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Dominican celebrates "Unity in Diversity" Day

Sarah Gardner

Dominican University of California, sarah.gardner@dominican.edu

Dave Albee

Dominican University of California, david.albee@dominican.edu

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Dominican honored "Unity in Diversity" on campus March 25 with a series of events beginning in Guzman Hall and culminating with the Melba Beals Awards for Excellence in Diversity and the annual Soul Candy celebration in Angelico Hall.

Communications major [Yema Khalif Manyanki](#) received the Student Award at the Melba Beals Awards for Excellence in Diversity while Julia van der Ryn, director of [Dominican's Service Learning program](#), and Todd Herriott, director of [Disability Services](#), received the "Faculty Award" and "Staff Award," respectively.

The day of celebration, education and community began in Guzman Lecture Hall with a keynote address – "Building a Stronger Movement for Equity and Social Justice in Education" -- by Dr. Kevin Kumashiro, Dean and Professor of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco.

Dr. Kumashiro's keynote address was followed by a "Global Gathering" of cultures and heritages with international food in the Angelico Hall lobby. The awards ceremony started at 7 p.m. in Angelico Concert Hall, followed by Soul Candy XII, Dominican's annual free live musical talent show that attracted a crowd of close to 400.

The [Melba Beals Awards for Excellence in Diversity](#) honors Dr. Beals who retired last year from Dominican as Chair Emeritus of the [Department of Communications and Media Studies](#). Dr. Beals joined Dominican in 1999 after a successful career as a print and broadcast journalist. In 2001, she was a founding member of the Diversity Action Group, which is credited with collaboratively transforming Dominican into a diversity affirming institution at a time when the University's student body was becoming increasingly diverse.

Last year, in the inaugural "Unity in Diversity" celebration, pre-med senior and [Black Student Union](#) president Alissa Gumbs received the first Student Award. Dr. Asayehgn Desta, professor of economics and finance in the [Barowsky School of Business](#), received the Faculty Award and [Campus Ministry's](#) Lianni Castro, campus minister, was honored with the Staff Award.

For more information on the [Unity in Diversity program](#), contact Jaime Castner at (415) 257-1300 or email jaime.castner@dominican.edu.

For more information on Soul Candy, contact Dr. Henry Shriebman in the [School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#) at (415) 948-6659 or email henry.shriebman@dominican.edu.