

Dear Colleagues,

I share with you today an enormous community loss. Cal State San Bernardino and the Inland Empire mourn the death of Dr. Tom Rivera, a long-time advocate for education, in particular in advancing opportunities for Latinos in education. I first came to know Tom when I worked at Cal Poly Pomona and my wife Evy worked under him here at CSUSB.

When he retired from CSUSB in 2011, he was commended for his nearly 50 years in the field of education throughout the IE. During 38 years at CSUSB, he served as an administrator, initiating numerous programs designed to motivate underrepresented students to enroll in and graduate from college. He was also named associate dean emeritus of Undergraduate Studies.

His accomplishments were numerous, so I will highlight just a few:

- He played an instrumental role in founding the EOP program, secured the first federal grant to establish the Upward Bound program and was also instrumental in developing the SAIL program.
- In addition, he helped establish the Children's Center, the Disabled Students Office and the Learning Center, which he used to direct.
- He founded Project Upbeat, the "I'm going to college project" for 4th graders and was a co-founder of the Inland Empire Future Leaders (IEFL) program for 8th and 9th graders.
- He served as the university's academic grievance coordinator, as a member or chair of campus-wide committees, and as the representative to community and university advisory committees and boards.

"Dr. Tom," as he was known, built a career which extended from teaching as a Peace Corps volunteer to teaching at the elementary school level, the community college and college level, and serving as a counselor at San Bernardino Valley College. His approximately 25 years as director of CSUSB's EOP can be characterized by its growth and progress in outreach, retention and advisement services that resulted in college completions for hundreds of students. He brought countless students to CSUSB, helped retain them and ensured that they graduated—this, he said, was his most important contribution

His service to the community must also not be overlooked. For example, in addition to co-founding the IEFL, he served as a board member for 36 years and held the title of emeritus chair. The program is directed exclusively to Latinx youth. The San Bernardino Sun most recently ran a profile on him in 2020, and wrote, "Rivera and the first generation of leaders found that doing so helped promote a family atmosphere and ability to tackle issues specific to Latinos." Two sitting members of Congress—representatives Pete Aguilar and Raul Ruiz—were IEFL graduates. San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC) has installed him in their Hall of Fame, listing his phenomenal community involvement in their profile of him.

A product of Colton schools, he attended SBVC, received his B.A. and M.A. from Cal State LA and his doctorate from UCLA.

There was absolutely no doubt of his passion for education, the IE and the underrepresented students in our region. His life-long work both empowered and inspired countless lives. We respect his leadership, honor his accomplishments and remain deeply grateful for all that he did for so many. On behalf of CSUSB, my deepest condolences to his family on this tremendous loss.

Sincerely,

Tomás D. Morales

President