peaceful family-oriented rally at Laguna Park and beat and tear-gassed us.

That same day, the death of LA Times reporter Ruben Salazar at the hands of the LA County Sheriffs at the Silver Dollar Bar on Whitter Blvd. marked a poignant bookend to the day's events.



David Salazar, FAICP
Founder & Principal of the Long Beach Community Design Center



Left:
David Salazar
Pico Rivera, 1960

Right:
National Chicano
Moratorium March
against the Vietnam
War. Los Angeles,
August 29, 1970, LA
County Sheriffs
attack and tear gas
peaceful
demonstrators at
Laguna Park.



Long Beach Community Design Center

You have an interesting story about a mural you painted at San Diego State University, and a certain tv show. Can you share that story?

At that point in my life, Pico Rivera became too small for me, I wanted to see the world!. So, I decided to transfer from Long Beach State (which I entered after High School) to SDSU. My brother Alex told me they had a lot of progressive Chicanos there and they recently had a big salsa/rock concert that was the later chronicled as the Chicano Woodstock. I said cool, I am going.

While studying there, I took a class in Chicano Mural Art and as a class project we painted a whimsical mural for a campus music venue in the Student Union called The Back Door. All the rock bands coming through town played there -- The Eagles got their start there. The theme of the mural was a collection of Aztec Hieroglyphic figures playing various instruments -- the university mascot was Montezuma.

I love old school rock music, so I designed the lead singer with speech clouds coming from his mouth as an "Aztec Composite" of Rod Stewart, David Bowie, Steven Tyler of Arrow Smith, and Kiss (crazy huh). For a counterculture effect, I placed a marijuana leaf on his tank top shirt. As it turns out the class professor, Arturo Anselmo Roman, later worked as a cartoonist for the Simpsons Show and said at the grand opening of the mural's restoration and relocation (now permanently installed in campuses main Library) that

he permanently installed in the campuses main Library; he said that he drew inspiration for Homer Simpson and the other characters from our figures (if you look close, you can see it).

You started your career at the City of Whittier processing conditional use permits. Why did you change lanes and go into the educational sector?

Yes, my first professional planning position was with the City of Whittier doing current planning in a small department of three planners. It was a great experience because I learned the basics of municipal city planning that served as a foundation for me. However, after about 5 years I concluded that I did not want to make a career in planning for local government. It was too regulatory, and I could not be creative. I not only wanted to make plans, but I also wanted to implement them. I could not accomplish this in that position.

By pure chance I saw a posting in the jobs section of the LA Times for a position of Assistant Facility Planner at the CSU Chancellor's office in Long Beach. At my wife's urging I applied and got the job. I did not have much confidence in my abilities in those days, but she did. This position launched my career in campus planning and facilities management and has included many significant accomplishments and awards. All the while, I still maintain my involvement with the American Planning Association and with my fellow urban planning colleagues.

The Backdoor Mural

"Formerly located in a hallway near the backstage entrance to the Backdoor Aztec Center, the 9-foot by 14-foot mural was completed on January 27, 1976. It was designed and painted by principal artist Arturo Anselmo Roman and students in his Chicano Mural art class.

Dedicated to the god of music, the design geatured various Meso-American gods as musicians. The band, dubbed "Los Moonlights" by the artists, include a pianist, marimba player, guitarist, nass player, vocalist trombonist, trumpeter and flutist, each designed by a different student.

Featuring a rainbow, stars and planets across the sky, it is bordered along the

bottom by 17 skeleton head profiles that represent the celebration and humor of life.

An inscription on the mural reads, "May this mural bring you peace of mind." It was dedicated to all San Diego State students, Dr. Robert Serros and staff of the SDSU Department of Chicano/Chicana Studies.

The Backdoor mural is considered "one of San Diego State's most distinctive and expressive hidden treasures." by Dr. Seth Mallios, SDSU professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology. Influenced by both the popular music of the 1970s and Latin American folklore, Mallios describe it as "half Kiss, half Aztec warrior."



The face that inspired Homer Simpson, by David Salazar, student at SDSU..

San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

COVER STORY

David Salazar, FAICP

Long Beach Community Design Center



After Whittier you went on to work as a University Facility Planner for the California State University-Office of the Chancellor, Long Beach. How was it making the transition from a municipality to an educational institution?

The transition was easy. What I learned in planning school and on the job at Whittier (i.e., general plans, zoning, environmental review, residential and commercial/retail development, urban design, parks/open space, etc.) I applied to my campus planning assignments. A college campus is really like a small city.

I learned on the job capital programming, enrollment management, space planning, capital construction, landscaping, and facilities/asset management and how they all come together to form a university campus.

It has been rewarding work for me both professionally and personally. I finally got to make plans, execute them, and maintain the projects and spaces I help build. I was also able to fulfill my passion and build facilities and outdoor environments that support teaching and learning. I could not have asked for a more meaningful career.

California State University-Office of the Chancellor, Long Beach: Implemented new building construction, renovations and additions, electrical and telecommunication upgrades, and landscape improvement projects for three assigned CSU campuses: CSU, Fullerton (left); CSU, Stanislaus (middle), and CSU, Dominguez Hills (right).



You recently retired as Chief Facilities Executive, Facilities Planning & Development Division, Los Angeles Community College District, from a career spanning 30 years. What kind of budgets and staff were you responsible for? What were some of the highlights of your career in education?

This was the highest administrative position I have held. I provided leadership and management for the Facilities Planning and Development Division for nine college campuses, the largest Community College District in the U.S. I led and managed a staff of 180 district employees and consultants and implemented a \$3.3 billion-dollar facilities bond program. However, what I came to understand is that the higher you climb the ladder of upper management the more detached you become with day-to-day project details and the creative planning and design process. You become an administrator/politician, ha! That was the biggest trade-off for me in that position. But what I was exposed to and learned in that role was invaluable.

Nevertheless, the highlights of my career in education, teaching and professional development are many, in particular.

- I was the principal author in the creation of American Planning Association, California Chapter, Membership Inclusion Plan and co-founder (West Coast) of American Planning Association, Division of Latinos and Planning.
- I was the chief campus planner for the planning, conversion, and transformation of the former Fort Ord to the CSU Monterey Bay campus.
- At Long Beach State, I led the development of the first net-zero energy building in CSU system and the Clean Energy Master plan to achieve carbon neutrality.
- I also, lectured undergraduate/graduate courses and mentored and guided student internships in Urban & Regional Planning program at Cal Poly Pomona.
- And, I have held local elected office and appointed board membership for state and regional parks and open space and social services organizations focused on underserved and disadvantaged populations.

Long Beach Community Design Center

Okay, so you retire as an executive of one of the largest community college districts in the United States. What thought process did you go through to arrive at wanting to open a Community Design Center after retirement, something that began in the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1960s or early 1970s?

I modeled the Community Design Center after a concept that a group of UC Berkley Architecture faculty and students created during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. It was classic, to bring planning and design "to the people" and address disparities in low-income communities in the bay area.

My motivation for creating the Long Beach Community Design Center was essentially the same, to provide pro-bono planning and design services to disenfranchised and underserved communities in the greater Long Beach area. In the end, planning and design is social justice and access to those services can empower communities to create physical spaces in their own image and build just communities. I have also been blessed to have acquired the education and knowledge that resulted in a successful planning career. Because of my life experience and my political and professional obligation, this was a time to give back and help those that need it the most. My belief is I am what survives me, and I want to leave behind a legacy of service.

You are the first and only Latino Fellow in the American Institute of Certified Planners in the State of California. (Note: the 2010 U.S. Census, notes Hispanics and Latinos of any race make up 38.1% of the state's population.) You are 1 of 39.51 million people, making you the rarest, and most extraordinary, of all professionals in the USA. How do we explain this disgraceful phenomenon?

A straightforward answer is systematic racism: a more involved response is that it signifies a lack of senior representation of Latinos in the field of urban planning and an absence of our stories and the significant contributions we have made to the field and American society.

Without question, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

I continue to work with the California Chapter and National Association of the American Planning Association on projects and initiatives to include the Latino narrative and to make meaningful change. One area I am currently focusing on in Long Beach is to bring youth of color into the planning and design profession through a pathway program that will provide hands-on project experience and exposure to education and career opportunities.

As far as FAICP goes, it looks like there is a group of California Latino planners in the pipeline that will hopefully join me soon.

You were a lecturer on California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in the Urban and Regional Planning Department for 8 years; you are a renaissance man. What was that experience like?

Like I mentioned I love learning. And since I never considered pursuing a Ph. D. in planning, I wanted to experience the classroom as a lecturer/practitioner.

Teaching forced me to examine my knowledge of planning (both in theory and practice) and how to transfer that to the student. I also wanted to impart my practical knowledge and philosophy to keep it real -- coupled with innovative/creative thinking and problem-solving skills. I enjoyed my time there and I still mentor young and mid-career planners to offer advice and words of wisdom.

“ In the end, design is social justice and the access to those services can empower communities to create physical spaces in their own image and build just communities. ”



California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Long Beach Community Design Center

What projects are you currently working on and what's the public/public partnership model being used to bring these projects to fruition?

Right now, I am working with a long-standing Long Beach Latino non-profit (Centro CHA) and the City of Long Beach to develop a Latino Cultural Center, a Mercado, and a Latino Cultural District in the city.

Not known widely, the population of Long Beach is 42.6% Latino, of which 82.1% are of Mexican origin.

The development of these projects is long overdue and will not only provide a cultural hub, e.g., (the creation of place) for the Latino community, but also provide retail and commercial space, work force housing, entrepreneurial/small business development, and arts and culture.

These projects will foster community empowerment, cultural recognition, and self-determination. An overarching intent of these projects is to avoid the usual market-driven approach, but instead provide long term economic benefits to the community and build local capacity and wealth in proportion to the city's demographics.

Until now, Latino based community development at this scale has been non-existent in the greater Long Beach area. The Latino Cultural Center in particular will provide space for self-discovery, to understand who we are, generate self-esteem, and reveal how we contribute to the American society and culture. To better understand how we become who we are!

We first spoke in March: What progress has been made on the 'Mercado' project since then? Could this project be a template for other communities?

“ The development of these projects is long overdue and will not only provide a cultural home for the Latino community, but also provide retail and commercial space, work force housing, arts and culture, and small business development. These projects will foster community empowerment, cultural recognition, and self-determination. ”

Progress on the project is moving forward very well. The City Council unanimously approved in March the development of a feasibility study for the project and now we are awaiting funding allocation.

We are extremely excited to start this process and thankful to receive critical support from the city. I feel we have an opportunity to create something incredibly special in Long Beach not only in exploring new ideas around Latino Architecture form and design, but also in establishing a community-based development approach that provides a model/framework for others to emulate.

My hope is that this project will have a "multiplier effect" where other Latino communities will be inspired and motivated to do the same. My dream is having others say, "Look what they were able to accomplish. We can make that happen in our community too!"

What advice would you give Latinx or students of color about pursuing a career in Facilities Planning, Campus Planning or Community Design?

I would say that education you receive in urban planning prepares you well to enter the field of campus planning and facilities management.

There is technical knowledge in the design and construction process and facilities management that you will have to learn, but this is something you can acquire over time. Just as important however, is visualizing and thinking in the big picture and the ability to integrate and synthesize ideas and concepts across multiple disciplines.

Once you have mastered these skills and develop a "people centered" philosophy, you will become a valuable talent to any planning or community design organization.



This is what the future of the US looks like, and it is bright!

SIDE BAR

David Salazar, FAICP

Executive Director, Founder, Long Beach Community Design Center

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Long Beach Community Design Center

LBCDC provides pro-bono community engaged planning and design services to low-income and underserved communities, nonprofit organizations, and municipal agencies in greater Long Beach and throughout California.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Long Beach Community Design Center, Long Beach, CA
Executive Director, Founder
September 2020 - Present

Services provided include:

- Identify and facilitate the development of conceptual drawings
- Develop feasibility studies to determine project viability
- Coordinate the development of preliminary cost estimates to guide fundraising
- Organize community engagement activities to build capacity and consensus
- Develop urban planning studies to foster community education, engagement, and empowerment
- Partner with higher education institutions to advance interdisciplinary design education through field study and internships

Planning Consultant, DS planners, dba
Long Beach, CA
June 2019 - September 2020

Facilities Planning & Development Division, Los Angeles Community College District, Los Angeles, CA
Chief Facilities Executive
August 2017 - June 2019 (Retired)

Physical Planning & Facilities Management California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA
Associate Vice President
January 2009 - August 2017

Urban and Regional Planning Department California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Pomona, CA
Lecturer
September 2002 - 2010

Facilities, Planning & Administrative Services, San Bernardino Community College District, San Bernardino, CA
Executive Director
February 2006 - January 2009

Claremont Graduate University, Claremont CA
Director of Facilities Management
September 1999 - February 2006

Campus Planning & Development California State University, Monterey Bay, Seaside, CA
Director
November 1993 - September 1999

California State University Office of the Chancellor, Long Beach, CA
University Facility Planner
February 1990 - November 1993

City of Whittier, Whittier, CA
Associate Planner
August 1985 - February 1990



Top: CSULB Go Beach Sign

Middle: Residence Colleges Dining Halls Renovations, (Renovation and modernization of two student dining halls, 10,000 asf; Project budget \$10 million). Completed Fall 2013 & Fall 2014

Bottom: Hall of Science Building, (125,524 gsf; Project budget \$100 million). Completed June 2011

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Long Beach Community Design Center

EDUCATION

- Executive Master of Business Administration, Peter F. Drucker Graduate School of Management, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA 2003-2006
- MA Urban and Regional Planning, College of Environmental Design, California, State Polytechnic University, Pomona, 1983-1990
- Bachelor of Arts, Sociology, California State University, Long Beach, 1981-1983

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Institute of Certified Planners College of Fellows
- American Planning Association
- California Planning Roundtable
- Society for College and University Planning
- Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

- Certificate, Ross Program in Real Estate, University of Southern California, Lusk Center for Real Estate, 2013
- Certificate, Leadership in Strategy, Peter F. Drucker Graduate School of Management, Claremont Graduate University, 2002-2005
- Certificate, Institute for Facilities Management, Association of Higher Education Facilities, 2000

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Planning Advocate Award, American Planning Association, California Chapter, 2018
- Planning Pioneer Award, American Planning Association, Los Angeles Section, 2018
- Distinguished Alumni, College of Environmental Design, Cal Poly Pomona, 2005
- Distinguished Alumni of the Year, Cesar E. Chavez Center for Higher Education, Cal Poly Pomona, 2005

BOARDS, COUNCILS, COMMITTEES

- Planner Emeritus Network, At-large Board Member, 2020 - present. Appointed by Planner Emeritus Board President.
- Planning Accreditation Board, Practicing Planner, 2019 - November 2022. Appointed by AICP Commission President.
- YMCA of Greater Long Beach, CA. Board of Directors, 2016 - present. Emphasis on capital development and fund raising.
- Centro CHA, Long Beach, CA. Board of Directors, 2015 - present. Appointed by the board/Executive Director to promote Latino focused programs and services.
- American Planning Association, California Board, University Liaison, 2012 - 2014.
- American Planning Association, California Board, Membership Inclusion Co-Director, 2009-2012. Co-directed activities and programs to increase membership for planners of color.
- California Planning Roundtable, Emeritus, 2001-present.
- Facilities Planning Academy, Society for College and University Planning, 2001-present.
- California Planning Foundation, Board of Directors, 1996-2003.
- Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, Board of Directors, 1996-1999.
- Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA), University Representative, 1995-1999. CSU, Monterey Bay representative.
- California State Parks Hispanic Advisory Council, Council Member, 1993-1995.

Long Beach Community Design Center

6285 East Spring Street #595
Long Beach, CA 90808



Top: Renovation of existing 1950s vintage building to Student Success Center, (80,000 gsf; Project budget \$40 million). Completed Spring 2019

Bottom: Construction of College of Continuing and Professional Education, Net Zero Energy Building, (30,000 gsf; Project budget \$30 million). Completed Fall 2018. This was the first net zero energy classroom building in the California State University system.

Middle: Bob Cole Conservatory of Music, New music pavilion, seating terrace, and entry plaza and landscape improvements, (3,000 gsf; Project budget \$2.5 million). Completed October 2012