

The Focal Point for Anthropology

COMMUNITY ETHNOBOTANY LAB



From cultural displays to traditional dance performances to botanical research activities, all will take place in the planned Community Ethnobotany Lab. The lab will be the focal point for the Anthropology Department at California State University San Marcos and will be an integral component of the new Social and Behavioral Sciences Building.

All upper division course work for Anthropology involves original research that is community-based and collaborative. The Community Ethnobotany Lab will serve as the venue for facilitating this research and collaboration. The lab's design creates a space for both anthropology students and community members to engage in ongoing collaborative projects. For example, students will gain valuable hands-on experience in botanical-related research as a result of the facility's wet lab. This feature will enable students and community members to analyze, process, and store plant specimens native to our region that will then be used to create medicinal products such as teas, crèmes, and infusions.

The lab's large courtyard and open floor plan will provide ample space for cultural events such as traditional song and dance performances, tribal drumming, ritual healing displays, community meetings, and traditional cooking and food demonstrations. In addition, the lab will be equipped with several museum-quality display cases in which community and student cultural displays can be presented.

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Opportunities for Research and Community Engagement

The Anthropology Department has several ongoing collaborative projects with local communities that continue to generate original research via course activities in upper-division courses (Medicinal Ethnography, Farmworker Health Ethnography, Community Ethnobotany, and Local Archaeological Practice). The lab will support the ongoing and new collaborative projects by providing a place where research results can be presented and students and community members can gather to discuss projects. In addition, the lab will serve as a home for collected specimens and provide a display area for multimedia projects and exhibits.

Some of the important research and project work of the Anthropology Department that will become a part of the Community Ethnobotany Lab includes:

- **The online Mixtec Ethnobotany Database — the only one of its kind**
- **The Ethnobotany Garden & San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indian's Native Plant Garden**
- **The Biannual Report on the Health of San Diego Farmworkers — distributed throughout the state to community clinics and to federal agencies**
- **Collaborative documentation of local Native American tribal communities' cultural practices and plant uses**

Need for Support

Funding is needed to properly outfit the Community Ethnobotany Lab with equipment, furnishing and display materials. Additionally, support is needed to develop and expand the Ethnobotany Garden as well as to finance community presentations on research findings and cultural events.

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