

San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education

Notes: Meeting with San Diego State University Administrators, Interim Provost William Tong, Vice President of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity Chris Manning, President's Deputy Chief of Staff Ana Molina-Rodriguez.

SD Concilio members: Alberto Ochoa, Isidro Ortiz, Patrick Velasquez

July 11, 2024, SDSU

Agenda:

Diverse Faculty

- Alberto Ochoa emphasized that although the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty at SDSU that are Chicano/Latino has increased, it remains far below the percentage of undergraduate student enrollment that is Chicano/Latino, creating a serious equity issue. In that context, it is important that Chicano faculty that recently left the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies (CCS) be replaced.
- Provost Tong stated that the process to replace faculty starts with requests by academic department deans that reflect their priorities. These requests are considered by the provost. Enrollment in an academic department that requests a faculty replacement is considered. Not all requests are funded. Other variables besides enrollment are considered and the university tries to grow new academic programs. The dean of Arts and Letters has requested and the Provost approved a CCS replacement TT line this year.
- The provost stated that some of the recent SDSU "cluster hires" were driven by an NIH grant to hire faculty in health-related fields. Eleven new faculty were hired, including nine junior faculty and two associate professors. Four new faculty were hired for the Imperial Valley campus through this NIH cluster hire. Seven Chicano/Latino faculty were part of the cluster hire.
- There was also a cluster hire in ethnic studies departments as a priority of the university's strategic plan.
- Some SDSU policies have contributed to the increase in diverse faculty hiring. One is the "Building on Inclusive Excellence" initiative that features work with university search committees.
- Also, the "approval to negotiate" stage of the hiring process utilizes a table of national data on faculty availability to ensure a diverse hiring pool. The provost reviews such data before approval to negotiate.
- In the faculty hiring process, the search committee chairs receive DEI training.
- The provost believes that these practices have contributed to hiring more diverse, new faculty and the building of a strong faculty pipeline.

Diverse Curriculum

- Patrick Velasquez related that some members of the SD Concilio heard reports that SDSU administrators discussed eliminating one of the two course requirements in ethnic studies on the campus.
- The provost denied such reports, stating that the university wants more ethnic studies courses and programs, and that building such programs takes time.
- The provost reported that California AB 928, calling for a “unified general education pathway,” would impact some departments. The Associate VP for Assessment, Accreditation, and Curriculum has visited some academic departments to review their GE requirements and find solutions.
- Isidro Ortiz noted that SDSU has already approved two faculty lines, one to replace a professor in CCS and another joint appointment between CCS and the English Department.

HSI Affairs

- Isidro Ortiz asked about the current and future status of SDSU’s Office of HSI Affairs. Patrick Velasquez added a question about the status of the HSI Affairs’ Advisory Committee, noting that the committee has not received a definitive institutional response to its recommendations.
- Chris Manning responded that he has discussed the work of the office with its director, Emilio Ulloa. Apparently, Emilio would like to concentrate on increasing campus-wide knowledge of SDSU’s HSI status and to ensure that SDSU is an authentic “Hispanic serving” institution. There was no mention of ongoing funding for the Office of HSI Affairs.
- VP Manning also stated that the HSI Advisory Committee’s future status would be decided by SDSU President Adela de la Torre, and that the recommendations of such advisory committees are often difficult to implement.

Student Outcomes—Academic and Liberatory

- Patrick Velasquez summarized the SD Concilio’s perception that SDSU has developed strategies to assess academic outcomes, e.g., retention and graduation, as well as “liberatory” outcomes, e.g., commitment to anti-racism and social justice, in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and Campus Diversity. However, much more detail is needed by the community.
- VP Manning responded that there is a division-wide assessment initiative in Student Affairs and Campus Diversity, and that by January 2025, every divisional office will conduct assessment. The Office of HSI Affairs will collaborate with more units, driven by data analysis. VP Manning noted that SDSU is a “high achieving” campus, making equity gaps more difficult to address (there was no explanation of this

concept). He also stated that SDSU is working hard on co-curricular programs at the Imperial Valley campus.

- Provost Tong stated that the Associate VP for Assessment, Accreditation, and Curriculum is working with academic colleges and departments on their assessment. The process was delayed by the Covid pandemic. Departments are also catching up on self-studies.
- In addition, SDSU is preparing for its accreditation review by WASC in 2025.

Student Learning

- SD Concilio members voiced their concerns about SDSU's transition from a "teaching institution" to a Research I Institution in 2025, and the implications of an institutional priority shift from teaching and learning to research as a commodity. They noted their decades-long observations of UC San Diego, a Research I Institution that features toxic racism, undervalues research that does not generate institutional funding, and ignores the learning experience of most undergraduates.
- Deputy Chief of Staff Molina-Rodriguez emphasized that SDSU is only authorized to offer independent doctoral degrees in applied and professional fields per the process established by AB 656. Thus, they will maintain their teaching mission.
- Provost Tong added that SDSU will continue its focus on undergraduate programs and that the transition will not be abrupt.
- Isidro Ortiz discussed the issue of enrollment of Chicano/Latino students at SDSU and the problem of "yield," i.e., such students applying for admission to SDSU, being admitted, but choosing not to enroll.
- Provost Tong responded that their enrollment services staff are examining that issue, and that a preliminary finding is that SDSU loses some Chicano/Latino students to other institutions that offer more scholarship funding. SDSU is looking at the possibility of an initiative to raise more scholarships.
- Provost Tong also mentioned that SDSU efforts to examine and increase the retention of men of color at SDSU.
- Patrick Velasquez thanked the administration for meeting and suggested that a follow-up meeting occur in late fall semester. The SDSU administration agreed.

In addition to the above discussion, the SD Concilio presented the following SDSU data:

- Chicanos/Latinos are 34% of SDSU undergraduates and 32.5% of graduate students.
- The 1-year retention of Chicano/Latino students is 90% compared to 90% for white students (fall 2022).
- The 4-year graduation rate of Chicano/Latino students is 49.5% compared to 64% for white students (fall 2019 cohort).
- The 6-year graduation rate of Chicano/Latino students is 75.6% compared to 79.2% for white students (fall 2017 cohort).

(Data provided by the SDSU Office of HSI Affairs)