

VIA EMAIL

September 25, 2023

TO: San Diego Community College District Board of Trustees

FROM: San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education

In June 2023, our SD Concilio notified the SDCCD Trustees of our plan to meet with the leadership of City College, Mesa College, and Miramar College, respectively. Our intent was to learn about these institutions' progress in achieving "servingsness" for Chicano/Latino students since the compilation of our SD Concilio Report in early 2023. The institutional conditions in local community colleges are extremely important to our SD Concilio, as the majority of California's Chicano/Latino students in higher education are enrolled in community colleges.

Since June, we have held meetings with President Shabazz, President Hands, and President Lundberg, along with members of their administrative leadership. In addition, we met with SDCCD Interim Chancellor Greg Smith, to discuss efforts at the district level. We appreciate the cooperation of these institutional leaders and their willingness to engage with us in an authentic dialogue.

We learned a great deal from our meetings about the challenges facing local community colleges in providing effective support for Chicano/Latino students, as well as their efforts to do so. Our meetings focused on three of our SD Concilio's priorities: the hiring and retention of Chicano/Latino faculty, support for Chicana & Chicano Studies, and the status of the Puente Program.

Unfortunately, we have seen little evidence of significant progress in hiring Chicano/Latino faculty across the district's three credit-bearing campuses. In fact, we still struggle to obtain updated data on the representation of Chicano/Latino faculty for each of the three campuses. Using a benchmark that compares Chicano/Latino faculty levels with the enrollment of Chicano/Latino students, as did the California State Auditor's 2023 report, we find that an unacceptable gap remains. It seems clear that the district needs a strong, effective strategy to provide its academic senates an incentive to diversify the faculty within the SDCCD.

It also seems that institutional support for Chicana & Chicano Studies remains uneven across the district. While City College and Mesa College have added full-time positions, there is little presence of Chicana & Chicano Studies, or Ethnic Studies, at Miramar College. Considering the State Auditor's call for more full-time faculty at California Community Colleges, we question whether SDCCD campuses have sufficient full-time faculty to meet student demand for courses in Chicana & Chicano Studies.

We also heard from at least one SDCCD campus about the problem of CSU approval of local community college courses in Chicana & Chicano Studies for transfer. It appears clear that the

SDCCD need a strong advocacy strategy to obtain CSU approval for such courses for students to have an incentive to enroll in Chicana & Chicano Studies courses.

Our SD Concilio perceives the Puente Program as an unequivocally effective model to maximize the success of Chicano/Latino students. Our students deserve access to such a program, but its availability is uneven across the district. While we find some local community colleges with two Puente cohorts, City College and Mesa College have only one cohort while Miramar has none.

Although there are various strategies to staff the Puente Program, two variables are clearly necessary to expand the program: institutional support and funding. We strongly encourage the district to develop and implement a strategy to ensure at least two Puente cohorts at each credit-bearing campus. This week, we read in the local newspaper that the SDCCD approved a budget of over \$1 billion, with an additional \$25 million in state general funding. We were also informed that the district's budget for law enforcement in 2022 was over \$7 million. In this context, we believe it should be feasible to allocate sufficient funds for a two-cohort model of Puente at each campus.

The notes from our meetings with SDCCD leadership are found on our SD Concilio website at <https://sdclhighered.org/advocacy>. They will also be presented at the next Latino Education Summit in 2024. We hope to continue our dialogues with the leadership of SDCCD campuses. Thank you for your collaboration.

Sinceramente,

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Co-Chair, SD Concilio

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