

# The San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education

## A Local Focus on the Campaign for College Opportunity's Report-- "Still Left Out: How Exclusion in California's Colleges & Universities Continues to Hurt Our Values, Students, and Democracy"

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### INTRODUCTION

This report by the San Diego Chicano/Latino Concilio on Higher Education, hereafter referred to as the SD Concilio, provides a focus on the representation of Chicanos/Latinos among the faculty and leadership of San Diego's public institutions of higher education. Our report highlights data and information contained in the January 2024 report by the Campaign for College Opportunity (CCO), "Still Left Out: How Exclusion in California's Colleges & Universities Continues to Hurt Our Values, Students, and Democracy." We strongly encourage all interested parties to read the entire CCO report and to reflect on its data, context, and analysis.

According to the CCO website (<https://collegecampaign.org/#>), the organization's mission is: "We work to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college to build a vibrant workforce, economy, and democracy." The CCO has its main office in Los Angeles and additional offices in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. They describe the 2024 "Still Left Out" report as a follow-up to their 2018 publication. According to the CCO:

These reports include a systemwide analysis of leadership at the UC, CSU, and community colleges, plus a detailed campus-by-campus analysis of senior leaders, faculty, and academic senate bodies. We have also included a breakdown of the racial/ethnic and gender diversity of higher education governing bodies—including the UC Board of Regents, CSU Board of Trustees, California Community Colleges Board of Governors, and the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) (CCO website).

The CCO's 2024 report provides a profile of ethnic representation of each public college and university in California, including the one University of California campus (UC San Diego), two California State University campuses (San Diego State University and California State University San Marcos), and eight community colleges in San Diego County. It also includes a profound explanation of the reasons why the ethnic diversity of California's higher education institutions is so important to the overall economic and social welfare of our entire state.

The 2024 CCO report includes a preface by the higher education scholar Estela Mara Bensimon (Bensimon & Associates, 2022). According to Bensimon:

As this report highlights, the representation of racially and ethnically minoritized faculty is embarrassingly low, particularly in comparison to the racial composition of the student body. The numbers show that progress in this regard has been worse than slow—the needle has hardly moved. . . the structure of the hiring process, aside from some minor tinkering, has stayed

the same—expectations, credentials, and definitions of merit and fitness have been unchanged. The culture of academic environments, even in minority-serving institutions, did not change; racially minoritized faculty were expected to assimilate into this culture in order to have any chance of staying employed (CCO, 2024, p. 4).

Bensimon refers readers to a companion brief written by African American scholars Frank Harris and Luke Wood (2023). These higher education scholars provide direction as to the specific strategies necessary to increase diversity among college faculty and leadership. Bensimon concludes, “The biggest obstacles to dismantling outdated hiring practices are lack of will and/or fear of consequences . . . ” (p. 5).

## THE CONTEXT

The CCO report emphasizes the growing diversity in California, with Blacks, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Chicanos/Latinos making up 61 percent of the state’s population, with projections for continued growth by communities of color. Obviously, the state’s economic prosperity and social fabric depends on the educational success of those communities. The report also notes that the history of higher education in California is marked by exclusion, marginalization, and racism.

Such lack of equitable opportunity for communities of color is not merely historical. For Black and Chicano/Latino communities, respectively, their present levels of educational attainment, employment, earnings, accumulation of wealth and homeownership, and health outcomes are lower than those of whites in California (CCO, 2024). The CCO report states:

While California has made substantial progress towards an equitable and inclusive higher education system, stark gaps persist in the rates at which Black, Latinx, underrepresented Asian American and NHPI, and AIAN students are supported to enroll in college and complete their degrees; system-level leadership bodies still do not reflect the diversity of their student bodies, and these bodies in turn fail to reflect the diversity of the state’s young population; institutional and system leadership remain dominated by white men; and the processes to select college and university leaders continue to privilege and prioritize whiteness as a core hiring trait (p.8) . . . . We are disappointed to report that while some progress has been made, California continues to exclude Latinx, Black, Asian American and NHPI, and AIAN residents from its higher education leadership, hurting our people, our values, and our promise (p.9) . . . The UC, the CSU, and the California Community Colleges must lead the way by both educating and employing Californians from all racial and ethnic backgrounds (p. 10).

## Race, Equity, and Their Implications

The 2024 report by the CCO is meticulous in its documentation of the importance of providing data on racial representation among California’s higher education institutions. In referencing the relevance of racial data, the report notes that such racial equity gaps are often perceived as simply “contours of the landscape, rather than consequences of centuries of exclusion and disinvestment” (p. 44). It goes on to say that without a focus on deconstructing racism and its effects on communities of color, our society will continue to maintain public institutions that do not reflect or serve such communities.

The report clarifies a critical point made by other contemporary scholars (Gonzalez Stokas, 2023), that merely achieving institutional diversity does not ensure equity and inclusion in the racial composition of faculty and leadership in our public colleges and universities. According to their analysis:

Diversity efforts acknowledge the value of difference and focus on access. Equity moves beyond access and emphasizes parity in student outcomes, with a focus on outcomes for minoritized students. Inclusion “puts the concept and practice of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, and connection — where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed.” Diversity is a precursor to equity and inclusion, and adequate representation is a necessary step in creating more equitable and inclusive campuses (p. 47).

Student development among college and university students is another focus of the CCO report’s analysis. It emphasizes the higher education scholarly literature’s documentation of the educational benefits enjoyed by students from “minoritized backgrounds” such as Chicanos/Latinos when their instructors reflect their racial/ethnic background (p. 50). Instructors of the same racial/ethnic background also contribute to the persistence of Black and Chicano/Latino students, respectively, in STEM courses and programs. Faculty and leadership of color are more likely to possess the cultural competence that enables them to facilitate inclusion and success among students of color, and to serve as positive examples of the contribution of diversity to excellence among all students.

### **PRESENT CONDITIONS**

Before offering data on the racial representation of each public, credit-bearing college and university in California, the 2024 CCO report provides aggregate data on the state’s three segments of public higher education. It notes that overall, the state’s student population reflects California. However, Black and Chicano/Latino students, respectively, are disproportionately enrolled in California’s community colleges (p. 13). California now has 147 public colleges and universities. Of those, 132 are designated as a “Hispanic Serving Institution (HIS),” with a student enrollment that is at least 25 percent Chicano/Latino, and the other fifteen are considered an “emerging HIS,” with at least 15 percent of the student body Chicano/Latino.

According to the CCO report, Chicano/Latino representation across the University of California, including its governing board, campus leadership, and faculty, does not adequately reflect the state's Chicano/Latino community:

. . . the Latinx undergraduate population at the UC still does not match the share of the California 18 to 24-year-old population that is Latinx, or the share of the California Latinx population overall (p. 16) . . . Of 18 to 24-year-olds in California, 49% are Latinx, but only 25% of undergraduates are Latinx. In examining the systems' leadership, only four of the 18 gubernatorial appointments to the UC Regents (22%) are Latinx and only one of 14 (7%) executive leaders in the UC Office of the President is Latinx, though the system leadership contained no Latinx members in 2018. **In 2018, 11% of campus senior leadership positions were filled by Latinx individuals. That number has decreased to seven percent of campus-level senior leadership in the 2021-2022 academic year.** Only eight percent of tenured/tenure-track faculty, and seven percent of non-tenured faculty are Latinx. Recently hired faculty at the UC are less white than the general faculty population, but Latinx professors account for fewer than one in 10 recent tenure-track hires at the UC (8%). A large share of these hires consists of international faculty (p. 17).

The report's data shows that student enrollment across the CSU's more accurately reflects California's younger population than does the UC. However, the CSU's system-wide leadership and campus-level leadership do not reflect the state. The data on CSU's shows:

Nearly half (47%) of CSU students are Latinx, and Latinx Californians are well represented at the Chancellor's Office level, and close to one third (31%) of appointed trustees are Latinx . . . However, at individual CSU campuses, Latinx students have few opportunities to see themselves among campus-level leadership. Only five of 23 campus presidents and 16% of total campus-level senior leaders (34 of 210) are Latinx. In the classroom, the Latinx share of CSU tenured/tenure-track faculty remains at 10%, as it was five years ago, and the share of non-tenured faculty who are Latinx has only grown from 10% to 12%. Latinx professors account for only 11% of recently hired tenure-track faculty—making any meaningful progress towards diversifying the faculty impossible (p. 24-25).

The report's data on California Community Colleges shows that their students represent the diversity of California. Chicano/Latino students make up almost half of community college students, or 47 percent. However:

. . . they have few opportunities to see themselves in their campus- and system-level leadership. Only three (25%) of the 12-member Board of Governors are Latinx. Latinx individuals comprise 29% of senior leaders in the

Chancellor’s Office, which is more than double the Latinx representation (14%) we observed in 2017. A quarter (25%) of district-level trustees are Latinx, up from 19% in 2017 . . . Among faculty at the community colleges, 18% of tenured/tenure-track faculty and 23% of non-tenure-track faculty are Latinx. These are up from 15% and 13% respectively in the past five years, but still a significantly small number of Latinx faculty in a state where Latinx Californians are the largest ethnic group and for a system where almost half of all students (47%) are Latinx. Only 14% of members of the Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges executive committee and 17% of the members of the various campus senates are Latinx . . . One in five recently hired faculty is Latinx (20%). While this means that Latinx professors make up a greater share of new hires at the California Community Colleges than they do at the UC or the CSU, that number is still half the share of California’s population that is Latinx, and will do little to alter the racial/ethnic balance of the faculty at the California Community Colleges (p. 31).

The CCO report’s overview of the three levels of public higher education in California concludes:

Educational attainment in California varies widely by race/ethnicity. Latinx Californians—the state’s largest demographic group—have the lowest level of degree attainment in the state. Low rates of educational attainment among the state’s Latinx population should be alarming to the state’s policymakers and all residents of California, given the fact that Latinx Californians are the state’s largest racial/ethnic group, and their share of California’s population is projected to continue growing (p. 58).

#### **PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION REPRESENTATION: CHICANOS/LATINOS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY**

In 2021, the San Diego Concilio issued a “Brown Paper” that summarizes the scholarly literature informing our organization’s analysis of public higher education in San Diego (SD Concilio, 2021). Subsequently, in 2023, we issued a comprehensive report with data and information on each of the eleven local, public colleges and universities (SD Concilio, 2023). The report provided a perspective of the degree to which each of those institutions provided access, supportive conditions, and relevant learning experiences for Chicano/Latino students. The data on each of those San Diego colleges and universities contained in the 2024 Campaign for College Opportunity report offers an update, along with additional data, on the contents of the 2023 SD Concilio report. We offer the CCO’s data to provide a focus on the representation of Chicanos/Latinos at various levels of our local higher education institutions. We focus on the representation of Chicanos/Latinos as well as a comparison with whites, who are the dominant, most privileged racial/ethnic group in California and the group that has perpetuated racist policies and practices to maintain their privileged position.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

**UC San Diego:** Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (11)	0%	73%
Academic Senate	4%	78%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	7%	63%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	7%	60%
New Faculty Hires	7%	44%
Undergraduate Students	19%	24%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

The UCSD data shows a drastic underrepresentation of Chicanos/Latinos and an equally drastic overrepresentation of whites in senior leadership, academic senate membership, and tenured/tenure track faculty. The complete absence of Chicanos/Latinos in senior leadership is especially striking. These positions control virtually all decision-making at UCSD, assuring that the needs of Chicanos/Latinos are ignored and that our students are marginalized and excluded from institutional priorities. UCSD remains the only public higher education institution in San Diego that has not achieved HSI status, with a Chicano/Latino student enrollment of only 19 percent.

## THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

**San Diego State University:** Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (7)	29%	43%
Academic Senate	10%	67%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	11%	55%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	15%	68%
New Faculty Hires	11%	39%
Undergraduate Students	35%	35%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

Despite a high representation of Chicano/Latino students at SDSU with 35 percent and a comparable representation of 35 percent white students, one finds troubling gaps. SDSU has a significant gap between Chicano/Latino and white representation in senior leadership. Even greater gaps are shown in academic senate membership and tenured/tenure track faculty, respectively. Given the extremely powerful impact of senior administrators and faculty senates, these discrepancies raise questions regarding the degree to which Chicano/Latino voices are present in the decision-making processes that impact student success. The gap between new Chicano/Latino faculty hires and new white faculty indicates that progress in solving this problem is minimal.

**Cal State University San Marcos: Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites**

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (9)	33%	44%
Academic Senate	15%	52%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	16%	51%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	11%	71%
New Faculty Hires	12%	40%
Undergraduate Students	52%	25%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

With 52 percent of Chicano/Latino students at SDSU and lower representation of white students, one also finds troubling gaps. As with the senior leadership representation found at SDSU, CSUSM also has a significant gap between Chicano/Latino and white representation in senior leadership. Even greater gaps are shown in academic senate membership and tenured/tenure track faculty and non-tenure track faculty. Once again, given the extremely powerful impact of senior administrators and faculty senates, these discrepancies at CSUSM raise questions regarding the degree to which Chicano/Latino voices are present in the decision-making processes that impact student success. The data on new faculty shows a continued difference between Chicano/Latino faculty and white faculty, an indication that progress in this area is not occurring.

**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

The data found in the Campaign for College Opportunity (2024 report) for San Diego County community colleges indicates that in the senior leadership category only two (2) of the eight community colleges San Diego exceed their Chicano/Latino undergraduate representation (Cuyamaca CC with 75 percent and San Diego City CC with 50 percent).

In the academic senate that sets policy, Chicano/Latino representation averages 13 percent for all eight community college and ranges from 0 percent (SWCC) to 32 percent (SDCC). Yet the average Chicano/Latino enrollment for all eight community colleges is 43 percent.

In the tenured/tenure track faculty or the most permanent faculty, one finds that the average percentage of Chicano/Latino faculty is 16 percent. The following tables illustrate the representation for each of the eight San Diego County community college.

**Cuyamaca College:** Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (4)	75%	0%
Academic Senate	10%	70%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	14%	69%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	25%	60%
New Faculty Hires	17%	50%
Undergraduate Students	34%	44%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

**Grossmont College:** Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (4)	0%	25%
Academic Senate	9%	61%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	14%	65%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	18%	55%
New Faculty Hires	26%	58%
Undergraduate Students	37%	38%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

**Mira Costa College:** Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (5)	0%	60%
Academic Senate	17%	61%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	19%	57%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	33%	67%
New Faculty Hires	27%	44%
Undergraduate Students	43%	36%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

**Palomar College:** Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (5)	20%	40%
Academic Senate	9%	82%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	14%	68%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	0%	67%
New Faculty Hires	10%	61%
Undergraduate Students	47%	34%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024



**San Diego City College: Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites**

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (4)	50%	0%
Academic Senate	32%	46%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	18%	48%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	0%	0%
New Faculty Hires	11%	33%
Undergraduate Students	43%	27%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

**San Diego Mesa College: Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites**

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (4)	0%	50%
Academic Senate	12%	63%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	14%	53%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	20%	80%
New Faculty Hires	8%	50%
Undergraduate Students	39%	30%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

**San Diego Miramar College: Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites**

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (4)	25%	50%
Academic Senate	16%	56%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	13%	54%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	0%	0%
New Faculty Hires	10%	10%
Undergraduate Students	33%	34%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

**Southwestern College: Comparison of Representation-- Chicanos/Latinos, Whites**

	Chicanos/Latinos	Whites
Senior Leadership (5)	20%	40%
Academic Senate	0%	83%
Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	23%	53%
Non-Tenure Track Faculty	0%	100%
New Faculty Hires	26%	38%
Undergraduate Students	68%	9%

Source, Campaign for College Opportunity, January 2024

Overall, the local community colleges have a Chicano/Latino enrollment that is at or above parity with the San Diego County Chicano/Latino population, ranging from 33 percent to 68 percent compared to the county-wide representation of 34 percent. Some of the community

colleges have a considerably higher level of such enrollment. However, none of the local community colleges have a faculty representation of Chicanos/Latinos that matches their student enrollment.

The size of senior leadership at community colleges is generally smaller, in some cases much smaller, than that of UC or CSU institutions. For these eight community colleges, the number of senior leaders is only four or five individuals. Thus, ethnic representation at this level can be misleading. Chicano/Latino representation among senior leaders ranges from 0 percent to 75 percent.

The Chicano/Latino representation among local community college faculty is very troubling. Among academic senate members, Chicanos/Latinos range from 0 percent to 32 percent while whites range from 46 percent to 83 percent. The difference in representation between Chicano/Latino senate members and white senate members ranges from 14 percent to 83 percent among the community colleges. The average (mean) difference in senate representation between Chicanos/Latinos and whites is 52 percent, a sizable difference.

There are also serious differences in Chicano/Latino representation and that of whites among tenured and tenure-track faculty. The percentage of Chicano/Latino tenure/tenure-track faculty among the eight community colleges ranges from 13 percent to 23 percent compared with 48 percent to 69 percent for white faculty. The mean difference in representation among the two racial/ethnic groups in such faculty is 42 percent.

The local community colleges show a smaller difference in representation of Chicanos/Latinos and whites among new faculty hires, an indication of progress. Still, at some of these institutions, the difference is significant. The average difference in such representation among new hires was 26 percent.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2024 Campaign for College Opportunity report includes a substantive set of recommendations for both state leaders and campus leaders. We encourage readers to view and analyze those recommendations as well as the previous recommendations submitted in the San Diego Concilio's 2023 report. The CCO report offers this call to action:

. . . we challenge our Governor and state leaders to do more than just speak about the importance of inclusion and diversity in our state. We challenge college leaders to begin and end with what is best for students and to ensure that their campuses are inclusive and welcoming places that reflect the talent and diversity of the student body. The only way California's economy will remain a global force is if we ensure that Latinx, Black, Asian American and NHPI, and AIAN Californians are active leaders in the classroom and across campus positions, including governing and academic senate bodies that make critical decisions (p. 63).

Our San Diego Concilio supports these recommendations and more from the CCO report:

### **State Leaders**

- Commit to dedicated funding to accelerate the establishment of inclusive hiring practices to help ensure California higher education systems reflect the state's diversity at all levels, from system leadership to student body.
- Require colleges and universities to critically examine hiring practices for faculty, staff, and campus leadership and implement solutions to increase inclusion on campus, using tools like those designed by Bensimon & Associates 2022 to assist colleges who seek to Redesign the Presidential Search Process for Racial Equity.
- Require all three public systems, the UC, CSU, and California Community Colleges to submit to the legislature a bi-annual analysis of leadership, faculty, and academic senate diversity by race/ethnicity and gender that includes goals for improving equity and inclusion.

### **Campus Leaders**

- The UC, the CSU, and the California Community Colleges should annually collect and publish data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender for campus leadership and academic senate positions.
- Governing boards need to prioritize the hiring of college presidents who are representative of the students they serve, and have the proven ability and cultural competency to lead/promote more equitable and inclusive college campuses. See [Whiteness Rules: Racial Exclusion in the American College Presidency](#).
- College presidents and senior leadership need to review current hiring practices to prevent bias against recruiting and hiring a more diverse and culturally competent faculty with the demonstrated ability to ensure student success.
- Campus hiring committees, including those for adjunct/temporary faculty, should be reflective of the diversity of California and be required to conduct peer observations of teaching. Candidates must move beyond simply valuing diversity to demonstrate an ability to effectively improve student outcomes and a talent for working effectively with underrepresented populations (p. 64-65).

The CCO report concludes:

The higher leadership and halls of our colleges and universities, however, remain dominated by whiteness. We must make sure that our students see leaders who look like them, that junior faculty and aspiring college leaders have mentors who understand the path they have taken, and that California has an equitable and inclusive system of higher education (p. 66).

Our SD Concilio continues to advocate for anti-racist structures, policies, and practices and much greater equity at our local institutions of higher education. The CCO's report, including the data on San Diego colleges and universities, clearly indicates that we have a long way to go. Once again, we call on our local, public institutions to prioritize equity and to summon the courage and will necessary to transform them into the supportive institutions that our community deserves.

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