

## ← COLLECTIVE STATEMENT CHICANX LATINX FACULTY

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### **The Collective Statement of the CSU Fullerton Chicanx and Latinx faculty**

Dear President Framrose Virjee, Provost Pamella Oliver, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs Harry Le Grande, Incoming Vice President of Student Affairs Tonantzin Oseguera, Vice President of Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion, and Senate Chair Stephen Stambough:

Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o faculty believe that collegial collaboration is essential to the democratic ideals of the university. Over the past 20 years, CSU Fullerton has, and not by intention or design, become one of the largest Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) in the region, state, and nation. As many critical education scholars remind us, the “promises” or the benefits of being at an HSI frequently fail both Latinx/a/o students, staff, alums, community partners, and faculty. Many HSIs do little “serving” and instead exist as “Hispanic Enrolling Institutions.” The federal designation comes with many benefits, which include special funding opportunities. These funding opportunities do not need to incorporate or include Latinx/a/o faculty for their execution. Despite the gains of hiring and promotion of faculty at different ranks, Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o faculty remain systematically and significantly excluded and disenfranchised on campus. Commitments by administration to campus-wide diversity, inclusion, and belonging cannot be codified into strategic plans while erasing faculty voices and knowledge.

Our concerns, perspectives, and professional abilities are routinely ignored within the University as faculty leaders on issues that directly impact Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o faculty, students, and staff. This is evident in many areas and specifically, with campus-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives within Student Affairs. Universities exist for the purpose of advancing knowledge in the service of our communities and it is faculty who are charged with preserving, extending, and transmitting this knowledge. Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o faculty, particularly those who have academic training and cultivated familiarity related to activism in higher education, identity, equity, social justice, ethnic studies, and critical pedagogy, are not included in more meaningful and deliberate ways. Our voices are vital in conversations and decision-making on issues related to all students, especially those directly impacting our Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o populations. As a Hispanic Serving Institution, this failure to fully integrate faculty is a clear break-down in shared governance and is unjustifiable.

A more recent example of our concerns includes the name change of the Chicana and Chicano Resource Center (CRC). We were told that the decision to pursue the CRC name change was based primarily on student input and that Student Affairs views the center as student-focused. Our understanding is that a name exploration discussed with students was led by the current CRC coordinator and an adjunct faculty in the Chicana and Chicano Studies Department.

The stakeholders leading the charge for the name change missed an opportunity to meaningfully lean in on our expertise and historical knowledge. They glossed over our voices instead of taking into account or objectively weighing the possible benefits and limitations to a name change. It is imperative to have an intellectual, political, and historical understanding of Latinx/a/o and Chicanx/a/o populations and the politics and contradictions of “diversity” and “inclusion” practices in higher education. Specifically, we are concerned with the process that led to the name change of the CRC.

The CRC consulted with select Chicanx/a/o and Latinx/a/o faculty through a few conversations and a snowball survey distributed to the broader community via Qualtrics. We took several issues with this survey as it was extremely biased and essentially designed to validate the desire for a name change. A variety of options only included adding “Latinx” without an opportunity to keep the current name and left little room for comments.

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through a town hall with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Further, we are concerned that the process did not meet baseline criteria for informed consent or traditional markers of decision making best practices (*Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs*--NASPA).

An uncritical dialogue that does not comprehensively take into consideration the concerns of faculty, is dangerous and disrespectful, especially to the legacy of the Chicana/x/a/o movement within the university. An intergenerational, intellectual, and community dialogue was and is needed in place of a customer-service neoliberal model that is reduced to social justice tourism. The Chicana and Chicano Resource Center (CRC) is the oldest ethnic center at CSUF. Established in 1972, the CRC developed a legacy of research and dedication to the study of Mexico and the Southwest. Over time, the CRC has expanded beyond a space for intellectual exchange; it has become a haven and place of resource for our Chicana/x/a/o Latina/x/a/o student population. Across the nation, there have been increasing conversations regarding the use of Chicana/x/a/o versus Latina/x/a/o, with the claims that the first omits the experiences of other Latina/x/a/o populations. Latina/x/a/o symbolizes a loosely bound racialized group in the U.S. Chicana/x/a/o moves beyond a pan-ethnic descriptor and needs to be historically and politically contextualized. The challenge against the use of Chicana/x/a/o comes during a particular moment of anti-Mexican discourse, that is not new within the U.S., but is currently uncritically engaged in some Latina/o/x circles. This erasure of Chicana/x/a/o is occurring in anti-intellectual discourses within several universities that have adopted uncritical neoliberal practices that are increasingly serving students as consumers.

We want to be clear: we are not in opposition to creating a more inclusive campus that serves the needs of various student populations. Instead, we are against the erasure of the significance of the name Chicana/x/a/o that grounds the legacy of such spaces. Further, we are deeply concerned with the failure to incorporate our voices in meaningful ways. The recent name change of the Chicana and Chicano Resource Center is a symptom of a more significant problem.

We demand to be real stakeholders and constituents based on action and not just in talk or empty jargon. We call for the end of institutional disrespect that is shown to our Chicana/x/a/o and Latina/x/a/o faculty and faculty leaders. Attached to this statement, we provide preliminary ideas that move our university to collaborate with campus stakeholders to chart a more just and equitable campus. Furthermore, Chicana/x/Latina/x faculty stand with our Black faculty, students, staff, alums, and community. We stand with our Asian American/Pacific Islander/Desi faculty, students, staff, alums, and community. We stand with our Native American/Indigenous faculty, students, staff, alums, and community. We stand with our Southwest Asian/ North African faculty, students, staff, alums, and community. We stand with our progressive/radical faculty, students, staff, alums, and community. We are committed to not succumb to intentional or unintentional attempts to “divide and conquer” the various intellectual, political and cultural communities on campus. We ask that we all start from a point of “we can”, “we will try” and “we will figure this out”. We are in a new historical moment. There is a new grassroots paradigm shift. We must change and transform the university for our students and we must commit the entire institution to be core partners in the struggle for authentic social justice in our society.

### LIST OF FACULTY SIGNATORIES

Lucia Alcalá, Psychology  
 Margie Brown-Coronel, History  
 Eric Carbajal, Modern Languages and Literatures  
 Maria Casanova, Economics  
 Minerva Chávez, Secondary Education  
 Claudia Evans-Zepeda, Human Communication Studies

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Alexandro Jose Gradilla, Chicana and Chicano Studies  
Monica Hanna, Chicana and Chicano Studies  
Pablo Jasis, Elementary and Bilingual Education  
Julian Jefferies, Literacy and Reading Education  
Veronica Jimenez, Biological Sciences  
Erica Lizano, Social Work  
Edwin Lopez, Sociology  
Brian C. Lovato, Politics, Administration, and Justice  
Maritza Lozano, Educational Leadership  
Maria Malagon, Sociology  
Celia Martínez-Sáez, Modern Languages and Literatures  
Salvador Mayoral, Mechanical Engineering  
Olga Mejia, Counseling  
Xhercis Mendez, Women and Gender Studies  
Barbara Miller, Library  
Gabriela Nuñez, Chicana and Chicano Studies  
Rosario Ordóñez-Jasis, Literacy and Reading Education  
Marcos Ortega, Chemistry and Biochemistry  
Patricia Pérez, Chicana and Chicano Studies  
Claudia Pineda, Child and Adolescent Studies  
Henry Puente, Communications  
Maria Soledad Ramirez, Biological Sciences  
Alvin Rangel-Alvarado, Theater and Dance  
Fernando Rodríguez-Valls, Secondary Education  
Carolina Valdez, Elementary and Bilingual Education  
Ricardo Valencia, Communications  
Estela Zarate, Educational Leadership  
CSUF Latinx faculty person

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### Action Items:

- **CRC Discussion:** The re-opening of the discussions around the naming of the Chicana/o Resource Center. We believe there is a clear and simple remedy to the problem.
- **Mission of DIRC:**
  - *History:* There is an urgent need of incorporating a larger national and local historical lens for its mission. The CRC for example, needs local partnerships in order to understand how the legacies of racism, xenophobia and virulent anti-Mexican sentiment shaped Orange County and the adjacent counties. The CRC should develop a historic speaker series (examples: Mendez v Westminster families, the Bernal families (first successful challenge to housing covenants in the country happened in Fullerton), Chicax/Latinx veterans/veterans groups who detail serving their country and returning to segregated pools, schools, social spaces and other local living activists who struggled and sacrificed for civil rights gains in the region.)
  - *Student Engagement Change:* DIRC and CRC (LCRC) move away from “identity development” models that hyper-focus on individualism and a customer service mindset. The current LCRC student engagement model is based on cultural pathology and deficiency models which are rooted in traditions of racism and white supremacy. LCRC needs to move towards a model of tolerant inclusions. When public centers declare the entire space a “safe space” then the centers are being exclusionary to all students. Students are not learning to negotiate with differences and coping with the real world.
  - *Civic Engagement and Community Involvement:* DIRC needs to reassess its focus on identity centers and identity development for a more civic engagement/awareness of local, national and global issues in order to build a stronger unified campus community. DIRC should prioritize solidarity within groups and between groups.
  - *Meaningful Faculty Inclusion:* DIRC needs to end the informal or *de facto* practice of discouraging faculty presence or involvement in all the centers. Community or resource centers cannot be both inclusive and a safe space. The inclusion model needs to be expanded to really mean inclusion as opposed to selective exclusions as the practice of DIRC’s “inclusion.” Faculty of color are essential to the success of the centers and their presence should not be viewed as antagonistic.
  - *Meaningful Faculty Collaboration:* We request support for an annual pre-fall semester “tardeada” or “encuentro” with student affairs and faculty from the Chicax/Latinx community in order to coordinate partnerships and collaborations on the ground to create meaningful student success. This partnership will be essential for creating “Redes de comunidad” which will produce an online resource guide for Chicax/Latinx students, parents, community members/partners, faculty and administrators so that simple process of finding and forming communities within the Chicax/Latinx community will no longer have barriers.  
\*Timeline: Meeting with new VPSA with Latinx faculty reps in mid to late June. And follow up meetings with agreed upon stakeholders and constituents to be agreed upon mutually.
- **Critical Discussions and Changes in the use of Terminology:** The immediate ending of branding campus events or the labelling of the Chicax/Latinx population as “Hispanic.” Though it is a label used at the federal level, knowledgeable Chicax/Latinx professionals and

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today.

- Chicax/Latinx Public Mural on the Humanities and Social Sciences Building; murals for all communities of color across campus. The installation of display cases for art throughout the 3rd floor of Humanities where local and student artists of color will have their art on display throughout the year.
  - The creation of community events that are dedicated to bringing communities we serve onto campus for food, music, art, film festivals (only naming a few). Too often Chicax/Latinx, African American, Indigenous and APIDA communities do not feel welcomed on campus. The local communities of color who could walk onto campus frequently see the campus as a space that does not want them. We need more events to demonstrate that CSU Fullerton cares about communities of color.
  - **Administration and Collaboration: Academic and Diversity Related**
    - *Chief Diversity Officer*: The establishment of a Chief Diversity Officer selected from the faculty (similar to FDC director's appointment) who will report directly to the President who will manage, coordinate, oversee, innovate diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging units across divisions. The CDO also will be charged with creating a faculty of color to administration pipeline program and ending "color blind" policy making on campus. Color blind refers to the conservative tradition of claiming that ignoring or not seeing race is better.
    - *Chicax/Latinx Faculty Task Force*: The formation of a task force by the Academic Senate to examine the "leadership inclusion gap" on campus and to offer solutions. The committee should have a 3 year charge.
    - *Presidential Chicax/Latinx Advisory Board*: The creation of an advisory board to oversee and provide guidance from "top to bottom" institutional awareness of Chicax/Latinx success at the community, student, alumni, staff, faculty and administrative levels.
    - All initiatives need to address the systemic lack of compensation for the work that faculty of color do. For the faculty currently doing a lot of work on campus continue to see their work ignored or devalued. Changes to RTP and how Dean's compensate faculty of color are urgent areas of discussion. We call for immediate, meaningful and measurable structural university wide actions to end the cultural tax on faculty of color and faculty who work extensively with students; and those faculty who work on transformative governance.
- \*Timeline: President, Senate Chair, Provost and VP HRDI initial discussion July 2020. And a mini-restart once the new Provost is in place, new timelines will be set once the new Provost is ready. We intend in the spirit of shared governance to maintain open channels of communication and to hold our campus leader accountable as a sign of a functioning healthy campus.*