

# **UCSD Chicano/Latino Concilio**

## **Meeting with Vice Chancellor Rue**

### **November 29, 2007**

**Opening statement:** The University of California, San Diego remains a resource-rich public institution that is largely inaccessible to the local Chicano/Latino community. This crisis is reflected most seriously in UCSD's educational mission. In order to improve access and outcomes (e.g., retention, graduation, and postgraduate opportunity) for Chicano/Latino students, UCSD must make both immediate and long-range efforts to alleviate institutional/structural barriers for historically underrepresented students.

UCSD's Chancellor Marye Anne Fox stated in a letter to the UCSD Chicano/Latino Concilio (July 12, 2005), "UCSD's priority is our students . . . As chancellor, I will continue to focus on enhancing the educational experience and the overall quality of life for **all students and the entire campus community**" (emphasis added). To fulfill this commitment and end the long-standing institutional neglect of the Mexican American community, we believe several steps must be taken to address the needs of UCSD's Chicano/Latino students.

#### **Specific Problems**

- **Lack of a critical mass** of Chicano/Latino undergraduates (Chicanos has remained frozen at approximately 8% of enrollment for over ten years while Latino enrollment has remained approximately 3%). This lack of representation contributes to Chicano students' sense of marginalization and alienation.
- **A campus climate** that ignores, excludes, and is at times hostile to Chicano/Latino students. The climate at UCSD fails to provide adequate validation and support for our students.

#### **Necessary Strategies**

- Expand outreach to those K-12 schools and community colleges that have significant Chicano/Latino populations in order to increase local Chicano/Latino students' applications to UCSD.
- Expand the weight of "noncognitive" variables (e.g., precollege involvement and surmounting difficult barriers) in the comprehensive admission process to alleviate ethnic and socioeconomic bias, ensuring equity in access for Chicano/Latino students.
- Name UCSD's Sixth College after a respected Chicano/a (i.e., ethnic Mexican raised and educated in the United States) who exemplifies professional distinction and a commitment to social justice. We agree with the recent report on yield that states: "The SAAC organizations, underrepresented staff, and faculty should be

able to take part in the procedures for naming Sixth College, future colleges, and other campus spaces. Input into the naming process should not be confined to the college exclusively since college names affect the entire campus community.”

- Following the advice of the yield report, establish a work group to immediately explore and pilot theme housing at UCSD. A student’s college affiliation should not hinder him or her from requesting space in a specific theme house. Similar programs have been successfully implemented at UC Irvine and UC Berkeley.
- Support student groups, Concilio, and other interested parties in the elaboration of campus public art projects that reflect the historical and cultural experience of underrepresented communities. Such art projects would have a valuable impact on campus climate. As the recent yield report states: “This should be a collaborative project in which SAAC organizations, underrepresented staff, and faculty with experience with equity issues should be involved. Planning and execution should explicitly include and harness the experience of administrators and faculty with a demonstrated history of equity activism on campus.”
- Provide stable, adequate financial and administrative support for those activities (e.g., high school conference and Raza Graduation) by UCSD's MEChA that contribute to outreach and retention for Chicano/Latino students.
- Provide expanded, stable funding to OASIS that enables it to provide an adequate level of support to facilitate the retention and achievement of Chicanos/Latinos and other underrepresented students.
- Work with Academic Affairs to ensure permanent financial support for the Chicano/Latino Arts & Humanities Program (CLAH).
- Institute policies to increase the hiring and promotion of Chicano/Latino staff at high levels in Student Affairs, particularly in the six colleges.

These strategies effectively address the connected problems of critical mass and campus climate. They address structural barriers in the “pipeline” (i.e., outreach, recruitment, admissions, enrollment, retention, graduation, and postgraduate opportunity) that impact access and positive outcomes for prospective and current Chicano/Latino students at UCSD. These actions also represent needed reforms to improve UCSD’s campus climate, decrease Raza students’ marginalization, and make the institution more attractive to prospective Chicano/Latino students.

We welcome Vice Chancellor Rue to UC San Diego, and we look forward to working with her to make the changes necessary for transforming the University into a truly public institution that is accessible and responsible to all the citizens of California.