

## UCSD DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Letter from the Chair

January, 2004

These are troublesome times at universities throughout the land. Although one often hears the clarion call that student enrollments, faculty hires, and staff employment should reflect the diversity of our state or country, reality is clearly at odds with that ambitious ideal. The inequities are not mere reflections of statistical dispersion. The academic sector is especially unbalanced. Clearly, identifiable segments of our society are systematically being excluded from the system: as undergraduates, as graduate students, and as faculty. The reasons for this under-representation are diverse and deep-rooted. Certainly they extend well beyond the university borders.

Universities – good universities – are by their very nature selective. Even under the best of circumstances, an open admissions policy whereby anyone who chose could attend would overwhelm the system. Further, faculties are prestigious or not depending on how they choose and promote their colleagues. Therein lies the dilemma. Until there is a steady flow of the currently under-represented into the undergraduate pipeline, graduate school enrollments and faculty hires will continue to fall far short of diversity goals.

Currently, admissions policies to UC are under fire from a number of quarters. Critics, including some Regents, contend that unqualified students are being admitted in an effort to redress the imbalances noted above. Further, voter-approved laws have tended to hobble efforts at targeting recruits from the ranks of the excluded. Present budgetary shortfalls are further compromising outreach programs.

The Diversity Council cannot make these problems go away. What it can do is provide a forum for exploring new ways to resolve these divisive issues. It can persist in its efforts to remind our community that genuine diversity is in everyone's self-interest.

Universities should be more than centers of technological research and development. They are not mere conduits for the nation's work force. They must also serve as the conscience of our society. We will not endure as a civilization if certain segments of the populace are excluded from the full benefits of our educational system. We can and must do better. If you have an idea for how matters can be improved, contact us at [diversity\\_chair@ucsd.edu](mailto:diversity_chair@ucsd.edu).

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