I believe the Diversity Requirement for the UCLA College needs to be supported.

1. UCLA is currently home to one of the most diverse college communities in the country. It is one of the largest providers nationwide of Federal Pell Grants to students who are first-generation in their family to attend college. More than one-third of our entering students have a first language other than English. Although there is a range and variety of our student population, the nature of American society is such that most of our undergraduates enter UCLA from sheltered backgrounds with little training and experience for living multicultural and for understanding and knowing how to respect difference. The challenge of learning to live together must be acknowledged.

2. Despite its diversity, African Americans are woefully under-represented in the College. This past year, their underrepresentation has gone viral with a video made by our students, and the problem has attracted national attention in print and television media. UCLA has now repeatedly over the course of this past year received bad press across the country. Further, the Moreno Report was issued this year and describes the negative racial climate on this campus to have reached crisis proportions. The attention UCLA has received serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy: prospective African American students are advised not to attend UCLA because of its unwelcoming atmosphere.

3. Students of color report often being the subject of various forms of “micro-aggressions,” unthinking words and actions by students that help marginalize them.

4. A front-page article in The New York Times recently featured UCLA as a site of growing anti-Semitism. Focusing on an incident in student government, it is clear that students often have difficulty differentiating between religious affiliation and the capacity to act impartially in the University community.

The current campus climate serves as ample evidence that we need to accept the responsibility to better educate our students. Situating through various courses the UCLA multi-cultural experience historically and within a larger national and world perspective will help. Further, no one should be exempt from considering the effects of their own perspective on the ways it continues to shape the academic community and the nation. I believe most students would welcome this kind of education; it is essential that the faculty commit themselves to providing it. The UCLA College has already passed this requirement. Should the whole UCLA faculty vote to undo what has already been agreed upon, it will surely garner us more negative attention locally and nationally. In this case, I think it will be well deserved.

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