

# Order of The Golden Bear

ΔΙΩΚΩΣ

ESTABLISHED 1900

**February 15, 2022**

The meeting was convened at 6:03 pm.

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

- A Fellow asks if other Fellows would kindly stay home if they are feeling unwell during Covid Times
- A Fellow extends a warm welcome to new Fellows who were recently initiated this past term, and asks that they participate so that they can contribute to the Order's Discussions
- A Vote was taken to determine whether a constitutional bylaw could be waived to allow the current Chronicler to remain as Chronicler despite not being currently enrolled (Early Graduation). Only current students were allowed to vote per the Constitution, and the vote was 12-0 in favor of waiving the bylaws and retaining the current Chronicler.

## **Items for the Good of the University: The University's Local and Global Impact**

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 of The University's Local and Global Impact:*

- A Fellow opens the discussion with a comment on the digitization project of the UC Berkeley Libraries, an effort to expand knowledge to allow it to be available to anyone around the world
  - A Fellow mentions a book, *First Principles*, where they discuss how James Madison was educated at Princeton, and how scholars compared it to Berkeley in the context of the leading institution of change as viewed by intellectuals across the nation

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- A Fellow provides some historical context: in 1919, Faculty revolted against the current president at the time, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, to have full control over curriculum and university decisions
  - Since the 1950s, Berkeley has been mentioned among the ranks of the top Universities in the US
  - This Fellow highlights the broadness and diversity of the University of California system, with 10 campuses, and hundreds of thousands of students over multiple generations
- A Fellow mentions that the University of California was one of the first universities in the nation with equal admission consideration of students with Disabilities
  - This Fellow mentions that diversity and inclusion of minority students is a key part of the University's impact
- A Fellow raises the question of how UC Berkeley can be considered one of the key institutions of change while Black students are only 2% of the student population
  - Berkeley could use the graduate education/research and community programs to help improve the experiences of Black students on Campus
  - This Fellow mentions that while we are a diverse campus, we don't have an equal representation of Black Students (compared to the U.S. population)
- A Fellow brings up the Racial Justice Council that was just created through Cal Athletics
  - The Fellow thinks that there are two different perceptions of the University, when we talk about Berkeley, we are talking about academics, but when we talk about athletics, it is referred to as Cal
- A Fellow brings some personal perspective from growing up in the Berkeley Area:
  - This Fellow mentions that since there is a lower percentage of Black Students compared to other ethnicities, this place can seem unreachable to many since they don't see enough people who are like them here on campus
  - This Fellow also brings to attention that Berkeley and the Bay Area can be overwhelming, and we need to bring more attention to the stresses that students are going through

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- A Fellow continues with personal experiences:
  - Although this Fellow had a negative view of Berkeley initially, this Fellow has found that the opportunities are there, but they just have to find them
  - While we do have the best resources, sometimes the navigation to get to those resources just isn't as accessible
- A Fellow touches on a few points which were already brought up:
  - This Fellow highlights that Black Recruitment and Retention is extremely important, and one of the biggest issues is that while we admit a large number of Black Students, many Black students do not SIR
  - UCLA, our sister school, has a much higher rate of Black Recruitment and Retention
  - This Fellow, who was also admitted to UCLA, received a lot of information about Black Student Life on Campus at UCLA, but they did not receive anything from Cal
  - This Fellow also brings up the separation of Berkeley as an institution and Cal as the athletic component
    - The separation of the two increases the stereotypes of Athletes on campus, a large proportion of whom are Black
    - This Fellow has been stopped before just because they were not wearing anything Cal-related on campus
  - This Fellow highlights that as a prestigious institution, we often set the status quo
    - Often those who challenge the status quo don't get to set it, but Berkeley challenges it while also being able to influence it
  - The Fellow recalls that Forbes had ranked us the number 1 overall university, mainly due to the upward mobility of our students
    - Students at Harvard or Stanford often come from families of wealth or high social status, whereas Cal has a much higher diversity of socioeconomic statuses of students who are admitted and attending
    - This is exactly what a Public University should be doing, providing upward mobility to students of a wide array socioeconomic backgrounds

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- A Fellow mentions some areas of improvement that the University could focus on as well as some potential solutions:
  - Recruitment: At UC Davis, with respect to enrollment after admission for Hispanic/Latinx students, they are well above their target goals - they provide support and information for these students to push for them to SIR
    - We know what we could be doing to increase the SIR rates of underrepresented groups, why do we not pursue this?
  - Students with Disabilities: Disabilities often are more than what we can see, and the definition expands past just mobility disabilities
    - For example, this Fellow postulates that we have not done enough for Veterans in our community who have disabilities as a result of their service, which often could be unseen
  - We have Nobel Laureates, they are great people, great teachers, great researchers, and this is one of the things that we do well on this campus
  - The Campus can be putting in equal effort into increasing enrollment rates for underrepresented students just as much as they do for promoting Nobel Laureates
  - This Fellow mentions that we would be remiss if we did not talk about the Campus Administration
    - This Fellow can attest firsthand how poorly the Administration treats their staff
    - For a campus that says that it wants to improve their sense of community, there is a lot to be done and they are currently going in the wrong direction
      - A Sobering statistic: 1 in 5 of our staff and administration changes over every year - there is no opportunity to keep the grassroots staff and what they have to offer
- A Fellow mentions that they think of Berkeley as a Beacon for Progress
  - We are constantly trying to figure out how to progress in the positive direction, and the Fellow thinks that these conversations can also push forward for progress and change
- A Fellow responds to the question of “What Makes Berkeley Berkeley?”
  - The Fellow mentions that whatever we do (research, community work, etc.), many institutions will follow

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- When the University voted to admit Women back in 1870 or drop the SAT scores recently, many Universities followed
- We set precedents, and how should think about how we can leverage our status as the Number 1 university to move the ball forward for everyone
- A Fellow recalls the welcoming videos and information that they had received, and the experiences of Black Students coming into Cal
  - This Fellow mentions that Black individuals are statistically trapped out of the education system around age 2 or 3, so if we are only focusing on High School recruitment, we are missing the larger issue
  - This is not just a Berkeley issue, this is a world issue, and we should utilize our ability to make an impact going forward
  - There is no power or privilege if you cannot make a difference for other people
  - This Fellow mentions that Berkeley should not be complicit in upholding the societal inequities that impact Black and Brown people, but we should use our prestige to make an impact and change the status quo
- A Fellow mentions that we should think about where we have come from and how much change has happened over the past few decades
  - It is probably a good thing that we are dissatisfied, because that means that we acknowledge that we can continue to make even more change
  - We often don't reach out enough when we are here on campus, we should continue to reach out to local members of the community
  - We should be spreading the concept of Berkeley to others around our local community and beyond
  - It's not just a matter of the University doing it, it's a matter of us all doing it
- A Fellow reflects on some points that have been mentioned this evening:
  - This Fellow, a public policy student, thinks about Prop 209 which removed affirmative action in California
    - This action caused the Campus to think about innovative ways to increase diversity on campus
  - This Fellow recalls their experience with applying and being accepted into Cal

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- The recruiter that this Fellow had talked with reached out to them after they were admitted and opened up communication channels with this Fellow
- The Fellow recalls that personal connection can have a key impact on a Student's decision and experience at Berkeley
- This Fellow mentions that there is little support for students after they are admitted, and there is a lack of accessibility to resources provided by the University
- A Fellow brings up that while we are a University with a great impact, we also need to take advice and inspiration from other Campuses and places
  - For example, other Universities made their COVID Spring Semester policies clear well ahead of time, while Berkeley did not make their plans known until very close up to the return to campus
- A Fellow highlights the central values of alignment and misalignment encompass the discussion of issues that have been mentioned during this discussion
  - If we could instill all the core values that we love about Berkeley, that would be how we could best pitch Berkeley to others
  - The "Master Plan" of Higher Education in California, including the UCs, CSUs, and Community Colleges
    - This Fellow is unsure of how many people in the current generation understand this idea, and whether we should redesign it?
  - How do we foster loyalty or camaraderie among students after they leave?
  - What is Berkeley to us? → Distill that → Help us all get on the same page and strive to become the University that we know the University could be
- A Fellow mentions that this has been a great conversation, but we have to "do what we say", and that we should carry out what we have talked about tonight going forwards
- A Fellow states that they currently spend most of their time away from Berkeley and outside of California, but they are constantly struck by the types of conversations that we have in this room and on this campus, and it reminds them of the brilliance of Berkeley
  - What is it that makes us "us"?

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- The three things that stand out to this Fellow as a former Tour Guide: Excellence, Tradition, and Diversity
  - We are not perfect, but we hold parts of these three things close
- This Fellow thinks about how many conversations we have had while we are in crisis mode
- This Fellow hopes that the conversation, thinking, and progress does not end in this room, and that we continue to carry out what we have discussed tonight and think about the impact that we can make and make that impact
- A Fellow highlights the impact of Faculty, particularly their impact on students
  - This Fellow mentions that we now have an agreement with our lecturers so that they can continue to have an impact on our students while also not being burdened by supporting themselves outside of employment with the University
  - Our Tenured Faculty are often removed from connecting with students because of their research, disconnect affects student experiences.

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

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