

# Do UC Us?

Campaign to Increase Numbers of African-American  
Students at the University of California, San Diego

Authored by: The Black Student Union of the University of California, San Diego in  
conjunction with the Black/Afrikan Student Unions, Alliances and Assemblies of the:  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, Riverside  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
University of California, Santa Cruz

## Table of Contents

Opening Statements of the Black Student Union.....	pg 3
University of California, San Diego’s Lack of Diversity in Numbers.....	pg 4
University of California, San Diego Current Yield Efforts.....	pg 4-6
University of California, San Diego Campus Climate.....	pg 7-8
BSU’s Reaction to 2007 Advisory Committee on Increasing Yield of Underrepresented Students.....	pg 8-9
Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials.....	pg 9-15
Do UC us Campaign Demands.....	pg 15
Identified Allies.....	pg 15
Attached Documents.....	pg16

## Opening Statements of the UC San Diego Black Student Union

We, the Black Student Union of the University of California, San Diego, in order to assist the University of California San Diego with Black yield, campus climate, and the overall diversity of the university as stated in the principles of community, provide this report.

“We affirm each individual's right to dignity and strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by mutual respect for each other.”

“We value the cultural diversity of UCSD because it enriches our lives and the university. We celebrate this diversity and support respect for all cultures, by both individuals and the university as a whole.”

With these statements of the University of California, San Diego's value of diversity, we would like to ask the university to prioritize increasing the yield of Black students at the University of California, San Diego. As stated by the university, diversity plays a critical role in the college experience and our lives in general. Many of the members of the Black Student Union can attest to the positive experiences we have had at UC San Diego when collaborating with other students of diverse backgrounds. Enriching interactions such as these are often identified as highlighting moments of learning and growth in a students' college experience.

However, in order for the campus at large to experience the aforementioned enrichment, students must be able to interact with other students of diverse backgrounds. Currently, the chances or probability of UCSD students interacting with a Black student on campus is slim to none because there are such a small number of Black students that make up the student population. Therefore, this crucial element of cultural and social enrichment among UCSD students is extremely difficult. In order to address the lack of social interactions, as well as the isolating experience of Black students at UCSD, the University of California, San Diego must recognize and analyze the problem at hand, commit to proactive solutions, and collaborate with those, such as the members of the Black Student Union, in order to increase the number of Black students at the university. We passionately feel the Black Student Union will be a strong asset in the University's attempt to increase African American yield, and in solidarity with the Black/Afrikan Student Unions across the UC system, are committed to the activities we have proposed and any efforts the University of California, San Diego puts forth as well.

Building on the models at University of California, Los Angeles and University of California, Berkley, we feel that one of the first and most effective steps to increasing the number of African-American students at UC San Diego is to have a Black Admit Overnight Program as part of a series of yield events that will reach out to prospective African American students. It is our hope that with the information provided in this report, and the sincere commitment of the African American students in the UC system, you will join us in solidarity in creating a more welcoming environment that celebrates the diversity African American students bring to the University of California, San Diego.

## **University of California, San Diego's Lack of Diversity in Numbers**

For the 2009-2010 academic year, the number of enrolled African-American students at the University of California, San Diego is 299 out of 22,500 which constitutes only 1.328% of the student body population. For the 2009-2010 academic year, 1,639 African-American students applied to UC the University of California, San Diego. Of the 1,639 applicants, only 333 African-American students were accepted, which is 20% of the applicant pool. Of that 333, 50 freshmen applicants submitted their student intent to register (SIR); for the transfer students, only 52 submitted their SIR for the University of California, San Diego.

Of the 333 admitted students, 172 students from the applicant pool were also accepted by the University of California, Los Angeles and/or the University of California, Berkeley. The other 161 applicants were not admitted by either the University of California, Los Angeles and/or University of California, Berkeley. Of the 172 applicants who were admitted to the University of California, San Diego as well as the University of California, Los Angeles and/or the University of California, Berkeley, only 10 applicants submitted their SIR for the University of California, San Diego. Furthermore, of the 161 applicants only 40 enrolled at UC San Diego.

Another interesting fact is that of the 1,306 African-American students who were not admitted to the University of California, San Diego, 74 of them were admitted by either the University of California, Berkeley or the University of California, Los Angeles. To attempt to address this discrepancy, the University of California, San Diego's Office of Admissions plans to do a pilot with the University of California, Los Angeles in order to analyze the basis of acceptance of these 74 students. In addition, with this pilot explore how much the University of California, San Diego would benefit from adopting the University of California, Los Angeles's holistic admissions criteria (See Table 2). Although we are questioning the use of Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) points within UC San Diego's admissions criteria, 21 of the 50 enrolled Black freshmen were accepted as ELC students (See Table 3).

(See Table 1A, Fall 2003-Fall 2009 Freshmen Yield, and Table 1B Fall 2003-Fall 2009 Transfer Yield)

## **University of California, San Diego Current Yield Efforts**

- A letter was sent on behalf of the Chief Diversity Officer (Dr. Sandra Daley) to all Admitted Students which included a special video message from her.
  - The letter addresses the "importance" of enrolling a diverse student body, presents information regarding the African American Studies and Chican@/Latin@ Arts and Humanities minors, as well as other ethnic-specific programs on campus, and highlight the services of the Community Centers (Women's Center, LGBT Resource Center and the Cross Cultural Center)

## University of California, San Diego Current Yield Efforts

- Regional receptions were hosted in Los Angeles, San Diego, and the San Francisco/Bay Area for newly admitted students and their families.
  - A Black Student Union representative was sent to the San Francisco Bay Area Reception, as well as representatives from MEChA. The BSU representative who attended this reception reported that there were no African-American admits in attendance.
  - The lack in African-American students in attendance at the SF/Bay Area Reception for UC San Diego was due to the fact that it was scheduled concurrently with that of both UC Los Angeles and UC Berkeley's overnight yield programs for African-American admitted students.
- Conducted Freshmen and Transfer Phone-a-thons for newly admitted underrepresented students.
  - These calls could be more effective if they were not just one phone call informing students that they were accepted into UC San Diego, rather a call where admits have an opportunity to make a connection with current students who could possibly share similar experiences.
  - Furthermore, we feel that current UC San Diego African American students should be able to contact newly admitted Black students, as done by UC Santa Cruz and UC Berkeley.
  - We are in complete agreement with the 2007 Advisory Committee on Increasing Yield of Underrepresented Students' recommendation of inviting Black and Chicano/Latino Alumni Association affiliates and members of the Student Affirmative Action Committee (SAAC) and Student Initiated Outreach Committee (SIORC which has now been renamed to Student Initiated Access Programs and Services-SIAPS) to participate in the annual Phone-a-thons.
- Visited select high schools in the San Diego and Los Angeles basin.
  - One of our BSU members went on the trips with the Admissions representatives, Biology faculty, and Financial Aid representative to the selected high schools in San Diego (Helix, Preuss and Otay Ranch) and those in the Los Angeles county (Bravo Medical Magnet, California Academy of Math and King Drew) in the Spring as a student representative in the Spring, as a yield effort.
  - Both our BSU member and Black Alumni member who were in attendance did not feel that the visit was structured enough, nor as effective as it could have been in making UC San Diego appealing to African-American students.
  - Students were very reluctant to ask questions or speak because of the way the space was presented and dominated. The perception of the representative in attendance was that UC San Diego needed more students of color solely to increase their numbers, not because of a true commitment to diversity as they claim in the University's mission statement.
- UC San Diego worked collaboratively with SPACES to plan the Overnight Program for newly admitted students attending fourth and fifth quintile schools from the San Diego County, Imperial County, and Inland Empire.

## University of California, San Diego Current Yield Efforts

- As students who volunteered and even were host in the Overnight Program, we saw how effective this program was for the students to feel acquainted with the campus and the UC San Diego community
- SPACES had a 75% yield rate in their 2008 overnight, and 72% in their 2009 program.
- Given the yield rates of the SPACES Overnight Program, it follows that providing a similar program for African American students will have a great impact on increasing overall yield at UC San Diego as seen with SPACES efforts, UC Los Angeles, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz and countless other UC's efforts.
- Worked with campus community groups to assist with the Affinity Group workshops and welcomes held during Admit Day.
  - This activity proved to be quite effective, although the number of students and parents in attendance was very low. In order to make this effort more successful, we feel it is, again, very important that current UC San Diego students be the ones to contact the admitted students for Admit Day/the Affinity Group workshops.
- Conducted numerous Financial Aid workshops for prospective and newly admitted students and their families.
  - Although UC San Diego makes the effort to present relevant Financial Aid information to its admitted students, many students of color come from underprivileged and/or first-generation backgrounds where the students and parents' are not familiar with the Financial Aid process. Because UC San Diego's Financial Aid website page is not the easiest to interpret, we feel that it is necessary to provide a sample Financial Aid package that includes a breakdown of each component (ex: Subsidized Stafford Loans, PLUS Loans, UCSD Grant-in-Aid etc). In addition, a student perspective should also be included in the presentation in order to address concerns of the students/parents that are often specific to underprivileged and/or first-generation backgrounds.

The following three yield activities were directed towards increasing the yield of underrepresented transfer students. The Black Student Union is rarely, if ever, notified of these efforts nor have we seen the numbers on the effectiveness of these yield activities and therefore cannot speak on the effectiveness of these programs.

- Conducted routine visits at 34 Community Colleges in Southern and Northern California with significant enrollment of underrepresented students.
- Participated in numerous community college fairs throughout the State.
- Conducted special tours for prospective community college transfer students.

## University of California, San Diego Campus Climate

For decades UCSD has been known to have a socially "dead" environment, but more than that, the campus struggles with developing and cultivating a socially healthy climate for particular groups of students to feel welcome.

- As members of a UC-wide student coalition, University of California African-Black Coalition, BSU has found that the issue of poor campus climate is prevalent on all of the campuses within the UC system.  
*State of the Black Union: Black Students in the UC System : John Johnson*  
*Doctoral Candidate, Social Psychology, UC Santa Cruz*
  - Only 35% of students “agreed” with the statement: “In general, my campus is supportive of its Black students.”
  - Only 21% of students “agreed” with the statement: “The community surrounding my campus is diverse and welcoming of Black students.”
  - Only 20% of students “agreed” with the statement: “I trust the student government on my campus to consider how their decisions impact Black students.”
  - 76% of students “disagreed” with the statement: “I never hear negative statements about Blacks used by non-Black people on my campus.”
  - 77% of students “agreed” with the statement: “The BSU is a valuable source of support for Black students on my campus.”
- As taken from the Bunche Research Report, Vol. 4, No.1, *Gaming the System: Inflation, Privilege, & the Under-representation of African American Students at the University of California:*  
“Anecdotal evidence suggests that many African-American applicants perceive the racial climate at UCSD as a hostile one, opting not to attend the campus after being offered admission. Similarly, the low enrollment numbers of Black admits could reflect their fear of experiencing racial isolation at the university because of its exceedingly small African-American population” (Bunche, 21).
- An excerpt from *Study Group on University Diversity Campus Climate Report* further discusses what “campus climate” means and why a hostile climate is important to address:
  - What do we mean by “campus climate”?
    - Campus climate is a measure—real or perceived—of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions. In a healthy climate, individuals and groups generally feel welcomed, respected, and valued by the university. A healthy climate is grounded in respect for others, nurtured by dialogue between those of differing perspectives, and is evidenced by a pattern of civil interactions among community members (UCR Framework for Diversity Report). Not all aspects of a healthy climate necessarily feel positive—indeed, uncomfortable or challenging situations can lead to increased awareness, understanding, and appreciation. Tension, while not always positive, can be healthy when handled appropriately.

## University of California, San Diego Campus Climate

Conversely, in an unhealthy environment, individuals or groups often feel isolated, marginalized, and even unsafe. The University of California strives to create and promote healthy climates across its campuses, where all community members, including students (graduate, undergraduate, and professional), staff and faculty feel welcomed, supported, included and valued. Campus climate is a multifaceted reflection and manifestation of diversity. Campus climate is about moving beyond the numbers (Hurtado, 2007). The very presence of individuals from different backgrounds results in diversity. Climate, on the other hand, refers to the experience of individuals and groups on a campus—and the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals. Diversity and inclusion efforts are not complete unless they also address climate. Stated another way, addressing campus climate is an important and necessary component in any comprehensive plan for diversity.

Why does climate matter?

- Research shows that a hostile campus climate directly impacts a student's ability to transition successfully into college (Hurtado, Milem, Clatyon-Pederson & Allen, 1999). In an unhealthy climate, students are less likely to adjust academically and are less likely to develop a sense of belonging on the campus. Furthermore, positive intergroup interactions affect academic outcomes positively.

([http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/diversity/documents/07-campus\\_report.pdf](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/diversity/documents/07-campus_report.pdf))

### **BSU's Reaction to 2007 Advisory Committee on Increasing Yield of Underrepresented Students**

We, members of the Black Student Union, recently attended the Diversity Council Summer Retreat and met individually with the Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Sandra Daley, about the current yield issue of African American students. What we took away from the meeting with Dr. Daley is that we should wait to take action on our demands and give our targets an opportunity to react to our demands. We also felt that our attention was being redirected to faculty and "the campus as a whole," rather than administration. Our interpretation of Dr. Daley's philosophy was that UC San Diego's yield issue is not just a Black issue (nor a historically underrepresented groups issue), but rather an issue across the board. We feel that her belief is that bettering the campus climate as a whole will automatically better the campus climate for Black students, and the best way to do this is to implement these diversity efforts across the board. However, as long there is a group that makes up only 1.328 % of the undergrad population and another that represents 30%, we strongly feel that efforts to increase the yield of the 1.328% represented group while ignoring the other groups' yield is completely justified.

## **BSU's Reaction to 2007 Advisory Committee on Increasing Yield of Underrepresented Students**

After reading the report, we feel that as students it is time for us to take action. The report clearly outlines effective yield activities and who should be involved in these activities, yet a proactive effort on the behalf of the Council members has not been made in order to put the report recommendations into action. Surprisingly, many of the activities that we came up with, or have seen other campuses adopt, were actually outlined in the 2001 and 2007 Diversity Reports. Therefore, we feel the demands we are making and the actions that we plan on implementing are feasible and imperative.

### **Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials**

- TESTIMONY #1: "What I've found difficult is having to be an "ambassador" for the entire black race wherever I go. I am often the only black person in most situations so I become the spokeswoman for every issue. Friends and colleagues often ask me my opinion on things like black pop culture, Obama's election and presidency, and they often have the urge to touch my curly hair without permission. I have become accustomed to my role as an "ambassador" and use these opportunities to share my thoughts on black politics or the differences between straight and curly hair. And most importantly I remind them that I am only one person and cannot testify to the opinions of the entire black community.

I also have to be aware of race sensitivity issues. For example, I served as an RA and in an event celebrating black and African culture, what the group decided to use to decorate the venue were wooden animal sculptures and safari themed articles, having almost nothing representing the actual people who live in the continent! When a lot of people think about Africa, they often do not appreciate the rich and diverse cultures, languages, and customs that exist there. All they understand about Africa is what they see on National Geographic. And this was a group of student leaders who have had some diversity training and are supposed to be able to understand and serve the diversity of our student body. I made a comment to my supervisor about it, but I do not believe my suggestions to not make the same mistake again were taken seriously.

It is occasions like this one that show the value of having diversity in the workplace and the classroom. My colleagues who made this mistake did not realize that what they were doing was very offensive to my race. If I was not there, this probably would have gone unnoticed and could offend future black students who do not have the voice to complain. Having people from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences benefits everyone because of the unique points of view and abilities each one can bring allows for the best and most comprehensive solutions to any challenge."

## Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials

- TESTIMONY #2: “My experience at UCSD is one that had been an intense circumstance from the beginning. I am now entering into my fourth year at the university and have to re-assert my presence to the entire campus on a daily basis simply because I am constantly looked at to represent the entire Black Community. It urges me to present myself in the most presentable manor which is one aspect I appreciate, but the underlying issue is that I am constantly under surveillance no matter the scenario, from the classroom, to social atmospheres, faculty expectations, etc. The pressures of being part of such a small percentage of the students in such an environment is always effecting my personal aspirations, by this I mean I find myself constantly setting aside my personal intuition in order to progress and secure our place here as Black students. One specific instance I recall is being the only black male in a sociology class with over 300 students enrolled in total, while the class lecture covered and discussed black male sexuality. I was open to discuss this issue but in this situation I felt as I could not actively participate in the discussion because of the fact that I would be representing more than just my own personal stance but rather the entire black male image. This mentality to answer in the most appropriate way possible combined with such a looming sense of alienation would have been some what alleviated by the presence of others in the class room who could relate to the discussion personally as well. This is one specific incident, but scenarios such as this come into effect each day. The experience of a Black student at UCSD is one which is completely unique. The added pressures are constantly distracting and make it difficult to be attentive to academics even in a class room environment. To further complicate matters, my achievements are being constantly down played and demeaned by those around me. When I make any sort of progress within my status or situation students without the capacity to relate to my experience as a Black student tend to depreciate my work through statements such as “You only got here because you are Black”, or “Well, you did good because they make it easier for you because your Black”, while they have no clue the issues I endure daily simply to continue to stay in school, even before considering academics. It is a task in itself to combat slanderous words such as these, but regardless I proceed and continue to excel as best I can. Personally I feel as if I am alone at times and it takes a critical effort to find those who I can relate to. The addition of others who look like me around campus would be a positive reaffirmation that I can succeed and I’m not alone in such a hostile environment - it would provide hope to succeed and the inspiration to continue.”
- TESTIMONY #3: “The most significant challenge that I encountered during my first year of college was the lack of ethnic diversity at UCSD. I was already hesitant to attend UCSD because of the staggering 1.3% Black population. Once I finally decided to attend the university, my concerns regarding the lack of ethnic diversity were confirmed. I was extremely disappointed to find that many of the students, faculty, and staff at UCSD lacked cultural awareness. Many people do not understand what it feels like to be one of the few Black people on the entire campus. I have heard expressions such as “people are just people” and

## Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials

“race shouldn’t matter.” This is true to a certain extent; however, it is very difficult not to take race into account when people are constantly judging me and/or assuming that I must behave in a certain manner due to my race. It is exhausting attempting to educate people on “Black history.” I must constantly explain to people that I am not from the “ghetto,” my hair texture is different, my parents are not on drugs, and I attend UCSD as a result of my GPA, SAT scores and extracurricular activities (not because of affirmative action). Please do not misunderstand me. I am not friends with Black people exclusively; I have friends of all ethnicities. However, it would be comforting to know that there are more people who can relate to my daily struggles and who understand what I have endured as a Black female in society.

In order to overcome my feelings of isolation and frustration, I decided to join the BSU (Black Student Union). I quickly felt a sense of community and family within this organization. Older members mentored the younger members and made us feel welcomed. During the weekly meetings, we discussed various topics concerning the Black community and we shared our personal experiences. This assured me that I was not the only person experiencing a slight disconnection from the university. If it were not for the BSU’s commitment to me and other incoming Black students, I would have transferred to UCLA. The love and support that the BSU community offered me is ultimately what made me stay here at UCSD.

I wrote this testimony to inform the UCSD admissions officers, the chancellors, the UC regents, ect, of the importance of creating a comfortable campus climate for African Americans. If the Black students here on campus are not comfortable with the overall climate of the University, then how can we promote UCSD to other Black students and make the campus appeal to them? Admitted Black students will not want to attend UCSD if they know that the campus is not very “ethnic friendly.” It is CRUCIAL that the atmosphere of our campus is changed to incorporate the needs of Black students; otherwise, the inadequate percentage of Black students attending UCSD will continue.”

- TESTIMONY #4: “I am one of UCSD's few African-American female students. My role on campus almost seems like a full-time job in itself. What bothers me isn't the borderline (and in some cases passed the line) offensive remarks, and overall ignorance of the individual students on campus, who may not have ever been exposed to any different cultures. Shockingly, what bothers me the most is the climate and overall 'feel' or 'vibe' of our campus. It definitely ties into our flawed campus climate that makes it so easy for minorities to be overlooked and unseen in the classrooms, sitting in Geisel, and most of the time completely absent from our campus’s own restaurants.

I feel we need the support that should have been given to struggling universities like UCSD a long time ago. We have all the ideas, but it's time to get the assistance and move forward with the leadership of the BSU and other like-minded groups, to really make things fair for all students. If we all got accepted into the university, why do only some students get to feel welcome?”

## Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials

- TESTIMONY #5: “I am from Long Beach therefore diversity has never been a problem for me. I knew before attending UC San Diego that the number of Black students was extremely low. What I did not expect was the lack of administrative support and student understanding. My first introduction regarding the hostility at UCSD came via the Summer Bridge program. I was resistant, not wanting to essentialize a whole campus as ignorant, unaware, and uninterested, however, I soon learned that I was not viewed as an individual, but rather as a representation of a mythical figure. When I moved into my freshman dorms I was excited to meet new people, make friends, and more importantly create salient connections to help alleviate some of my homesickness.

What I found was an even greater longing for home, longing for understanding. I would come to the dorm from class and just became frustrated. I took a lot of naps freshman year. I just wanted to wake up, go to class, and not be bothered with roommates unaware of their privilege and disinterested in my experiences. I was tired of the bold, rude questions: why are you always watching BET, why do you need to go to BSU, why can you only say “nigga”, why do you think red rooster hot sauce is bomb, why do you talk in quadruple negatives? While I was wondering why conversations would always be about the newest Lil Wayne song, why I was always asked to go “mad Black woman” on loud roommates, and why they would bring up Roscoe’s Chicken and Waffles and give compliments as if Roscoe himself were my Uncle.

Being the person I am, I did not give a FUCK about the essentialized notions people had about me and my race. I could act loud, go “mad Black woman”, watch BET, eat fried chicken, yet still get an A on my paper, speak without an ounce of inferiority, and exert my opinions eloquently. I do not feel as if my roommates even still to this day understand the complexities, intersections, differences that are within people of African decent. I had a Black roommate from Ethiopia who was less “angry” and “bossy”. They associated our differences with the fact that I was from “ghetto” Long Beach and she had been adopted into a white family in Santee. They lacked the ability to see that we are different because we are not the same person. Blackness is not a disease that creates a typified collective; our personalities, experiences etc cannot be deduced into a small category. We are complex. My roommates do not know me and are probably content with the little pieces of myself I did share.

After my experiences my freshman year I was determined to get involved. I joined the BSU board as the Student Affirmative Action Committee (SAAC) representative where I began to understand that students of color in general were experiencing disconnect at UCSD even if they were represented on campus percentage wise. I realized that campus climate in general needed to be tackled in order to retain Black students and all students of color at UCSD. Admission was most definitely not enough. Getting involved for me meant that I would see Black faces often, struggle besides all students of color, and feel as if I had a group of people I could rely upon.

## **Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials**

Next year I will be in Associated Students, SAAC, African American Studies Association, along with continuing my support of BSU and all the great work we do. I want to focus on administrators to make them understand that accepting Black students is not enough. There is a problem when a Black student does not feel comfortable walking around campus; there is a problem when a Black student has to play the representative of their Black race. No one wants to feel excluded, unrepresented, and misunderstood. I am usually the only Black student in my classes, even classes for my African American Studies minor. Not seeing Black students goes beyond a comfort level because it also affects my ability to form study groups, ask questions, and provide insights. I want the opportunity to see a familiar Black face next to me, also in front of me lecturing, so that I can feel as if I have an ally and can participate in class without thinking that people assume I know the answer or do not know the answer. I want to be free to be myself while being proud of my race.

The steps administrators need to take to improve campus climate and insure a greater yield is fund cultural based events, lecture series', yield and outreach programs while also getting students involved in the efforts enacted in the Chancellor's office in order to create a bi-directional mode of communication and accountability for students and administration. I do not have all of the answers. I do not have access to an unlimited amount of resources and money. What I do have is a voice tired of being silenced. What I do have is a passion to see change. I am prepared to dedicate my time to increasing the number of Black students on campus through programs and improving campus climate. I am ready to see the active dedication of administration as well in hopes that they educate the whole UCSD community and themselves."

- TESTIMONY #6: "I feel as if I am like a social pariah in class. Example: One day I was sitting in class and I noticed there was NO ONE sitting next to me in all directions. I watched as each person came in the classroom they would look at me and sit somewhere else...even if they had to go around people and sit in the crowded middle. It made me feel as if they were scared of me or as if my skin was a disease."
- TESTIMONY #7: "The campus climate at UCSD for me, personally, in terms of diversity (or rather its lack thereof) is, to put it simply, an incessant struggle to connect. I am a black Thurgood Marshall student entering my junior year as a structural engineer major, and so far it seems as if my classes and connecting with other students are on the same level of difficulty. This is not to be misunderstood with my ability to make friends-in which I have made more than enough. I believe there is a crucial difference between just making friends and actually establishing a connection with someone. When people from similar backgrounds and traditions meet, they can quickly create long-lasting, powerful connections. As a black student at UCSD, this type of connection is apparent among the other more prominent races making it

## **Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials**

easier for me to realize and feel this lack of connection. For instance, I roomed with 9 other guys my first year and we became the closest of friends and till this day I see them as my closest friends at UCSD. Nonetheless, I never felt a connection with them. The lack of connection was not at all because they didn't have the same color skin as me or because they didn't look like me. It was due to the fact that our backgrounds were so discrepant and some things they really just didn't understand about me and vice versa. For instance, they didn't understand why I brushed my hair or why I didn't want them throwing the "N" word around leisurely. On numerous occasions I would have to deal with the infamous series of "acting black" questions usually starting with "Why don't you..." and ending with "...like all black people do?" Besides the stereotypical comments that I reluctantly brush off, I respect the differences that we have. If there were no differences, life would be rather dull and mundane. But like my roommates, who share common backgrounds and traditions with each other and mostly everyone on campus, its nice to be able to share a connection with other people who come from similar backgrounds and can relate to you with common experiences. Essentially, I have to go through college coping with "understood differences" without ever really being understood myself.

Near the end of fall quarter of my freshman year, I was printing transfer documents in order to transfer to UC Berkeley. I knew there was a more eclectic set of students there and I was sure to be able to find some that I could relate to. I became really close with my roommates at UCSD, but I just couldn't (no matter how hard I tried) relate with them in just about anything. I started going home every single weekend because I felt like I was suffering from "idiosyncratic asphyxiation" where I just couldn't be myself at school anymore. Fortunately, I met and CONNECTED with another black student who came from a similar background and lifestyle (we actually made a list of all our commonalities). If it wasn't for that student, I know for a fact that I would not be at UCSD. The university just didn't provide the social experience I hoped to experience while in college.

After two years at UCSD, I've been able to enjoy the various discrepant lifestyles and backgrounds with other black students whom I've been fortunate enough to connect with, and I believe that the crucial ingredient of "connection" has made my stay at UCSD so much more enjoyable. However, I believe the diversity issue at UCSD has much room for improvement. For me to find another black student in my class or even around campus for that matter is comparable to looking for a needle in a haystack. I believe everyone should be able to enjoy their stay at UCSD and be able to enjoy others no matter how different they are, but they should also be able to make those crucial connections with others with whom they have a lot in common. In fact, college students should not be "searching" for others that have things in common with them – it should be readily available. Instead, we should be looking forward to meeting new people and experiencing the different lifestyles other people from various lifestyles offer. Ultimately, this will offer every college student a great

### **Black Student Union Constituency Testimonials**

experience and a chance to mature culturally. As a black student at UCSD, I simply long to “fit-in” and enjoy an authentic “college experience”.

## **Do UC Us Campaign Demands**

With this campaign, the Black Student Union is advocating for specific solutions that we feel will be effective means for increasing the yield of African American students at the University of California, San Diego. Listed below are short-term goals that we believe can be accomplished during the 2009-2010 school year.

- Yield Activities
  - Phone-A-Thons: Have BSU members call admitted Black students
  - Black Admit Welcome Package: includes a Welcome DVD, letter from BSU and UJIMA, Black Directory, Postcard invitation to Admit Day, and a T-shirt/lanyard
  - Black Admit Overnight Program for the 2010 UC San Diego Admitted African-American Students

## **Identified Allies**

Following is a list of organizations that have given us their support and are also committed to increasing the yield of African American students and the University of California, San Diego.

- The Black/Afrikan Student Unions of all UC undergraduate campuses
- Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) out of UC San Diego). Another strong asset of OASIS is that ATP hosts Summer Bridge, a free annual four week summer residential program for incoming freshmen who fit the criteria of being either low income or a first generation college student.
- TRIO Outreach Programs
- Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service (SPACES)
  - Student-Initiated Access Programs and Services (SIAPS)
  - Academic Success Program (ASP)
- Student Affirmative Action Committee (SAAC)
- The Campus Community Centers which consists of the Cross Cultural Center, the LGBT Resource Center and the Women’s Center
- African American Studies Minor
- UJIMA
- UCSD Chicano/Latino Concilio
- The UCSD Diversity Council
- Black Alumni Association

## Attached Documents

- Tables 1A, 1B, 2 & 3
- Final Report Advisory Committee on Increasing Yield of Underrepresented Students March 2007  
([http://diversity.ucsd.edu/pdf/FINALREVISED\\_YieldAdvisoryCommitteeReport32607.pdf](http://diversity.ucsd.edu/pdf/FINALREVISED_YieldAdvisoryCommitteeReport32607.pdf))
- UC San Diego Admissions Criteria and Point Breakdown
- Vice Chancellor Admissions Officer, Mae Brown's, Outreach, Recruitment and Yield Activities 2008-2009 Report