History Adds Perspective to Immigration Debate

Despite the United States’ recent sharp focus on immigration, the tensions that surround immigration are much older than the country itself, said Lacee Harris of the Northern Ute and Northern Paiute tribes.

“This isn’t something that happened five years ago,” he said, “This has been going on for thousands of years.”

During Weber State University’s Diversity Conference, two sessions will seek to put the current immigration debate in its proper historical context.

First, Harris will present “A Native View on Immigration,” which examines what he says is Americans’ ignorance of their own immigration history. The native historical perspective on immigration, he explained, is one of great disruption in which “foreigners” brought disease, war and arbitrary boundaries to what are now the Americas.

“Here we were, living happily, doing our thing, then all of a sudden these foreigners came,” he said.

The second session, titled “Migration Histories: Total Recall or Selective Amnesia,” will center on uses and abuses of history in the immigration discussion. Panel members will include Chris Newman, legal director for the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, and Israel Pastrana, a University of California, San Diego doctoral history student. Pastrana focuses upon Chicano studies specifically.

Janine Joseph, a WSU assistant professor of English who emigrated from the Philippines when she was 9, also will serve on the panel.

Omar Guevara, moderator for the discussion and WSU director of forensics, said Joseph’s inclusion will serve as a reminder that immigration is a global issue, not just one regarding relations between the United States and Central and South America.

Guevara also said he hopes that the diverse panel members provide three things for attendees: a sense of the debate’s history, knowledge of the legal difficulties that surround the current debate and the resolve to stay focused on the issue until its conclusion.

“I’m expecting some pretty grand wisdom to be dropped,” he said.

Taking the history of the immigration debate into account can only help present and future conversations on the subject, which won’t cease anytime soon, Guevara said.

“There’s no shortage of people who want to live in the land of the free.”

Do you remember your first year in college? I remember studying college as a dreamer. I wanted to develop ideas, challenge conventions and bring to the table those who were disenfranchised as a political scientist. I was always asking myself, “What is at stake?” Now more than 20 years later, I work at a university that helps students, faculty, staff and community members make their dreams come true. And I still ask myself, “What is at stake?”

Weber State University has attained national prominence because of its ability to answer that question intentionally – at stake for us is our values: access, learning and community. This means that we seek to include others in our educational, cultural and service opportunities. It also means that we learn not only from books, but from our experiences, from each other and from our history. Finally, it means we know that community requires us to work together. While we may not always agree, we can find opportunities to connect in our commonality while respecting our differences.

One of the first ways this engagement begins is with this year’s diversity conference. Our theme is to maintain pace with society by engaging the question: Immigration: Whose American Dream? As a committee we sought to find ways to investigate what was at stake – and who were the stakeholders. We sought to develop thoughtful workshops and panel presentations for each of you. I hope you will join us as we engage this question from multiple perspectives to arrive at what is at stake for us individually as well as collectively. I also encourage you to review our calendar of events inside to find more opportunities to engage.

Adrienne Andrews, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity

“Immigration: Whose American Dream?”

Truth lies on all sides of the immigration debate. That’s the message Edward Schumacher-Matos, an immigration policy expert and fellow at the Migration Policy Institute, will share during the keynote address at the 15th Annual Diversity Conference. He will speak on Oct. 11 at 8:30 a.m. in the Shepherd Union Ballrooms.

Schumacher-Matos, who also serves as the ombudsman for NPR and is a visiting professor at the Columbia Journalism School, said he wants to dispel some of the immigration myths and enable an honest conversation regarding the topic. Among the myths he hopes to counter are the ideas that immigrants come to the United States to take advantage of welfare and do not work.

However, Schumacher-Matos said some form of immigration laws must exist in order to ensure the country is not overwhelmed. He characterizes current immigration law as incompatible with today’s realities.

“We have 11 million people living in the United States who are here illegally, but they are very much a part of the American social fabric by now.”

“In an academic and a journalist, Schumacher-Matos brings a critical eye to the often divisive issue of immigration,” she said. “His investigative nature, combined with academic prowess, demonstrates a critical understanding of the issues and what is at stake as we uphold democracy.”

Starting the evening of Oct. 10 and ending early the afternoon of Oct. 11, the conference will feature multiple workshops and sessions that revolve around the theme “Immigration: Whose American Dream?” Educational in nature, the conference encourages attendees to think critically and take part in the marketplace of ideas.

This year’s conference topic not only will discuss inclusion of those who desire to be citizens, but other issues, Gillespie said. For instance, when immigrants can no longer stay in the United States, they take their skill sets with them.

“All of these questions swirling around us, how do we decide who gets to come?” she asked. “Who are we to decide who gets to come?”
2013-2014 DIVERSITY EVENTS

OCTOBER
Oct. 2 LGBT Lounge Grand Opening
Shepherd Union Room 232
10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Oct. 3 Tribute to Dr. Forrest Crawford
Former Assistant to the President for Diversity
Shepherd Union Mezzanine and Ballrooms
4-6 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Oct. 3 Grand Opening Community Education Center
United Way/Red Cross Building (295 Harrison Blvd, Ogden)
6-8 p.m.
lsheehan@weber.edu

Oct. 8 “It Gets Better Campaign” Lunch
Shepherd Union Room 232
Noon-1:30 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Oct. 11 Gay Men’s Chorus
Shepherd Union Room 232
1:30-3:30 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Oct. 14 National “Coming Out Day” Celebration
LGBT Lounge/Shepherd Union Room 232
8 a.m.-2 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Oct. 17 HIV/AIDS Rapid Testing
Shepherd Union L impairment
1:30-3:30 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Oct. 18 Immigration: Whose weber.edu/DiversityOffice/conference.html
of History in the Immigration Discussion”
Selective Amnesia? The Uses and Abuses “Migration Histories: Total Recall or
Refugees and Immigration
The Dreamers
Impacts of Immigration on Education
Those Left Behind
Key Issues in Global Migration
Madison Visiting Professor at Columbia
Matos, Ombudsman of NPR and James
Journalism School
Film and Discussion with Dr. Pepper Glass
Opening Reception
All Events are Free and

DECEMBER
Dec. 5 HIV/AIDS Rapid Testing
Shepherd Union 232
9 a.m.-2 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

MARCH
Women’s History Month
March 15 Latinx in Action Conference
Shepherd Union Room 232
3-6 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

March 21 Second Annual Myles College of Education International Education Symposium Interdisciplinary Service Learning Experiences
University of Utah
adrienneandrews@weber.edu

APRIL
GAYPRIL, adm-diversity@weber.edu
Annual American Indian Symposium
March 31-April 4, 2014
Shepherd Union Room 232
7 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

JUNE
June 14 Juneieighth
bettyyoung@weber.edu
June 17-20 Summer Summit Leadership Institute
ejamie@jamesthomas@weber.edu

NOVEMBER
Nov. 18-22 Transgender Awareness Week
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Nov. 6 Safe Zone Training
Shepherd Union L impairment
1:30-3:30 p.m.
adm-diversity@weber.edu

Nov. 16 Expect the Great Conference
University of Utah
jenna@jenna@weber.edu

Dreamers Tell Stories of Lives in the Shadows
When 18-year-old Eusebio Echeveste graduated from West High in 2013, he had a scholarship to attend a California college. What he did not have was a Social Security number. His family, his friends, his schooling and his memories are all from America, but he has citizenship is not. Echeveste arrived in the United States with his parents at age 3 and moved to Utah at age 8. His American dream includes an education, a successful career and the opportunity to come out of the shadows and uncertainty that have plagued his family.

Without the chance for a scholarship or federal financial aid, Echeveste was happy to take advantage of Utah House Bill 144. The legislation offers in-state tuition at state colleges to undocumented children who meet several criteria including having graduated from, or attended high school in Utah for three years or more.

“I chose Weber State because I heard their message on YouTube,” Echeveste said. “They love to give back to the community, which I love to do. They also talk about reaching your dreams.”

The message resonated with Echeveste, who wants to major in political science and business and to establish a Weber Dream Team. “My model is the Salt Lake Dream Team, which is part of the larger Dreamers movement. The name comes from The Dream Act, a federal law first proposed but defeated in 2001. The law and its many subsequent versions would provide undocumented youth raised in the United States a path to legalization. President Obama bolstered their status on June 15, 2012, announcing that his administration would stop deporting youth who meet certain criteria.”

“The most important message Dreamers are trying to share is they are American in every practical sense,” Alejandre said. “They are no different than any other citizen, and have done everything we ask American kids do; they just lack the recognition and security they need.”

What’s Your “I.Q.” (Immigration Quotient)?

Here are five True/False questions that test your immigration knowledge:

1. Immigrants don’t pay taxes and they cost the government more than they contribute.
2. Immigrants take jobs and opportunities away from Americans.
3. Most immigrants cross the border illegally.
4. Undocumented immigrants bring crime.
5. Immigrants come here to take welfare.

All five statements are false. Learn the truth during the I.Q. session on Friday at 9:30 a.m.