

Gerontology Student Association

Newsletter

February, 2005

\$3 Million in Research Grants!

Four new major research grants and a grant to support the Department's lecture series were awarded to the SDSU Department of Gerontology by the close of 2004. The grants totaling \$2.967 million were secured and announced by Department Chair Mario Garrett. Three of the grants provide for the expansion of data research that Dr. Garrett and various colleagues have done on older adult cohorts of Native Americans. The grants are:

- 1) Establishment of the California Epidemiological Center (the last of twelve such centers nationwide). While the grant is focused in the State, the impact is nationwide on Native American elders (U.S. Indian Health Service - \$2.5 million over five years).
- 2) Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) is a program
(continued on page 2)

Torres-Gil Opens Spring Lecture Series

Former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging, Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil, will head-line the Spring semester E. Percil Stanford Lecture and Seminar Series on Tuesday, February 8, at 5:30 pm in 100 Nasatir Hall. The title of his lecture is "Diversity and Immigration: Implications for Global Aging," a topic on which Dr. Torres-Gil has lectured all over the world.

Dr. Torres-Gil, who served at the national level during President Clinton's first term, is now Acting Dean of the School of Public Policy and Social Research at UCLA and is Director of UCLA's Center for Policy Research on Aging.

Previous Stanford lecturers in the fall semester were Dr. Stanford, who was the SDSU gerontology program's mainstay for 30 years; Cathy Greenblat Stein, whose photographic essay entitled, *Alive With Alzheimer's*, has sold internationally; and David Baldrige, former Director of the American Indian Center on Aging and now Director of the National Indian Project. Invited to speak in March is Dr. Rick Moody, author on ethical issues in aging and former Chairman of the Board of ElderHostel.

The Stanford Series is sponsored by GSA, our Alumni Association and the Department and is supported by a generous grant from AARP.

\$3 Million in Research Grants! (Continued from Page 1)

that examines care-giving among, and for, Native American elders. This grant will examine the resilience of Indian elders throughout the nation to care for one another (National Institute of General Medical Services - \$350,000 over three years).

- 3) Modeling American Indian Diabetes – a data research project aimed at one of the major health issues for Native Americans (Riverside/San Bernardino Indian Health Board - \$63,375 first-year grant).
- 4) Evaluation of San Diego County’s Caregiver Support Programs, part of the new title of the Older Americans Act (San Diego County Aging and Independence Services – continuation grant of \$29,000).
- 5) Support for the E. Percil Stanford Lecture and Seminar Series, a series of six lectures and follow-up seminars throughout the academic year on vital topics in gerontology (AARP - \$25,000 first-year grant).

Work on these grant projects was begun over the holiday period. The largest of the grants, the Epidemiological Center (known as an “Epi Center”) envisions the physical establishment of a facility in which is housed a comprehensive data system which tracks individual and aggregate information on health and social services for the population served. As such, the Epi Center concept can prove to be a data center that could be replicated for sub-sets of the general population throughout the country.

In addition, care-giving among elders (NARCH) is not only the physical support an older adult might need, it is the social support necessary to sustain independent living, not institutionalization. Not surprisingly, the Indian Health Board grant is related inasmuch as diabetes is a major health issue for a disproportionate number of Native Americans. The health of the body and the health of the spirit (care-giving) go together!

SF State Gerontology Program Reinstated; Letters Protest Illogic of Initial Closure

After initially accepting the advice to close the gerontology program at San Francisco State University, the campus president reversed himself. Over 300 letters from elected and appointed officials, sister academic programs, advocates, faculty and students poured into the President’s Office. The tenor of the letters asked how the SF campus authorities could eliminate gerontology at a time when the need for trained professionals to meet the demand for independent living by exponentially-growing cohorts of older adults, including Baby Boomers, is obvious.

Under CSU rules, the salary of a departing or retiring faculty member reverts to the Dean, Provost and President of each campus for reallocation, if appropriate, to other departments based on campus-wide priorities. That reallocation at SF State was what the Dean recommended. In the following uproar the Dean resigned, and the program was brought back to life with a new mandate to “grow” the program.

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