



La Raza Student Cultural Center
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La Raza SCC In Support of Whose Diversity?

In Solidarity with the Whose Diversity? collective, the students of La Raza Student Cultural Center formally and fully endorse the demands made to the University administration on April 30, 2014. Recognizing and honoring the history and the legacy of our organization, one rich in student activism, we support the students of Whose Diversity? and join in on requesting that the demands made be met. La Raza has historically struggled for the recruitment and retention of Chican@/Latin@ students, sponsorship of culturally relevant events, helping navigate the financial systems for students to attend the University, and supporting the Chicano Studies department and student groups. These issues, struggled for by this organization since 1969, continue to be insufficiently addressed. Furthermore, the struggle for permanent space for La Raza, most recently violated by a unilateral removal of our mural, is not new and signals the inability for the administration to meaningfully support our organizations and the issues brought up by the Whose Diversity? Collective.

Taking an extensive look into the establishment of La Raza, students came to realize the low enrollment of Chican@/Latin@ students and demanded that the University administration do more to better reflect the proportion of the Chican@/Latin@ population in the state of Minnesota. Starting in 1969, students organized and made a number of requests to the administration, which were often times ignored and disregarded. The need to increase the number of Chican@/Latin@ students was initially so low, 65 students out of 40,000, that students volunteered to help in recruitment. Ironically, today students continue to give their free time to recruit Chican@s/Latin@s although a paid staff exists in the Office of Admissions. The initial demands made back in 1969 carry on to this day, and La Raza students have given their time and energy to recruitment when this is the responsibility of the University administration. More recently, La Raza Student Cultural Center, along with other student organizations, experienced a series of reductions in relation to physical space. This past summer, the second floor of Coffman Memorial Union, which housed La Raza and other organizations, underwent a reconstruction, which literally pushed Cultural Centers to the margins, those housed in the main hallway of the second floor were moved to the sides and back of the building, and destroyed meaningful murals. La Raza's mural was made through a collective effort of students and community members in 2006. Not only was the making of the mural a collective organized effort but also one fought for with the specific purpose of fitting onto the walls of La Raza's offices in Coffman. But this is only one of many examples in which La Raza has lost space. Previously, La Raza was centered on the ground floor of Coffman, and various historical documents and former La Raza members reveal a number of relocations throughout the history of the organization. These relocations are evidence of an unwillingness or inability for the administration to

meaningfully support La Raza. Continued struggles against the low enrollment and retention of Chicano@/Latin@ students are tied to the administration's failure to support La Raza's struggle for permanent, meaningful space on campus.

Lastly, La Raza stands together with Whose Diversity? in removing the sanctions given to student protesters. As mentioned before, it is this student activism, which throughout the years has helped in maintaining the social, physical, and epistemological worlds paved here at the University of Minnesota by our predecessors. To sanction student involvement would be dismissing the actions made throughout the years that have sustained our diversity.

Sincerely,

La Raza Student Cultural Center

"Power concedes nothing without a demand.

It never did and it never will"

- Frederick Douglass