



PUBLIC RELATIONS

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Southern University at New Orleans welcomes Congressman Joseph Cao for International Week



NEW ORLEANS, LA – Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) will celebrate its annual International Week from March 16th to 20th. To start the week off, the university will have United States Representative Anh “Joseph” Cao (La.-2nd District) serve as a guest speaker. Congressman Cao will speak on Monday, March 16, 2009 at 11 a.m. in the Knights’ Café (cafeteria) on the Park Campus at 6400 Press Dr.

Themed “Out of Many, We Are One”, the week will feature additional guest speakers and forums designed to heighten students’ diversity awareness.

“We are in a history making year with our first African-American President, Barack Obama, and Congressman Cao as the first Vietnamese Congressman. Here at SUNO, we provide intentionally packaged speakers who can motivate our students to embrace diversity as is reflected in our theme,” says Josephine Okoronkwo, Director of SUNO’s Student Development Center and head coordinator of International Week.

Congressman Cao was born in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam. His father, an officer with the South Vietnamese Army, was imprisoned by the Communists; he came to America at the age of eight with two of his siblings. He earned his degree in physics from Baylor University before arriving in New Orleans in 1992. He left to earn a master's degree in philosophy from Fordham University, and returned New Orleans to teach philosophy and ethics at Loyola University. Eventually Congressman Cao would obtain his law degree from Loyola Law School.

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While in Washington, D.C., Congressman Cao became an advocate for refugees. He became the in-house legal counsel for Boat People S.O.S, Inc., an organization helping poor Vietnamese and other minorities. In 2002, he was chosen by Archbishop Alfred Hughes to become a member of the National Advisory Council of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, addressing women's rights in the Catholic Church, social justice, child abuse, and the Catholic response to Hurricane Katrina.

He helped residents of New Orleans East stop plans for a landfill that would have devastated their community, and he also led the fight to get electricity and telecommunications restored for returning residents.

In 2007, Governor Bobby Jindal appointed Congressman Cao to help ensure fair voting as a member of the Board of Elections for Orleans Parish. He was also elected to lead the Louisiana Republican Party both on the parish and state levels, and earlier this year he was elected a delegate to the Republican National Convention.

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