



**OFFICE for EDI**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**NOVEMBER 2022**



**WELCOME BACK: WE HAVE  
SO MUCH TO TELL YOU!**

Happy Autumn and Welcome back, Raider Family! We missed you and are so glad to have the bustle and buzz you bring to campus when you're here. A lot has happened since we said good-bye last summer. We're here to catch you up on what's happened, make sure you know what's happening, and give you a peek of what's to come in EDI at SOU. Welcome to the 2022 Fall Edition!

**TOP NEWS**

- **LATINO/A/X EXCELLENCE @ SOU**
- **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY**
- **VISIBILITY FAIR**
- **SOPRIDE IS BACK**
- **VETERANS DAY**

**LATINO/A/X EXCELLENCE**

**SOU FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIVERSITY**

Each year beginning September 15th and until October 15th we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month. The year's theme, "Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation," called for community conversation emphasizing the values of connection, inclusion and celebration.

The Office for EDI loves a good heritage celebration—both in heritage and out of special months of recognition. So, we want to take this opportunity to celebrate two exemplars of the excellence of Hispanic Heritage right here in the SOU community.



# **PROFESSOR DR. ALMA ROSA ALVAREZ ENGLISH**



Dr. Alma Rosa Alvarez

Alma Rosa Alvarez is the daughter of Mexican immigrants and is a proud Chicana. Her family has had a long history with the U.S. that spans five generations. Dr. Alvarez earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Mexican American Studies from California State University, Dominguez Hills. She earned her Masters and Ph.D. in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Dr. Alvarez is a professor of English at Southern Oregon University, where she has taught for twenty six years. Her speciality is U.S. Ethnic Literature. Dr. Alvarez has been a long-standing member of the Committee for Equity and Diversity at Southern Oregon University.

Dr. Alvarez is a public scholar. As such, her work includes co-leading the Racial Equity Coalition (2015-2017), a grassroots organization committed to racial equity through advocacy, education, and conversations. This summer (2022), Dr. Alvarez was chosen to be the project scholar for a program that educated participants about Mexican/Chicano culture via literature. This program was funded by the National Endowment of the Humanities grant through the American Libraries Association. Dr. Alvarez has also recently been commissioned to write an essay about migration for the catalog of the 2024 exhibit of visual artists Deborah Orropallo and Andy Rappaprot.

Dr. Alvarez is the author of *Liberation Theology in Chicana/o Literature: Manifestation of Feminist and Gay Identities* (2007) and *Promised Fruit* (2020) [available in the Hannon Library]. Last spring she finished a family memoir tentatively titled *De La Casa* which has been submitted to a press for consideration. Dr. Alvarez is a co-author of the blog *Writing Life*. In her spare time, she enjoys writing poetry, reading, baking and eating cookies, and going out on walks.

# PROFESSOR ROBERT ARELLANO EMDA



Professor Robert Arellano

Robert Arellano, a self-described Cubanito de Nueva Jersey, is a professor of Emerging Media and Digital Arts at SOU. He is the author of the award-winning Cuban Noir series of novels, nominated by the Mystery Writers of America for the annual Edgar Allan Poe Prize. Bobby, as he's known to his students and coworkers, had a story selected for the recent State University of New York Press anthology *Let's Hear Their Voices: Cuban American Writers of the Second Generation*, and his poetry is forthcoming in the first edition of the *New Mexico Poetry Anthology*, published by Museum of New Mexico Press. This summer, Bobby was invited to offer a multimedia keynote presentation at the National Hispanic Cultural Center that kicked off their yearlong *historia, idioma, e identidad* speakers series. He has been awarded fellowships by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. Before coming to SOU, he served on the faculties at Brown University, the Institute of American Indian Arts, and the University of New Mexico.

Bobby was recently elected Chair of the Board for Oregon Humanities, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This nonprofit sponsors hundreds of community forums all over Oregon every year, in both Spanish and English. "In the summer of 2019,

I got to moderate a conversation for Oregon Humanities in partnership with SOU that brought Richard Blanco, President Obama's inaugural poet laureate, to Ashland," Arellano said. "I would not have been able to take on a leadership role at Oregon Humanities without the unequivocal support of my division director, David Humphrey, and SOU Provost Sue Walsh, who have also both participated in events we've hosted here in the Rogue Valley." Bobby lives in Talent with his wife Jodie and their children David and Zane.

Bobby's proudest accomplishment this year was being selected as one of three faculty members to receive the Distinguished Teaching Award. "It means so much to me that it comes from the students and alumni of SOU."

This winter term, Bobby will offer EMDA 401, a new course titled "Somos Oregonenses." Students will collaborate on group research into Hispanic and mestizo communities of southern Oregon and design an interface for a digital repository of oral histories, folk art, and other Latinx cultural treasures. Knowledge of Spanish is not required. Bobby says, "EMDA 401 has a prerequisite of any EMDA 200-level Foundations course, but I can put in registration overrides for students who are passionate about the subject if they email me at [arellanor@sou.edu](mailto:arellanor@sou.edu)."





Photo Credit: Lupe Sims

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

## The Sovereignty of Tribal Nations

Returning from a 2-year COVID-driven hiatus, Indigenous People's Day celebrations returned to Southern Oregon University with the same richness participants experienced in years past. Coordinated this year by SOU Alumna, Lupe Sims— who also served as host for the day— participants were honored with the presence of tribal elders, traditional drumming from the group Screaming Eagle, and enjoyed fellowship among long-time and newly made friends.

Sims opened the time with a prayer that acknowledged the good of being together again following the pandemic's interruption. President Richard Bailey welcomed the crowd. He was followed by recitation of our Land Acknowledgement by our Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Susan Walsh. New this year was the announcement of Ashland's recently adopted proclamation, claiming October 10th as Indigenous People's Day. On behalf of the citizens of Ashland and Ashland City Council, SOU professor Dennis Slattery read the city's proclamation. Similar to the university's land acknowledgment, the proclamation recognizes,

***“. . .that the Indigenous Peoples of the lands (later known as the Americas) have lived on these lands since time Immemorial . . .and that the community of Ashland is built upon the traditional homelands of the of the Takelma, Shasta and Klamath Basin Peoples.”***

The proclamation also affirms the legal right of the nine federally recognized tribal nations in the State of Oregon and all Indigenous Peoples everywhere and encourages all of Ashland private and public to

***“acknowledge, honor, value and celebrate Indigenous Peoples' historic and current contributions locally and beyond, while also recognizing the ongoing and interconnected struggles of all Indigenous communities locally and beyond.”***

# LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE AVAILABLE NATIVE RESOURCES

The proclamation is a fitting one as we embark on the annual recognition of Native American Heritage Month. It echoes Indigenous Peoples' Day [IPD] coordinator Sims' thoughts on what lies at the root of recognitions like these. "[IPD is an] acknowledgement of the bloodborne rights of Indigenous blood, breath and bone." and demonstrates our willingness to contend with the reality of a "[h]istory [that] is inarguable . . . regardless of those who intentionally perpetuate silence, shame, and inherent grief among Native and Indigenous Nations." Occasions like IPD and the heritage month that follows hold additional and special space for "the next seven generations . . . to heal ourselves, our families, and communities, when we tell our own truth through our own lens and voice," says Sims.

SOU recently announced instituting in-state tuition for all students of the nine federally recognized tribes, as well as those of the Chinook Nation. We encourage you to continue your reflections on the history of the land you call home, as well as on the present day implications that history has for those who called it home first. Join us in exploring ways to grow knowledge and hold space to honor the legacy and ongoing thriving of these nations.

- National Parks Service article, Words Matter naming the importance and power of language in discussions on native sovereignty.
- Learn more about the sovereign rights of native nations that are the continuing focus of the [National Congress of American Indians](#) (NCAI)
- For information about the work right here at home, explore the organization [Red Earth Descendants](#), whose mission, in part, is to "create healthy, sustainable community while preserving Native values, traditions and culture."
- Native American Programs most recent newsletter [Talking Circle](#)

SOU Offers a variety of ways to participate in Native American programs and events. These programs will offer the opportunity to participate and learn about Native American heritage.

For more info visit:  
<https://sou.edu/land/get-involved/>



Photo Credit: Lupe Sims





Photo Credit: Toya Cooper

## VISIBILITY FAIR

We hear that some students called it the “Invisibility Fair.” You know students—they got jokes. That’s alright; we thought it was funny too. The laughs didn’t keep 58 of them from dropping by the Stevenson Union’s Arena on October 13th and learning more about the library’s Writing Center services, picking up laptop charger cords from IT’s Client Services, or getting one of the 27 flu shots administered during SOU’s first Visibility Fair. Fairgoers also enjoyed refreshments, music, and opportunities to win gift cards.

Well-honed study habits and consistent class attendance are not the only things that impact academic performance and persistence toward degree attainment. In fact, developing either habit can be largely impacted by the common barriers to academic success that students routinely face throughout their college careers. Perhaps now more than ever, services that support student academic, social, and emotional success are a must on any university campus and Southern Oregon University is no stranger to providing these “wraparound services.”

From Bridge and TRiO’s mentoring and coaching programs, to Financial Aid’s burgeoning financial advising sessions, to the free food pantry and reduced-priced bus passes offered in the Social Justice and Equity Center, these systems of support are designed to address challenges students face both in and outside of the classroom. The fair brought representatives from these offices of support services and over a dozen similar

additional ones together in one spot. One of the fair’s creators, Admissions Counselor and Multicultural Retention and Transfer Specialist, Soteria Gallo described the services as critical in “retaining some of our most vulnerable students— they are underrepresented along a range of social identities.”

Gallo was joined by Assistant Professor of Education and Education Studies Program Coordinator, Amanda Casto and the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, to design an occasion that made more visible not just what Gallo describes as the “service-deep campus” that is SOU but also highlighted the value these students bring to the campus and to this region, and demonstrated our investment in their success. Creating the foundations of the logo that was finalized in fine form by SOU Marketing and Communications department, Casto’s graphic eye paired the title of the Visibility Fair with the statement “We See You.” “It’s one of the first steps to creating belonging— making sure people know that they are seen, wholly seen and then responding to the needs as they present and anticipating those that may come and being ready for them. When you know you’re in a place where that can happen, you have a sense that you belong,” said Cooper, who was delighted to share in the vision with Casto and Gallo to bring this event to campus.

It wasn’t a bad showing this first time at the fair. Stay tuned for the next iteration of this program— above ground next time, whether our room reservations calendar permits or not, we promise!

## **(SO)PRIDE IS BACK**

We know this day of celebration in Ashland began long before we thought painting signs in the Stevenson Union would be fun, but painters and parade-goers alike were delighted to be here for the return of the occasion, which always comes with a strong SOU showing. This year, the Social Justice and Equity Center’s Jill Smedstad, Equity Coordinator for Sustainability and Basic Needs Resourcing was at the helm, coordinating our student’s participation in the festivities.

(SO)Pride finds its origins in its founder Ashland City Councilwoman, Gina DuQuenne, Ashland's first black and openly gay elected member. She describes the event as her "baby." Southern Oregon Pride parade began with a thought in 2008 and launched its first parade in 2010. Like the return of so many pandemic waylaid events, the return of (SO)Pride to the Ashland landscape after a two-year pause was a welcome occasion for many Raiders who also appreciate SOU's recognition among the nation's [Best of the Best LGBTQ Friendly College and University](#) campuses by Campus Pride.



Photo Credit: SOU Latino Student Union

Students and staff were invited not just to march through downtown Ashland on October 8th but to help with campus participant preparations. On the day before the parade they gathered in the Social Justice and Equity Center fortified with pizza and equipped with poster-boards, markers, and paint volunteers prepared signs of affirmation, respect, and pride for the diverse people that constitute the LGBTQ+ community here in the city of Ashland.

## **VETERANS DAY** **WHY NOVEMBER 11TH?**

In 1918 at the 11th hour, on the 11th day, of the 11th month, Allied Powers of World War I and the then German empire agreed to temporarily cease their conflict. Though this cease-fire or "armistice" did not mark the end of the Great War, November 11th lives on as the day we set aside to recognize, celebrate, and honor all members who have served in our armed forces, with special focus on those who served during times of war. Known in most of the rest of the world as Armistice Day, the occasion of recognizing the end of WWI, it saw its first recognition on November 11th 1919. The war concluded officially with the signing

of the treaty of Versailles on June 28th--over 7 months after the powers declared a cease-fire, following nearly 4 years of war, and after the loss of almost 40 million lives--civilian and military.

Armistice Day became a legal US holiday in 1938 following the second World War, twelve years after the 1926 congressional resolution that set aside a "recurring anniversary of [of Armistice Day] be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations."

In 1954, after lobbying efforts by veterans' service organizations, Congress amended the 1938 act replacing the word "Armistice" with "Veterans," recognizing not merely the anniversary of the WWI ceasefire and those who served during that time but all military personnel who served during times of war.

Our military force is among the most diverse armed forces in existence, with over 40% of active, enlisted personnel identifying as a member of a minoritized group. Military leaders often note the statistic with pride and cite that diversity among the greatest sources of its strength. "It is a strategic imperative that we have and raise an army that is reflective of our nation and reflects the core values for which our nation was founded," says Air Force General Jacqueline Van Ovost<sup>1</sup>. In noting diversity as a necessity, Senior advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Human Capital and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Bishop Garrison notes that the number of historically underrepresented personnel in US armed forces drop at higher ranks. He affirms the need for a "data-driven approach" to determine the reasons for the decline and cites the need for diversity of experience, thought, and background to innovate in the resolution of complex problems the military program faces<sup>2</sup>.

We're grateful for the talented, diverse, and committed veterans in our midst. If you're reading this as one who identifies as such, we thank you—for your service and for honoring us by choosing SOU as a place to continue your education.

# Did you know...



## EDI SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN

Campus Climate Survey Results Are In! Did you miss the October board Meeting? Valuable information is provided during those times. We recommend your attendance when you can manage it in your calendar. Look for an announcement for the January meetings. During the October meeting, we announced the publication of the spring [EDI Campus Climate Survey](#) results. Our fine board members asked great questions. Find the executive summary of the survey and full and final survey report on our [EDI website](#), and stay tuned for ways you can be part of developing the data gathered to help us bring even greater focus to the work of EDI at SOU.

## LIBRARY SURVEY IS OPEN ALL FALL

Speaking of surveys, all fall quarter, our own Hannon Library is conducting its survey of the EDI resources it provides. Billings Coordinator and Night Access Services team member Brent Cummings says the library is “super excited about the survey” and “is looking forward to sharing what it learns”. We invite you to take the [Library Survey](#) and support Hannon Library’s desire to improve services for you!

## INCLUSIVE GUIDE DROPS IN JANUARY

You’ve heard about it! The inclusive guide to learning, working, and living in the Rogue Valley is on its way. A sub-group of the Committee for Equity and Diversity did some great work over summer. The guide drops January 2023. We think you’re gonna like it! Stay tuned!

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> "Diversity in U.S., Partner Militaries is a Strategic Strength," Lopez, Todd C. Department of Defense News, US Department of Defense, September 21, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Are Necessities in Us Military", Garamone, Jim Department of Defense News. US Dept. of Defense, February 9, 2022.



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## NOVEMBER 2022

**November 2 | 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM | SOU**

Raider 2 Raider Storytelling: The Sharing

Hosted by Social Justice and Equity Center

<https://sou.presence.io/event/raider-2-raider-storytelling-the-sharing>

**2nd Thursday of Every Month | 12:30 - 1:30 PM**

Consent Cupcakes (while supplies last)

Pop up Locations @ SOU

**November 11 | 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM | SOU**

Black Community Say Hey

More info: [community@baseoregon.org](mailto:community@baseoregon.org)

**November 11 | 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

**NORTH MEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL**

REMEMBER AND SALUTE:

A VETERANS' DAY CONCERT (FREE)

More info: <https://www.socband.org/>

**November 14 | 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM | SU 323**

Campus Theme Event: Álvaro Alcántara, PhD

Afro-descendants' Experience in Mexico

**November 15 | 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

**MEESE AUDITORIUM**

Campus Theme Music and Dance Event:

Sonero (Traditional Musical Identity Construction

in The Fandango Fiesta Tradition in Mexico)

## JANUARY 2023

**January | Time TBA | Location TBA**

Martin Luther King Celebration (Medford)

**January | Time TBA | Location TBA**

Martin Luther King Celebration (Ashland)

**Consent Cupcakes | 2nd Thursday of Every**

**Month | 12:30 - 1:30 PM**

(while supplies last)

Pop up Locations @ SOU



**EQUITY,  
DIVERSITY, &  
INCLUSION**

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**HAVE AN EVENT OR STORY YOU'D LIKE TO  
SHARE? PLEASE CONTACT US!**

EDI @ SOU will return in the spring. We look forward to bringing you more EDI news and information then. If you have an event or other contribution you'd like to make to the end of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community where we all flourish, contact us at [edi@sou.edu](mailto:edi@sou.edu).