

Aztec Culture Education Committee Ideas Report Draft August 2018

ORIGINAL CHARGE/FRAMWORK

A committee of cross campus partners including faculty, staff and students was formed at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year to work on and develop a comprehensive Aztec culture educational plan. As a result of the committee meetings, a number of proposed initiatives were identified.

The charge of the group and the basis of the conversations have revolved around fulfilling prior commitments made by the campus, as an example:

Associated Students Referendum Spring 2008, passed

Implementation of an Aztec Culture Project. The Project will include three elements intended to promote historically accurate portrayals of the Aztec Culture: new botanical gardens around the campus that include indigenous plantings from areas where the Aztecs thrived, a glass-mosaic mural that depicts historically accurate images portraying the origins of the Aztec Culture, and educational programs about the Aztec Culture that would be offered to all new SDSU students

As the committee incorporated the recognition of the University's relationship to local Indian groups as well as other indigenous groups from Mexico that comprise the larger University community. To begin prioritizing ideas and potential campus efforts, the following framework has been created from the current committee's discussions, to categorize the overarching topical areas and objectives identified to date:

San Diego State University will enrich the environment and deepen campus learning, both inside and outside the classroom, by enhancing Aztec Culture Education knowledge and understanding by strategically:

- **Expanding opportunities for scholarship regarding Aztec Culture, as well as local indigenous and Native American groups, through innovative courses, experiences, and engagement. (Curricular)**
- **Creating and fostering environments that provide opportunities for students, faculty, staff and the community to participate in intentional experiences regarding Aztec and other indigenous and Native Cultures outside of the classroom. (Co-Curricular)**
- **Establishing and promoting Aztec Arts and Culture on campus and beyond the university through installation of art displays and cultural event opportunities. (Arts and Culture)**
- **Producing an appropriate messaging and a communication plan to highlight and make visible the Aztec Culture Education programming that honors their culture and history along with recognition of the many other indigenous and Native groups of the region. (Communication Plan)**

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Curricular	Co-Curricular	Arts and Culture	Communication Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language course(s) • University Historian • Online Education Program • Current course offering list • Potential course enhancement and development program through the Provost's office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker Series including Panel discussions • Online Education Program • Athletics – athlete training; images; and fan education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art displays • Music & Dance • Art or mural commissioned • Healing Garden • Aztec names: definition/description of Aztec Names used on campus (at site of use &/or archived) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online platform – easy access to educational information • Published materials • Scripts for events • Social Media • Messaging

COMMITTEE IDEAS MOVED FORWARD:

1. NAHUATL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING

COMPLETED – OFFERED SPRING 2018

Overview

The Nahuatl language remains one of the most dominant indigenous languages of the Mesoamerican region and is situated within the valley of Mexico and extends to El Salvador. It was the official language of the ancient people commonly known as Aztecs by scholars of preContact Mesoamerica. Today, it is estimated that there are 1.5 million Nahua speakers of Nahuatl. The course sequence for Nahuatl at San Diego State University would rest on the coursework developed by Dr. John Sullivan through the Instituto de Docencia e Investigación Etnológica de Zacatecas (IDIEZ) and the Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies at Yale University. The online and live streaming course is supported through a cooperative of universities to include UCLA, Stanford, University of Utah, University of Michigan and Yale. SDSU has the opportunity to join the cooperative, known as the Western Alliance for Nahuatl (WAN), by providing access to our existing Mixtec language program to the partners. The WAN provides shared course activities, projects, and online materials in addition to those provided by the IDIEZ.

Structure

The potential course offerings from IDIEZ would encompass up to four semesters and the opportunity for winter, spring, and summer immersion programs (study abroad) in the Huasteca in central Mexico. Courses would be broadcast through Zoom and the SDSU course listings would be offered at the same hour as the live instruction. SDSU would provide a Teaching Assistant with advanced Nahuatl language skills that would be available during the course broadcast, hold office hours, and provide feedback on course activities. Suggested course capacity is a maximum of 25 students. In addition, we would need to sponsor one of the Nahuatl instructors to come to campus for one week to work with students, the TA, and the larger campus to assure that the language instruction includes appropriate culture

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learning.

Timeline

Depending on the notification of approval for funding, formal incorporation into the Course Catalog would take two years.

The courses would be offered as LATAM 130 Elementary Nahuatl; LATAM 131 Elementary Nahuatl II; LATAM 230 Intermediate Nahuatl I; and LATAM 231 Advanced Intermediate Nahuatl. A three semester sequence for Nahuatl would fulfill the foreign language requirements for SDSU. Participation in the live streaming course can take place on very short notice and could be offered as a Special Study while the courses undergo formal curricular approval process.

2. UNIVERSITY HISTORIAN

COMPLETED – NAME CHANGED TO UNIVERSITY HISTORY CURATOR/DR. SETH MALLIOS OFFERED AND ACCEPTED ROLE

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT/DESCRIPTION FROM PROVOST FOR NEWLY NAMED ROLE:

As a part of our effort to document the history and culture of San Diego State University, I am inviting applications for the newly created position of University History Curator.

The University History Curator will provide expertise in research, teaching, development, and leadership to further an understanding of the history and culture of San Diego State. The appointee will be formally associated with the University Library Archives, rare book collection and special collections areas of the library, and will work collaboratively with the Dean of the Library and colleagues campus-wide.

The appointee is expected to perform the following duties:

- Collaborate (or liaise) with Special Collections and University Archives to procure or transfer historical artifacts, historical documents and other items of university history
- Author articles, books, monographs and other items that document the university's history
- Develop educational materials, lectures, seminars, workshops, etc., and present same to persons within and outside the university using a variety of formats including online teaching
- Advance an understanding of the history and culture, of SDSU
- Serve as the go-to person for SDSU's history
- Perform other special historical responsibilities as assigned
- Work with Alumni Association on celebratory events, anniversaries, etc.
- Be on call for media requests involving university events, issues, etc.

ORIGINAL UNIVERISTY HISTORIAN WRITE UP BELOW FOR REFERENCE

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Overview

A university historian provides the institution of higher education with essential campus expertise in research, teaching, development, and administrative capacities.

Purpose

Responsibilities of the University Historian role would include:

Research

- Publish books and articles on campus history

Teaching

- Develop online training course for all students, faculty, and staff on essentials of SDSU cultural history; includes vignettes on Aztec culture education and spirit leader (mascot) issues

Development

- Write regular column for *360 Magazine*
- Lead tours for campus dignitaries
- Work frequently with Alumni Association on celebratory events, anniversaries, etc.
- Be on call for media requests involving university events, issues, etc.

Administrative

- Serve as an objective arbiter of internal disputes that involve campus history, traditions, symbols, etc.
- Contribute as researcher, team member, and expert witness for external issues that involve campus territories and expansion, strategic plans and vision, community impact, etc.

3. ONLINE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

IN PROCESS

Curriculum &/or content currently being developed/technology needs and products being investigated/budget available. Desire is to pilot a version in the Spring 2019 semester.

Overview

To educate campus community members regarding the University's connection and history with Aztec culture and to assist our community with the choices they make when representing a culture. The education program will help to also educate about SDSU Aztec history and to ensure our cultural connections with the Aztec Culture and other indigenous and Native American cultures and histories are treated with honor and respect. Significant effort would be placed on representing the Aztec

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culture in appropriate ways while explaining the intentional and unintentional activities that minimize a culture.

Purpose

Provide an opportunity, through an online educational program, to students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members that will educate them regarding Aztec culture. The online education can be integrated into University Seminar courses, Recognized Student Organization trainings, including Advisor trainings, potentially offered at new employee orientation, etc.

4. CAMPUS AZTEC CULTURE EDUCATION SPEAKER SERIES

To be completed, further development and conversations need to occur with the appropriate campus community members. We believe this could be a very doable project to complete. We could contract an appropriate speaker for second semester of 2018-2019.

Overview

Create an ongoing educational series regarding Aztec culture and SDSU's connection to Aztec culture

Purpose

Collaborate with One SDSU series, the Provost and Latin American Students, Love Library and the Aztec Student Union Programming Board to regularly bring speakers and speaker panels to SDSU to discuss Aztec culture and SDSU's ongoing relationship to Aztec culture. In addition, speakers and panels may also be developed that demonstrate SDSU's commitment to recognizing the many other indigenous groups that form the larger SDSU community. Key speakers and/or speaker panels will be identified through campus partners and connected to diversity programming and campus speaker programs. These partnerships could include One SDSU Community programming, the Love Library Speaker Series, the Provost's speaker series, and others.

Timeline

Each semester a committee will plan for at least one speaker or panel to discuss Aztec culture and address realities and the myths associated with the culture. The plan takes place at least the semester before the event but may be planned an academic year in advance. The event would follow the One SDSU Community marketing guidelines and timelines.

5. ATHLETIC INITIATIVES

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Overview

It is important for Athletics to continue to educate its student athletes and fans regarding Aztec Culture to enhance their collective experience and knowledge of the University's moniker. Additionally, the student representing the Aztec Warrior (Spirit Leader) will receive continuing education, to remain historically accurate in representing Aztec Culture in a positive manner.

Classroom Education

IN PROCESS/began in Fall 2017 with Dr. Seth Mallios providing a lecture to the athlete sections of university seminar. Plans to provide this lecture again in future semesters are in process.

A program (lecture) for all freshman and sophomore student athletes in the first semester so that they can best understand Aztec Culture. This should include, but not be limited to, information provided by the Athletic Department on the symbolism of the Aztec logos and Aztec history and culture provided by a University professor.

Aztec Warrior

Needs further discussion and understanding of University plan moving forward

It is important that the University refer to the Aztec Warrior as a "Spirit Leader" rather than a "Mascot". The word mascot demeans the culture, while Spirit Leader would best relate back to the culture and education provided to our students and fans.

Information Sheet (Fan Education)

COMPLETED – Included in season ticket holder mailings

Create an information sheet on the history of Aztec Culture, to be included in the information sent to all season ticket holders.

Program Ad

To be completed, the appropriate campus constituents need to be consulted and conversations need to be had. Needs to be part of a comprehensive communication and marketing campaign.

The Athletic Department would provide ¼ page ad space to the University to promote a link for further education on Aztec Culture.

6. AZTEC PRIDE AND CULTURE

To be completed, further development and conversations need to be had to accomplish.

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Overview

To help create Aztec Pride and Culture messaging and opportunities for Alumni and community members that will help to educate, inform and create opportunities to represent Aztec Culture accurately, respectfully and consistently.

The Alumni Association presented this concept to the Alumni Executive committee for feedback.

As a result of the conversation the board suggested:

- Hearing from focus groups on this issue
- Education with purpose, telling the accurate SDSU story, consistently to alumni and the community (360 magazine, social and online media platform, etc) **Recent 360 magazine article**
- Considering an alumnus of indigenous background as a board member to offer perspective on these important issues. **Completed: This fall the Alumni Association is welcoming alumnus Sam Brown, '96, to our Alumni Board of Advisors. Sam serves as the Viejas Tribal Treasurer.**
- Utilizing the SDSU Alumni communication platforms for education and messaging on this issue. **The following is in progress:**
 - We have begun to build our online resource/library for our various ACEC topic and info at sdsualumni.org/AztecCulture. This page is not yet public, but can be viewed at the link.
 - Aztec Culture information and resources have been added to our official SDSU Alumni app.

IN PROGRESS: We are in the early stages of partnering with the university's Study Abroad program and others to offer international travel and learning opportunities for Alumni focused on Aztec culture and history in Mexico next year.

7. ART, MUSIC AND CULTURE PROJECTS

To be completed, further development and conversations need to be had to accomplish. Again, working with the correct campus and community entities, we think portions of this are very accomplishable in the 2018-2019 academic year. We may also want to consider ways in which local tribes and indigenous organizations are featured in order to assure that the many contacts and influences of the Aztecs are understood within the larger context of their empire.

Overview

Create ongoing educational and performance opportunities for Aztec culture from the perspective of Art, Music and Language.

Purpose

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Collaborate with One SDSU series, Arts Alive, the Provost and Latin American Students, Love Library and the Aztec Student Union Programming Board to regularly provide Aztec art, music and language opportunities for the SDSU community. Key speakers/performances, art displays will be identified through campus partners and connected to current curricular and co-curricular offerings. These partnerships could include One SDSU Community programming, Arts Alive programming, Theater department performance offerings, the Love Library Speaker Series, the Provost's speaker series, Common Experience and others.

The Associated Students, Aztec Student Union Board (ASUB) has created a sub-committee currently called the "Beautification Committee". This committee is creating a multiple year plan to bring more pride into the student union through permanent facility enhancements as well as traveling exhibits and other events.

Proposed ideas to enhance Aztec Culture and Education in a culturally appropriate manner:

- Commissioning an artist to create an Indigenous or Aztec Mural within the Aztec Student Union
- Traveling Art Displays
- Music and Dance performances
- Creating plaques, pictures and education for the Aztec Student Union 2nd Floor Conference and Event rooms which have Aztec Names.
- Restoration of current Aztec based symbols painted on the Art building.

***Restoration of Art Building and Commission of Aztec Mural, the costs need to be further explored**

CURRENT FALL 2018 OPPORTUNITY: AZTEC MARKET MURAL DISCOVERED IN ENS. The mural is a beautiful piece of student art in the Exercise and Nutritional Sciences building. It was completed in 1949 by Robert Hugenberger. He was a WWII veteran, a member of the gymnastics team, and a class of '49 graduate. The artwork was part of his curriculum. The mural is of a contemporary Mexican market, but interspersed with the usual marketplace figures are various pre-Columbian indigenous Aztec gods. It's a profound statement on the connection between everyday life and reverence for the past; it also links indigenous groups from across Latin America with modern Mexico and the San Diego State campus.

We will need \$22,000 to conserve it (We have received an estimate for \$18,900 and added in \$3,000 for the potential indirect costs). The idea being discussed is to have a 70-year anniversary celebration for the mural during Explore SDSU (March 23) in 2019. The work takes 60 days, so it would be ideal to undertake the work during the fall of 2018.

8. INDIGENOUS HEALING GARDEN PROPOSAL

Overview

In 2003 a proposal was put forth to create a garden space on campus that featured the medicinal herbs and other plants that were used by the Nahuatl speaking people of Mexico. The plant life would be conducive to the San Diego climate and many of the plants may also be indigenous to the area.

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Although approved for implementation, the project was not undertaken.

We propose to modify this proposal to include culturally appropriate spatial organization and landscape elements and features including medicinal herbs and plants relative to the many indigenous people that now reside in the region: Kumeyaay, Nahua, Mixtec, and Zapotec peoples. The cultural landscape garden would be termed the *Indigenous Healing Garden*, and would serve to feature the healing herbs but also to produce a space of quiet and solitude that might also be used for small gatherings. At a time when we need to ‘heal’ over the issue of indigenous identities, the landscape garden would metaphorically and literally provide the opportunity to do so. The landscape garden would provide the names in each language along with the cultural uses and scientific properties. Additional interpretive messaging and information on the cultural significance of the landscape garden and its individual features could be delivered on site or through a link to a website associated with the SDSU and partner organization websites.

Resources

Even though the landscape garden would be designed with an appropriate spatial organization and include plants that are indigenous to the cultural groups represented, development and maintenance are important considerations, as is the inclusion of representative healers from the indigenous groups in both design and stewardship. To do this effectively, we would need the following:

1. Space dedicated to the landscape garden. Existing Mediterranean garden area would be ideal. **Decision was made to use the space next to the Communications building that has ADA access from elevator. This has been a construction holding zone and is ready to be returned to garden space.**
2. SDSU landscaper to work with us (Robert Schultz). These plants tend to be annuals and thus must be maintained and replanted seasonally.
3. Landscape architect. We will secure three bids once an advisory group of local tribal and indigenous group representatives have convened and provided counseling on how the space should be constructed and honored.
4. Inclusion of local persons from the various groups, student groups on campus, and other important partners.

Pérez is a Co-PI on a new USAID grant (with Chanqui Liu, David Larom, and John Love) that focuses on indigenous farming techniques and the recruitment of students with indigenous ancestry into agricultural sciences. The landscape garden could be incorporated into the program, which runs for the next two years.

Resource implications for this project are around \$500,000 to \$800,00; existing resources are between \$400,000 and \$500,000. Once a landscape architect has created a plan, the costs relative to the garden can be determined. The plants themselves would be a minimal cost and the ongoing maintenance is projected to be no different than the current allocations for landscaping maintenance in the area.

9. PLANNING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A framework and strategic plan needs to be created and implemented to affirm San Diego State University's commitment to promoting historically accurate portrayals of native and indigenous

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cultures, knowledge, ideas and contributions. SDSU acknowledges its responsibility to educate the campus and broader community about the Aztecs and other Nahuatl speaking people of Mexico through educational, co-curricular, outreach-oriented and other programming.

Potential Key Messages and Perspective Points

- Enhancing the knowledge and understanding of native and indigenous cultures and contributions of these cultures deepens campus learning.
- SDSU strives to foster a campus environment that is inclusive of and responsive to the history, culture and contributions of native and indigenous populations.
- Ensuring a climate that is welcoming, respectful and responsive to community needs.
- Research indicates that the implementation of appropriate culture learning has important academic and social benefits for student populations.

Specific Focus Areas	Strategic Goals	Possible Tactics
Curricular	Integrate teachings on native, indigenous populations in a broader set of SDSU's curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An online and live streaming sequence for Nahuatl will be offered in partnership with several higher education institutions; Nahuatl instructors will be sponsored for campus visits and presentations ● Development of online training course for all students, faculty, and staff on essentials of SDSU cultural history.
Co-Curricular	Educate the on and off campus community about native and indigenous populations and amplifying SDSU's historic connection with Nahuatl speaking peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Campus tour scripts will be updated with specific information about native, indigenous populations ● Artworks and murals will become part of the built space to present culturally appropriate images of the culture and contributions ● Speaker series and other events will be hosted to discuss native and indigenous culture and symbols, and also SDSU's relationship to Aztec culture
Student, Alumni Engagement	Improve knowledge, awareness and understanding of native and indigenous populations and their respective cultures, customs and symbols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An alumnus of an indigenous background could be invited to serve as a SDSU Alumni Board of Advisors member

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Campus Resources	Dedicate campus resources to the documentation of native and indigenous populations and the furthering of SDSU's educational commitment to Aztec Culture Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire a SDSU historian responsible for research and teaching; documentation on regional native and indigenous populations
Communication		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of Aztec Culture Education ideas through use of campus communication channels• Regular promotion of campus projects and events associated with education initiative via: SDSU social media accounts, NewsCenter, @State, the 360 Magazine and other e-newsletters, publications and sites• Include educational/informative messaging with season Athletics tickets

DRAFT

[Document has been appended to include photos of the site chosen for the Indigenous Healing Garden. See the following pages for photos. db/2018Nov08.]

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