

Making Change

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UCLA's Centennial Celebration Initiatives



Abel Valenzuela, professor and director of UCLA's Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Center on campus.

At the close of UCLA'S first century, the university's portfolio belies its relative youth — from the \$1 billion it receives in annual research funding to its perch as the most applied-to

university in the nation, not to mention its consistent ranking among the world's top public universities.

There is indeed much to celebrate. But the yearlong series of programs and events planned for the centennial is about the future as much as the past.

"This is much more than a celebration, and more than about ourselves," says Andres Cuervo, director of operations and strategic partnerships for the UCLA centennial celebration. "It's an opportunity to showcase and deepen our commitment to advancing knowledge, creating opportunity through education and connecting with Los Angeles and the world."

To that end, the centennial year features four initiatives designed to expand access to UCLA's scholarly resources and build on the university's commitment to serving the community. The initiatives, developed through partnerships among academic units campuswide, bring to life the themes of the centennial: UCLA's coming of age; its role in promoting opportunity for all; its leadership in technology, medicine, athletics and the arts, among other areas; and its ascension alongside Los Angeles' rise as one of the world's leading cities.

OpenUCLA

As an elite research university, UCLA produces, houses and consumes massive amounts of scholarship. The UCLA Library system holds 12 million print and electronic volumes and logs 3.5 million in-person visits per year, along with more than 15 million online visitors. But a portion of these vast resources remains hidden behind subscription pay-walls or prevented from public view by ever-increasing prices for journals and books. OpenUCLA, an initiative led by the UCLA Library, accelerates ongoing efforts to remove barriers to the university's scholarship.

"The open access movement has sought to make materials more widely available," says Virginia Steel, university librarian. "We have a long tradition of trying to make our collections as accessible as possible, so it's appropriate that we would take the lead in embracing the concept in a new way."

The effort will include digitization of more than 5,000 library resources and a dramatic expansion of the library's open repositories. Wikipedia edit-a-thons will create new entries for publicly accessible collections to increase the likelihood of users' finding them through a Google search. Partnerships with the Los Angeles Public Library and the Los Angeles County Public Library will link resources on common topics, such as the history of Los Angeles, in

new ways. Says Steel: “Our goal is to transform not only what we do at UCLA, but the thinking on how knowledge needs to be shared with the world.”



University Librarian Virginia Steel in Powell Library's Main Reading Room.

UCLA Collects: 100 Years of Sharing Knowledge

What may be more surprising is the wealth of physical knowledge on campus, in the nearly 14 million art objects, texts, crafts and antiquities under UCLA's care. A group of campus institutes has formed UCLA Collects, which will produce a major exhibition at the Fowler Museum, along with a course for UCLA undergraduates, K-12 outreach, public programming and new digital resources linking the collections.

“Since we began this project, there have been many ‘I did not know we had that’ statements,” says Matthew Robb, chief curator of the Fowler Museum, which leads the effort in partnership with the Hammer Museum, UCLA Library and 11 campus units that oversee the artifacts. “UCLA students and faculty who use the library all the time don't necessarily

know that UCLA Library Special Collections has the RKO studio collection, which tells part of the history of the film industry in Los Angeles, or that we have a meteorite gallery on campus.”

UCLA Collects aims to raise awareness of the campus-held objects while making them more accessible. The Fowler exhibition will use some of the most visually engaging objects to weave new narratives that illuminate both the diversity of UCLA’s collections and the rich and diverse history of the university and Los Angeles. “We have more than we can possibly include in one exhibit, but we hope to stimulate people’s enthusiasm for learning about the collections and the stories they tell,” Robb says.



Fowler Museum director Marla Berns '73, M.A. '76, Ph.D. '86; Hammer Museum deputy director of curatorial affairs Cindy Burlingham; and Fowler Museum chief curator Matthew Robb, pictured at the Fowler Museum.

UCLA: Our Stories, Our Impact

UCLA boasts scores of iconic alumni, but also countless others who have made admirable contributions with minimal fanfare. *Our Stories, Our Impact* will showcase the unsung heroes who have advanced social justice and equality movements in Los Angeles and across the nation. A multimedia exhibit will raise the profile of these Bruins, past and present. The exhibit, featuring 10 people, will move from the UCLA campus to venues across the city.

“We know about many alumni who resourced their earnings and fame in positive ways,” says Abel Valenzuela, professor and director of UCLA’s Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. “But we want to celebrate those who took a less linear path to leadership, like the leaders of the L.A. teachers’ strike, or the students who led the DACA movement and other campus-based efforts to support diversity and equity.”

Our Stories, Our Impact will be a joint production of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, the Labor Center and the Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Immigration Policy, in partnership with the UCLA American Indian Studies Center, UCLA Asian American Studies Center, Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA and UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center — the four ethnic studies programs at UCLA that have fueled campus diversity and the rise of students and graduates fighting for equity and social change, Valenzuela notes.

UCLA Data for Democracy in L.A.

The fourth centennial initiative harkens back to UCLA’s origins as a teachers’ college in downtown Los Angeles. UCLA Data for Democracy in L.A. enlists campus research centers that address issues of social inequality and opportunity to partner with Los Angeles K-12 teachers to strengthen civic discourse among the city’s youth.

“We’ve been hearing from teachers and principals across the country about disputes over what were previously perceived to be facts, as well as the spread of untrustworthy information through the Internet,” says John Rogers, faculty director of Center X and the Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access in UCLA’s Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, which is spearheading the initiative. “With this project, we want to engage young people in establishing more powerful relationships with the data so that they can assess the degree to which information is trustworthy and then use it to address problems in their everyday lives.”

Every month throughout the 2019-2020 school year, participating K-12 classrooms will receive data from UCLA research centers highlighting a local issue of inequality and opportunity, along with questions designed to assist teachers in helping students to analyze

and interpret the data, conduct related investigations and hold evidence-based discussions on how to address these concerns. The initiative will culminate with a Centennial Youth Summit, bringing students to UCLA to present and exchange ideas with the research centers' faculty and staff.

Rogers sees the initiative as part mathematics education and part civics lesson. "As a great public university, we should not only make our data public, but also encourage a more vibrant and robust public life in Los Angeles," he says. "The university plays an important role in supporting informed dialogue and communication about critical public policy issues among all residents of Los Angeles."

Cuervo adds that UCLA's position as a leading public institution and major driver of progress dictates that the celebration should go well outside the confines of Westwood and be both democratic and forward-facing. "We hold the values and themes of our mission as a public university very dearly," he says. "The centennial year is an opportunity to embody them, expand them and recommit."



Professors Megan Franke and John Rogers discuss the Data for Democracy initiative in Rogers' office in Moore Hall.