

# Highlights from 35 years of the Latino Cultural Center

## 1970's

With the Latino student population growing, many Latino/a students came together to be a voice for Latino students on campus and to create a center for Latino UIC students.

**September 27, 1973:** 39 students, university employees, and other members of the Latino community arrested after participating in a sit-in at University Hall. They were asking the university administration to acknowledge the need for a Latino recruitment, retention and cultural program.

**1975:** LARP (later named LARES) was established.

**1976:** Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center opened in small locker room in University Hall. The Center was named after the late UIC professor in recognition of his contributions as a faculty member who successfully combined teaching, scholarly work and commitment to his community.

## 1980's

**Early 80s:** Center was relocated to first floor level of Lecture Center B2.

**1985:** First coordinator appointed to run the Center.

**1985:** The mural, "Our Essence, Our Presence," was painted by three Chicago Art Institute students. It depicted the history of Latin America before and after colonization and the Latino experience in the United States.

## 1990's

**Early 90s:** Center became an independent unit focusing more on cultural education.

**1991:** An Advisory Board for the Center was formed and a Five-Year Plan created for a redefinition of the Center.

**1993/94:** First official version of the Center's mission and goals drafted; first Director named and Assistant to the Director hired; Center underwent renovations and expansion to include basement offices and student computer lab; "Our Essence, Our Presence," mural destroyed in process (only one wall remained).

**1994:** The Center with the help of students embarked on a fundraising campaign to develop a new mural called "El Despertar de las Américas."

**1995:** Muralist Hector Duarte from Chicago was selected to lead this project and engage Latino/a students in the process.

**1996:** Mural was completed.

**1996/97:** A student advisory board for the Center was formed and a partnership with the Chicago Latino Film Festival was initiated.

**1997:** Dolores "Lolita" Lebrón Sotomayor visited the Center.

**August 20, 1997:** Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchú visited the Center.

## 2000's

**2007:** Grammy winner Mercedes Sosa invited to Center to headline benefit concert.

**2009:** Directors from UIC cultural centers met over several months and developed a shared mission, vision and working structure for the group and called themselves the Centers for Diversity.

**2009:** A UIC committee was formed to review the Centers for Diversity.

## 2010's

**2010:** Review Committee held town hall meetings to allow feedback about the Centers for Diversity; several protests took place in an efforts to "save the Centers for Diversity" from potential budget cuts and closure or consolidation.

**2010:** The first coordinated collaboration among the Centers for Diversity was the inaugural seminar of the Faculty Institute.

**2010:** Internationally acclaimed author Sandra Cisneros presented at Latino Heritage Month event organized by the Center.

**April 2011:** New Director hired after having an Interim Director for 2 years.

**Summer 2011:** Hector Duarte commissioned to restore the mural and paint a new section representing a 21st century Latina woman whose experiences, aspirations, and commitments make her a global citizen.

**September 14, 2011:** Center celebrated its 35th Anniversary.