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### Cultural Times

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ISSUE 51

# CULTURAL TIMES

FALL  
2019



*MAGIC*

## WHO WE ARE

**The MultiCultural Center (MCC)** is one of the four Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence. We are a dynamic and inclusive learning community that supports students in their academic and personal journeys at HSU. We do this by creating community, a home away from home and a safe place to Explore, Experience, Express, Empower and Engage. Our program is student-centered and fosters acceptance and respect of all people.

## OUR FAMILY

The Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence also include the African American Center (AACAE), El Centro (LCAE), and the Native American Center (ITEPP).

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The Cultural Centers take a group photo during the 2019 CCAE Fall Retreat



And above all,  
watch with glittering  
eyes the whole world  
around you, because  
the greatest secrets are  
always hidden in the  
most unlikely places.  
Those who don't  
believe in magic will  
never find it.



-Roald Dahl





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## Editor's Note

**W**hen we hear the word “magic,” many of us immediately think of it in its literal forms, like wizardry, disappearing acts, etc. But what about magic that exists in more subtle ways— the everyday magic we discover, create, and/or seek? My publications team and I kept this question at the front of our thoughts as we created the first-ever Magic issue of *Cultural Times*. Our main vision was to celebrate the seemingly ordinary pieces of ourselves and our lives that are actually quite brilliant when you hold them up to the light.

In our main feature, “Magic in Me,” (p. 16) the magic that exists within ourselves and the world around us is celebrated through student submissions that highlight the beauty of our individual strengths and our experiences. A student essay by Johvanna Ordonez (p. 18) reflects the magic of self-discovery and empowerment through the practice of *brujeria*. Photography and poetry submissions (pp. 20-21) demonstrate the magic of developing consciousness and self-reflection. Lastly, we close the issue with a piece that honors the magic of Ketly Sylla, an HSU student and CCAE family member who was an extraordinary and loved part of the community.

Many thanks to all of you who shared your words, wisdom, and art for this issue— your contributions are invaluable! I also owe a huge thank you to my publications team: Ash Ramirez, the baddest gemini queen to ever touch Adobe Illustrator, and Mona Mazzotti, my publications advisor whose momma-bear energy, guidance, and support gives me the ugly-cries.

Enjoy!

**Cara Peters**  
Publications Editor



# Mid-Autumn Moon Fest

Story and photo by Thomas Lal // originally published in *The Lumberjack*

**The Mid-Autumn Moon Festival** is an annual Chinese celebration dating back to the Zhou dynasty. At Humboldt State, the Asian, Desi and Pacific Islander Collective (ADPIC) observed the traditional holiday with a free event on campus.

Students and members of the community were invited to enjoy food and conversation with others in the Kate Buchanan Room.

Attendees were provided utensils to paint Chinese characters throughout the event and of course, enjoy mooncakes to properly celebrate the creation of their art. Mooncakes are a wheat based pastry seen as an essential part of the festival in Chinese culture.

A short presentation from the ADPIC officers helped show the meaning of the event. They talked about how the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival is traditionally a time to spend with family or in absence, think of family members. After this, ADPIC member Jonathan Haeteurn and fellow

Humboldt Rockers' member Romel Robinson entertained the crowd by break dancing. The dance may not have been expected from the event, but it was very well received with Haeteurn and Robinson being applauded throughout the performance.

Maria Castillo took her friend Afua Mensah to the event after hearing about it earlier that day. Mensah was happy that she had decided to join Castillo for her first Mid-Autumn Festival and said that she might be interested in attending more ADPIC events in the future.

"I really enjoyed it," Mensah said. "I've never had a mooncake before so I'm like, 'this is pretty good!'"

The event was marked as the first event for ADPIC since becoming an Associated Students program. ADPIC President Tammy Phrakonkham was happy with the turnout from the campus and community, especially considering the lack of attendance at the events earlier in the week. She also believed

that the amount of people that came out proved that there should be more support for the program from the school.

"I want students like me to feel like they're welcome," Phrakonkham said. "I'm from Kansas City. I get out here and there's no one here that looks like me, I feel like I don't belong. I feel like I'm always having to bring my chair to the table."

The ADPIC program passed around a petition supporting the goal of eventually having an ADPIC center on campus strictly dedicated to the progress and success of the program.

"For five years prior, we were a club," Phrakonkham said. "We have always been trying to fight to have our own center because a lot of the students felt like we weren't represented here. When you think of Asians you aggregate that they're all smart, they're all rich or whatever. But half of us are South Asians or Southeast Asians. We're also first generations and children of refugees."



# Indigenous Peoples Week

by Michael Estrada // photo by Thomas Lal  
*sourced from The Lumberjack*

**O**ctober is the month for many things—breast cancer awareness, Halloween, and previously Columbus Day. However, at Humboldt State, October marked the beginning of the 26th annual Indigenous Peoples Week (IPW), a holiday originating in protests of Columbus Day. Humboldt County is home to many different indigenous groups.

Plenty of events took place that allowed for neighborhood growth and unity; one of the first was a community “Home away from home” potluck thrown by Equity Arcata and HSU’s Council of American Indian Faculty & Staff (CAIFS).

Local community members brought home-cooked food, there was a barbecue going out front, and people even donated clothes for students. Arcata Mayor Brett Watson spoke at the event, mentioning some measures the city has taken to recognize Native Americans and their culture. They also showed skits from the 1491’s, a Native American comedy group.

Later in the week, Fisheries & Molecular Biologist Keith Parker, a member of the Yurok tribe, spoke on campus about his work on the lamprey eels and the Klamath River ecosystem.

This was a great moment for people to learn about the Yurok and the local ecosystem of Humboldt County as Parker is both a member of a local indigenous tribe and a Humboldt State alumni, giving students an opportunity to learn about their surrounding area from a source who directly interacts with it on an everyday basis.

“As a tribal scientist I work in an area where there’s an overlap between traditional

ecological knowledge, placed based identity and western science, and if you took the three separate circles like that and overlapped them, where they overlap is kind of where a scientist like me lives daily,” said Parker.

Keith’s work on his master’s thesis included the health of the Klamath River. It plays a huge role in the Yurok cultural as their name translates to “downriver people.”

Indigenous Peoples Week came to an end with a showing of “From Wounded Knee to Standing Rock: A Reporter’s Journey” at the Eureka Theater.

This film followed reporter Kevin McKiernan as he documented the events at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The theater was packed as people got to witness the events

of a 71-day occupation and seizure by the local Native Americans.

It was a fight of native rebels against the tribal loyalists who had procured the aid of the United States Marshals Service and the FBI. But with assistance from the American Indian Movement, the rebels and activists were able to come to an agreement with the U.S. Government and put an end to the battle.

The 26th annual IPW brought members of the community together, and showed the type of unity that it’s volunteers and participants aim to create. People came together and learned about Indigenous culture and history, and by gaining new knowledge and understanding, were able to grow as a community.



Community members gather at the Home Away From Home potluck





# CDOR



CDOR Keynote Dr. Nazia Kazi

Story by Carlos Holguin  
photo courtesy Dr. Nazia Kazi

**A**t this year's Campus/Community Dialogue on Race (CDOR), Humboldt State University asked audiences to challenge and expand their preconceived notions and ideas. Many workshops and presentations were hosted throughout the week that shed light on a wide range of social issues. Two standout discussions were lead by the keynote and featured speakers.

Dr. Nazia Kazi and Dr. John Johnson came to HSU with a mission in mind: to make students see the new perspectives in things within their day to day lives. From the pop culture we consume to the history of America for those who may not know the truth, both speakers drew crowds of students, staff, and community members.

Presenting first, Kazi was a strong start to the week of events. Her presentation, entitled "Islamophobic Nationalism in the U.S. Racial Landscape" was created with a specific audience in mind. While teaching her classes in Stockton University, Kazi realized that many, if not all of the incoming freshmen class were not born before the events of September 11, 2001.

As such, Kazi wished to explore how a class full of individuals interpreted and

conceptualized the phrase "Never Forget" when they couldn't have been alive to remember it in the first place. In her explanation, Kazi detailed how the slogan of "Never Forget" was steeped in islamophobic rhetoric, stemming from the inherent racism within the nation's structures and government.

Kazi informed students of America's past and present involvement in Middle Eastern politics, supplying rebel groups and governments with support in efforts to make sure their government were easier to work with when it came to American interests, such as oil. In doing so, it created a series of repercussions that all involved still feel to this day.

Meanwhile Johnson asked students to look at the most successful film franchise of all time and question how it could be better in terms of coding and representation. Titled "MARVEL-ous Times on Campus: Race(bending), Whitewashing, and Representation" Johnson focused on the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the continuing struggle it has to show off diversity, and how some of the attempts have fallen flat.

Johnson pointed out that while the franchise is over 20 films strong, it took a remarkably long time before they were able to give a black character a leading role in a film in Black Panther. In addition to that, Johnson also pointed out that other minority characters are often sidelined for the leading characters played by white actors, who are only willing to pass on the mantle when they no longer want it.

In doing this Johnson alleged that, while perhaps unintentional, the MCU continues a theme of white supremacy within the comic book industry and Hollywood that only recently has begun to be challenged.

Referencing the next phase of films and shows split between theater releases and the Disney+ app, Johnson noted that only one series had a black actor in a lead role with The Falcon and The Winter Soldier, but that it had to be shared with another white actor.

While tackling vastly different subjects, both Kazi and Johnson wished for students to take action against these ideas and practices. By engaging in discussions, voicing complaints and working with others to combat these issues in all forms, both hope that students can help lead others to a better tomorrow.



# Diwali Festival of Lights

Story and photos by Benjamin Zawilsky  
originally published in *The Lumberjack*



Anamika Singh performs a Bollywood dance at the Diwali Festival of Lights

**T**he Diwali, or Deepavali, Festival of Light brought together friends and family to enjoy delicious Indian food and cultural dances at Humboldt State University on October 30.

The event was hosted by the Asian, Desi, and Pacific Islander Center (ADPIC) in collaboration with the MultiCultural Center and the Department of Sociology.

HSU Fisheries and Biology major Arjun Chand celebrated the festival's message.

"It is a festival for freedom," Chand says. "You can see a common theme that is goodness over evil, light over darkness and

freedom. Those are all celebrated at the same time in India."

Though the celebration holds origins from Hinduism, it's celebrated throughout India, Nepal, Singapore, Pakistan and several other regions of the Eastern Hemisphere.

Activities available for students at the festival included making a candle holder called a diya, and traditional tabletop games including carom. After dinner, a series of dances were performed by scheduled dancers and then the dance floor opened up for guests.

In presentations, Chand and Meenal Rana shared their experiences and memories of

Diwali celebrations and explained what the festival personally means to them.

"I try to take what works for me and integrate those things in my day to day life," Rana said. "And how it shapes my world view."

Through different stories and traditions, Diwali is known as the biggest festival of light. To families and relatives, it honors values like sharing, gratitude, interdependence and commitment to joy and hope.





# Queer Student Welcome

story and photo by Ash Ramirez

**C**olorful tables lined the wall of the Kate Buchanan Room on Sept. 12, where students could connect with community members, organizations and resources at the Queer Student Welcome.

The Queer Student Welcome was an open space for LGBTQIA+ folks to learn about resources on campus. Many centers and clubs tabled at the event to showcase their support and different services.

Ravin Craig, Health Educator at HSU, hosted the event in collaboration with Health Education, The MultiCultural Center, El Centro, The Eric Rofes Multicultural Queer Resource Center and Student Engagement and Leadership.

Craig said the aim of the welcome was to create community and connectedness. They hoped that students would make new friends, find resources, find a place to get involved on campus, and have fun in the space.

"We exist on campus, as staff, faculty, fellow students, and we are interested in cultivating relationships that help people survive and thrive in this community," Craig said.



Maximus Landin, a freshman majoring in zoology, said that event felt warm and fun.

"When a campus is very open about their education, it makes it more safe to be more open," Landin said. "I plan to get more involved with the community because I've never able to do that before."

The night ended with a presentation by Dr. Melissa Mora Hidalgo, on Morrissey, frontman of the rock band the Smith's, and his connection to the queer Latinx community in Los Angeles.

"It was really interesting and enlightening, because I have never gone in depth about the Smiths or Morrissey's fandom," said Kayla Thompson, a junior majoring in environmental science.

Thompson found the event itself to be just as important as the context.

"You got to be visible, you got to be out here constantly saying 'I'm right here'," Thompson said. "Not everybody has the opportunity to be visible or be out or be acknowledged."

# AACAE Resource Mixer

story by Kassandra Rice // photo courtesy the AACAE



**T**he African American Center for Academic Excellence (AACAE) hosted many different events for students throughout the Fall 2019 semester.

One of them was the "Resource Mixer," thrown during September. The Resource Mixer was held two times, with the second event taking place a couple weeks later.

The AACAE invited resources and organizations on campus to come meet the students face to face. Among these resources and organizations, some included the Admissions Office, other Cultural Centers, several clubs, and Associated Students.

The event also provided light snacks and a fun raffle towards the end. After debriefing as a team, the staff for the AACAE agreed that the event turned out well, and was very helpful for students.

The AACAE is hoping to do this event again in the Spring for students who might have missed out, or for students who may be just starting school during that semester.



# El Centro: New Name, Same Community Mission

by Silvia Alfonso // photo courtesy El Centro  
originally published in *El Leñador*

**F**ormerly known as the Latinx Center for Academic Excellence (LCAE), it was decided this semester that the name of the center would be changed to “El Centro.”

According to Fernando Paz, the coordinator for El Centro, what prompted the change in name was the inclusivity factor. The purpose of the cultural centers on campus are for people to find community, but each of the centers should be generally welcoming to anyone. The term Latinx was not very inclusive to the vision for the space as a whole.

“It was empowering but also dis-empowering,” said Fernando Paz. “We wanted to provide resources for students to help them find their identity, rather than tell people how to identify.”

The idea of a name change came to be about a year ago when the center reevaluated the term Latinx and what it truly meant. What they found was that not everyone identifies with the term Latinx. Paz explained

that they wanted to change the center’s name to be something that reflected more of their vision.

“The main purpose behind the name change was that we wanted to focus on other broader cultural communities,” said Nathaniel McGuigan, a student that frequently spends time in El Centro.

El Centro and other Cultural Centers on campus are spaces where people connect and build community on campus. Understandably so, some people connect with one particular group and some people identify with a combination of them all.

“Identity is so complex, you know, there are so many things that you could be mixed with,” said Christian Trujillo, a promotorex for El Centro.

College is a time where people explore identity, and having cultural centers like there are on campus is a huge developmental factor for students. It shouldn’t matter how

far you’ve traveled to get to Humboldt State University, having community is what makes the process that much smoother.

“With a name like ‘El Centro’, it generally sounds more welcoming,” said Ritz Garcia, the Communications Liaison for El Centro. “People will feel more willing to come in and check out the place.”

Although it may take a while to get used to the name change, the mission of El Centro will always remain the same. Students have several places on campus where they can come together and meet new people, and that should be the general motive for all the cultural centers on campus. The name change for El Centro has been and will continue to be accepted with open arms.

“Honestly, I prefer it,” said Aliah Bueno-Strong, another promotorex of El Centro. “For one, it’s less of a mouthful, but with a name like ‘El Centro’, it doesn’t matter who you are or where you’re from- it’s a place to be.”



# SWB Offers Critical Support and Resources

by Anayeli Auza

photo via @swb\_hsu Instagram

**S**cholars Without Borders (SWB), a resource for but not limited to the undocumented community, continues programming events amidst the current political climate and xenophobia towards immigrants.

One of these events was “Undocuweek,” a week-long program that raises awareness about the challenges and experiences that undocumented students face in higher education. Undocuweek was made possible with the support from four peer mentors, one intern and several volunteers.

For this event, SWB was able to have two keynote speakers. Christina Hernandez from Freedom For Immigrants presented on a developing project which allows community members and allies to host asylum seekers in their home. Conditions in detention centers all around the country have resulted in many deaths, and Freedom for Immigrants along with Centro del Pueblo and Scholars Without Borders have been working really hard to provide as much support to the folks that have been released into the community as they wait for their court dates.

Karla Estrada, an undocumented activist, presented on how educators can be active allies and support undocumented students through their experience in higher education. Since DACA was rescinded in 2017, many of the students entering higher education do not hold a DACA status. This makes their experience a bit more difficult because without DACA, these students don’t have access to a social security number and therefore are not allowed to work.

It is crucial for educators and any staff and faculty at Humboldt State to provide the support that these students need, whether it’s navigating a higher education institution or financial support.

An additional program that SWB has run this year is the Undocumented Student Ally Training (USAT) that consists of three parts: proper terminology, state and federal legislation, and how to be an active ally. With a scheduled training, SWB delivers this training for departments, clubs, centers, etc.

Moving forward, SWB will continue to provide financial assistance to undocumented students through our Educational Award. This award is open to all students but priority is given to those that are undocumented as DACA renewals come at the expense of \$495 every two years. Scholars without Borders is also in the process of planning and facilitating a healing/informative circle for those that are affected by the current political climate and wish to have some support.

SWB will also send out monthly newsletters with resources such as scholarships, latest state and federal news regarding the undocumented and immigrant community, and any upcoming workshops that they will be hosting.

*If you have any questions, or would like to receive SWB’s newsletter, please contact: [swb@humboldt.edu](mailto:swb@humboldt.edu) or call (707) 826-3368. Follow SWB on Instagram: @swb\_hsu*





# AACAE Hires New Permanent Coordinator

by Vanessa Flores // photo by Jose Herrera  
*originally published in El Leñador*

**A**n HSU graduation stole hangs from the bookcase that also holds an image of Josiah Lawson and a Marvel 'Black Panther' action figure at the office of the African American Center for Excellence (AACAE) new coordinator's office.

Douglas Smith, a native from Los Angeles, has been brought back to Humboldt to help students navigate HSU and gain tools that he hopes will be of success to them after they graduate.

A transfer student at the time, Smith graduated from HSU in 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a focus on Development. He also spent time studying abroad in Santiago, Chile, where the focus of his academic courses served as an experience of how to navigate different cultures.

"No, no, no. I did not," Smith laughed, when asked if he ever thought he'd be back in Humboldt.

"But I think that about a year ago, I was like looking at my resume and all my jobs have been some form of education," he explained. "I was able to see this common theme of Education and working with youth and working with families, trying to give people tools. Education for me has been a vehicle. It's not the only vehicle, not the only way to get some place. But for me it's been something that's been huge in my life."

After graduating from HSU, Smith returned to Los Angeles to work for organizations



that are dedicated in serving youth, who he says "often get left behind." One of those organizations is "A Place Called Home (APCH)." Based in South Central, APCH is a non-profit whom first opened its doors in 1993, to provide a safe place for gang affected youth of South Los Angeles.

"I would do outreach to different or other organizations in the community who are also serving this population of youth," Smith said. "I would go to schools or I would go to foster youth organizations," he added.

Any place in the community he said that was serving youth to get back into school or get a good job is where he'd spent his time trying to support them.

Being from Los Angeles, Smith hopes to bring a piece of home to HSU.

"In LA, and it doesn't always happen like this, but there are a lot of people who are trying to work together and collaborate together with different communities," he said. "We're trying to work together, whether it's addressing gentrification or it's addressing education. Different communities of people are coming together to address these things. So this is my role here on campus," Smith explained.

"I'm really drawing on that, on that collaboration."

Amid the AACAE not having a permanent coordinator for a while, Smith wants to assure students that he's here for them.

"I have a direct interest in them as a person. I care about them as an individual. That's my vision, not just about what happens to them here. I care about what happens to them here, but also what happens after they graduate," Smith said.

In 2015, after arriving back from his trip abroad, Smith participated in the first Black graduation to be hosted by the AACAE, in which he recalls that he wished he had been more involved with the cultural centers that had just opened.

His priority now is to create an environment where students feel seen and they feel they like they belong.

"That's the focus," he said. "I'm here to help our students."



# Coming Home: Sacred Land Returned to Wiyot Tribe

by Collin Slavey // photo by Thomas Lal  
originally published in *The Lumberjack*

**W**iyot Tribal members and Eureka community members were joyful, yet solemn, at the Eureka City Council meeting to officially return Tuluwat Island to the Wiyot people.

Wiyot tribal elder Cheryl A. Seidner blessed the room in a prayer of welcome. The crowd was silent and respectful, and tribal members let out emotional “ho’s.” Seidner thanked everybody in the audience and asked them to rise.

“This is something I’ve always wanted since I was a kid,” Seidner said. “I thought the island was always ours, not anybody else’s. So we came together and said, ‘Let’s do this, let’s make it ours.’ So I decided to be bold and ask the new mayor to give us the island they owned.”

In 2004, 40 acres of Tuluwat were returned to the Wiyot Tribe. Oct. 21 marked the return of the remaining 202 acres. The tribe has been working with the City of Eureka for the last five years to make this happen, and this action marks the first step to repairing the damage caused to the tribe that began 100 years ago.

Cutcha Risling Baldy, Ph.D, the Native American Studies department chair at Humboldt State University, delivered one of many moving speeches to the hundreds of assembled community members. Baldy talked about the future of the Wiyot people and how she knew, one day, they would come back.

“I realized that native people were always making plans for our future and that we never gave up on our land or where we came from,” Baldy said. “That is the story I want people to know. I know that the story of Tuluwat, which people often refer to as Indian Island, has been one of a massacre for most people, but for me

it has only been a place for world renewal.”

Baldy once read a book about stories gathered from people about Tuluwat. One particular story was about a woman who was stuck in the mud after the violence on the island. While it may be a story of sadness, Baldy said it was a moment of strength and hope. The woman sang a mourning song because she knew she had to send her tribe off properly. Her strength showed she knew her kin would one day return to Tuluwat.

Eureka Mayor Susan Seaman began official proceedings by declaring the day as a moment in time that should forge strong bonds going into the future to create a long sought-after vision. Seaman prepared to take a vote from the council people while tension in the air grew as the crowd waited.

“I move to authorize the transfer of Tuluwat Island to the Wiyot Tribe and I authorize the vote,” Seaman said.

The Eureka City Council spoke on behalf of the motion, each member contributing a unique perspective to the magnanimity of the event.



A child stands with other tribal members at the Tuluwat return ceremony.

The tension began to ease as Seaman’s voice fell over the crowd.

“The vote to return the Tuluwat island to the Wiyot Tribe was unanimous and the motion passed,” Seaman said.

Applause erupted from the audience. The crowd stood on their feet to clap and shout in joy.

Seidner invited her family to the front of the auditorium to sing a song to the people gathered in the room. Seidner welcomed everyone in the audience and invited them to sing the song “Coming Home.”

“I know that our ancestors knew this day would come,” Baldy said. “I think that we need to consider it an opportunity to think about our next steps in the future. People stand up and ask me, ‘What can I do?’ And I have one answer for them: you can start by giving all the land back. And now we know it’s possible.”

The signing of the deed marked the end of the meeting. Seidner placed a quilt representing all who could not be present on the table, and the council people huddled around to officially return Tuluwat to its ancient owners.



# WRC Provides Safe Space for Empowerment

by Lesly Vasquez



**The Womxn's Resource Center** (WRC) aims to provide the tools, support and safe spaces for empowerment and encouraging people to dismantle systems of power, privilege and oppression. Simultaneously we are transforming our communities; as well as acknowledging & embracing diverse perspectives that promote collective visions of liberation. We put on a variety of events both for Spring and Fall semester.

During the Fall, our big event is Kink On Campus which is a sex-positive, body-positive week of events and workshops centered on alternative sexuality- such as kink, fetish, and sex politics that is open to all HSU students and community members. This event is put on every year to celebrate and educate our community about sexuality and desire.

Our goal is to disrupt patriarchal, racist, ableist, and heteronormative notions of sexuality; to provide spaces for those within the kinky and BDSM communities; to educate about these often stigmatized topics; to promote consent as a foundation for all sexuality; to decolonize often whitewashed images of sexuality and desire; and to encourage people to cultivate unconditional love and compassion for their bodies and selves, as well as those of others.

Take Back the Night occurs during the Spring. This event aims to stand in solidarity

with and bring to the center the voices of survivors and/or victims of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and/or intimate partner violence. One of the desires while planning Take Back the Night is to create a survivor centered space in order to help encourage healing and expression for those attending.

We hope to raise awareness on how structures of power enable this ongoing violence particularly faced by womxn of color. This event consists of a Take Back the Night March, Rally, and Speak Out.

Year round, the WRC upholds the Mxnstrual Gear Project. We place bins in restrooms

around campus stocked with mxnstrual products such as tampons, pads, and occasionally panty liners. Anyone in need of such products can come to our center and receive as many as needed.

The WRC also has our very own Rosa Parks Library. Students are welcomed and encouraged to check out any books we have available, there is no deadline to the amount of time one can have it checked out we just ask that they are returned. We have books on fat theory, queer studies, ethnic studies, womxn's studies, Black studies, Latinx studies, children's literature, biographies, and more.

We also publish a new edition of our Matrix Feminist Magazine every semester or once a school year (varying depending on number of submissions). Some other events we have put on are Hxrstory Week, book/clothes swap, jewelry making workshops, DIY pad-making, and candle-making workshops.

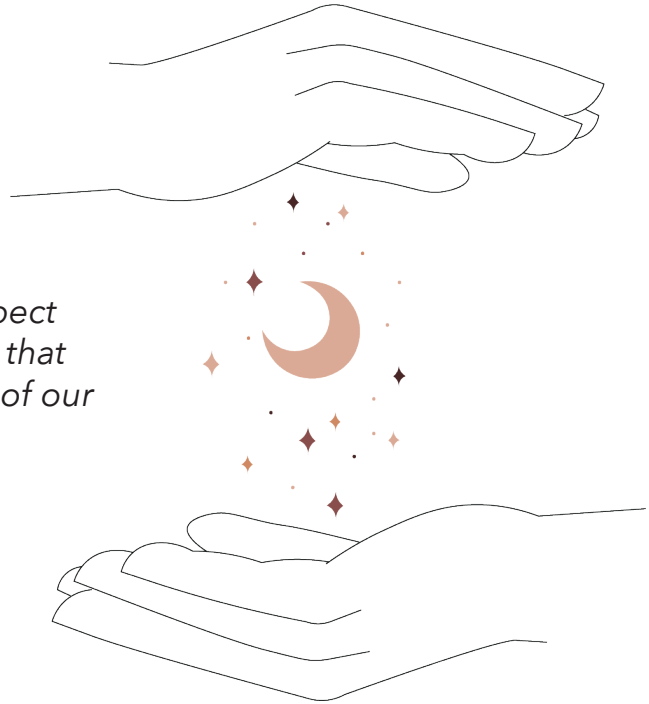
*If you have any questions, or would like to know more about the WRC, please contact the center at [hsuwomen@humboldt.edu](mailto:hsuwomen@humboldt.edu) or call (707) 826-4216. You can also follow the WRC on Instagram: @hsu.wrc*





# Magic in me

*We asked our readers to tell us about an aspect of their identity or an experience in their life that held some type of magic. These were some of our selected responses.*



**Paola Valdovinos-Rojas**  
Psychology Major

One aspect of my identity that I consider magic is finding the positive side of things. If I am mad I know there is a reason to it, so I try to encourage myself to figure out the root of why something bothered me. Within that is being able to pick myself up from things that I thought had left me empty, and encouraging myself to invest my time in seeing the goodness of the situation instead of just the negatives. I have come to find that pouring energy into good things won't necessarily mean they'll drain me because they will always come back to me in a different form. Finding this about myself encourages me to help others feel the same way and hope we can all give ourselves the credit we deserve. Being a student, worker, and human is hard, so it is important to take a step back and acknowledge when we know we are putting a lot of effort into something, even if we might think it's not enough.



**Alexis Parra**  
Journalism Major, English Minor

My magic is simply knowing that I am magical. Being a queer Mexican woman in today's climate means that the world is against me in one way or another, so knowing that my heart, mind, and overall being is magical now that's some magic power greater than infinity stone can hold.

Ever since I was 12, I knew who I was and what my role was in this world. Since then, I've grown but remained completely sure of myself. So as I move through day-to-day life, you either take me or leave me. I am a strong, smart, beautiful, and magical woman. With the heartbreak, hurt, and discrimination I have faced in this world it's hard for some to believe how I have remained so positive and loving— that's all magic.



**Cassie Caudillo**  
Journalism Major, News Emphasis

I come from resilient women. My abuelita moved from her homeland to this new world with a child that she basically raised on her own. My mother found the strength within herself to raise four children on her own while working a full-time job. My bisabuelos and the many ancestors who came before me dealt with being displaced by force, wars that had nothing to do with them, and trying to survive in a world that didn't want them in it.

Resiliency runs throughout my blood, I feel it course through me when I feel like nearly giving up. With a family history like mine, with family stories that I've been told, it's hard to forget that I come from resilient women. First-generation, brown, Mexican; all of those things I am, but most importantly, I am a resilient woman.



**Mirian Mendoza**  
HSU Alum, B.A. English

When I first arrived at Humboldt State University, I never really breathed the same breath since then. It was new, it was scary, it was my new home. I walked through the streets, the forest, and the hallways and I was stunned. THIS is what's considered a "small state school"?! And I remember stuttering a Wow. I looked around some more, I found so many new things on my long tread through the jungly awe-inspiring environment. I fell in love.

Deep, deep into the psychedelic trance of the woody dome of what I knew as Humboldt, I found something so new and so brave. Words came to me every day as I dreamt of a new dream, lost in what was the longest walk I've ever taken in my life. Things I imagined were figured worlds. The longest night, until I woke up again in SoCal. My so-called self-concept totally destroyed. Who am I? What happened? Where am I? It was the longest trip I've ever taken.

-Like magic.



**Dylan Anderson**  
Environmental Science Major,  
Energy & Climate option

The part of my identity I consider magic is my connection to nature, and the way that my relationship with nature allows me to derive a sense of peace from knowing my place in the universe. I hope one day we all can find what brings us serenity.



# BRUJA

Essay and illustrations by Johvanna Ordonez

*I am a witch.  
I worship through nature,  
I live through the sun and the moon,  
I cast spells in faith and love for myself.  
I live with pride as a witch.*

*Yo soy bruja.  
Adoro a través de la naturaleza,  
Vivo a través del sol y la luna,  
Lanzo hechizos en fe y amor por mí misma.  
Vivo con orgullo como bruja*

**O**nce I was born the world had decided who I was destined to become. Because I was born a daughter of a Catholic Latinx family, society told me I would be obedient, I would go to church and worship without question, I would speak Spanish perfectly and help my mother in the kitchen.

It felt restricting, like a hand wrapped around my throat refusing to let go. This was society's way of holding me back, its way of deciding my fate even though it was mine to decide. So, instead of waiting to be asked what I wanted, I decided to ask myself.

I gave myself the authority that society wanted to refuse me. And this was my answer.

I am Wiccan. And I am a witch, a bruja; it is my own personal act of defiance in a world that wants to silence what it doesn't agree with. A place where I find my heritage and strength from women that came into the world before me, blamed for heresy and burned at the stake, witch or not. A connection to nature, and to the past. That is witchcraft.

I am the connection to a sin that many would like to forget. Try to imagine a time long before now where there



**“Being a bruja is a way that I connect to my ancestors. I remind myself I am powerful. It is the way I respect the earth and myself. I live because of it and I live by it.”**

was nature everywhere. When we did not command it, we lived within it. Then imagine genocide. When land was taken by people who had no claim to it. They demonized cultures and forced assimilation into the way they deemed to be the only way.

From this past, Brujería was born. Brujería is the term witchcraft in Spanish. It is a blending of many different forms of folk magick and the dominating religious identity. Brujería is the way that the cultures of the past tried to survive. But yet it is still demonized.

I can still remember stories about brujas coming from tias, tios, abuelitas and abuelos when they talked chisme together. Witches were evil women that used power granted to them from the devil to perform dark magick. When we visualize women healers or old wise women we don't run afraid. We stand in awe of the respect they command. That is what it means to be a witch.

Witchcraft is a practice, which means that anyone can be a witch. Whether you are Christian, Catholic or atheist you can be a witch. The term witch is an umbrella term that encompasses many different crafts. For example, Brujería and witchcraft even though they are translated to the same word they represent different forms of practice. None of which worship the devil.

In reality, it is about connection, it is herbalism, healing, and spirituality. It is superstitions passed down by abuelitas, it is culture, it is heritage, it is Brujería.

Wicca like Brujería is a part of my personal practice. Wicca is a new age nature-based religious movement a seed cultivated

from paganism. Paganism is an umbrella term that was once used as a way to describe all religions that worshiped multiple gods or was not based in Christianity.

However, unlike Brujería, Wicca came from western culture. Spells, rituals, blessings, god worship, etc. are all part of the world of Wicca. Although, similarly to witchcraft, there is no craft that fits all. You can be a witch but not Wiccan and vice versa, the way people practice Wicca also varies. Some worship the Triple Goddess and the Horned God, while others do not worship any gods.

Every witch you ever meet will practice in a different form. And that should be respected.

Just as the image of a witch in society is ever changing, so is witchcraft. Witches were killed, demonized in our society. We turned them into imaginary green old ugly women only to be called upon during the Halloween season.

However, as we reclaim what has always been ours, witches are finding themselves to have become a revolutionary image.

The witch has become a way to display femininity, a way for women to feel powerful in a patriarchal society. However, to this day we still only view witches to be imaginary creatures from another world. I am not imaginary, my religion exists.

I have a connection to nature that empowers me. And I connect to the world through ritual.

Being a bruja is a way that I connect to my ancestors. I remind myself I am powerful. It is the way I respect the earth and myself. I live because of it and I live by it.

The Wiccan Rede says this “An ye harm none, do what ye will” many wiccans live by it. Witches are not evil, and we do not go into the world hexing all who step in our way. We send blessings into the world.

I'm a witch, I'm bruja, and I am wiccan.

*Blessed be*







# Fighting for the Future

photos by Klara Hernandez



## Women's March

January 2019 -- Pershing Square, LA

Indigenous Peoples Day triggered a memory. I was oblivious to Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) when I took this photo. Now I know well that Indigenous women are the number one racial group targeted for sexual violence. Indigenous Peoples Week is incredibly powerful. We need Indigenous perspective-- their cultural practices, their knowledge of the land. We need to decolonize and indigenize.



## DACA protest

March 2018 -- LA City Hall.

With Ethnic Studies - Latin@//Chican@ Lives, learning about my Salvi history so thoroughly for the first time, I look at how far we've come in history. With Undocuweek, training to become an ally for the Undocumented, I see we've got so much more to go. My sweet ol' pa saying not to get "too deep" in all this and to focus on the future. I am pa. I've got fuel to keep fighting for the future until I die.



### Unconforming

Taught to be silent; complacent.  
Code switch like a constant twitch.  
Each day I choose to hold myself back,  
I remember the love for myself I lack.  
Disguise who I am for comfort? safety?  
Why? if then my own mind defeats me.  
You tell me to blend in.  
And let society win.  
I am not your confining category.  
I am me.  
In my world I'm beautiful,  
In your world I'm far from normal.  
Your perception of me,  
Is not what I see.  
  
I'll learn to love myself.

WATCH ME.

-Andrew Sloan

### Connected

There is a cathedral en la Heredia  
where people pray just like we do.  
on empty Mondays a few scattered  
prayers pass between the silence of  
strangers.

In San Joaquín de Flores, a man like dad  
paints black on bars that line his front yard.  
between strokes, he smiles and waves at me, a  
stranger.

Along the Malecón in Havana, lovers stroll to the beat of  
water against stone, a splickety-splash, splash-swish,  
a splickety-splash, splash-swish. Somewhere along  
the Tennessee river, a splickety-splash, splash-swish,  
lovers move to the same beat.

In Nassau on Standford Drive, there is a yellow  
condominium where after a hard rain,  
snails, oblivious to feet crunching their cousins,  
slug across wet concrete. A mother carries one little snail shell  
on her back, one little life. Be careful where, how you step in the  
world.

-Ramona j.j. Bell

### Purpose

Trust your Intuition my dear  
Said the Lioness to the Baby Bear  
Do not act on feelings of fear  
And know your inner Guidance is always here

In times of stress and Wildness  
Take a deep breath and know you are Blessed  
You were born at this time to Heal your Heart  
And to Recognize we were never apart  
Your Love and Loved ones  
are part of you and me  
With this Realization you are free

Being able to Love in the middle of chaos  
Being able to Heal even with immense loss  
Keeping Peace in your Heart  
while the world is falling apart  
Is the reason you came, so this is your start

Trust your Intuition my dear  
Do not be led by the temptations of fear  
Said the Lioness to the Baby Bear

- Danielle Daniel





# Our Sister, Ketly Sylla



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written by ITEPP staff  
photo courtesy Joelle Montes

**O**ur dear friend and sister Ketly Sylla will not only be greatly missed on the HSU Campus but the presence and spirit that she brought to the Indian Tribal Education and Personnel Program (ITEPP) will forever be in our hearts.

Ketly worked at the African American Center for Academic Excellence (AACAE) with Dr. John Johnson in her first years at HSU. A native of the South Central Los Angeles, Ketly came to HSU in the Fall of 2015 and was a Sociology major. Ketly was passionate about helping others, especially those with “disabilities.” She regularly expressed her interest in supporting communities in both her actions and words. Her desire and willingness to get involved in various cultural centers on campus left a mark on these communities. She was known by many to be genuinely joyful and loving.

In the Spring of 2017 HSU campus suffered the loss of David Josiah Lawson, an African American student whose murder remains unsolved today. This loss brought students together across campus who worked to get Justice for Josiah. In addition, during this sad time some of the ITEPP students reached out to the AACAE Center and offered a prayer and condolences to the center and its students. Songs were offered as prayers and it was a moment that brought these two centers together. Ketly was a student of the AACAE at that time, and she recalled later that this connection was what made her interested in learning more about ITEPP.

That following Fall of 2017, Ketly came to work for ITEPP as part of the student staff leadership. Once she became a part of the ITEPP House there was no turning back! She made many friends, was a key member of the ITEPP student club, and worked tirelessly alongside her fellow ITEPP student staff leadership team to make ITEPP a comfortable and supportive home away from home.

To many of us here at ITEPP, our little community is like a family. Ketly was undoubtedly an important part of our house and its family. Though she did not identify as Native American, which many of us did not realize or mention, she found ways to support and be a part of our community in a manner that was respectful, as she was always secure in herself and confident about who she was. Her involvement with ITEPP allowed her to travel with our students to all sorts of conferences and events surrounding American Indian Education, Indigenous leadership, and community building and research. It is because of this that Ketly is not only remembered as a dear friend but is also remembered for her activism. We were proud to have a strong leader like her as a part of our team and family.

# Social Justice Summit 2020

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

★ **March 2nd-7th**

★ **Keynote speaker Mia Mingus and  
featured speaker Abby Abinanti**

★ **Register now!**

*<https://summit.humboldt.edu/>*

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