

Sikh and Punjabi Studies at UC Santa Cruz, 2017-18

The following activities were completed under the auspices of the Sikh and Punjabi Studies Program at UCSC. Activities are partly funded by three endowments, and supported by the volunteer efforts of Professor Nirvikar Singh and the UCSC Sikh Student Association. Significant administrative support is provided by the UCSC Division of Humanities and Institute for Humanities Research.

The three endowments are

1. Sarbjit Singh Aurora Chair in Sikh and Punjabi Studies (held by Prof. Nirvikar Singh), effective from 2010. [SSAC]
2. Guru Nanak Heritage Fund, effective from 2012. [GNHF]
3. International Economics Fund for Punjab Studies. [IEF]

For some events in the following list, the above sources of financial and other support are specifically noted. Many events and activities are described at the web site, sikhstudies.ucsc.edu.

Summary

This past year, the focus was on institutional development. Aurora Chair funds were used to support activities of the Sikh Student Association, a younger scholar, and the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies department (which is the home department for the class, Introduction to the Sikhs).

UCSC Campus Activities

1. Course: *Introduction to the Sikhs*, Winter Quarter 2018

Prof. Nirvikar Singh taught this 2-unit course, which he designed, for the seventh time in 2017. He teaches it in addition to his regular course load in Economics, so there is no financial claim on the two endowments for his time. The course introduces the Sikh community, including its origins, history, belief system, and contemporary issues. Other topics include Sikh music, art, literature, and aspects of Sikh society. Particular attention is paid to the Sikh diaspora in the United States and in California, including comparative perspectives with other minority communities, particularly important in contemporary America. The class is listed under the new UCSC Department of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, which provides administrative support. Students write papers and make oral presentations. The class has a diverse enrollment, and includes a student trip to the San Jose Gurdwara, offering class members and their accompanying friends a first-hand

cross-cultural experience. The cost of chartering a bus for the trip is covered from the Aurora Chair income. This past year, a record proportion of students were of non-Sikh heritage, increasing the outreach aspect of the class. Students make oral presentations as well as writing final class papers, and they participate actively in discussions.

[SSAC]

2. Punjabi Language Teaching, Winter and Spring Quarters 2018

Introductory Punjabi language (one quarter of instruction) has been supported since 2012 by the GNHF, with bridge funding from the Dean of Humanities and the SSAC. The class was taught for the fourth time in Spring 2016, and for the first time on the main UCSC campus. Enrollments were very strong, with 27 students taking the class.

A second course in Punjabi language, to create a two-quarter sequence, was added in 2016-17, and the sequence was taught for a second time in Winter and Spring of 2018. Enrollment was 12 students for the first quarter, and 4 students for the continuation class. We still hope to build this enrollment, as the sequence becomes more widely advertised and known to students, and as the campus grows. Punjabi is currently the only modern South Asian language taught on the UCSC campus. Prof. Nirvikar Singh met with the Chair of the Department of Languages and Applied Linguistics to plan for ongoing offerings of the 2-quarter language sequence.

This year, current and past students from the Punjabi class participated in a Punjabi play, as part of a long-standing tradition of an International Playhouse at UCSC, which features plays in multiple languages from among those offered at UCSC.

[GNHF]

3. UCSC Sikh Student Association Activities

This year, a grant was given to the UCSC SSA, which allowed it to become a focal point for many student activities. The list of activities is provided here, by categories.

Social Events

- Game Night: Hosted game nights for students to get to know each other and build their *sangat* (community)
- Thanksgiving Potluck
- Pajama Social
- Bowling Night
- Lohri Bonfire at Seabright Beach

- Sports Day & Potluck at Beach
- Bhangra Bash: cultural dance night, with food, performances, etc.!
- Supporting the Bhangra and Giddha folk dance teams with their expenses
- Supporting the Punjabi class in their potluck and Punjabi play within the International Playhouse production

Simran (meditation, etc.)

- Bi-weekly Rehraas Nights
- Sukhmani Sahib recitation
- Inter-SSA Kirtan each semester with San Jose State, Santa Clara University, etc. and local sangat
- Offering and organizing rides to Yuba City and Stockton nagar kirtans
- Going to San Jose Gurdwara on Diwali

Academic

- Study Sessions: Provided study spaces, testing materials and snacks for students around midterms and finals
- Gurbani Study Course: Hosted 12 sessions of Gurbani Study throughout the year led by two trained facilitators breaking down lines from Kirtan Sohila. With each session, we had booklets with Kirtan Sohila, videos, activities and discussions.
- Discussions: Throughout the year we hosted three speaker events for discussions, including Bhajan Singh, Peter Friedrich, G.B. Singh, Amardeep Singh (all authors within the community) and Amandeep Singh.
 - Topics covered: Women in Sikhi, Was Gandhi a revolutionary or racist?, Anand Karaj: meaning of Laavan and Maryada, Sikh Legacy in Pakistan

Seva (Service activities)

- 100+ care packages made and distributed throughout Santa Cruz
- Including sanitizer, protein shakes, water bottles, socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, snacks, granola bars, tissues, women products, and any donations from the club!
- Seva Days - trips to the San Jose Gurdwara to do seva together and to provide rides to the gurdwara
- Self-Care event: Provided art activities, CAPS resources, CARE resources, ice cream sundaes, and other de-stressor activities to students
- Donation to and attendance at Jakara Sikholars conference

Other

- Turban Day: Tied turbans and provided free food to the campus community as we had conversations and presentations about the Sikh identity and Vaisakhi through visuals and flyers

- Tabling: Tabling or presenting at events held by different campus units and spaces, including the Asian American/ Pacific Islander Resource Center, Student Union Assembly, Interfaith Council, Fall Festival and general tabling at the Quarry Plaza and in front of the library
- General Meetings: Held general meetings throughout the year to keep the club updated about what events we are holding
- Attending United Sikh Movement conference 2017
- Planning for hosting USM Conference at UCSC in Fall 2018

[UCSC Sikh Student Association and SSAC]

4. Faculty Support

A grant from Aurora Chair funds allowed Associate Professor Guriqbal Singh Sahota to engage in professional development activities, including attending conferences, purchasing research materials, and building his professional network.

[SSAC]

5. CRES Department Support

A grant from Aurora Chair funds allowed the CRES department to host Prof. Sunaina Maira of UC Davis for a colloquium at UCSC. Prof. Maira has been an important academic voice for the rights of minorities in the US, including Sikhs, after 9/11.

The funds also supported the CRES graduation, where numerous students spoke, including students who had taken the “Introduction to the Sikhs” class. The work of the Sikh Studies program and its relation to CRES and diversity were emphasized.

Scholarly Activities

6. Research Project: Healthcare Demand in Rural Punjab, India

Prof. Nirvikar Singh is working with a doctoral student, Arshad Mirza, to analyze a survey of 500 individuals conducted in villagers around the town of Nabha, to determine the factors influencing their healthcare choices. This project is ongoing.

[IEF]