

The attached report, also pasted below, is the **fifth** in a series from the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education. These reports provide a perspective on the status of Chicanos/Latinos in local colleges and universities. This fourth report focuses on the **success** of Chicano/Latino students at our local, public higher education institutions. We will continue to report on data and information that our SD Concilio gathered from San Diego's higher education institutions regarding key dimensions of our Chicano/Latino students' access and success.

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## San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education Research & Policy Report #5, August 2022

### The Status of San Diego Chicanos/Latinos in Public Higher Education: Decolonizing Local Colleges and Universities

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

This research and policy report is the fifth of 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.

Our previous report contained data on the enrollment of Chicano/Latino students at these local institutions. Except for UC San Diego, all the local, public community college districts and universities have a Chicano/Latino enrollment that reflects our community's demographic profile in San Diego, i.e., approximately 35 percent Chicano/Latino. While such enrollment is laudable, it carries a responsibility to provide institutional conditions that support Chicano/Latino student success, including retention, graduation, and high levels of achievement in both "traditional academic" and "liberatory" outcomes (Garcia, 2020).

The SD Concilio asked each local, public institution to provide detailed data and information on their specific institutional strategies to maximize the success of Chicano/Latino students. We also requested data on institutional outcomes for those students. The responses from the eleven local, public institutions of higher education were uneven in terms of the degree to which they provided all our requested data and information.

In this report, we provide data gathered from each local, public college and university. In most cases, we report the responses we received directly from these institutions. In other cases, we report data extracted from an institutional website. In addition to the data on outcomes, we provide a conceptual framework to assess the commitment of institutional strategies that provide supportive conditions for Chicano/Latino students. We will report more detailed data and information on the strategies identified by our local, public institutions in future reports.

#### **RESULTS: CHICANO/LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS**

Except for UC San Diego, all local, public universities identified programs and services implemented to maximize the success of Chicano/Latino students. The SD Concilio developed a conceptual framework of the types of supportive programs and services provided to Chicano/Latino students. A metric was developed to assess the degree of institutionalization of support and success at each campus. We provide a basic summary of the results of our assessment of such institutional support below with support in ascending order. A more thorough description will be disseminated in a future report.

### **Metric of Intensity from Low to High Institutional Support**

#### **LOW • No evidence of support for C/L students**

- Variable support provided to C/L students (CSUSM, UCSD, GCCCD, MCCD, PCD)
- Supporting programs that facilitate C/L student success (SDCCD, SWCD)
- Leading through institutionalized infrastructure in support of C/L success (SDSU)

#### **HIGH • Exemplary infrastructure and institutionalized programs that support C/L student success**

The specific outcomes reported by local, public higher education institutions are reported below. None of the local institutions was rated at the highest level of institutional support for Chicano/Latino students.

### **San Diego State University**

San Diego State University was identified as a **Leading** institution for student success that has institutionalized an infrastructure of support of Chicano/Latino students. Their data reported the first-year retention rate for all SDSU students that enrolled as first-time freshmen in 2020-21. In addition to first-year retention, SDSU reported its six-year graduation rates for first-time freshmen and its three-year graduation rates for transfer students. They compared the outcomes for all students with those of Chicano/Latino students. The SDSU data on these outcomes is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: SDSU Outcomes

	All Campus	Chicano/Latino Students
2020-21 1 <sup>st</sup> year retention-1 <sup>st</sup> time freshmen	89%	89%
6-year graduation-2012 1 <sup>st</sup> time freshmen	75%	72%
3-year graduation-2014 transfers	81%	81%

## California State University San Marcos

CSU San Marcos submitted data that reflect retention and graduation rates among their first-time freshmen and transfer students, respectively. The data includes first year retention for both sets of students as well as graduation rates of five years for freshmen and three years for transfers. These outcomes compared the data for all CSUSM students in each category with data for Chicano/Latino students. This CSUSM data is seen in Table 2.

Table 2: CSUSM Outcomes

	All Campus	Chicano/Latino Students
2020 1 <sup>st</sup> year retention-1 <sup>st</sup> time freshmen	79%	78%
1 <sup>st</sup> year retention-2020 transfers	85%	84%
5-year graduation-2016 1 <sup>st</sup> time freshmen	49%	48%
3-year graduation-2018 transfers	72%	70%

## University of California San Diego

UC San Diego provided no information on institutional responsibility for Chicano/Latino student success. Our requests for data and information were not answered other than a referral to the university dashboard, which does not provide the responses we requested and were promised by UCSD.

## San Diego's Community College Districts

The five community college districts in San Diego, San Diego Community College District, Southwestern College District, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, Mira Costa College District, and Palomar College District, submitted data on five student outcomes. These outcomes included the percent of academic courses in which students enrolled and completed, first year retention, grade point average (GPA), the number of students that earned an Associates Degree, and the number of students that completed the requirements for transfer to a four-year university. Our SD Concilio reports comparisons with the most privileged students, whites, along with Chicano/Latino students from these community college districts. The data reflecting these local community college student outcomes is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: SD Community College Outcomes by District

	SDCCD	Southwestern	GCCCD	Mira Costa	Palomar
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	White; C/L	White; C/L	White; C/L	White; C/L	White; C/L
Course completion	79% 68%	78% 69%	79% 67%	77% 68%	75% 66%
1 <sup>st</sup> year retention	63% 60%	66% 71%	75% 67%	70% 67%	69% 67%
GPA	3.32 3.20	3.31 3.08	3.31 3.13	3.39 3.23	3.30 3.17
Associates Degrees awarded	972 1,296	204 1,405	1,690 1,241	902 816	777 1,036
Transfers to university	746 859	60 706	686 466	607 562	640 669

## CONCLUSIONS: CHICANO/LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

Some of the important trends in outcomes that contribute to Chicano/Latino student success include:

- There is a significant difference among local, public higher education institutions in the support they provide to Chicano/Latino students. Unfortunately, the pattern tends toward offering disconnected services with no evidence that they receive adequate funding. This is problematic, as higher education history is replete with examples of effective programs and services for Chicano/Latino students that suffer from budget reductions and inadequate institutional support (Ibarra, 2001; Smith, 2015). Likewise, these institutions offered little evidence that their programs and services undergo a comprehensive assessment of effectiveness.
- There was little evidence of services for Chicano/Latino students provided by academic departments to supplement classroom instruction. Nor was there evidence of the assessment of learning among Chicano/Latino students in academic courses. Academic departments should not receive a free pass without documentation of their effectiveness in facilitating learning among our students.
- None of the local, public colleges and universities provided any evidence that they are intentional in facilitating “liberatory outcomes,” e.g., ethnic identity development, commitment to social justice, community service, among Chicano/Latino students (Garcia, 2020; Hurtado and Alvarez, 2015). Such outcomes are a critical complement to traditional “academic” outcomes such as retention and graduation, especially for students from a subordinate community such as Chicanos/Latinos.
- Although small, there are some gaps between the retention and graduation rates, respectively, of Chicano/Latino students and the overall student

body at both SDSU and CSUSM. However, it appears that Chicano/Latino students are performing well at both these CSU campuses.

- There was a small difference in first-year retention between Chicano/ Latino and white students in four of five community college districts in 2019-20. In four districts, the retention rate was higher for whites than for Chicanos/Latinos.
- At all five community college districts, there appeared to be a considerable, disturbing gap in course completion rates between Chicano/Latino students and white students. Across the community colleges, the mean course completion rate for Chicanos/Latinos was 68 percent compared to a mean of 78 percent for whites.
- At three of the five community college districts, Chicanos/Latinos earned a higher number of Associate Degrees than whites. At the same three districts, Chicano/Latino students outnumbered white students in the number that transferred to four-year universities. This data indicates that many Chicano/Latino students in local community colleges are earning an important credential or advancing toward a four-year degree.
- The GPA data provided by community college districts showed a trend of white students with higher GPA's than those of Chicano/Latino students. Some of the differences appear significant.

As noted above, the administrative coordination of programs and services to maximize Chicano/Latino student success is indicative of an institutional priority on such success. Among the three universities and eight community colleges, only SDSU seemed to identify a high-level administrative cluster that was responsible for Chicano/Latino student success. However, SDSU did not indicate how administrative entities in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs & Campus Diversity, respectively, interact to ensure a coordinated focus on Chicano/Latino success. CSUSM appeared not to have a focused structure of responsibility for Chicano/Latino student success other than the coordination of its federal Title V grants. The disturbing trend among the eight community colleges was a vague reference to “the entire campus” or “the institution as a whole” having responsibility for the success of Chicano/Latino students. Unfortunately, if everyone is responsible, ultimately no one is truly responsible, and the diffusion of responsibility is dysfunctional.

Only UC San Diego failed to identify any programs and services to facilitate success among Chicano/Latino students. However, only some of these programs appear to focus on Chicano/Latino students while others have a broader focus. During our more than thirty years of advocacy, the SD Concilio has learned that an institution's laundry list of programs and services does not necessarily indicate an effective contribution to Chicano/Latino student success. Often, such programs and services are underfunded, or poorly administered, or meet the needs of only a small number of students.

If access, as indicated by enrollment data, represents the first general priority of the SD Concilio, student success is our second major priority. It appears that the public colleges and universities in San Diego are implementing institutional strategies to contribute to Chicano/Latino student success although much more detail on their funding and coordination is needed. The overall trends in outcomes such as first-year retention, graduation, course completion, and transfer to four-year institutions, are generally positive. However, some troubling gaps in outcomes exist, and most of these institutions do not indicate a clear line of responsibility for Chicano/Latino student success or a comprehensive assessment of effectiveness of their strategies to facilitate such success. Likewise, they do not provide a plan or focused strategy to close such achievement gaps. We are also disheartened to see that apparently, none of the local, public colleges and universities are intentional in facilitating “liberatory outcomes,” a critical component of success for contemporary Chicano/Latino students.

## REFERENCES

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