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## Looking for 36

### SDSU Turns to Family and Friends to Help Find Nisei Students

An [extensive research effort](#) turned up the names of 43 former San Diego State students who may qualify for honorary degrees under the California Nisei College Diploma Project. The project, approved by state lawmakers, seeks to bestow honorary degrees to American college students of Japanese descent who were sent to internment camps during World War II.

In the coming weeks, SDSU is mailing application forms for the degrees as well as sending out [a letter signed by SDSU President Stephen L. Weber](#). It seeks assistance in finding the former students or their family members, as many of the students themselves may now be deceased. The purpose is to gather information from those eligible to find out how best to recognize them with the degree awards.



The names of several Nisei students were found in the captions of photos like this one of the Nu Alpha Chi student club in the 1942 Del Sudoeste yearbook.

"We've heard from three families (of former students) so far and I have mailing addresses for four other living individuals," says Kristina Moller, a business systems analyst for enrollment services, "so we're still looking for 36."

#### SPECIAL CEREMONY PLANNED

It was Moller who pored through thousands of archived records in an effort to determine the names of former students who might qualify for the honorary degrees. She sits on a campus committee charged with contacting them and planning a special ceremony in May to award the diplomas. The committee is reaching out to community groups like the Japanese-American Historical Society of San Diego to

- October 2009
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distribute the letter and spread the word.



Kristina Moller searches archives for the names of Nisei students.

"We're looking for former classmates or people whose parents or grandparents may have been friends with these students," says Moller, "anyone who can help us locate them."

Many of the names Moller compiled of San Diego State's Nisei students were found in the 1940 and 1941 yearbooks and archives of the The Aztec newspaper that featured stories of the students forced from campus by Executive Order 9066. Issued in February 1942 following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor,

it was a government security measure authorizing the military to relocate Japanese Americans, among others, from along the Pacific coast to inland internment camps.

SDSU is just one of many California State University institutions participating in the Nisei College Diploma Project. If you know someone who may qualify for an honorary degree, please contact SDSU's Kristina Moller at (619) 594-8274 or [kmoller@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:kmoller@mail.sdsu.edu).

[Read the letter](#)

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