

The attached report, also pasted below, is the first 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. We will 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, June 2022

THE STATUS OF SAN DIEGO CHICANOS/LATINOS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: DECOLONIZING LOCAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Decolonization ultimately requires the overturning of the colonial structure. It is not about tweaking the existing structure to make it more Indigenous-friendly or a little less oppressive. The existing system is fundamentally and irreparably flawed . . . Decolonization . . . involves challenging colonizer systems and institutions that serve to maintain the colonial relationship so they are eventually eradicated completely (Waziyatawin, For Indigenous Minds Only: A Decolonization Handbook. Santa Fe, NM, 2012).

In order to effectively serve Latinxs . . . the organizational structures that have excluded and oppressed them must be completely disrupted and transformed . . . I absolutely want Latinx students to graduate and get jobs, but I also want them to graduate as socially conscious people who understand their historical, social, linguistic, and racial-ethnic backgrounds. I also want them to be committed to serving, empowering, and transforming their own Latinx communities upon graduation. Stop being race neutral and understand that becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution presents an opportunity to disrupt whiteness while being unapologetically committed to racially minoritized students (Gina A. Garcia, *Journal of the Alliance for Hispanic Serving Institution Educators* 2021, 1, 1-14).

INTRODUCTION

This research and policy report is the first of a series of such 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. A previous report or “Brown Paper” by the SD Concilio, issued in November 2021, provided a summary of the scholarly research and theory that informs our approach to such community advocacy. That report also provided an important historical context to explain the contemporary status of Chicanos/Latinos as a subordinate group in the racial hierarchy of the United States.

In the coming months, we will disseminate additional research and policy reports on the data and information we receive regarding local Chicano/Latino students. We emphasize that our main purpose in disseminating these reports is to inform our local Chicano/Latino community regarding the status of our students in San Diego institutions of higher education and to raise the community’s consciousness of necessary policy changes. We hope that our work contributes to the process of decolonizing our communities and their public institutions, which is critical for our self-determination as Chicanos/Latinos. Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird provide these helpful definitions for indigenous groups such as Chicanos/Latinos:

Colonization refers to both the formal and informal methods (behavioral, ideological, institutional, political, and economic) that maintain the subjugation and/or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands, and resources. Decolonization is the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands. Decolonization is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation (2012, p. 3).

This decolonization process is essential due to the decades of systemic and institutional racism to which Chicanos/Latinos have been subjected, and the continuing hindering conditions in our communities and public institutions that result from such racism.

THE METHODOLOGY OF OUR REPORTS

The focus of this and subsequent reports was developed collectively by the members of the San Diego Concilio. During the second half of 2020, we engaged in a dialogue that resulted in the formation of “Priorities & Strategies” of the SD Concilio for 2021-22. These priorities and strategies were meant to provide local colleges and institutions with research-based elements of access and success for Chicano/Latino students in higher education. Our expectation was that these local institutions would utilize those elements to maximize supportive conditions for our students. Therefore, we disseminated our priorities and strategies by email to the administrators of each local, public college and university. In our correspondence, we invited institutional administrators to meet with our SD Concilio via Zoom for a dialogue regarding our recommendations for transforming institutional structures, policies, and practices.

In addition, we attempted to disseminate our priorities and strategies to the members of the California Latino Legislative Caucus, those Chicano/Latino state assembly members and senators that purport to focus on the needs of California’s Chicano/Latino community. We did

so despite our SD Concilio's history of seeking, without success, the support of those caucus members in our advocacy for Chicanos/Latinos in higher education. Despite our organization's efforts to bring our concerns to the caucus, their caucus members representing San Diego have not supported our advocacy.

After disseminating our priorities and strategies to the staff of the Latino Caucus in March 2021, they responded that they would not forward them to the caucus members because our SD Concilio's priorities and strategies did not reflect the caucus' "projects." This is incomprehensible to us since our priorities and strategies included specific legislative objectives on behalf of our community. Despite their staff's rejection of our request for support, we emailed our priorities and strategies directly to some of the local caucus members such as Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez and Senator Ben Hueso as well as the caucus chair, Maria Elena Durazo, and the caucus member that serves as chair of the Assembly's Higher Education Committee, José Medina. In addition, we emailed our priorities and strategies to Assembly Member Akilah Weber, who was recently elected to the California Assembly and had indicated a special interest in equity policy. Unfortunately, *none* of these legislators responded to us. We disseminated our priorities and strategies to several local Chicano/Latino community organizations as well.

During the summer of 2021, our SD Concilio met by Zoom with Israel Contreras, staff of then Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez' office. Mr. Contreras outlined the process through which our SD Concilio could meet with Assembly Member Gonzalez and subsequently, with the members of the California Latino Legislative Caucus. We emphasized our need to enlist the caucus' support to hold local public institutions of higher education accountable to our Chicano/Latino community. After we gained an understanding from Mr. Contreras of the process necessary to meet with Assembly Member Gonzalez and then the caucus, we followed Mr. Contreras' direction to formally request such a meeting. Mr. Contreras never responded. Thus, our opportunity to meet with the caucus prior to their meeting to identify a legislative agenda for 2022 was denied. In early 2022, Assembly Member Gonzalez resigned from the assembly. As we complete this report, we await an election to fill her position with the hope that a new assembly representative will be responsive to the needs of our Chicano/Latino community.

Over the first three to four months of 2021, our SD Concilio held Zoom meetings with the leadership of most of the local public colleges and universities:

- Miramar College
- Mesa College
- City College
- Palomar College
- Mira Costa College
- San Diego State University
- California State University San Marcos
- SDICCA (San Diego Imperial Valley Community College Association)
- Southwestern College
- Cuyamaca College

- Grossmont College

These meetings were helpful in developing working relationships, clarifying our SD Concilio's objectives and recommendations, and obtaining initial information on each institution's progress in enrolling and serving Chicano/Latino students. Only UC San Diego expressed no interest in meeting with our SD Concilio. During this series of dialogues, our SD Concilio concluded that the level of support for Chicanos/Latinos in San Diego's higher education institutions was uneven at best. To illuminate this situation for our community, the SD Concilio decided to compile and disseminate a report on the status of higher education for our Chicano/Latino community in San Diego.

In June 2021, our SD Concilio sent correspondence to each institution's leadership to request data and information that would be utilized to compile these reports. All the institutions initially responded with an expression of willingness to provide the data and information we requested. The following are the general areas identified for which we requested specific data and information from local public institutions. They represent variables in the research of scholar Sylvia Hurtado that impact campus racial climate in postsecondary education:

1. **Institutional Leadership Composition/Institutional Mission (Organizational Diversity)**
2. **Campus Enrollment Data and Strategies (Compositional Diversity)**
3. **Chicano/Latino Student Success Outcomes and Strategies (Psychological & Behavioral Dimensions)**
4. **Chicano/Latino Faculty Representation (Compositional Diversity)**
5. **Institutional Support for Chicano/Latino Studies, Bilingual-Teacher Education (Historical Legacy)**
6. **Campus Law Enforcement Models and Expenditures (Historical & Behavioral Dimensions)**

For each of these six general areas, we requested more specific data and information. As we received this data and information from local institutions, our SD Concilio began to compile and analyze the responses. The subsequent research and policy reports that we disseminate provide highlights from the responses to portray the status of Chicanos/Latinos in the public colleges and universities in San Diego.

It is important that we emphasize our reports' objective to provide accurate information on educational outcomes and institutional strategies for local Chicano/Latino students. To achieve this objective, we sought consistency in the way we obtained and reported information on these institutions. Our hope was that each institution would fulfill its commitment to

provide the information we requested. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. As we will detail in subsequent reports, the response of our local colleges and universities has been very uneven, which no doubt indicates a gross inconsistency in the degree to which San Diego's higher education institutions prioritize accountability to our Chicano/Latino community.

Due to the uneven response from these institutions, our SD Concilio was forced to search out information from the web sites of local colleges and universities. Since each institution makes its own decision as to the student, faculty, and other data to display publicly, the information we report is bound to be incomplete. **We emphasize that each local, public college and university had an opportunity to avoid this shortcoming.** Unfortunately, some chose not to respond to our inquiries despite the public information nature of our request. Thus, we shall report data and information that we received along with what we retrieved on our own.