

SDSU

College of Arts and Letters
Women's Studies

Transformations

SDSU DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

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Over the last thirty-four years, the "Transformations" newsletter has been an important part of the history of the Department of Women's Studies. This newsletter highlights faculty and student scholarship and activism, events throughout the year, and community engagement.

Message from the Chair

By Kimala Price, Chair

Congratulations to our 2024 graduates! I know that it was not an easy road for many of them. They have had to navigate many challenges while pursuing their academic goals these last four years. Most of them began their college careers during a global pandemic and lockdown, having to take their first year of coursework online. From there, they have witnessed continuous attacks on their basic human rights, notably on reproductive justice, queer and trans rights, racial justice, and the right to dissent and protest. And yet, they have persevered, while also developing a strong sense of social justice and collective responsibility. It has become increasingly clear that our women's studies graduates are needed now more than ever. They are needed for their intersectional, transnational feminist perspectives and insights, for their compassion, humanity, and empathy.

I am confident that our graduates will continue to do amazing things and show the world what a degree in women's and gender studies can offer.

Our faculty (current and emeriti) and students continue to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and other academic pursuits. For instance, Assistant Professor **Jess Whatcott** was awarded the Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) Award by the College of Arts and Letters, while Professor **Amira Jarmakani** was selected to receive a Humanities Scholar Award for the SDSU Outstanding Faculty RSCA Awards. Associate Professor **Angela Coker** and Professor **Amira Jarmakani** received grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities this year, and Professor Emerita **Bonnie Scott's** new book "Taking Place: Environmental Change in Literature and Art" was recently

Continued on next page

published by Palgrave-Macmillan. This past spring semester, several of our undergraduate and graduate students participated in the SDSU Student Symposium, an annual two-day event that showcases the research, scholarship, and creative activities of SDSU students; second year M.A. student **Aurora Valdez De La Torre** won the HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) Award at the symposium. You can read more about these and other accomplishments in the newsletter.

I would like to thank the staff and student workers who have kept this department running: **Claire Villa**, our administrative coordinator who recently marked her one-year work anniversary with us; **Maria Nuñez**, who has been our student office worker for the past three years; and **Grayce Honsa**, who was an intern in our department for the spring 2024 semester. Thanks to their hard work and dedication. I would also like to send a special shout out to **Grayce Honsa** who was not only named the 2024 Outstanding Graduating Senior for the Department of Women's Studies; they were also selected as the Outstanding Graduating Senior for the College of Arts and Letters. They chose women's studies instructor **Amanda Beardsley** as their Most Influential Faculty Member.

Last, I would like to thank all of you — emerita professors, students, alumni, donors, and community members — who continue to support our mission to educate future scholars, activists, and practitioners who strive to create a more just and equitable world. Without you, much of what we do would not be possible.

Faculty & Staff Bios and Updates

CORE FACULTY



Marie Draz

Professor Marie Draz is excited to have a chapter forthcoming in the edited collection “Trans Philosophy:

Matter and Meaning,” which is the first authoritative collection to establish trans philosophy as a unique field of inquiry. It defines trans philosophy as philosophical work that is accountable to and illuminative of transgender experiences, histories, cultural production, and politics. The book will be published by Minnesota University Press in fall 2024 and Draz’s chapter is titled “The Racializing Work of Biological Sex.” Draz will be on sabbatical research leave in Spring 2025 to work on a book manuscript that expands this chapter. This year, Draz has also been busy serving as the chair of the Committee on the State of Women for the Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) and on the Book Selection Committee for SPEP’s annual conference. In fall 2023, she served as a panelist on an Author Meets Critics panel at the SPEP conference in Toronto focused on Cressida Heyes’s book “Anaesthetics of Existence: Essays on Experience at the Edge.” She has also continued to serve as a panelist on community events focused on LGBTQ+ issues at organizations like Diversionary Theatre and the Women’s History Museum.



Angela Coker

Angela D. Coker, Ph.D., LPCC, NCC is an associate professor for the Department of Women’s Studies.

She is a practicing LPCC in California, and an LPC in Missouri. Currently, Coker

is the past-president of the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development, and a longtime active member of the American Counseling Association and a member of the American Psychological Association. She has taught in higher education for over 20 years! Coker’s current work explores the nexus between women’s career, academic, and personal development. Much of her scholarship is shaped by the writings of bell hooks, Audre Lorde, and Patricia Hill Collins. In 2023 Coker was awarded an NEH professional development grant to explore the intersections of Black feminism, Buddhism practices, and women’s self-care. Coker’s regular course rotation includes: WMNST 101: Gender, Self, Identity & Society, WMNST 325: Psychology of Women, WMNST 336 Women of Color in the US, and WMNST 536: Gender, Race, and Class. Her hobbies include international travel whenever her schedule permits, her favorite places are Brazil, South Africa, Kenya, India, Namibia, Botswana, Mexico, Belize, and Barbados just to name a few. She loves being in nature and enjoys chasing the most scenic sunsets possible! Coker also loves going to the beach, playing with cats and dogs, and her all-time favorite pastime: watching Zombie movies!



Priya Kandaswamy

This year, Priya Kandaswamy published two co-authored articles, “A Conversation on Abolition

and Pedagogy” with Erica Meiners in the Journal of Higher Education in Prison and “Building a Culture of Life: A Conversation on Abolition, Feminism, and Asian American Politics” with Setsu Shigematsu and Margo Okazawa-Rey in Frontiers. In addition, her book “Domestic Contradictions: Race and Gendered Citizenship from Reconstruction to Welfare Reform,” was recognized with an honorable mention for the Sarah A. Whaley book prize of the National Women’s Studies Association. Kandaswamy was a featured speaker on a panel

commemorating the 20th anniversary of same-sex marriage recognition in San Francisco at UC Berkeley’s Center for Research on Social Change and on a panel on the intersections of abolition and reproductive justice at American University’s Antiracist Research and Policy Center. She has enjoyed teaching Gender, Law and Policy, Topics in Transnational Feminisms, and Queer of Color Studies and loves being the faculty advisor for the Young Womyn’s Studies Club, our department’s collaboration with students at Hoover High School.



Irene Lara

One of her highlights this past year was presenting the Latinx History Month keynote at Metropolitan State

University of Denver, “Fleshing the Spirit, Spiritizing the Flesh as Decolonial Xicana Feminist Movida.” This visit included meeting with students, faculty, and staff to facilitate a workshop that Lara titled “Curanderx ~ Guerillerx Prácticas de Conocimiento/Healer~Warrior Conocimiento Praxis: Loving Our Bodymindspirits in Academia.” Her scholarship furthering Gloria Anzaldúan thought continues, including work on the co-edited anthology “Anzaldúan Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning con el Corazón con Razón en la Mano” and the forthcoming publication of “When Coatlicue Comes For You... Transformation is Inevitable: Anzaldúan Chicana Feminist Autohistorias, Spanglish Coatlicue Conocimientos Included.”

In recognition of her expertise in Chicana/Latina feminist healing, spirituality, activism, and m(other)work, Lara was also invited to write the afterword for “Frontera Madre(hood): Brown Mothers Challenging Oppression and Transborder Violence at the U.S.–Mexico Border” (forthcoming in 2024). After a long pause during the pandemic and its aftermath, she was also very happy to attend her first conference in many years – Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social Summer Institute – where she presented on “Moon Monologues:

Comadres Creando Comunidad y Curación Durante la Cuarentena.”

Lara’s work with students also continues to feed her spirit. In addition to serving as the internship supervisor and supporting several graduate students through their M.A. thesis writing process, she rebooted her Faculty-Student Mentoring Program research and *femtoring* seminar. “Curandera/xScholarActivism In and Beyond the University” has now reached more than 100 students. Several alumni of the program joined current students during last spring’s special full day feminist colloquia event held at the Native and Indigenous Healing Garden and Scripps Cottage: “Pop-Up Botánica: Enduring Mesoamerican Medicine” led by Patrisia Gonzalez and four of her graduate students from the University of Arizona. We also continue to partner with California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, who facilitates a workshop on the transformative power of storytelling about reproductive justice and trains our students on gathering community stories for their “speaking story” digital archive.



Kimala Price

Kimala Price continued her duties as chair of the Women’s Studies Department. This academic year has turned out to be

just as busy as last year due to the current state of reproductive politics in the U.S. She is collaborating with Clare Daniel (Tulane University) on a research project titled “Hedging: University Responses to the Overtake of Roe in Abortion-Ban States,” and is working on her second book tentatively titled “Reclaiming the Black Reproductive Body.” In February 2024, she gave the keynote address at the symposium “Reproductive Justice in the Context of Queer and Trans Reproduction with Assisted Reproductive Technologies” at the University of Graz in Austria. She also had speaking engagements at the University of Notre Dame, the University of Maryland, and Syracuse University. She was recently featured in

an article in The San Diego Union-Tribune on the Alabama IVF court ruling.



Amira Jarmakani

In the spring of 2023 Amira Jarmakani took the first sabbatical of her career, and spent it working

on her new project: “Weapons of Mass Dissemination,” which investigates how viral memes, images, and stories about Muslims as a dangerous threat to the U.S. can perpetuate gendered, anti-Muslim racism. This project fills a gap in current scholarship in the digital humanities by demonstrating how corporate manipulation of big data, combined with militarist practices of weaponizing surveillance, perpetuates gendered anti-Muslim racism. She argues that popular perceptions about Muslims, as filtered through stereotypes and misinformation circulated digitally (e.g., in tweets), can also spread anti-Muslim sentiment, reify disinformation about Muslims, and, perhaps most concerning, build the technical and representational structure to apprehend Muslims. The viral spread of gendered, anti-Muslim images, enabled by surveillance technologies, serve to normalize the type of domestic surveillance that can also lead to the capture and incarceration of innocent people, framed as terrorists or enemy combatants in the War on Terror. Jarmakani used her sabbatical to conceptualize the project and to submit an NEH grant application, and is thrilled to report that it was successful.

Her career has also been dedicated to solidifying the institutional home of Arab American and critical SWANA studies within ethnic studies in the university; toward this end, she is one of the co-editors of “Sajjilu Arab American: A Reader in SWANA Studies” (Syracuse University Press, 2022). It won honorable mention for the 2022 Arab American National Museum book award. Jarmakani spent much of last fall and spring visiting campuses to give book talks about it. She’s also honored to be the recipient of the 2024 SDSU



Outstanding Faculty in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) Award, and is very grateful to her colleagues for nominating her. It has been over 225 days of the ongoing genocide in Gaza. These past months, I have been organizing, teaching, and writing through grief and despair and toward a free Palestine.



Christine Knott

Christine Knott's current research projects deepen and expand her expertise on the social-ecological

dimensions of the fisheries and aquaculture industries in Canada. Her research findings on these topics can be found in articles published in the Canadian Journal of Sociology, Marine Policy, Acadiensis, Gender, Place and Culture, ICES Journal of Marine Science, International Migration, Journal of Agrarian Change, Geoforum, Maritime Studies and Applied Mobilities. In addition, she has co-authored chapters in the books "For a Sociology of Home for Canada," "History in Spatial Contexts," and "Opening Windows: Embracing New Perspectives and Practices in Natural Resource Social Sciences." By drawing on existing feminist scholarship and anti-oppressive intersectional frameworks, she is exploring how political, ecological, economic, and corporate influences (across multiple scales) are reconfiguring ocean spaces and coastal communities in unequal ways. For example, she has been collaborating with faculty members in the Environmental Humanities (EH) at SDSU to start an EH lab. The primary objective is to provide a platform for environmental humanities praxis that combines research, pedagogy, and community outreach with a commitment to social and environmental justice.

Additionally, building on her Ph.D. field work on international and Canadian migrant workers in seafood processing, Knott has been developing an understanding of how blue economy narratives hold the potential to transform seafood

systems (or not) as nations recreate and develop their ocean economies. Knott has been focusing on how blue economies work as ocean resource frontiers that hold colonial legacies that have led to exploitative labor practices within aquaculture and seafood processing. She has also received funding from the Research Council of Norway with Madeleine Gustavsson from Ruralis – Institute for Rural and Regional Research in Norway, for a project titled, "Assembling the Blue Economy for Equitable and Sustainable BLUEPLACES? A gender and intersectionality perspective." Beginning in March 2024, this project will involve a case study of aquaculture in California. Finally, in alignment with my research focus on climate justice, she has partnered with Professor Ashley Kim for an Arts Alive collaboration for which we combined her course, Intro to Wheelthrowing 325, with Knott's course, Women, Gender, and the Environment 530. This collaboration aims to provide an overview of current climate justice literature and feminist theories along with an introduction to ceramic materials, techniques, and processes. She will be teaching this collaborative course in the fall of 2024.



Anh Hua

For the academic year of 2023-2024, Anh Hua had a sabbatical year off from teaching to focus on her own writing.

The sabbatical allowed some time to go home to Canada to take care of her elderly mother, who is a cancer patient, and to travel a bit now that travel is safer. Hua spent most of her time writing and editing her book manuscript, "Global Healing in the Changing World: Women of Color, the Arts, Storytelling, Muses and Spiritual Silence." The book is a creative scholarly manuscript that argues for the need within academia to be more open to creative writing and acts, personal and collective healing, and spirituality or spiritual practices. By combining theories, her own storytelling, creative writing,

and poetry, she tells stories about how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted us for the past four years. It argues for a need to explore healing, decolonial healing and global healing in our pandemic and post-pandemic times. For Hua, it was through the creative acts, spirituality and mother earth that helped her and her loved ones to heal. The COVID-19 pandemic was a global historical trauma, like other wars: WWI, WWII, Vietnam War, 9/11, the Gulf War, Iraq War, Afghanistan War, and more recently the Ukraine-Russia War and the Hamas-Israel War. In her non-linear journey of writing from muses, rants, poetry, emotive dance, and spiritual silence, she reflects how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted us, the loss of so many lives, and so many folks have become ill, especially our elders. There was so much personal and global pain, so much loss, and who we are before the pandemic transformed us. Our identities, our lives, our relation to work and health, our relation to mother earth, our worlds have changed tremendously.

In writing this book, being more vulnerable to share her own experiences and the challenges faced by her loved ones, she learned to heal herself, making sense of what happened the past four years. The book is an intellectual, creative, embodied, psychic, spiritual journey to rediscover the core of who she is, and how her new creative voice and recent knowledge of the spiritual world or path allowed her to arrive at more wholeness. Hua's homes, life, work, family, and sense of self was disrupted by the trauma of COVID-19 era. To heal the brokenness, put the pieces back together again, she had to write this creative-scholarly book, to find healing for herself and for others. It was a year less of methods and methodologies, of science and hard data, but a year of unraveling the confusions and destabilization around us that was impactful to begin a new journey of seeking knowledge that is more nuanced, found in spiritual silence despite the noise and chaos of the world, something of a whisper or a breath that left her wanting more — more out of this world and more out of this life.



Jess Whatcott

Jess Whatcott (they/them) has been an assistant professor in the department and affiliated faculty with LGBTQ+ Studies

since 2019. Whatcott taught two new courses this year: Queering Comics was offered through a collaboration between the LGBTQ+ Studies program and Center for Comics Studies; and WMNST 565 is being taught with a focus on feminist disability studies. They have also advised awesome graduate student research and projects, and mentored graduate teaching associates. Whatcott co-organized (with Associate Professor Kandaswamy) the Bread and Roses speaker series this year on abolition feminism. In the past year, Whatcott has been busy preparing the book manuscript "Menace to the Future: A Queer and Disability History of Carceral Eugenics" which will be released by Duke University Press. The book tells the story of California institutions that segregated disabled people away from their communities and families in the early twentieth century. Whatcott theorizes that this was a practice of using carcerality to enact eugenics, and points out that these practices continue on today in state hospitals and prisons. They are looking forward to talking about this book more when it comes out in August 2024. Whatcott has also been co-chairing the American Studies Association's Critical Disability Studies Caucus, which connects disability studies scholars nationally and internationally. In the community, Whatcott has continued to be involved in abolitionist organizing against detention.



Anne Donadey

Professor Anne Donadey is currently writing about very recent literature by women writers. In

2024, she published an article on British-Nigerian author Chibundu Onuzo's 2021 novel "Sankofa." In fall 2023, she published an article on Italian writer Viola

Ardone's novel "The Unbreakable Heart of Oliva Denaro" (original 2021, English translation 2023). She has enjoyed teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in feminist theory.

She is also very involved in a variety of service and leadership activities. She was an elected member of the search committee for the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. She continues to serve as one of two diversity liaisons for the college, co-leading the implementation of the college's diversity plan and co-organizing a college-wide mentoring program for tenure-track faculty. She served as interim chair of the Department of Classics and Humanities in spring and summer 2023, is currently chairing the college committee on reappointment, tenure and promotion, and continues to serve as French program director and student adviser. She enjoys working with a variety of colleagues and supporting their professional goals.

STAFF



Paola Martinez

Paola Martinez is the undergraduate advisor for the Department of Women's Studies.

This will be the second academic year that she has served in that role. During this time, Martinez has enjoyed working with student's to identify their interests and long-term goals. A few highlights have been helping students plan international experiences and finding campus activities to be involved in! It has been so fulfilling for Martinez to see students find their passions and is looking forward to continuing to support their learning and growth.



Claire Villa

It has been one year since Claire Villa joined the Department of Women's Studies and she is greatly

enjoying her time at SDSU. In addition to

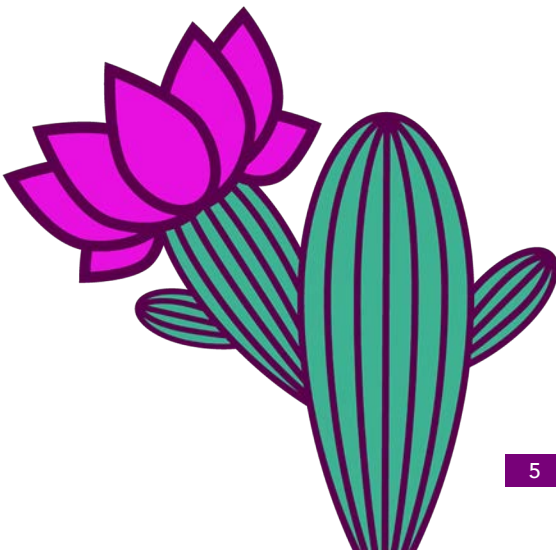
growing more comfortable in the position of administrative coordinator, Villa has continued to expand her education by auditing undergraduate courses for fun in the spring semester. Villa believes that education is a lifelong process and is grateful to be surrounded by such impressive colleagues. In her free time, she's joined a local track club and enjoys running at various scenic locations in San Diego, exploring local ramen restaurants, and is hoping to spend the summer of 2024 re-learning how to surf.



Grayce Honsa

Grayce Honsa is the current intern for the Department of Women's Studies and graduated in May 2024 with a

double major in political science and women's studies and a certificate in human rights. Honsa was named the Outstanding Graduating Senior for the Department of Women's Studies undergraduate class as well as the Outstanding Graduating Senior for the College of Arts and Letters at SDSU. Honsa is serving their third year as a resident advisor for the Residential Education Office and works at the Women's Resource Center as a Feminist Peer Education outreach lead. Honsa will be spending the summer working in the Bay Area for the State Bar Association and hopes to continue to make a positive impact on diverse communities through political advocacy and activism. Honsa likes to watch sunsets at the beach, contribute to community organizing, and read in their free time!



Message from LGBTQ+ Studies

By Marie Draz, associate professor of the Department of Women's Studies and director of LGBTQ+ Studies

Greetings from LGBTQ+ Studies! While LGBTQ+ Studies is an independent program housed in the College of Arts and Letters, we are administratively housed in the Department of Women's Studies and many of our affiliated faculty members and courses come from the Department of Women's Studies . As an interdisciplinary program, LGBTQ+ Studies offers a major, minor, and advanced graduate certificate. We also contribute LGBTQ+ focused courses to SDSU's general education curriculum.

In our programs, students have the opportunity to study LGBTQ+ identities, cultures, politics, and histories across a range of disciplines as well as how gender and sexuality shape our society more generally. Students examine topics such as the construction of ideas about heterosexuality and binary gender; the connection between sexuality and race, colonialism, and ability; and how LGBTQ+ people organize social justice movements to offer more liberation and freedom for everyone.

I am happy to share a few exciting updates from our program: during the 2023-2024 school year, we have continued to offer two new courses: LGBT 333: Intro to Trans Studies and LGBT 350: Queer of Color Studies. This is our second year adding these courses to our curriculum and they continue to draw students and bring more majors/minors into our program. Jess Whatcott also taught LGBT 550 Queering Comics for the first time in fall 2023, which was our first ever dedicated (LGBT-prefix) 500 level course and a collaboration between LGBTQ+ Studies and the Center for Comics Studies.

Our students also continue to excel in our internship course, LGBT 598, in which they are paired with LGBTQ+

related organizations in San Diego and around the country. Recent interns have worked with the San Diego Public Library, Breaking Down Barriers (Jewish Family Services), SafeZones/The Pride Center, and Lambda Archives. I serve as the internship coordinator and it is a pleasure to see this program make such a difference in the lives of our students and help them develop careers in relation to LGBTQ+ studies.

We also continue to collaborate with The Pride Center and Student Affairs and Campus Diversity on several exciting initiatives. For example, students who mention LGBTQ+ issues in their SDSU applications are invited to live in Pride House on campus and enroll in LGBT 101 Introduction to LGBTQ+ studies together. I taught the Pride House section of LGBT 101 for the first time this fall and am looking forward to continuing the program next fall.

One of the things I am most proud of from this year is our collaboration with The Pride Center to hold SDSU's first ever Pride Student Research Symposium. The event was held on Friday, Oct. 27 and featured an undergraduate, graduate, and faculty panel. Throughout the afternoon, the panelists presented on research ranging from queerness in horror films to sharing lived experiences as a trans individual through the creative work of ceramics. It was a special event and hopefully the first of many.

I invite you to learn more about our work by following us on Instagram @ [lgbtq.studies.sdsu](#), Facebook, or checking out our website at [lgbt.sdsu.edu](#). If you have the ability, please also consider giving to our program! Your support could go toward scholarships for students taking LGBTQ+ studies courses or majoring/minoring in LGBTQ+ studies, teaching and research in LGBTQ+ studies, bringing visiting scholars to campus, collaborations with The Pride Center on our signature events like Lavender Graduation, and so much more. Thank you for your support of this program!

Events

Bread and Roses: Feminist Colloquium Series – Abolition Feminisms Legalize Positivity

Inés Ixierda and Clio Reese Sady discuss their comic “Legalize Positivity,” which was part of the [2020 StripAIDS exhibit](#). The exhibit uses comics to share information about HIV/AIDS, and Ixierda and Sady's comic focuses on how people with HIV/AIDS have been criminalized as part of the growth of the prison industrial complex. Inés Ixierda is a queer Mestix interdisciplinary visual artist and mediamaker in Oakland, California, unceded Ohlone Territory.

Clio Reese Sady (AKA Thatcher) is a cartoonist and former tattoo artist living on unceded Ramaytush Ohlone land in San Francisco, California.

Ghosts of Adelanto and the Rise of Abolish ICE

A preview screening of “Ghosts of Adelanto and The Rise of Abolish ICE” on November 9. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with activists featured in the film and local organizations working to end migrant detention. About the film: “Ghosts of Adelanto & The Rise of Abolish ICE” is a powerful new documentary produced by award-winning filmmaker Mayon Denton, co-produced and co-written by Cinthya

Martinez a postdoctoral researcher at UC Santa Cruz and Setsu Shigematsu, professor of Media and Cultural Studies at UC Riverside.

Offering an intimate glimpse into the lives of migrant families torn apart by detention and deportation, we journey with Cinthya Martinez to Adelanto, the largest immigrant prison in California. Featuring compelling first-hand accounts from young activists who have been detained and put their bodies on the line, Ghosts of Adelanto intertwines stories of family separation, haunting, and resilience against a backdrop of systemic injustice. Exposing the often-hidden narratives of immigrant detention, the film centers on courageous feminist and queer undocumented activists who have emerged to forge a blossoming movement to Abolish ICE. Speakers include: Cinthya Martinez, Berto Hernandez, Mitzie Perez, Ymoat Luna, Setsu Shingematsu, Layla Razavi, and Mayon Denton.

FEMINIST OUTREACH COALITION / STUDENT SUCCESS FUND

“Chisme as Survival: Unpacking ‘Chisme’ As a Weapon, Joke, & Record Keeping Tool” with Rubén Angel

By [Samaria Avila, M.A. class of 2024](#)

To start 2024's Women's History Month, the Feminist Outreach Coalition was able to host our first event thanks to the Student Affairs and Campus Diversity Student Success Fee fund and we brought to campus Rubén Angel (he/she/they). Angel is a writer, activist, social-cultural critic, and content creator and they presented “Chisme as Survival: Unpacking ‘Chisme’ As a Weapon, Joke, & Record Keeping Tool” and we all got

to learn about ethical chisme and how it can be used to bring change into the institutions we are part of, keep our communities safe, and create accountability without the need of the criminal justice systems involvement. The lecture was about 45 minutes and the rest of the time was spent having a Q&A session with Angel in which many students and alumni were allowed to ask questions about the lecture and gain further insight on the practice of chisme and implementation. Overall, it was a successful event, and we hope that as we graduate, the coalition will continue and we can bring more guest lecturers and speakers. Lastly, we want to thank the Women's Resource Center, the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department, the Latinx Resource Center, The Native Resource Center, and the Undocumented Resource Center, for sponsoring this event, our organization advisor Amira Jarmakani, our Coalition members Vale, Mack, Samaria, Aurora, Jenny, Tess, and most importantly Rubén Angel.

“We Were Just Negro Queens”: Safe Space Activism and Black Queer Institutions in San Diego with Cristina Carney

By [Jess Whatcott](#)

The theme for the department's annual Bread and Roses Feminist Speaker Series this year is “Abolition Feminisms: Creating New Worlds.” For Women's History Month, Christina Carney, assistant professor of women's and gender studies at the University of Missouri in Columbia, joined us virtually to discuss her research on the history of Black queer and trans women in San Diego. Carney is a graduate of University of California San Diego, and a former lecturer for our department. Her

forthcoming book from the University of California Press, discusses how Black women organized and created space for themselves in San Diego throughout the twentieth century, fighting against forces such as gentrification, urban renewal, and criminalization. Carney's talk focused on how Black trans women created safe community spaces for themselves after being pushed out of other areas by city crackdowns and also by white gay activists who promoted respectability politics. Priya Kandaswamy's Queer of Color Studies class and Maggie Slaska's Women and Violence class both joined the talk and asked great questions. We look forward to bringing Carney back after her book is published.

What does Reproductive Justice look like on the U.S.-Mexico Border? with Patricia Zavella

By [Tess Kossoff, M.A. Class of 2025](#)

Professor Zavella is the author of “I'm Neither Here nor There: Mexicans Quotidian Struggles with Migration and Poverty” and coauthor of “Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios.”

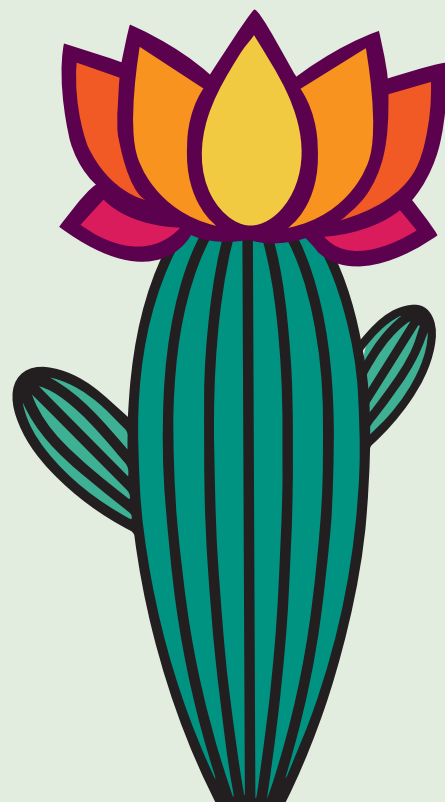
The department welcomed distinguished Chicana scholar Patricia Zavella to speak about reproductive justice at the U.S.-Mexico border and her work in cultural shift activism on March 13. Zavella is professor emerita in the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies at University of California Santa Cruz and affiliated with the Dolores Huerta Research Center for the America, feminist studies, anthropology, critical race and ethnic studies, and the community studies program.

Zavella's talk focused on how reproductive justice is being mobilized through grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, and cultural shift activism. The post DOBBS reality leaves 6.5 million Latinas

Continued on next page

Events continued

living in the 26 states that have banned access to abortion. Zavella discusses how this post DOBBS context and the overall lack of access to health care, especially in communities along the border, disproportionately affect women of color. The talk focused on research within their book, “The Movement for Reproductive Justice: Empowering Women of Color through Social Activism,” on how women are participating in reproductive justice activism and unnamed feminism through education, storytelling, lobbying, protesting, and collaboration. Women of color are mobilizing power across social differences through activism and sharing knowledge to address reproductive justice issues of accessibility and human rights. Zavella’s talk was followed by a lunch Q&A, which was attended by faculty and students in the department, as well as the Center for Latin American Studies, Education, and the Women’s Resource Center.



EMERITI IN THE NEWS

The Little Italy Association Dedicates a Piazza in Honor of Midge Costanza

On November 28, 2024, the Little Italy Association of San Diego held a piazza (town square) dedication ceremony in honor of Margaret “Midge” Costanza, a lifelong champion of social justice and human rights and a longtime supporter and collaborator of the SDSU Women’s Studies Department. Mayor Todd Gloria, other elected officials, community leaders, and close personal friends were present to say a few words about the remarkable life of Costanza before unveiling a bust in Costanza’s image and a commemorative plaque in her honor at the piazza. Our women’s studies colleague Professor Emerita Doreen Mattingly was among the speakers. Mattingly was a close friend and collaborator of Costanza’s and is the author of the book “A Feminist in the White House: Midge Costanza, the Carter Administration, and America’s Culture Wars.”

The daughter of Sicilian immigrants, Costanza had an extraordinary career in politics. After many years active in Democratic party politics in New York State, Costanza was the first woman elected to the city council of Rochester, New York

in 1973. After an unsuccessful bid to win a congressional seat, Costanza was the first woman to be appointed as a special assistant in a presidential administration.

According to Mattingly, “A feminist, an outspoken activist, a woman without a college education, Midge Costanza was one of the unlikeliest of White House insiders. Yet in 1977 she became the first female Assistant to the President for Public Liaison under Jimmy Carter, emerging as a prominent focal point of the American culture wars. Tasked with bringing the views of special interest groups to the president, Costanza championed progressive causes even as Americans grew increasingly divided on the very issues for which she fought.” Indeed, Costanza advocated for a range of controversial social and political issues, including the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), abortion rights, and LGBTQ+ rights. After receiving considerable backlash for these stances, she was ultimately pressured to resign in 1978.

Upon her resignation, Costanza moved to Southern California, first to Los Angeles to work on various media projects. She eventually settled in San Diego in 1990 and quickly became involved in local and state politics. For several years, she co-taught courses on women and politics with Mattingly for our department. She passed away in 2010 and was posthumously inducted into the San Diego Women’s Hall of Fame in 2011.

Dedication of the piazza in honor of Midge Costanza (Doreen Mattingly in blue stands next to Mayor Todd Gloria).



You can visit Costanza’s piazza at 1440 Columbia Street between W. Beech and W. Ash Streets in the Little Italy neighborhood of San Diego. You can read more about Costanza’s political career in Doreen Mattingly’s book “A Feminist in the White House: Midge Costanza, the Carter Administration, and America’s Culture Wars,” published by Oxford University Press in 2016.

Research Activities

SDSU Student Research Symposium 2024

Undergraduate Students

Janae Dellafosse: “The Interconnectedness of Love and Guilt: Discovering the Path to Conocimiento and Healing by Confronting Guilt with Love”

Graduate Students

Vale Magaña: “Towards Transformative Justice: Envisioning Survivor-Centric Approaches Beyond Title IX for Addressing Campus Sexualized Violence at San Diego State University”

Jennifer Barajas: “Harmony of Resilience: Hip-Hop, Pláticas, and the Collective Narratives of Graduate Latina Friends”

Aurora Valdez de la Torre: “Fear Embodied: Transforming Temor into Resistance Along the Borderlands”

“Radical Self-Care and Emerging Feminist Scholars”

Angela Coker is currently leading a research team of several Department of Women’s Studies students to investigate how a group of feminist scholars has operationalized radical self-care in their daily lives as graduate students and practitioners. This research will be conducted over the course of the spring 2024 semester through recording and analyzing the weekly responses of participants to specific sets of questions. During sessions, students reflect in community with each other on the difficulties



The “Radical Self-Care and Emerging Feminist Scholars” group. Back Row: Jennifer Barajas, Nora Novak, Lorraine Gadsden. Front Row: Angela Coker, Juana Eslava-Bejarano, Forrest Ponsot

of being a scholar in the field as well as the team will then employ an autoethnographic methodology to explore definitions of radical self-care and the ways in which feminist learners and practitioners engage in personal wellness.

Forrest Ponsot reflects on their participation in the research study. “Participating in academics can be an isolating endeavor,” Ponsot said. “Days spent in the office, often hunched over a screen or buried in a book at the library while basking in fluorescent lights, the work done is often alone. Further, the content of our work can foster even deeper isolation at the level of ideological and political schisms. Unable to recount the number of times I’ve had to rationalize (or justify) my interest in women’s studies – to family, friends, professors, and strangers – I am sometimes overwhelmed by this career choice. In many ways, the feeling of isolation that had often accompanied my academic journey subsided in the space of radical self-care. This group has provided a restorative outlet composed of diverse minds to think about ways of living well. Because of this, it has also provided a foundation of reflection for

me to think about myself in relation to the world – all the destructive and painful connections – and authentically redefine these bonds. Ultimately, I hope that the personal insights and narratives gathered from my colleagues and I will provide meaningful content for similar research and for those who wish to practice radical self-care in the wake of systems of isolation and domination.”

San Diego State University Hispanic Serving Institution Award

Aurora Valdez de la Torre: “Winning the HSI award as a Chicana first-generation college student empowers me,” Aurora Valdez de la Torre said. “It solidifies the fact that the stories of my family, community, and ancestors are transformative and need to be shared. I hope this encourages other first-generation students like myself to know that we belong at SDSU. Thank you to my advisor Dr. Irene Lara for guiding me and cheering me on throughout this research process. Thank you to my cohort and the Women’s Studies department for always showing me support.”



Group of students from the Women's Resource Center

Student Activism and Community Building

Women's Resource Center

The Women's Resource Center at San Diego State University strives to provide a vibrant, brave, and inclusive space that educates, empowers, and advocates for gender justice. The Women's Resource Center (WRC) provides support and mentorship to students by creating an environment that fosters healing, intersectional feminist activism, and enhancement to students' academic, personal, and professional success. Throughout 2023 and 2024, the Women's Resource Center has created transformational experiences for students and the SDSU community at large, specifically through support for parenting students, student development, and other ongoing efforts.

Support for Parenting Students

Per AB 2881, California campuses are required to offer priority registration to students who provide support to one or more dependents under the age of 18. The WRC worked closely with the

Office of the Registrar and the Communication Services team to disseminate a campus-wide email informing students about this resource. Additionally, the WRC partnered with campus partners like the Basic Needs Center, Student Parent and Allies Association, and the Parenting & Caregiving Employee Resource Group to host brown bag lunch discussion and bi-annual resource fairs for pregnant and parenting students. These efforts form part of the WRC's Pregnant and Parenting Students Initiative (PPSI), which is continuously evolving to serve an often forgotten community of students pursuing higher education.

Student Support and Development

The WRC team provides students with the tools and resources necessary to cultivate feminist leadership. Their team, which is composed of graduate assistants, feminist peer educators, WAGE mentors, student volunteers, and career staff, work together to cultivate community inside the WRC and across campus through

holistic lens. Student leaders involved in the WRC and other feminist organizations actively participate in the planning of these events, and simultaneously develop as feminist leaders, public speakers, and coalition-builders.

Other Ongoing Efforts

The WRC career staff and student leaders center women and gender expansive folks in efforts to help create a campus culture rooted in intersectional gender equity. For instance, the WRC, in partnership with The Pride Center and with the support of the Community and Belonging Sub-division, debuted a new front gate with a door actuator for greater accessibility. Additionally, the WRC is working with Student Health Services to raise awareness about reproductive care, and to begin offering free pregnancy tests within the WRC restrooms. Finally, the Women's Resource Center is approaching its 10th anniversary, which will take place during March 2025. All will be invited to the WRC's celebratory plans, which will be announced soon through the WRC website and social media!

programming focused on education and healing. Such programming include the Black Women's Healing Circle (with the Black Resource Center), Queer Femme Healing Circle (with the Pride Center), and Rise: A Confidential Support Space for Survivors of Sexual and Relationship Violence (with Counseling and Psychological Services). The WRC also offers robust programming during Take Back the Week in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the Brave Project training to provide education on sexual assault prevention, resources, and support through a

Student Organizations

Girl Gains

By Amaya Garcia

SDSU Girl Gains is a female weightlifting organization that supports women wherever they are in their fitness journey! Whether you have never picked up a weight in your life before or you're a regular gym-goer, Girl Gains is for you! We are a community of women with a common interest in working out and creating a safe, judgment-free environment for girls in the gym. A common issue many women face is gym intimidation since the gym can be a male-dominated space. Our goal is to eliminate that problem by creating a supportive community to fall back on in the gym. Girls can get involved by attending our bi-weekly GBMs and off-campus events. Our GBMs have different topics to educate members and be a space for members to get to know each other. In addition, our events range from different bonding events such as bonfires

SDSU Girl Gains at Tecolote Shores in Mission Bay.



or socials to different workout classes for girls to try. We also offer executive-lead hours where you can work out with other members and learn new exercises to incorporate into your routine or learn how to do different workouts! Through the variety of services and events we offer to women, we empower them and give them the resources to be confident in themselves. SDSU Girl Gains is here to provide representation for female weightlifters on campus, to spread fitness knowledge, and to empower women by providing a female support system for women in the gym. If you are interested and would like to join us, all you need to do is follow our Instagram [@sdsugirlgains](#) and join our Geneva group chat linked in our bio and you are free to attend any event or meeting you'd like! We welcome ALL women! We hope to see you soon!

V-Day

By Kylee Kyte

Throughout its eleven year history on SDSU's campus, V-Day has been committed to transformation. Whether it is transforming a handful of actors and writers into a full-fledged theatrical

performance, transforming live theater into a medium of social action, or transforming the community through their support of San Diego's nonprofits, transformation has been the name of the game for V-Day. With each new year, V-Day highlights the voices of new individuals, giving space to actors, artists, and creatives to express their individuality. This past year, they were able to generate \$1,194 to donate to their chosen beneficiary, Groundswell Community Project. Closer to home, V-Day has found success in uniting interested students from across SDSU's campus under one common mission: to tell the stories of those who often go unheard. Although they are considered a service and performing arts organization, V-Day has attracted students from countless majors, ranging from psychology, business and social work to film, marketing and hospital-ity. Each member of V-Day is passionate about telling the vulnerable stories submitted each year to be performed in their annual performance Raise the Vibration. Last year's production featured stories about surviving sexual assault, struggling with ADHD, and trying to feel hopeful in the face of climate change. These stories

Continued on next page

Student Organizations continued

are intended to make the audience feel uncomfortable, to force them to challenge their preconceived notions about how the world works. With nearly three hundred seats at each show, three nights in a row, V-Day reaches a wide audience with their mission, activism, and ambition. With each person that walks into the theater, a new story is heard, another individual is represented, and empathy for all continues to be fostered.

IGNITE

By Cambria Head

Since our inception in 2010, IGNITE has trained 30,000+ young women to discover and flex their political power. From a small pilot program in Oakland, California, IGNITE has become the nation's leading organization harnessing political ambition, community building and leadership skills among young women and girls. Our model moves young women to run and win, and it dramatically increases their political engagement on every level. We also know that programming is not

IGNITE SDSU's Executive Board in the Student Union



enough: we uplift inspiring voices among our community to celebrate and cultivate young women's ambitions. Our community welcomes all cis and trans women, as well as non-binary people who are comfortable in a space that centers the experiences of young women. We strive to build the largest, most diverse movement of young women who are ready and eager to own their political power and create a future where all young women and women-identifying persons have the opportunity to leverage their unique experiences and values to flex their political power and shape policies that benefit our communities. IGNITE works with organizations around SDSU and San Diego to help support diverse groups of people in need, as well as encourage women and non-binary people to speak out and lead our community towards a better future. For example, we packaged and donated period products for women in need, raised over 1,000 dollars in our fundraiser event to support The LGBTQ Community Center downtown, and we collaborated with a fellow organization on campus to host a clothing drive for the unhoused people of San Diego. Our meetings include subjects such as the Pink Tax, Reproductive Rights, how to vote, and many more.

Young Womxn's Studies Club

By Allison Keane

My advisor Priya often says, "We are planting the seeds of women's studies topics into the minds of highschoolers." This is why we do what we do at the Young Womxn's Studies Club. As one could imagine it is fairly difficult to grab the attention of twenty highschoolers during their lunchtime while pizza is being passed around; however, once everyone settles in and has had a few bites, we are able to dissect pressing topics and issues relating to feminism and women's studies. Each week, a women's studies topic that is deemed relatable to the students and high-school life is presented by one of the leaders of YWSC. The bulk of these meetings is spent talking to the students. This is where the learning and progressive insight comes from. The students are urged to question the norms they are surrounded by in society and criticize standards that they have been taught. This push is guided by the leaders but the critiques and questions come from the students.

As Priya says we are planting seeds. By dropping these seeds and allowing the students to germinate the ideas, they build courage and are empowered to engage in critical thinking. This can encourage the students to become better communicators and self-advocates.. Empowering youth to think critically for themselves helps them become more independent, responsible, and informed individuals who are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the world around them. This is especially important when dealing with complicated women's studies and feminist topics. We hope to inspire these students to recall these topics and discussions and use the tools we hone during the meetings in their personal lives.



Undergraduate Student Spotlight: Lorraine Gadsen (She/Her)

I have always valued the power of the collective and how, as a society, we are stronger together. As I entered San Diego State University, I found myself drawn to the women's studies program for its core use of intersectional frameworks that reconceptualize the world with respect to diversity and liberation. As a fourth-year student, women's studies facilitated my aspiration to actively work to decolonize our bodies through a reimagined food system that leaves no one hungry. My education has allowed me to bring a critical, gendered, and intersectional perspective that acknowledges inequities within our food system while recognizing vital yet often forgotten or devalued approaches, such as indigenous science. From this, I have had the opportunity to create a program for the SDSU Women's Resource Center and participate in a USDA community engagement program at a local high school to introduce decolonized diets to students.

As I prepare to graduate with a double major in women's studies and political science, I am excited to use my women's studies background to support the change I want to see in our food system and society. Most importantly, I am grateful to the women's studies collective (department, professors, and community), who helped foster, challenge, and encourage me to flourish by embracing my own unique identity as a form of empowerment within my education and passions.

Alumni Feature: What Can You Do with a Women's Studies Degree?

By Laura Kreeger

In practically all areas of American society, we see disparate outcomes. I could easily rattle off a variety of statistics related to incarceration rates or literacy rates or maternal mortality, just to name a few. While it is easy to focus on individual cases and what went wrong with specific bad actors, it takes a different skill set to zoom out and take a larger systems perspective as to what the root causes to these problems are and what possible solutions may be. During my women's studies courses at SDSU I learned about intersectionality and gained the analytical skills to truly understand compounding problems; and more importantly, I was given an opportunity to dream about what an equitable society that centers justice could look like.

So what can you do with your women's studies degrees? There are a myriad of options- working for smaller community organizations that focus on uplifting community power, conducting research, working for one of many reproductive justice organizations, or — like myself — you can find yourself in the policy world. The women's studies classes at SDSU grant a unique set of skills to navigate the world, skills and perspective which I have found very useful for my career. When your Department of Women's

Studies professors give you the opportunity to get creative, to dream big, and to ideate about solutions for the social issues that plague our society, take the opportunity seriously. Lean in to the chance to learn the tenets of reproductive justice, to listen to the stories of radical Black feminists like Angela Davis and Audre Lorde, and think through how those ideologies could be applied to real world problems we see today. I work in the world of public policy, and have learned how many of the disparate outcomes we see for children and their families are the results of policies acting exactly as they were intended. By that I mean that there are racist roots to many of the policies that guide us today. To address the harm that has been done and to re-build new, equitable policies we need to use an intersectional and anti-racist approach. The women's studies program at SDSU gives students the foundation to understand what a truly intersectional and anti-racist approach looks like. My advice to current students is to take the opportunity to dream big, to dig into radical feminist teachings, and to always critique and question. Take advantage of the internship courses that are offered, make connections with your professors, and connect with one (or more) of the many amazing community organizations here in San Diego. Find what you are passionate about and utilize the skill set you have developed throughout your women's studies courses to create an opportunity to make a difference.





M.A. Thesis Titles 2023/24 AY

Aurora Valdez de la Torre: “Fear Embodied: Transforming Temor into Resistance Along the Borderlands”

Vale Magaña: “Towards Transformative Justice: Envisioning Survivor-Centric Approaches Beyond Title IX for Addressing Campus Sexualized Violence at San Diego State University”

Juana Eslava Bejarano: “A Feminist Perspective on Veganism: Zines for the Liberation of Humans and Other Animals”

Jennifer Barajas: “Voces from the Periférica: Mare Advertencia Lirika’s Feminismo Comunitario Hip Hop”

Mackenzie Moore: “Go Ask Mack”

Samaria Avila: “Housekeepers: Immigrant Mexican Women as the Heart, Soul and Spirit of the American Hotel Industry”

Scholarship Recipients 2023/24 AY

Congratulations to our scholarship and award winners and a heartfelt thanks to the donors!

Betty Nesvold Women’s Studies Scholarship - **Alondra Orozco, Lilyana Baja**

Joanne Davis Women’s Studies Scholarship - **Brooklyn Horn**

Oliva Espin Endowed Scholarship - **Vale Magaña**

Sue Russell Memorial Endowed Scholarship - **Alisha Alexander, Jada Alibizures, Grayce Honsa**

Andrea O’Donnell Memorial Scholarship - **Grayce Honsa**

Student Engagement: Internship and Volunteer Opportunities

Fall 2023 Internships

Chandria Arboleda – Casa Cornelia

Jissell Kruse – Center for Community Solutions

Meghan Stoff – Lambda Archives of SD

Lorraine Gadsden – Women’s Resource Center at SDSU

Spring 2024 Internships

Adriana Chavez – Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest

Samina Laguna – Helen Knoll Foundation

Olivia Thompson – Kim Center for Social Balance

Jenae Dellafosse – Center for Inclusive Excellence (SDSU)

Allison Keane – Young Women’s Studies Club (Dept. of Women’s Studies, SDSU)

Grayce Honsa – Department of Women’s Studies (SDSU)

Scholarship Recipient Reflection

by Alonda Orozco

I am so grateful to have been a recipient for the Betty Nesvold Women’s Studies Scholarship. The Women’s Studies Department means so much to me, so receiving this scholarship is truly an honor. This scholarship has allowed me to focus more time on my academics and to participate in an internship. I wanted to have an internship last semester and was worried I would not be able to do it since it was not paid, but this scholarship has allowed me to have more legal experience. This scholarship has alleviated my financial stress such as being able to pay for my textbooks and all the expenses that come with senior year. Not only has the Women’s Studies Department at San Diego State University provided me with emotional support, but they have provided me with financial support as well. This support has ultimately allowed me to succeed at SDSU and have an enjoyable experience.



The Giving Link

Gifts from alumni, parents, students, and other friends help the department make a lasting impact on our world. Every gift makes a difference. All donations are tax-deductible, private, and secure.



Click or scan to access the SDSU Women’s Studies Fund

Kumeyaay Land Acknowledgement

By Mike Connolly
Miskwish (Kumeyaay)

We stand upon a land that carries the footsteps of millennia of Kumeyaay people. They are a people whose traditional lifeways intertwine with a worldview of earth and sky in a community of living beings. This land is part of a relationship that has nourished, healed, protected and embraced the Kumeyaay people to the present day. It is part of a world view founded in the harmony of the cycles of the sky and balance in the forces of life. For the Kumeyaay, red and black represent the balance of those forces that provide for harmony within our bodies as well as the world around us. As students, faculty, staff and alumni of San Diego State University we acknowledge this legacy from the Kumeyaay. We promote this balance in life as we pursue our goals of knowledge and understanding. We find inspiration in the Kumeyaay spirit to open our minds and hearts. It is the legacy of the red and black. It is the land of the Kumeyaay.

Eyay e’Hunn My heart is good.

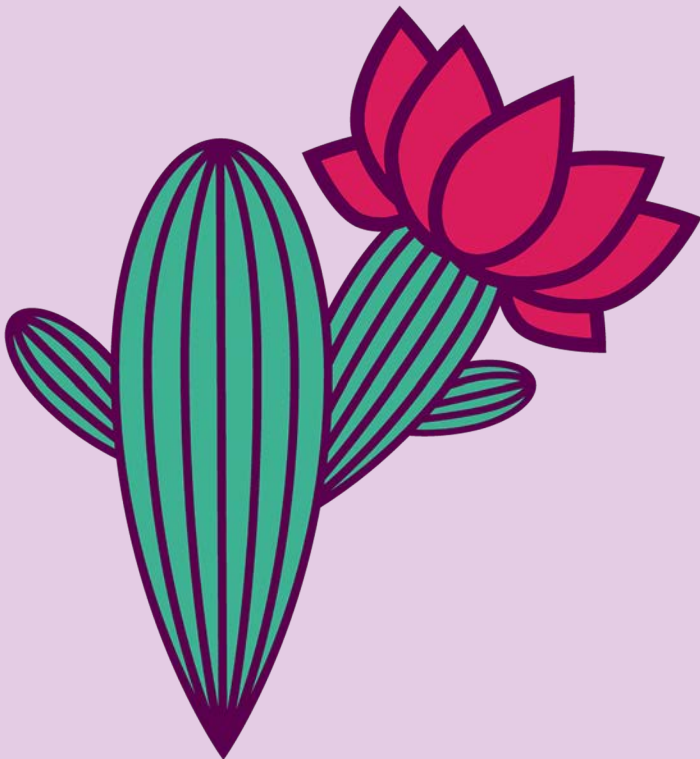


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