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A Space Between Us: Do Cultural Spaces Improve UC Undergraduate Student Life?

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Introduction

What is diversity? According to the *University of California's* "Diversity Statement," it "refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance" (Regents Policy 4400). The diversity of California is the reason that universities try to have a diverse student population, and for many students, choosing a university or college to attend can come down to how diverse the campus is. One way prospective students can investigate this is by looking into how many cultural resource centers exist on the campus of interest. Cultural resource centers aim to be a space of inclusion, while honoring certain backgrounds such as race, gender, and disabilities. The existence of cultural resource centers alone can create a "safe space" or "second home" for many minority and historically marginalized students. However, there have been questions behind the intention of these cultural spaces that impose their existence as a form of segregation and isolation of communities of color. Therefore, I ask: "What is the debate behind cultural spaces on UC campuses?" and "Do they have a direct relationship with students of color satisfaction?"

At the University of California, there were more satisfied students of color than there were unsatisfied (UCUES). Therefore, I am analyzing if there is a direct relationship between higher satisfaction and quantity and quality of cultural resource centers. To do so, I will first explain the mission of cultural resource centers, along with the debate behind them. Then, I will use a Likert scale to determine the average of students of color satisfaction at each UC campus. Following these results, I will determine the quality of cultural resource centers at each UC campus, and create an index scale to measure so. If there is any correlation between satisfaction of students of color and cultural resource centers, then I will be able to analyze the debate behind the creation and continuation of cultural spaces.

Significance and Background

California is home to a very diverse population of people. According to the 2020 Census, 39% of people identify as Latino, 35% as White, 15% Asian or Pacific Islander, 5% Black, 4% multiracial, and less than 1% is Native American or Alaska Natives. And, according to the July 2022 Census Bureau estimates, California has a population of 39 million. Of this 39 million, over 10 million are immigrants (Johnson, et al.). Using this information, we can see that no group constitutes a majority of California's population. California being so diverse, and of course home to the UC campuses, their mission has been to create spaces for people of all backgrounds that coddle the diversity of the growing population.

It is why the UC's have taken opportunities to achieve diversity among the student body and employers as well (Regents Policy 4400). As mentioned, they created cultural spaces, such as resource centers for the sake of diversity and inclusion, aiming to make students of color more comfortable. One way they track the comfort level of students is by a yearly climate survey. Each UC campus utilizes this method to see how their students are doing in terms of social experience, academic value, belonging, and so on. Every two years, they share the results of the "UC Undergraduate Experience Survey." It emphasizes the number of how many students took the survey, and how many agree or disagree with various statements such as "I feel I belong at this university" (UCUES). One feature of this database is that you are able to filter it by UC campus, race/ethnicity, gender, etc. This means that I could individually look at each UC campus to figure out how African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian students responded to the statements provided. Most questions listed on the survey aren't detailed, but they do touch on belonging, academia, and how good administrators are about acknowledging the differences of

the student body. However, there are still other factors that exist individually and collectively among students that could influence student satisfaction.

By definition, student satisfaction is a “short-term attitude resulting from an evaluation of a student’s educational experience” (Elliott and Healy 2). It results when institutions meet or exceed student expectations. Colleges and universities can build their numbers on student satisfaction by treating their students in a fair and equitable manner, and of course, by taking any of their suggestions or complaints seriously (Elliott and Healy 2). In a study, it was found that student satisfaction is reliant on “student centeredness,” “campus climate,” “instructional effectiveness” (Elliot and Healy 1), as well as class size (Appleton-Knapp and Krentler 255). On a more personal level, student satisfaction was also found to be reliant on age, gender, employment, temperament, preferred learning style, and GPA (Appleton-Knapp and Krentler 255). The student satisfaction score should give anyone who is researching a specific educational institution an idea of what campus is like for those students and if their needs are being met.

Universities are incentivized to grow student satisfaction because it not only benefits its students' environment, but it benefits the overall quality and name of the institution. This is because students who are satisfied with their institution are more likely to stay enrolled and recommend them to prospective students (Wong and Chapman). Student satisfaction with a college or university can also form a loyalty bond between both the student and the institution, creating potential benefits, such as gifts for an institution on behalf of an alumni, or student. These gifts can consist of alumni participation, alumni engagement such as direct financial support, and employment opportunities for current students and new graduates (Wong and Chapman). Any educational institution should strive for better numbers when it comes to students' overall well-being because it benefits more than just the students. With that being said,

student satisfaction varies, and different factors can contribute to that feeling. Now considering the existence of cultural resource centers, their goal has been to maximize student engagement, learning, and success, while promoting and preserving their history (Hypolite). Therefore, there could be a connection between the quality and quantity of cultural resource centers on UC campuses and student satisfaction. However, there are still opposing viewpoints that portray the existence of these centers as something negative, which has created conflicting thoughts that could jeopardize student satisfaction.

Previous research done by other scholars about cultural spaces seem to agree with the UC's mission of diversifying the campuses. Cultural spaces are described as "safe spaces," which are "crucial to demonstrating university diversity values" (Boyd 36). These safe spaces build community and offer an incentive to minority students looking to attend a college or university. Patton explained the importances of these cultural spaces by describing what it's like for Black students in higher education with and without cultural spaces. What she found was that in one campus with no Black culture center, Black students felt invisible, undermined, and defensive, with nowhere to turn to because peers didn't understand them, and their voices weren't being heard (Patton). However, at a different campus that had a Black culture center, similar feelings were there. Black students once again felt invisible, undermined, and defensive, but because they had a cultural space, they felt validated and supported, while receiving assistance and resources that would help them succeed (Patton). Black students found a community at these centers; one in which nurtures their development, recognizes their cultural perspective, and listens to them (Patton). Patton had stated, "They have a physical location where they feel a sense of belonging, a space grounded in their particular experiences" (Patton). If

cultural resource centers are responsible for creating a community for these students of color, why are there conflicting thoughts about these centers?

| UC CAMPUS | Grade |
|-----------|---------|
| UCSB | D- |
| UCI | D- |
| UCSD | F |
| UCB | F |
| UCR | F |
| UCD | F- |
| UCLA | F- |
| UCM | No Data |
| UCSC | No Data |

Figure 1: chart highlighting UC grades based on *Dean's List*

Turning Point USA founder, Charlie Kirk, has made comments about the living communities at various campuses across the United States including California. He had stated, “Why would we have different dormitories for races...Segregation is what you are arguing for-” (Kirk). Although this particular statement is about dormitories, it relates to cultural resource centers because it was his organization, TPUSA, that had launched *Dean's List*. This is a search engine that grades institutions of higher education based on certain qualities including average salary of recent graduates, average debt of graduates, and segregation. This search engine had graded the majority of the UC campuses an *F* or *lower* (figure 1). After looking at each individual UC campus, one reason their grading was significantly lower than other universities was due to the apparent “segregated” spaces for students of color.

Patton also analyzed the debate behind cultural spaces, specifically of Black culture centers. There is an idea that these centers promote “separatism” and encourage Black students to only depend on each other. There is also the belief that they prevent them from integrating into the larger campus environment (Patton). Because of these viewpoints, the debate behind cultural resource centers persists. We need to figure out if cultural spaces, such as cultural research

centers, are even worth having on UC campuses. In order to determine their worth, we need to see if students of color are “happier” at an institution that contains these spaces, or if they don’t play a role at all and student satisfaction is prominent at any UC campus regardless of cultural centers.

Theory and Argument

I argue that student satisfaction is reliant on the quality and quantity of cultural resource centers that exist on each UC campus. Therefore, there shouldn’t be a debate about whether or not cultural centers cause more harm than good. Many counter arguments that went against cultural spaces on, not only the UC campuses, but other colleges and universities as well, were looking at this issue from a political stance. Turning Point USA was using words like “segregation” (Dean’s List), which that word alone has a long history of racial discrimination, civil rights, and politics. Their argument puts forward the idea that educational institutions are moving backwards, and instead of abiding by what was fought for, such as the right to use the same resources as white people, institutions are encouraging that students segregate all over again. However, TPUSA isn’t thinking about the issue from a different perspective, such as that of a historically marginalized community seeking higher education. Therefore, I offer the following hypothesis: *The existence of cultural resource centers on UC campuses leads to an increase in student of color satisfaction.*

My independent variable will be cultural resource centers on nine undergraduate UC campuses. The cultural resource centers I will consider for this project are those dedicated to a specific race and ethnicity, meaning I will not count a multicultural or cross cultural center. My dependent variable will be satisfaction of students of color on each undergraduate UC campus. In order to operationalize my independent variable, I measured student satisfaction by measuring

quality and quantity of cultural resource centers. My goal is to see if there is any correlation between high satisfaction and the quality/quantity of cultural resource centers. The causal mechanism between my dependent and independent variables is that cultural resource centers affect student satisfaction because the more centers there are, the more support services students will have in terms of academics, professional development, and cultural awareness. It also gives individual students the chance to build community with others that share similar experiences, stories, and overall background. This is because they are able to gain involvement and leadership skills, historical pride and identity, self preservation, and matter (Patton). Patton's research is the reason I chose to discuss quality as one of the independent variables. Cultural resource centers are nothing without the actual resources and support. Student satisfaction cannot properly be measured if I don't take into account the quality of a resource center, because what good is having one resource center if it doesn't offer a variety of support services that would help students succeed?

If cultural resource centers aren't responsible for student of color satisfaction, there are other possible explanations as to why one UC campus is reporting low or high satisfaction rates while having a lot or a few cultural resource centers. The confounding variable could be student-run organizations, also known as clubs. Clubs are known to distribute resources to a designated community, while helping its members form relationships with other members. There could be student-run cultural organizations on many UC campuses, which could affect student satisfaction in a positive way. Other possible explanations that could add a limitation to my independent variable would be student enrollment. Students may look at this as a factor in their decision to commit to a certain school. For example, if Black students see a high percentage of Black students enrolled at a university, they may be more incentivized to attend. As a result,

student of color satisfaction could be higher because of student enrollment. Existing resources such as a food pantry, or free health products that are accessible to students could lead to a higher rate of student satisfaction. Thus, student of color satisfaction wouldn't just be dependent on cultural resource centers, but also other variables that improve their college experience.

Research Design

I will be testing my hypotheses to determine how cultural resource centers impact student satisfaction at the University of California. In order to do so, I need to look at both the quality and quantity of the centers at each UC. My assumption is that the more cultural resource centers there are on campus, the higher satisfaction will be among students of color. Also, the quality of existing cultural resource centers contributes to student satisfaction. The better the quality, the higher satisfaction will be, and the lower the quality, the lower student satisfaction will be. The units of analysis will be the nine undergraduate University of California campuses.

In order to measure my dependent variable, specifically satisfaction of students of color, I used the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) from 2022. I was able to select student groups from the UC's by race and ethnicity, and filter to which campuses I wanted to include. For this method, I collected the information regarding how many students were satisfied at each UC campus. The race and ethnicities the survey had available that I selected to include were African American, American Indian, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian. Because I am not looking at each individual race and ethnicity's satisfaction, I decided to collectively gather the total satisfaction among those groups at each UC, and then compare them from campus to campus. Luckily, the UCUES database had a tool that could calculate how many students of color took the survey at each campus.

"I feel I belong at this university"

| Campus | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Total |
|--------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| UCSB | 3% | 6% | 12% | 31% | 34% | 13% | 4028 |
| UCR | 2% | 4% | 10% | 30% | 38% | 17% | 5023 |
| UCD | 2% | 3% | 8% | 28% | 42% | 17% | 4829 |
| UCB | 3% | 6% | 12% | 30% | 33% | 16% | 7191 |
| UCSD | 3% | 6% | 12% | 33% | 35% | 11% | 6335 |
| UCSC | 3% | 5% | 13% | 32% | 33% | 13% | 2977 |
| UCI | 2% | 5% | 10% | 31% | 38% | 14% | 4990 |
| UCM | 2% | 3% | 9% | 29% | 38% | 18% | 1807 |
| UCLA | 2% | 5% | 9% | 29% | 37% | 18% | 4771 |

Figure 2: Data collected from UCUES database

Data source: University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey, 2022.

To operationalize my dependent variable, I decided to find the average of satisfied students of color by creating a Likert scale to measure certain attitudes or beliefs towards the statement, "I feel I belong at this university." The scale will run from 1-6 with "strongly disagree" being 1, and "strongly agree" being 6 (figure 2). Initially, what this is doing is providing certain percentages shown in figure 2 more or less weight. More weight was given to stronger feelings of agreement towards said statement. After multiplying each percentage tab at each UC by their assigned weight, I will add up each row, and individually find each UC's finished grade of satisfaction by using the Likert scale.

After measuring student satisfaction at each UC campus, I was able to operationalize my independent variable in order to test my hypothesis. To do so, I need to measure the *quantity* and *quality* of cultural resource centers. I found the quantity of these centers from each campus by searching through their student resources website. I decided to only consider the designated student of color resource centers. These were centers dedicated to Black students, Chicano/Latino students, Asian and Pacific Islander students, Native students, Middle Eastern, North African, and South Asian students. By gathering how many cultural resource centers there are on each campus, I will be able to determine whether or not there is a relationship between

student satisfaction and the amount of available centers. I also need to account for the population at each UC campus because some UC's have more than others. Therefore, I will find how many cultural resource centers are available per 5000 students. This will either support or not support my hypothesis because if there is a campus that has more centers per student, then satisfaction could also be higher at that campus, as opposed to a UC that actually has more resource centers by the quantity. There are data limitations for this measurement because finding undergraduate student population by race and ethnicity has been challenging. Thus, I will just use the total number of undergraduate students enrolled at the UC's. I figured that there would be some campuses that may have a similar amount of centers, but different satisfaction levels. Therefore, I need to measure quality as well.

To measure quality, I will create an index scale in order to “grade” each UC campus by how good their existing resource centers are. This data will come from the UC's cultural resource centers websites. The index scale will be from 0-1, and depending on their final grading, it will show how accessible these centers are and how well put together they are for the sake of their students. When I create the index, I am using a 0-1 point scale system for each individual four categories that are being evaluated for each center at each campus. Of these four categories, each one can gain the highest score of 1, or the lowest score of 0. It will be a “yes” or “unclear” system; for every yes, the center will receive 0.25 points; if I can't find what I am looking for, it will be 0 points. For example, if UC Santa Barbara's Chicano/Latino center is open at least 40 hours a week, they will receive 0.25 points. If they don't host events, that will be a 0, and if they receive two more zeros, their total score on a 0-1 index scale will be 0.25/1. I will then move on to the next center they have.

The first category will aim to figure out if each cultural resource center is open at least 40 hours a week. Longer hours will allow for more accessibility and longer range of available times for busy students. Sometimes students have classes on certain days. Therefore, they wouldn't be able to attend, but if there is a longer duration of hours, there is a higher chance that students will find open time to access available resources.

The second category accounts for academic support such as access to tutoring at the center, free academic supplies such as printing, paper, etc, and study groups. If a center has at least one of these academic resources, then they will receive 0.25 points on the index scale. The reason I chose academic support/resources is because sometimes students are more comfortable in an intimate environment. They will have access to tutoring sessions that really cater to the needs of those specific students. Any supplies that are provided will also aid in supporting financially challenged students at the designated institution.

The third category is whether or not the centers host events that honor their students' culture. Events are important for socializing because it will give students of color a chance to meet students that are just like them in terms of background, culture, and even physical appearance. This is a chance for students to really build a community at the UC's, and make long-lasting friendships that will support each other when things get tough both academically and mentally. Events are also an opportunity for students to explore their identity, or explore different cultures outside of their own. Events support diversity at any institution because they could increase cultural awareness.

The fourth and final category on the index scale is professional development. This supports students discovering how they want to advance their future post university. It also aids them in finding jobs or internships, scholarships, as well as preparing students for job interviews,

resume building, cover letters. Having professional development available at cultural resource centers gives students of color a chance to truly connect with higher education and the meaning behind it. A lot of students of color in the UC system are first generation college students (University of California), which makes professional development very necessary for these communities. The first generation college students often need more support in these areas simply because they are first generation, meaning many can't rely on a parent or guardian for this type of support.

For the final grading of each UC, I will take the total amount of points each center received and divide it by how many centers they have. Then I will take this average and multiply by 100 to get the index scale of 0-100. This method has one weakness due to the UC's having a different amount of cultural resource centers. However, it also offers a fair scoring of each UC because not every UC has the same student population, and as a result they may not have the same resource centers. Therefore, the grading will demonstrate how good of quality the centers are for what each UC offers, but because of this issue, I will also offer a second grading of the UC's cultural centers while also considering the centers they don't have.

Results and Analysis

Assessment of Cultural Resource Centers on UC Campuses

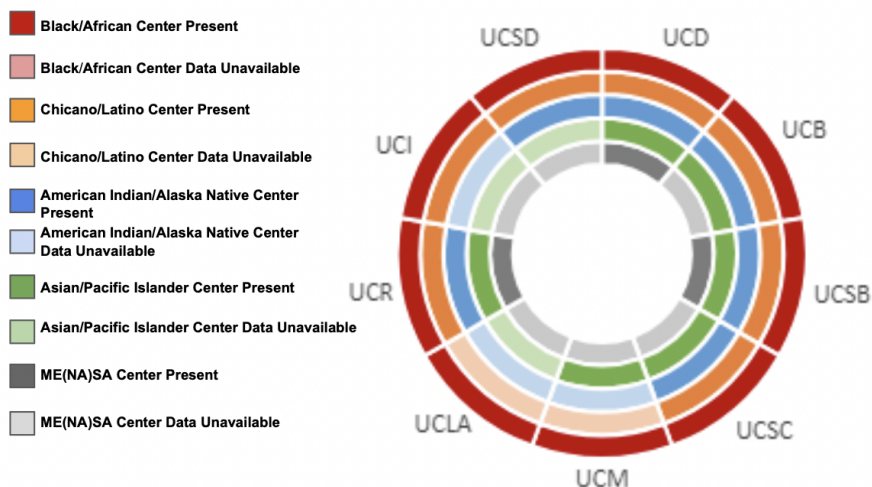


Figure 3: quantity of centers each UC has

Data Source: UC websites

After measuring the quantity of cultural resource centers at each UC campus, I discovered that UC Davis, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara have more cultural resource centers than the other UC's. They actually lead the list with the same quantity of five (figure 3). As we can see, UC Davis, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara checked all the boxes for the cultural resource centers I was looking for. Other UC's resource centers like UC Los Angeles were more difficult to find. I was very surprised to see it only has one, the *Black Bruin Resource Center*, opened in 2020 (UCLA Black Bruin Resource Center), considering how populated it is (figure 3).

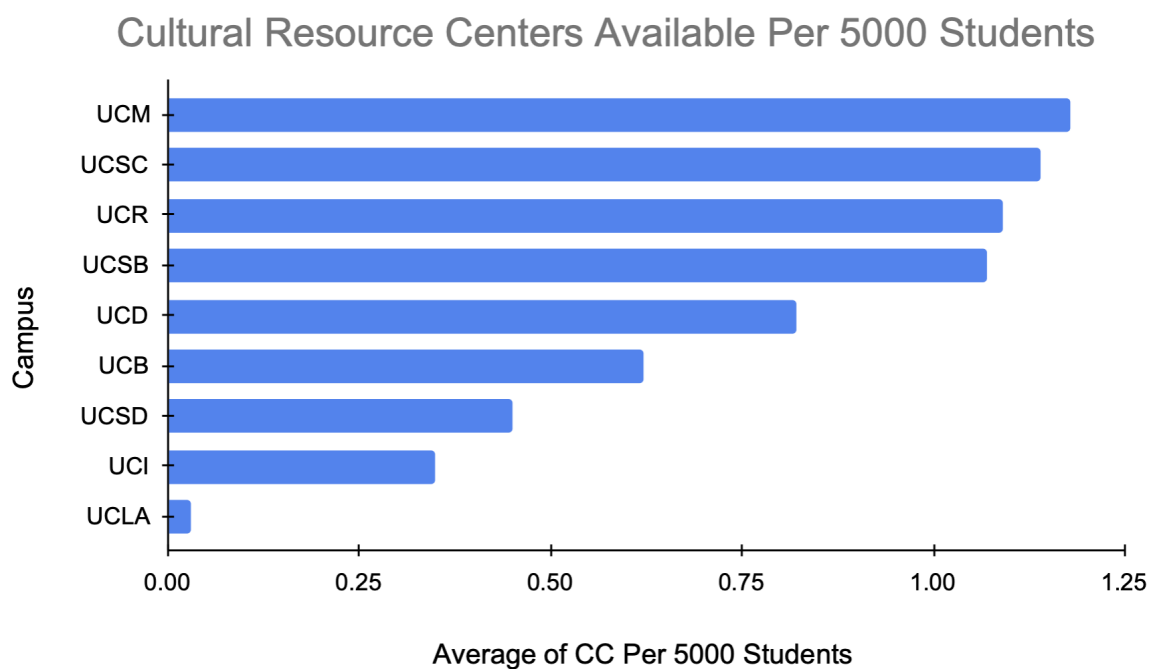


Figure 4: cultural centers available per 5000 students

Data source: UC student enrollment websites

However, in terms of cultural resource centers available per 5000 students, UC Merced led that list, along with UC Santa Cruz, right behind it. As mentioned, I only wanted to demonstrate this statistic to account for population. If we report back to figure 3, we can also see that UC Merced only has two cultural resource centers, but because their population is smaller than other UC's, they would technically have more per student. It doesn't affect my hypothesis because I only want to account for the quantity of centers available on the campus, regardless of population.

| School | MESA | Asian/pacific | native/Alaska | Chicano/Latin | Black/Africa |
|--------|------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| UCD | 0.75 | 1 | 0.75 | 1 | 0.75 |
| UCB | 0 | 0.5 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.5 |
| UCSB | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0.25 |
| UCSC | 0 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.75 |
| UCM | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 |
| UCLA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| UCR | 0.75 | 0.75 | 0.75 | 1 | 1 |
| UCI | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| UCSD | 0 | 0 | 0.75 | 0.5 | 0.75 |

Figure 5: index scale from 0-1

Data source: individual UC's resource websites

The results of my index scale from 0-1, which was used to measure the quality of each cultural resource center in order to find out which UC had the best resource centers, showed surprising results (figure 5). Since each resource center (labeled by race/ethnicity) could get the maximum score of 1 point, I was able to total how many points each UC received. If there is a 0 in a space that means that the specific UC does not have that resource center. After I totaled those individual scores, I divided it by how many resource centers each UC actually has (figure 3) in order to get its final grade.

| School | Grade |
|--------|---------|
| UCLA | 100/100 |
| UCI | 100/100 |
| UCD | 85/100 |
| UCR | 85/100 |
| UCSC | 69/100 |
| UCSD | 66/100 |
| UCB | 63/100 |
| UCM | 50/100 |
| UCSB | 25/100 |

Figure 6: final score based on the quantity of UC's each have

| School | Grade |
|--------|--------|
| UCD | 85/100 |
| UCR | 85/100 |
| UCSC | 55/100 |
| UCB | 50/100 |
| UCI | 40/100 |
| UCSD | 40/100 |
| UCSB | 30/100 |
| UCLA | 20/100 |
| UCM | 20/100 |

Figure 7: final score accounting for centers UC's do not have

Data source: index scale 0-1, then 0-100

In terms of quality, UC Los Angeles and UC Irvine lead the scoreboard with a perfect grade of 100 (figure 6). The reasoning behind this is that these UC's have less cultural resource centers than other UC's that scored lower. If I would have taken into account the fact that UC Los Angeles and UC Irvine lack other centers such as some for ME(NA)SA, Chicano/Latino, etc, then they wouldn't have scored as high (figure 3 and 7). Therefore, the way I graded the UC's would give me very different outcomes. However, regardless of the way I scored them, UC

Davis and UC Riverside maintain a pretty strong score (figure 6 and 7). If we take a look at how many cultural resource centers they have, they lead with the most centers than any other UC (figure 3). UC Santa Barbara also has the same amount of resource centers as UC Davis and UC Riverside, but the quality is not as great. Regardless of how I scored UC Santa Barbara, it scored significantly lower on both charts (figure 6 and 7). Once student satisfaction is measured, we'll be able to possibly see some support towards my hypothesis about whether or not quality and quantity play a role in student satisfaction.

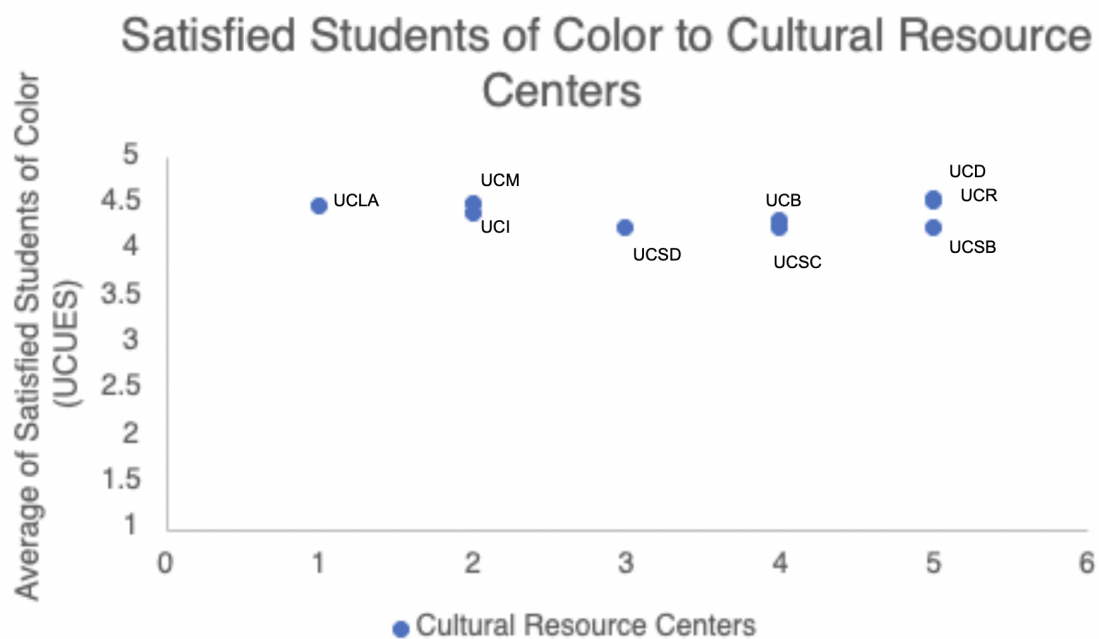


Figure 8: quantity of cultural resource centers to average student satisfaction

Data source: UCUES 2022 and student resource websites

The Likert scale showed that UC Davis and UC Riverside are the UC's with the highest rates of satisfaction. The scale showed that UC Davis had an average of 4.56 of satisfied students of color on a 1-6 scale, while UC Riverside had an average of 4.52. UC Merced and UC Los Angeles are next on that list with an average of 4.49 and 4.48, which sets my hypothesis back a

bit because they have very few cultural resource centers. However, if we take into consideration UC Los Angeles' score in figure 6, the centers it has checks every category for "best" in terms of quality. UC Davis and UC Riverside also have a great score when it comes to quality. UC Merced on the other hand has one of the highest averages of student satisfaction, but few resource centers that didn't receive a good grade for quality. I do wonder if this is due to population because UC Merced technically has the most centers per 5000 students (figure 4).

UC Santa Barbara has the same amount of resource centers as UC Davis and UC Riverside, but their quality isn't as great. Once I took a look at the average of satisfied students of color, I noticed that it had one of the lowest averages. UC Santa Barbara stands at 4.23 on a 1-6 scale of satisfaction. This did not surprise me considering the grade they received for quality was very poor. UC Merced received a higher quality score (figure 6) for the centers they have. This could be the reason UC Merced has a higher average of satisfied students than UC Santa Barbara. However, UC Santa Cruz stood at the same average of satisfied students; 4.23 on the 1-6 scale. They have less cultural resource centers than UC Santa Barbara, but received a better grade in terms of quality for the amount of centers they have (figure 6) Therefore, because both UC Santa Barbara and UC Santa Cruz overpower one another in a specific measure, they're at the same average of satisfaction.

The last three UC's I analyzed were UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, and UC Irvine. UC Irvine was right behind UC Merced in average satisfaction with a score of 4.4 on the 1-6 scale. They have the same amount of resource centers as UC Merced, but better in terms of quality. However, UC Merced still reported a higher average of satisfaction, 4.49. This could still be because of the student population. UC Irvine has less cultural resource centers available per 5000 students (figure 4). Therefore, UC Merced may be able to satisfy their population a lot easier. I

believe it is a similar situation with UC Berkeley and UC San Diego. Both UC's reported a lower amount of satisfied students, more cultural resource centers than UC Merced, and better in terms of quality. UC San Diego had an average of 4.24 satisfied students of color, which is 0.01 higher than UC Santa Barbara, and although UC Santa Barbara has more centers, UC San Diego has better centers. UC San Diego's resource centers were better by more than 25% (figure 6).

After looking at each individual UC's reportings of students of color satisfaction, as well as the quantity and quality of their cultural resource centers, I believe that my hypothesis is supported. I can conclude that cultural resource centers aren't the only reason as to why or how students of color are satisfied, but there is definitely a trend with my findings, especially among UC Davis and UC Riverside. Again, they have the most cultural resource centers and some of the best by quality grading. If the quantity of centers wasn't affecting student satisfaction, then quality was because there were obvious trends among some UC's that had either a lower or higher quantity/quality. There are other factors that I should mention because it may provide reasoning as to why some UC's don't have many cultural resource centers, but still have high student satisfaction. I was able to conclude that UCLA has many student-run organizations that help students of color around campus. So, even though they have one cultural resource center, they have other organizations helping their large population (Mother Org Coalition). Therefore, I believe that cultural resource centers definitely have something to do with student of color satisfaction at the University of California.

Implications and Conclusion

After analyzing the results of my research question, I can infer that student satisfaction, whether it be minority students or not, is extremely important to a university's reputation and image. This also suggests that because there are more satisfied students of color at some UC's

with the highest quantity and quality of cultural resource centers, then the debate behind their existence is unstable. Because there seems to be a bit of a relationship, if we choose to get rid of cultural resource centers and give one side of the argument what they want, we could see a decline in student satisfaction. Isolation would be more prevalent this way because many students would have a difficult time building a community with other students that have similar interests and backgrounds. One side of the argument believes that having ethnic or cultural spaces on college and university campuses is “segregation.” However, they have failed to realize that “ethnic spaces,” like cultural resource centers, aren’t denying entrance and participation to and from other races and ethnicities that don’t pertain to that center. Therefore, the idea that these centers promote “separatism” and only allow certain students to depend on certain students seems to be a close-minded viewpoint. As I scanned through every single cultural resource center website from the UC’s, not one suggested that white students, or other backgrounds weren’t allowed.

In order to give cultural resource centers a better image, and for their mission to be better understood, I suggest that every cultural center on UC campuses have a sign outside of their door that emphasizes that everyone is welcome. We’ve seen previous research showing how positively influential these centers are, and how they act as a “safe space” for minority students. Based on my results, we have also seen how the campuses with the most and best resource centers have the highest average of student of color satisfaction. If we don’t do something about the misguided belief that they are responsible for segregation, the existence and future creations of cultural resource centers could be at risk, leaving students of color without a space for them. This means they will have less academic and personal resources to help them succeed in higher education, thus lower student satisfaction.

I also suggest that UC's continue to fund these programs, especially if they care about the satisfaction of their students. More funding can lead to more resources being provided for disadvantaged students. This is especially important for the centers that don't offer much support or resources. This research can also be a message to the UC's that don't have very many cultural resource centers. If student satisfaction is low, maybe they should try analyzing how reliable and helpful their resource centers are, and if they should be adding more. This can also be an opportunity for UC's to require their cultural resource centers to organize and update their websites in a more efficient and convenient way. Everything that they offer should be the first thing I see on the website and nicely labeled for convenience. In this project, many UC resource centers had unorganized websites with little to no information. This doesn't necessarily mean that they don't have what I am looking for, but it was difficult to find that information. As a result, they received a low score.

The experience survey (UCUES) didn't have a specific question for cultural resource centers, meaning that there could be more information out there that isn't accessible. The next step in this research process should be the formation of focus groups at each undergraduate UC campus, and surveys distributed to students accessing each cultural resource center. The focus groups will allow for a more in depth answer of what student satisfaction means to them, and how they feel about the utilization of cultural resource centers. This is the next great step in figuring out how student of color satisfaction works at the University of California.

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