

WHERE WE STAND

1975-2011

In honor of Black History Month, Kennedy Library is showcasing an exhibit titled *Where We Stand* in collaboration with University Archives and the History Department Internship program.

Where We Stand is an extension of the 2009 exhibit *Strive & Struggle: Documenting the Civil Rights Movement at Cal Poly, 1967-1975* and similarly draws from *Mustang Daily* articles, student club documents, and oral accounts to construct a brief history of African American advocacy on the Cal Poly campus from the Civil Rights Movement to the present day.

The exhibit documents the roles that student and faculty organizations played in building awareness of issues of diversity and identity on campus. Assessing their efforts reveals both what has changed since 1975 and what remains to be addressed on the Cal Poly campus. The Black Student Union, fraternities and sororities, faculty groups, the Society of Black Engineers & Scientists, and the Multicultural Center served as catalysts for student empowerment. These organizations promoted African American culture and diversity on campus at a grassroots level and established a community for black students at Cal Poly. Despite difficulties in obtaining both members and recognition from the student population, these organizations remain relevant and are crucial to campus efforts to reach a shared understanding of issues of race and diversity.

African American Student Union event, 1993



BLACK STUDENT UNION

At the start of their advocacy in 1968, the Black Student Union (BSU) was a force for social and educational reform on the Cal Poly campus. BSU student leaders held an unwavering vision to increase access to Ethnic Studies and Black Studies courses in order to provide a culturally relevant curriculum. Student organizations, including the Black Student Union, advocated for the creation of an Ethnic Studies program, recognizing that the adoption of such courses was an important step toward alleviating racial problems in America. Their advocacy was a model of effective communication with campus administration, promoting interracial efforts to address the concerns of African Americans on campus.

Despite many milestones for change, including the adoption of Ethnic Studies Interdisciplinary Course Offerings as early as 1969, it wasn't until 1992 that an Ethnic Studies program was established. In 1994 the program evolved into a department, offering an Academic Senate-approved minor in Ethnic Studies. In 2006 a major in Comparative Ethnic Studies was created. Cal Poly took further steps to recognize the importance of cultural studies in student curriculum. Beginning with the 1994-97 Course Catalog, students were required to complete one course that fulfilled the United States Cultural Pluralism Requirement. In 1998 the Academic Senate adopted the *Cal Poly Statement on Diversity*, which recognized that "diversity serves as a fundamental means to enhance both the quality and value of education. It cannot be a mere adjunct to such an education but must be an integral element of the educational experience, infused through the community."



In recent years the BSU underwent several name changes, from the Afro American Student Union to the African American Student Union (AASU). During this time the Cal Poly BSU/AASU functioned as a support group for black students working together to achieve educational success and personal growth. Student organizers worked with other groups to host events celebrating African American culture. They organized marches in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; recruited speakers for Black History Month; and engaged in political discourse and activism when necessary, often in collaboration with the Multicultural Center and the Black Faculty & Staff Association.

The BSU became dormant in 2009. According to former co-president Shauna Kimball, the student leaders realized that the BSU and the Society of Black Engineers and Scientists (SBES) contained many of the same members. As a national organization with multiple conferences per year, the SBES proved more successful at maintaining membership and attendance for events. Student leaders concluded that holding meetings for both the BSU and SBES proved redundant and officially stopped BSU meetings, instead choosing to focus their efforts and energy into SBES.

ETHNIC STUDIES COURSE CATALOG COMPARISON

ETHNIC STUDIES (Interdisciplinary Course Offerings) Acting Coordinator: Bruce E. Tjaden

Bernice B. Loughran, Art
Gloria Jameson, English
Donald W. Hensel, Social Sciences

Marie S. Pfeiffer, Home Economics
Fuad H. Tellew, Economics
Alexander Capurso, Music
Sharron L. Kerr, Dance

The College presently offers in several departments a number of courses which are classified as ethnic studies designed to facilitate the study of various cultures and subcultures, their origins, development, contributions, and changing characteristics. The underlying premise is that in studying the society and culture of a people, a combination of several disciplines can be utilized to produce comparative insights and a more comprehensive knowledge. Although a major is not offered in ethnic studies, a proper selection of courses from this area may provide a student with an interdisciplinary minor, acceptable in some programs. The courses can be used to supplement the requirements for many degree programs, and some will satisfy the general education-breadth requirement.

The following courses are typical of those available in ethnic studies and students are referred to the current class schedule for cultures or areas to be emphasized within the courses in a given quarter.

Anthropology

Ant 201 Cultural Anthropology (3)

Art

- *Art 214 American Art (2)
- *Art 216 Non-Western Art (2)

Economics

- Ec 300 Economic Problems (3)
- Ec 325 Underdevelopment and Economic Growth (3)

Education

Ed 521 Teaching the Culturally Deprived Child (3)

English

- *Eng 214 Afro-American Literature (3)
- *Eng 215 Latin American Literature (3)
- Eng 414 Significant World Writers (3)
- Eng 418 Significant American Writers (3)
- Eng 504 Problems in Language (3)

Foreign Language

Lang 101, 102, 103 Foreign Language—Independent Study (3) (3) (3)
(See course listing for specific languages)

Geography

- Geog 201, 202, 203 Regional World Geography (3) (3) (3)
- Geog 401 Area Geography (3)

* These courses were not approved in time for inclusion in the 1969-70 description of courses, but may be offered on an experimental or trial basis during one or more quarters in the 1969-70 academic year. They will appear in the class schedule for the specific quarter offered but will be continued on a regular basis only if approved for the 1970-71 Catalog.

Ethnic Studies

History

- Hist 112 History of California (3)
- Hist 307*, 308*, 309 Latin American History (3)
- Hist 331 Afro-American History (3)
- *Hist 341 Mexican History (3)
- Hist 381, 382 African History (3)
- Hist 411, 412, 413 History of East Asia (3) (3) (3)

Home Economics

- *HE 301 Culture of Afro-American Pre-School Child (3)
- *HE 302 Culture of Brown American Pre-School Child (3)

Philosophy

Phil 302 World Religions (3)

Physical Education

PE 141 Physical Education (Social folk dance) (½)

Political Science

- Pol Sc 311 Inter-American Relations (3)
- Pol Sc 402 Politics and Governments of Developing Areas (3)
- Pol Sc 465 Contemporary Problems and Institutions of the Middle East and Africa (3)
- Pol Sc 468 Contemporary Problems and Institutions of Africa South of the Sahara (3)

Sociology

- Soc 303 Social Problems (3)
- Soc 313 Urban Sociology (3)
- Soc 315 Race Relations (3)
- *Soc 316 American Minorities (3)
- Soc 323 Social Stratification (3)
- Soc 344 Sociology of Poverty (3)

Music

Mu 208 Ethnic Music of the World (3)

* These courses were not approved in time for inclusion in the 1969-70 description of courses, but may be offered on an experimental or trial basis during one or more quarters in the 1969-70 academic year. They will appear in the class schedule for the specific quarter offered but will be continued on a regular basis only if approved for the 1970-71 Catalog.

Ethnic Studies

Department Office
Math and Science Bldg. (38), Room 136
805 756-1707

Acting Department Chair, Donald H. Ryuji

Denise A. Isom Elvira Pulitano
Jane L. Lehr Victor Valle
Kathleen J. Martin Grace I. Yeh

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Comparative Ethnic Studies - BA
Ethnic Studies - Minor

The Ethnic Studies Department uses inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to study the lives of Indigenous, African, Latino/a, and Asian peoples in the United States within a global and postcolonial context. The Ethnic Studies curriculum provides students with unique forms of critical inquiry that advance their analysis of race, ethnicity, and cultural difference in an increasingly heterogeneous and complex world. Courses in Ethnic Studies examine how social hierarchies frame access to political power, allocate economic resources, and influence cultural expression. By critically exploring such issues, students develop not only a greater understanding of the legacy of racism, discrimination, and injustices in the United States, but also a greater appreciation for new and emerging knowledge about diverse American peoples and their global and transnational connections.

Housed in the College of Liberal Arts, the Ethnic Studies Department at Cal Poly encourages critical dialogue about race, ethnicity, postcoloniality, and transnationalism across the entire university curriculum, with special focus on concepts that integrate the arts, humanities, and social sciences, as well as the sciences and technology. The department offers a number of courses that fulfill both general education and United States Cultural Pluralism requirements. A minor in Ethnic Studies is open to all majors and provides a useful complement to the differing types of inquiry used in the wide variety of disciplines throughout the University.

ETHNIC STUDIES MINOR

An Ethnic Studies minor provides students with special competence in the histories and experiences of diverse communities and the critical skills with which to understand complex social issues. Students majoring in subjects across the university curriculum find Ethnic Studies useful, particularly when their interests require a deeper understanding of race, ethnicity, and diversity in the United States and beyond. The minor prepares students for careers in education, government, and community organizations; for entrance to professional schools in areas such as law, social work, and health; and for graduate studies in all areas of the arts and sciences.

Units	
Core courses (12)	
ES 112 Race, Culture and Politics in the U.S. (D1) (USCP).....	4
ES 212 Global Origins of U.S. Cultures (D3) (USCP).....	4
ES 320 African American Cultural Images (D5) (USCP) or ES 321 Native American Cultural Images (D5) (USCP) or ES 322 Asian American Cultural Images (D5) (USCP) or ES 323 Mexican American Cultural Images (D5) (USCP).....	4
Advisor approved electives	12
Electives reinforce and enhance student understanding of issues of culture, race, and gender. A minimum of 8 units must be 300-400 level.	24

BA COMPARATIVE ETHNIC STUDIES

- 60 units upper division GWR
- 2.0 GPA USCP

* = Required in Major/Support; also satisfies GE
Note: No major or support courses may be taken as credit/no credit.

MAJOR COURSES

ES 112 Race, Culture and Politics in the U.S. (D1)*(USCP).....	4
Choose any 3 courses (D3)*(USCP).....	12
ES 241 Survey of Indigenous Studies (4)	
ES 242 Survey of Africana Studies (4)	
ES 243 Survey of Latino/a Studies (4)	
ES 244 Survey of Asian American Studies (4)	
ES 350 Gender, Race, Science & Technology (Area F)* (USCP).....	4
ES 390 Research Methodology in Comparative Ethnic Studies.....	4
ES 410 Advanced Topics in Comparative Ethnic Studies.....	4
ES 450 Fieldwork in Comparative Ethnic Studies ..	4
ES 461 Senior Project.....	4

Advisor Approved Electives.....	40
(Minimum 20 elective units must be 300-400 level.)	
Minimum 20 units must be from courses offered by the Ethnic Studies Department. The remaining elective courses can be chosen from Ethnic Studies-related courses offered by other departments. (See an Ethnic Studies advisor for a list of qualifying courses.)	76

SUPPORT COURSES

Language other than English (all 8 units must be in the same language).....	8
STAT 217 Introduction to Statistical Concepts and Methods (B1)*.....	4
	12

GENERAL EDUCATION (GE)

72 units required, 12 of which are specified in Major/Support.
→See page 50 for complete GE course listing.
→Minimum of 12 units required at the 300 level.

Area A Communication (12 units)

A1 Expository Writing.....	4
A2 Oral Communication.....	4
A3 Reasoning, Argumentation, and Writing.....	4

Area B Science and Mathematics (16 units)

B1 Mathematics/Statistics *4 units in Support plus	4
B2 Life Science.....	4
B3 Physical Science.....	4
B4 One lab taken with either a B2 or B3 course	
B5 elective	
Area B elective (select one course from B1-B5) ...	4

Area C Arts and Humanities (16 units)

C1 Literature.....	4
C2 Philosophy.....	4
C3 Fine/Performing Arts.....	4
C4 Upper-division elective (not ES courses).....	4

Area D/E Society and the Individual (12 units)

D1 The American Experience (40404) *4 units in Major.....	0
D2 Political Economy.....	4
D3 Comparative Social Institutions *4 units in Major.....	0
D4 Self Development (CSU Area E).....	4
D5 Upper-division elective (not ES courses).....	4

Area F Technology Elective (upper division)

(4 units).....	4
	60

ELECTIVES

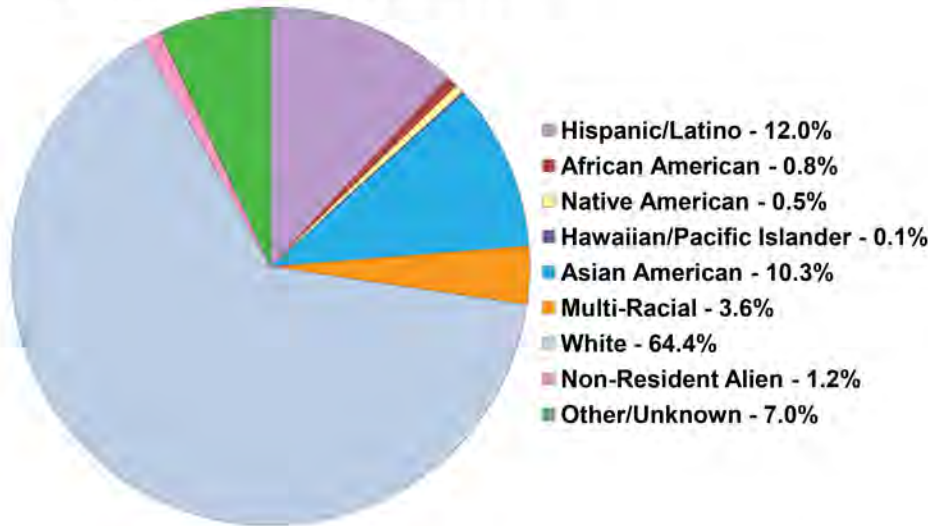
(minimum 8 units must be 300-400 level)	32
	180

1969

2009

TOTAL ENROLLMENT BY ETHNIC ORIGIN

Fall 2010 Total Enrollment



As of Summer 2009, Cal Poly converted to the new federal standards for collecting and reporting ethnicity. As a result, comparisons to previous years are not possible. Among the changes is a new option for students to identify themselves in multiple races. Because of the new multi-racial category, we no longer aggregate students into a “non-white” category.

Of the Fall 2010 total student population, 12.0% identify themselves as Hispanic/Latino, and 10.3% identify themselves as Asian American. The 3.6% of students that identify themselves as multi-racial consists almost exclusively of Fall 2009 and Fall 2010 new students, since the new collection method started with the Summer 2009 applicants.

EMERGING STUDENT LEADERS OF THE BSU

In a 1996 *Mustang Daily* article Colette Toomer recounted her involvement with the Black Student Union, including her time as president of the BSU during her junior year at Cal Poly. Toomer attracted admiration from both peers and professors for her commitment to academics and BSU activities. While she claimed to never have experienced outright discrimination at Cal Poly, she noted that it could sometimes be difficult for black students to attend a predominately white university. She sought to use the BSU to help "provide a support network for African-American students on campus," while also helping them achieve academic excellence and success in community outreach. Under her tenure the BSU maintained dance troupes and choirs and helped with events such as Black Commencement. In addition to her work with the Black Student Union, Toomer served on the advisory board for the Multicultural Center, as well as the ASI Board of Directors during her sophomore year and the Inner Hall Council during her freshman year.



COLETTE TOOMER
(Biochemistry, 1997)



SHAUNA KIMBALL
(Industrial Technology, June 2011)

Currently a senior Industrial Technology major, Shauna Kimball has involved herself with many of the African American clubs on campus. After growing up in Los Angeles and attending a high school with a large minority population, Kimball came to Cal Poly. While she never felt uncomfortable in her new environment, she did have to work hard to seek a network supportive of her cultural identity and acclimate to a predominately white campus. Prior to her freshman year, Kimball attended Polycultural Weekend, where she met members of the BSU,

which she joined her freshman year. During her junior year, Kimball helped lead the BSU and contributed to the decision to officially discontinue the BSU in order to focus student energies into the Society of Black Engineers and Scientists. She has worked closely with the Multicultural Center in planning events for Black History Month in 2010 and 2011. Kimball currently serves on the regional board for the National Society of Black Engineers and directs the "Driven Toward Sisterhood" club, which hopes to eventually establish a branch of the Sigma Gamma Rho African American sorority on campus.

Beginning in the late 1970s, black fraternities and sororities at Cal Poly provided students with alternative forms of participation in campus and local communities. Five Black Greek-letter organizations focused on service-oriented opportunities: fraternities Alpha Phi Alpha, Phi Beta Sigma, and Omega Psi Phi and sororities Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta. These organizations fostered a sense of community and identity among African American students, and led and participated in university and community reform movements and educational outreach.

As part of a national effort, these student organizations led a successful petition to legalize a holiday recognizing the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1981. They sponsored local activities such as a program at the California Men's Colony, educational seminars, gospel music programs, and a petition to reinstate the Voting Rights Act. According to former student and fraternity member Mark Iles, while these groups were not overtly political organizations, they used their resources to seek positive change, organizing celebrations of African American and minority culture as well as offering a forum for critical debate on campus. The *Mustang Daily* chronicles many of these celebrations, including demonstrations of step dancing, an African American art style with roots in African foot dances. Student and former BSU co-president Shauna Kimball noted that African American groups at Cal Poly continue this tradition.

By 1998, Cal Poly's African American sororities and fraternities were disbanded. Declining African American enrollment at Cal Poly, blamed in part on the passage of Proposition 209, was a key factor. In combination with changes to the ASI Student Organizations framework (which required that 8 or more students were members of any club) and revised GPA requirements set by the CSU Chancellor's Office, the organizations were unable to continue. Current efforts for new African American student clubs include the formation of "Driven Toward Sisterhood," a satellite of a UCSB organization. "Driven Toward Sisterhood" hopes to eventually develop into a branch of the Sigma Gamma Rho sorority, but difficulties in attaining membership challenge their goal.



"A black student at Cal Poly is like being in the middle of the Mojave Desert without any water. We must find a water hole: a way to relieve the tensions in comfortable surroundings."

– Omega Psi Phi president Mark Iles (Mustang Daily 2/3/82)



GREEK EXPERIENCE

B S U OMEGA PSI PHI PRESIDENT

Mustang Daily photo, 1982



MARK ILES

(Graphic Communication, 1983)

Originally from inner-city Los Angeles, Mark Iles recounts having a difficult time transitioning to life in San Luis Obispo, noting that the environment proved uncomfortable for African Americans. He recalled feeling outnumbered and overpowered, believing that his experience at Cal Poly forced him to come to terms with his identity as both an African and an American. He joined the

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity during his freshman year and later was elected president of the Cal Poly chapter.

By 1981 he served as 1 of 3 undergraduates on the national board of the fraternity, and by 1982 he had become the highest-ranking undergraduate official in the country for Omega Psi Phi, overseeing the activities of 256 chapters. Under his direction, Cal Poly's chapter primarily strove to provide a support group for African American students on campus, but also involved themselves in community-service activities and political events. The group helped many African American students succeed at Cal Poly. Iles notes, "If it wasn't for Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, I would have never stayed at Cal Poly. I would have left." Mark Iles graduated in 1983 and currently runs his own printing company in Los Angeles.



for Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, I would have never stayed at Cal Poly. I would have left." Mark Iles graduated in 1983 and currently runs his own printing company in Los Angeles.

Compiled from a 2011 University Archives Oral History Interview by student Andrew Pagan

"When I first came here the attitudes of some people got so bad that it was either leave school or join a frat. I just didn't care for the white community. It didn't meet my social needs."

– Omega Psi Phi president Mark Iles (Mustang Daily, 2/3/82)

BLACK FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION

Cal Poly's Black Faculty and Staff Association, formerly known as the Concerned Black Community (CBC), serves as both a representative and advocate for Cal Poly staff, faculty, and students. In 1976 Robert Bonds, a black administrator, counselor and educator at Cal Poly, began advocating on behalf of students of color regarding discrimination. He later focused especially on the concerns of the Black community of San Luis Obispo and served as the chairperson of the CBC. The CBC's mission was "promoting education, fair and equitable employment, awareness, and sensitivity to black people associated with this university and its educationally charged mission."

In October 1979, the Concerned Black Community was recognized by President Warren Baker as an official campus organization.

One of the CBC's major goals was the implementation of the Campus Affirmative Action Program, which helped increase diversity among faculty, staff, and students. The Cal Poly Black Faculty and Staff Association, formed in 1997, was a result of the restructuring of the CBC. The Black Faculty and Staff Association serves "as a voice in issues regarding the recruitment, retention, and promotion of black faculty, staff, and students."

DONNA DAVIS

– *Cal Poly Student Academic Services, Connections for Academic Success Program Coordinator and Cal Poly EOP Academic Advisor*

Donna Davis, Cal Poly's Program Coordinator for Connections for Academic Success, joined the Black Faculty and Staff Association shortly after beginning her professional career at Cal Poly. Davis became much more involved with the organization in the late 1990s, helping to facilitate the BFSA's name change and has since served as co-chair of the organization.

Davis' leadership, energy, and direction earned the respect of her colleagues on campus, for which she was awarded the co-honor of the 1997 Women of the Year. During her service as BFSA chairwoman she spearheaded the Allensworth Mentoring Program, in which black Cal Poly underclassmen served as mentors to freshmen and high school students, aiding in the retention rate of black Cal Poly students.

Davis' background played a central role in her advising and mentoring of students and the Cal Poly community. In a 2010 interview with the *Mustang Daily*, Davis spoke about her upbringing in Kentucky, at a time and place where Jim Crow laws were active. "I have memories of having to drink from colored-only drinking fountains, going to the movies and having to sit in the balcony." Because of her own experience being mentored by strong women leaders, Davis came to California and was exposed to other cultures and freedoms Kentucky didn't have. "If it hadn't



been for those women who saw potential and took me under their wing, I don't know where I would be." In recent years, under Davis' leadership, the BFSA has shifted focus from faculty and staff interests to issues of black student retention on campus. The association collaborates with members of SBES and the Multicultural Center to address shared concerns and initiatives.

Protest proves Cal Poly's passion

History-making moments sometimes seem to come all at once.

Last week, Cal Poly took to protest, refusing to accept hurtful images that remind us of our nation's intolerant past. Tomorrow, we'll take to the polls to decide our nation's future.

Hundreds of students and faculty took time out of their busy lives to protest in the University Union last Thursday. They stood wearing black shirts, holding homemade signs and had one message to get across: Cal Poly students will not tolerate hate.

Allegations of hateful messages and symbols – including a noose, a Confederate flag and alleged racist sign – displayed at the on-campus crop science student housing building had sparked the uproar.

The students who live in the house and were responsible for the displays were exclusively interviewed by the Mustang Daily. In the interviews, one of them said the displays were “stupid and immature and ignorant,” and another associated the Confederate flag with “rebel youthism,” but neither ignorance nor rebellion are excuses for symbols that had such an infamous role in a painful part of America's history. Anyone who's taken a history class knows better.

Just as these displays can't be dismissed as an ignorant mistake, they can't be passed off as a joke or misunderstanding. We're reminded of the freshman who sent e-mail threats to Cal Poly faculty and students around last Halloween promising a Virginia Tech-like tragedy. That student claimed it was all a “prank,” but to the recipients of the violent and profane e-mails and University Police Department, it was no joke.

In the same vein, a noose leftover from the crop maze paired with a Confederate flag is no laughing matter either. For most people, the flag is still a symbol of racial hatred.

The protests ignited when the New Times reported that a sign saying “No niggers, no fags, no hippies” was displayed at the house. However, the alleged racist sign is disputed by the crop science building students, who claim they've only displayed one saying “no drugs, no hippies, no liberals, no Obama.”

Regardless of what the sign said, the fact remains that the noose and Confederate flag are symbols with hateful enough connotations to cause an uproar by themselves.

The protest, in addition to countless comments and letters to the editor to the Mustang Daily, made it clear that the campus community wants some administrative response to this incident. There have been campus-wide e-mails from President Baker and the horticulture and crop sciences department rightfully condemning the display though no judicial action has been announced.

The e-mails simultaneously supported the students' First Amendment rights to free speech. Though no one condones what they did, the students' rights are constitutionally protected. And as a publication that's entire existence depends upon that very important amendment, we are appreciative of the administration's respect for free speech; we would not want to see these students facing academic or legal reprimand for what they did.

Yet for all their right to say what they want and display whatever

symbols they may, these students should not escape entirely without consequence. The First Amendment grants them the right to free speech; it does not grant the right to subsidized university housing. Living on Cal Poly's campus is a privilege and students who put such a bad face on our university do not deserve to live here.

Think about what the consequences would have been had students hung a noose or Confederate flag from a dorm window. Would they have been allowed to continue staying in the dorms (the same dorms that kick students out all the time for drinking in their rooms, an act which has little to no effect on anybody but themselves)?

If the students involved have not already made plans to leave the crop science housing, the university should require them to. Cal Poly is a university that struggles to be racially diverse; we don't need leniency towards students who openly display symbols of hatred that offend our minorities.

Though we support everyone's right to free speech, in this case we're glad the opposing side came out stronger. When Cal Poly took to protest, it turned hatred on its head and opened up an intelligent discussion. This is exactly what the First Amendment was intended for: when ignorant opinions arise they only give those with an intelligent argument an opportunity to respond and come out victorious.

Rather than combating the alleged hate speech with name-calling or accusations, protesters peacefully convened in the UU, holding signs with statements like “End Racism Now,” “Hate is not a Cal Poly value,” and “Will not stand for intolerance, injustice, inequality, invisibility.”

They called for tolerance and debate rather than a witchhunt.

If only everyone with an opinion could always express it so rationally. Had the crop house students taken the time to write a reasoned-out guest commentary, instead of posting a sign, detailing whatever their

qualms with certain groups or political views may be, this entire debacle would have been avoided.

Had they felt strongly enough about expressing a political view, perhaps they should even have organized a speaker or participated in a debate on campus.

Opinions shouldn't be condensed to stereotypes, slurs or extremist symbols. If you have a view that you are passionate about, be prepared to convey it in a well-reasoned argument. A sign – whether it be actually racist or just bluntly political – has no value if it merely attacks a group of people. At most it will genuinely offend and hurt, at the very least it will drive away the very people you're trying to convert.

Perhaps last week's protests will set a precedent for political action at Cal Poly. Remember that your strongest political statement can be made tomorrow. However you vote, do so with both passion and reason. Too much is at stake in our country's future to let ignorance into the political process.

Marlize van Romburgh is the Mustang Daily editor in chief and Giana Magnoli is the Mustang Daily managing editor. They are journalism seniors.

Though the Mustang
Daily supports
everyone's right to
free speech, in this
case we're glad the
opposing side came
out stronger.

MUSTANG DAILY
OPINION/EDITORIAL

Monday, November 10, 2008

Editor in chief: Marlize van Romburgh
Managing Editor: Giana Magnoli

mustangda

www.mustangdaily.net

Crops house incident: opportunity to improve

So you want to know what happened at the Crop's House?

Here's what we do know: at "the party," there was a confederate flag, a beer pong table with a painted confederate flag and a noose. There is much speculation over the signs, but we have heard reports of both versions ("no Obama, no liberals" and "no ni--ers, no fa--ots, no hippies"). Regardless of what the alleged sign may have said, though, a combination of a noose and confederate flag implies only one thing and I can promise you it doesn't mean a history of the South.

Once the media got a hold of this situation, personal opinions on the outcomes of the students became well known. Some felt that they should be expelled, while others still lack an understanding of "why everyone is so upset." For those of us who have been traditionally marginalized, these words ring true.

Don't know what I mean? Try walking down Marsh Street while a truck full of people shouting "dyke" or "fa--ot" or "ni--er" drive by. Try going into a bar with two gay or black friends and watch the entire place turn to look at you.

Think we live in an equal and welcoming world? Think again.

The groundswell of student activism has been apparent, and I am proud of every person who commented, questioned or engaged in conversation regarding not only the crops incident but on current Cal Poly policy on diversity and inclusion as well.

Ultimately, the six students determined that it was in their best interest to move out of the house. Again, we don't know for sure, but my best guess is that a few of them wanted to remove themselves

from the situation, while others were simply overwhelmed with the attention. There have been several statements issued on behalf of nearly all entities on campus, some more aggressive than others, but at the end of the day one message is clear: Cal Poly does not support hate.

Since the beginning of the media storm, I have met with campus administrators several times a day. I told them that students lack a safe, anonymous place to report incidents of discrimination or inequality. We've talked about academics and I point-

ed out the importance of incorporating a diversity component to each course requirement. With the help of some powerful students, there have been talks about USCP requirements and establishing an ombudsmen office. I have put pressure on the deans, the division of Students Affairs, our university president and fellow student leaders to forego business-as-usual and re-

establish Cal Poly as a safe space for all students and employees.

Make sure to attend the Campus Community meeting on diversity and inclusion discussion on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the main hall of the Performing Arts Center. This student-centered forum will allow any and all persons to communicate their feelings and ask questions of President Warren Baker, vice president of Student Affairs Cornel Morton and each of your college deans. This is a true collaborative effort on behalf of students, staff and faculty.

We will not go quietly — keep fighting for change! The campus is listening...

Angela Kramer is Cal Poly's Associated Students Inc. president and a political science senior.

asi CAL POLY
update

by
ASI President
Angela Kramer



Campus holds diversity forum in wake of student protests



CASSANDRA J. CARLSON MUSTANG DAILY

Due to student and community protests, a forum will be held tonight to discuss diversity issues on campus.

Cassandra J. Carlson and Rachel Glas
MUSTANG DAILY

A forum will be hosted tonight to address concerns and questions stemming from the Cal Poly crops house incident that happened two weeks ago. Associated Students Inc. members, Cal Poly President Warren Baker and student leaders have collaborated to provide a place students can discuss the incident, the ramifications for those involved and future issues regarding campus diversity.

"The main purpose of the forum is to give students input on how to change the campus climate at Cal Poly," graphic communication senior Brad Purpura, an organizer of the event, said.

The free forum will be held in Harmon Hall in the Performing Arts Building at 7 p.m.

Peter Wade, chapter president for the Society of Black Engineers and a city and regional planning senior who is also involved in organizing the forum, said he thinks the campus doesn't support minority students and hopes this forum will create a system to help the administration improve campus diversity.

Kramer agreed.

"We want students to have the opportunity to voice their opinion and feelings and concerns not only about the incident at the crop house but the future of Cal Poly in regards to its diversity policy," she said.

The incident, which involved a noose and Confederate flag hung in close proximity over a balcony of the house, sparked a massive on-campus protest Oct. 30, when *New Times* printed an article and photo about the incident.

Since then, the residents of the crop house have moved out of the house and it appears they no longer work at the crops unit.

"To be the best of my knowledge, the students are no longer hired at the Crops Unit since their living arrangement was linked to their working there," said John Peterson, head of the horticulture and crops sci-

ence department.

When the incident was first reported, many people said that the students involved should be expelled. However, the Cal Poly administration has maintained that the students are protected under the First Amendment.

This is not the first time Cal Poly has dealt with a student's right to free speech.

In 2003, Steve Hinkle, a member of the Cal Poly College Republicans, was charged with "disruption" for posting a flier on the Multicultural Center's bulletin board announcing a College Republicans-sponsored speech by a black social critic. According to a May 2004 report by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, Hinkle fought back and won, and Cal Poly was forced to strike the disciplinary action from Hinkles' record, and to pay significant attorney fees in a settlement of \$40,000.

When reporters from the *Mustang Daily* attempted to discuss these issues with the school's attorney, Leah Kolt, the director of Public Affairs, told them that the administration's discussion with its attorney, Carlos Cordova, was protected under attorney-client privilege.

Some in the campus community are unsatisfied with the university's actions.

"My wish is that the initial response from Provost Koob had been more," said Camille O'Bryant, associate professor and department chair of kinesiology.

She said that she would have preferred that Cal Poly investigated the incident further with respect to freedom of speech, while still disciplining the students.

O'Bryant did offer some positive insight on what Cal Poly can learn from the incident.

"Faculty members have to respect and be more assertive in their commitment to diversity through their curriculum," she said.

Since *The New Times'* initial report of the inci-

see Forum, page 2

WORD ON THE STREET

“What do you think of the Cal Poly administration’s response to the crop house incident?”



“I think that it was appropriate because it’s a freedom of speech issue and if they had done more then they would have been encroaching upon their constitutional rights.”

-Jeff Traugher,
biology chemistry freshman

“I don’t think they should be expelled. But at the same time their actions were inexcusable.”

-Tori Boden,
math sophomore



“I really haven’t been following it enough, but regardless of how they are punished, I think what happened is disgusting. This kind of hate isn’t something that can be cured by any administrative decision.”

-Mary Fischer,
communication freshman

“I think that they should do more. It seems like they should require them to learn more about the immensity of their actions. Volunteering to move out is not enough.”

-Charlene Mills,
philosophy freshman



COMPILED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIDGET VELTRI

A Message from the College of Liberal Arts

The report of the most recent expression of bigotry directed toward students of color and/or within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Trans-gendered (LGBT) community has left many in our college awash in feelings of anger, dismay, outrage, and sadness. Like others in the Cal Poly community, we want "something to be done," and that "something," we believe, should seek not merely to preserve or defend the reputation of the university, but to address the abiding issue of a less than welcoming climate for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff at Cal Poly.

As a result we, the undersigned faculty and staff of the College of Liberal Arts, wish to affirm two cardinal principles:

- The right of every member of the Cal Poly community to the benefits only an inclusive educational experience can provide.
- The right of every member of the Cal Poly community to be free from discrimination, harassment, and fear.

We believe we must explore deeply what the pervasiveness of this "less than welcoming" environment means to those individuals who find themselves targeted as "strangers," as "others,"—not just once or twice, but over and over again—within a learning community purportedly dedicated to their success and well-being.

We believe we must also ask ourselves what the pervasiveness of such an environment means for those within it who denigrate others with hurtful actions or speech, as well as for those of us who wish to create a campus climate free of such denigration. The Crops House incident would seem to present three potential questions for us to consider:

As a university community, what are our responsibilities when hurtful actions or speech are intentional?

What are our responsibilities when they result from thoughtlessness or carelessness?

What do we do if they come from ignorance?

Each of these questions points to a failure on the part of our community to foster the success and well-being of all, and each requires not only our thoughtful consideration, but specific and purposeful action.

We shortchange our students—all of them—when we do not address these failures decisively, for not only are we not preparing them to be informed and thoughtful citizens of a diverse world, we are abdicating our responsibility to speak clearly and firmly to the values we share. As one of the placards at the protest rally on Friday read: "Hate is not a Cal Poly value."

As members of a community we embrace, we, too, wish to be "on the record," as no longer willing to stand, as another placard read, for "intolerance, injustice, inequity, and invisibility." Cal Poly is a fine institution, but this blight of intolerance, injustice, and inequity—together with its insidious insistence that our underrepresented students subside into invisibility—must be rooted out, whatever its cause. We, the faculty and staff of the College of Liberal Arts, commit ourselves as partners in this task.

Keith Abney	James Cushing	Denise Isom	Steven T. McDermott	Al Schnupp
Elizabeth Adan	Denise Daniels	Lorraine Jackson	Korla McFall	Jeffrey Schultz
Teresa Allen	Connie Davis	George Jercich	Patrick Mckim	Ned W. Schultz
Rocio Alvear	Chris Den Hartog	Jennifer Jipson	John McKinstry	Debora Schwartz
Tom Antl	Ron Den Otter	Eric Johnson	Rachel Messner	Tal Scriven
Mary Armstrong	Carolyn Dentler	Terry Jones	Paul Miklowitz	Melanie Senn
Patty Arnold	Robert Detweiler	Eileen Joseph	James Miller	Allen Settle
Jennifer Ashley	Lorraine Donegan	Jasna Jovanovic	Juanita Minor	Kathleen Severn
William A. Ausmus	Kate Dore	Maria Junco	Matthew Moore	Christine Shea
Tim Barnes	Daniel Dove	Corinna Kahnke	Olivia Morales	Linda Shepherd
Michael Barton Miller	Kathy Driscoll	Lisa Kawamura	Kelly Moreno	Lyndee Sing
David Beals	Rachel Duchak	James Keese	Barbara Mori	John Snetsinger
Jennifer Becker	Bernard Duffy	Malcolm Keif	Barbara Morningstar	John Soares
Penny Bennett	Susan Duffy	Alison Keleher	Karen Moro	Diana Stanton
Sky Bergman	Tim Dugan	Harold Kerbo	Andrew Morris	Glen Starkey
Tom Bernard	Linda Eaton	Laura M. King	Karen Muñoz-Christian	Gary Steenson
Richard D. Besel	Dan Eller	Richard Kranzdorf	Patrick Munroe	Lynn Steiner
Chris Bickel	Bud Evans	Daniel E. Krieger	Kathleen S. Murphy	Velanche Stewart
Suzy Black	Kevin Fagan	Devin Kuhn	Lynne Nagahara	Meg Streiff
Jnan Blau	William Feldman	Devin Kuhn	Andrea Nash	Russell Swanagon
Valerie Bluett	Francisco Fernflores	Carie A. Langner	Dawn Neill	Doug Swanson
Mike Blum	Rachel Fernflores	Mary LaPorte	Taryn Okuma	Lisa Sweatt
Greg Bohr	Giancarlo Fiorenza	Gary Laver	John Oriji	Brady Teufel
Linda Bomstad	Basil Fiorito	Jane Lehr	Joel Orth	John Thompson
Margaret Booker	Christina Firpo	Anika Leithner	Jennifer T. Pedrotti	Benjamin F. Timms
Ken Brown	Manzar Foroohar	Harvey Levenson	Michael Pershall	Yolanda Tiscareño
Kurt O. Brown	Kathy Friend	Dan Levi	Marnie Petray	Tom Trice
Shawn Burn	Sheryl Frisch	Patrick Lin	Bob Pinkin	Vince Uhler
Kathy Cairns	Tera Galanti	Debi Linderholm	Sari Pinto	Debra Valencia-Laver
Roslyn Caldwell	Julie A. Garcia	Stephen Lloyd-Moffett	William Preston	Margie Valine
Lewis Call	Annie Garner	Molly Loberg	Elvira Pulitano	Victor Valle
Brad Campbell	Howard Gee	Mindy Lorenz	Tony Rector-Cavagnaro	Jeff Van Kleeck
Jesse Chavarria	David Gillette	Enrica Lovaglio	Jeannine Richison	Catherine Waitinas
Kevin Clark	Richard Graziano	Bill Loving	Robyn Rigoni	Chris Walla
Lisa Coffman	Lou Greenberg	Jody Loving	Mark Roberts	William Walters
James Coleman	Whitney Haas	Elizabeth Lowham	Johanna Rubba	Nancy Jo Ward
James Conway	Ken Habib	Joseph Lynch	Stacey Rucas	Jean Wetzell
Barbara Cook	Linda Halisky	Josh Machamer	Nancy Rucci	Amy Wiley
Terri Cook	John Hampsey	Ken Macro	Kathryn Rummell	Deborah Wilhelm
Kevin Cooper	Mary Kay Harrington	Andrew Maness	Kathleen Ryan	Jason Williams
George Cotkin	Nishan Havandjian	Paul Marchbanks	Donald H. Ryujin	Jean Williams
William Covey	Brenda Helmbrecht	Kathleen J. Martin	Diane Salmon	T C Winebrenner
Judith Cross	David Hennessee	Erin Martin-Elston	Rick Salomon	Grace Yeh
Nancy Cullins	Adam Hill	Charmaine Martinez	Terry J. San Filippo	Jan Zahn
Carol Curiel	Robert Howell	Kathryn McCormick	Elena Scanu	Ning Zhang
	James Howland			

Suarez

continued from page 1

of Public Policy honored him with the 2005 Distinguished Policy Leadership Award.

He earned his master's degree in social sciences from the University of Chicago, and prior to that he earned his bachelor's degree in african history from New York University. Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania has recently awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Suarez is a life member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and a founding member of the Chicago Association of Hispanic Journalists.

The Brooklyn, N.Y. native now lives in Washington, D.C. with his wife and three children.

The free event will begin with a breakfast at 7:30 a.m. followed by a lecture inside Sage Restaurant, formerly Vista Grande Café, at 8 a.m.

Reservations for the event are required and can be made by phone or e-mail at 805-756-0327 and lcofer@cal-poly.edu.

Forum

continued from page 1

dent, several variations of the story have come to light.

Though the article stated that in addition to the noose and Confederate flag, a sign was posted a month earlier that said, "No N--gers, No F-gs, No Hippies," the crops house students and other students who attended the event where the sign was placed, have said this is untrue. They maintain that the sign said, "No liberals, no drugs, no hippies, no Obama."

The students moved out of the house the week after the incident was reported, a move that was voluntary, according to the administration.

Furthermore, the students confirmed to the Mustang Daily that the crops house was already scheduled to be torn down before the incident occurred, and that its demolition has nothing to do with the incident.

The controversy is not an isolated incident; there have been both reactions and other incidents of racial tension throughout the campus and community.

Two signs posted by Jane Lehr, an ethnic studies and women's and gender studies professor at Cal Poly — one stating "Hate is not a Cal Poly value" and the other "Fear of difference is not a Cal Poly value" — were defaced in thick black marker with the words "Sic Semper tyrannis," or "Death to tyrants."

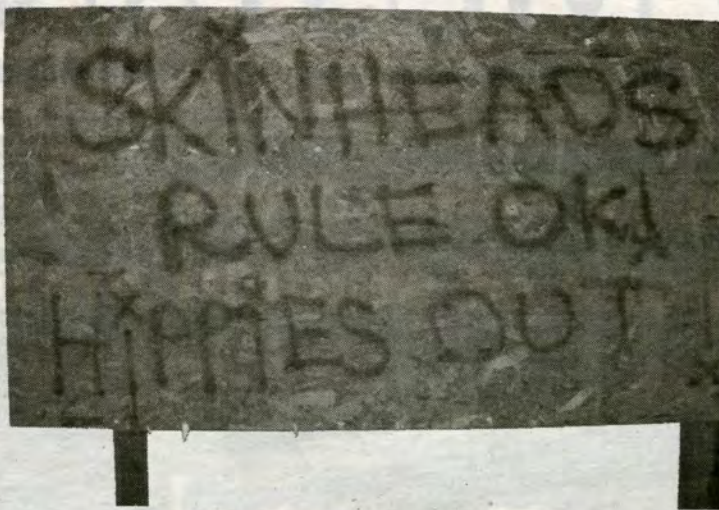
Lehr was unsure of the motives of the defacer, but speculated that "some people maybe are against the Cal Poly community being against this, the tyranny of 'anti-hate,'" she said.

A sign in Los Osos spray-painted with "Skinheads rule OK! Hippies out!" was discovered by a Cal Poly student, who was unavailable for comment.

The sign was originally used as a place for local politicians to cover with campaign signs, and thus, the message could've been there for months, since the sign has been covered due to election season. No community member who spoke with the Mustang Daily knew how long the message had been there or if it is connected to the Crop House incident.

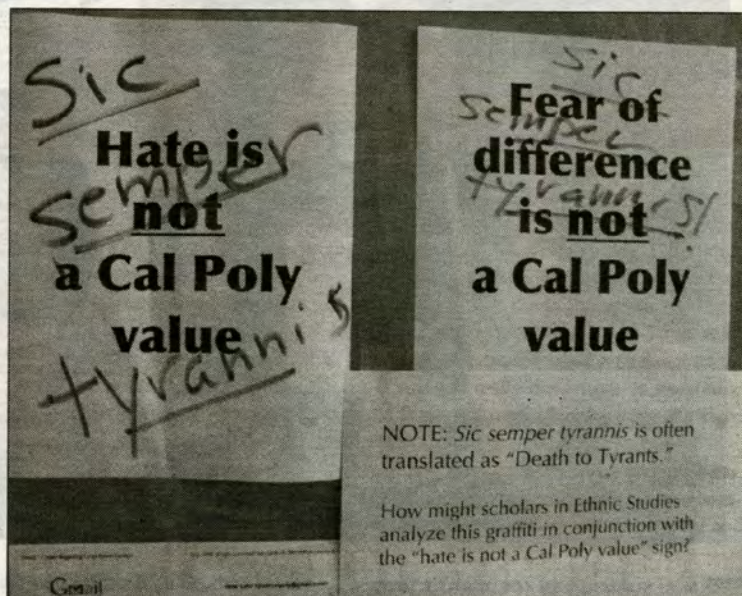
Whether the students eventually face repercussions, Kramer hopes that students will learn from the incident, and take action.

"This will generate momentum — students will help the university to create action plans for change that we can articulate our feeling and goals a little bit better," she said.



CAMAS FRANK
MUSTANG DAILY

A racially charged message was found on a sign in Los Osos earlier this week. The board it was spray-painted on had been covered by campaign signs and no one knows how long the message was there.



CASSANDRA J. CARLSON MUSTANG DAILY

Two signs posted on the door of the ethnic studies department were found defaced earlier this week. There are no suspects.

Comparative Ethnic Studies Department Women's and Gender Studies Department

Cal Poly Crops House Incident

Some social behaviors are considered to be legal, and some are not. Some social behaviors are considered to be just and humane, and some are not. Justice and humanity do not necessarily coincide with legality. The purported behaviors of the residents of the University's Crops House may be considered to be legal, but they are neither just nor humane. Ostracism and disrespect that does psychological and emotional damage to its victims—including the entire Cal Poly community—cannot be condoned, especially in a nation that champions equality and whose strength comes from its very diversity.

We, the faculty of the Comparative Ethnic Studies and Women's and Gender Studies Departments believe that the majority of students in the Horticulture and Crop Science Department, students in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, and students throughout the university do not condone the behaviors that were reported to have taken place at the Crops House. The perpetrators themselves may not have fully understood the seriousness of their actions. Still, the actions of a very few have brought embarrassment and shame to their department, to their college, and to Cal Poly. In some small way, they have made our community and this great nation something less than it could and should be.

We must do better. And we must not forget what happened on this campus. It must change us as individuals and as a community. In this regard, we laud the many students who have gone to rallies, written letters, and attended meetings in order both to protest this incident and to provide direct support for students of color, GLBTQ students, and other members of our community impacted by these alleged behaviors. We must treat each other with more decency, dignity and humanity and we must work to change the practices and beliefs that contribute to these incidents. The faculty and staff of Comparative Ethnic Studies and Women's and Gender Studies are some of the many individuals at Cal

Poly deeply committed on a personal and academic level to inclusivity, respectful behavior and efforts to create a more just and equitable world. Scholarship in our fields suggest that it is only through understanding and knowledge, not ignorance and misinformation, that we will be able to create a university-wide atmosphere that promotes what the President has called "Inclusive Excellence." However, to meet fully the goal of inclusive excellence at Cal Poly, we need the kinds of systemic solutions that come from sustained efforts, not a temporary solution aimed at a single incident, a single department, or a single college. Curricular enhancements and university policies that humanize a polytechnic education may be a starting point.

To conclude, we would like to extend our support and encouragement to every student, faculty and staff member, as well as San Luis Obispo community members, who have felt harmed, threatened, and/or angered by the incident. In all of this, you are not alone. Indeed, faculty and staff in both the Comparative Ethnic Studies and Women's and Gender Studies Departments have felt on a deeply personal, as well as professional level the anger and fear you feel. We cannot say that the atmosphere of Cal Poly will change to be more inclusive overnight, but we hope that the Comparative Ethnic Studies and Women's and Genders Studies Departments, our faculty, and our classes will be a resource in your efforts to find support, empowerment, hope and a voice. We stand beside you. You are not alone.

Sincerely,
Faculty and Staff,
Comparative Ethnic Studies Department
Women's and Gender Studies Department

The Cal Poly History Department is saddened and revolted by the recent display of hatred and intimidation exhibited by the residents of the Crops House. This was not an isolated incident. We must change the campus culture, and effectively confront this bigotry and hatred that continues to alienate and drive away many of our brightest minds.

As historians, we have a professional responsibility to teach members of our community about symbols and ideas that summon the worst moments in the history of our country and other parts of the world. The artifacts of cruelty and spite exhibited at the Crops House are not funny or "rebellious." They constitute threatening reminders of murder, intimidation and exclusion that unfortunately remain a part of our national culture.

We pledge, as historians, to work harder to educate members of our community about America's unfinished mission to provide equality for all and about the real scars that past acts of hatred and brutality leave upon all of us.

We call on all members of the Cal Poly community to move beyond momentary expressions of "shock" and to begin working on lasting ways to instill in every member of our community a true respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings.

We charge our colleagues in university administration to move beyond abstract learning objectives and initiatives to help us devise concrete, ongoing measures to ensure that every member of our community, regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or beliefs, is equally valued here. Programs like PREFACE, campus conferences, dormitory activities, student clubs, and guest speaker series, in addition to class instruction, must be reoriented and utilized to accomplish these goals now. We must find ways to educate our students better about these crucial issues, and teach them to embrace diversity in all of its forms, to hunger for knowledge about cultures beyond their own, and to be courageous in seeking out social justice. These are the values that will make them leaders in this new century.

Tim Barnes	Robert Detweiler	Art Hansen	Dan Krieger	Kate Murphy	Gary Steenson
Lewis Call	Linda Eaton	Craig Harlan	Molly Loberg	John Orijj	Tom Trice
Kathleen Cairns	Christina Firpo	Paul Hiltbold	Sherrie Miller	Joel Orth	
George Cotkin	Manzar Foroohar	Matt Hopper	Andrew Morris	John Snetsinger	

Paid Advertisement

English Department Commentary on

MOVING FORWARD

► **THE CROPS HOUSE INCIDENT** and the open forum on campus climate and diversity illustrate the need for a better understanding of how language and symbols profoundly affect the ways we think about ourselves and others. Our faculty and students closely study the power of words and symbols, and we believe that hanging the confederate flag next to a noose is neither a casual association of items nor a joke.

We seek a path toward a more inclusive future for Cal Poly, and we hope that our campus community will reevaluate the extraordinary power of symbols. For more than a century, the confederate flag has stood for slavery and barbarism; the noose has always stood for murder and vigilantism. We understand that the Crops House inhabitants and their friends may not have been fully conscious of these connotations.

But we also know that a winking acceptance of discriminatory signs and symbols does at least three things: it inflicts permanent, personal wounds on large groups of people; it casts the message that these groups are not welcome in our society; and, perhaps most importantly, it grants collective consent to the worst racists and homophobes who wish to act out their rage.

Only a few years ago, Sakia Gunn was murdered because she told a man she was a lesbian. This year, Brandon McClelland, an African-American, was deliberately dragged to death beneath a truck driven by two white men. It is difficult to imagine that the communities in which these events occurred condone murder, but it is not difficult to imagine these same communities awash in the persistent, casual use of violent, discriminatory language and symbols. Actions are connected to language and symbols, which is why we must be vigilant to ensure that our community doesn't allow symbolically what we would never tolerate in actuality.

While we recognize the power of speech and symbols to destroy, we also firmly believe in the right to free speech. No constitutional tenet is more important to our discipline. We believe, too, in finding the balance between the open, democratic expression of ideas (including distasteful ideas) and the destructive power of words and symbols that threaten, harm, and even lead to violence. We understand that free speech practiced by some can often silence the expression of others, so we're gratified that many people in our community, especially African-American and GLBTQ students and staff, have not been silenced and have instead spoken firmly and eloquently against this incident.

In the spirit of healing and good grace, we look forward to continuing this dialogue with all our friends across campus and with our larger communities.

**The English Department
Faculty and Staff**

Paid Advertisement

SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS & SCIENTISTS

The Cal Poly Society of Black Engineers and Scientists (SBES) was founded in 1978 and according to their bylaws, "seeks to increase the retention and recruitment of African Americans in the sciences, technological, engineering, and mathematics fields." They are now the largest university-recognized African American academic and social club at Cal Poly.



As part of the National Society of Black Engineers, SBES students attend both regional and national conferences run by the national organization every year. Over time, SBES has come to accept a diverse selection of students from different ethnic and academic backgrounds. In addition to working towards the academic success of black students on campus, SBES has moved beyond its official goals to lead a number of cultural programs, including presentations that foster community dialogue, with topics ranging from black skin vs. brown skin to interracial dating. Although their numbers remain small, SBES continues to make significant differences in student's lives and strives to represent African American culture here at Cal Poly.

The Cal Poly Society of Black Engineers and Scientists emerged as a campus-wide leader during the highly polarizing event commonly referred to as the "Crop House Incident." In 2008 the *New Times* published an article describing the display of a noose, a Confederate flag, and an offensive and derogatory sign, which included racist and homophobic slurs at a party held at an on-campus agricultural housing unit called the Crop House. After the incident was made public, the SBES played a vital role in coordinating efforts to represent concerned students. Social networking sites such as Facebook soon spread word of this issue throughout campus and within 24 hours various online groups appeared, criticizing what they considered to be racist acts.

Under the direction of SBES president Peter Wade, SBES led peaceful student protests challenging the Cal Poly administration to take action against the students responsible for the public display. Protestors dressed in black to emphasize their opposition to discrimination and called for a campus-wide forum to address issues of race on campus. The Cal Poly administration and campus departments publicly condemned the incident. President Baker issued an announcement outlining the actions the campus would take, recommending that the Crop House residents voluntarily vacate the house and submit a public letter of apology.

Many voiced concern and opposition to these administrative actions, asking instead for the eviction and expulsion of the students. The students complied with the administration's requests by writing a second letter of apology published in the *San Luis Obispo Tribune* and vacating the house, citing the main reason for leaving as being overwhelmed by the unwanted attention.

Students voiced many different opinions regarding the Crop House Incident. At the time of the incident, many Cal Poly students, staff, and faculty united together to stand against racism. The incident highlighted the often-ignored issues of diversity on the Cal Poly campus, and forced the Cal Poly administration to respond to issues of free speech and racism. The Office of Ombuds was reinstated in February 2010 to provide an "accessible, confidential, impartial, independent and informal resource for all Cal Poly students."

Although in 2008 the Cal Poly administration found the students protected by their right to exercise free speech, a California state law enacted in January 2010 outlawed the display of a noose on someone else's property, at school or at a workplace. University of California, San Diego faced a similar incident in February 2010 with the display of a noose at their library, which was met with similar student protests and campus response.

LEADING

DURING

ADVERSITY



SBES PRESIDENT

Peter Wade transferred to Cal Poly in 2007, pursuing a degree in City and Regional Planning. His first years resembled those of other black students at Cal Poly who came from diverse urban cities such as Oakland, CA, where he grew up. Wade remembers finding it difficult to make friends and find other students he could relate to during his first year. After some time, Wade became involved with the Society of Black Engineers and Scientists while seeking help with math homework. He notes that while involved with SBES he achieved both social growth and academic development. Over time, Wade grew more involved with the organization, becoming president of the club in 2008.



PETER WADE
(City and Regional Planning, 2009)

"I was so overwhelmed... I was just a black student going to a school that at the time was less than 1% African American... to see a lot of students rallying behind you... personally, I've never seen people come together like that."

During the Crop House incident at Cal Poly, Wade--along with the SBES--led efforts to protest racism on campus and draw attention to issues of diversity at Cal Poly. This work took varied forms, from private discussions with campus administrators to public rallies expressing support for minority students. The movement springing from this controversy, while not resulting in the punishment of students responsible for the derogatory Crop House decorations, certainly resulted in establishing a feeling of unity between many students at Cal Poly. Wade, on the anti-Crop House protests, noted "I was so overwhelmed...I was just a black student going to a school that at the time was less than 1% African American...to see a lot of students rallying behind you and expressing support for you...even though they didn't know you...personally, I've never seen people come together like that. It was a big step for Cal Poly." Peter graduated in 2009 and is currently completing graduate work in urban planning at a school in Southern California.

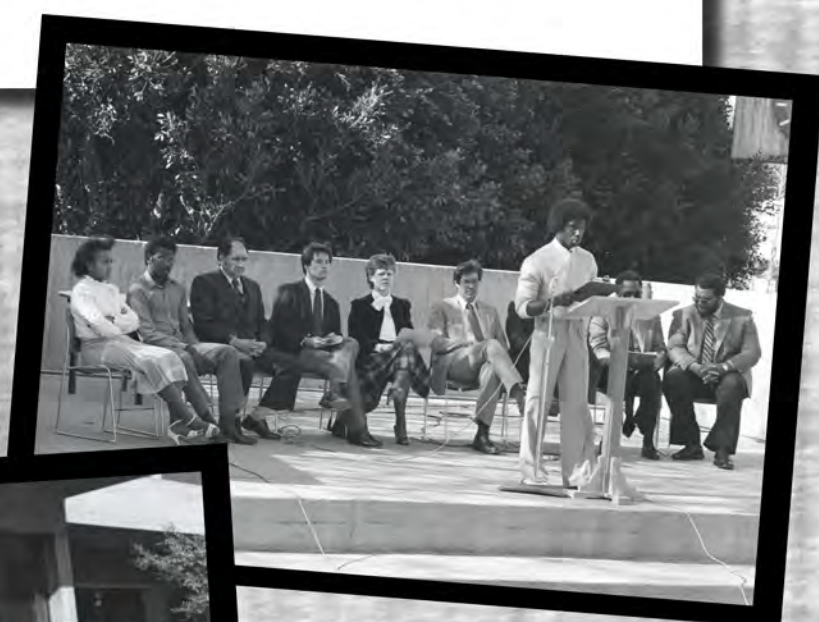
A small group of dedicated and passionate students voiced a need for a centrally located collaborative space to enrich cultural diversity. Forming a Cultural Advisory Committee, they worked with other campus groups and despite an initial lack of funding and staffing, opened the Multicultural Center on January 15th 1981. They sought to provide minority students with a place to celebrate their own cultures while also helping grant "majority" students a greater awareness of different cultures on campus.

Over the years, the Multicultural Center (MCC) has conducted a number of programs oriented towards students of all different backgrounds. They have published numerous issues of *Cultures Magazine* and managed events such as Culturefest and Polycultural weekend, which continue to the present day. The MCC has worked in concert with the Black Student Union and African American fraternities and sororities to coordinate Martin Luther King Day celebrations and organize programs for Black History Month.



The MCC also functions as a center for political discourse, activism, and community dialogue. Recently the MCC co-sponsored a lecture by South African author Mark Mathabane, whose 1986 autobiography *Kaffir Boy* had been the subject of debate at San Luis Obispo High School, when an anonymous parent objected to *Kaffir Boy* being taught in honors history classes.

As their mission notes, the MCC has empowered students with "the resources, skills, and opportunities necessary for academic achievement, leadership development, and purposeful civic engagement while providing them with a safe and welcoming home away from home."



MCC dedication, 1982



**MULTICULTURAL
CENTER AT CAL POLY**

MCC

A CONVERSATION WITH STUDENT ATHLETES



WILL MITCHELL
(Psychology, June 2011)

Will Mitchell, a 5th year Psychology major and Cal Poly football player recalled being surrounded by African Americans during recruiting and summer camp training. "I was fooled that there was a major black culture here." Upon the first day of classes he discovered that he was the only black student in his 600 student Psych 101 lecture in the PAC. He remembers

feeling like white students did not know how to relate to him. "That first class was always a guessing game who would be the first to talk to the black guy." Later, he

took an Ethnic Studies course and could not believe that most students in the class with him had never had a class with an African American student before. Eric Gardley, a 5th year Kinesiology major and Cal Poly football player, remembers suffering intense culture shock when moving from a nearly all black high school in Long Beach to Cal Poly. It took him nearly two years to become accustomed to the lack of diversity in San Luis Obispo and being the only black student in his classes.

Scottie Cordier, an Industrial Technology major and Cal Poly football player, says that the football team functioned as a sort of family, and many older players would serve as mentors to him and the other African American freshmen athletes. He believes his first year would have been a bad experience without support from his friends on the football team. Will Mitchell

SCOTTIE CORDIER
(Industrial Tech., June 2011)

agrees with Cordier, noting that football players "always talk about how we have it easier than most freshmen, because we're able to build a bond with other people early. Through team aspects, we're able to grow closer and faster since we have such a significant commonality in our love and passion for the sport."

Mitchell, Cordier, and Gardley recall instances in which their peers and professors have stereotyped them. Mitchell recounts a typical experience with professors. "How can I say it? In class I don't want to be seen as an athlete. The professors think I don't want to excel because I am an athlete and in particular an athlete of color. Sometimes you have to hide that you are an athlete. I had a professor ask me 'So what team do you play for?' even though I had given no indication that I was an athlete."

Eric Gardley notes that school and football consume so much of his time and energy that he just cannot commit to active membership in a group like SBES. Scottie Cordier spends some time hanging out at the MCC after class, but says really getting involved with cultural clubs on campus is "too demanding" for most black athletes.



ERIC GARDLEY
(Kinesiology, June 2011)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the struggle and accomplishments of former Cal Poly students and administrators whose passion sparked this exhibition:

Robert E. Kennedy, Cal Poly President: 1967-1979

Everett Chandler, Cal Poly Dean of Students: 1950-1978

The student leaders, 1967-1975: **Bob Bonds, Preston Dixon, Fred Johnson, Darryl Bandy, Roger Jones, and Doyle McGhee.** Many of these students continued with their activism and interest in Civil Rights.

The student leaders, 1975-2011: **Shauna Kimball, Brittany Cheaney, Colette Toomer, Will Mitchell, Scottie Cordier, and Eric Gardley.** Alumni: **Peter Wade, Yvonne Scruggs, Mark Iles.**

Campus support: **Donna Davis, Renoda Campbell, and Walter Harris, and Ken Barclay.**

Project Curator: **Catherine J. Trujillo**

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Student Designers: **Joyce Ting**, Art & Design, and **Shanée Ascarrunz**, GrC, and **Quyen Trieu** (2009 exhibit).

The Cal Poly Ethnic Studies Department: We are especially appreciative for the guidance of professors **Denise Isom, Jane Lehr, and Grace Yeh,** and **Victor Valle.**

The Mustang Daily: The reporters from the 1960s and '70s as well as our current campus reporters.

Student scholars: **Andrew Pagan**, History Intern and **Beverley Kwang**, Ethnic Studies. **Josh Harmon** and **Laura Sorvetti** (2009 exhibit).