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Palomar program to explore racism in schools

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Staff Writer

SAN MARCOS ---- Palomar College will host a town hall meeting tonight where college and high school students will explore the question of whether there is racism in the education system.

The town hall meeting, at Palomar's Howard Brubeck Theater, will be followed by a performance of the play "Stand and Deliver."

"This is going to be an amazing event," said Michael Mufson, program organizer and a professor in Palomar College's theater department. "This will be an opportunity for students to talk about some of their experiences and talk about possible solutions."

The town hall discussion is free. The program will start at 6 p.m. followed by the play at 7:30 p.m.

Admission to the play will be \$3 for high school students, \$6 for college students and \$10 for the general public. Call Palomar College at (760) 744-1150, Ext. 2150, for more information.

The town hall meeting is part of a month-long program called Speak Out that is examining racism in education. Activities include a Web site and message board, performances and presentations.

"This event may be the most important in the program, because it will be their voices," Mufson said of the town hall meeting.

At the meeting, moderators will ask several students to give prepared statements and ask audience members to share their views and opinions on racism in the schools.

Following the meeting, there will be a performance of the play "Stand and Deliver," based on the story of Jaime Escalante, a math teacher who taught inner-city high school students in East Los Angeles.

His story was later turned into a movie starring Edward James Olmos.

The idea for the program was born out of a need to explore ideas that challenge and bring different types of people together, Mufson said.

"People normally think of Palomar College as a place where they can take a couple of classes and maybe get job training," he said. "I think these kinds of programs can give students more of a sense of community."

The program kicked off Nov. 2 with a Day of the Dead procession by members of MEChA, a Latino student leadership organization, and theater department students.

"We want to keep the discussion of diversity alive on our campus and be sure that we are creating an atmosphere where everyone can work in a supportive environment," said Jack Miyamoto, chairman of the Faculty and Staff Diversity Committee.

Those interested in participating in the dialogue via the internet can log on to the Speak Out website at <http://speakout.palomar.edu>.

Contact staff writer Edward Sifuentes at (760) 740-5426 or esifuentes@nctimes.com.

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