

Why We Support Dolores Huerta, Ana Murguia, Debra Rojas and Other Survivors

Joint Statement by San Diego Mesa College & San Diego City College Chicana and Chicano Studies Departments

As educators in the field of Chicana and Chicano Studies, we are directly impacted by the overwhelming news of the sexual abuse perpetrated by Cesar Chavez and feel a reckoning that we must respond ethically and responsibly.

1. Our first response is to center, respect, and honor the courage of the women who were abused: Ana Murguia, Debra Rojas, Dolores Huerta, and others. We denounce sexual violence done to the women in the United Farm Worker movement.
2. The United Farm Worker movement is a pivotal part of Chicana/o cultural history, and one individual does not represent the collective labor of the movement. Let us shift our sense of what it takes for social justice to come to fruition: inter-ethnic and grassroots community work. The UFW would not have transformed California history without the Filipino community, without the farmworking families, and the women laborers who are often invisibilized or forgotten.
3. Our patriarchal system and cultural values are at the root of enabling and protecting sexual and gender violence. We must name our errors, flaws, and confront the continued power relations that uphold patriarchal and machista cultures. Since the early stages of El Movimiento, Chicana feminist organizers and scholars have long named and resisted these conditions. Anna Nieto-Gómez, through the 1971 newspaper *Hijas de Cuauhtémoc*, helped articulate a foundational Chicana feminist praxis that centered economic justice and Third World solidarity and explicitly named the domestic violence faced by Chicanas. Thus, as educators and scholars of Chicana and Chicano Studies, we recognize that our movement spaces are not free from harm. It is through the intersections and interventions within these spaces that we grow and become better.
4. This is a collective learning moment for us all to prevent in our community spaces, and to protect our classrooms and students from sexual violence, misogyny, and

patriarchal values. This shared accountability requires a healthy restructuring of our spaces and our relationships to one another. May our community's response be a model for how we, as a society, reckon with sexual violence in ALL spaces and respond to ALL who perpetrate harm.

As a first direct response to our community of students, faculty and staff in our district colleges, we are planning a community forum to have a dialogue and a safe space to address how we have been impacted by the news and how we plan on constructing further plans to implement a responsible mechanism to prevent this from happening again, to any of us.