and the University of San Diego present the

California Sol Great Debate

July 12-17, 2022

University of San Diego, San Diego
California, USA

USD hosts California Sol Great Debate in 2022

Through the years, NHI has cultivated relations with a significant number of universities, mostly private, as reference possibilities when selecting their preferences. As members of NHI’s College Register, these institutions are located throughout the U.S. and usually attend NHI college fairs and admission workshops that give them one-on-one communication with NHI students.

On different occasions some of these institutions go a step further. They realize the importance of placing young minds in environments that excite the possibilities of college and make higher education real in their lives. Since 2014, the University of San Diego has played a significant host role as the California host of the Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session. In 2022, this well-known and highly respected institution will host NHI’s California Sol Great Debate project that will serve 100 students from California, Nevada, Arizona, and Mexico. Part of the effort is to increase the participation by college-bound Latino high school youth is early exposure to community leadership training, while also making college an early priority in their current plans.

NHI’s chief strategic officer, Nicole Nieto, is first to endorse the Great Debate training site on the campus of the University of San Diego from different vantage points-of-view.

“Besides the stellar academic standing of an institution like USD,” she explains, “its facilities and physical surroundings are remarkable, especially through the eyes of young people who see themselves attending such institutions in the near future.”

Nieto goes on to state NHI’s strong intention of making the tri-state area of Nevada, Arizona, and California a long-term investment strategy to identify and train future community leaders. “We value and appreciate the University of San Diego for doing its part in this mission,” she states.
What is the Great Debate Experience?

NHI’s 2022 select group of 9th grade students will take center stage at the Great Debate, a space to hone communication skills and state their views on topics that relate to Latino community life. In this annual meeting of the minds and speech/debate tournament, over 100 students from schools representing Nevada, Arizona, Mexico, and California travel to the University of San Diego to speak their minds about the future. This 6-day experience includes learning the meaning of social forces and how they can influence community perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and the operating beliefs of entire populations. By the end of the program, students form teams, compete in rounds, have new friends and are much more familiar with social issues that impact themselves and their communities. This rite of passage makes them into “NHIers” with immediate access to future opportunities for leadership engagement.

Goals of the Great Debate are to improve the language skills and word management capacities of students, in anticipation of advanced coursework in high school and college admission testing. Other goals include expanding networks with like-minded peers who value higher education, introduction to college residential life, and engagement of parents in the program’s organization.

In 2001 studies conducted by Dr. Nora Perez on the academic effectiveness of NHI students who later pursued their master’s degree, it was established that they associated their participation in the Great Debate as an important factor in their success. Furthermore, the late Dr. Michael Gibb’s 2003 study further established that NHI’s LDZ program either met or exceeded five categories of leadership and success behaviors established by acclaimed leadership experts, James Kouses and Barry Poser.

“I’ve been involved with the Great Debate for over 25 years, with 10 of them as national director,” states Chris Nieto, Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management. Of all NHI leadership programs, the Great Debate remains at the top. And there are real reasons for my views...What people rarely know is that participants learn at multiple levels of development.”

By this, Nieto means that 10th graders from the previous Great Debates return as debate judges, scoring ballot managers, staging managers and program support staff. They work only for one reason and that’s making the student learning as enjoyable and meaningful as possible for everyone in attendance. Ongoing participation of NHI alumni, ongoing discussion of social issues, and continued proposals to advance our community’s prosperity is what makes the Great Debate memorable!
Travel
Students should plan to arrive to the USD campus at 5889 Alcala Park, San Diego, California, 92110. The exact location on campus will be part of your final confirmation materials. The registration area will open at 10am on July 12 and remain open until 2:00pm. NHI will always provide late check-in if any student must arrive beyond the registration hours. Students’ first meal will be dinner on July 12 at approximately 5:00 p.m. Please plan accordingly.

Flying? Any student flying in from out of town should arrive at the San Diego International Airport (SAN) by 1:00pm on July 12, 2022 and can schedule departure times beginning at 1:00pm (but we can help accommodate earlier flights if needed), on July 17, 2022. Unfortunately, NHI staff are not available the day before July 12 nor may stay after July 17 to supervise students. NHI will later provide a link to add your travel itinerary so that we can send a representative to meet you at the airport and guide you to the appropriate ride-share/taxi service to get to the campus. On the final day, NHI will also assist students with planning and getting to the airport on time with rideshare assistance.

Application Qualifications & Requirements
- Current 9th grade high school student
- Enrolled in a college bound curriculum
- 88% or above grade point average (GPA)
- Submit (upload) HS transcript/report card
- Include a $25 nonrefundable application fee

Advance Preparation
Prior to the program, students will receive reading materials about a theme related to the Latino community. They will also read the book, Third Reality by NHI founder, Ernesto Nieto, as an introduction to NHI’s work in community equity building. Finally, they will go through safety/security guidelines, COVID protocols, and be guided on how to prepare for the experience. All of this will happen through pre-program meetings online prior to the first day on campus. Get ready to meet your mentors and prepare for a great experience!

Applicants should apply by May 25th but may call for availability at any time.
ABOUT THE NATIONAL HISPANIC INSTITUTE

Ernesto Nieto and Gloria de Leon’s intent for the National Hispanic Institute was to do much more than host programs for high school youth. NHI was founded in 1979 to establish an institutional presence in Latino community life with a deliberate and organized strategy to prepare the next generation of leaders. It became an entity to study and research leadership to guide young Latinos to envision their value beyond the attainment of college degrees and careers. In particular, NHI wanted students to assess their operating beliefs, behaviors and outlooks. Through organized and thoughtful experiences, participating students analyze their individual choices and determine the strengths to keep and what is no longer useful or potential obstacles to their aspirations. More importantly, they recognize the need to preserve and embrace as crucial, the spiritual and cultural understanding of themselves. The core mindset of recognizing and leveraging assets becomes the foundation for NHI’s signature equity building approach to the development of community leaders. All leadership initiatives are framed within this context of NHI’s mission and as the institution’s community purpose and mandate for the past 42 years.

For additional information or resources, contact:

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Partners

The National Hispanic Institute (NHI) and the University of San Diego annually partner to make programming possible for students. This year, we are especially pleased to be joined by Las Vegas Sands, which is sponsoring over 30 students from Las Vegas, Nevada! NHI alumni who serve as ambassadors also help get the word out to school partners to identify future leaders who will strongly benefit from early leadership development.

About the University of San Diego

The University of San Diego is set at the edge of an international gateway on a campus that’s consistently ranked among the nation’s most beautiful. Our focus on academic excellence — inspired by faith, infused with contemporary Catholic values and nurtured in a warm, community environment — empowers innovative, confident, original thinkers to make positive contributions by confronting humanity’s urgent challenges in places near and far.

With more than 9,000 students from 85 countries and 50 states, USD is the youngest independent institution on the U.S. News & World Report list of top 100 universities in the United States. USD’s small class sizes, compassionate culture, unique learning opportunities, study-abroad opportunities and state-of-the-art resources ensure that graduates of our undergraduate and graduate programs succeed after graduation and throughout their lives.
Annually, partner institutions of higher learning make up NHI’s College Register, a consortium of member colleges and universities that are committed to supporting the successful transition of NHI students to their campuses. These institutions provide year-round support by participating in virtual seminars and panels, attending NHI college fairs, providing feedback and ideas regarding research, and sending representatives as coaches to the CWS programs.

2022 Great Debate Host Institutions

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