

## Winter 2025 Newsletter

American Indian Studies Center (AISC)  
Chicano Studies Research Center (CSRC)

Asian American Studies Center (AASC)  
Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies (Bunche)

[iac.ucla.edu](http://iac.ucla.edu)

## Message from the Vice Provost



The new year has had a difficult start with the devastation of the wildfires, and I hope that you and your loved ones are safe. Our thoughts and wishes go out especially to those who have been directly affected. We have been and will continue to be engaged with our communities as they navigate through these times. Please take good care.

David K. Yoo  
Vice Provost & Professor

### Vicente Diaz, AISC inaugural associate director for community engagement, on deepening engagement with Native communities

Professor Diaz's goal is to ensure the survival of Indigenous canoe traditions and ecological knowledge through community-engaged research and learning — or what Diaz would redefine as “community relations building” or “Native peoplehood rebuilding” — utilizing critical and comparative Indigenous studies.

[Learn More](#)



### Professor Lisa Uperesa Appointed to Morgan and Helen Chu Endowed Chair in Asian American Studies

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Department are extremely pleased to announce the appointment of Associate Professor Lisa Uperesa as the holder of the Morgan and Helen Chu Endowed Chair in Asian American Studies, starting the 2024–2025 academic year, along with her appointment in the Department of Asian American Studies. Professor Uperesa works with Pacific Islander communities to understand migrations, movement and mobility, and how they shape lives, identities, families, cultures, and futures.

[Learn More](#)



### AASC Welcomes Kari Okubo as the 2025 AASC Activist-in-Residence

Kari Okubo is a digital strategist, cultural worker, and organizer who is a fifth-generation Uchinānchu and Japanese settler from 'Aiea, Hawai'i. As the Social Media Strategist for **18 Million Rising**, an organization mobilizing Asian Americans through digital organizing, Kari brings her experience working in social media across various industries to power Asian American grassroots campaigns and creative projects. She will be focusing on building narrative power in digital spaces and utilizing storytelling as an organizing tool to shift culture and engage communities in the fight for collective liberation through a series of workshops at UCLA.

[Learn More](#)



### **New Data Brief: Eaton Fire’s Disproportionate Impact on Altadena’s Black Community**

The UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies released a new data brief, **LA Wildfires: Impacts on Altadena’s Black Community**. This report examines the devastating effects of the January 2025 Eaton Fire on Altadena’s historic Black community. The brief was published in partnership with the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge and the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute.

[Learn More](#)



### **CSRC hosts Día de los Muertos tribute to Cindy Montañez**

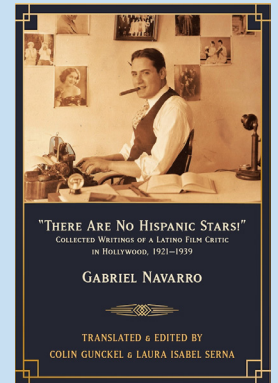
On November 1, the Chicano Studies Research Center, Latina Futures 2050 Lab, and the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability paid tribute to Cindy Montañez’s legacy of community activism and social and environmental justice at the Día de los Muertos event “Latina Futures and the Environment.” The late Montañez, a UCLA alumna and former San Fernando councilwoman and former California state assemblywoman, was one of the first Latina leaders of an environmental nonprofit, serving as the CEO of TreePeople. Watch the event highlight reel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EIDManeskg>

[Learn More](#)



### **CSRC Press celebrates new release and book award**

This fall the Chicano Studies Research Center Press released **Amalia Mesa-Bains** by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, volume 13 in the **A Ver: Revisioning Art History** book series. In addition, **“There Are No Hispanic Stars!” Collected Writings of a Latino Film Critic in Hollywood, 1921–1939**, edited by Colin Gunckel and Laura Isabel Serna, won a bronze medal for Best History Book in the 2024 International Latino Book Awards.



**We hope to see you at our IAC and ethnic studies center events this winter!**

**IAC Events Calendar:** <https://iac.ucla.edu/news-events/calendar>