

Community Celebrates César E. Chávez Center

STUDIES: Chancellor, director gives speeches about Chicana/o studies

Byline: Todd Belie

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"The State of Chicano Studies at UCLA" was the topic of discussion as Chancellor Albert Carnesale and Reynaldo Macías, director of the César Chávez Center for Chicana-Chicano Studies in Ackerman Union Wednesday [May 19, 1999].

In addition to speeches made by Carnesale and Macías, the two-hour event covered a wide range of activities including a slide show by Judith Baca, whose artwork appears at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

With Latin music playing in the background and a buffet lined with food and drinks, students visited tables containing information on a number of Chicana/o programs and groups on campus such as La Gente de Aztlán, Raza Woman de UCLA, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana y Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA), and the Latin American Student Association.

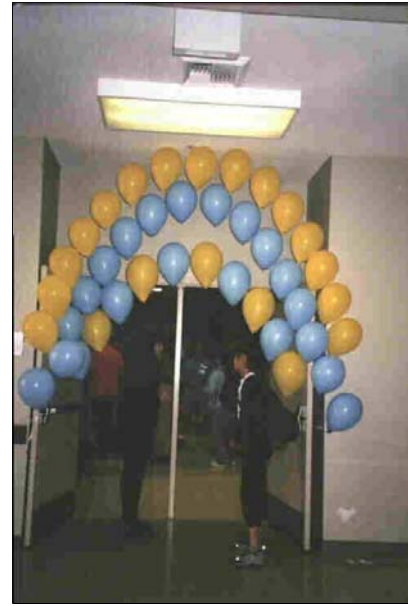
Macías' speech focused on solutions to the continuing struggles faced by Chicana/o programs at UCLA.

"There won't be instant results, but we will build and set a direction for the César Chávez Center," Macías said.

Macías suggested the implementation of a masters program in Chicana/o studies, an increase in the number of undergraduate courses in the field, and also the expansion of fund-raising for scholarships.

This was this first open house Macías, a UCLA alumnus, has attended as chair of the center.

After having met with students and professors



Prof. M. Cristina Pons speaks with a student at the entrance to the Open House



Undergraduate Student Senate Representatives Lina Velasco, Cynthia Acosta, and Li'i Furumoto welcome people to the Open House and discuss the history of UCLA Chicana/o Studies.

earlier in the afternoon, Carnesale spoke briefly about the importance of the César Chávez Center.

"There is a sense of pride we can take in the faculty here that can be measured by anyone's standards," he said.

The chancellor also spoke of the role of the center in the community and its focus in the future.

"The biggest thing the César Chávez Center provides is not for its students, but for others who don't know about its treasures," Carnesale said.

"As a public university we have a responsibility to prepare leaders, and for them to be successful in today's world they had better know more about American culture than just the Revolutionary War," he continued.

Ellie Hernández, a student advisor for the event, discussed the path of the center.

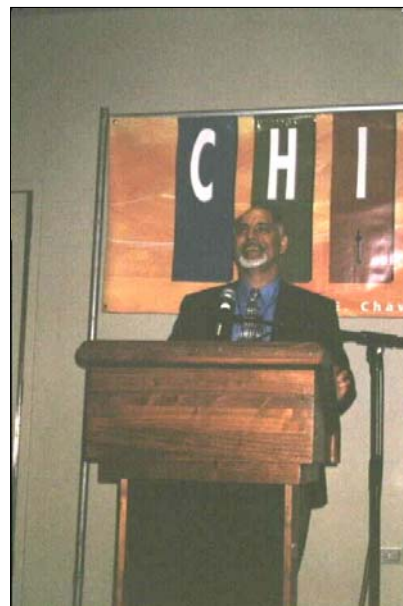
"Today is a great opportunity to show what we've done and what we're going to do in the future," said Hernández.

In addition to the chancellor and faculty, students also spoke during the event. According to Lina Velasco, a fourth-year history student, community involvement was key to the program's success.

"I'm hoping that students, alumni and faculty will see this event as a stepping stone," Velasco said. "It's a way to show the importance of the Chicana-Chicano community to the campus, and to the city."

"It has been successful so far but definitely needs more ties to the community to solve the problems of poverty, gangs and language barriers that are found in minority groups."

Marc Mayerson, assistant dean of social sciences also spoke to students about his personal memories of César Chávez.



Chair Reynaldo Macías discusses the direction and future of the Center



A large audience of UCLA faculty, alumni, staff, graduate students, and undergraduates review the program.



"With his cause and his publicity, César Chávez opened my eyes to the lives of farm workers in California," Mayerson said.

"He showed us that these lives mattered because they had a unique American experience, that there was a history and a future for these people."

Mayerson related Chávez's life to the roles of the center named on his behalf.

"We do not have a César Chávez Center because it is fashionable or for the legacy - we have it because it matters. A Chicana and Chicano studies program has to be a part of a university that bears the names of both Los Angeles and California."

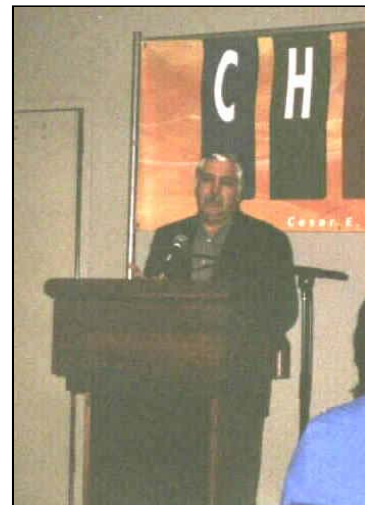
MEChA Chair Henry Pérez reminds audience of the significance of Chicana/os in the university.



Professor Macías in conversation with UCLA Chancellor Albert Carnesdale.



Professor Otto Santa Ana speaks with student.



Professor Guillermo Hernández, Director of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, says a few words.



Guests of the Open House enjoy the tasty range of treats and food!



Latina/o student organizations
distribute information about groups
and upcoming events



Academic Personnel Coordinator
Elena Mohseni distributes information
about the Center & the Chicana/o Studies
major and minor.



Administrative Assistant
Gretchen Baumhover welcomes
students, guests, and faculty at the door.

