

"Black Mental Health" a documentary featuring the work of the UCSD chapter of the National Black Science Students Organization

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"Black Mental Health," a documentary featuring the work of the University of California, San Diego chapter of the National Black Science Students Organization (NBSSO), will be presented at 7 p.m., Friday, November 24, at the KUUMBA Foundation Southeast San Diego Communications Complex.

The complex is located at 3040 Imperial Avenue in San Diego.

Excerpts of interviews at UCSD with Dr. Frances T. Welsing, Black psychiatrist from Howard University, Washington, D.C., will also be featured in the 35-minute film. Director and producer of the film is Oscar Gandy, UCSD Lecturer in Communications. Executive producer is Paul Simms, UCSD student and past national president of the NBSSO. Filming was made possible through the Office of Learning Resources, UCSD School of Medicine.

The film was originally produced to be shown at the national convention of the NBSSO at the Americana Hotel in New York City October 19-22. The documentary was part of a wide-ranging program of events which included workshops on Black mental health, logistics, diseases largely affecting the Black population, an acupuncture demonstration by doctors from the Republic of China, and interviews with U.S. medical schools, NASA, National Science Foundation, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In addition to the documentary, the NBSSO is conducting a number of other projects. According to Sac Carreathers, National Cochairman of the NBSSO and a student at UCSD, a luncheon with some 70 San Diego high school counselors is scheduled for November 30 at the Sheraton Inn on Harbor Island to discuss the need to increase the number of minority students entering science disciplines at the University. Students will be given tours of UCSD and the medical school facilities and introduced to new kinds of health careers other than the-normal M.D. positions.

A continuing project of the NBSSO is the sickle-cell anemia testing and genetic counseling. Last year, with the help of the Black Action Committee coordinated by Bernard Ashcraft, laboratory technician at UCSD, approximately 5,000 people were tested. Eleven percent were found to carry the trait and 1 1/2 percent found to have the disease.

"The only problem with continuing the project," said Carreathers, "is a lack of funding, particularly to provide assistance for those who are found to have the disease."

On the national level, a project to test for lead poisoning is being developed by the NBSSO. A conference on Black health care with the ministers of several African countries is also being planned.

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