

INFORMATION REPORT NO. 1

June 2026

The Center Begins.

A new research home
for Africana
cultural restoration,
cultural rectification,
and cultural property.



Africana Research & Cultural Renaissance Center

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Why ARC, why now?

The Africana Research & Cultural Renaissance Center (ARC) is necessary because knowledge of African and African diasporic life remains dispersed across archives, classrooms, communities, and disciplines, too often uncollected in ways that serve the people from whom that knowledge comes. San Diego State University now has an institutional home able to gather, organize, interpret, and publish this knowledge with public purpose.

ARC has been formally approved as an SDSU-Designated Center. The approval letter recognizes a clear and compelling mission, thoughtful governance, strong advisory leadership, a realistic funding strategy, and meaningful partnerships that position ARC for long-term impact.

ARC's mission is to research, preserve, and restore African and African diasporic cultural practices and heritage while advancing cultural justice and cultural property rights. Its agenda brings together cultural restoration, cultural rectification, and cultural property as one coherent framework.

Approval excerpt

“ARC represents an important contribution to SDSU’s research enterprise and to our broader mission as a public research university.”

Hala Madanat, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and Innovation



Fall 2026 inaugural celebration

ARC plans to mark its public debut with a Fall 2026 inaugural celebration at SDSU. The event will formally introduce the Center’s mission, recognize its supporters and board, preview inaugural projects, and invite faculty, students, alumni, and community partners into the work ahead.

Program elements

- university welcome
- board recognition
- project previews
- affiliated faculty invitation

The three pillars of the Center

ARC investigates continuity, corrects distortion, and highlights cultural value.

01

Cultural Restoration

Investigates how African phenomena such as music, language, spirituality, art, and social life were preserved, adapted, and transformed in the diaspora. ARC traces these roots and routes back to the continent and turns that research into exhibits, databases, and teaching resources.

Origins and continuity

02

Cultural Rectification

Confronts the misrepresentation and demonization of Africana cultures by centering accurate, respectful, Afrocentric narratives. ARC produces scholarship and public-facing work that challenges stereotypes, repairs distortion, and affirms the dignity of Africana cultures.

Narrative authority

03

Cultural Property

Examines how Africana cultural assets, from art and artifacts to music, food, fashion, and folklore, have been exploited without fair return. ARC studies appropriation, intellectual property, and benefit-sharing, then advances strategies that restore autonomy and value to Africana communities.

Ownership and benefit

Together these pillars move ARC from historical recovery to narrative repair and material protection.

The first work ARC will build.

Digital humanities, publishing, and public-facing research will define the Center from the outset.

01 ArcGIS Cultural Patterns Project

This project will build an Africana Cultural Atlas through interactive maps and story maps that visualize cultural movement from West Africa to the Americas, linking historical data with contemporary cultural life.

What it opens up

Interactive maps and story maps. West Africa to the Americas. Historical data linked to living cultural practice.



02 Student Research Journal

ARC's journal is envisioned as a student-led, faculty-mentored publication platform for original research, public scholarship, and multimedia work rooted in Africana cultural analysis.

On the horizon

Future immersive work, including virtual reality experiences on African and African diasporic history, as well as conferences, community symposia, public scholarship, and broader digital humanities development.

The people shaping ARC



The founding board

- Taharka Adé, Director
Africana Studies
- Sureshi M. Jayawardene
Africana Studies
- Adisa A. Akelebulan
Africana Studies
- Daniela Gomes
Africana Studies
- Charmane Perry
Africana Studies
- Anta Merritt
Africana Studies
- Tamika Lovelace
Africana Studies
- 'Niyi Coker
Television, Film, & New Media
- Malcolm Oliver II
Black Resource Center
- Gloria Rhodes
University Library
- Alexis Dixon
Brilliance Exposed

Join the work

ARC seeks affiliated faculty whose research, creative practice, teaching, or public engagement overlaps with cultural restoration, cultural rectification, cultural property, digital humanities, public scholarship, community archives, and Africana cultural justice.

We need ideas for

- mapping and archives
- documentary film and oral history
- music, performance, and exhibition work
- policy and legal research on cultural ownership

This is a founding invitation.

Faculty, artists, scholars, technologists, and community partners with ideas that align with ARC's mission are invited to help shape this founding moment. Those interested, please contact us via email:

ARC Supporters

“The future of such research and teaching sites will come from the research and cultural renaissance envisioned by this Center...”

Molefi Kete Asante Institute

Voices in support

Alliance for African Assistance

“An important opportunity to study, document, and share knowledge about African peoples and their cultural traditions and contributions.”

Molefi Kete Asante Institute

“The future of such research and teaching sites will come from the research and cultural renaissance envisioned by this Center, a model that will have great longevity in cultural transformation.”

Black Leadership Alliance Coalition

“More than a vision. It is a necessary investment in cultural restoration, community memory, and public scholarship.”

Our thanks

ARC extends sincere thanks to the colleagues, community partners, university leaders, and endorsing organizations whose confidence helped bring the Center into being. We especially acknowledge the Alliance for African Assistance, the Molefi Kete Asante Institute, and BLAC for their letters of support, as well as the SDSU leadership whose approval affirmed ARC’s mission, governance, and long-term promise.

Make a Gift

Make a gift in support of ARC’s student research, public scholarship, cultural restoration, and community partnerships via the QR code below:



Scan to give

ARC

Africana Research & Cultural Renaissance Center



Department of
**Africana
Studies**

Support ARC

Help advance student
research, cultural
preservation, public
scholarship, and community
partnerships.



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