HELLO FROM ZAVEENI!

Dear MCC Staff Alumni and Friend,

It is with pleasure we send you an Alumni Newsletter to keep you informed about the UCSB MultiCultural Center. All of you were valuable staff members and we know that the Center played an important role in your lives at UCSB as well. During your tenure here, you had a substantial impact serving to remind us all that what the MCC stands for is much bigger than each one of us. As we continue to work here, we are mindful of the MCC’s long history, as well as the foundation we all stand on that was created by many of you and other students who were deeply invested in the MCC. So thank you all for the tremendous contributions that you made to the Center and I am confident that you will continue to advocate for social justice and equality. I am happy to report that the MCC still continues to be a highly visible and vibrant space on campus.

The past year has been painful for all of us as we witnessed police brutality and violence toward people of color occur throughout the nation. At the MCC we continue to be proactive in raising critical consciousness and facilitating critical dialogue throughout the year in the face of injustice. In keeping with our intent of being inclusive, we were instrumental in creating a support group for the transgender community. The MCC continues to be a home away from home to many UCSB students. In the staffing front, we had three temporary staff members who had a deep impact on the MCC. Leida Tolentino and Kelsey Thibodeau conceptualized and presented several outstanding seasons of events, while Marwa El-Abbadi stepped in as the Acting Student liaison and was truly an asset to the MCC.

During the upcoming year, we look forward to continuing the work that promotes the mission of the Center. Our Student Assistants will begin working in September following a two-day training retreat, and the MCC Council will continue to engage all our affiliated student organizations. We will have a permanent programmer in the Fall and we are lucky to have a publicity/marketing coordinator, Carol Dinh, who has taken our publicity to a higher level with a heightened presence on social media and visibility in this community. I am deeply grateful to our Office Manager, Enma Elias, who continues to inspire our student staff and keeps the Center intact.

Thank you as always for your support. Occasionally I hear from some of our Alumni and I am always touched by their attachment to the MCC. On a personal note, my son Ziyad just graduated from UCLA with a BA in Ethnomusicology and my son Ari just completed his first year at Stanford University. I feel blessed and proud. Please do also keep us posted about your own work and life.

Sincerely,

Zaveeni Khan-Marcus
NEW STAFF MEMBER PROFILE: CAROL DINH

Hi everyone! My name is Carol Dinh and I was born and raised in Orange County. I graduated from UCSB two years ago with degrees in Global Studies and English and decided to stay in Santa Barbara. I have previously worked in a wine marketing, media, and magazine company (so don’t be shy if you have any questions about wine). I’m excited to begin a new chapter here at the MultiCultural Center as I’ve always been passionate about social justice and multiculturalism. With my skills in digital marketing and graphic design, I look to increase the MCC’s visibility and recognition on campus as well as outreach to the greater community about our amazing events and space. Outside of work, I enjoy road trips/traveling, dancing, Zumba, trying different foods, wine tasting, concerts, movies, reading, puppies, and more! If you have any questions or would just like to talk, please feel free to contact me at carol.dinh@sa.ucsb.edu! I would love to meet you!

“I’ve always been passionate about social justice and multiculturalism.”

MCC STAFF

During the 2014-2015 school year the MCC had 53 total user groups. These groups, whose missions are complementary to that of the MCC, are integral to our department. Collectively, they host hundreds of meetings, performances, mixers, and other events each quarter, many of which take place at the MCC itself. These events, such as the Pan-African Culture Night and the MultiCultural Drama Company’s annual show, help make the MCC the vibrant and active space that it is.

Further, every year we have a bi-weekly MCC Council meeting open to all of the user groups where we examine topics related to campus climate as well as broader social issues. One of the successes that came out of the MCC Council this year was the creation of the Police Brutality Task Force.

The 2014-2015 MCC Council culminated in the Spring Town Hall, a fabulous event attended by many members of each user group. The Town Hall participants discussed and celebrated the accomplishments of the past year, connected with one another through games, and envisaged possible future changes to continue to improve the Council. Overall, the MCC was kept hopping by this year’s vivacious and lively bunch of user groups!

MCC STUDENT USER GROUPS

MCC DONATIONS

For over 2 decades the MultiCultural Center (MCC) has been committed to presenting cutting-edge programs, fostering diversity of expression, and providing a public forum/safe space in the struggle against exclusion and discrimination. We have strived to inspire and stimulate thousands of UCSB students, community members, and local organizations to build relationships across differences.

In the coming year, we will be challenged in our work given the current state of the economy and resultant budget cuts. But the MCC needs your support now more than ever. Supporting the MCC has become even easier with online giving! Working together, we all can make a difference for the years to come.

To make a donation: Go to http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/giving/, click on the "You may make your gift online" link. Then scroll down the online giving page to the drop down menu and select "MultiCultural Center" from the list of giving options. Questions? Contact Catherine Boyer at Student Affairs Grants and Development at (805) 893-5037 or Catherine.boyer@sa.ucsb.edu.

For more information about giving to UC Santa Barbara, go to www.ucsb.edu.

[Top left: Guadalupe and Mohsin show their love for the MCC. Top right: Judith excitedly prepares a cheese platter for a reception. Bottom: Anumita, Judith, and Guadalupe share a moment before the MCC’s Spring Town Hall.]
THE TRANSGENDER INITIATIVE

In the past few years, positive public visibility of transgender people has significantly increased. Icons such as Laverne Cox, Janet Mock, and Caitlyn Jenner have become household names, which, in theory, should bring an increased normality to the transgender experience. However, the reality of most trans lives is drastically different. Transgender people still face extremely high levels of job discrimination, with the vast majority of states legally allowing them to be fired solely on the basis of their gender identity. Furthermore, both general and trans-specific medical care is very much inaccessible to most trans people. The suicide rate for trans people is disproportionately high, as is the rate of violence towards transgender women of color, and transgender students commonly report being harassed or assaulted in school, even on college campuses.

In response to these dire circumstances, the MCC, in collaboration with UCSB’s Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity (RCSGD) and with help from various other departments, has been working on an initiative to provide resources for transgender people on campus.

We kicked off the initiative with an open house, extending invitations to transgender people and cisgender people from all across campus and the community. The open house brought over forty individuals ranging from high school, UCSB, and Santa Barbara City College students to professors, medical doctors, and everyone in between. Afterward, Dave Whitman, the director of the RCSGD, reinstated the Trans* Task Force, a team dedicated to improving the lives of trans people both on campus and in the community. The MCC has been closely involved in the task force. Some projects we have taken on include creating a mentorship program for younger trans students, increasing the number of gender neutral bathrooms, creating a self-defense class for trans women, and much more.

Additionally, we developed a transgender support meeting group, hosted weekly by an MCC staff member. This group has been a great success in bringing together the trans community, with regular attendance by transgender students, staff, faculty, and unaffiliated community members. The group is a valuable way for trans people to discuss their experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

By providing these resources for the transgender community, the MCC hopes to have an impact on the lives of this highly marginalized community. We hope that by fostering a supportive community on campus, we can help make the world a safer and more accepting place for transgender people as a whole.

This chalk recreation of Norman Rockwell’s famous The Problem We All Live With, by Delphine Anaya, adorned the wall of the MCC Meeting Room this year.

Our lovely office manager Enma always finds something to smile about every day. Here, she is seen talking on the phone with accounting, helping a student group reserve the theater, and assigning schedules to the student assistants, all while staying on point for the camera. Go Enma!
Review of 2015 Events

THE NARCYCIST—A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

On May 29, hip hop MC Yassin “Narcy” Alsalman AKA The Narcycyst, along with his longtime friend and fellow artist Omar Offendum, performed a stunning multimedia concert at the MCC. This show was the premiere of Narcy’s new album, *World War Free*, which was a great cause for excitement among the students, many of whom were longtime fans of both Narcy and Omar. Among the songs Narcy performed were “Hamdullilah” and “PHATWA.”

Following the performance, there was a question and answer session between the audience and the artists. One audience member asked how the artists’ parents reacted to their decision to pursue rapping as a career. Both Narcy and Omar described how their parents were initially not very enthusiastic about their life decisions, but came around once they saw how successful and talented their sons were. Another audience member, a teaching assistant at UCSB, asked about Narcy’s experience using Hip Hop as a tool for education. Narcy explained how he taught his class at Concordia University entitled “Hip Hop: Past Present, and Future” in a way that facilitated dialogue and empowerment through Hip Hop music and culture.

“An incredible performance that had over 500 people bouncing, bopping, and boogieing.”

ANA TIJOUX—MCC BRINGS THE PARTY

On April 24th, 2015, the MCC brought Grammy Award-winning Chilean MC Ana Tijoux to perform at the UCSB Hub. In an incredible performance that had over 500 people bouncing, bopping, and boogieing, she took the idea of socially conscious art to the next level. She performed songs such as “1977,” “Vengo,” and “Somos Sur,” my personal favorite. Her lyrics contain hard-hitting messages about topics relating to politics, feminism, and colonialism, while also expressing vulnerability, discussing personal loss, friendship, and grief. Overall the performance was a resounding success that brought students, community members, and even many people from out of town together for not just a musical performance, but a celebration of our shared humanity.
MISSION STATEMENT

In 1987, UCSB students of color, who were then severely underrepresented at the University demanded the creation of a hospitable and safe space for their use. Such a space was intended to facilitate the retention and recruitment of students of color and to combat institutional racism and ethnocentrism. These aims were to be realized in part through educational programming, which would promote changes in attitudes and behaviors throughout the campus community.

Out of this initial impulse and the ensuing dialogues among students and allied faculty and staff, the MultiCultural Center was born. Students of color joined with international students to share a space, which, it was hoped, would realize these initial demands, and increase communication among people of different cultures. In time, recognizing the need to be inclusive of diverse value orientations, the MCC mission was broadened to include combating racism, sexism, and heterosexism.

UCSB struggles today with the same problems which necessitated the formation of the MCC. The MCC and concerned students, faculty, and staff continue to resist and confront these persistent forms of group oppression. In addition to continuing to provide a safe space for students of color, international students, and gay, lesbian, and bisexual students, the MCC serves as a bridge to the entire campus community. To that end, the MCC offers a broad spectrum of events including lectures, panel discussions, films and videos, musical, dance, and dramatic performances, and poetry readings, which are all open to the general public.

It is vital that the MCC always remain an autonomous site under the direct control of the MCC Board, composed of students, staff, and faculty. The MCC strives to support student activism and maintain a mutually supportive relationship with its student users, as they work together in pursuit of a more just society.

—The MultiCultural Center Board
April 20, 1995

THE COUP—AN EXCITING EVENING

On February 20, 2015, Oakland-based funk band The Coup gave a very memorable, high-energy performance at the MCC. Their lyrics encapsulate both a sense of community and empowerment, along with intense cultural and societal critiques, often within the same line. For example, in their song “Laugh/Love/F***,” they sing “Laugh, love, f***, and drink liquor – and help the damn revolution come quicker!” This, along with songs such as “Magic Clap” and “5 Million Ways to Kill a CEO” had the audience, already squeezed tightly into our theater, bouncing around in the aisles and between the seats for the entire performance.

After the show, we hosted an open discussion between Aaron Jones, UCSB’s Assistant Director for Community Affairs, and Boots Riley, the lead singer of The Coup. They discussed the ongoing trend of different entities (e.g. individuals, institutions, corporations, etc.) attempting to prevent musical events by black performers and/or for black audiences. Boots recalled how, when performing in the Bay Area during the 1990s, he often ran into trouble with police frequently shutting down his shows, particularly when the audience was primarily black. However, when he performed for mostly white crowds or alongside white performers, he rarely encountered such issues from law enforcement. He articulated that throughout American history, law makers and enforcers have constantly tried to suppress expressions of black art, culture, and community, a suppression that remains prevalent today. Because of this, it is vital that we continue to fight for these events to happen as they allow us to build a strong and empowered community.