

Background:

A week after the November 4, 2015 incident students came together at the Students of Color Conference in Berkeley and began conversations on the necessity of our campus having safe spaces for marginalized identity communities (of color, LGBTQPIA+, etc.) to go to in times of crisis. At the Students of Color Conference, students quickly realized that our campus is the ONLY University of California without a cultural center, yet our campus is often marketed as, "the most diverse UC". Upon returning from the Students of Color Conference a student coalition was created with the purpose of ensuring that a cultural center finally be built on our campus! We have been meeting weekly since the end of November 2015 and discussing space availability options, the purpose of a cultural center on our campus, the intended programs/initiatives/education aspects of the space, the clubs/students/faculty/departments that would be involved, and why we desperately need safe spaces on our campus. We define "safe spaces" as place for marginalized communities to gather without restriction or regulation (from those who do not understand the issues we face) where we feel safe enough to communicate the intersecting types of oppression, prejudice, racism, sexism, macroaggressions, phobias, and violence we consistently face on our campus—an institution that was not made for us.

We recognize that what our campus really needs is a building where many different communities have their own individual offices/"safe spaces" yet are accessible to one another for allyship and coalition building (good examples of this are UCSB's Student Resource Center and UCD's Cross Cultural Center). We have met with and addressed our concerns to a number of administration with demands for a building in the 2020 project but have been rejected with the same three words: "you're too late". But we weren't too late. Conversations, demands and proposals for a center like this have been in the works for over eight years. LAMBDA sent in a proposal for space like this in 2008, another group sent in a similar proposal in 2009 (instead of a center, the Social Justice Initiatives department in OSL was a direct result from this group), BSU, LAMBDA, and a few more groups made similar demands just last year through protests and written demands directly to Chancellor Leland yet they continue to tell us that we're too late.

We decided to call this space The Intercultural Hub because "intercultural" means that communication, education, and learning both across and between different cultures and identities. We decided to use the word "hub" instead of "center" because as of right now, our campus has no physical space for a center and our temporary space will be no larger than a room, which is not enough to be called a "center". We are still fighting for a center (aka a building) but getting the hub on campus is our most immediate opportunity and we need space now! Once we have a building, then it will be called a "center".

Purpose:

The purpose of this resolution is to support the efforts of creating the Intercultural Hub at UC Merced

Resolution Supporting Establishing Intercultural Hub at UC Merced

WHEREAS, The Charter of the University of California Student Association states UCSA shall exist to: serve the interests of the current and future students of the University of California and promotes cooperation between various student governments of the University and student organizations concerned with higher education;

WHEREAS, The Intercultural Hub will help better the quality of our education at UC Merced;

WHEREAS, UC Merced's University News department has stated that, "UC Merced is the most ethnically and culturally diverse student body among all University of California campuses" (University News, 2015) ¹;

WHEREAS, "UC Merced has been identified by Best Colleges as one of the country's top 50 campuses where students have the most opportunity to interact with different ethnicities, ranking No. 12" (2015);

WHEREAS, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Charles Nies has said, "Diversity enriches our research and academic missions... We have remained committed to creating a campus that welcomes diversity" (2015);

WHEREAS, 87.3% of the undergraduate student population consists of students of color²;

WHEREAS, UC Merced is the only UC without a cultural center;

WHEREAS, There have been 5 separate demands for a cultural/resource center since 2008;

WHEREAS, The upcoming 2020 plan still does not include a designated permanent space for a cultural center;

WHEREAS, After the Nov. 4th incident, Muslim and Sikh students were wrongfully targeted by the media and didn't have a safe space to provide help and resources to their group;

WHEREAS, With the increased police presence after the incident, the students of color did not feel safe on campus and had no safe space to go to;

WHEREAS, A student coalition of UC Merced students was formed at the Students of Color Conference (SOCC) following the events of the Nov. 4th incident;

WHEREAS, November 2015 made it very clear that we are in desperate need of a cultural center;

WHEREAS, The student coalition has since been meeting weekly and outreaching to clubs and organizations on campus to gain support for the Intercultural Hub;

WHEREAS, The Intercultural Hub will promote principles of intersectionality, diversity, inclusivity and social justice by providing students a safe, inclusive space; and

WHEREAS, Through unity, identity exploration, and communication with one another, The Intercultural Hub hopes to build solidarity and foster a culture of acceptance and anti-oppression activism on our campus.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, UCSA publically supports the efforts of the coalition and the creation of the Intercultural Hub;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the University of California Student Association directs its Executive Committee to work with the student coalition to create an open letter to the Chancellor of UC Merced

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and President Napolitano about the importance of the center to our campus; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors of the University of California Student Association commits its members to take this resolution back to their respective campuses and encourage students to support the efforts at UC Merced.