

# Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

**November 9, 2021**

The meeting was convened at 6:01 pm.

## **Items for the Good of the Order:**

- The Warden would like to thank Vice Chancellor Reichle for providing some information and handouts for tonight's discussion
- A Fellow reminds all Fellows in attendance to sign in to mark their presence at the discussion
- A Fellow informs the order of the postponement of the upcoming Cal Football Game due to a COVID outbreak

## **Items for the Good of the University: How to Improve the Minority Experience**

The Warden opens the floor with anecdotes and reviews some questions sent out to the Fellowship prior to the meeting.

*On the topic of Discussion on How to Improve the Minority Experience:*

- A Fellow opens discussion with personal experiences from both high school and their Berkeley experience. The Fellow talks about many derogatory comments made towards them in high school based on their ethnic background.
  - This Fellow recalls that Berkeley was very early to recognize the widespread racism throughout the country, even way back in the 1960s - before modern society acknowledged it
  - This Fellow raises discussion of framing how to view individuals of the context of their time - they can be better, average, or worse compared to others during their time
  - This Fellow also points out that the usage of the term "Latinx" is a form of linguistic imperialism, as its forced usage reduces the backgrounds of Spanish-speaking people

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- This Fellow does praise Cal for its sense of inclusivity when they were a student
- This Fellow mentions that breaking into industries or scenes that did not have a good representation of people from their background motivated them to continue to break down barriers
- A Fellow recalls the points from previous speakers:
  - This Fellow recognizes the historical context - times have changed so much in such a short amount of time
  - This Fellow claims that the primary question of the Warden's statements is how do we increase the awareness of social justice across the nation
  - How do we rally around a set of unifying principles that are practical and rational?
  - This Fellow recounts their experience as one of the only Hispanic and disabled members of the Berkeley community, and how their experience at Berkeley pushed them and gave them the confidence to continue to explore their identity and advocate in spaces where they are not equally represented
- A Fellow details their experience having taught an economic course in previous years that dealt with the impact of migrants on the domestic economy
  - The Fellow highlights the discrimination against many ethnic groups: Chinese, Japanese, Polish, Irish, etc.
  - The Fellow claims that this is a key mark on the history of our country
  - This Fellow highlights modern analogues, such as environmental racism, results of structural inequalities in today's society
- A Fellow provides some historical context:
  - It wasn't until the 18th century when there was a concept of "equality" in the Atlantic U.S.
  - There is a key difference between equality and equity, a difference which we still struggle with today
  - This Fellow recounts their experiences living in red-lined districts decades ago
  - There are still issues with institutional racism and unconscious bias
  - Those who have been members of minority groups before should reach out and support other minority groups in a common struggle

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- All groups have issues with equality and equity - it should not be “us against them”, it should be “us, together”
- This Fellow does not expect the University to answer all the problems
- This Fellow emphasizes that we should not let the racial insensitivity of others define those who are marginalized
- The University should strive to match the increased diversity of the state of California
- A Fellow disagrees with a statement made by a previous speaker:
  - The statement in question: “Equality is a myth” (context provided by previous speaker)
  - This Fellow states that the idea of equality should continue to motivate us to work towards a better society
  - This Fellow agrees with previous statements regarding the continued existence of racism, just in different forms
    - This Fellow notes the changes that the Campus has made over time to eliminate racism
    - Hopefully other communities that are different from us can work towards a similar goal
  - This Fellow provides some context to the information provided by the Warden:
    - The data collected in the handout came from 2019, which means that the data collected most likely came from the years before
    - It is most likely that many of us have changed since then, society as a whole has changed since then
  - This Fellow postulates that we match the diversity breakdown of the State when it comes to admitted students, but the real question is why are people not choosing to come to Berkeley despite accepting a diverse class?
- A Fellow brings up a few resources from their experiences on campus:
  - This Fellow recalls their experience with GBO, where they were able to see and meet people who were just like them
  - The Fellow also highlights the Basic Needs Center, a place that is accessible to a lot of students who are in need
  - DSP, EOP, Bridges Program, etc.

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- This Fellow, a tour guide, notes that many of the prospective students who tour Cal are typically wealthier
- In many instances, students are faced with the reality that their high school may not have adequately prepared them for Cal
- We admit many students from a wide range of backgrounds, but many of them do not feel supported once they are at Cal (equality vs. equity)
- This Fellow suggests raising awareness for the variety of support groups/organizations/programs to students during GBO
- A Fellow touches back on two comments made by previous speakers:
  - This Fellow addresses the question of why students do not want to come to Berkeley even though they may have been accepted:
    - Sometimes, siblings/friends/acquaintances talk with one another and bring up negative experiences with Berkeley
    - Many students of color consistently say no to Berkeley for other private schools (specifically Hispanic and Black students)
    - Why do we struggle to become a Hispanic-Serving institution?
    - How can we provide them with resources and experiences to increase diversity in specific fields
    - Students of Color consistently feel isolated - reduces enrollment of this demographic
    - This Fellow recounts that to become a Hispanic-Serving Institution, they needed to have 25% of the undergraduate population be Hispanic
      - Once given the money and resources, they were able to treat prospective students just like they would treat football players.
    - There is no tradeoff between attracting Students of Color and the quality of the overall student body - The selection pool is deep
- A Fellow states that they would like to hear more about the experiences from Students present in the room:
  - This Fellow highlights the importance of going to the Students to enact change
  - Go to the ASUC, go to student organizations to try to bring more and more people together

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- Can we plan campus-wide, cultural events that can bring people together and make more students feel connected with others
- This Fellow recalls the change from CalSO to OGB → CalSO was limiting for many students who could not travel to campus for just one weekend
- Could Dorms plan to make floors more diverse - have people experience living with people from completely different backgrounds
- A Fellow recounts their personal experiences with why specific demographics choose not to come to Cal
  - This Fellow recalls one of their first thoughts when they were accepted to Cal was that they did not belong here
  - This Fellow also points out that the Clark Kerr dorm is usually mostly white and mostly involved with Greek Life
    - Different housing options have different prices - is the price of Clark Kerr causing a specific demographics to populate there?
- A Fellow recalls back to a previous point about the treatment of potential students:
  - Why can't we treat prospective students the same way as football players - emphasize the notion of "we want you here"
  - Other schools fly out students and family members to various campuses to have them tour for a weekend to see what the campus is like - could this be something that Cal could do?
  - This Fellow points out that Memorial Stadium is usually  $\frac{2}{3}$  empty on Game Days - can we leverage this as a recruitment tactic to bring people into the community and give them a Cal experience for the day?
  - How do we make students feel like this is the place that they want to be?
  - This Fellow points out that Hispanics are matriculating at higher rates, but the growth is still slow
- A Fellow also provides their input on the question of why prospective students choose not to come to Cal
  - This Fellow recounts their experience of attending Cal Day as a prospective student
  - They attended a Cal Day Shabbat hosted by Hillel, with their parents, and this was a big reason why they wanted to attend Berkeley

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- Are there ways to create similar experiences of helping minority groups feel welcomed and at home on campus
- A Fellow recounts their experiences with pre-orientation groups
  - This Fellow's friend attended "PREP", which was a pre-orientation program for Hispanic admitted students, and this allowed them to explore campus and create friendships prior to starting at Cal
  - This Fellow was a member of the Global Environment theme housing their first year, community based on values
  - How can we continue to create spaces and experiences for students to feel welcome and that they are in the right place
- A Fellow takes issue with a previous speaker's comments:
  - This Fellow did not have the opportunity to meet people of the same demographic as they are, and this forced them to meet people who are different from them
    - They are still friends with them to this day
  - There are fears of not being accepted and fears for academic security
  - We should be encouraging groups to step out of their silos and engage and interact with other groups who are different from them
  - Yes, there is a need for cultural sensitivity and encouraging folks to find people to whom they can relate
    - But the world is going to look very different once they step off campus, and they need to be prepared for that
- A Fellow states that the only reason they came to Cal was because of the Black Recruitment and Retention Center
  - They were sent a train ticket and came to Cal for the Weekend
  - They came to Cal knowing nothing about the school and left determined to sign their SIR
  - What belonging looks like for one Black student may not be the same for other Black students
    - Different experiences across the board
  - It is important to not treat these groups as monolith, as experiences and desires may be different for everyone
  - A main factor as to why students are choosing not to come to Cal definitely has to deal with resources, the key issue is that the money is needed, but it is not there
- A Fellow discusses their experiences with the admissions programs at Cal

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- This Fellow did not have much experience with the undergraduate admissions, but they did have experience with graduate programs (College of Engineering, Haas, Law School)
- The one thing the graduate admissions programs does is seek to find out why people who were accepted choose not to come to Cal
- This Fellow states that we will never be able to compete with private universities when it comes down to money
- This Fellow asserts that we as a campus should be aggressive when trying to figure out why undergraduate admitted students choose not to come to Cal (whether they chose another school or nowhere at all)
- There is power in the students who chose not to come here if they tell us honestly, frankly, and thoroughly as to why they did not come here
  - This information is important because it could help create a better environment and help more and more future students fit in when they are admitted
- A Fellow notes that every student's experience is extremely different, even among the same ethnic groups
  - Some students may prefer to be surrounded by people who are similar to them because that would make them feel more comfortable, others may want a different option

The meeting closed with song and was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Meeting Minutes taken and compiled by the Chronicler for the Order.