**Cal State Fullerton Graduate Forum 2011**

Transcript for Research and Careers Panel Video Excerpt:

**Donna Nicol,** assistant professor of women’s studies: In my own courses, I use my own story of how I became a feminist on this campus many years ago. And what kind of led me to embracing feminism and making it a part of who I am on a regular basis. And, so talking about how I was raised in a household with very strong women and how those women provided an example for me to model my life after and how when confronted with discrimination of various types, whether it be racism or sexism or any other kind if ‘ism’, to speak out and speak forcefully about it. So, I actually put myself on display in the first few weeks of class because students are very uncomfortable. They don’t want to appear racist; they don’t want to appear sexist. They don’t want to say anything until they feel comfortable enough to know you are not going to judge their sense of experiences.

So, we have found using cultural capital, your own cultural capital kind of takes you off of that ivory tower and brings you down to the students level so that they can feel they can engage with you and share a bit more so that they can then embrace what feminism is, what critical race theory may be, so they can have these kind of fuller conversations without their defense mechanism already put up.

**Jennifer A. Yee**, assistant professor of Asian American studies: The last thing we brought, we’re running out of time, we wanted to share from our perspective, what are some of the implications of our work for administrators, faculty and students.

Also, over the top is just kind of like what Marco had said, is supporting students not only holistically but also financially. When you want to diversify, there is that intersection of class, and we’re not going to get in to the history of institutionalized classes in society, but that is a key thing. To be able ask those kind of questions because the way people construct their budgetary situations makes a big difference.

Resisting that one size fits all mentality.

Try to avoid being perspective, this is what you need to do, and then this is what you do in order to succeed. Instead, hearing that person as a unique individual and then taking a look at yourself and asking what are my assumptions when I see someone walk through the door and what is it that they should be studying. Because someone worked with me does that mean my advisor next time says, ‘Oh I see an Asian American woman she is going to want to study that.’ Maybe not! Be open to students’ research directions and methodologies. What if they want to do something that in your mind says, oh my gosh this is not positioning them well for the next step. Well, maybe this is what will position them well towards finishing their dissertation. It is to do something of meaning. That is really key. Supporting formal mentoring program. Make sure that is institutionalized.

**Nicol:** For students we encourage you to seek out graduate programs that support your evolving, professional and personal identities. Visit the campus, don’t rely on name recognition. Visit the faculty. Ask the faculty what they are doing in terms of research, ask about how their programs support diversity explicitly. Talk to the other graduate students. Also be very clear if you can stay in that environment, that learning environment, that social environment. I was in Columbus, Ohio and it was a change coming from Los Angeles to Columbus, Ohio. You have to really consider if you can do this for the duration.

— Transcribed by Muniba Siddiqui