



The Student Memorial Center at Western New Mexico University was the site where Kappa Delta Pi presented a Day of the Dead (Dia de los Muertos) altar along with six other student organizations on campus. The altars were built throughout the day on November 2, 2009, and unveiled at 6:00 pm. Visitors were given a tour of the lighted altars by Manuel Rodriguez who explained the historical origin and significance of the tradition of honoring the dead with pictures, drinks, bread, and candies.

Dia de los Muertos is an ancient tradition that is practiced throughout Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. Originally, the Aztecs observed it during the first four days of November of the Christian calendar. Each day was designated to honor, celebrate, and commemorate the spirit and life of the deceased. These four days were opportunities for the entire community to clean their houses and the cemetery, prepare altars and food, and wait for the return of the souls who had departed.

Offrendas or offerings are the altars themselves and everything that is placed on them. The favorite food of the deceased is prepared and placed on the altar with special bread, pan de muerto. Other favorite items are also placed on the altar: candies, fruit, flowers, blessed candles, holy water, incense, chocolate and pictures of the deceased.

