

San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education

Position Paper

Adjunct Faculty in San Diego's Community Colleges: Effects on Chicano/Latino Faculty and Chicana & Chicano Studies

April 2023

Introduction

This position paper by the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education, hereafter the SD Concilio, examines the status of adjunct, or temporary, faculty in San Diego's community colleges. It is our assertion that the over-reliance on adjunct faculty in San Diego's community colleges is problematic. Further, that it has negative effects on Chicano/Latino faculty as well as Chicana & Chicano Studies, with subsequent negative effects on local Chicano/Latino students. The SD Concilio is a local coalition of faculty and staff, including emeriti, that has conducted advocacy for the access and success of Chicano/Latino students in higher education for over thirty years. Our 2023 San Diego Concilio Report, "The Status of San Diego's Chicanos/Latinos in Public Higher Education: Decolonizing Local Colleges and Universities," details the uneven institutional conditions faced by Chicano/Latino students in local colleges and universities.

San Diego County has eight credit-bearing community colleges: Cuyamaca College, Grossmont College, Mira Costa College, Palomar College, San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and Southwestern College. Data collected by our SD Concilio indicates that most of these colleges reflect the trend documented in a report by the California State Auditor in February 2023. In that report, the state found that most community college districts in California "are not meeting the goal established by state lawmakers more than 30 years ago to have 75 percent of instruction taught by full-time faculty" (California State Auditor, 2023).

In fact, the community colleges in California are not even close to achieving progress toward that goal. As the State Auditor's report noted, despite an allocation of \$450 million by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to facilitate full-time faculty hiring, only 60 percent of the state system's current faculty are full-time. According to the State Auditor, those funds were not used appropriately.

The State Auditor also concluded that the California Community Colleges are not making sufficient progress toward diversifying its faculty, particularly Chicano/Latino faculty, and that the Chancellor's Office is not providing the guidance and oversight necessary to achieve faculty diversity. As an example, the audit emphasized that while 47 percent of all community college students in California are Chicano/Latino, only 18 percent of its faculty are Chicano/Latino. The State Auditor concluded, "In general, we determined that the Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges (Chancellor's Office) has not ensured that districts meet

legislative goals, use funds for their intended purpose, or implement best practices for hiring a diverse faculty” (California State Auditor, 2023).

The Over-Reliance on Adjunct Faculty at Community Colleges

Before addressing the negative implications for our Chicano/Latino community, we acknowledge the general, critical dimensions of California Community Colleges’ failure to provide sufficient full-time faculty throughout its system, which is the largest system of higher education in the United States. The state audit provided a description of the problematic elements of over-reliance on adjunct faculty that is extracted from scholarly literature on higher education:

- Part-time instructors are less likely to use high-impact educational practices—which are more likely to engage students—such as referrals to tutoring services.
- Students who take an introductory course taught by a part-time instructor are less likely to sign up for a second course in the same field.
- Part-time instructors are less likely to have a designated office space, making it more difficult to meet with students outside of class.
- Part-time instructors are less able to dedicate the same amount of time to advising students.
- Part-time instructors may not know their instructional assignments until shortly before the term begins, which may limit their time to prepare course materials. (State Auditor’s Report, 2023).

These elements contribute to hindering conditions for Chicano/Latino and other students. They also provide substandard working conditions for the adjunct faculty themselves, including lower wages, uncertainty of employment (no assurance of future teaching opportunity), frequent lack of benefits such as medical insurance, and lack of collegial support.

Diversity of Faculty in Community Colleges

In addition to such evidence of the educational benefits of instruction by full-time faculty, scholarly literature also documents the benefits to students that are provided by an ethnically diverse faculty (Bristol and Martin-Fernandez, 2019; Hurtado and Alvarado, 2015; Smith, 2015; Zambrana, 2018). The scholar Gina Garcia emphasizes that Chicano/Latino faculty are especially important in so-called Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI’s):

Diverse faculty members are essential at HSIs for a number of reasons. Latinx students want to see themselves in the faculty at HSIs, as it is motivating to see successful Latinxs with terminal degrees on a daily basis (Gonzalez et al., 2020). Moreover, Latinx students at HSIs feel like they can relate to Latinx faculty, personally, culturally, and linguistically (Garcia, 2016, Gonzalez et al., 2020; Guardia and Evans, 2008) . . . Diverse faculty

teaching at HSIs are more likely to develop pedagogical skills that recognize the unique ways of knowing and being that students at HSIs bring to the institution (Garcia, 2023).

All eight of the credit-bearing community college campuses in San Diego are classified as Hispanic Serving Institutions.

One of the most important benefits of having Chicano/Latino and other diverse faculty at institutions of higher education is that they are more likely to teach diverse curriculum. Such curriculum, including Chicana & Chicano Studies, provides its own benefits to students in both cognitive/intellectual and non-cognitive dimensions (Hurtado and Alvarado, 2015; Smith, 2015; Sleeter and Zavala, 2020). Such curriculum is particularly important to produce student outcomes that prepare those students to live, work, study, and engage politically in the 21st century.

Adjunct Faculty in San Diego Community Colleges

Although the percentage of full-time faculty across California Community Colleges is only 60 percent instead of the state’s benchmark of 75 percent, it appears that conditions are considerably worse in San Diego’s five community college districts. There is disagreement about the way such percentages are computed. The State Auditor chastises the CCC Chancellor’s Office for counting non-instructional staff such as librarians and counselors as full-time “faculty.”

The CCC Chancellor’s Office maintains an online data base called the “Management Information Systems Data Mart.” This data base provides a profile of each community college district’s faculty and staff, divided into four categories: (1) educational administrators, (2) academic tenured/tenure track, (3) academic temporary, and (4) classified. While the two “academic” classifications might include non-instructional staff, the numbers provide an indication of the degree to which San Diego’s community colleges rely on adjunct faculty to teach their students.

Table 1: Academic Tenure/Tenure Track and Academic Temporary Faculty in San Diego’s Community Colleges, Fall 2022 (CCC Chancellor’s Office, Management Information Systems Data Mart)

	Academic Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty	Academic Temporary Faculty
SD Community College District	648 (32% of all faculty)	1,361 (68% of all faculty)
SW Community College District	268 (29% of all faculty)	651 (71% of all faculty)
Palomar Community College District	275 (30% of all faculty)	638 (70% of all faculty)
Mira Costa Community College District	206 (31% of all faculty)	467 (69% of all faculty)

Grossmont Community College District	298 (29% of all faculty)	715 (71% of all faculty)
--------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

According to this data, none of the community college districts in San Diego are close to achieving the state-mandated level of 75 percent of faculty teaching at a full-time basis. This failure may represent a crisis condition and it has serious negative implications for those institutions' hiring of Chicano/Latino and other underrepresented faculty as well as for providing students a well-supported Chicana & Chicano Studies Department.

Chicano/Latino Faculty in San Diego Community Colleges

The CCC Chancellor's Office also provides data on the ethnic representation among faculty at community college districts, including the five districts in San Diego County. The data below extracted from the CCC displays each district's Chicano/Latino faculty, both tenure/tenure track and temporary, along with the percentage of student enrollment that is Chicano/Latino. Our premise reflects a point noted in the State Auditor's report, that the degree of Chicano/Latino faculty in our public institutions should reflect the degree of Chicano/Latino students.

Table 2: Chicano/Latino student enrollment, tenure/tenure track faculty, and temporary faculty in San Diego County's Community Colleges Fall 2022 (CCC Chancellor's Office, Management Information Systems Data Mart)

	Chicano/Latino Enrollment & % of Total Enrollment	Chicano/Latino Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty & % of T/TT	Chicano/Latino Temporary Faculty & % of Temporary
San Diego CCD	1,977 (46%)	105 (16%)	195 (14%)
Southwestern CCD	2,554 (74%)	73 (27%)	172 (26%)
Palomar CCD	2,152 (54%)	41 (15%)	106 (17%)
Mira Costa CCD	1,178 (42%)	45 (22%)	55 (12%)
Grossmont CCCD	930 (38%)	47 (16%)	103 (14%)

Obviously, none of the local community colleges have a level of Chicano/Latino representation among its faculty that is comparable to their Chicano/Latino student enrollment. Thus, it is unlikely that most Chicano/Latino students have an opportunity to take a course taught by a Chicano/Latino instructor or enjoy a mentoring relationship with such an instructor. Since Chicano/Latino faculty are most likely to teach a diverse curriculum, these numbers indicate that most local Chicano/Latino students are unlikely to enjoy a high degree of access to courses in Chicana & Chicano Studies. Likewise, non-Chicano/Latino students are likely denied the same opportunities. This limited access to a diverse curriculum undermines students' preparation for engagement with an increasingly diverse society.

Chicana & Chicano Studies in San Diego Community Colleges

The website of each of the five local community college districts provides information regarding the institution's academic programs, including Chicana & Chicano Studies. As noted previously, Chicana & Chicano Studies contributes to retention, graduation, and learning among Chicano/Latino students. According to these websites, our local community colleges offer students the following degrees:

- San Diego City College (SDCCD)—Associate in Arts Degree in Chicana & Chicano Studies
- San Diego Mesa College (SDCCD)—Associate in Arts Degree in Chicana & Chicano Studies
- San Diego Miramar College (SDCCD)—no degree
- Southwestern College—Associate in Arts Degree in Mexican American Studies
- Palomar College—Associate in Arts Degree in Social Justice, Chicana & Chicano Studies
- Mira Costa College—Associate in Arts Degree in Social Justice, Chicana & Chicano Studies
- Grossmont College (GCCCD)—Ethnic, Gender, and Social Justice courses
- Cuyamaca College (GCCCD)—no degree

Unfortunately, the institutional websites do not provide the number of full-time faculty positions in each of these programs. Historically, less than a handful of full-time faculty work in such programs, placing limits on the number of courses available to students pursuing a degree in Chicana & Chicano Studies. More analysis is needed to determine the extent to which these critical programs are under-funded and relatively unsupported, particularly in comparison with other, less important academic programs as well as non-instructional functions such as law enforcement.

Conclusion

Despite the clear evidence that full-time faculty, Chicano/Latino faculty, and Chicana & Chicano Studies contribute to positive educational outcomes among students, especially Chicanos/Latinos, the community college districts in San Diego have not provided sufficient institutional support for those elements. An unacceptably low level of faculty in our local community colleges are full-time, placing considerable stress on adjunct faculty. The relative lack of Chicano/Latino faculty representation in San Diego community colleges reflects the unfortunate state-wide trend documented in the State Auditor's report, a failure to achieve sufficient progress in diversifying the faculty. Clearly, these two institutional shortcomings contribute to a third problem in local community colleges, a failure to provide adequate support for Chicana & Chicano Studies departments.

Our SD Concilio calls for a renewed institutional focus on this situation among local community colleges. Our thirty plus years of advocacy have taught us that no significant

amount of institutional reform, let alone transformation, occurs without a strategic plan that involves the coordinated efforts of an entire institution. Therefore, we recommend that each community college in San Diego develop a clear strategy to increase its degree of full-time faculty, its representation of Chicano/Latino faculty, and its support of Chicana & Chicano Studies. We also ask that our elected state officials demand accountability from local community colleges. Given that approximately 60 percent of California's Chicano/Latino students pursuing higher education are in community college, demanding more supportive conditions is urgent.

Authors: Octavio Garcia, Abel Macías, Patrick Velasquez

REFERENCES

Bristol, T. and J. Martin-Fernandez. 2019. The added value of Latinx and Black teachers for Latinx and Black students: Implications for policy. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 6(2), 147-153.

California State Auditor. 2023. Report of the California State Auditor on California Community Colleges: Increasing Full-time Faculty and Diversity.

Garcia, G. 2023. Transforming Hispanic serving institutions for equity and justice. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hurtado, S. and A. Alvarado. 2015. Realizing the potential of Hispanic-serving institutions: Multiple dimensions of organizational transformation. In Nunez, Hurtado, and Galdeano (Eds.), *Hispanic-serving institutions: Advancing research and transformative practice*. NY: Routledge.

Sleeter, C. and M. Zavala. 2020. Transformative ethnic studies in schools: Curriculum, pedagogy, and research. New York: Teachers College Press.

Smith, D. 2015. Diversity's promise for higher education: Making it work (second edition). MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zambrana, R. 2018. Toxic ivory towers: The consequences of work stress on underrepresented minority faculty. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.