

Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

Virtual Meeting February 16, 2021

The meeting was convened at 6:00 pm.

Items for the Good of the Order:

The Warden reviewed updated protocols for this semester's meetings due to these unique circumstances.

Items for the Good of the University: Did the University Get It Right?

Prior to the meeting, the Warden prepared a set of questions and resources for the Fellowship to inform our conversation of the topic:

On the topic of Did the University Get It Right, here are some questions to consider:

- How does the University's reluctance to repatriate Native American artifacts and remains affect that community? Should we be doing more than only returning the federal minimum and renaming Kroeber Hall?
- Is renaming buildings just a way to sweep problems under the rug, instead of dealing with the actual problems at hand? How should we actually deal with those problems?
- In regard to p/np and other academic policies for the 2020-2021 school year, Stanford and the Ivy Leagues made decisions about p/np before the semester began, why did UC Berkeley take so much longer to make a decisive decision on pass/no pass? Is allowing optional p/np the right thing to do - is it having a positive or negative influence on Berkeley students' admissions to graduate school and jobs?
- Does the University enact changes because they are forced to do so by law and/or social pressure, or because they consider it the morally right thing to do?

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- Do simple actions made by the campus to make a problem go away miss opportunities to teach or seek solutions to the underlying problems?

After a brief introduction from the Warden, the floor was open for the Fellowship for discussion:

- A Fellow asks the question of the scope of the topics for the evening, in regard to responses from just the University or responses from the campus community as a whole
 - Are we looking for just responses from Campus Administrators, or are we considering the responses from other pockets of the community, specifically from the ASUC and other Campus Advocacy organizations
- A Fellow notes that the University did take a good amount of time to consider renaming LeConte and Barrows Hall
 - The Campus first started considering the possibility of renaming these buildings back in 2015, but did not make any formal moves until 2020, after the George Floyd and Black Lives Matter movements
- A Fellow, a former member of student government, states that there appears to be a disconnect between Chancellors and high-level administration and the general community
 - Those in high level positions of leadership are not often aware of the issues which are important to the general population
- A Fellow notes that the University is often ignorant of the issues which are going on with the greater community, and this leads to the University being particularly reactive rather than proactive
 - The Campus usually has a reaction to external movements rather than take proactive steps in controversial issues
- A Fellow notes that buildings on campus have been “de-named” and not currently “re-named”. Campus maps and documents reflect these changes.
 - The Fellow notes that Campus was not just sitting on these discussions up until 2020, but there were dynamic conversations going on for a long while
 - There have been fellows who have sat on campus committees on the topic of de-naming buildings around campus
- A Fellow brings up the issues that surround the entire process of repatriation

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- The whole process is very long and bureaucratic
- A Tribe has to be federally recognized in order to have a claim for repatriation of remains and artifacts
- The process is generally expensive
- A Fellow discusses that it has always been a challenge for the University in regard to handling issues that affect BIPOC and LGBTQIA communities
 - This fellow has lived through times where the challenges lingered for a long time before the administration responded
 - A lot of the issues which were present back in the 70's-80's are still present today, and that is disconcerting that these issues are still here
- A Fellow notes that the general admission process does not help with equal representation for all racial groups who apply
 - This fellow brings up general underrepresentation of many racial groups in just about every area and level of higher education
- A Fellow expresses disappointment in the lack of transparency from the Chancellor and Administration that there was only a singular announcement made, with no details about the actual process itself
 - The issue in question involves Native American artifact repatriation
 - This Fellow, a history-adjacent professor, discusses the erasure of individuals for a singular aspect of their lives
 - Specifically, being reduced to a single flaw, erasing all contributions of the past
- A Fellow raises the issue of changing the name of an individual on a library, as the university is quietly handling these issues
 - The Fellow highlights the renaming of Wurster Hall to Bauer-Wurster Hall, so there are positive ways to approach the “renaming” of buildings
- A Fellow brings up the issue of just because you change a name, does not mean that the unconscious bias stops as well
 - If you want people to be engaged, you have to be transparent about the process, and If you want people to understand the decisions, you have to explain the details of how one arrived to the result
 - The Fellow notes that people often do not remain around if they do not feel included

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- A Fellow notes that a lot of these key decisions which are the focus of the discussion are very reactionary, and something such as changing the name of a building is performative
 - Does changing the name of the building fully solve the issue? There should be more done to address the issues which raised the discussion in the first place
 - The Fellow agrees that we should give more attention to those who have been historically underrepresented, as we become unaware of issues affecting everyone when
- A Fellow brings up the idea of thinking that renaming buildings is good, but the answer should be “yes, and”
 - The “and” part of the issue should continue to be explored, and it should be recognized that it will not go away with the removal of a singular name
 - The Fellow notes that a lot of these changes happen when there is social momentum behind the issues, but change can also be enacted even when these situations are not in the mainstream
- A Fellow brings up the topic of how the university handled the P/NP situation
 - The Administration was relatively transparent about the situation and the thought process about the decision
 - The issue is also that the Administration took too long to reach a decision
 - Many students were struggling with the effects of the Pandemic, and it would have helped relieve a lot of stress with the P/NP guidelines
 - Compared to other universities which announced P/NP either before the semester started or earlier in the semester
- A Fellow talks about their experience as a Dean’s Representative and Academic Advisor, in particular to how the UC System interpreted UC Santa Cruz’s default P/F system back in the 70s-80s
 - Santa Cruz did uphold the academic standards of the UC system in regard to graduate level performance and matriculation
 - Compared to Stanford, which allowed students to drop courses during Finals Week
 - The administration analyzed and debated those issues much faster back then

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- These policies have years of data behind them, yet the issues have been dragged on for so long
- A Fellow notes historically, P/F courses were sort of a fall back or a way to manage your GPA
 - There was a risk before in terms of applying to graduate school
 - The Fellow notes the idea of dropping courses up to a certain point late into the semester
 - Sometimes, students just do not click with the professor or teaching staff, yet they have no other options for taking courses that fulfill the major requirements
- A Fellow brings up the suspension of the use of SAT/ACT for UC admissions until 2024
 - There used to be a sentiment among admissions officers that one could be admitted on the basis of ZIP codes, and the results would be the same
 - The Tests do not accurately measure one's aptitude for college
- A Fellow states that it was difficult to see the name of Kroeber being removed, as he was a pioneer in the field of Anthropology
 - Currently, California Archeologists do converse with Native American tribes before engaging on work on their lands
 - Museums are currently moving in the direction of trying to right the wrongs of the past
 - Many items in the Phoebe Hearst Museum are of unknown origin, at least in the context of the dig sites at which they were found
 - A large issue with repatriation is private collections which are traded online
 - This private sphere is not in the spotlight and is completely hidden
- A Fellow readdresses the issue of the SAT/ACT usage for admission to the University
 - This Fellow was one of the first students to take the SATs back in the 60s, during the time when they were trying to determine whether or not these tests were useful
 - These tests were designed to be measures of intelligence - they are not

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- They were designed by people with a specific background and it was almost tailored to be gated for people with similar backgrounds
- The most critical issue with standardized testing is that it can be “gamed”
 - So many prep programs are available for people who have the access to them - distinct advantage
- The general conclusion is that there are so many students who are capable of doing the work at Cal, standardized tests do not provide any further information
- The Fellow brings up an anecdote from Berkeley Law School in the 70’s: initially it was P/F, but the competition between the students caused letter grades to be implemented
- A Fellow brings up the historical context of Standardized Testing:
 - Designed by a Harvard Admissions officer to reduce discrimination against Jewish applicants
 - The percentage of underrepresented students being admitted to the UC system dramatically increased with the removal of the SAT/ACT
 - Berkeley receives way more qualified applicants than we have room, and the issue of admissions is a very complicated process
 - We should not look harshly on the University for doing what they can to try to admit as many qualified students as they can
 - The Fellow notes that it is looked upon negatively to take a class pass/fail, but it can in fact lead to a student being more engaged in the course
- A Fellow, a former employee of the Hearst Museum of Anthropology, states that we can definitely continue to do more for repatriating artifacts and remains to those who occupied the lands that UC Berkeley operates on
 - Many of the artifacts and remains have been treated with toxic materials used for preservation, and they should not just be handed back without any safety analysis
- A Fellow notes that many of the issues which were discussed this evening are a small part of much larger issues
 - We need to find a way to promote communal discourse

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- How do we go about finding solutions which take account the inputs from a wide variety of people who represent the values and interests of the greater population?

The meeting closed with song and was adjourned at 7:24 pm.

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