



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Philosophy
College of Arts and Letters
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive, AL 446
San Diego CA 92182 · 6044
Tel: 619 · 594 · 5263
Fax: 619 · 594 · 1199

Anthony R. Pico, PhD ad honorem
Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Nation
Mark R. Wheeler, PhD
San Diego State University

June 9, 2019

Dear and Revered Elders,

We hope that you and your families are well. It is with honor and humble regard that we are reaching out to **invite you to an Elders gathering at SDSU July 11th from 12-3pm.**

We are planning a weekend of events focused on the Indigenous peoples of California (broadly defined), celebrating resilience, raising awareness about continued oppression, and educating our campus and our regional community about the genocides that took place in California. We are collaborating with the Southern California Warrior Spirit Team, tribal community members, and academic colleagues at San Diego State University (SDSU) in American Indian Studies, Anthropology, Chicano/a Studies, the School of Social Work, the Sycuan Tribal Gaming Institute, the SDSU School of Theater, television, and film, and others.

The weekend of events will take place on the SDSU campus, November 22-24, 2019. The SDSU President's office supports our efforts, and we are in the process of working with our regional tribal communities to plan the events.

Your wisdom and insight are fundamentally important. You have seen more than we have, and you can help us to see more than we do. You have lived the history we study in books, and you can help us to learn what we need to remember before it is forgotten. You are the living embodiment of the values and viewpoints of your families and ancestors. Our conference will be a great success if we incorporate your life experience and what matters to you, if we honor your understanding of your culture and your wisdom traditions, if we incorporate your view of the history we hope to bring into the light.

We hope that you would be willing to come to SDSU as honored guests to discuss the conference and to raise any questions or concerns you may have. If you are available and willing to join us on Thursday, July 11, from noon to 3pm, we would be grateful. The President of SDSU has agreed to host a luncheon in your honor, and she plans to join our conversation from 1 pm-2pm. We will gather on campus at Scripps Cottage for an afternoon of engagement, sharing food, songs and learning from you.

The SDSU campus community has struggled to acknowledge the history of the regional Indigenous communities and the Kumeyaay people on whose land our university sits. SDSU is working toward adopting a formal land acknowledgment, hiring a tribal liaison, and creating a Native Student Resource Center—but as of yet SDSU has not realized these goals. SDSU has also chosen to identify itself with the Aztec community. This decision comes with responsibilities that must be taken seriously. Among these responsibilities are

educating the SDSU and regional community about the Aztecs and our Indigenous communities, and acknowledging and properly respecting our communities, on whose land SDSU sits. SDSU has yet to live up to these responsibilities.

We hope to create a context within which truth may be spoken, healing may take place, and better relations may develop between SDSU and our Indigenous communities.

We look forward to meeting you at SDSU Scripps Cottage where we will gather for this historical conversation with the intention of bringing unity for all people through your Indigenous Wisdom.

If you are able to attend the luncheon on July 11th, please RSVP to Professor Tamara Strohauser at: SDSU.CGCG@gmail.com

With love, gratitude and peace,



Anthony R. Pico, Ph.D. ad honorem
Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Nation

and



Mark R. Wheeler, Ph.D.
Chair, SDSU University Senate
Chair, SDSU Faculty
Chair, SDSU Department of Philosophy
Director, SDSU Institute for Ethics and Public Affairs
Professor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182
619-582-5893
mark.wheeler@sdsu.edu