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Department of Ethnic Studies

Spring 4-13-2021

USD Department of Ethnic Studies Newsletter 2:4

Department of Ethnic Studies

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USD Department of Ethnic Studies Newsletter 2:4

Special Message from Faculty: Lessons from the Bus

It was Saturday March 27, 2021, in Chicano Park in Logan Heights. We had a line of over three hundred people waiting since 5:00 am, wishing to get the Moderna Vaccine administered by two medical organizations, Champions for Health and the USD School of Nursing. The Chicano Park Steering Committee along with the Turning Wheel Project, the Mulvaney Center, the Brown Berets and the San Diego Latino Health Coalition entered into a partnership with these medical teams with a plan to vaccinate the "disconnected" in our city.



The line was comprised of young and old essential workers, abuelitas, danzantes, brown bodies missing documents and without access to wifi, and non-English speaking COVID-19 survivors. They waited patiently, seeking the "privilege" to get that magical vacuna (vaccine) into their brown arms knowing quite well that the odds were against them: Latinx people represent 55% of COVID-19 cases, 51% of COVID-related hospitalizations and over 44% of COVID-related deaths, yet are only 33% of the population in San Diego County. A harsh reality of being POC and poor in the midst of a devastating pandemic.

As the clock drew closer to 9:00 am, we waited with anticipation alongside our community to commence with this historic event. Little did we know that our medical team partners had other plans. Without consultation or permission, the partners had

selected 27 outsiders to receive the first shots of the day. Occupying the nicely aligned rows of socially-distant chairs meant for Logan Heights residents, these privileged outsiders methodically lifted their sleeves in preparation for their vaccination, ahead of those who had been waiting patiently for nearly four hours.

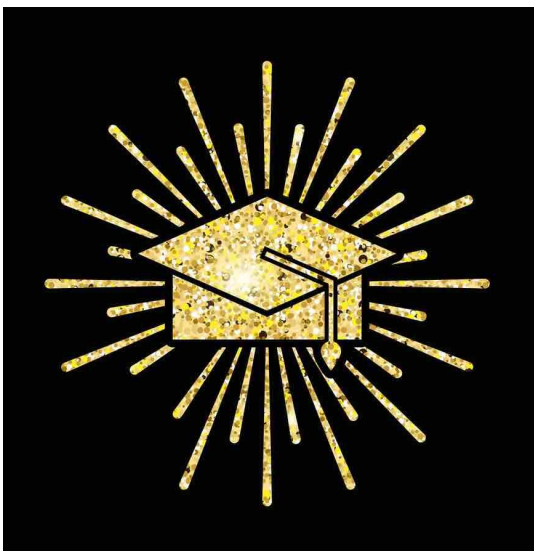
The medical teams quickly launched into a premeditated rationale, explaining that another vaccine event had been cancelled which justified giving these individuals priority and bypassing the long line of Logan Heights residents that had been waiting before sunrise. They assured us that they were not taking the vaccines meant for our community. This preferential treatment was magnified by the fact that the chosen 27 were all outsiders and white! What was a preventative decision for the privileged 27 to get vaccinated was a life and death decision for the Latinx residents of the neighborhood.

In Ethnic Studies, we adopt a critical lens recognizing the social context out of which our work and struggle arise. We incessantly work to decolonize unequal arrangements as we strive to change situations through our actions. From the outset, we decided to support a vaccination event in our community being that our people are the most impacted by COVID in San Diego. Without direct access to the vaccine, we had no choice but to work with medical teams who had expressed excitement in working with our community since they lacked the interpersonal and organizing skills required to access and mobilize our community.

This encounter highlights the realities of COVID apartheid. Because our communities do not have direct access to the vaccine, we are required to be dependent on people outside of our community in order to survive. The inquiry remains: why are we forced to work with people who have no vested interest in our survival and instead are driven by profit as they receive dollars to give the vaccine to the less fortunate and then turn around and boast about it on their social media?

Our Turning Wheel Bus aka Barrio Bus is represented by the Mayan Olin symbol that acknowledges movement as a life-giving source of transformation of self and community. While 300+ people were vaccinated that day, we must relentlessly organize our communities in order to bring change. We are meeting with the medical teams next week. Despite the contradictions, the struggle continues.

- Alberto Pulido, Professor of Ethnic Studies



SAVE THE DATE! Ethnic Studies Graduation Ceremony

You are invited to the Department of
Ethnic Studies Graduation Ceremony!

Saturday 5/22

9:00-11:00 am

Zoom link TBA

Join us as we honor our majors and
minors, enjoy senior capstone
presentations, and celebrate
departmental achievements!

APPLY NOW! Copley Library Undergraduate Research Awards

All students are invited to submit your favorite research paper for the Copley Library Undergraduate Research Awards!

Click [HERE](#) for more information and application guidelines.

Application materials are due May 3, 2021.

COPLEY LIBRARY UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS

Purpose:

These awards were established to recognize students' exceptional research papers using library resources and services.

Award Amounts:

- One \$250 award for a paper submitted for a 100 or 200 level course in 2020.
- One \$400 award for a paper submitted for a 300 level course in 2020.
- One \$550 award for a paper submitted for a 400 level course or Independent Study/ Research credits in 2020.



Senior Spotlight

Mariana Flores Chavez: Honor Your Roots

Hi everyone! My name is Mariana Flores Chávez. I'm a first-generation Latina majoring in Political Science and Ethnic Studies with a Spanish minor. Within my studies, I have been especially interested in immigrant rights, advocacy, and border issues. Growing up in a predominantly white county, I didn't understand what it meant to be proud of and embrace where I came from until my late teenage years. Being one of less than 15 Latinx students in my graduating high school class, I felt like an outsider, but always did my best

to try and understand my roots, culture, and traditions. It wasn't until college that I felt I had a space to do so openly and without judgement.

After taking an Ethnic Studies class, I was hooked. It allowed me to openly resonate with, understand and empathize with the challenges and struggles that I had encountered in my early years of schooling. As a USD transfer student, I have been grateful for the ways in which this department has allowed me to grow, learn and bloom amongst my incredible peers and professors. As the daughter of immigrants, I hope to utilize both of my majors and minor as well as my passion for immigration issues to continue this journey of solidarity by attending law school in the near future.

Moving forward, I recognize the importance of remembering my roots. While it can be difficult to feel like you belong, embracing and honoring your cultural heritage has been vital in my experiences. I hope that as we continue to grow, we can keep finding the goodness that comes with being proud of what makes us the beautiful people we are.

I hope everyone has a wonderful end to the school year. Sending you all lots of love and support!

Senior Spotlight

Vicenta Martinez Govea: Precrastinate on Deadlines

Hi everyone! My name is Vicenta, I am a first-generation college student double majoring in Architecture and Ethnic Studies. I am from San Diego and hope to stay in southern California after graduation. My plans after graduation are to attend graduate school to obtain my Master's Degree in Architecture and continue my research on racialized housing developments and its implications on current development. Ethnic Studies has helped me define my role to bridge racial and class gaps within residential communities as an aspiring architect. To prepare for this, I am a current McNair researcher and serve as a research and program assistant within the Urgent Challenges Collective at USD.

My advice for current students is to find what you are passionate about and work towards making a living out of it. As cheesy as it may sound, I love designing and researching within the fields of Architecture and Ethnic Studies, and I am excited to continue this work as a professional.

I am eager to learn but also excited for some down time this summer. Although I will not be traveling, I am counting the days until it is safe to visit Mexico again. And of course, looking forward to reuniting with you all on campus!



Meet Our Amazing Lecturers!



Professor Leon Lee



Professor Alexis Meza

Leon Lee is a Cultural Producer and a DJ from San Francisco. As a practitioner of Hip-Hop culture and pedagogy, his work is motivated by a commitment to actualizing a world liberated from white supremacist patriarchal violence. He is invested in Hip-Hop as a vehicle for youth resistance, critical pedagogy, cross-cultural coalition building and social justice.

Some of his hobbies include calisthenics, salsa and bachata, and abolishing the carceral system. He also got into watching anime recently. He's usually hanging out with a really sweet pitbull named Nala. Always happy to connect with students, alumni or other cool folks!

Alexis Meza is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at UC San Diego. Her research focuses on the politics of historical and collective memory of the Salvadoran diaspora. In her work, she centers the practices of migrant and refugee memory, remembrance, and epistemologies to push against presumed silences and absences in the historical record.

Alexis organizes with collectives in the San Diego borderlands as part of the larger movement to abolish immigration detention, end the criminalization of migration, and defend the right to asylum. She also enjoys biking, camping and wants to learn to play the guitar.



Alumni News

Taylor Fuentes, Class of 2015

Hello everyone! It has been almost six years since I graduated from USD with a double major in Ethnic Studies and Political Science. After graduation, I attended California Western School of Law where I earned my J.D. in Spring 2018. Thankfully, I passed the bar that same year, and I will forever feel so privileged to call myself an attorney. During law school and for a brief time after passing the bar, I worked at Appellate Defenders, Inc. a nonprofit

organization that represents individuals who cannot afford legal representation in their criminal appeals. I am currently a staff attorney for one of the appellate courts in California. I enjoy crocheting, hiking, and helping law students prepare for oral argument competitions.

I am so grateful to the entire Ethnic Studies Department. Each class challenged me, broadened my world view, and cemented my desire to become an attorney who is committed to social justice. Learning to unpack, examine, and challenge the dominant narrative has been an invaluable skill in my personal life and work. This year has been challenging, and I hope that you are all being kind to yourselves and to each other. If you are interested in chatting with me about legal careers or anything else, feel free to reach me at taylorfuentes@outlook.com.



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Everything you ever wanted: [Kehlani](#)



Better than the COVID vaccine: [D'Angelo on Verzuz](#)



Unknotting Transformative Justice: [Race, Dis/Ability, and Care Work](#)



University of San Diego
Department of Ethnic Studies
5998 Alcalá Park, Maher Hall 210
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 260-4132
<https://www.sandiego.edu/cas/ethnicstudies>

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