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Transcriber:	Ziggy Ghassemi (edited by Sarah Glover)

Time	Transcription
	Florante Ibanez: Are you on campus?
	Justine Trinh: Yes, I'm on campus right now.
	Florante Ibanez: How's the weather up there?
	Justine Trinh: It is sunny. It was cloudy earlier, but now it's super sunny. Like it usually is.
	Florante Ibanez: Did you watch the eclipse the other day?
	Justine Trinh: Yeah, I didn't think I would be able to watch it, but then some-- the founder of Project Ngoc came in and he was like, "Here are some glasses, go outside".
	Florante Ibanez: [laughs] That's good. That's great.
	Justine Trinh: Did you see it?
	Florante Ibanez: I saw it on my screen from the NASA website. But my wife, she saw it [indecipherable] glasses [indecipherable] because they all went out from their office, and they all looked up, people were just, you know, sharing glasses, so it worked out.
	Justine Trinh: My mom-- yeah, my mom was telling me at her work, they were using a welding mask.
	Florante Ibanez: Ah.
	Justine Trinh: And they were just passing this welding mask around [laughs].

	Florante Ibanez: You know, this connection might be bad because my AT&T phone in my office doesn't work that well, what's your number? I will call you back.
	Justine Trinh: What's your number?
	Ziggy Ghassemi: [redacted].
	Justine Trinh: [redacted]. Did you get that?
	Ziggy Ghassemi: Did he drop on us?
	Justine Trinh: Shoot, did he get the number?
	Ziggy Ghassemi: I don't know, let me-- should I call him back?
	Justine Trinh: Yeah, I guess so, maybe, because if he didn't get the phone number--
	[voicemail message]
	Florante Ibanez: I tried to call you and it just went to voicemail. Let me--
	Justine Trinh: Okay. Let me hang up.
	Ziggy Ghassemi: What is that?
	Justine Trinh: It's fine. Hello? Hello?
	Florante Ibanez: Yeah, hello.
	Justine Trinh: Hi. We're back.
	Florante Ibanez: We're back on. So are you grad students over there or are you working staff?
	Justine Trinh: I just graduated this year in--
	Florante Ibanez: Oh, great. Great.
	Justine Trinh: Yeah. But I'm still here for the masters program. Asian American Studies just had its first 4+1 program where students can get their bachelor degree in 4 years and then earn their masters in AsAm in the next year.
	Florante Ibanez: Oh, that's great.
	Justine Trinh: So I'm still stuck here for another year.

	Florante Ibanez: Oh no, that's fine. One year for a masters program is pretty outstanding. Is there a particular focus that you're doing?
	Justine Trinh: Not really, I haven't really decided yet, considering I just, yeah-- it's been summer. [laughs] I don't want to think about it.
	Florante Ibanez: [laughs] I know what you mean. Okay, so let me pull up the document [indecipherable]. Hold on a minute.
	[background noise]
0:05:00	Florante Ibanez: Okay. Go ahead.
	Justine Trinh: All right. I also sent you a few-- half an hour ago-- a permission slip. It just says that we're allowed to film you or, you know, record this.
	Florante Ibanez: Okay, I'll send this back to you as a PDF.
	Justine Trinh: Yeah, thank you. I just wanted to make sure you got it and I didn't send it to-- that you knew about it and it didn't catch you off-guard. But I'm ready to begin whenever you are, with the interview.
	Florante Ibanez: Go ahead.
	Justine Trinh: Okay. What is your name and current occupation?
	Florante Ibanez: Florante Ibanez, and my current occupation is, librarian at UC-- oh, not UC, at Loyola Law School. I am also adjunct professor at Pasadena City College, teaching History of Asian Pacific Americans.
	Justine Trinh: Okay. How do you self-identify in relation to the term Asian American?
	Florante Ibanez: Filipino American.
	[background noise]
	Florante Ibanez: Yes?
	Justine Trinh: How were affiliated with UCI? And how did you get to UCI?
	Florante Ibanez: I came to UCI in 1973 under the EOP program, Educational Opportunities Program, Student [indecipherable] Action. I was-- what do you call it? Special Action Student, meaning that I did not meet the regular requirements, I was brought in under the category of special action, and previous to that, I was at Cal State Dominguez, and in between that, I worked at the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA.

	Justine Trinh: Okay. What is your academic training and what was your major at UCI?
	Florante Ibanez: My major was Comparative Culture, I graduated with that in 1977, it no longer exists [laughs]. And then I went on, and then I went back to school in 2003 to attempt-- to get my MLIS, my library degree at UCLA, and at the same time got my Masters in Asian American Studies from UCLA.
	Justine Trinh: Okay, I'm now going to move onto your campus involvement.
	Florante Ibanez: Okay.
	Justine Trinh: Can you tell me a little bit more about Comparative Culture?
	Florante Ibanez: So, Comparative Cultures at that time, when I had to define it to people because it did not exist on any other campus, was a combination of International Studies and Ethnic Studies, at least that's the way I looked at it, with a very left perspective-- or progressive perspective for social justice and social changes in the world. So, it becomes studies around not only Ethnic Studies, but also questions of Latin America, Marxism, there was even a class on the-- what was it? Culture of cars [?], I think it was called. It had a lot of interesting stuff going on at the time, and I really enjoyed all the classes I took.
	Justine Trinh: Can you tell me about the formation of Kababayan?
	Florante Ibanez: So Kababayan started in, I think we started in '74, and I had previously been at UCLA working at the Asian American Studies Center, in '71-'72. So, at that time when I was an employee on the staff there, I helped start Samahang Pilipino at UCLA.
	Justine Trinh: Mhm.
0:10:00	Florante Ibanez: So, when I went to Irvine, I, you know, found other Filipino's on campus, and we started Kababayan. Similar to what we did at UCLA, we had a pot-luck, and that's what drew Filipino's together, and then we decided to form a club. I, along with, some other folks there that also worked at EOP-- because at the time, as a work-study student, I worked for the EOP program, as a Student Recruiter, going out to high schools, and looking for minorities [indecipherable] to come to UC Irvine. We were there at the same time that another organization was on campus, but was not very active called United Asians, and then there was already a-- what do they call themselves? There was a La Raza Association, or the MEChA. There was also a Native American group that came and there was also the-- I think there was a Black Student [indecipherable]. And so we made up the group that actually went forward and called ourselves the Third World Student Coalition, and went to the [indecipherable] at that time to ask, or demand, or

	request the Cross Cultural Center. That is when the Cross Cultural Center came about--
	Justine Trinh: Okay.
	<p>Florante Ibanez: --through the Third World Students. And so we were originally in, I guess, what is the building now on campus that is for the Handicap Students, and at that time that was our Cross Cultural Center. We did peer counseling, we had a coordinator that I think got all work-study stipends, and our offices were in there. Kababayan actually had the back room, which I think is probably [indecipherable] room now. And the other folks had cubicles in the front, and so from there we had activities on campus. We had the first Asian American Day on campus, and later on, the next year, we had a Filipino Day, because we were actually covering for both, I guess. At that time, United Asians weren't really doing much, so we actually had more than just Filipino's in our club. We had some Anglos, and we also had Chinese and Japanese students that joined Kababayan, and at that time we also wanted to try to see if we could get a Filipino class on campus.</p> <p>So, that struggle took place in-- that's why I'm looking at my transcript, because I took the class after we got it. So we actually got the class in Fall '74, it was a petition campaign that we put through the Cross Cultural Center, and it was called History of the Philippines, and then the next semester-- or the next quarter, in Winter Quarter '75, it was called Filipino Immigration. So, we were able to get the class through a petitioning campaign, and at the same time, Comparative Cultures was also offering languages. So, they also had a Chinese class, and a Japanese class to learn, but no Tagalog or Filipino class, we were also trying to get that-- that didn't happen. So, the disadvantage of getting the class-- frankly, the big disappointment for us after we got the class, was that it was taught by an Anglo, who was very [indecipherable] Filipino. So her husband was Filipino, but she was an Anglo and, you know, we were really put off by that. But we really didn't-- you know, at the time, we hadn't thought that through, we just thought we wanted the class. I guess we just assumed it would be a Filipino who would teach it, a wrong assumption. I do not know how she was hired because we were not involved in that process, and so a number of us took the class, I think most of us got As. She was very-- I don't know how to say it, she was a nice lady. But, you know, she kind of clashed a little bit with our more I guess progressive speaking about how the class should be taught, and what should be studied. So, that was, that was what happened [laughs]. I don't know how else to put it.</p> <p>We did not know what to do with it after that. We tried to be nice to her, frankly. She invited us over to her house to have-- I guess it was like a social thing, kind of like a pot-luck. Some of us went, I actually didn't go, and I think she was disappointed that a lot of people didn't show up. You know, we just kind of felt,</p>

	<p>"Well, you know, we don't have to go". If it had been a Filipino, or another Asian, we probably would have shown up. But anyway, you know, that's just the reality. And, after that, I am not sure how things went, because I graduated in '77. But we-- we didn't have another class after that, I think. Because I don't remember encouraging anybody to take the class.</p>
0:15:00	Justine Trinh: I wanted to kind of backtrack--
	Florante Ibanez: Sure.
	Justine Trinh: You mentioned other groups, were there tensions between any of the groups?
	Florante Ibanez: No, there was actually even a Chinese Club on campus, or Chinese American Club, and we had a joint dance with them--
	Justine Trinh: Oh, wow.
	Florante Ibanez: We did a joint thing with them, over in the Commons which is now-- I don't know what it is now, but it was right across from the-- from the library. That used to be the Commons, or the Cafeteria.
	Justine Trinh: Yeah, it's now Gateway.
	<p>Florante Ibanez: Yeah, so that's the place where we had the dance, and yeah, it was-- it was, you know, we were pretty friendly with the other groups. We had food sales, when there were, like, cultural days on campus so we would sell lumpia, cook it in the dorms, and then bring it out and sell it in the Commons, at Gateway Plaza. Yeah, so we got along, and like I said, we had these cultural days, where we, you know, were able to get funding from campus. A particular kind of funny thing was that, since our club was mainly women, we had to actually ask some of the guys from Cal State Long Beach to come over and help with the folk dancing, so that they would have partners [laughs]. And, it was kind of funny, because some of them hooked up later on, so they became couples.</p> <p>And then, what else? A lot of women in Kababayan were part of the Volleyball team at UC Irvine, and so they were kind of known for that. And what other things were going on? When we had a band called Califarno [?], which is still around today, [indecipherable] at Irvine, we invited them to come to our-- one of our members' houses over on Balboa Island, and we had a pot-luck for them, and they showed up, and it was kind of a big deal, because this was a band on campus and the [indecipherable] so, it was good. They had a lot of good times. I know that some of our members were not really happy about going to Irvine. In fact, I saw one of our friends up in-- she lives over by Portland now, and she was just kind of-- she doesn't have fond memories of Irvine, although when she</p>

	<p>graduated, she met her husband there, and, you know, they are doing fairly well now, but it was all part of the experience of being in Orange County frankly, I think. So, a lot of us in EOP, a lot of us minority folk were always-- we pretty much stuck together, we had our parties, we had our own fun, but you know, in the context of a white, suburban, Orange County, we felt a lot of racism and isolation at the time.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Can you tell me about some of the race-- the feelings of isolation and racism?</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: Well, it's just, you know, the feelings that you get, when people are checking you out in the store [laughs]. Kind of like, you're a person of color, and you are in the store, there's a lot of white people, and they just kind of like, check you out, right?</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Can I ask what the demographics were back then? Because I was born and raised in Orange County.</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: The demographics--</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Yeah.</p>
0:20:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: Our club, I think when we started was probably just a dozen folks. You know, and we were-- and this is early '70's, right? So it's like, for one thing, I think that's why Irvine was trying so hard to get minorities on campus, because through the EOP program-- I mean, it was a good school. And it was prestigious at the time, even though it was a new campus. The thing was that folks-- you know, that's why we started the club, frankly, because a lot of folks felt very isolated out there. I mean, folks came-- like the guys who recruited me into EOP, they came from Delano and so, I came from the South Bay, I went to [indecipherable] high school. We had a lot of minorities where I lived in Wilmington, and so we all kind of were used to that. But coming to that campus was just another kind of-- the EOP took care of us because we had our own things going on. Manuel Gomez, I do not know if you knew him when he was there. He retired out, but he was one of the directors of EOP along with John Clayton. John Clayton was African American and Manuel Gomez was Mexican American, and you know, they ran the EOP program, Special Action, you know, the way it should have been run. And that's why we worked for them, because we really felt like we were doing something and making a difference going out and recruiting students. And we also had programs that we developed, because I came back and worked for EOP after I graduated for a few years, and it was the Student Affirmative Action Program, before it got stopped up [indecipherable] decision.</p> <p>So, we developed a program called Saturday College, and so [indecipherable] Castro was my boss, another Filipino. And it was basically, Saturday College was a way to connect to the community, bringing in junior high and high school</p>

students on campus on Saturdays, [indecipherable] and providing them with some academic skills to give them an edge up before the graduated, to give them some self-esteem, and at the same time, prepare them more academically than what we thought they were getting in school. So, I, you know, brought kids in from Long Beach, and Wilmington, and Santa Ana, and Anaheim, and these were students who were determined by their counselors who had the potential, but, you know, could use the help. So, that is what we were there for. So, we gave them some academic skills, had them meet other folks, and see what the college environment was like.

And we also had a summer program, where we'd bring high school students in over the summer for, I think it was a two week period, and live on campus and get a mini set of classes on cultural identity, as well as academics, so they would have to write, humanities and arts, and that was, I thought, you know, a really great program. So, I directed an area called the Academic Enrichment Program and I would, particularly with high school students, work more cultural components, humanities, and we staffed it with-- with other minority students from UCI, working-- who had work-study money, and-- and through the outreach program, I thought we were a great success, and it was disbanded when Affirmative Action was taken away from the UCs.

I teach now, so when I go to teach, I tell folks, because I have taught as a TA Asian American Studies at UCLA, and you know, the question would come up, why is a college like UCLA, because, you know, you see all the Asians or whatever, something like that, I forgot what it exactly, but it's a joke, right? And so I would question my students about it, "What do you think about that? Do you think there's too many Asians here? Do you think we should have some type of action program to get more here or to increase the numbers? Because not all Asians are equally footed in terms of academic preparation." And some students said, "Well no, we shouldn't have it, because there are too many of us here." And I said, "Well you know, I am a product of Student Affirmative Action. If I didn't have that extra hand-up, I wouldn't be here teaching you now."

So [indecipherable] it's interesting, because the perception now of what the Asian American movement was then and what it is now, it's very distorted. The impression folks have now, or at least my impression of them, is that, you know, it was like just another time, or it doesn't really mean anything to them. They don't have anything to do with it, and they don't see the roots of their own existence being on campus from being from that struggle. So it's kind of disappointing in a way but try to-- well, at least I try to do my best to educate them about what's in place and what opens doors for them to come to college.

	Justine Trinh: Can I ask what was the campus and political climate of UCI was like in the '70s, when you were on campus?
0:25:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: Well, you know, there was the Greek system going on and also some people also tried to get into it. I don't know how they did, but interestingly enough, my own daughters went through the Greek system, joined sororities when they were in college. My older daughter went to UCI after she started off at San Diego State, and she even started a sorority, a chapter of a sorority there. And my younger daughter joined a sorority when she was at UCSD, and they were both, you know, Asian American sororities. And when I asked her about it, when I asked both of them about it, they said, "Well, we do community service, not like, [indecipherable] hazing, and making pledges to all the stupid stuff like the stereotypes is." And I said, "Oh, well that's good." And so, my impression of them is different now. But, back then it was like, they were I think not the thing you wanted to join. Just among minorities. Unless it was a minority sorority or fraternity, but that's a whole different detail.</p> <p>So, it was conservative-- I mean, you know, on campus it was more liberal I am sure than that of the community. Like, you know, I would get those stares at the stores and I would say, "Oh, that's the racism there." And, you know, you would feel it every once in a while. Going to a restaurant or whatever, and people would just kind of check you out. They wouldn't-- I didn't have anything said to me personally, but, you know, I don't know what was in their minds. Especially when a group of us would go someplace, you know, make a lot of noise. "Okay, there's those minorities acting up again." But, on campus it was okay, because you know, there was a lot of, you know, we felt like, on campus, we were more equal to everybody else. And I think people respected us more there, especially, you know, professors-- our professors that were minorities. There was one incident I can recall now though, and there was about-- what was it about? It was a women's class, let me look on my transcript-- what was that class? Hold on.</p>
	Justine Trinh: Okay.
	<p>Florante Ibanez: I took it actually with my wife, when she went there, and some other folk. It was Women in Film. And so, you know, they had these other films-- I don't even recall the other films frankly, but there was one film that they showed about the-- the revolutionary Chinese Ballet. So like, you know, that's the height of their cultural expressionism of, you know, showing workers these different kinds of dances that they had in their red ballets [?]. And I think it was called White Haired Woman, or something like that-- in any case, I heard these other white girls in the class behind us talking about, "Oh, that's not even real ballet, that's just like, you know-- they don't even really know how to do dance, and blah, blah, blah." I thought, "Shit, what do these guys know about the [indecipherable] people that are trying to express [indecipherable] more popular way." So that really pissed me</p>

	<p>off, but you know, we did-- our project for that class was to do a slideshow on Asian women in film and I don't know if people took it the right way, or whatever, but you know-- what did get in that class? Oh, I got an A in that class, so I guess it was okay [laughs]. I lose track because I'm trying to remember what happened [indecipherable].</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Yeah. Can I ask, why do you think there was a need for Asian American Studies or Filipino Studies on UCI campus?</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: Oh, I think it's needed on all campuses, frankly.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Yeah.</p>
0:30:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: I think it's needed in high school. But I think in particular that, because in Orange County there was still this whole model minority myth that people have, of like, you know, "Well, you Asians don't need anything, because you guys are already set up. And you're already too many-- well, now, there's too many of you on campus anyway, so you don't need any help. You're all the same, you know, you're all Asians." And not taking in the particularities of Native Hawaiians, or Hmongs, or Cambodians, or those who are-- the refugee population that came later, and how they are, you know-- how they are prepared academically, as well as how they are viewed in their own community to want to excel, or to just have a family, or just be the wife, or you know, girls don't go onto college, or that kind of stuff. And so I think, for Irvine in particular, it's because of the white neighborhood that that stereotype is still very much alive, and that, you know, Asians don't need anything because they are already set up. They don't-- they shouldn't even be classified as a minority because they, you know-- there's too many of them. That kind of thing.</p> <p>But I think, you know, especially during that time period-- because at the time, we did not have an Asian American Studies, we were all under Comparative Cultures, and-- and then, it kind of surprised me actually when I found that AsAm is under Humanities, and I thought, "Why is that? Why is it not under Social Science or History?" But, you know-- or why is it not under Social Ecology? Because Social Ecology also emerged at the same time as Comparative Cultures as unique kind of programs for UCI. And my wife was a Social Ecology major, and they did a lot of progressive stuff in there, and I thought, "Well, you know, this is kind of a cool campus to pick up these two majors that nobody else has, and they seem to be pretty progressive, even more than Comparative Cultures." But if we had Ethnic Studies, I don't know if that was-- I don't know. It is hard to look in hindsight, to know what it could have been.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: What sort of protests or organizing tactics did you use to get the Cross Cultural Center here and getting Filipino Studies here?</p>

	<p>Florante Ibanez: Well, the Filipino Studies thing was just a petition campaign basically, and then we went and talked to folks and got support from faculty. But for the Cross-Cultural Center, it was like meeting with the Chancellor as a group, as the Third World Coalition of Students. And, you know, talking about it, and telling him, this is what we need, and the stuff that we should be having. And at the time, I think there were no other Cross Cultural Centers on other campuses. I think we were the first at a UC, so, I guess in that way it was kind of groundbreaking. But, you know, we went united as a group, and so I think that's what impressed the Chancellor and, "Yeah, you guys should have your own-- we should have our own, you know, space." And so, at the time, we got what we got, and we were thrilled about it, but you know. And it's much better now that you have that building, but back then it was like, "Okay, we're out here on the side of Humanities and we're-- oh no, we're out here by the side of--" What's out there? The sciences? And then to add to that, there were these trailers. I don't know, are the trailers still there? There were trailers next to it.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Yeah, there are trailers still.</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: They're still there? [laughs] So when I was working for the EOP program, and the Academic Enrichment Program as the director, those were our offices, those trailers were our offices, and the Cross Cultural Center was right next to it. So that was kind of like, "Okay, we'll put all the minorities over here in the trailers, and this little building, and that's what they can have." So at the time, it was a plus, because we had something, right? But it was kind of like, "Okay, we get trailers. What does everybody else get around here?" [laughs] But you know, it was okay, we were all together, so we went through it.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Were you here around the '90s or were you aware of the protests that happened in the 1990s for Asian American Studies?</p>
0:35:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: No, I wasn't. I mean, we didn't really come back to campus until my wife was approached by Anna Gonzalez, who was at that time the Director of the Cross Cultural Center, to come out and speak. And then we got re-hooked up again. And we were actually kind of impressed that the club was still around, and it had grown so large. Because, you know, back in the day, there was just not that many of us, but it survived the changes. I mean, I did have some of those students work for me when I was working there in the-- with the Academic Enrichment Program, and that was in the '80s. And those students had a different kind of perspective, because a lot of them were more recent immigrants, and frankly, there was a questioning going on among them of, "Should we have the political part of our-- of our points of unity?" And you know, we had to re-educate them about, you know, the political is there for a reason. It's not just social, academic, and cultural; the political is there for a reason. We had to reinforce that with them because there was that whole period of the '80s actually, when</p>

	<p>Reaganomics was there. We had to, you know, there was that swing to the right of, be more conservative and be more concerned about me, myself, and I, as opposed to community and serving others.</p> <p>So, it was a different period of time, but, you know, we did have, I remember one time, when I was there working for EOP, there was a student protest about EOP. I have a picture of one of the demonstrators, an African American woman, who had a poster. It was like they were cutting DACA and us, or the EOP program in general, and so there was a demonstration on campus up the circle and around to the administration building, but that's the only demonstration I recall at the time, that was after I graduated when I was working as staff.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Okay. Why do you think there was resistance in creating Asian American Studies?</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: Well, there is always the excuse that they do not have the money. But I think it's also just because of the whole model minority myth of like, Asians don't need anything, that they have-- they have-- they're already set, they don't need-- they're not the same as Latinos, Chicanos, or Blacks, or African Americans, because they really have-- they live in, you know, we don't live in ghettos, and so we don't need it. It's that whole stereotyping of bunching us all together in the same boat, as not being the same as other folks, or having the same needs as other folks.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Mhm.</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: So, I think that's the struggle, mentally. But culturally that, you know, privileged whites have to-- are thinking in their minds and they say, "Well, why are they out here snagging [?] this stuff, they already got stuff, they don't need stuff." That kind of equation, and then those folks of Asian descent who agree with them [laughs], don't help. Kind of like, your own folk working against you. Not realizing that we have a history of struggles in this country, and things were not just handed on a plate, and we had an easy time of gaining what we have today.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Mhm.</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: And then, you know, understanding that folks don't even still believe that there was internment camps during World War II, or that other things happened, that there were lynchings of Chinese in Los Angeles, that there were, you know, riots of Filipinos in Watsonville. So that history is lost, even to a lot of Asian Americans. I mean, when I teach at PCC [Pasadena City College], people are very surprised, and they are even more surprised to find out, well Filipino's started the great strike, that built the USW, and they say, "Oh no, I thought it was all Mexican." No, it wasn't. So, there's a lot of education to go around.</p>

	Justine Trinh: Mhm. All right. I'm going to-- we're almost done, we're going to go to "looking back", now.
	Florante Ibanez: Okay.
	Justine Trinh: How did your experience with advocating for Asian American Studies influence you in later life? And are you still doing community or political/social work?
0:40:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: Yeah, well, when I got to Comparative Cultures, it was always in mind to teach Ethnic Studies. So even then, there was the MA that they had at-- in Comparative Cultures at UC Irvine, which I almost got into, but frankly, I couldn't. I was also involved politically in the community at the time, in an organization called the KDP, Union of Democratic Filipinos, which was basically a left wing organization of the Filipino community fighting against the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines at the time, this was the '70s to '80s, and also for civil rights and social justice for Filipino's in America. So my organization told me I shouldn't be doing that, that I should be working more on the community stuff. And so that's why I passed on going for my Masters at the time. So it was political pressure from my organization, but otherwise I would have gone for it then, and I would have been teaching sooner [laughs] than now-- than later. But you know, I still accomplished what I wanted to do, so I'm glad about that. I still did a lot with the organization too, so I-- there's no regrets about having done what I-- the decisions I made. So my political activity, you know, has been around the Democratic Filipino's for most of my life. In fact, my wife and I were married with the organization helping with the-- with our wedding. So there was an LA Chapter, the San Diego Chapter. I will send you actually a PDF of-- did you have a chance to see the exhibit at the Chinese American Museum in LA? Of the '70s?</p>
	Justine Trinh: No, I didn't.
	Florante Ibanez: Oh, okay. Well anyway, one of the projects that came out was a zine, and in the zine, I put our story of our KDP peoples wedding, so I will send you a PDF of that, and you can take a look at that.
	Justine Trinh: Thank you.
	<p>Florante Ibanez: But, we were very involved, both of us, in the organization for a long time. We raised our kids in the organization, or they had child care in the organization. And so, you know, with that background I was-- I continued to be involved in the community in different ways, so I was on the boards of several non-profits in the community. SIPA [Search to Involve Pilipino Americans], FilAm Arts, which put on the Festival of Philippine Arts and Culture. I am now on the board of the Filipino American Library which is [indecipherable] USC, and I am still active. We are putting on a book tour of a friend of ours from the Philippines about</p>

	<p>the Marcos Dictatorship, she has a book. In fact, I've been trying to see if folks at Irvine would be interested in having her come out to Irvine, but I do not know if we have any days left, this would be a [indecipherable]. And I am active as a librarian as well, so I was a past president of the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association. I was on the joint conference of Librarians of Color Steering Committee. I'll send you a resume with my CV, it's got all that stuff on it.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Thank you.</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: I did labor organizing for a while with AFSCME [American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees], during the campaign to organize UC campuses. The American Federation of-- The American Federation of County, Municipal, and Employees something-- [laughs] I forget what the acronym stands for. It was AFSCME, but it was an interesting time in my life too. And so I've been involved, like with forever, I am still there teaching History of Asian Pacific Americans at the past few colleges, since I got my MA in AsianAm, and I was teaching Filipino American classes at LMU for a few years, before they changed the program, and now they've combined AsianAm with Asian Studies. I think that was a bad mistake, but then with talking to people over there it was, like, a lot of it had to do with the budget, and just having a way to save Asian American Studies. Hope it doesn't happen to Irvine.</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Hopefully, yeah. I wanted to ask, how does Asian American Studies begin to differ from what it was as Comparative Culture, and from now-- how did it change, I guess, is the question.</p>
0:45:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: Well, you know, we didn't really-- because I'm looking at my resume now-- I mean, my transcript, and I don't really see us having really an Asian American class per se, although I think there was one offered. I'm trying to think of a guy named Eddie [indecipherable], I think was teaching it. Because I know other people took it, but I don't see it on my transcripts, so I guess I never took it. But I see I took a class on China, Fruit of Revolution, Intro to [indecipherable] Studies, Intro to Marxism, Society of Culture, Minority Women in Film, Contemporary China, I had a Japanese Culture class, I had a-- what is this? Something China-- Chinese American History, I guess? I don't remember that at all, but it was-- I think because, you know, a lot of the materials we had at the time were not that much. There were not that many out. In fact, when I was working at UCLA, I was-- part of my job, the main part of my job was to distribute a book called <i>Roots: An Asian American Reader</i>, which came out of UCLA, and was actually probably the first textbook that a lot of fledgling AsianAm classes were using for their text. So I was distributing that at other campuses, and we also had a number of-- of documentary films that were housed at UCLA, that I was in charge of distributing to campuses as well. So we-- I sent out films, and we rented them, I was in charge of that.</p>

	<p>So the materials were not that much, and now you know, there is a whole lot of stuff. I am involved in triple AS, a lot these days, and so I see a lot of the stenography [?] here, and I do not have time to read them all, but they're out there. I see a lot of films, I use a lot of films in my own class, because I think it shifts students more, and they retain more along with the reading. [indecipherable] they don't really read a lot, quite frankly, but you know, you assign it anyway.</p> <p>But I think the difference between then and now is that we have a lot more material that people can use, and I think-- well, when I was going to grad school, there was, I think, I had a much [indecipherable] as well, for my contemporary life than my cohort. I think I had a better appreciation just because I lived through it, and then I also had done, you know, a lot of stuff in the community itself. So the thing about a lot of the academics coming up is that they don't have that real community experience, and so they're relying so much on academics. So when we talk about postmodernism and all that stuff, critical Marx theory, and critical racism, you know, I just feel like it's just, the academics being taught today - just at the graduate level, I am not so sure about the undergraduate level - is more, I guess, I would say more ivory tower academics. Or more theoretical than practical. But I think folks need to have more practical classes, especially of learning the history. That's why I like to use the films or documentaries that show what really happened, like I show the [indecipherable] and students see that other people were actually beat up and, you know, tackled by horse, fully shod horses and stuff. So I think it gives-- my perspective on teaching classes, you have to make sure-- understand the actual struggle that went on in the day, and not so much rely on theory. Because I think there's also-- not always a bad thing per se, there is always a lot more reliance now on literature, so more of the narrative as opposed to the documentary. I think. But I-- but you know, from my contemporaries. Yeah, so, theory versus practical.</p>
	Justine Trinh: Okay, we have three more questions left.
	Florante Ibanez: Okay.
	Justine Trinh: How do you feel about the Asian American Studies department now? And what do you think the importance of Asian American Studies is in today's political climate?
0:50:00	Florante Ibanez: In particular or in general Asian American Studies? Like, doing it as triple AS or at UC Irvine?
	Justine Trinh: Both.
	Florante Ibanez: Okay, in general, I go back to the previous comment about it being more theoretical than practical. And I think also-- I think in the particular

	<p>climate we're in, it has to fight for making sure that folk have an understanding of the activism of the past historically, and also that their role is not to sit on the fence and wait for stuff to happen, or wait for somebody else to do something, but to also become actively involved themselves. I think some of my contemporaries are posing those questions in class. I mean, I plan to, I start teaching next Wednesday, to put that out there in terms of, "What do you think of what happened about Trump's comments about Charlottesville?" And, you know, start that discussion, that it's not just isolated, and try to make them understand that that question is not isolated from Asian American Studies. That it is part of Asian American Studies, as well as stories of the farm workers, or the stories of internment camps, or any of that other stuff. That those stories are part of American history, and you have to look at everything within the context of history as well as what is contemporary.</p> <p>So hopefully it gets them to think, because that's what education is supposed to be about, critical thinking. And not just absorbing information for information's sake, and being able to remember a bunch of dates and names. That's what we are trying to impress on them. So my class is relatively easy. I tell them, "You know, you can learn all of this stuff on your own, like googling all this stuff, but at the same time, I want you to have an understanding of what is important to understand in Asian American history, and contemporary history as well." So it's not just dates and names, but actually what drove folk to what-- the push pull factors that brought us here in the first place, the wars that brought us here in the first place. But what are the kinds of things that continue today, that were still there in the past, and why is it important to keep the struggle alive, and not just take things for granted that the struggle is over, and everything is done for and you're all set. So, that's how I try to teach the class.</p>
	Justine Trinh: Are there any topics that you would like to discuss that we haven't explored yet?
	Florante Ibanez: No, not really. What's your impression of how things are on campus now?
	Justine Trinh: There isn't much-- I would say it's really quiet. There isn't really much activism. I mean, there is activism going on, but it's no longer-- I know in the '90s there was a giant sit-in in the administration buildings, and there were hunger strikes. But now it's-- I don't see any of that.
	Florante Ibanez: Mhm.
	Justine Trinh: And it's all very passive and quiet. Like, I know when Trump first got elected, people like, ran out into the street, and was-- they were rallying and stuff. Well, in Irvine. I heard from one of my partners that she saw some people

	<p>marching outside, and she just ran outside and started marching with them. But after that, like after a week, there was no more of that. It was just kind of accept what has happened and move on, there's nothing we can do about it, kind of that idea. So I would just say today's, you know, today's campus climate is just really quiet. And just accept the way things-- accept the things that they are now, and move on, I would say. But that's only from my observations.</p>
0:55:00	<p>Florante Ibanez: Mhm. One of my speakers in class - I use a lot of community folks to come in and talk to - brought up the point, "What do you think we should do if something happened on campus? Would you", posing to my students, "Would you start a petition campaign, or would you go around and collect signatures, or would you get on a phone banking thing and start calling people up, or would start doing social media, or something? To make people aware of whatever bad thing had happened on campus. That did not affect you directly, but affected others and you felt strongly about?" And a lot of my students were very quiet, so I guess that's the kind of status-quo now. Like, you know, "Well, I'm not going to say nothing, and I'll just kind of wait to see what happens." And I think that's the difference from back then and now. Back then, we all felt like we had to do something, and if we didn't do it-- if somebody else wasn't going to do it, we were going to do it ourselves.</p> <p>I think the feeling now is that, "Well, we'll just have to wait for somebody to-- to start the fire and we'll jump on." Or something like that. But I brought up to the students you know, "you shouldn't feel badly that you didn't answer that question, or raise your hand or anything like that. Because how many of you are also involved in social media? And you know, you see something that comes up and you feel like you need to retweet it or at least make a comment on it." So I said, "That's a form of social protest as well. It's not as active, but it is something, and it could be the start of something else. So as long as you have the attitude, and as long as you understand what's right and what's wrong, then you still need to do something." So even if it's in the passive way of social media, stuff that-- you know, at least do that. Because at least those numbers get counted someplace, someone does see that or, you know, you can make a phone call, or write a letter. That's a little bit of a higher level of activism, but then you know it is a show of something, not so much going out in the streets, but going out in the streets [indecipherable]. I got a student out here I need to help, so are we done?</p>
	<p>Justine Trinh: Yeah, the last question was do you have any photos or archival materials from your involvement that you would be able to, or that we would be able to digitally photograph?</p>
	<p>Florante Ibanez: Yeah, I will send you some stuff and then you guys can sort it out.</p>

	Justine Trinh: All right.
	Florante Ibanez: I still need to clean my old archives right now myself, so. Okay.
	Justine Trinh: Thank you.
	Florante Ibanez: I'll talk to you later, okay?
	Justine Trinh: Thank you so much.
	Florante Ibanez: Bye.
0:57:13	END