

Dear Ismael,

As a co-chair of the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education, I am responding to your correspondence to Norma Cazares, one of our Concilio members. I am also attaching the SD Concilio's priorities and strategies that we distributed to each higher education institution in San Diego in March 2021. Our intention was to provide direction to those institutions regarding the institutional commitment and strategies necessary to equitably serve our Chicano/Latino students.

During the past four months, our Concilio has held Zoom meetings with the leadership of each public college and university in San Diego with the exception of UC San Diego, which persists in remaining isolated from much of our local Chicano/Latino community. They indicated no interest in meeting with our Concilio.

I also emailed our priorities and strategies, that include recommendations for state legislation that would contribute to the success of local Chicano/Latino students, to the leadership of the California Latino Legislative Caucus along with the cover letter I'm attaching. I included direct emails to Assembly Member Gonzalez and Senator Ben Hueso since they represent our San Diego community. I also emailed our priorities and strategies to Armando Chavez, who informed me that he would not disseminate them to the Caucus members because they do not directly reflect the Caucus' "projects." I expressed to him my disappointment with the lack of access to the Caucus for groups such as our Concilio, which is the only organization in San Diego that advocates broadly for Chicano/Latino students in higher education. Finally, I sent our priorities and strategies to Assembly Member Gonzalez and Senator Hueso, along with Maria Elena Durazo, via U.S. mail. I received absolutely no response to any of this correspondence, not even an acknowledgement of receipt.

Our Concilio would welcome a meeting with you to discuss how Assembly Member Gonzalez' office, and the Latino Caucus at a broader level, can support our advocacy efforts. Thus far, our meetings with local higher education institutions have been productive. Most institutions have indicated an interest in working with our Concilio to improve their institutional conditions, although there is great variance in the actual degree to which their leadership, enrollment, student services, faculty diversity, support for diverse curriculum, and law enforcement reform currently serves Chicano/Latino students on an equitable level. The most intransigent institution is UC San Diego, which struggles to achieve a Chicano/Latino student enrollment that is even half of our community's representation in California. In addition, their hiring of Chicano faculty is abysmal and they completely lack Chicano/Latino leadership at the highest level.

Please let me know when you are available to meet with our San Diego Concilio by Zoom between August 12 and August 20.

Thank you,

Patrick Velasquez, Ph.D.

Co-Chair, San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio