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Year in Review 2014

El Centro de la Raza

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45th ANNIVERSARY
YEAR IN REVIEW 2014



2014 was a year of changes for El Centro de la Raza. Last year, students and staff welcomed Rosa Isela Cervantes as the new Director, after more than 20 years under our previous director. Apart from the multiple changes we have seen this year, we also celebrated our 45th Anniversary serving students and creating a better future for New Mexico, the nation and the world. In our first year-in-review edition of El Centro News, we want to share with our readers some of the major accomplishments of our students and staff during last year. We believe that a key aspect of making our community strong and united is to share our challenges and victories with the organizations and individuals who believe that education is one of the most effective ways to transform communities collectively. **Thank you for your support and encouragement for the past 45 years!**

2014 MILESTONES

Established the DEEP Center at UNM along with the UNM Dream Team

Organized Raza Junta with over 500 attendees

Re-structure the El Puente program which allowed us to double the number of students served

Created infrastructures and means to receive donations and increase financial sustainability and community support of El Centro de la Raza programs

Organized the Timekeepers, an initiative that brought 40 Indigenous Timekeepers from the US, Mexico, and Central America.

Established the El Centro Information Repository which is allowing El Centro students to publish their research at UNM

Organized six Speaker Series that showcased the work of faculty and community leaders to our El Centro students

Hosted 6 STEM workshops

Co-hosted two FAFSA workshops where we helped hundreds of students with their financial aid

Created links between Career Services and Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) to provide weekly services at El Centro

Started the process to create the first Latino Alumni Chapter at UNM

At El Centro de la Raza, we are constantly inspired by the determination and will power of our students to remain in school regardless of their economic or social barriers.

However, there is one group of students that remind us everyday that for them, the fight for education is not a choice, it's a life commitment.

Jaen Ugalde, a graduate student at UNM, is proud to call himself a "Dreamer," a term usually used by undocumented students who are fighting to have access to higher education or join the armed forces and legalize their immigration status.

"Being a dreamer has allowed me to appreciate the value of an education," says Ugalde. "This fight is not only for my dreams it's for the dreams of my community."

El Centro de la Raza is in a unique and strategic position to help many students who, without our services, could have a very difficult time completing their education.

To Continue supporting the efforts of undocumented students, El Centro de la Raza along with multiple partners have created DREAM Educational Empowerment program (DEEP), focussed on:

*** Empowering student organizers to share their stories and train students, families, staff, and other allies**

*** Educating immigrant students and families on education rights and skills**

*** Educating K-12 and college instructors and staff on educational access for immigrant students and families**

*** Collaborating with campus and community partners to raise awareness of educational access, rights, and skills for immigrant students and families**

*** Launching an "immigrant safe zone" at UNM**

For more information or questions about DEEP, contact Armando Bustamante at : abustam1@unm.edu



LA UNION HACE LA FUERZA



2014: A Year to Plant The Seeds and Create New Systems For El Centro de la Raza

Imagine working for a startup organization that every year opens its doors to share its resources and help students accomplish their goals in higher education and their professional lives.

Although El Centro de la Raza has been in existence at UNM for more than 45 years, we are always striving to continue the legacy of creativity, innovation, and fierce commitment to education that started with the students who took the initiative to found El Centro de la Raza more than four decades ago.

Last year, I started my journey with El Centro de la Raza as Director, but my relationship with El Centro goes back a long way, more than 20 years to be exact.

I came to El Centro as a student with more questions than answers and I was fortunate enough to find the people who believed in me and paved the way for me to thrive in higher education and make access to education for everyone my life's calling.



Coming back to El Centro as the new director stirred a mix of emotions in me because even though I was coming home, in many ways I was a stranger to some of my staff members and thousands of students who were used to working with the previous administration.

Last year my focus was to create constant and permanent communication bridges between faculty, staff and students to help shape and define El Centro's future.

This year I aim to create a space where students feel that their goals and concerns are significant, and most importantly, that students and community feel that our programs and resources are current and relevant to their goals, aspirations, and concerns.

Thank you for your support during this year of change and transition for myself, the staff, and the students. We have much work to do to eliminate barriers to higher education, yet I believe that we are on the right track to keep moving forward.

-Rosa Isela Cervantes, Director

Every student that comes through our doors becomes part of the El Centro Team, but there are some members of the familia who play key roles at your El Centro de la Raza:

Jorge García
Senior Program Manager

I use my expertise in operations management and international relations to provide world-class opportunities to our Raza students. My wish for all Raza students is for them to receive the best academic and interpersonal programs they deserve at UNM so they can be competitive, innovative, and problem solvers once they finish their education.

Armando Bustamante
Student Programs Specialist

I create bridges for students to start or come back to UNM. It is important that we create mentoring programs and create awareness of El Centro long before a student comes to UNM. I have a holistic approach to education and like to keep myself well informed to help students make thoroughly considered decisions for their education, regardless of their immigration status.

Dayra Fallad
Program Specialist

I am part of a team that has the ability to create opportunities for students to share and create knowledge outside of the classroom. I am able to develop programs based on the current needs of our Latino/Hispanic students here at UNM. I view our Latino/Hispanic students as high achieving scholars.

Noemí Gutiérrez
Supervisor, Admin. Support

I offer more than 12 years experience working with different organizations in the areas of human resources, finance, and operations management. One thing I've learned over the years, regardless of the type of work I have done, is that being a mentor to others is one of the greatest feelings of satisfaction I can have and I feel

that is one of many valuable things that I can bring to El Centro.

Adriana Sanchez
Graduate Professional

I have more than eight year of experience as a bilingual journalist covering business, and community and health.

Pursuing a M.S. in Health Education has allowed me to bring multiple aspects of sustainability to El Centro, such as creating El Centro News, developing the infrastructure to increase donations for El Centro, and leading the efforts to found our first Latino Alumni Chapter. My time at El Centro has allowed me to develop two of my professional passions, communications and business development, on a large scale.

Eric Tomala Viteri
Graduate Professional

Through my role as a mentor, I am able to understand what my students' needs are, but also recognize their strengths and the role they play in promoting systemic changes in our communities, the state and even the world.

As a graduate fellow, I am the bridge between my students' professional and academic goals and the community. At El Centro de la Raza, I am able to think critically and develop curricula that impact students' retention and graduation, and inspire student to continue graduate school and research opportunities.

Jose Mondragón
Graduate Professional

As a first generation, non-traditional student, and the first in my family to go to college, my experiences make me a key contributor for the development of El Centro. Knowing first hand what it means to navigate the educational system makes me understand the needs and challenges of the students we serve here.

El Centro de la Raza has provided me with experiences that go beyond this institution. Having the opportunity to work with students like myself, students who have goals, has opened my eyes for the need to increase programs like El Puente and Transformar; programs that give students the opportunity to fulfill their leadership potentials.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

African Proverb

