

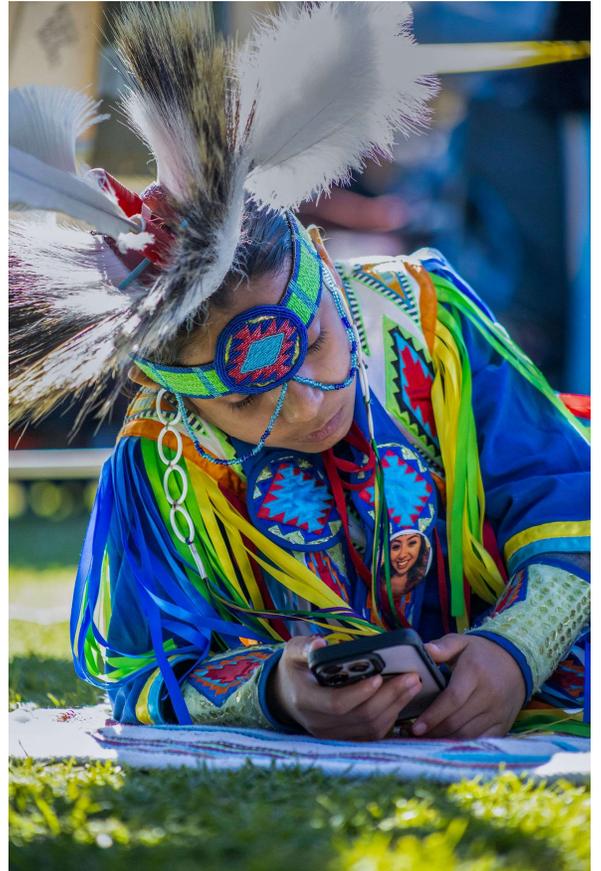
CSULB Pow Wow Field Trip
Saturday March 14, 2026
53rd ANNUAL CSULB POW WOW AT PUVUNGNA



California State University, Long Beach's annual Pow Wow at Puvungna, an American Indian social celebration, is the largest spring event of its kind in Southern California. The Pow Wow is focused on displaying the university's strong American Indian presence. Admission and parking are free.

The two-day event (March 14 & 15) will feature American Indian dancing, arts, crafts and food. The event begins at 11 AM each day and runs until 10 PM on Saturday and 6 PM on Sunday. In addition to dance contests and inter-tribal dancing, there will be California Indian Cultural Presentations, Gourd dancing with Dancer Registration closing at 2 PM on Saturday. All dancers and drums are invited.

Native foods, such as mutton and beef stew, Navajo tacos, fry bread, and Indian burgers will be on sale at the event, and American Indian vendors will be selling both traditional and



contemporary American Indian art.

A Native American Powwow is a social, cultural, and spiritual gathering centered on music, dance, and community. Historically, powwows evolved from ceremonial dances and warrior societies. In the modern era, they also serve as venues for cultural continuity, education, and intertribal connection. Powwows typically serve several purposes simultaneously:

- **Cultural preservation:** Passing down traditional songs, dances, regalia-making, and values to younger generations.
- **Community gathering:** Reuniting families and friends, strengthening intertribal relationships.
- **Spiritual expression:** Honoring ancestors, veterans, and spiritual traditions (especially during opening and closing ceremonies).
- **Education and outreach:** Providing non-Native attendees with an opportunity to learn respectfully about Native cultures.

- **Competition (at some events):** Many powwows feature judged dance competitions with prize money, particularly at larger contest powwows.”

The CSULB powwow is open to the general public and welcomes non-native visitors. Visitors are expected to be respectful and understand that this is a cultural and spiritual gathering not entertainment for visitors. We are invited to share in their celebration. When attending, visitors are expected to observe posted rules and follow guidance from the master of ceremonies (MC).

Stand during honor songs and the Grand Entry,

Do not touch regalia, drums or Eagle feathers.

Follow seating rules around the drum circle.

Ask questions respectfully. Most participants appreciate genuine interest.

Powwows are living expressions of Native identity, resilience, and community. For attendees, they offer an opportunity to witness rich cultural traditions while learning the importance of respect, listening, and protocol. Approached thoughtfully, a powwow can be both an educational and deeply moving experience.

A Powwow typically begins with a **Grand Entry**, a formal procession of dancers led by eagle staffs and flags. All attendees are expected to stand, and men are often asked to remove hats. You will see multiple dance styles, each with its own history and significance, such as:

- Men s Traditional
- Grass Dance
- Fancy Dance
- Women s Traditional
- Jingle Dress Dance
- Fancy Shawl Dance

Live drumming and singing are performed by drum groups, who are central to the powwow and treated with great respect.

Dancers wear **regalia**, not costumes.” Each outfit is handmade and often carries personal, family, or spiritual meaning.

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Guidance for Photographers at Powwows

At a powwow, you are a **guest documenting a living culture**, not covering a staged performance. Cultural respect takes precedence over technical or artistic goals. CSULB has not posted specific rules for photography. In general we should be as unobtrusive as possible. Think street photography, not photoshoot.

Gear Considerations

Use quiet equipment: Enable silent shutter where possible.

Avoid flash: Flash is often prohibited and can disrupt dancers and singers.

Lenses: Mid-range zooms (24–70mm, 70–200mm) are generally preferred over extreme telephoto lenses that feel intrusive.

Minimal footprint: Carry only what you need to avoid obstructing spectators.

During the Powwow

- Never enter the dance arena unless explicitly invited.
- Stay clear of drum groups: Drums are sacred; do not cross between a drum and the arena.
- Remain seated or kneel when close: Avoid standing in front of elders or blocking views.

Listen to the MC

- The MC will announce:
 - When photography is not allowed
 - Which songs or dances are restricted
 - Whether certain groups or individuals should not be photographedIgnoring these announcements is considered disrespectful.

What Not to Photograph

Photography is commonly prohibited or strongly discouraged during:

- Opening and closing prayers
- Honor songs
- Memorials, healing ceremonies, or giveaways
- Moments involving eagle feathers or spiritual intervention
- Individuals who have requested privacy

If you are unsure, do not shoot.

Portraits and Close-Ups

- Always ask permission before making individual portraits, especially of:
 - Elders
 - Children (obtain parental consent)
 - Drum group members
- Respect refusals without discussion.

- Show the image if asked: Many people appreciate seeing the photo and may offer guidance.

Cultural Accuracy and Framing

- Use correct terminology: Regalia, not costume.
- Avoid stereotypes: Do not frame images to exaggerate “exotic” elements or remove modern context to imply the culture is frozen in the past.
- Context matters: Wide shots that show community, family, and intertribal interaction are often more respectful than only dramatic action shots.

Editing, Captioning, and Publishing

Editing

- Avoid excessive stylization that alters skin tones, regalia colors, or ceremonial context.
- Do not crop images in ways that misrepresent actions or meaning.

Captioning

- Be accurate and restrained.
- If unsure of a dancer's tribe, style, or the song's meaning, do not guess.
- Acceptable: “Dancer during intertribal dance at [Powwow Name].”
- Avoid pan-Indian generalizations.

Distribution and Use

- Personal use: Usually acceptable if respectful and non-commercial.
- Editorial, commercial, or educational use: Obtain explicit permission from:
 - Event organizers
 - The individuals photographed
- Social media: Even personal accounts can feel exploitative if images are posted without context or consent.

Professional Conduct

- Dress neutrally; avoid clothing that draws attention.
- Do not pose dancers or ask them to repeat actions.
- Do not interfere with ceremonies for “a better angle.”
- If challenged, respond politely and comply immediately.

Summary for Photographers

A powwow is not a photo opportunity first—it is a cultural gathering first. The best images come from patience, restraint, and relationship-building. When photographers act respectfully, they are often welcomed and trusted, leading to more meaningful work over time.