To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Jesse Arreguín
Subject: Support of Latino/Chicano Representation at UC Berkeley

RECOMMENDATION
Send a letter to UC Berkeley Chancellor Nicholas Dirks urging UC Berkeley to do more to address the underrepresentation of Latino/Chicano students, staff, and faculty.

BACKGROUND
Nearly 40% of California’s population is Latino, a statistic that continues to grow. Over 50% of high school graduates are Latino. Yet Latinos only represent 11% of UC Berkeley’s population of students, staff, and faculty. Furthermore, not a single Latino has been appointed to a senior management position since 2007.

On September 18, 2015, the Chicano Latino Alumni Association (CLAA) started a petition directed to Chancellor Nicholas Dirks outlining the disparities in representation of the Latino population. In the petition, CLAA expresses its concerns over both the lack of Latino student admittance to the University and the failure to appoint any Latinos to senior management in eight years, despite many opportunities to do so.

As one of the top universities in the world, UC Berkeley must do more in regards to representation and accessibility of underserved communities. Taking the appropriate steps to create a more inclusive environment for Latinos and other underrepresented groups is necessary for the University to help achieve its values and mission for equity and inclusion.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
None

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
No adverse effects to the environment.

CONTACT PERSON
Jesse Arreguin, Councilmember, District 4 510-981-7140
External Links:
1: [https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/letter-to-chancellor-dirks](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/letter-to-chancellor-dirks) - Chicano Latino Alumni Association Petition to Chancellor Dirks.

Attachments:
1: Letter
Dear Chancellor Nicholas Dirks,

The Berkeley City Council expresses its support for better representation of the Latino community on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. UC Berkeley, is one of the most prestigious and premier public universities in the world, and we should make sure that such a leading institution ensures it is representative of the community it serves.

Latinos make up the largest ethnic population in California, representing nearly 40% of the population. Additionally, over 50% of high school graduates are Latino (203,894 in 2014). Yet there were only 12,067 freshmen applications to UC Berkeley from Latinos, representing 6% of the graduating population, tied with Pacific Islanders for the lowest percentage of any ethnicity who applied in relation to the number of high school graduates.

Only 11% of the student, staff, and faculty population of UC Berkeley is represented by Latinos. Moreover, not a single Latino has been appointed to a senior management position at UC Berkeley since 2007, despite many opportunities to do so. The underrepresentation of the Latino community on campus has led the Chicano Latino Alumni Association (CLAA) to publish a petition urging the University to take more action to deal with the underrepresentation.

The Berkeley City Council supports this petition. If the University is to support the values of equity and inclusion, more needs to be done to ensure that underserved communities are adequately represented at all levels at the University, whether it be students, staff, or faculty. We hope that you will work with the CLAA and other appropriate groups and organizations to address these issues in a prompt and serious manner.

Sincerely,

The Berkeley City Council
The campus Chicano Latino Alumni Association launched an online petition directed at Chancellor Nicholas Dirks on Sept. 18 to highlight underrepresentation of Chicano and Latino individuals in campus senior management positions.

The petition — published by Action Network with a goal of 800 signatures — points out the disproportionate number of Chicano and Latino students, administrators and faculty members on campus in comparison with the population of Chicano and Latino individuals in California as a whole.

The document goes on to point out that Dirks "chose to attend an out-of-state Cal football game rather than attend the first Chicano Latino Legacy Celebration" and asks him to respond promptly or risk losing the CLAA's partnership as a representative of the campus.

"For us, it's about having parity and accurate representation on the student level, on the faculty level and on the higher administrative level," said Sbeydeh Viveros-Walton, a member of the CLAA who is in charge of the upcoming press release regarding the petition.

Campus spokesperson Dan Mogulof and incoming Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion Na'ilah Nasir could not be reached by phone or email.

According to a joint report from CLAA, the Chicana Latino Student Development Office and the Center for Latino Policy Research, almost 40 percent of California’s population is composed of Chicano and Latino individuals, while 11 percent of campus students, staff and faculty comes from this demographic.

The report was brought about in an effort to emphasize the presence of the Chicano and Latino community on campus, and came to fruition during the two-year planning process for the first Chicano and Latino Alumni Legacy Celebration. Its recommendations focus on increasing overall funding for the state education system, fundraising for specific groups, hiring strategies and community engagement, among other areas.
“Finding community is difficult here for some of us,” said Edgar Robles, transfer director of the Bridges Multicultural Resource Center, a coalition of seven groups advocating for underrepresented students on campus.

According to Robles, many underrepresented students come from “low-income backgrounds” and are first-generation college students.

“Coming to Cal, we don’t have resources that a lot of students have, so that’s why we do this work,” Robles said.

While the petition addresses the lack of Chicano and Latino members in senior administration and faculty, students feel affected by the issue of underrepresentation as well.

“What does it mean for our numbers to continuously be so low and underrepresented in terms of senior management leadership?” said campus senior Alejandra Lopez in an email. “What does that demonstrate to students like myself?”

Former campus chancellor Robert Birgeneau said in an email that appointments of Chicano and Latino individuals were attempted during his tenure but not always successful. Potential Chicano and Latino nominees were reached out to, but several were not able to be persuaded to accept employment because of “different reasons for the individuals involved.”

While the demands of several student minority groups have been met — such as a recent joint task force between campus administration and the campus’s Black Student Union — many groups are still actively advocating for underrepresented students.

“Other student groups and faculty groups on campus who are from underrepresented minority groups are also experiencing similar issues,” said Patricia Baquedano-Lopez, chair for the Center for Latino Policy Research and professor in the campus Graduate School of Education. “So more than anything, we hope that this is the beginning of a good conversation.”

Contact Ericka Shin and Pamela Larson at newsdesk@dailycal.org.