

Diverse Activities at UCSD Commemorate Life and Achievements of César Chávez

Open to the public, April events include lectures, artistic collaborations, cultural celebrations and more

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The legacy of César E. Chávez, a labor leader and champion of human rights, will be observed with a month-long series of diverse activities during April at the University of California, San Diego. Chávez, a principal figure in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement who defended working families and advocated for nonviolent solutions, will be recognized at UC San Diego with lectures, a roundtable discussion, cultural celebrations, a youth essay contest, a student field trip to Chicano Park and an artistic collaboration with the original muralists who founded the park. All events are open to the public and many are free.

"We are proud to celebrate the life of César Chávez and continue his legacy as we strive to improve our campus climate and the overall diversity of UC San Diego," said Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. "We are grateful for Chávez's tireless efforts to ensure equality for all people and we wholeheartedly support the core values that he embodied."

This year's celebration takes place after hurtful racial incidents occurred on campus. "The strong coalition created by Chicano, African American and other students in order to combat that racism reminds us of the multiethnic United Farm Workers union founded by Chávez in 1962," said Jorge Mariscal, professor of Literature and chair of the UC San Diego César E. Chávez Celebration Planning Committee.

Chávez's birthday, a statewide holiday on March 31, will be observed on UC San Diego's campus March 26. Celebratory and educational activities begin April 8 with a luncheon that will benefit students planning the Latino graduation ceremony in June. At the luncheon, awards will be presented to outstanding alumni and staff representatives and leaders of the Black Student Union for their commitment to social justice both on and off campus. Other events include:

April 12, 10 a.m. at Peterson Hall: Members of the UC San Diego community will join artists Mario Torero and Fernando Vossa at Peterson Hall to create an interactive art installation that celebrates African, Native American and Latin traditions and the importance of art in shaping campus climate. Peterson Hall is home to UC San Diego's community mural, "Chicano Legacy," created by Torero and Vossa. The mural is a collage of vivid images and features iconic figures in Chicano history including Chávez as well as San Diego landmarks such as Chicano Park and the Coronado Bridge.

April 16, 4:30 p.m. at the Cross Cultural Center: Professor Steve Pitti of Yale University and professor Mario Garcia of UC Santa Barbara will join LeRoy Chatfield, a counselor to César Chávez in the 1960s and other scholars and activists for a discussion on how the Chávez legacy speaks to contemporary anti-racist and equal opportunity struggles.

April 22, 3:30 p.m. at the Cross-Cultural Center: William Pérez, an education professor at Claremont Graduate University, will present his new book "We Are Americans: Undocumented Students Pursuing the American Dream." Pérez addresses the implications of neglecting comprehensive immigration reform and the plight of high achieving undocumented students.

April 29, 6 p.m. at Peterson Hall: The César E. Chávez Celebration finale will feature a presentation by popular author and comic artist Lalo Alcaraz. Alcaraz is a cartoonist and multimedia humorist best known for his daily syndicated comic strip "La Cucaracha." He was born in San Diego and grew up in the neighboring city of Lemon Grove. He has drawn for "LA Weekly" and in late 2002, "La Cucaracha" debuted in daily newspapers nationwide.

The month long celebration was coordinated by the UC San Diego César E. Chávez Celebration Planning Committee comprised of student and staff volunteers from across the UC San Diego campus. For further information on César Chávez month activities at UC San Diego visit the website, <http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/chavez>, or call (858) 822-4059.

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