

# The Counter History of UC San Diego

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Ranked among the top fifteen universities in the world, [University of California, San Diego](#) is held in high esteem, through its history in innovation and research<sup>[1]</sup>. Absent among the history widely known and recognized however, is the UC campus' counter history, which highlights the university's participation in upholding structures of dominance. Highlighting the conception of the UC San Diego campus, Admissions and Hiring Practices, Choices of Recognized Figures, Racist Groups and Events on Campus, this article will chronicle the history UC San Diego not widely known.

## UC San Diego's Conception

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Established in 1960, [University of California, San Diego](#) was designed to be a graduate research institution focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. The university was geared towards the success of an "elite" few. Formerly known as the site at which [Camp Matthews](#) resided, [UC San Diego's](#) conception engaged with [U.S. Military](#) interests, as the proposal made to the [UC Board of Regents](#) asked that an institute be made that "contributed to national security"<sup>[2]</sup>. The vision through which the university was built have been attributed to the historical events that have had negative impacts on the [UC San Diego](#) and broader [San Diego](#) communities.

## Land Founded On

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During [UC San Diego's](#) conception, the location in which the university would preside was highly disputed. While politicians and community members argued for the university to be established in the [City of San Diego](#) near [Balboa Park](#), the university was instead established in La Jolla, CA<sup>[3][4]</sup>. According to Dr. Jorge Mariscal, the stark differences in demographics between San Diego proper and La Jolla meant limited access to the university for people of color<sup>[5][6]</sup>. The location in which the university was established however is not only significant because of the city it was chosen to be located in but more importantly its existence as 2,141 acres of land belonging to the [Kumeyaay](#) Tribe prior to the university taking ownership<sup>[7][8]</sup>. During construction of the Chancellor's House, human remains belonging to the [Kumeyaay](#) people were discovered<sup>[9][10]</sup>. Almost 10,000 years old, these remains are found to be among the oldest skeletons to be found in the Americas<sup>[11]</sup>. Insensitive to the Native American population that disproportionately underrepresented on the UC campus, this discovery however did not come without a battle as it took years for UC Regents to return the remains to the tribes<sup>[12]</sup>. Twelve tribal nations were reported to have filed a lawsuit against UC Regents<sup>[13]</sup>. Among issues relating to land ownership and rights is the property deed for which the land was sold under. The property deed for the land UC San Diego now sits on once stood as anti semitic and discriminatory towards people of color in the United States<sup>[14]</sup>. Once stating, that no land under the deed be sold to Jews or people of color, the land chosen to establish the UC San Diego campus engages with a history of exclusion and displacement of Native Americans as well as other people of color<sup>[15]</sup>.

## Architecture and Lay Out of UC San Diego

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In addition to the intentional location of the [University of California San Diego](#) in La Jolla at a geographical distance from the urban population of San Diego<sup>[16]</sup>, the university made continuous efforts even after its establishment to maintain political passivity and racial homogeneity. In response to the [Civil Rights Movement](#) of the 1960's and the protests that followed in opposition to the [Vietnam War](#), institutions all over the nation of the [United States](#) including the [University of California San Diego](#) began changing their growing architecture in response to the protests, in an effort to contain the masses and police them.<sup>[17]</sup> University faculty and students created organizations

and committees to meet with political officials like [Governor Reagan](#) to find a way to put an end to the political activity at the [University of California San Diego](#) and "reverse the trend toward political activism in the university system."<sup>[16]</sup> Signs of defense within these institutions included the placement of concrete walls, narrow stairways, and narrow hallways.<sup>[17]</sup> College residential apartments and dorms situated on the outskirts of campus and decentralized from the main campus areas demonstrates measures to ensure the design of the university campus anti-mobilization <sup>[18]</sup>. These structural implementations were put in place to physically hinder the successful demonstrations of students and faculty, and limit their engagement in political action opposing political situations they deemed unjust.

## Discrimination in Admissions and Hiring Practices

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Critics like Tony Valladolid, an Acting Director of the Student Affirmative Action and Human Relations Coalition states, low enrollment is due to lack of diversity among staff and faculty. There is an attitude of high school counselors, teachers and students that UCSD does not welcome students of color<sup>[19]</sup>. It is very uncomfortable for a black student to come to this campus because it's alien and there is no accepting network, believed by union member Ubbu Aarons. Aarons claims recruitment of black students are not actively recruited in black neighborhoods by UCSD <sup>[20]</sup>. Jorge Mariscal claims administrators of UCSD identified with Kennedy-style liberalism which supported antidemocratic elitism. Elitism in UCSD continues to produce racialized outcomes of student enrollment, curriculum, staff promotions, and faculty hiring.<sup>[21]</sup> The proposal of building University Of California San Diego near Balboa Park where people of working class live, was rejected and any chance of working class communities going to college was taken away. The building of a new university in La Jolla, San Diego was approved in 1958 which consisted of a wealthy neighborhood. Casual racism directed at Latinos and Blacks which ensured that anyone who wasn't Caucasian race be suppressed of any resources. <sup>[22]</sup> Provost Watson wrote to Chancellor McGill about faculty recruitment for the Third College was not very successful and were in desperate need of faculty. It would seem that at this time any strong candidate would be hired. Waston describes the Mathematics Department's blockage of hiring talented Chicano mathematician Richard Griego. [Affirmative action](#) in 1996, implemented that government institutions do not consider admittance based on race or ethnicity. Although in 1998 California banned the affirmative action that resulted in a decline of black students represented in universities<sup>[23]</sup>. Specifically in University of California campuses the percentage of black students in [University of California Los Angeles](#), [Merced](#) and [Riverside](#) have a 4% total population of black freshmen students. In [University of California Davis](#), [Irvine](#) and [Santa Barbara](#) 3% make up incoming black students. Whereas, In [University of California San Diego](#) the total population of black students is 1%.<sup>[24]</sup>

The Left Out report is a toolkit developed by the Center For Urban Education that came about through their partnership with the Campaign for College Opportunity. <sup>[1]</sup> The Center For Urban Education uses an inquiry protocol that aids institutions identify and analyze comparatively the state of racial and ethnic equity. The campaign adequately titled, Left Out: How Exclusion in California's Colleges and Universities Hurts Our Values, Our Students, and Our Economy, traces these inequities across higher education institutions in California. <sup>[2]</sup> "The left out college diversity report released this month identified that UC San Diego had a less diverse faculty than other UC's." <sup>[3]</sup> This report found that UC San Diego in particular employs predominantly white men. In this report there are statistics on gender, ethnic background, and issues around diversity and inclusivity. The student population for the 2016-17 year at UC San Diego consisted of 49% AANHPI (Asian-American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander) ,20% Latinx, 3 % African American, and 24% White. In the same report, there was data collected on the academic senate of the University. The study found that there was 13% AANHPI, 6% Latinx, 4% African American, and 77 % White. These statistics identify a representation gap and a disproportionate student-to-faculty ratio. Furthermore, as the University's student population diversifies, the diversity of educational leaders lags. <sup>[4]</sup> View the full report at [www.collegecampaign.org/left-tool-overview/](http://www.collegecampaign.org/left-tool-overview/)

# Recognized Figures and College Namesakes

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## Roger Revelle College

[Roger Revelle](#), one of the founders of the UC San Diego campus, envisioned the university to be one that admitted a "small elite group which would guide a larger group that were less talented"<sup>[25]</sup>. The larger group was to study at local state college. To ensure that only the talented elite attend the UC San Diego campus Roger Revelle propose that locals with IQs greater than 140 be recruited to attend the university. This according to, Marshall College Dimensions of Culture Director, Jorge Mariscal, limited the access working class and people of color had to the university <sup>[26]</sup>. Roger Revelle's vision of the university also included its location in La Jolla, CA as oppose to San Diego proper. Despite an Anti-Semitic and Anti-Persons of Color Property deed, Revelle was a major proponent of the university being established in La Jolla <sup>[27]</sup>.

## John Muir College

[John Muir College](#) was the second college founded in UC San Diego. [John Muir](#) was chosen for his contributions to the [Sierra Club](#) and the conservation of the natural environment through [national parks](#). John Muir's role as a proponent of national parks however comes with the advocacy for [Indian Removal](#)<sup>[28]</sup>. His role in furthering the marginalization of Indigenous peoples is sensitive to the history of UC San Diego, as an institution built on Native American land itself. Muir also promoted the idea of the "[noble savage](#)."<sup>[29]</sup> John Muir fled to [Canada](#) during the [Civil War](#) and was known to be ambivalent towards the abolition of slavery<sup>[30]</sup>. In his essay "Thousand Mile Walk to the Coast" Muir also expressed his belief that black people were lazy and unable to pick as much cotton as a white man. <sup>[31]</sup>

## Thurgood Marshall College

[Thurgood Marshall College](#), named after Supreme Court Justice [Thurgood Marshall](#) is the only college at UC San Diego out of six colleges that is named after a person of color. In efforts to create a college that catered to needs of underserved underrepresented students of color<sup>[32]</sup>, [Angela Davis](#) along with other UCSD students and Faculty of color proposed Third College at the time be officially named [Lumumba Zapata](#) College to commemorate the work of Congolese leader [Patrice Lumumba](#) and Mexican Revolutionary [Emiliano Zapata](#) in the struggle for freedom<sup>[33]</sup>. This Proposal however was denied by UCSD upon submission, under the assumption that a name like this may compromise the vision set out for UCSD. The proposal was criticized for being "extremely militant" and reportedly came to the dismay of Chancellor William J. McGill<sup>[34]</sup>. The vision set forth for Third College by students was college to be composed of a population of at least 35% African American and 35% Mexican American students<sup>[35]</sup>. The University has not published any current racial demographics for [Thurgood Marshall College](#) pertaining to African American or Mexican American students, but of the university population there are only 707 African American students at UC San Diego and 4,509 students in Thurgood Marshall College. If all African American students were placed in this college, the original 35% quota still would not be satisfied, accounting for only 15.7%<sup>[36]</sup>.

## Earl Warren College

[Earl Warren](#), the namesake of the fourth college at UC San Diego [Earl Warren College](#), was chosen for his contributions as a Chief Justice and three term governor of California <sup>[37]</sup>. Warren however, was one of the major proponents of the [Internment of Japanese Americans](#) during [World War II](#) <sup>[38]</sup>. As part of the American Legion and Native Sons of the Golden West, Warren had membership in organizations that shared anti-Japanese sentiments <sup>[39]</sup>. This part of his legacy however, did not trump his contributions in the decision to name Warren after the fourth college to be founded at UC San Diego.

## Sixth College

Despite the significant amount of prominent figures of color who have made numerous contributions to the nation, the most recent college to be founded, Sixth College has yet to be named. UC San Diego Associated Students and Sixth College Student Council have supported the proposal to name sixth college after a woman of color<sup>[40]</sup>. In November of 2017 Professor Olivia Graeve proposed to name the college Cesar Chavez College<sup>[41]</sup>, but as the college is now finding its permanent home to be in the soon to be built North Torrey Pines Living Learning Community there seems to be no action towards solidifying a name for the college.

UC San Diego's landmark Geisel Library, was named in honor of Theodore Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss. Theodore Geisel was a writer who is most known for his children's books. In his early career, while working in advertising for Flit, an insecticide company, Dr. Seuss drew cartoons that displayed black people as cannibals that were infected by bugs<sup>[42]</sup>. Before creating works like "The Cat in the Hat", Geisel used to write books containing offensive caricatures of people of color<sup>[43]</sup>. For example, in his book "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street," [Geisel depicts] a slant-eyed, chopsticks-carrying Chinese man in a way that critics called "deeply hurtful"<sup>[44]</sup>. Critics of Geisel's past work have said that "that Dr. Seuss' illustrations are steeped in racist propaganda, caricatures, and racial stereotypes"<sup>[45]</sup>.

## Racist Events and Groups on Campus

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### Compton Cookout

The Compton Cookout and Koala live broadcast are examples of individual acts of racism that contributes to the hostile campus climate. This racially-themed party, the Compton Cookout, sparked outrage among black students, community members, and a vast number of allies locally in the San Diego community and state of California. The party was hosted on Monday, February 15, 2010 by a group of individuals affiliated with several fraternities, specifically [Pi Kappa Alpha](#) (PIKE). Although PIKE denied any association with the event in their official statement, some organizers were affiliated with the fraternity. At the time of the incident, a [Revelle College](#) sophomore, Elize Diop, published the [facebook](#) event description where the hosts asked males to wear "XXXL white T-shirts, Jerseys, stunner shades, Jordans, and chains" while females were asked to look and act like "ghetto chicks," similar to Shenaynay<sup>[46]</sup>. In order to get the full experience of "life in the ghetto," the hosts served Old English forty-ounce beers, "Kool-aid, chicken, and watermelon"<sup>[46]</sup>. The invitation encouraged attendees to not only mock Black History month, but promote offensive racial stereotypes. In response to the recent racially-charged experiences, the university decided to focus on a diversity campaign, Not in Our Community, and held a teach-in on February 24, 2010 in the [Price Center](#) East Ballroom to educate and empower the UCSD community. This movement concluded with the administration's accordance to carry out the demands presented by the Black Student Union (BSU) in order to make the university a more equitable and racially just place of higher learning. Not all Demands were met however. A few core organizations, specifically the BSU and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanola de Aztlan (MEChA) were at the core of this social movement in their struggle for racial and social justice on the campus.

Justin Simein, the writer of the Netflix show "[Dear White People](#)" and the 2014 movie of the same title used a [black face](#) party at a primarily white university as a major plot point<sup>[47]</sup>. Simein was originally conflicted about including a [black face](#) party at the end of his film because he thought that it would be criticized as a thing of the past that doesn't occur on college campuses anymore, but then he heard about the Compton Cookout and decided to put the event into his film<sup>[48]</sup>. Simien was quoted in an [SF Gate](#) article saying "I took the blackface party out because I thought it was too outlandish," Simien told SF Gate. "Then when that happened at UC San Diego, I sort of rabbit-holed down the research path, (thinking) 'Oh, I wasn't pushing buttons. I was talking about something that actually happens'<sup>[49]</sup>."

## Response from the University

After the Compton Cookout the University held a teach-in this teach-in on racial tolerance. [5] This Teach-in however, fell short as Students walked out and protested outside. "About 3,000 people gathered at the teach-in and resulting demonstration -- with whites making up about half of the crowd." [6] Since, the University has implemented many programs and initiatives to further enhance the experience of students of color. The Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion created an EDI Unit plan that depicts strategic goals, initiatives, and their accomplishments. [EDI Unit Plan](#) The University has also implemented the Black Academic Excellence Initiative since February 2016. [7] The vision of this program is to increase the population of black students and faculty. Additionally, the initiative intends to increase scholarship and funding to promote the success of black student, staff, and faculty. [8] The University has also established the Black Resource Center as well as the Raza Resource Centro. Students were allowed to choose both the location and appoint who was in charge. [9]. The Black Resource Center was established officially in May 2013. [10] The Raza Resource Centro was established in April 2014. [11] In 2011, it became a University requirement to take a DEI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion course. The criteria that these courses must fulfill are in frameworks, subject matter, and pedagogy. [12] There was not an official statement on behalf of the University addressing the issue.

## KKK Hood

On March 1st, 2010 a KKK Hood was found on the head of the statue of Dr. Seuss outside of Geisel Library. This was a part of series of racist incidents following the Compton Cookout and was found during a time of "tense racial campus climate" [50]. While Black students were joined by some of their peers in calling for accountability from the UCSD administration in response to the Compton Cookout, other students sought to take an oppositional stance. The KKK hood, along with other racist acts, was a tactic based in fear with an "intent to terrorize" on part of those who wanted to undermine the protests and demands made by Black students who wanted to make changes to improve conditions on campus for marginalized groups [51].

## Crossroads Shooting and Campus Response

On April 30th of 2017, there was a shooting at the La Jolla Crossroads Apartment Complex [52]. The shooter was a white man who shot and killed Monique Clark, a black woman, and injured seven other people six of whom were black and one man who was latino [53]. Although the shooter had no connection with the people who were shot, and a majority of the victims were black the San Diego Chief of Police, Chief Zimmerman, denied that the incident was an [Anti-Black](#) hate crime. Official statements from [UC San Diego](#) advised students to seek counseling, but did not acknowledge the effects the shooting had on students of color, in particular black students, and their sense of safety at UCSD [54]. Faculty from seven different departments released a statement criticizing the university for not acknowledging the Crossroads Shooting as a hate crime [55].

## Identity Evropa

[Identity Evropa](#) [56] is a white supremacist group founded on principles of white nationalism. Their aims are stated as follows, "[Identity Evropa](#) is an American Identitarian organization. As such, our main objective is to create a better world for people of European heritage – particularly in America – by peacefully effecting cultural change. [Identity Evropa](#) is thus an explicitly non-violent organization." Members of [Identity Evropa](#) have used their affiliation with [UC San Diego](#) as students to further their agenda. The members of the organization attached a large banner to the wall of the UCSD Price Center [57]. Students and Faculty critiqued this action to be inappropriate and damaging to campus experience for students of color [58]. [Identity Evropa](#) later drew widely unwanted attention to their objective of upholding white nationalist ideals, when the organization sent representatives to social sciences courses geared towards social justice for marginalized populations, to create a disruption to the classroom environment [59]. On one account, a student representative left a class and stating

“someone will be watching” in an attempt to threaten students who may be undocumented or non-white <sup>[60]</sup>. [UC San Diego](#) released a statement to Professors warning of potential visits and reminding them of their right facilitate their removal from classrooms <sup>[61]</sup>.

## UC San Diego Post-Trump Elections

According to the UC San Diego Library, on Friday, April 8th, 2016, Trump supporters chalked the campus with Anti-Immigrant slogans. The slogans targeted newly admitted students of Mexican descent on UCSD’s Admissions welcoming event, Triton Day <sup>[62]</sup> <sup>[63]</sup> <sup>[64]</sup> <sup>[65]</sup>. The slogans consisted of “Trump 2016”, “Tritons 4 Trump”, “Build the Wall- Deport them all”, “F\*\*\* Mexicans” and “Mexico Will Pay!”<sup>[66]</sup>. These slogans were written on the pavement outside of the UC San Diego Raza Resource Centro and in other areas of campus. Staff and students attempted to erase the hate speech, only for the offenders to return and repeat their actions a second time <sup>[67]</sup>

In the wake of the Election results there were multiple reported incidents of hate crimes, mainly targeting Muslim identifying students <sup>[68]</sup>. Reports were made of hijabs being forcefully removed and students being harassed. The day after Trump's victory, anti-Semitic graffiti was spray painted at a UCSD shuttle stop<sup>[69]</sup>. Both of the events fueled outrage from undergraduate and graduate students, who demanded expulsion once the offenders were found<sup>[70]</sup>. The graffiti prompted a response from the Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Becky Petit, in which she condemned the hate speech and racism in order to reaffirm inclusion on the campus and assure that it was a safe space for all its students. <sup>[71]</sup>