

A FORMER STUDENT COMES HOME

New Chávez Center Chair Named

By DIANA DE CARDENAS. UCLA TODAY. Vol 19, No. 5. Oct 28, 1998.
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As an undergraduate student at UCLA in the late '60s, Reynaldo F. Macías was part of a student group that led the effort to establish a research center and academic program in Chicano studies. Nearly 30 years later, Macías is the newly appointed chair of the Cesar Chávez Center for Interdisciplinary Instruction in Chicana and Chicano Studies. He replaces Raymund Paredes, associate vice chancellor of Academic Development, who served as interim chair since fall 1996.

“One of the significant attractions in accepting this position was the opportunity to return to UCLA and help build the program in Chicana and Chicano studies through the Chávez Center, which is certainly very exciting and challenging,” said Macías, who was the first graduate-student chair of the student group MEChA at UCLA. “Chicano studies has come a long way in the last 30 years; there has been a tremendous explosion of research, teaching and publications that have clearly established it as a legitimate and burgeoning field of study.”

A prominent education and socio-linguistics scholar, Macías specializes in bilingual education, educational history and policy analysis, literacy, language demography, teacher preparation and multicultural curricular issues. He has written numerous books and authored hundreds of articles on Chicanos in higher education, bilingualism, language minorities and the changing demographics in schools.

“We are extremely fortunate to have Professor Macías join the faculty of UCLA, and I’m confident he will make an outstanding contribution to Chicano studies,” said Scott Waugh, dean of Social Sciences. “His broad expertise in a variety of fields adds to the overall mission of the center and will help integrate the center into the intellectual and instructional activities of the campus as a whole.”

Prior to returning to his alma mater, Macías was a professor of education at UC Santa Barbara and director of the nine-campus University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. From 1982 to 1992, he taught at the University of Southern California, where he served as director of the Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research.

Macías hopes to bring international prominence to the Chávez Center by establishing the country’s premier program in Chicano studies. Among his many goals at UCLA are to incorporate community service and applied research into the Chicano studies curriculum - through internships, learning experiences, student-initiated programs and utilizing education abroad programs.

His immediate plans include working with the faculty, students, community leaders and the various constituencies involved with the Chávez Center in establishing common goals.

“To be chair and really provide leadership involves understanding the needs of all those individuals who have an interest in the center and have a stake in its success,” Macías said. “I want to make sure the faculty are very much involved in continuing to set the direction of the center, as well as the students and community members who play a big role in creating it.”

Since the establishment of the Chávez Center in 1993, the university has appointed seven core faculty to the center, representing such disciplines as linguistic anthropology, urban planning, popular culture, education, Los Angeles history, art and muralism. Fourteen new courses have been added to the curriculum, bringing to 42 the number of courses in Chicana and Chicano studies offered at UCLA.

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