# **#StayWoke**. Using Living Archives to Build Bridges to the Future by Reflecting on Our Past wauk/ adjective Tamara Rhodes, Rachel Myers, Gayatri Singh, & Cristela Garcia-Spitz, UC San Diego Library fig. and in figurative contexts. Originally: well-informed, up-to-date.

Now chiefly: alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice.

In later use perhaps popularized through its association with African-American civil rights activism (in recent years particularly the Black Lives Matter movement), and by the lyrics of the 2008 song Master Teacher by American singer-songwriter Erykah Badu, in which the words I stay woke serve as a – Oxford English Dictionary



### <u>April 8, 2016</u>

The UC San Diego community woke to discover that anti-Mexican graffiti had been chalked across Library Walk, around campus residential areas, and immediately outside the Raza Resource Centro. The chalkings appeared the morning of the Triton Day celebration for admitted students. The timing was not accidental. (Lumumba-Zapata Collective, 2016)

https://library.ucsd.edu/tellushowucit/items/show/2256

#### **February 2010**

The UC San Diego campus had been rocked by escalating racist incidents surrounding a fraternity party designated the Compton Cookout, which made national news and prompted a federal investigation.



<u>May 2016</u> 

Comm Playground: In response to the chalkings, Communication students and faculty created a temporary installation, #howUCracism, outside the library. Adapting the "tell us how UC it" signage from an official campus campaign for a recent student survey, the students invited community members to populate the space with their own responses to the current campus climate. After three days, the campus removed the installation.





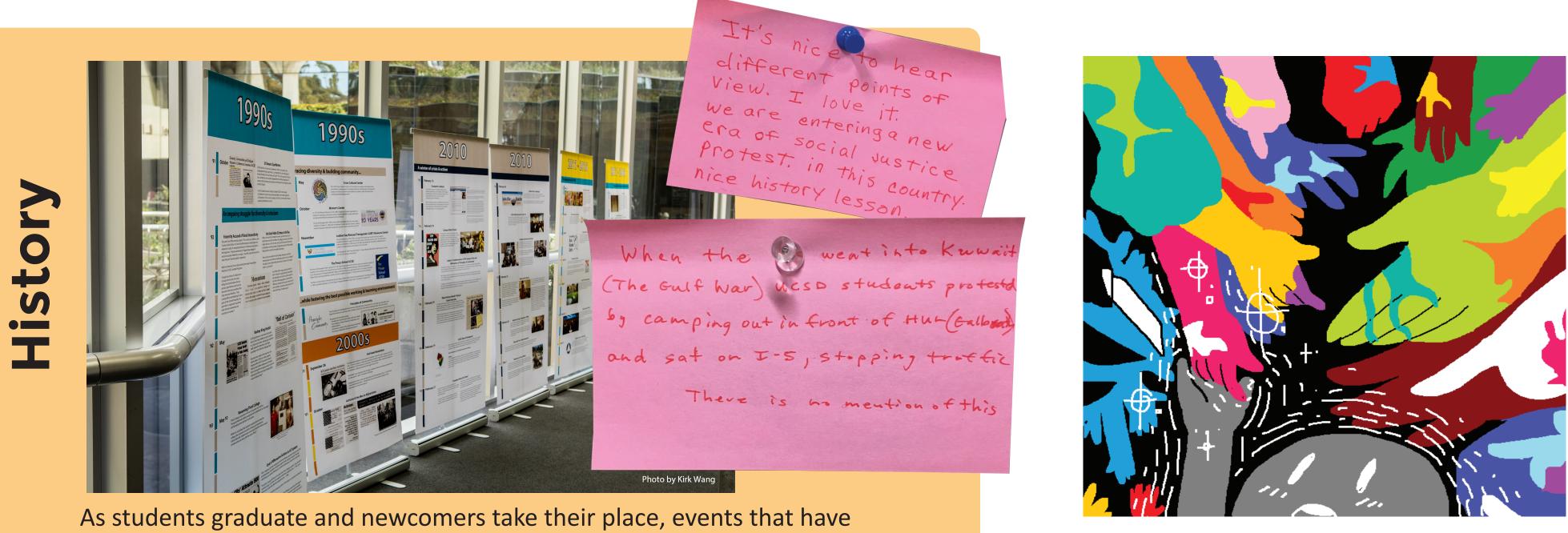
MAY 1965 - UC SAN DIEGO'S FIRST DEMONSTRATION. tudent demonstration against United States military intervention in the Dominican Republic", Robert Glasheen Photograph Collection. MSS 154. Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego. Retrieved from https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb38919738

Chalkings and other incidents that were arising in a particularly heated political climate left many among the UC San Diego community feeling frightened and outraged. After attending a Race Relations Town Hall sponsored by the Graduate Student Association and the Black Graduate Student Association at UC San Diego, Tamara Rhodes, then a temporary instruction librarian and new to the campus, recognized a need and had a theory for how the Library could help.

Tamara had previously published an article discussing how libraries can create "living" archives" to support social movements in their communities. A "living archive" collects and presents materials in a way that allows for the expression, exhibition, documentation, and preservation of a sentiment or movement in a particular community. This type of "archiving" is living because it is done in the moment for the purpose of provoking thoughts and discussion, and it encompasses all manner of material from documents of the past to creative expression of present sentiment through art, film, writing, and more. It consists of three parts:

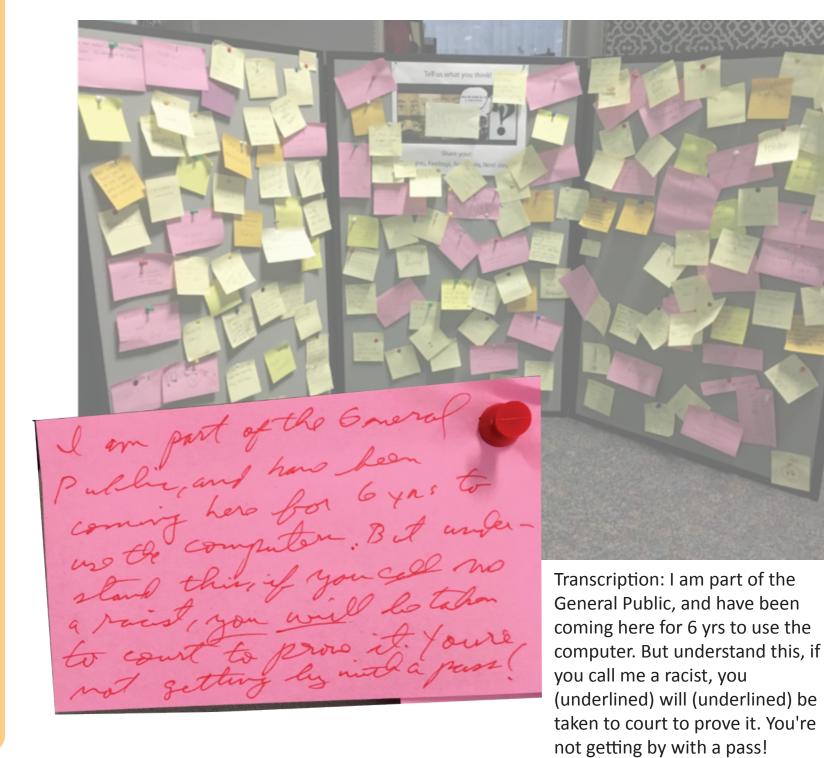
- (1) **History**: Historical artifacts and accounts documenting the progression of a movement
- (2) **Current Perspectives**: Creative works by current members of a community that offer an in-the-moment expression of community sentiments and experiences.
- (3) **Real-Time Feedback**: In-the-moment feedback, about the exhibit or movement as a whole, which preserves real-time responses and allows reflections of the past to converge with vital expressions of current sentiment.





shaken and shaped the campus are often forgotten. To address this gap, we reviewed the campus's history, beginning from its founding in 1960. Delving into our library's collections, we selected materials from university press releases, student newspapers, and local records that document events and incidents that catalyzed activism and campus change.

Quotations that defined these moments were presented on banners in a physical exhibit and are preserved in the digital archive. While by no means comprehensive, the timeline contextualizes the present and is meant to inspire research and begin a conversation.



- The archive was on display for 2 months.
- A panel of former student activists, who now work on campus, accompanied the opening The timeline was included in Resident Advisor training for one of the colleges. of the exhibit.
- Responding to concerns expressed by students who attended the panel discussion, the project partnered with the Organizing Director of the University of California Student Association to host a workshop entitled "From Crisis to Change: How to Organize for Action."

## The Living Archive

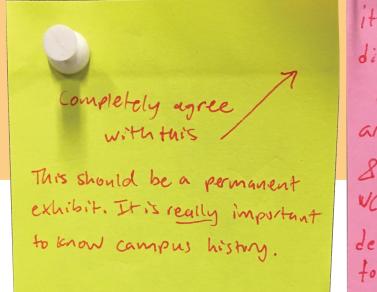
### **Current Reflections**

Students submitted creative work expressing the way they experience the campus climate. All submissions are now part of the archive, and a selection of them were featured in the physical exhibit.

### **Real-Time Feedback**

The exhibit area included a prominent space for visitor feedback. These notes complement the formal archive submissions on display and offer another, more unfiltered, narrative about campus climate. For many, a lively discussion began right there.

The board was photographed on a daily basis and all of the notes were added to the digital archive. The archive also offers space for comments from online visitors.



dislike the ways the university placates Students. This art and history is a great splay - but what about a Sanctuary campus? How about directing from coorporations that are trying to infringe on Native Peoples' Nights & land? Divesting from the militarization of )? Standing with student groups that emand more inclusive programs? There is WOR be done by UCSD-this isn't enough.

exhibit need Vilbility. local Chican

We are UCSD

By Alex Morrow

We are UCSD.

We are united as a student body

We are diverse and liberal students.

We have no binary for race or ethnicity, and we are accepting.

We are not afraid exhibit free speech and thought.

We challenge authority when needed and suggest changes for our community

We are creators of new ideas, inventions, and attitudes.

We represent the people of innovation and forward thinking.

We are UCSD.

We are future leaders of the world in all sciences, whether it be social or physical.

Ve stand up for what we believe in, and support each other when we are down.



• More classes have integrated the Living Archive exhibit into their assignments.

• The timeline was used in the Anthropology Department's Teaching Assistant training to prepare them to teach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion courses.

 The timeline banners have been reproduced using sturdier materials to be displayed in community centers and residence halls throughout the campus.

- The *Triton*, a student newspaper, reviewed the exhibit.
- Since February 2017, the online archive has received over 7,900 individual page views.
- Tell Us How UC It was mentioned in *American Libraries*, and in an article in the Journal of American Ethnic History.

## Doing the Work

The project required the skills of many, across various library departments. Core working group / Title / Project Role:

- **TAMARA RHODES**: Social Sciences Liaison/ Project designer & manager
- **GAYATRI SINGH**: Reference & Information Services Coordinator and Liaison to Comm/ Program manager & liaison advisor
- **CRISTELA GARCIA-SPITZ:** Digital Initiatives Librarian/ Digital & archival
- **RACHEL MYERS**: Library Assistant/ Copyeditor & research assistant

#### **Other collaborators:**

- Liaison to campus communi centers
- Rights Analyst
- Special Collections & Archives
- Library IT Services
- Campus activists & other community members

## Considerations

#### **Scope**

- What is the theme?
- Who will contribute?
- What kinds of materials will be included?
- How often will the archive be updated?

#### **Collaboration**

- Collaboration from the beginning is essential.
- Reach out to your community and discover what needs the archive will serve.
- Look beyond the library's doors to find contributors and collaborators. Be open to surprises.

#### **Submissions**

- Get on the syllabus. Collaborate with faculty to ensure a robust number of submissions.
- Create submission guidelines by taking into account format, acceptable content, copyright, and permissions.
- Give contributors the option of remaining anonymous in the archive.

#### **Digital/Online Platform/Site**

• Explore accessible digital platforms that will accommodate the scope and content of your materials.

#### Institutional Buy-in

- Tie your project to national trends to get support.
- Tie your project to your campus's strategic plan and initiatives.

#### Audience and Environment

- When doing these types of projects, think about the way you frame the issue or theme e.g. "student experiences related to campus climate" rather than "racial incidents on campus."
- Think about how your language may influence the way participants respond.

#### **Feedback**

- Though the goal is to be reflective of your community, when soliciting comments, consider some guidelines such as requesting that feedback be "free of bias and hate." This ensures constructive dialogue and that the library remains a welcoming place for all. We used our campus's Principles of Community.
- Be prepared for a range of comments. We received positive comments praising the exhibit and expressing appreciation. Others were less positive, dismissing the idea of racism and expressing an assumption of censorship on the part of the library.

## The Future

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- Continue to develop and refine the online archive and determine a long-term home.
- Establish a workflow to update and add additional content.
- Fill in gaps in the history section.
- Respond to unfolding events and incidents that affect our campus.
- As members of Project STAND (STudent Activism Now Documented), a national project that was awarded an IMLS grant, continue to expand our archive.
- Maintain current partnerships and develop new ones.
- Engage alumni and develop a video history project.
- Arrange for exhibits to travel to public places on campus.