

MEChA Letter in Support of the Faculty Diversity Initiative

April 20, 2003

Chancellor Albert Carnesale,

Much controversy has highlighted the university's misunderstanding of what diversity really is. This past week, admissions numbers were made public. Through these they illustrated the increasing number of applications received for next academic school year, yet the number of underrepresented students dropped significantly.

As a result, the greater understanding and academic value of diversity on this campus has decreased significantly. In February 13, 2003, the directors of the four ethnic studies research centers at UCLA submitted to you a proposal that would in turn increase the overall faculty in all realms of the university. Similar to the importance of diversity within the classroom, there is also a need for faculty that also addresses the changing needs attributed by the state, and nationwide changing demographics.

As undergraduate students, we understand that a quality education is underscored by the premise that "without a critical mass of faculty whose research advances the understanding of the state's diversity, UCLA and other UC campuses will fail to provide an intellectual environment that can attract, nurture, and prepare all students for the new century." It is vital to have UCLA provide an education that prepares undergraduate and graduate students to function in the new California environment in which they will assume roles as professionals who serve the diverse population of the state. UCLA should also be training the next generation of scholars who will assume positions as faculty in community colleges, the California State Universities, private universities, and the University of California. The next generation of faculty must address the changing needs of the population of the State of California and of the Nation as a whole.

It is not only important to have faculty within the institution who will be able to address the diverse needs of the State, to be able to prepare all students regardless of race or ethnicity, or economic condition, but it is important to also have a student body that will be able to bring in a personal connection to understanding the state's diversity. UCLA is considered to be one of the premiere public universities in the country, but if it wishes to remain competitive it must 1) allocate critical academic resources to address current and future needs of the public through the increase of new Chicana/o studies and other ethnic studies faculty positions as proposed by the Faculty Diversity Initiative, and 2) address the needs of underrepresented students within the comprehensive admissions plan to be able to alleviate the continual decrease of these populations at UCLA.

Your attention to the UCLA Faculty Diversity Initiative is of utmost importance at the current time, and it is because of this that we ask immediate consideration and positive response to the proposal. If there are any additional questions on the stance of students on this proposal please feel free to contact Elizabeth Delgado (310) 625-5928, or Andy Ramirez (310) 206-6452.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Delgado
MEChA de UCLA
Chairperson

Andy Ramirez
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Student Representative, CSRC Faculty Advisory Committee