

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

November 2022

VIA EMAIL

To: Adela de la Torre, President
Salvador Hector Ochoa, Provost
Luke Wood, Vice President, Student Affairs & Campus Diversity

Dear Colleagues,

We submit for your consideration our recommendations regarding the work of the SDSU Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Advisory Committee during the 2021-22 academic year. We appreciate the work of the HSI Advisory Committee and its subcommittees as well as the support of the SDSU Office of HSI and Regional Affairs. As we address this correspondence, we have not been informed of the status of the recommendations compiled by the HSI Advisory Committee, including the degree to which they are accepted for implementation at SDSU. We recognize that implementation of the advisory committee's recommendations may require action by the SDSU Academic Senate and/or the administration.

While our SD Concilio acknowledges the positive intentions of the advisory committee and its staff support, as well as representation from our SD Concilio on the advisory committee, we feel it is necessary to submit our own recommendations to underscore those of the advisory committee and to identify necessary actions not acknowledged by the advisory committee.

General Advisory Committee Recommendations

- In addition to the advisory committee's recommendation to change the name of the Office of HSI and Regional Affairs, our SD Concilio recommends that the office be transferred to Academic Affairs, reporting directly to the provost. Moving the office will ensure its oversight at the highest level and facilitate critical collaboration with academic departments that is essential to the success and mobility of Chicanos/Latinos at SDSU.
- The "General Recommendations" of the advisory committee describe "opportunities for the use and dissemination of internal SDSU-HSI data" by faculty, staff, and students. We recommend that such data be available to community organizations as well to fulfill our function as advocates.

Latinx/Chicanx/Hispanic Representation, Recruitment, and Retention

- We emphasize that the climate assessment referenced in recommendation #1 be informed by scholarly literature, e.g., Hurtado and Alvarado, 2015. While climate surveys are enhanced by data collected from faculty and staff, the clear focus on such climate assessments should be on students' experience at SDSU and their subsequent perceptions.
- Regarding recommendation #2, the HSI Office should do more than merely coordinate information. It should have resources and authority necessary to direct strategies, programs, and services, particularly institutional collaborations. The need for resources and authority is essential.
- In reference to recommendation #3, we underscore the great need for higher education scholars with expertise on Chicano/Latino students in the Office of HSI Affairs. These scholars should be hired through a competitive search process, **not** appointed. We question the idea of hiring visiting scholars or postdoctoral scholars as a temporary solution.
- We consider recommendation #4 an extremely high priority. The current representation of Chicano/Latino faculty at SDSU is clearly inadequate. While some current practices to increase Chicano/Latino faculty may be effective, e.g., cluster hires, a more comprehensive, multi-dimensional plan is needed. We encourage the continuing strengthening of the Department of Chicana & Chicano Studies as a visible commitment to HSI status and a validation of Chicano/Latino student experience. In addition, the broader representation of Chicano/Latino faculty across academic areas is critical.
- We support recommendation #5 unequivocally. We have observed a number of staff or faculty appointments at SDSU that appear violate the spirit of affirmative action and equal opportunity. Although this practice might reflect a long-standing dimension of student affairs culture, such appointments can create the appearance that faculty and staff are rewarded for supporting the institutional status quo, which potentially damages staff morale.
- Like recommendation #4, we wholeheartedly support recommendation # 6. While we certainly recognize and applaud the presence of Chicanos/Latinos in some high administrative positions at SDSU, the overall representation of Chicanos/Latinos in leadership positions is inadequate.

HSI Student Success, Academic, and Liberatory Outcomes

- Recommendation #1 merits immediate implementation. Within the broad range of necessary assessment, there is a glaring need for the assessment of liberatory outcomes in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs & Campus Diversity.
- Regarding recommendation #3, the assessment of outcomes among Chicano/Latino students should directly inform the broad institutional strategies to maximize those students' success.

HSI Experiences @ SDSU

- As the Latinx Resource Center and the Undocumented Resource Center become spaces to which students turn for support with mental health, financial needs, etc., those centers will need to expand their staff and resources to respond effectively.

HSI Research, Granting, and Extramural Funding Activities

- Referencing recommendation #2, the Office of HSI Affairs should have the authority to coordinate the process to apply for grants explicitly targeting HSI institutions and/or for HSI purposes. They should encourage a focus on prioritizing Chicano/Latino student needs and ensuring the most expertise among entities seeking funding. The research of scholar Gina Garcia reveals that far too many "HSI grants" do not focus their activities on Chicano/Latino students, a practice that SDSU should strongly avoid.

Conclusion

We encourage the SDSU administration to consider these recommendations by our SD Concilio as well as those submitted by the HSI Advisory Committee. While the progress of SDSU in actualizing HSI status is commendable, there is clearly work to be done in making the institution a space that maximizes access and success for Chicanos/Latinos.

Sinceramente,

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Co-Chair, SD Concilio

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Co-Chair, SD Concilio