

**San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education**  
**Research & Policy Report #9, October 2022**  
**The Status of San Diego Chicanos/Latinos in Public Higher Education:**  
**Decolonizing Local Colleges and Universities**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This research and policy report is the ninth and final in a series of papers by the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education (hereafter the SD Concilio) that analyzes data and information gathered from eleven public colleges and universities in San Diego to provide a profile of the status of local Chicanos/Latinos in higher education. The SD Concilio is a local coalition of faculty and staff, including emeriti, that has monitored and conducted advocacy for the **access and success of Chicano/Latino students** in higher education for over thirty years.

For this report, the SD Concilio developed recommendations based on our findings on the status of Chicanos/Latinos in local, public colleges and universities. As we described in previous reports in this series, our SD Concilio utilized data and information submitted by these institutions, along with their website content, to identify recommendations to improve the conditions and subsequent success for Chicano/Latino students on local campuses.

The data and information that our SD Concilio received reflect both positive and negative dimensions of institutional strategies enacted by local public colleges and universities that impact Chicano/Latino students. Our organization makes the following recommendations for these institutions and the administrative and legislative entities to which they are accountable. These recommendations are made in the context of a thorough recognition of the characteristics of our local Chicano/Latino community, including our long historic experience as a subordinate ethnic group subject to systemic and institutional racism, a community that has suffered from subsequent educational underachievement, and a community that continues to grow as a portion of the California population. The effect of our Chicano/Latino students' educational achievement on the entire social and economic fabric of our state will increase as well. Most of our recommendations suggest necessary actions by local, public colleges and universities. Others are made to stimulate necessary action by the state and federal legislatures that provide extensive funding to San Diego's public colleges and universities. We emphasize that these recommendations are not exhaustive.

After disseminating these recommendations, we expect our local, public institutions of higher education to respond with their plans to achieve progress in serving our community. Our SD Concilio will continue to monitor such progress or lack thereof.

### **Recommendations for Local Higher Education Institutions:**

#### **Institutional Mission and Leadership**

- As a requirement for any public institution of higher education that receives government funds, including funds from state, county, and/or federal sources, each such institution should provide to the public, including elected officials, data and information on the dimensions of equity addressed by this SD Concilio report. This includes the dimensions

that directly impact Chicanos/Latinos, including leadership and institutional mission, enrollment, student success, faculty representation across academic disciplines, support for Chicano/Latino Studies and Bilingual Literacy Education, respectively, and law enforcement structure and strategies. None of this data or information should be withheld from the public.

- If public colleges and universities find it too cumbersome to respond to public inquiries regarding equity for Chicano/Latino students, those institutions themselves should publish an annual report on Chicanos/Latinos that addresses all dimensions of equity. As previously stated, the historic status and subsequent educational underachievement of Chicanos/Latinos and the increasing size of our community warrants this degree of attention from higher education institutions.
- Local colleges and universities should develop and implement strategies designed to increase the representation of Chicanos/Latinos in high administrative positions. These include positions in which individuals serve as part of the chancellor's or president's cabinet. Institutional strategies should include mentoring and leadership development programs that identify Chicano/Latino staff and provide them experience and education to increase their qualifications to serve at the highest administrative levels. Local institutions of higher education should also contract with outside consultants to review and interrogate their hiring practices for high administrative positions to identify and eliminate bias and other manifestations of institutional racism.
- Local higher education institutions should have a strategic plan that places diversity, equity, and inclusion among the highest priorities. Such plans should emphasize the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as Hispanic Serving Institution status, to the institutional mission and its essential contribution to institutional excellence. When necessary, local colleges and universities should contract with external consultants to develop such a strategic plan.
- Each local college and university should appoint a chief diversity officer that reports directly to the chancellor or president. This person should have a substantive budget and staff to monitor, report on, and improve diversity and equity at all levels of the institution. The chief diversity officer should appoint and utilize an **inclusive** community advisory group to ensure the position's accountability.
- All local colleges and universities should have at least one inclusive Chicano/Latino advisory group with which the chancellor or president interacts regularly. Individuals appointed to such advisory groups should demonstrate experience and knowledge regarding the Chicano/Latino experience in higher education rather than passive individuals that merely rubber-stamp institutional policies and practices. The advisory groups should monitor all manifestations of diversity and equity at the institution and disseminate an annual written report on their findings.

### **Chicano/Latino Student Enrollment**

- Local public colleges and universities should develop and implement a plan to maximize the enrollment of Chicano/Latino students, a variable that is critical to the subsequent success of our students (Hurtado and Alvarez, ). Such plans should be developed by a broad section of the campus that includes both Academic and Student Affairs. Specific institutional entities should be responsible for implementing enrollment strategies. The group responsible for planning enrollment strategies should assess annually those strategies as well as annual enrollment data.
- Selective universities should utilize a holistic admissions process with admission criteria that includes prospective students' contribution to institutional diversity and equity.
- Local public universities should implement only anti-racist admissions criteria and processes. Standardized test results should not be utilized for undergraduate school admission.

### **Chicano/Latino Student Success**

- All public colleges and universities should develop and implement a comprehensive, detailed plan to maximize the success of Chicano/Latino students. Success should be defined as “traditional” academic outcomes such as retention, achievement, transfer, and graduation, as well as “liberatory” outcomes such as ethnic identity development and commitment to social justice (Garcia, 2020). Institutional strategies to maximize Chicano/Latino student success should apply principles from the scholarly literature on our students, including validation (Rendon and Muñoz, 2011), sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012), community wealth (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal, 2001), bicultural social capital (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), and others.
- Student success plans should clearly identify one individual or entity with primary responsibility for Chicano/Latino student success. Likewise, that individual or entity should have a clear reporting line to the campus' chancellor or president along with the authority and resources necessary to fulfill their responsibility. Although efforts to maximize the success of Chicano/Latino students should involve all segments of the campus, e.g., both academic and student affairs, the principle that “all faculty and staff are responsible for student success” is much too diffuse and should be reconsidered. Coordination of all efforts is necessary to ensure focused institutional energy and to avoid the duplication of services.
- All services designed to contribute to the success of Chicano/Latino students should be thoroughly assessed annually by individuals with knowledge of college student development. Ideally, such assessments should include both qualitative and quantitative dimensions.

- All public higher education institutions should review annually their outcomes, including disaggregating data by ethnicity to compare dominant and subordinate groups, respectively.
- All public higher education institutions should develop and implement High Impact Practices (Kuh, 2008) that have demonstrated success with Chicano/Latino students. These institutional strategies should be marketed heavily for Chicano/Latino students. Their impact on Chicano/Latino student success should be assessed regularly.

### **Chicano/Latino Faculty**

- All public colleges and universities should develop and implement a comprehensive, detailed plan to increase the representation of Chicano/Latino faculty across all academic disciplines (Hurtado and Alvarado, 2015), (Smith, 2015). If necessary, campuses should hire an external consultant to develop effective strategies.
- Public colleges and universities should utilize “cluster hires” to ensure the hiring of a group of Chicano/Latino faculty across academic disciplines that cluster around academic foci that are relevant to the Chicano/Latino community. These cluster hires should not be limited to STEM fields. Such cluster hires can avoid violation of California Proposition 209 by focusing on areas of research and/or teaching rather than the ethnicity of faculty themselves.
- All public colleges and universities should develop and implement mentoring programs for new Chicano/Latino faculty that ensure institutional support for them and maximize their retention as faculty. Such programs should carefully guide such faculty through the process of tenure and promotion.
- Each public college and university should review its process and outcomes of faculty tenure, including the results of tenure decisions by faculty ethnicity for at least the past five years. Where necessary, institutions should change elements of their tenure process to ensure an anti-racist, equitable process. The tenure process for faculty at public institutions should include these elements: (1) the effect of Covid-19 on faculty tenure; (2) the extent to which mentors and other support are provided; (3) the provision of clear and detailed information on the rights and responsibilities of faculty in the tenure process; and (4) the provision of formal information sessions for new faculty of color and first-generation faculty that intentionally address such topics as microaggressions, imposter syndrome, bias in student evaluations, service obligations (departmental and campus-wide), cultural taxation, burnout, leadership development, and hostile work environments.

### **Chicano/Latino/Ethnic Studies and Dual Language Education Teacher Education**

- All public colleges and universities should make a commitment to establish and fully support a department of Chicano/Latino Studies, even if under the umbrella of broader Ethnic Studies (Hurtado and Alvarado, 2015; Sleeter and Zavala, 2020). The fact that

more than 40 percent of the California population in 2022 is Chicano/Latino means that no college graduate can function well as a professional without extensive knowledge of our community. Institutions that currently have an Ethnic Studies department should ensure the development of an extensive focus on curriculum that reflects the Chicano/Latino experience.

- Public institutions of higher education should provide sufficient budget, faculty, and staff to ensure a broad array of courses offered by their Chicano/Latino Studies Department. For universities, Chicano/Latino Studies courses should be offered at both lower and upper division levels. Clearly, a college or university department with only two-three tenure-track faculty is insufficient to achieve this critical objective.
- Public universities should establish and fully support a department of Bilingual Teacher Education to ensure a substantive contribution to the production of Bilingual-Bicultural teachers necessary to serve the growing population of Chicano/Latino students in California that presently exceeds 55 percent of all students (2022). It is a reasonable, sound expectation among the Chicano/Latino community that all levels of public education, including colleges and universities, contribute to the development of bilingualism and biliteracy for Chicano/Latino students.

### **Law Enforcement**

- As is the case with virtually all segments of public higher education, campus law enforcement strategies should be assessed annually for their effectiveness in providing safe institutional conditions in an anti-racist, economically efficient manner. These annual assessments should be made public.
- The leadership of local colleges and universities should work with the leadership of local law enforcement entities, e.g., the San Diego Police Department or the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, to develop cooperative agreements that ensure the safety of our San Diego campuses without duplication of local police or sheriffs.
- Local colleges and institutions should demonstrate total transparency in the operations of their campus law enforcement practices. Data on police-related incidents, including the ethnicity of parties involved, should be available to the public. Likewise, data on complaints against campus police should be available, as should annual budgets for law enforcement that delineate costs. The ethnicity of campus police officers should also be public information. These items should be published annually and clearly posted on institutional websites.
- All local colleges and universities should have a representative campus safety advisory board made up of campus faculty, staff, students, and community members that provide an oversight function for campus law enforcement. The board should meet at least monthly and should make an annual report on its activities, findings, and recommendations. The minutes of all meetings should be available to the public, including posting on the institution's website.

- All local higher education institutions should employ a team of counselors and/or social workers trained to address certain traditional law enforcement situations that do not require the presence of an armed officer. Those staff should report to an entity other than the campus law enforcement office.
- All local colleges and institutions should ensure that law enforcement officers utilize de-escalation strategies when interacting with individuals on local campuses. Those institutions should train all faculty and staff to ensure the use of the lowest intensity interventions for individuals with whom they experience challenging interactions.

### **Recommendations for State or Federal Legislators**

- State legislators should demand that as a condition of public funding, all California Community College, California State University, and University of California institutions must monitor access and success, defined broadly, for Chicano/Latino students. As the state's largest ethnic group that has historically been subjected to racist structures and processes in public higher education, our community merits such attention. State legislatures, through their appropriate committees, should publish their findings from these audits annually.
- The California Latino Legislative Caucus should implement immediate steps to greatly increase their accessibility to community organizations such as the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education. The caucus should hold quarterly meetings with such organizations that create collaborations for greater advocacy on behalf of Chicano/Latino students in California. The caucus should also develop and implement a system through which community organizations can communicate with the entire caucus via email.
- Federal elected officials representing San Diego should assign staff to maintain regular communication with community organizations such as our SD Concilio. Such communication should lead to greater collaboration that holds public higher education institutions accountable for effectively serving Chicano/Latino students.
- Federal elected officials should implement regulations to prohibit public institutions of higher education from receiving federal grants from entities such as the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation without those institutions providing evidence of anti-racist, supportive structures, policies, and practices toward Chicanos/Latinos and other underrepresented communities of color. Institutions should be required to go beyond mere "nondiscrimination" to demonstrate actions that remove historic barriers to access and success for Chicanos/Latinos and other underrepresented communities of color.

The SD Concilio provides these recommendations with both the hope and expectation that, with appropriate oversight from elected officials, our local, public colleges and universities will maximize institutional equity for Chicanos/Latinos. Such action on their part should

contribute greatly to the decolonization of Chicano/Latino communities, a higher rate of achievement for Chicano/Latino students, and a stronger, more positive social and economic fabric for the entire state of California. For this to occur, one element is especially critical: these higher education institutions are **public**, and they must be **transparent** about their service to Chicanos/Latinos.

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