

UC SANTA BARBARA

# *THE Current*

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Paul Desruisseaux

## **UC Santa Barbara Plans Town Meeting and Speakers Bureau on Immigration Issues**

With immigration issues continuing to draw national attention, the University of California, Santa Barbara is presenting a community panel discussion devoted to immigrant access to higher education this Thursday, May 3, at 7 p.m. in the Marjorie Luke Theatre, Santa Barbara Junior High, 721 East Cota St. The event is free and open to the public.

In addition, UCSB has organized a speakers bureau to help provide the local community with information about aspects of the immigration debate.

Thursday's panel discussion will feature Professor William Perez of the Claremont Graduate University; Araceli Simeon-Luna, director of the National Parent-School Partnership of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund; and Maria Rodriguez, Youth Organizer for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles.

UC Santa Barbara representatives will also take part in the program.

The panel will examine the impact of California Assembly Bill 540, signed into law in 2001, which provides a path to higher education for undocumented immigrants who meet certain requirements. The discussion will also focus on proposed federal

legislation, including the DREAM Act. The Development, Relief, and Education for 'Alien' Minors Act (Senate Bill 1291) would grant the children of immigrants who have lived in the United States for a significant portion of their lives the opportunity to obtain legal status and pursue higher education. The University of California system supports such initiatives.

The speakers bureau includes 25 UC Santa Barbara faculty and staff experts who have been trained to guide discussions regarding social justice issues, particularly immigration-related topics. Responding to invitations from local schools, these volunteers help students wrestle with the complexities of the immigration debate. UCSB invites inquiries from schools in both the Santa Barbara and Goleta school districts regarding the volunteer speakers and discussion facilitators. For more information, contact Theresa Pena at UCSB's Center for Chicano Studies, (805) 893-5315 or [theresa.pena@chicano.ucsb.edu](mailto:theresa.pena@chicano.ucsb.edu)

UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang said the campus welcomed the opportunity to share its intellectual resources to foster productive dialogue "and to seek answers to pressing questions raised by current events."

The panel discussion and the speakers bureau have been organized by UCSB's immigration working group, which is co-chaired by Carl Gutiérrez-Jones, a professor of English and director of the Center for Chicano Studies, and Dr. Marisela Márquez, director of the Academic Senate's Center for Faculty Outreach. The immigration working group also maintains a Web site (<http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/immigration.html>) with a range of information about immigration issues as well as a schedule of related events on campus and in the community.

Related Links

[Immigration Debate Resources](#)

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society.

All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.