

## Concerned Students @ USD Demands

We, the Black Student Union, and our allies in PRIDE, the DARE Collective, other equity-minded student-led organizations, and non-affiliated student activists at the University of San Diego, stand in solidarity with the Black student activists of Mizzou, as well as those organizing similar initiatives for complete equity at educational institutions across the nation.

We come to you today to voice our grievance over our exclusion from this panel and exclusion from the planning of this week's events "related to issues of exclusion and inequality," that is, Black students' actions against aggressive racial oppression at Mizzou. One of the reasons why the successful protests at Mizzou are important is because they were student-led initiatives. Black students are, and have been historically, under-represented, ignored and abused within academia. Black students at Mizzou reclaimed their space and their power at their educational institution – we, the Black Student Union at USD, will follow suit. The following is a list of demands, drafted by a diverse group of students with the intention of remaining intersectional in our construction of revolutionary change.

### Campus Culture and Leadership

- I. We demand that President James Harris publicly state that Black Lives Matter. We demand that he do so without the clause "All Lives Matter" – for though all lives do matter, Black lives in particular have been the target of 400 years of unabated brutality. Such a clause invalidates the struggle and full humanity of Black people.
- II. We demand that the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, the United Front Multicultural Center, and other centers on campus dedicated to diversity and social justice be radically decolonized and student-run. This includes a reevaluation of the operations of these centers, the nature of the support and funding they receive, and the extent to which they achieve their professed intentions.
- III. We demand that the university's current mascot, Diego Torero, be replaced by a non-human mascot, as Diego Torero is a racist and derogatory caricature of Spanish men.
- IV. We demand more people of color, queer-identified people and women represented in positions of administrative and student leadership.

- V. We demand the active inclusion of cultural, LGBT and feminist student organizations in the planning of campus events related to the concerns of these organizations.
- VI. We demand the increased visibility of existing Black and multicultural Greek life on campus and ease of chartering for emerging chapters. We demand that representatives from Black and multicultural Greek organizations be present at the Alcala Bazaar, USD Greek functions, and other Greek events and operations.
- VII. We demand the creation of a comprehensive orientation on racial, gender, and queer inclusion and diversity, mandatory to students, staff, faculty and administration and maintained by a board comprised of students, staff and faculty from diverse, less privileged backgrounds.
- VIII. We demand that representatives from the university's administration acknowledge the colonialist legacy of Junípero Serra, who established the Catholic California mission system that massacred the vast majority of native peoples in California. We demand that Serra Hall be renamed to a designation chosen by a coalition of native students, staff and faculty.
- IX. We demand that Yik Yak, an anonymous social media application, be banned from the USD area, as it provides a platform for hate speech inflected with racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and, especially recently, islamophobia, amongst several other bigotries.
- X. We demand the installation of gender-neutral bathrooms in every building on campus.

## Education

- I. We demand the increased employment of faculty of color and women faculty in every academic department, in every school at USD. In particular, we demand a 10% increase in the number of tenured Black professors in every academic department by November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 5 years from today.
- II. We demand the expansion of the Ethnic Studies department, which, in its current state, fails to meet the educational needs of the campus. There are currently 4 full-time faculty in the Ethnic Studies department. We demand that this number is tripled to 12 full-time faculty by November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 5 years from today. We demand a significant increase in the number of Ethnic Studies courses provided each semester and the Ethnic Studies events made available to the entire university.

- III. We demand that an Ethnic Studies course be a core curriculum requirement for all students. We also demand a rigorous reevaluation of the courses that currently fulfill the core curriculum's diversity requirement, led by a board comprised of faculty of color who would be compensated for this service.
- IV. We demand the development of a Gender and Queer Studies department with at least 12 full-time faculty.
- V. We demand greater diversity in the honors program, in particular a dramatic increase in the number of Black and Latinx honors students, within the next 3 years.

#### Admissions, Retention and Support

- I. We demand that the university strengthen its partnerships with high schools with large populations of students of color, including, but not limited to: Lincoln, Mission Bay, Garfield, Hoover, and Mar Vista, to promote the admission of more a more diverse group of students to USD.
- II. We demand that all statistics and promotional material for USD be reevaluated and revised for accuracy, particularly in regard to the population of students, staff, and faculty of color, by a committee of student and faculty representatives of color and third-party statisticians.
- III. We demand a rigorous revision of meal plan options, led by a diverse coalition of students, to make them more accommodating to socioeconomically disadvantaged students, commuter students, and students with alternative dietary needs. We also demand that the food prices on campus be more affordable. We demand that nutrition and nourishment be accessible to all students.
- IV. We demand a reformation of the university's distribution of financial aid, such that it is significantly more accommodating for students of working- and middle-class backgrounds. This reformation must include the following adjustments:
  - a. Students continue to pay the amount of annual tuition that they paid their first year in the succeeding years of their education, unless the change in tuition is advantageous to them, i.e., the cost of tuition lowers in the succeeding years.
  - b. Students awarded external scholarships will not have their financial aid, provided by the university, diminished in any way. Outside scholarships and financial aid awards will remain completely separate and one will not have bearing on the other.

- c. Students who live on campus will not have their financial aid diminished if they choose to move off campus.
  
- V. We demand that the university greatly increase the number of counselors of color in both Career Services and Student Wellness. We also demand an increase in resources and support groups for queer and trans students of color.
  
- VI. We demand that donors and patrons of USD have absolutely no monopoly upon the politics, configuration and affairs of the university. The university's recent history has demonstrated how such inequitable power breaches the intellectual freedom that educational institutions such as USD are required to defend and utterly corrupts university administration.

Finally, we demand that the students involved in the implementation of these demands, and the faculty and staff supporting them, do not suffer negative repercussions as they engage in this process of systematic and cultural change.

The University of San Diego proclaims to be a Changemaker campus committed to "creating a diverse and inclusive community and preparing leaders who are dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service." Changemaking must begin from within and we ask that the university stand by its professed values now, by critically examining the aforementioned aspects of the campus culture that are exclusionary, alienating, and invalidating to its marginalized students. We, too, are USD, and out of revolutionary love challenge the university to honor its commitment to justice through the immediate observance of these demands, not only for the sake of our intellectual and personal well-being, but for the sake of ethical integrity and the hope for the widespread liberation of historically oppressed peoples.