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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES  
**DAILY BRUIN**

## **[A closer look] Multicultural faculty recruit diverse student body**

### **Professors can add personal bond that helps attract, retain minorities**

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By Heather Rabkin

Professors who are part of the four ethnic study centers on campus play a role in drawing undergraduate minority students to UCLA, and in retaining them.

The admission of undergraduate minority students statistically went up slightly for the 2005-2006 school year, leading to a possibility of a bigger representation of minority students on campus next year.

Many professors believe an important attraction for minority students to UCLA is the connection they have to minority professors.

“It makes UCLA a place that high school students and transfer students can relate to, that UCLA includes someone that looks like them and relates to their experiences,” said Professor Carlos Haro, the assistant director of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

“Faculty can be a critical asset for recruiting students because, at the undergraduate level, you’ll have students who identify with faculty in very concrete and tangible ways,” he said.

Three of the ethnic study centers, the UCLA American Indian Studies Center, the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA and the Chicano Studies Research Center are not actual departments, but do promote undergraduate, graduate and faculty research in their specific areas.

The Asian American Studies Center has recently become a department on campus, along with the Cesar E. Chavez Center in Interdisciplinary Chicana/o Studies.

Dennis Arguelles, the assistant director of the Asian American Studies Center, believes ethnic departments at UCLA give a necessary reflection of the community.

“A lot of ethnic and minority faculty serve as role models from communities who are underrepresented and show that it is possible to succeed in the university,” Arguelles said.

Though minority professors and ethnic departments may attract students to UCLA, many professors agree that academic interest is most important.

“If the students feel that the curriculum is more relevant to their own daily life and what they want to do in the future, it helps keep them interested and retain them, but these courses and research exist on further reasons,” Arguelles said.

“A diversified curriculum helps everyone and gives everyone a better picture of ethnic diversity and what to expect when going out in the workforce,” he said.

Though admission for minority students saw a slight overall increase, the admission of black students statistically decreased for the 2005-2006 year.

“It’s unfortunate that we still continue to have a student population that doesn’t reflect the state’s diversity,” said Darnell Hunt, a professor and director of the Bunche Center for African American Studies.

The center is currently working with different groups on campus to promote the increase in black students at UCLA.

“We work with our faculty to meet with prospective students,” Hunt said, “and impress upon them what UCLA

has to offer and what the Bunche center does to contribute to a vibrant intellectual community on campus.” □

Hunt recalls many students who participated in research at the Center for African American Studies and decided to pursue a career in academia.

“We are always thinking about the next generation of scholars,” he said.

Other organizations on campus provide minority students with help throughout their undergraduate career at UCLA, and provide resources to learn about furthering their education.

The Academic Advancement Program has more than 6,000 students, and works to “ensure the academic success, retention and graduation of all AAP students,” according to the AAP mission statement.

AAP is limited to students whose personal backgrounds or academics may limit their educational experience and ability to graduate.

The Student Retention Center is a student-run organization, which was formed as a response to “disproportionately low retention rates of students from communities with a history of low graduation rates,” according to the retention center Web site.

The retention center is made up of different minority groups which focus on aiding specific students.

Some professors still feel that it will take more than an increase in admissions to ensure that UCLA is a diversely represented campus.

“There still needs to be a lot of work done to bring in minority students. We’re encouraged by these numbers but there’s still more work to do,” Arguelles said.