

## ComuniLove NOW! 11 Demands\*

We want to emphasize that our demands were purposefully left unnumbered because each one is equally important and such, will not be listed in a specific order.

- **We want a community-led process for the name change of El Centro Chicano y Latino.** We want the new name to be inclusive of current student identities and reflective of contemporary community conversations. We recognize the effort of resilient Chicano and Latino student activism that has led to the formation of this space on campus, and hope to continue to honor this legacy by advocating for this space to remain inclusive of all those it serves. We draw inspiration from other Latine community centers and organizations across the country, such as Yale University, Colorado State University, the University of Southern California, and most recently the University of California Los Angeles, who have either already changed or are initiating community-led processes for an update to their community centers' name.
- **We want the implementation of visible, diverse representations of our comunidad (such as new murals) and the removal of offensive murals.** We want visible representations that include new student murals that are created by, represent, and center Black and/or Indigenous students from across Latin America. We want the removal of murals offensive to Indigenous and other underrepresented Latine identities, such as the following hurtful Stern murals: the unfinished "Indio" *Lotería* card and murals that solely depict Central American culture and bodies through references of war. Though we recognize that many of these murals were created with student input throughout the 20th century, we stand firm in our belief that we should not commemorate racist history or depict communities in ways they no longer feel are appropriate. Murals are meant to uplift the communities depicted in them, and should not leave Latine students feeling misrepresented and hurt. Historically, the practice of muralism has not been defined by its permanence, but rather by the public calls of collaboration and change it promotes.
- **We want a revised hiring process for and by El Centro's staff that intentionally increases underrepresented Latine hires.** We want an increase of Black, Indigenous, Asian, queer, gender marginalized, and mixed-race Latin students from Mexico, Central American, the Caribbean and South America. We also want intentional outreach for staff recruitment toward these demographics. As student staff play a major role in both bringing events to the table and deciding which events will be put on, we hope that an increase in diversity of staff will result in a structural increase in the amount of diverse cultural events that will be supported and organized by El Centro. This looks like redistributing power and control of the hiring process to current student staff at El Centro in choosing the incoming class of workers as is already being done by other community centers on campus. We also want the professional staff hiring process at El Centro to include current student staff and community opinions. As we've emphasized before, El Centro was created by students and for students — *and we want to put the power back into community hands.*
- **We want an investment in and increase of more diverse cultural events in partnership with underrepresented communities.** We want an increase in diverse Mexican, Central American, Caribbean, and South American events. We want an increase of queer, gender marginalized, language-diverse, and faith-diverse events. Specifically, we acknowledge that while El Centro claims to serve 'Chicano y Latino' identities and has historically centered those of Mexican descent, we acknowledge that intersectional Mexican identities (Indigenous, Black, non-Spanish speakers, undocumented, queer, trans, etc) have not felt included, welcomed, or celebrated by El Centro. We want community events, cultural programming, and educational opportunities created by the center to be reflective of the diverse identities, experiences, and celebrations present within our *comunidad*. This can look like appointing program leads from diverse backgrounds who work on intentional outreach and creation of events in partnership with the communities they represent. This should look like time, care, and investment in supporting the success of these events by all staff in the center. In a further bulletin point, we elaborate on how El Centro can improve how they financially support and uplift these events.

- **\*We want the implementation of a community-led accountability and transformative practices<sup>1</sup> committee.** This committee of accountability and transformative practices will address concerns brought forth by *comunidad* about the community space, student staff, and larger community. This will be a committee that relies on non-punitive practices to address issues through restorative circles,<sup>2</sup> student and staff conversations, and educational opportunities that emphasize accountability and transformative repair. This will be a committee where students from across *comunidad*, from varying experiences and opinions, meet to move our community forward instead of promoting student-on-student attacks. El Centro was created as a student-led space, and we want our *comunidad* to return to its student-led roots with the guidance, protections, and wisdom of faculty, professional staff and other valuable non-student members of *comunidad*.
- **We want a clear established line of communication between El Centro and Zapata staff.** This communication ensures there is a cohesive relationship between the two dominant Latine spaces on campus, especially when Zapata is home to a greater Central American and Caribbean population. One such line could be to require El Centro workers, similar to Zapata pre-assignees, to attend “ZapaMonday” programming for at least one quarter. This will allow El Centro staff to establish direct student connections with our second Latine home and engage with different but important programming and educational opportunities that uplift our diverse *comunidad*.
- **We want budget transparency between El Centro and the larger Latine community.** We want budget transparency from the professional staff to *comunidad*. We want to know how El Centro’s over 200K budget is being used. El Centro is our community center, with the goal of *serving* us as its community members. In this goal of transparency, we also hope to empower students in taking the reins of what events are created by us and for us. We propose student staffers to receive grants to plan at least one community event of their choosing, similar to other community centers. We expect trust to be placed with student staff to manage the funds for planning community events and carrying out the duties assigned to their roles. Furthermore, with the recent funding denial of many Latine VSOs, we hope that budget transparency can help us envision how the community can support student-led Latine events beyond those organized by VSOs.
- **\*We want a transparency statement between El Centro professional staff and student staff members.** With a transparency statement, we want El Centro to *explicitly* state what aspects of their student staff’s non-work lives will be monitored throughout their employment (e.g. social media, interpersonal relationships). We want El Centro to clearly detail these expectations in their Student Staff Expectations and Handbook, to provide transparency to its workers and prevent instances where actions that have not been officially prohibited for student staff are brought against them. We demand these expectations are also addressed during staff training. These protections are necessary for student staff members, who have been told that they are “workers first, community members second,” and had this concept applied in ways that impede upon their right to free speech. No student should feel too intimidated to criticize, comment on, or

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<sup>1</sup> Transformative Justice (TJ) “is a political framework created to respond to violence without creating more violence... TJ centers community accountability, holistic wellness, and the transformation of underlying conditions which cause harm. Transformative Justice actively works to build alternative structures to our current punitive systems (such as prisons, police, and I.C.E.) which utilize violence to maintain social control... [TJ] works to understand the production of harm from a systemic lens” (definition from pg 17 of “[Integrating Indigenous Peacemaking in the Academy](#),” created June 2020 by the Native American Cultural Center (NACC) at Stanford).

<sup>2</sup> “Restorative circles” derives from Peacemaking, “an Indigenous conflict resolution process which works to address the core issues of conflict to restore balance within one’s self, between peers, and among community... Peacemaking brings together all impacted members of the community to reach a place of mutual understanding and respect. For if the community does not work through the conflict by reestablishing a balanced, healthy relationship, reintegration is less likely to succeed, and the core issue is likely to take root once more” (from pg 6 of “[Integrating Indigenous Peacemaking in the Academy](#),” created June 2020 by the Native American Cultural Center (NACC) at Stanford).

provide feedback about their community space — especially when it is meant to be their only safe space at a PWI. We want to be clear that the protections we demand do not include hate speech, or any form of discriminatory actions. We hope that Pro-Staff opens a student-led conversation on how this can look to ensure students are protected, but also called into conversation via the student-led accountability and transformative practices committee when harm is done (outlined five bulletin points above).

- **\*We want undocumented students to feel protected and have safe networks of visibility.** We want El Centro to create specific programming that supports undocumented students on campus. Undocumented students should not be left advocating for themselves without the support of professional staff and protection of El Centro, which is often the only community center or resource that many undocumented Latine students can turn to. We also want El Centro to work with undocumented students to create options where they are involved and compensated for their labor, such as stipends, which many on campus jobs provide.
- **\*We want El Centro to create spaces where students are able to be their authentic selves.** We want those students who have been dismissed and disregarded to be included in partaking in different aspects of their culture. This would entail language diversity in community spaces, having a sense of reinforcement when wanting to highlight their communities, and ultimately not feeling like their communities and cultures are tokenized. This also means creating a welcoming, affirming, and learning space for students who come from different political ideologies, academic backgrounds and walks of life to speak their truths and (un)learn with community.
- **\*If these demands fail to be met within a reasonable amount of time, we call for the reevaluation of those with the power to implement these changes for the betterment of our current *comunidad* and the future generations to inherit this space.** The list of demands outlined in this document are a starting point for a larger community conversation on ways El Centro must structurally change to continue its commitment to community work, inclusion, and justice. These demands were born from several community conversations spanning years and are reflective of the needs of the community. These demands live and breathe through our community and thus, are subject to change. As it stands, they are reasonable, realistic and must be immediately implemented to restore community justice. If these demands fail to be implemented within a reasonable amount of time, we must engage in a difficult conversation on the reevaluation of those who are in power of the community center, their commitments to justice, and whether they are capable of fulfilling their duties to the diverse identities and voices they serve. We believe that our community's current inability to move forward—remaining stagnant in unproductive discourse and attacks on students—is a reflection of the failure of those in power to listen and be willing to work with students in visualizing change. **We've forgotten that it is us, students, who are the leaders that created El Centro in the first place.** Because of this, we ask that those in power—who feel like they can no longer carry out their responsibilities to the community or feel as if their capacity might no longer suit the power they were given—begin to consider stepping down.

**\*Statement of transparency (what we edited/added from our original demands and why):**

As a collective of Latine community members calling for the betterment of our *comunidad*, we want to be open and honest about the work that we do. This includes listening to feedback from the community and adjusting the work we do to accommodate that. This statement of transparency will explain what demands have been altered or added in the order they appear within our demands:

1. **\*We have added the words “community-led” to the demand stating “We want the implementation of a community-led accountability and transformative practices committee.”** In the past months, a lot of rumors have spread about harmful comments made by community members. Our community was never

given a space to discuss and hold each other accountable, and these rumors continue on today, skewing the truth and leaving students unprotected. We believe that a lot of our community division could be solved if we had a direct way to address community hurt, in student-to-student mediated conversation and accountability. **Ensuring this is a community-led effort ensures transparency at every step of the way and allows for justice to be restored in and by the community.**

2. **\*We have edited and clarified the wording regarding our demand for a privacy contract** for El Centro and Zapata student staff. This change comes after we received feedback from the community for clear wording on what is meant by this. Many students had questioned whether, by demanding a “Privacy Contract,” we sought NDA’s for student staff which could potentially create challenges for whistleblowers and condone individual instances of hate or discrimination. **ComuniLove NOW! is not advocating for El Centro student staff to sign NDAs**, and we believe there should be transparency between all staff members and the wider community about what working at the community center entails. **Our demands seek a transparency statement to outline expectations, responsibilities, and the scope of work conduct of Student Staff.** This is a response to how current staff handbooks have been vague in wording, and non-work conduct that was never explicitly prohibited was used to discipline and discourage staff from raising critiques of these spaces.
3. **\*We have added a demand stating “We want undocumented students to be and feel protected.”** This was added after listening to undocumented members of the community who felt isolated from and uncared for by El Centro. We wanted to be sure to include undocumented students and their needs into our collective and ask that undocumented students to please contact us further on how we might update this to reflect their needs.
4. **\*We have added a demand stating “We want to create spaces where students are able to be their authentic selves.”** This was also added after listening to community grievances and collecting feedback post-Friday’s demonstration. We do not want to continue to uphold the notion that Latinidad only means speaking Spanish and/or looking a certain way. We want to ensure that students feel comfortable at Centro, expressing **every** aspect of their culture, including speaking their home languages and uplifting their communities. For those who do feel as though El Centro currently offers them a space to be their authentic selves, our goal is to preserve that safety and comfort and extend that space to groups that have not historically or do not currently feel that they can be their authentic self in the space. We believe that we do not have to give up anyone’s safety or comfort in the space in order to create inclusion for others and that we can expand the space and make it more inclusive while still maintaining the safety and comfort for those whom the center already serves and serves well.
5. **\*We have completely removed our call for Director Prieto’s resignation and instead, replaced this with the following demand: If these demands fail to be met within a reasonable amount of time, we call for the reevaluation of those with the power to implement these changes for the betterment of our current *comunidad* and the future generations to inherit this space.** We want to remain firm that as a collective, we do not condone personal attacks nor do we encourage any students to believe Director Prieto, or any individual professional or student staff member, should be villainized, targeted or found to be completely at fault with the issues of our center. When this demand was initially written, it came from a place of disappointment with Director Prieto and the rest of El Centro’s professional staff’s lack of transparency and communication with the community who had, on multiple occasions, and over the course of many years, stepped forward with concerns. We have since changed this demand because we feel it is not reflective of our ultimate goal: (re)imagining a Centro that is just and inclusive of all community members, committed to restoring relationships, and intentional in its work to dismantling the systemic anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity of Latinidad. Furthermore, community members raised that this demand excluded students who feel as if their relationship to Director Prieto looks differently than those who have been harmed by the actions of the center. These students deserve a place in our movement and ultimately, are community members whose experiences are valuable to reconstructing an inclusive Centro. However, we do want to continue to emphasize that as long as no efforts are made by those in power at El

Centro—while our grace continues to be extended towards them for collaboration—then we must call for a reevaluation of their ability to serve our community.