The annual celebration of La Bienvenida organized by the Latina/o Faculty and Staff Association was held at the Memorial Gardens, but in previous years it was held at the Peace Garden.

The purpose of La Bienvenida is to welcome new and returning Latina/o/x students, faculty, and staff to the university as it takes place during the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Newly elected Latina/o Faculty and Staff Association (LFSA) President Estevan Parra Guerrero made his remarks, along with the Director of Outreach and Special Programs Martina Granados and Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval.

ASI President Caroline Alvarrez and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) Director Ofelia Gámiz were also in attendance.

The Latina/o Faculty and Staff Association provided tacos and ice cream throughout the event, where there was a demand for both food and dessert.

Crowds of students, staff, faculty and members of the community gathered for the entertainment and performances by Fresno State Mariachi, Los Danzantes de Aztlán and live music.

Student clubs and organizations began tabling before the event to showcase their work.

Among them, the Chicanx Writers and Artists Association and La Voz de Aztlán joined to promote its creative writing and journalism to students.

Many students said they were first introduced the existence of the association and the student paper during the event.

The Chicanx Writers and Artists Association is a literary journal that publishes writing and art related to community, identity and social justice with Chicanx, Latinx, Indigenous and under-represented communities across California.

They publish and accept submissions of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, visual art and photography.

Ashley Rivera, one of the officers of Chicano Writers and Artists Association (CWAA) who was present during La Bienvenida, described her experience as being able to meet people on campus, introduce them to CWAA and how to participate in it.

Rivera said many students said they were interested.

“How willing they are to join once they are given that resource,” Rivera said.

“What students can experience from CWAA is being able to see other students with similar stories to theirs,” she said.

“Often we have many students from various backgrounds and experiences but one thing that brings us all together is our love for the arts and sharing that through expression. I highly encourage students to join our club, we are looking to expand and get student voices out there.”

Ashley Rivera is in the Masters’s Program for English Literature.

Their recent publication is the 2022 spring edition of Flies, Cockroaches, & Poets.

Students who are interested can contact the club through email at cwaasubmission@gmail.com, on Instagram @cwaafresno and on Twitter @LaCWAA.
On Sept. 15, 2022, Fresno State held its first Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) celebration at the Library Ellipse Gallery.

It prompted the importance of being an HSI and brought forth the opportunity for Latinx students and faculty to discuss how Fresno State has celebrated and supported them.

It also discussed how the university can continue to be at the forefront of growth with regard to equity, authenticity, diversity and support for all students and faculty.

Fresno State earned its recognition as a Seal of Excelencia Certified Institution based on two principles: intention on serving transfer innovation in teacher education and post-graduation success. It is certified from 2021 to 2024.

The Seal of Excelencia required documents and data submissions in order to show that the institution has met the qualifications, where Fresno State did in fact have to apply, as stated by Jesse Farias who spoke during the staff panel.

The Seal of Excelencia framework has three core components: accurate data; implementing and advancing evidence-based programs; and demonstrating leadership.

Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval spoke on how an institution becomes an HSI.

“To become HSI, at least 25% Latinx students must be enrolled, have to be a nonprofit, and course work must lead to a degree,” he said.

By earning the prestigious Seal of Excelencia certification, the university will get “access to grants, federal funding, network to other institutions in HSI, and be recognized across the nation by Excelencia,” according to Jiménez-Sandoval.

According to the Latina/o Faculty and Staff Association (LFSA) at Fresno State, Latinx students make up 53% of the student population, 14.2% of the faculty and 22.9% percent of the university’s non-faculty as of fall 2019.

Three panels featuring students, staff and faculty spoke on regard to service as an HSI.

My journey began when my mother, a first-generation Latina student and single mother, attended Fresno State for her bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

I, Victoria Monsivaiz, had the wonderful opportunity to speak on the student panel to discuss my experiences as a second-generation Bulldog.

His mentorship broadened my interests and he is someone who I cannot thank enough.

As Fresno State continues to hold higher education and academic programs on high priority, we must never lose sight to aim for growth in methods and efforts of guidance and engagement for students.

What we as students take away from our experience at Fresno State, we hope to apply towards the continued work and effort to make the next generation of Bulldogs feel heard, empowered and leave no doubt that they belong.

Fresno State receives Seal of Excelencia, celebrates title as Hispanic Serving Institution

By Alondra Ruiz & Victoria Monsivaiz

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The panels included discussions of student success and barriers, outreach and community, providing more resources, academia, increasing representation and more.

I, Victoria Monsivaiz, had the wonderful opportunity to speak on the student panel to discuss my experiences as a second-generation Bulldog.

My journey began when my mother, a first-generation Latina student and single mother, attended Fresno State for her bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

I recall the tremendous support she received from her professors, the ample amount of resources from the library and Graduate Student and Success Center she was offered and have access to, of which I now have graciously received and have access to as well as a current graduate student here at Fresno State.

Fresno State is an HSI because of its services, programs, and outreach from many individuals of the university that uplift students and provide guidance.

For myself, Alondra Ruiz, upon my first time arriving on campus as a second-year student in the fall of 2021, I was unaware of any Latinx groups.

I did not know how to navigate and wanted a place of belonging. After enrolling in Mexican Folkloric Dance (CLAS 106) and meeting Victor Torres, I was given the opportunity to join the newspaper La Voz de Aztlán, volunteer at Chicano Latino Commencement Celebration, have a role in Los Danzantes de Aztlán, and participate and be active in other events and programs on campus for Chicana and Latinx.

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What we as students take away from our experience at Fresno State, we hope to apply towards the continued work and effort to make the next generation of Bulldogs feel heard, empowered and leave no doubt that they belong.
Fresno Unified hosted a grand opening ceremony for Juan Felipe Herrera, naming an elementary school after him on Aug. 22, 2022. Educators, community leaders and members joined the ribbon-cutting ceremony, located in Southeast Fresno.

The Juan Felipe Herrera Elementary School first opened its doors to students a week prior. Sunnyside High School’s marching band performed welcoming guests, and several keynoters spoke included: Superintendent Bob Nelson, members of the Fresno Unified Board of Education and Juan Felipe Herrera.

Following the ceremony, classrooms were available for media tours demonstrating the Early Learning room, makers room and music room.

The Juan Felipe Herrera Elementary School is a dual language immersion program that is instructed in two languages – Spanish and English, with a program known as STEAM that integrates science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics.

The Fresno Unified School Board decided on a name after much consideration narrowing down recommendations from the public before deciding the name in 2018.

Due to his accomplishments, leadership, and contributions to the community, region and across the United States, Herrera was selected for this recognition. This new elementary school is among one of seven schools named after a Latino/a in Fresno Unified.

Having deep roots in the Central Valley, Herrera was born and raised in Fowler by migrant workers where he constantly relocated.

Education and his interests merged, as he became immersed in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement and creative writing, which led him to become a voice on the Chicano and Indigenous experience.

He is all – a poet, writer, artist, performer, teacher, mentor, and activist.

Juan Felipe Herrera served as the poet laureate of California from 2012 to 2015 then became the twenty-first United States Poet Laureate, and the first Latino to be appointed from 2015 to 2017.

He is a professor emeritus at the Department of Chicano and Latin American Studies at Fresno State, and holds honorary degrees of Doctor of Letters from the Board of Trustees for the California State University (CSU).

Herrera is currently the coordinator for The Laureate Lab Visual Wordist Studio at the Fresno State Library, and is also an author of more than 30 books.

He was recently awarded the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize.

Mural of Juan Felipe Herrera at Herrera Elementary. Courtesy of María G. Ortiz-Briones/The Fresno Bee

By Alondra Ruiz

Spring 2022 Staff

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Reporter
From Aug. 3 to Aug. 26, 2022, the United Farm Workers (UFW) union and activists marched from Delano to Sacramento in record high temperatures to advocate for farm workers’ rights and to demand that Gov. Gavin Newsom sign Assembly Bill (AB) 2183.

Farm workers in California have struggled to obtain basic worker rights for decades.

Local community organizers and leaders such as Dolores Huerta, Cesar E. Chavez, Larry Itliong and many others began the farm worker activism and lucha that people continue today.

AB 2183, otherwise known as the Agricultural Labor Relations Voting Choice Act, aims to make a tremendous impact to ensure that agricultural workers have access to vote by mail to the Agricultural Labor Relations Board for union leadership representation without employer intimidation.

According to the bill, if any civil securities were violated due to unfair labor practices, a penalty of $10,000 would be imposed for each violation on the agricultural employer.

Depending on what the violation is, the penalty could exceed as far as $25,000.

The bill has already passed the Assembly and Senate but at the end of the march on Aug. 26, 2022 Gov. Newsom refused to sign bill AB 2183, and still to this day refuses to do so. So, in resonance with our activist predecessors, la lucha continues.

The Director of Communications and Organization from the Dolores Huerta Foundation, Fabiola DeCaratachea, participated in the march in Sacramento and continues to advocate and fight for farmer workers to obtain basic worker rights.

“All of it was beautiful but also, why are we still here? Why are we still in this place where we’re still having to demand what should be basic worker rights?” DeCaratachea said in an interview, addressing the many people from all walks of life coming together to support farm workers.

For those who couldn’t participate and chanted along with the marchers as they continued, she shared that sentiment.

Farmworkers have and continue to put their life and well-being on the line working in record breaking heat, pesticides, horrid air climate due to the forest fires, exposure to COVID-19 and countless other factors.

Gov. Newsom claimed that farm workers are essential workers back in 2020; however, many feel his lack of action to sign the bill does not continue to reflect those sentiments.

“I think it’s important that communities always hold their elected officials accountable,” DeCaratachea said.

Though weeks have passed since the march to Sacramento, farm workers, activists and supporters continue to protest and demand that Gov. Newsom sign AB 2183.

It is imperative that the advocacy for basic work rights for farm workers and the circulation of this bill continue on from the tremendous momentum of media exposure that this march has brought.

“This can’t be a moment, it has to be a movement. Everybody can do something such as amplifying it on social media — letting people know that this is still an issue that needs to be addressed. Keep the pressure on,” DeCaratachea said.

According to the California Secretary of State webpage, county election offices will begin mailing ballots to active registered voters for the General Election on Oct. 10, 2022. This provides a pivotal opportunity for people to advocate, support and to amplify the voices of those who can not vote.

So vote, register to vote, or pre-register to vote because the movement continues—¡Si se puede!