

San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education
San Diego, CA

VIA EMAIL

November 16, 2023

TO: Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey
President, Palomar College

We thank you for meeting with our San Diego Concilio on November 8, 2023. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss the progress at Palomar College in areas on which our organization is focused, particularly the hiring and retention of Chicano/Latino faculty, the status of Chicana & Chicano Studies, and the Puente Program.

The following are highlights from our dialogue:

- Palomar College has an extensive service area with urban and rural dimensions.
- Palomar has a clear agenda for DEI. The board of trustees has done good work in this area.
- Palomar has stabilized its fiscal condition. Its fiscal monitor has been removed and the college no longer has “at risk” status.
- In terms of faculty diversity, the college is tracking the pipeline, being more intentional.
- The Palomar College President makes final hiring decisions for faculty. There is a strategy to hire cohorts so that diverse faculty do not feel isolated. The tenure process is also examined.
- The college is not yet where it would like to be in faculty diversity. Like most community colleges, faculty diversity has not reached parity with student diversity.
- Palomar College is almost 50 percent Chicano/Latino students while 15 percent of full-time faculty are Chicano/Latino.
- There has been recent improvement in faculty hiring. In the latest hiring cycle, six of 29 new hires, or 29 percent, were Chicano/Latino. The college is also integrating hiring policies with part-time faculty, of which 17 percent are Chicano/Latino.
- Palomar College will update its EEO plan in early 2024.
- In order to improve faculty diversity, some departments can adjust expectations, e.g., not require doctoral degrees. A broader hiring committee structure can also be utilized. It is important to ensure a diverse pool of candidates, particularly in disciplines that are not historically diverse.
- The cultural competence of applicants can be valued more in the evaluation process.
- Hiring committees have access to data on their departmental diversity for consideration.
- Palomar College is hiring a Puente counselor. Their Puente Program will have a 23-student cohort.

- Star Rivera-Lacey or Michelle Barton will send our SD Concilio a copy of PB 7120A, their college's EEO plan, and an update on both the Puente Program and the status of Chicana & Chicano Studies at the college.

Please let me know if we missed anything or described any areas inaccurately.

We thank you again for the dialogue and we look forward to future conversations about our mutual priorities.

Sinceramente,

Patrick Velasquez
Co-Chair, SD Concilio