

UCSD Campus Climate

I believe UCSD is a theoretically diverse campus. I say “theoretically” because, although each racial group/minority is represented on campus, they are not represented equally. As Angela Kong explains, in the fourth chapter of *Re-Examining Diversity Policy at UCSD*, diversity at UCSD is present, but minorities have not always had the rights they deserved on our campus. I knew that a large percentage of our campus population was Asian American, but I did not know that, just like other minorities, all of their rights were not satisfied. Kong changed my idea of UCSD’s campus climate in how I view Asian American minorities, myself and the minority I belong to, and the rest of the UCSD student body.

I now understand, and completely agree with Kong, that UCSD marks Asian Americans as “model minorities”, which as Kong presented, not only marks them as the perfect example of what a minority should accomplish, but it also separates them from other minorities on campus. In a way, their successes have a reverse effect on their position in the community, allowing the campus to overlook their needs due to their already accomplished successes. While Kong does have an agreeable argument about representation of Asian Americans, she fails to mention that other successful minorities (other than women, LGBTQ+, Hispanic, and African Americans) are overlooked (like Middle Eastern, Muslim, Jewish, etc.) as well. While Kong’s work furthers my understanding of Asian American representation, or lack there of, it also furthers my feelings of underrepresentation towards other minorities.

Although I agree with everything Kong stated about minorities and the lack of focus on Asian American minorities, I also noticed that the Asian American community is

not the only minority that is overlooked at UCSD due to their successes. Along with Asian Americans, there are marginalized groups like Muslims, Middle Easterns, Indians, mixed race peoples, etc. I understand the work was focused on Asian Americans, however other races and their discriminations can also correlate with the issues that Asian Americans are facing. For example, I am Iranian American, and people automatically believe I am going to be a doctor or lawyer, similarly to how people assume 100% of Asian Americans are extraordinarily smart.

When I applied to college, I was confused as to what race I was considered to be. As I remember, the only categories I fit into were “white” or “other”. “White” implies that I am not a minority, and “other” is degrading to my culture and me. If I am considered “white”, then why am I treated differently than the “blonde-blue eyed-white” community? I do not fit into the “white” category, and if I do, then why aren’t I treated the same? I am most definitely not “other” either.

Kong’s work made me realize that I am more of a minority at UCSD than I thought I was. I may not be African American, Hispanic, LGBTQ+, or Asian American, but I am and feel like a minority, and I know I am not “white” or “other”. So why do I not even have a classification? Because they follow these classifications, the UCSD climate (and all education systems in general) is one that makes me uncomfortable. It scares me that people have to be put into racial classifications in the first place.

On another note, Kong’s description of the Compton Cookout changed my understanding of the UCSD student body in two ways. First, it made me realize that not everyone is open minded or understanding of how their actions can affect others. I realized that not every student on campus is going to be nice or fair to others. We must

be our best selves to help the entire student body. Second, I realized that the UCSD student body never fails to fight for their rights. Whether it was during the Compton Cookout, or more recently when Donald Trump became the future President of the United States, UCSD students know that we must voice our opinions to fight for change.

Kong's work opened my eyes to more realistic social aspects of UCSD. I now understand that although Asian Americans play a large role on campus, they are still a minority and are underrepresented for their rights. I (an Iranian American) am an underrepresented minority as well in that I do not belong to any specific "classification". Lastly, the UCSD student body has pros and cons, but we must continue fighting for equality and the greater good.

Word count: 740

Kong, Angela. "Ch 4." Re-Examining Diversity Policy at UCSD. 2014.