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Cuellar A02

Reading Response 5

Everyday I assemble with my fellow teammates, brethren, at the pool on campus and take the plunge into the water, not knowing what challenges the practice or swim meet will present us with that day. On a daily basis we come together before our competitions and practices embracing each other, arms around each other's shoulders enclosing a circle, to yell, scream, chant, and jump as a unit preparing to endure the struggle together. To prepare for championship meets a large majority of the team assemble to style their hair, bleaching it blond, in similar fashions to show brotherhood, a shiny flashing representation of unity. All members walk into the competitions with matching team uniform identifying themselves as a proud member of our group and efforts, our common struggles. There is no separation as to Asian descent, African descent, Latin descent, European nations descent or other foreign descents for we all form a cohesive group, a brotherhood, a team. Some may perceive swimming as a race for personal gain or personal achievement, however this is not the case. At every race our team groups up one beside the other, lining the walls chanting to out perform those to the left and right of you. The team not only loses together but accomplishes goals and achievements together. After every victory against an adversary there is singing in unison of favorite songs as the team rides back home. Even after defeat, the team makes the trip home not singing but still with one another talking over what went wrong, encouraging and supporting those who did not perform to their expectations, and enjoying our time together. When it comes time to leave the realm of the pool and team our unity does not fade. Each individual member goes his own way out into the UCSD campus to encounter their own hardships, studies, and experience. However, he or she is not

alone; we have the support of our team. As everyone goes back to the pool we look at one another as kin; no gender, no race, not differences, all have a common goal and all have a common passion.

After reading Kong's chapter 4, it has expanded my understanding of the intolerance and discrimination at UCSD felt by the "Asian" student body. Prior to reading the chapter I have heard stories from upperclassmen and have talked to many freshman students that complain of the sheer numbers of "Asian" students and their isolationist manner. One who attends UCSD inevitably will encounter comments of there being "so many Asians" and how "they don't use English on their electronic devices," or "some of them don't even speak English." Until these readings I was unaware of their exclusion from the diversity talks that came about after the Compton Cookout. It unfortunately supported the view that they represent a "model Minority" even to the minorities seeking University support. It was a discouraging but not an atypical course that they would be included in the initial rallying cries by their sheer numbers but then excluded from the critical University talks. It was felt that they even carry the stereotype of that "gifted/model minority" and they neither require assistance nor suffer the same discrimination as other minorities. Another difficulty pointed out in the reading was the lack organization in the Asian community in regards to getting their voice out there. The Black community can look to decades of struggles and leaders such as Malcolm X, Black Panthers and Martin Luther King. The Latin/Chicano cause can find it's roots in leaders like Cesar Chavez. The Black and Latin groups have history in support of one another and naturally have an established dialogue and goals. The Asian community found themselves isolated by not having any bridge or a voice into the historical struggles already traversed by the black and Latin leaders.

Ultimately, I feel that the UCSD campus climate is one that attempts to be tolerant of diverse groups and cultures but struggles to cleanse itself of hardwired stereotypes. As an athlete I have a different perspective and experience than most individuals that attend UCSD. All athlete's had to complete a "Triton Passport" which had them attend different centers on campus and receive tours hosted by a student representative. Despite my white ethnicity, my sexual orientation, and other attributes that make up who I am, all the centers, for example, the African American's center, Women's center and all the others, I was invited to come use their resources any time I needed. I was encouraged by this open arms policy. All the centers were very inclusive and did not discriminate even though I did not fit into the racial, gender, and other requirements it would take to join the center or participate in their private meetings. On the swim team there is a diverse group of individuals ranging from foreign immigrants from Venezuela, African Americans, Latin/Chicano, European Americans which has exposed me to many different viewpoints and experiences. As all of us on this microcosm of UCSD known as the swim team share a unified goal and support one another's success, the readings have expanded my view of the macrocosm of UCSD and how we aspire to bring everyone into the fold and struggle ahead together supporting each group. Just like the swim team all students at UCSD are trying to achieve a higher level of education, intellectual discourse, deeper understanding of others viewpoints, new friends, and preparation for future life. The solutions to diversity and its difficulties will not be easily found without open dialogue and acceptance by the student body. UC centers should be available for under privileged, financially challenged and radically under represented groups. The caveat is that this in turn should not drive groups into their own folds but be a center, a source of communication and understanding for the difficulties we all face.