



The University of Texas at San Antonio
Office of University Communications
One UTSA Circle
San Antonio, Texas 78249-0619
(210) 458-4550
www.utsa.edu/today

DATE: Friday, January 11, 2008
CONTACT: James M. Benavides (james.benavides@utsa.edu)
Office: (210) 458-2092 Mobile (210) 347-9786

EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

UTSA tri-campus community celebrates the Day of the Dead

SAN ANTONIO – UTSA will observe El Dia de los Muertos, the traditional Day of the Dead celebration, with displays and activities at each location of the tri-campus community.

Falling on Nov. 2, the Christian feast of All Souls Day, El Dia de los Muertos is a way of celebrating the lives of deceased relatives and friends. In the Hispanic tradition, as long as the departed are remembered, they are never truly gone.

The observance of El Dia de los Muertos usually involves preparing an altar dedicated to the memory of a loved one. Various artifacts are placed on the altar, including candles, religious emblems, salt, water, calaveras (sugar skulls), incense, marigold flowers, photos and other items the deceased may have been associated with in life, such as sunglasses, tools or jewelry.

At UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures, educational specialist and floor manager Willie Mendez has prepared the altar for the past 10 years. This year, it is dedicated to the memory of deceased ITC staff members, docents and friends. In addition to the traditional altar, ITC educational specialist Patti Dunn continues to research the contemporary evolution of the holiday and its re-emergence with the help of Chicano artist Joe Lopez and photographer Pablo Ruiz. Their findings are shared in a new ITC documentary, "Imágenes en Transición: The Evolution of Contemporary Imagery in El Dia de los Muertos," which is incorporated into the exhibit.

The ITC Dia de los Muertos exhibit is free and open to the public, but does not include admission to the main floor. UTSA students, faculty and staff get in free with UTSA ID. The exhibit runs Oct. 11 through Nov. 4.

At UTSA's Downtown Campus, student activities has invited students, faculty, staff and organizations to prepare altars for display in the Durango Building student activities center. They will be on display through Nov. 5. Altars currently on display include a tribute to senator Greg Luna, UTSA Downtown Facilities, Catholic Students Association and the Mexican-American Studies Student Organization.

At the 1604 Campus, altars will be on display Oct. 31 – Nov. 2 at the University Center Galleria, sponsored by the Inclusion and Community Engagement Center and other student organizations. At 10 a.m. on Nov. 2, Pan de Muerto, the traditional Mexican sweetbread baked for El Dia de los Muertos, will be served at the UC Galleria near the altars.

A UTSA College of Architecture class received an invitation from the Museo Alameda to participate in a Dia de los Muertos observance by designing and building the structure for the museum's altar on Market Square. It is one of the museum's first community collaborations and its first with UTSA. Students from lecturer Curtis Fish's Visual Communications class designed and installed the pyramid-like cardboard structure for the museum's "Dia de los Muertos: Honoring our Heroes" exhibit which opens Nov. 2. The altar will remain through Veterans Day on Nov. 11, drawing together the two distinct cultural celebrations. Additional information is available at TheAlameda.org/events.

In addition to the Nov. 2 Feast of All Souls, the Catholic community celebrates the Feast of All Saints on Nov. 1. In observance, the Catholic Students Association will hold two All Saints Day masses, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. at the Durango Building student activities center downtown and 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. at the St. Anthony Catholic Center on Roadrunner Way.

For more information on El Dia de los Muertos celebrations, visit TexanCultures.com, contact Downtown Student Activities at (210) 458-2816 or the Inclusion and Community Engagement Center at (210) 458-4770.