In this ever changing and globalizing society, Cal State Fullerton, with the guidance of the Diversity Initiatives and Resource Centers Interim Director Carmen Curiel, prepare students to embrace diversity with a particular emphasis on issues of identity and culture.

Diversity Initiatives and Resource Centers (DIRC) is committed to creating learning environments and opportunities that foster academic excellence, cultural competence, and student success. DIRC is comprised of four campus cultural centers and diversity education programs that address issues related but not limited to: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, gender, ability, and class.

The campus cultural centers include: African American, Asian Pacific American, Chicana/o, and the forthcoming Titan Dreamers Resource Center. There will be a close relationship between these centers and the ASI LGBT Queer Resource Center, which is operated by Associated Students Inc. The cultural centers offer study and social space, weekly programs that focus on academic success, personal growth, discussions on current issues, and training programs. Learning outcomes for students include examining issues of identity, culture, and intersections that emerge; exploring the shared and unique histories, experiences, and challenges of our diverse campus; and pursuing scholarly research. DIRC also functions as a resource to student leaders and culturally-related student organizations through advisement and training on group development and organizational management in addition to event planning that includes heritage month celebrations.

The immediate and future goals of DIRC are to build capacity, establish and nourish partnerships with campus and off campus stakeholders, and to complete a review of the cultural centers. The Interim Director’s belief is that to be successful in virtually any industry, a person needs to be culturally competent. People need to possess an awareness and more than superficial understanding of what culture and diversity mean. To be culturally diverse means to understand the various frameworks, rules, and guidelines that a person or group of people practice, and to recognize the variety of differences and similarities between communication. This can promote positive interactions between individuals with vastly different backgrounds and world views.

LGBTQ Center – Dedicated Student

Janet Carracoza (senior, graphic design) started with the ASI LGBTQ Center as a hang out in her junior year. If she wasn’t in class, she was upstairs in the TSU with her friends. It’s only logical to get involved if you’re there most of the time anyway, right? Once a position opened up, Janet was first in line.

She’s currently in charge of the ‘Did You Know’ board, which serves to spotlight and educate the community on famous LGBT figures like Harvey Milk and Ellen DeGeneres. She is also a member of the relationship talks, which is a partnership with CAPS. Dr. Maleki leads discussions about queer relationships and the differences between queer and heterosexual relationships.

Janet encourages others to participate in the array of events available through the LGBTQ Center by word of mouth, tabling, and involvement with other clubs. The space sees a lot of freshmen, and its welcome atmosphere is a place for all walks of life to relax and have fun while also learning more about the LGBT community. One warning from Janet: “never go there to study--you’ll never get anything done!”
LGBT Queer Resource Center

Founded by the Associated Students, Inc in 2012, the ASI LGBT/Queer Resource Center (QRC) works collaboratively with DIRC and the other cultural centers. The QRC provides educational, informational and supportive services that are open, safe, inclusive and affirmative to students who identify as queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, asexual, pansexual, intersex, questioning and allies. Building on the work being done in the other cultural centers, the QRC strives to create spaces that are supportive, to provide programs that raise the visibility of queer issues, to make connections to the Queer Studies minor and to promote a more inclusive campus community.

The ASI LGBT/Queer Resource Center offers programs that include several student focused discussion groups, various activities and programs which foster the development of community, a number of partnership programs with other university departments, SafeSpace training for faculty and staff, and student ally and leadership training. Throughout its programs and services, the QRC hopes to help students define and describe their queer identities, develop connections with other students, understand privilege and how it impacts the queer community, and expand knowledge of queer community resources especially those offered at the Center.

A few initiatives to look forward to are: the reorganized SafeSpace program, which will become a one session training program for faculty and staff in order to increase the number of allies on campus; the introduction of Safe Space Advanced, a brown bag lunch discussion for current allies to further their knowledge; and, the implementation of a student ally program. Additionally, the center is implementing a leadership development program geared toward empowering queer students.

African American Resource Center

The most important mission of the African American Resource Center (AARC) is to provide services that encourage students to succeed educationally, professionally, and personally. The center creates a sense of belonging and a chance to learn about African American history and other cultures as well. It’s a place to relax and connect where all students, regardless of background, are made to feel welcome.

The AARC is equipped with computers, a printer, a library, and space for students to gather and study. Gwen Alexis, lecturer in African American Studies, is the liaison between the department and the center. She provides advising and program support. Workshops and discussions, coordinated by ASI Graduate Assistant Mashonda Salsberry, are available for students to explore a range of educational, social, and identity-based topics. The center also connects students with clubs and organizations and helps them get involved on campus.

Plans are in place to increase faculty engagement, which could enrich AARC programs that promote retention, career development, and cultural competence. Spring semester has already been exceptionally busy with our Black History Month celebration in February and planning for the cultural recognition ceremony well underway.

When students leave the AARC, they are likely to feel empowered to not only excel academically, but also in their personal and professional lives.
Eloisa Amador is a rarity at CSUF with incredible ties to what AB540 stands for on campus. Beginning in high school when her brother was attending CSUF, Amador sat in and became one of the founders of the AB540 Club. She was very aware of what was going on and passionate about bringing change to her surroundings.

During her time at CSUF, she continued to be invested in the club as treasurer, secretary, president, and the like. She is currently an advocate for a resource center for undocumented students on campus.

To identify as AB540 can be an understated way of admitting you are undocumented, but that is not always the case. In fact, 80% of AB540 students are actually US citizens who maybe have just lost their California residency. To be AB540 allows you to pay in state tuition fees. The requirements are: attend 3 years of high school in California and graduate from a California high school or adult school, and then apply for the affidavit.

Because of her immigration status, Amador could not get a job on campus when she was a student, but she was able to complete internship work. She applied for deferred action, a two year work permit that the Obama administration passed in summer, 2012, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. DACA allows for a work permit, a social security number, and a driver’s license.

There’s a misconception that being undocumented means you are barred from many things. In some cases it holds true, Amador would take the bus 3 hours one way to get to campus as an undergrad because she was unable to attain a driver’s license. But she also ran for ASI Vice President last year when she found nothing was actually stopping her. One of the struggles of undocumented students is that there are not a lot of resources out there, and opportunities could go by simply because they were uneducated about their actual capability.

Chicana/o Resource Center

The Chicana & Chicano Resource Center (CRC) provides a learning environment for students, staff, faculty and the broader community that fosters the history, education and culture of Chicanas, Chicanos and Latinos.

The CRC exerts a positive influence on the academic success of all students with research assistance, support, workstations, instructional guidance and networking. It is a resource for learning the history, culture, education, and politics of Latinos. Cultural and academic programming augments the journey to success by encouraging students to become more involved with the campus community, and student organizations.

Campus programs like Chicana/o Studies, Latin American Studies, History, Sociology, Elementary and Bilingual Education and Secondary Education, to name a few, also benefit from the resource center’s services through research assistance, advisement, graduate school and scholarship information. On a broader note, the CRC is a catalyst for social change between CSUF and the surrounding communities, and it is a safe haven for AB540 and Latino LGBTQ students through support and advocacy.

Learning outcomes that students can achieve through the CRC include developing an awareness and understanding of the identity and culture of the Latino community, and developing leadership skills, as well as cultivating their development as college educated citizens. The center looks forward to strengthening programs that will help preserve and present Southern California Latino history, and stories of its human experience and evolution.

Asian Pacific American Resource Center

The Asian Pacific American Resource Center (APARC) strives to unify and empower the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community by serving as an academic and creative home for its students, staff and faculty, as well as its external community partners. The center provides a space for students to meet and interact with other AAPI community members on campus.

The constant presence of the Asian Pacific American Resource Center has provided for me and other students a second home away from home. The center provides a stimulating environment for the sharing and discussion of topics that I have not been recently exposed to.

--Adrian Velasco, APARC Student Assistant, Spring 2014

APARC offers workshops and discussions for students to explore and learn about Asian American Pacific Islander history, leadership development and other related topics. The center also helps students to connect with AAPI-based clubs and organizations. Currently, APARC is working on the AAPI Heritage Month program, which will take place in April, and providing support for the cultural recognition ceremony in May.

APARC is open to everyone, regardless of background. The center is located in University Hall room 210B and is open Monday-Thursday from 9am-7pm.
Titan Dreamers Resource Center

In a few short months, the Division of Student Affairs will open a completely new cultural center primarily designed to serve the needs of undocumented students on campus. California State University, Fullerton, will be the first among the CSU system to create this type of center. The center, Titan Dreamers Resource Center, will serve as a supportive community space for all CSU Fullerton students. It will offer academic support services, cultural programming, curricular and co-curricular programming, and a host of other services.

Since 2001, California State Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540) has permitted undocumented students who meet certain criteria requirements to attend a public college or university in California while paying in-state tuition instead of out-of-state tuition. This bill has made financing a higher education easier for undocumented students who benefit from the bill. A decade later, in 2011, the California Legislature passed two additional bills to address undocumented students’ pursuit of a higher education: AB 130 and AB 131. These bills make financial aid a reality for undocumented students who are also classified as AB 540.

In 2012, President Obama created and implemented Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) by an executive order. Young individuals who are eligible for DACA, apply for DACA, and are granted DACA status are afforded a two-year temporary relief from deportation. This relief can be renewed every two years for as long as DACA continues to exist. In addition to relief from deportation, DACAmented (as they have termed themselves) individuals are also granted a work permit which allows them to legally work in the US. In California, deferred action and a work permit allow individuals to obtain a Social Security Number (SSN), a State-issued identification card, and a State-issued driver’s license. DACA beneficiaries are also able to request advance parole to travel outside of the US.

For years, undocumented students have been their own biggest advocates in local, state, and national legislative issues. More and more, however, colleges and universities have proven themselves allies in undocumented students’ pursuit of a higher education. CSU Fullerton continues to be a safe and supportive university for undocumented students, and the campus will continue to pave the way for other colleges and universities to do the same. Located on the second floor of Pollak Library North (PLN-203), construction is well underway, and a national search for the coordinator of the center is forthcoming. It is truly a remarkable time for all at CSU Fullerton!