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Title

Keynote Address, UC Chicano-Latino Consortium Second Annual Convocation

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

UC Chicano-Latino Consortium Second Annual Convocation

David P. Gardner, President
University of California

February 21, 1989
Los Angeles

Members of the Consortium, ladies and gentlemen:

I appreciate this opportunity to visit with you this evening about how, together, we can further the task of creating a University community that is as interesting, diverse, and pluralistic as California itself. I will try, briefly, to give you my sense of where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going in terms of this goal, especially as it bears upon the presence of Chicanos and Latinos in the University of California.

Throughout UC's 120 years of existence, scholarships, fellowships, loans, and work opportunities have been offered by the University to assist its economically disadvantaged students. This year, however, marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the University's initial effort to increase the enrollment of disadvantaged minority students--what was called in 1964 the Educational Opportunity Program.

Ten years later, spurred in part by a concern over the levelling off of Hispanic enrollment in the University, the University mounted a series of additional student affirmative

action efforts, e. g., the Early Outreach and Immediate Outreach Programs, community college transfer student recruitment, and a variety of student affirmative action support services.

The seventies also saw the beginning of employee affirmative action programs, extending to staff and professional development, design professionals, and business contracting. Indeed, during the 1970s the University was a national leader in seeking to develop these kinds of affirmative action programs.

In the field of graduate and faculty affirmative action, an increasing number of programs--the Graduate Outreach Program, Research Assistantships and Mentorships, Dissertation Year Fellowships, the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, and the Target of Opportunity for Diversity Program, among others--have extended the scope and reach of our efforts, many of them having served as models for similar efforts begun in other universities and colleges comparably committed to improving access and retention throughout the range and levels of university education.

While we can all find fault with parts of these efforts, we should also seek to take account of the advances and progress these 25 years have brought:

Historically underrepresented minority students enrolled as undergraduates at UC nearly doubled in number between 1977 and 1987, growing from 8,260 in 1977 to 16,178 in 1987. The percentage of these groups--Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians--among entering freshmen has been increasing at the rate of about 1 percent each year and now represents over 18 percent of the entering class;

For some years now, the University of California has hired minority and women faculty in a proportion comparable to or above their availability, as defined by the production of Ph.D. recipients in each discipline (although I wish to note that--as this audience well knows--availability is unacceptably low and must be dramatically improved if we are to make meaningful progress in the years to come);

The University's graduate student affirmative action programs include a strong representation of young Chicano/Latino scholars, who now make up 30 percent of this year's participants in the President's Fellowship Program; 45 percent of the Ph.D. candidates who have received President's Dissertation Year Fellowships; and 43 percent of the graduate students since 1984-85 who

have received Affirmative Action Graduate Research Assistantships or Mentorships.

During the past nine years, UCLA has ranked second, and Berkeley third, among the nation's top ten doctoral-granting universities in the number of doctorates awarded to Chicanos/Latinos in the academic disciplines;

Minorities now represent over a third of UC staff and management. Representation of Chicanos/Latinos, in particular, has increased significantly across all occupational categories. The greatest increases have occurred in the professional and management ranks, where the number of such staff has increased by 114 percent and 186 percent, respectively, since 1977, although we have not yet done as well at the upper ranks of our executive program.

These, of course, are first steps, and in that sense they represent more the difficult and halting first steps down this path than they do the coming journey itself. For example:

Although UC undergraduate enrollment of Hispanics, Blacks, and Native Americans has risen dramatically, the

statewide UC eligibility rate of students from these groups has risen only slightly, and remains not just disturbingly, but unacceptably, low;

Although we can be encouraged by the increase in the enrollment of women and minority students in many of our professional schools, we need promptly to address the discouragingly small percentage of minorities in our graduate programs and on our faculties, and to broaden their spread across disciplines;

Although the total number of minorities and women on the staff has risen, the number of women and minorities among our ladder-rank faculty, and the number of minorities in upper-level administrative positions, have not increased as significantly as had been hoped;

Although the University's record is crucial here, we cannot lose sight of the impact on educational opportunity of the State's schools, and how higher education might be of help in staunching the hemorrhage of high school dropouts in the Chicano and Latino community--as you know, roughly 40 percent of Hispanic students who enter high school will not complete it.

In short, as I told the Chancellors in my letter to them of

last fall on this general subject, "The University's experience has been at once encouraging and discouraging . . . while we have made steady, indeed even dramatic progress, we have not done so evenly across all areas or campuses, including our business and purchasing affirmative action programs."

The University's goal here is in every respect consistent with the role it has historically striven to play in California, that is, to serve the people of our State and to advance the cause of learning. Everything we are, everything we do flows from the imperative to contribute, in ways that only universities can contribute, to the well-being of this state, to its people, and to the advancement of knowledge. Thus, any look at where we are headed must take account of contemporary California.

And California today is in the midst of pervasive and far-reaching change.

First, as I need not tell this group, California's demography is changing. It is changing dramatically and at an accelerating pace. The proportion of students from Asian and Hispanic backgrounds is rising, the proportion of Blacks is roughly stable and will perhaps modestly decline, and the proportion of non-Hispanic Whites is declining, and will

continue to do so. Although Asian-Americans will be growing at the fastest rate of any minority in California between now and the turn of the century, Hispanics will remain, proportionately, the largest minority group in California, and by a very considerable margin, roughly equal numerically to all other minority groups combined.

These changes are having profound effects on California's economy, education, cultural, social, and political life, and they will become more encompassing, not less, over time. These forces and influences will transform our society in enduring ways, and will affect virtually every aspect of life in our State, including the institutions that make up such an important part of California today, UC among them.

Second, our 25-year effort to diversify the University community has made it clear that the road to educational opportunity begins even before school and is enduringly marked by the school experience. Thus, UC's ability to influence these forces, while consequential, is not determinative, impacted as it is by forces in the larger society and conditions in the State's schools that will, in combination, have far more influence on our society generally, and on UC's options in particular, than we are comfortable in acknowledging.

Some recent and welcome changes, however, have improved the educational climate in California. Reforms in the State's public K-12 sector have raised hopes that the general quality of education might be rising for a change. For example, test scores are rising marginally after years of decline; differences in the rate of UC enrollment of students from California's ethnic groups have narrowed (although only at the margin); demand for UC admission among eligible high school graduates has increased dramatically; a reformulated University application system has broadened campus choices for prospective students; and most UC campuses have expanded enrollment and are poised for growth, resources permitting.

The California environment, in sum, presents us with reasons for modest optimism, tempered by a profound sense of urgency. With dedication and some measure of luck, we should be able to build on both.

Let me now turn to where we go from here.

As you know, in June of last year I met with representatives of the UC Chicano/Latino Consortium to discuss their concerns and their hopes regarding the future of Chicanos and Latinos in the University. During this past year I have also met with representatives of the Asian American Task Force on Admissions, the UC Black Eligibility Task Force, and others

involved with the issue of UC diversity. My letter of last September 25th to the Chancellors was based, in part, on those conversations and on my profound sense of our need to get on with the task of helping California and UC respond to a changing world. In that letter, I mentioned several steps I intended to take, and some of these points bear repeating:

First, it is my intention to strengthen the President's Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program, the UC Dissertation Year Fellowship Program, and various graduate outreach programs for minority and women graduate students. I also intend to add funds to strengthen campus-based student affirmative action programs.

I have asked Senior Vice President Frazer to develop, in coordination with the campuses, a UC program that will enable us to tap into the growing pool of minority undergraduates to identify and encourage those willing to consider an academic career, and then to help them realize the first step toward this goal by assisting them in their graduate studies. Despite the University's difficult budgetary situation, the 1989-90 budget includes two million dollars for these and related programs, funds I have reallocated for these purposes, rather than waiting to seek them from the Legislature.

I have asked Senior Vice President Brady to recruit an Executive Director, reporting directly to him, to help us improve our effectiveness in identifying and employing greater numbers of minorities and women, particularly in upper-level management and administrative positions, as well as to improve the rate at which we use minority-owned and women-owned businesses. I am pleased that we have just found a talented and seasoned person to fill that crucial slot-- Ms. Carmen Estrada of Los Angeles, who joins us officially as of April 1.

Finally, I have asked Vice Presidents Frazer and Brady each to appoint advisory committees, broadly representative of the University community, to advise them in their respective areas of responsibility on matters of affirmative action, and to advise me on those recommendations in the Chicano/Latino's June 1988 report that are addressed to the University in general and to the Office of the President in particular.

My letter also asked each Chancellor to improve and strengthen campus programs intended to increase minority representation and the representation of women in areas where they are underrepresented; to foster mutual respect and

understanding among all ethnic and racial groups on campus; to review their affirmative action programs, and report to me on any planned changes. And I also asked the Chancellors, among other things, to respond to the Chicano/Latino Consortium's report.

As you know, the campus responses to the Consortium's report are now in, excepting UCSC's, which is due in momentarily. I note from your agenda that they were a topic for discussion this morning. I have read your analysis of them and will welcome your further comments about them.

My own sense of the campus responses is that they give us a useful point of departure to monitor progress and to assess in a more coherent and systematic way how each campus is doing, measured against its own expectations, as well as providing a referent for the intentions of one campus compared and contrasted with the other eight. Every campus, of course, is not equally ready to address comprehensively all the issues that are relevant, but we have made a reasonable beginning and, in some instances, an excellent one. I intend to encourage each campus to pursue what it plans to do, as set forth in its response, to examine and consider areas requiring some additional attention, and to monitor systematically and regularly the efforts of the nine campuses, and those of my own office as well.

At the beginning of this month Senior Vice President Frazer sent to each of the Chancellors a list of the nearly 100 scholars who have received President's Dissertation Year Fellowships since the Program's inception in 1986-87, urging them to distribute the list widely to departments planning to recruit new faculty. This is in line with what I told the Academic Senate on November 29th--that we should be encouraging departments, more systematically and carefully, to consider for appointment minority and women graduate students who complete UC doctoral programs.

We are planning an All-University Faculty Conference--the first in 15 years--expressly for the purpose of discussing UC's affirmative action efforts and how they can be improved. A faculty advisory committee has been appointed and planning has already begun under Senior Vice President Frazer's direction.

I have just received the report of the SCR 43 Task Force, "The University of California: A Plan for Universitywide Diversity," but have not yet had an opportunity either to read it carefully or study its recommendations.

So much for examples of current plans and possibilities. I wish to conclude these remarks with a few personal

observations.

There are now nearly 12,000 Hispanic undergraduates enrolled at the University of California--a revolution unimaginable, it was believed, as recently as a decade ago. Among UC-eligible Hispanic students, your efforts, and the University's, have paid off handsomely. This effort needs to be sustained and strengthened as we see our way clear to do so.

Now we need also to find ways of helping the schools increase the UC eligibility rates of historically underrepresented minority students and to increase their presence in our graduate schools. Both of these efforts must successfully be undertaken if we are to expect material improvement in the percentages of such persons serving on our faculties, studying in our graduate and professional schools, and working among the ranks of our most consequential administrative positions. We will be seeking your assistance in these endeavors, especially as they affect Chicano and Latino students; and I intend to have programs responsive to these goals as quickly as we can get them in place.

Finally, I want to say a few words about my role as President. For some time now I have rarely had a

conversation with a legislator--and I meet with a significant proportion of the California Legislature during each session--in which I did not bring up, in one way or another, the issues I have talked about tonight. Similarly, as we have gone through the budget process, I have consistently urged the importance of responding to California's growing racial pluralism in discussions with the Governor, with State officials, with the business community, and with leaders in every domain of California's public and private life.

In my regular meetings with the Chancellors, affirmative action-related issues have appeared on our agenda some 25 times over the past two years--at virtually every meeting, in other words; and these issues come up with similar frequency in my meetings with the Vice Presidents. In meetings with faculty, students, and staff, I have sought to encourage involvement in the problems and prospects we face in making UC more encompassing of contemporary California. In my visits to various areas of California, in public speeches to business and civic groups, alumni and friends of the University, I have tried to make the subject of what is happening in this state and the strategic need to respond a visible, compelling, and prominent issue on California's public agenda, and on my agenda as President of the University of California.

I stress this because I believe there is nothing more important for California than dealing creatively, expeditiously, and successfully with the complex set of conditions we confront. The University, of course, is not an organization in which orders from the top, by themselves, accomplish very much--and, in any case, it may be possible to issue orders but it is impossible to order results. As this group will especially appreciate, the University is a place in which persuasion and reason are, and should be, the most powerful engines of change, buttressed by a foundation of mutual respect and trust, whatever our individual differences may be.

Progress will only occur as there is a genuine desire on the part of people to make it happen, and that is a matter of our earning one another's confidence through our actions as well as our words. We will be infinitely better off, and we will be far more likely to obtain progress of a kind that we all wish, if our energies, time, and efforts are expended in collaborative as against contentious activities. The style and tone of our relationships will have a profound influence on whether we focus our energies or dissipate them.

I realize that this group is, in many respects, the first wave of role models for the young Chicanos and Latinos who are entering the University in increasing numbers every year.

I recognize that a significant portion of your time is taken up with the need to serve that role and to reach out in your communities to help others, especially those who are coming into the University or who are considering it. I thank you for that, especially because it is a contribution that you can make with such positive effect. And it is altogether right that you should keep track of UC's successes and failures in these matters and offer encouragement or criticism where they are warranted. I have every reason to believe that we can find constructive uses for both in a spirit of common commitment and mutual respect.

Racial and ethnic pluralism is one of our hallmarks as a nation, a state, and increasingly as a university. We rightly celebrate all it has contributed to our society, all it has meant to us in both our public and our private lives, while also acknowledging the rough roads our nation has followed in its collective effort to accommodate these forces and influences over time. But diversity, in and of itself, is not enough to make a community. A community requires a unity of purpose and a coming together in support of common goals and a common vision of what we can be and where we want to go, together. I sometimes feel that we have ample diversity in our society, but precious little unity. Perhaps, working together toward a better tomorrow for all of our people, those of us in UC will be able to show how

change, racial and ethnic pluralism, and a sense of community can be accomplished simultaneously. At least, it seems to me, we have the obligation to try.