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# UNIVERSITY IN CRISIS:

## Challenges and Responses During the Formative Years of the Young Administration at UCLA



**UCLA**

**Luskin Center for  
History and Policy**

***University in Crisis:  
A Case Study of Institutional Responses to Social and Political  
Turmoil at UCLA (1968-1971)***

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UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy

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### **Director's Note**

This latest report is the third in a suite of three research projects devoted to the university—and UCLA—that the Luskin Center for History and Policy (LCHP) undertook over the past two years. When the COVID-19 pandemic first began in March 2020, we asked ourselves how we at the LCHP would respond to the crisis at hand and what our transformed agenda should be. That prompted a wider reflection on the university of which we are part, with a particular interest in learning how UCLA has responded to past crises of scale. Some months later, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, we decided to widen that introspective lens to examine structural inequity and racism at our own institution.

The present report engages both of these themes, exploring institutional and student responses to crisis and the struggle to achieve greater racial and ethnic diversity at UCLA. The research team has unearthed important new documents that reveal tensions and competing ambitions at UCLA in the tumultuous period of the late 1960 and early 1970s. This report provides a new baseline for understanding that period as well as institutional responses--and thus constitutes an important benchmark for future researchers to build upon.

David N. Myers

Director

Luskin Center for History and Policy  
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“A crisis is something in which events, if unraveled, are going to create a negative set of circumstances which will be bad and difficult to undo.”

– Charles E. Young, Former UCLA Chancellor (1968-1997)<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

As in other fields and organizations, crises regularly emerge and affect institutions of higher education. In July 2020, the UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy (LCHP) initiated a research project to investigate how universities navigated crises of significant scale. With early COVID-19-related economic fallout in mind, the initial research team during that summer situated the 2008-2009 Great Recession as the most recent crisis moment that had a broad economic effect on higher education. For the University of California and UCLA specifically, the research team found that the Great Recession caused severe financial distress, which precipitated major changes in funding structure for academic operations.

After an initial exploration of dynamics and outcomes of a “university in crisis,” LCHP began a second phase of research with the current research team that utilized archival data, reaching even further in the past. With a continued focus on UCLA—as well as additional interest in the intersection of social and political movements and college campuses—the research team identified two moments of crisis that occurred within a three-year period between 1968 and 1971:

- 1) The student demand for Ethnic Studies content in their curriculum and the establishment of UCLA’s Ethnic Studies Centers (1968-1969), and
- 2) The on-campus killings of students Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John J. Huggins and the creation of the High Potential Program (1969-1971)

For both crisis moments, the research team explored what took place historically, clarified the various decision-making processes that were utilized at the time, and examined how the crisis was strategically responded to within its own context.

These moments are significant because of their situational and topical relevance to one another and because of the institutional circumstances in which they collectively

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<sup>1</sup> Charles E. Young, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, and Victoria Pfau, February 26, 2021, interview 1, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

took shape. In 1968, Charles E. Young ascended to the chancellorship at UCLA, replacing Franklin D. Murphy and becoming the youngest individual to ever serve in the role.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, activism connected to the social and political movements of the 1960s played out on college campuses, especially at public institutions—like UCLA—which were expanding in enrollment and increasing their student and faculty diversity.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the University of California (UC) system was in the midst of change, as the centralized powers from the president’s office were beginning to be delegated to the campus chancellors—a period in which UCLA had begun to rise in stature and capacity.<sup>4</sup> The three-year period between 1968 and 1971 initiated a consequential chapter in the university’s growth and transformation— overlapping with the formative years of the Young administration and marked by both new demands from students and institutionally regulated change.

This report offers a narrative overview and historical analysis of a pair of crisis moments that took place at UCLA. The two moments centered in this report are of particular note, as they represent a condensed period of overlapping turmoil on campus. That said, the research team believes that “crisis” is a universal phenomenon experienced by institutions broadly. By acknowledging the potential for parallels over time and the salience of historical context in present-day policy or decision-making, this report will also connect the analyzed crisis moments with contemporary occurrences. It is our hope that this report may be useful for university administrators and other important stakeholders on campus involved in navigating crises at their institutions.

### **Data Sources**

Data used to develop this report were gathered from multiple sources. Most notably, the research team utilized administrative files housed at the University Archives, a subset of the UCLA Library Department of Special Collections. Seizing on a limited opening of the archives due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research team made visits over the course of four days and explored 18 boxes of administrative files from the

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<sup>2</sup> Marina Dundjerski, *UCLA: The First Century* (Tempe: Third Millennium Publishing, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> “Celebrating 150 years of being boldly Californian,” *University of California*, 2018, <https://150.universityofcalifornia.edu/#timeline> (accessed on January 31, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Marina Dundjerski, *UCLA: The First Century* (Tempe: Third Millennium Publishing, 2011).



1960s and 1970s. A total of over 400 documents were identified, photographed, and logged for our use. Secondary sources were utilized in the form of newspaper articles (e.g., Daily Bruin) and institutional newsletters or publications.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic's challenges to in-person interactions, the research team was fortunate enough to make use of ample interview and oral history data. With support from institutional contacts and with the remote functions provided by Zoom, the research team was able to conduct semi-structured interviews to enrich our document analysis. Interviewees were identified by their appearance in archival documents as well as by their surfacing in participatory and/or leadership roles during the crisis moments of this report's focus. Additionally, the research team utilized existing interviews housed in the UCLA Center for Oral History Research.

### **The Demand for Ethnic Studies and The Establishment of Ethnic Studies Centers (1968-1969)**



UCLA student leaders representing the Ethnic Studies Centers in a meeting with the Young administration<sup>5</sup>

In May 1969, UCLA's University Research Library displayed an exhibit entitled "Four American Cultures" that brought attention to the American Cultures Project. The Project was a new initiative to "provide a framework for research and community actions" through four cultural programs, then called the Afro-American, Mexican-

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<sup>5</sup> Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, "Forty Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA," *UCLA Graduate Division*, February 2010, <https://www.aisc.ucla.edu/news/files/40thCommBook.pdf> (accessed on July 25, 2021).

American, Asian-American and Indian-American programs.<sup>67</sup> The impetus for what would become the new Ethnic Studies Centers largely came from students, who wanted to establish a space of inclusion at a predominantly white institution such as UCLA. With linkages to the various ethnic “power” movements of the 1960s, these students were part of a broader campaign across college campuses to establish academic opportunities relevant to their lived experiences. Universities at the time, however, were unprepared for this advocacy—thereby prompting one of the many institutional crises that arose as a result of students becoming more ethnically diverse. Despite the innovative nature of these centers, they were formed through pre-existing institutional structures for research units at UCLA. Ultimately, the crisis prompted by the demands of students of color led to innovative spaces being established: UCLA’s Ethnic Studies Centers. With an active commitment from Chancellor Young, the Ethnic Studies Centers represented a multi-pronged approach which the UCLA administration used to address the interests of multiple groups as well as a means of avoiding further demands and crises from unfolding.

### *Background*

According to an interview with Chancellor Young, college campuses in the 1960s increasingly became students’ central outlet for voicing their frustrations and agitating for change.<sup>8</sup> This phenomenon was not just prevalent at UCLA, as countercultural movements appeared across college campuses—with perhaps the most notable example of mass civil disobedience taking place at UC Berkeley beginning in 1964.<sup>9</sup> But there were important developments at UCLA as well. For instance, a 1968 on-campus party—dubbed “Viva Zapata”—hosted by a historically white fraternity at UCLA resulted in the desecration of the Mexican flag and the hanging of a banner declaring that certain racial

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<sup>6</sup> Four American Cultures: An Exhibit at the UCLA Library Pamphlet, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>7</sup> These four cultural programs mirror the four established Ethnic Studies Centers. At the time of this report’s publication, the four centers are named: the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, the Chicano Studies Research Center, the Asian American Studies Center, and the American Indian Studies Center.

<sup>8</sup> Charles E. Young, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, and Victoria Pfau, February 26, 2021, interview 1, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

<sup>9</sup> The Oral History Center of UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library has various historical accounts of the 1964 Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley and its legacy for student organizing.



groups were unwelcome.<sup>10</sup> These incidents resulted in protests organized by students, highlighting a growing frustration with a campus climate that was deemed uncondusive to multicultural inclusion and dignity. This atmosphere primed students to call for new commitments to be made by the university, including the demand for Ethnic Studies.



Signage during the "Viva Zapata" fraternity party<sup>11</sup>

UCLA administrators in 1968 and 1969 were primarily interested in ensuring stability on campus, and avoiding the uncontrollable breaking points they observed with the Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley and the protests for an Ethnic Studies curriculum at San Francisco State University).<sup>12</sup> Upon assuming the administrative helm, Chancellor Young strategically decided to engage UCLA student leaders of ethnic minority groups about the potential for establishing Ethnic Studies-focused entities on

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<sup>10</sup> Roy Hu, "Inspired from Past Experiences in Civil Rights, UCLA Faculty Continues to Fight for Equality," *Daily Bruin*, January 14, 2011, [https://dailybruin.com/2011/01/14/inspired\\_from\\_past\\_experiences\\_in\\_civil\\_rights\\_ucla\\_faculty\\_continues\\_to\\_fight\\_for\\_equality](https://dailybruin.com/2011/01/14/inspired_from_past_experiences_in_civil_rights_ucla_faculty_continues_to_fight_for_equality) (accessed January 24, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, "Forty Years of Ethnic Studies at UCLA," *UCLA Graduate Division*, February 2010, <https://www.aisc.ucla.edu/news/files/40thCommBook.pdf> (accessed on July 25, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> The J. Paul Leonard Library at San Francisco State University has a special collection covering materials from the student-led "strike," also referred to as the "Third World strike."

campus.<sup>13</sup> Carlos Haro—an undergraduate student at the time who later served as Assistant Director of the Chicano Studies Research Center—was present during these discussions with Young and attested to their strategic nature. According to Haro, students viewed the newly appointed Young administration as an opportunity for campus change, as Young appeared more receptive to students than did his predecessor, Franklin Murphy.<sup>14</sup>

Government action was also a factor in the push for Ethnic Studies at UCLA. In the fall of 1968, the California State Assembly passed legislation urging the development of a Black studies curriculum at state-funded institutions.<sup>15</sup> In line with this decision, the UC Office of the President transmitted to campus the urgency and legitimacy of supporting Ethnic Studies initiatives at the UC campuses.<sup>16</sup> Notably, this legislation called for the development of a curriculum and teaching materials, but the model for Ethnic Studies at UCLA had a different priority: research.

Before Charles Young took up his duties, Chancellor Murphy made significant strides in elevating UCLA's profile as a research institution.<sup>17</sup> UCLA's ascendance in research mission was aided by a structural avenue for establishing research-focused entities—known as “organized research units” (ORUs)—led by faculty, often in collaboration with students.<sup>18</sup> The ORU model acted as a key vehicle to incorporate Ethnic Studies into the UCLA institutional fabric—evident in one of Chancellor Young's letters, in which he commented that the proposed centers “were not fundamentally different from the ORUs.”<sup>19</sup> Haro also alluded to the ORU framework as a key vehicle,

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<sup>13</sup> Charles E. Young, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, and Victoria Pfau, February 26, 2021, interview 1, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

<sup>14</sup> Carlos Haro, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, Victoria Pfau and Sarah Son, April 2, 2021, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

<sup>15</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors r.e. Black Studies Curricula, November 5, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 3, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>16</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors r.e. Black Studies Curricula, November 5, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 3, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>17</sup> While Young is credited with leading UCLA into the modern era and into its present reputation as a top research university, a significant amount of fundamental growth for research functions and knowledge production—including expansion of the library—occurred during Murphy's tenure as chancellor.

<sup>18</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors re: Report of the University Committee on Educational Policy on Organized Research Units, April 2, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 2, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>19</sup> Charles E. Young to E. R. Hardwick and Professor Young, March 24, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

stating that “viability was key” in justifying the formation of Ethnic Studies-focused centers in light of the university’s research commitments.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, students seemed to understand that framing the proposed Ethnic Studies-focused entities as research-oriented centers was consistent with UCLA’s institutional priorities as an ascendent research university.

### *Establishment According to the ORU Model*

The interest and demand for Ethnic Studies at UCLA became clear in discussions between Chancellor Young and student leaders in 1968 about how to address the needs of ethnic minorities and other underrepresented students. Part of the rationale included a need to illuminate the lived experiences of people of color and to provide opportunities for students to learn about their own and their peers’ cultural backgrounds.

The Afro-American Studies Center was the first of the four Ethnic Studies Centers to be formulated and proposed under the ORU model. The four centers—serving Afro-American, Mexican American, Asian American, and American Indian stakeholders<sup>21</sup>—were to be united under a new umbrella entity: the Institute of American Cultures (IAC). Young outlined the scope of the work of the IAC, including its role in overseeing the centers’ budgets, coordinating collaborative projects between them, and publishing a quarterly newsletter.<sup>22</sup>

The outline of the 1968 IAC structure drew heavily from the ORU model. In April of that year, UCOP and the campus chancellors across UC were briefed on the relevance

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<sup>20</sup> Carlos Haro, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, Victoria Pfau and Sarah Son, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

<sup>21</sup> It is essential to note that the UCLA Library’s University Archives had very few documents related to the Asian American Studies Center\* and American Indian Studies Center\* (\*current names) during data collection for this report. The research team acknowledges this significant limitation. Unbalanced focus on events and individuals related to the establishment of the Afro-American Studies Center (present-day Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies) and Mexican American Cultural Center (present-day Chicano Studies Research Center) is an unintended result of utilizing an incomplete archive and the research team’s limited ability and capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate access to other archives. Under more ideal circumstances, this report would have better included events and individuals related to all centers. Each of the present-day Ethnic Studies Centers at UCLA has a robust archive of materials related to the center’s establishment, including oral histories, print documents, and other multimedia vessels of information. The research team strongly recommends readers to visit all centers and to explore their archives.

<sup>22</sup> Charles E. Young to Dean Kinsman, Dr. Cannon, Professor Kincaid, Professor Nash, Professor Takaki and Professor Sanchez, September 27, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

of ORU functions—including on the systemwide Academic Senate’s policy on ORUs that could be used at the time.<sup>23</sup> According to a memo from UCOP Vice President Angus Taylor to the campus chancellors, an ORU’s main priority was research, not community action.<sup>24</sup> While public service was included as a “coordinate objective” if the research were problem-solving oriented, the extent of such involvement had to be limited—such as through field study or by providing recommendations after conclusion of research.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, ORUs were only permitted to teach courses if they received referral by the chancellor to the local Academic Senate’s Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)—and if the CEP determined that the proposed coursework was not already fulfilled (or could be fulfilled) by an existing entity.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, despite the fact that Ethnic Studies advocates could rely on the ORU model as an avenue for establishing a center, the limitations outlined in the ORU policy were significant. At face value, ORUs were narrowly defined by the university as decidedly apolitical entities, prevented from formally serving as action-oriented community and teaching hubs that some students hoped to create. This limitation helps explain the eventual compromises that students, faculty, and early staff of the centers had to make with administrators.

Draft proposals for the Ethnic Studies Centers were forged by students and faculty in steering committees and executive advisory spaces. They included functions for the centers that diverged from those of the typical ORU. Commenting on discussions for the Afro-American Studies Center, the student-run NOMMO newsmagazine advocated for a community and social center that would break the “superficial white

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<sup>23</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors re: Report of the University Committee on Educational Policy on Organized Research Units, April 2, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 2, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>24</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors re: Report of the University Committee on Educational Policy on Organized Research Units, April 2, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 2, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>25</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors re: Report of the University Committee on Educational Policy on Organized Research Units, April 2, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 2, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>26</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors re: Report of the University Committee on Educational Policy on Organized Research Units, April 2, 1968, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 3, Folder 2, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

reality” at UCLA.<sup>27</sup> Gil Garcia, who became director of the Mexican American Cultural Center,<sup>28</sup> echoed this sentiment in a letter to Young, indicating a desire to focus on curriculum as their a man priority.<sup>29</sup>

The initial draft proposal for the Afro-American Studies Center generated several innovative projects which required review and recommendation from the UCLA Academic Senate’s Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (CBIR) and the CEP.<sup>30</sup> The CBIR recommended against inclusion of the newly proposed Bureau of Urban Affairs and Inter-Racial Clinic—a programmatic unit that was intended to channel research into action programs in the local community. A letter from CBIR chair E.R. Hardwick stated that the proposed components were not part of the university’s capacity and that the committee had concerns about potential “indoctrination.”<sup>31</sup> Despite offering a lukewarm recommendation for establishment, the CEP shared similar concerns and described the proposed components as duplicative of existing governmental agencies and as potential “propaganda machines” if the Afro-American Studies Center were allowed to influence classroom curriculum.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps sensing a need for urgency, Chancellor Young moved forward in April 1969 by appointing Robert Singleton as the first interim director of the Afro-American Studies Center. This move was rather controversial, as the center itself had yet to be formally established<sup>33</sup> and Singleton was not a faculty member with tenure. Young also made the appointment without consulting Singleton’s home department, Economics, thereby circumventing traditional steps when appointing an ORU director. Recalling this moment during an interview conducted for this report, Young stated that Singleton,

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<sup>27</sup> NOMMO Newsmagazine, “A Proposal to Create an Afro-American Studies Center”, March 12, 1969, Administrative files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>28</sup> Former name of the current Chicano Studies Research Center.

<sup>29</sup> Gil Garcia to Charles E. Young, August 27, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>30</sup> Angus Taylor to UC Chancellors re: Revised Policy on Organized Research Units, April 29, 1970, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 4, Folder 5, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>31</sup> E. R. Hardwick to Charles E. Young, April 16, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>32</sup> Professor Young to Charles E. Young, April 12, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>33</sup> The center would formally be established in the following month, May 1969.

as interim director, was the head of the group working to establish the Afro-American Studies Center in its initial days, but it was never intended for him to stay on permanently.<sup>34</sup> It is unclear whether Young faced criticism for circumventing the established procedure for consultation; nonetheless, Singleton's appointment was undoubtedly unconventional and was further evidence of a shift in chancellorial power that Young was willing to use.

Through this moment of crisis response, Young had to negotiate his actions within the context of an academic atmosphere that was in the midst of transformation and also resistant to change. While the younger, more diverse faculty had momentum as a result of the activism of students, the older, largely white faculty often created hurdles in bureaucratic processes. These clashes played out with the other proposed Ethnic Studies Centers, even though Young did not experience blowback for his role in the unconventional setup of the Afro-American Studies Center. For instance, with the first center established, some on campus may have believed that more centers would collectively pose a threat to campus norms. Writing again on behalf of the CBIR, Hardwick rejected the proposal for the American Indian Studies Center in July 1969—citing a lack of need to justify an entire center as a “distinct cultural unit,” given the fact that there were only ten American Indian-identified students on campus.<sup>35</sup> This rejection of the proposed American Indian Studies Center mirrored paternalistic evaluations of the other centers, ignoring ORU-related faculty interest in conducting research on issues relating to these groups.

### *ORU Growing Pains*

While the traditional ORU structure was helpful in taking initial steps toward legitimization, the structure also caused tensions in early discussions of the Ethnic Studies Centers' scope and functions. These tensions played out between administrators, on one hand, and students and faculty, on the other hand, especially when the Afro-American Studies Center and the IAC were established. For instance,

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<sup>34</sup> Charles E. Young, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, Victoria Pfau and Sarah Son, June 11, 2021, interview 3, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

<sup>35</sup> E. R. Hardwick to David Saxon, July 17, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.



some believed that representatives of the chancellor had had too large a hand in shaping the internal structure of the centers at the expense of the center directors. Some even challenged the creation of the IAC as an umbrella entity—preferring instead a non-administrative board of directors—but ultimately it was not changed. In his resignation letter from November 1969, Robert Singleton cited a “university pecking order” that prevented him from accomplishing work due to some senior faculty not taking his requests seriously.<sup>36</sup> Notably, Singleton himself disagreed with the CEP’s recommendations on the Afro-American Studies Center’s functions; an April 1969 *Daily Bruin* article about Singleton’s appointment to the directorship cited how he wanted to make the center an “activist force.”<sup>37</sup>

Physical space for the Ethnic Studies Centers was another major source of conflict. During the late 1960s, Campbell Hall had been transformed from a home economics building to a gathering space for various underrepresented students on campus. Perhaps fittingly, the physical transformation of the building was complemented by the intellectual transformation that was taking place with the rise of Ethnic Studies. However, circumstances at Campbell Hall—including the killings of students Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John J. Huggins as well as potential nonrenewal of center funds—led to a proposal for the Ethnic Studies Centers to be moved to Royce Hall.<sup>38</sup> This suggestion was massively unpopular among students and faculty, as noted in an interview with Professor Teresa McKenna, a former student who participated in one of the protests in response.<sup>39</sup> From McKenna’s perspective, the administration was using a tactic to create competition among the centers by limiting resources and by separating the centers from a shared physical space that served as a multiethnic hub.<sup>40</sup> In a letter to Young, Singleton requested chancellorial intervention to

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Singleton to Charles E. Young r.e. Resigning as Director of the Afro-American Studies Center, November 19, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>37</sup> *Daily Bruin*, “Singleton sees activist role for Afro-American program”, April 3, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 130, Folder 8, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>38</sup> Araceli Centanino, “Interview of Teresa McKenna,” *Center for Oral History Research*. UCLA Library, March 5, 2018. <https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz002kdd7x>.

<sup>39</sup> Araceli Centanino, “Interview of Teresa McKenna,” *Center for Oral History Research*. UCLA Library, March 5, 2018. <https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz002kdd7x>.

<sup>40</sup> Araceli Centanino, “Interview of Teresa McKenna,” *Center for Oral History Research*. UCLA Library, March 5, 2018. <https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz002kdd7x>.

keep Ethnic Studies in Campbell Hall, citing “the value of the commitment” the university had in addressing student needs.<sup>41</sup> As the birthplace of Ethnic Studies at UCLA, Campbell Hall had clear significance to the various communities involved with the Centers. While the Young administration indeed appeared to support and find avenues for the Ethnic Studies Centers to be formally established through the ORU model,<sup>42</sup> the uncertainty of growth and the tumultuous politics of the time may have had a role in limiting public attention on the centers and curtailing the centers’ collective influence on campus.<sup>43</sup>

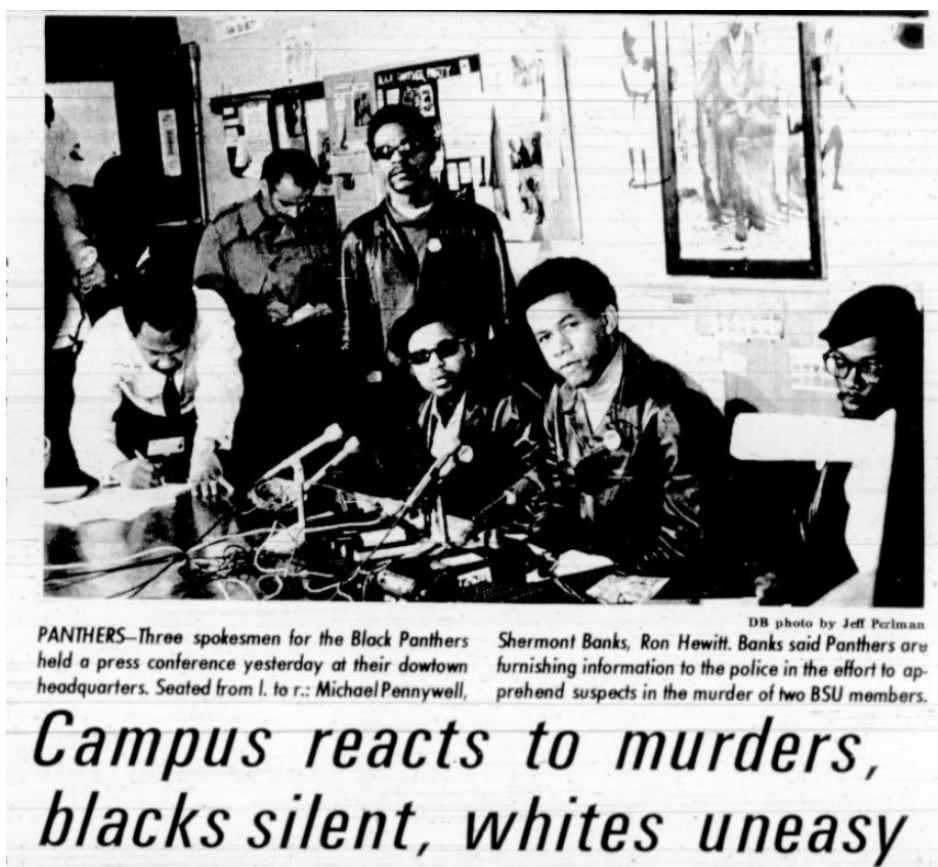
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<sup>41</sup> Robert Singleton to Charles E. Young r.e. Ethnic Studies Center Being Moved from Campbell Hall, June 26, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>42</sup> Grants from the Ford Foundation secured from 1969 throughout the 1970s would provide opportunities to expand undergraduate and graduate programs at all of the Ethnic Studies Centers. Research, library operations, publications and curriculum development would all expand through funding and through the creation of staff positions under the directors. Atypical of an ORU, some of the centers would institute a “student affairs” position to advise and/or liaise with student organizations.

<sup>43</sup> To note, most documents on the Ethnic Studies Centers between 1968 and 1970 that are housed at the UCLA Library’s University Archives are related to the Afro-American Studies Center. Documents related to the Chicano Studies Research Center are dated in 1975 and afterward, which focus on its continuing activities more so than its establishment.

## The Carter/Huggins Killings and the Restructuring of the High Potential Program (1969-1971)



*Daily Bruin* newspaper clipping in the aftermath of the Carter and Huggins killings<sup>44</sup>

Concurrent with the formation of the Ethnic Studies Centers were the on-campus killings of Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John J. Huggins in January 1969 and the transformation of a unique admissions program at UCLA called the High Potential Program (HPP). These events revolved around Campbell Hall, which was the site of important moments in the history of ethnic minority and underrepresented communities at UCLA. As a result, Campbell Hall has come to have symbolic value for students, faculty, and staff committed to diversity and equity in academic curriculum, research, and student affairs.

<sup>44</sup> Martin Rips, “Campus reacts to murders, blacks silent, whites uneasy,” *Daily Bruin*, January 21, 1969, <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin50losa/page/n133/mode/2up> (accessed January 24, 2022).

Carter and Huggins were active participants in this community as members of the HPP, as Black students at UCLA, and as members of the Black Panther Party.<sup>45</sup> Their deaths are generally discussed in relation to Campbell Hall, the restructuring of the HPP, and the subsequent formation of the Academic Advancement Program (AAP) in 1971. One goal of this study is to investigate the links between the restructuring of the HPP and the university's reaction to the Campbell Hall killings. Furthermore, we ask: what was UCLA's overall response to events that had a strong impact on campus during a time of general social unrest and critical examinations of spaces for ethnic minority students in higher education?

### *Background*

#### Activism and College Campuses in the 1960s

The deaths of Carter and Huggins were partially the result of mounting tensions between opposing Black Power activist organizations, each of which had a considerable presence on the UCLA campus: the Black Panther Party and the Black nationalist US Organization. In the late 1960s, the two groups underwent a power struggle, each vying for their respective candidates to be appointed to lead the proposed Afro-American Studies Center. Robert Singleton—one of the original members of the Freedom Riders and a former president of UCLA's NAACP chapter—was backed by the US Organization, while some members of the Black community on campus, including the Black Panther Party, felt he was unqualified for the position.<sup>46</sup>

With the 1960s ushering in an era of increased activism and mass mobilizations on college campuses, an increase in police presence and in students carrying arms on campus also followed. Higher education institutions nationally—such as UC Berkeley, San Francisco State College (later University), and Queens College—saw similar protests led by students, including rising demands for Black studies, autonomy over ethnic-specific support programs, and admission of more minority students.<sup>47</sup> Programs

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<sup>45</sup> Michael Levett, "Tension surrounded fatal day," *Daily Bruin*, January 20, 1969, <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin50losa/page/n127/mode/2up> (accessed January 27, 2022).

<sup>46</sup> Black Power in Turmoil, February 16, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>47</sup> "Roy Wilkins blasts militants," *Daily Bruin*, January 23, 1969, <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin50losa/page/n127/mode/2up> (accessed January 24, 2022).

housed in Campbell Hall were part of a larger movement to make public higher education more accessible to underrepresented and minoritized communities. Similar to its institutional peers, UCLA had already been responding to a demographic crisis to increase the enrollment of students of color, thus creating the conditions for activity in a place such as Campbell Hall. The killings of Carter and Huggins represented an immediate crisis moment, which could have lent the impression that the campus was out of control. The institution's support of the HPP may well have been connected to fear from the fallout from the student murders.

### The High Potential Program

At the same time that the Ethnic Studies Centers were being developed, the establishment of the HPP was in progress. The HPP was an initiative created in 1968 to increase the enrollment of low-income, disadvantaged, minority students at UCLA. It was classified as a special education program targeted toward high school students who would not pass UCLA's regular admission standards (e.g., GPA and standardized test scores), yet who showed "high potential" to succeed if given supplemental and culturally responsive support in academics, counseling, and tutoring.<sup>48</sup> The program was organized into four components, each representing a racial/ethnic minority group: Black, Chicano, Asian, and Native American. Similar to the Ethnic Studies Centers, the HPP operated in Campbell Hall. Professor of English and Associate Dean Robert Kinsman explained in a letter to Vice Chancellor David Saxon that Campbell Hall was a "refuge" with "symbolic value" to students involved in both the HPP and Ethnic Studies.<sup>49</sup>

### Shooting at Campbell Hall

On January 17, 1969, members of the Black Student Union and the Black Panther Party gathered in Room 1201 of Campbell Hall to deliberate over who should direct the emerging Afro-American Studies Center. As leaders of the local Black Panther Party

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<sup>48</sup> A Brief History of the High Potential Program, February 19, 1971, High Potential Program - Asian Students, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>49</sup> Robert S. Kinsman to David S. Saxon, July 29, 1969, Administrative Files of Franklin D. Murphy (401), Box 127, Folder 255, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

chapter, Carter and Huggins were prominent participants in the conversation. J. Daniel Johnson, a student who was helping to lead the meeting, recalled that day's events:<sup>50</sup> When the meeting concluded and people began to filter out, Harold "Tuwala" Jones, a member of the US Organization, entered the room to confront Huggins about an incident between members of their two parties. The argument escalated to the point that Claude "Chuchessa" Hubert, another US affiliate, fired a shot and fatally injured Huggins. Alarmed by the sudden gunfire, Carter ducked behind a chair but was also killed by Hubert before he and Jones escaped the scene. Neither Hubert nor Jones were convicted of the killings, while George and Larry Stiner, two US members and HPP students, were falsely imprisoned instead.

The campus was on edge in the aftermath of the killings. Writers of the *Daily Bruin* described a "guarded silence from Black leaders on campus."<sup>51</sup> Black students, faculty, and eyewitnesses did not provide immediate public comment, and Mary Jane Hewitt, director of the HPP, explained that people were hesitant to discuss the killings out of respect for those who were close to Carter and Huggins.<sup>52</sup> Non-Black people were also reluctant to speak on the matter, which they viewed as an issue within the Black community.

Faculty, administrators, and students expressed concern about the implications of the killings for the HPP. A *Daily Bruin* editorial voiced students' concerns that "the Regents and the general public may call for the elimination of [the HPP] so as to screen out possible 'troublemakers' from campus."<sup>53</sup> Others did not think the killings should reflect on the characters of the HPP or its members. Thomas J. Scully, who held a position as Campus Advocate, suggested in a letter to Chancellor Young that the incident be framed as a purely academic and not a "political, ethnocentric, or

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<sup>50</sup> Bob Pool, "Witness to 1969 UCLA shootings speaks at rally," *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 2008, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-jan-18-me-panthers18-story.html> (accessed January 31, 2022).

<sup>51</sup> Martin Rips, "Campus reacts to murders, blacks silent, whites uneasy," *Daily Bruin*, January 21, 1969, <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin50losa/page/n133/mode/2up> (accessed January 24, 2022).

<sup>52</sup> Martin Rips, "Campus reacts to murders, blacks silent, whites uneasy," *Daily Bruin*, January 21, 1969, <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin50losa/page/n133/mode/2up> (accessed January 24, 2022).

<sup>53</sup> "Progress, not tension, must follow campus deaths," *Daily Bruin*, January 20, 1969, <https://archive.org/details/ucladailybruin50losa/page/n129/mode/2up> (accessed January 24, 2022).



administrative” matter.<sup>54</sup> Among various campus constituencies, however, there was a fear that the existence of spaces like the HPP could be endangered.

### Connections to the HPP

The killings of Carter and Huggins became intimately tied to the success and criticism of the HPP and the Ethnic Studies Centers, both of which were situated in Campbell Hall. On the one hand, the killings led some members of the campus community to question the university’s commitment to its ethnic minority constituents. Following a tragic event involving Black HPP students and activists, some wondered how the administration would alter its priorities to increase admission and support for disadvantaged and minority students in response. At the same time, others recognized that the negative publicity of the killings could lead the university to assert control over these spaces. The dissolution of the HPP as originally structured and the establishment of the AAP are moments often interpreted as causal results of these events at Campbell Hall. However, a closer look at administrative planning during that time reveals that these outcomes may have been in progress.

Though the murders were not the primary motivation for restructuring the HPP in 1971, they were undeniably a significant factor that propelled the evolution of programs in Campbell Hall. In an interview with Chancellor Young, he agreed that “[the killings] influenced everything. Most things are not independent.”<sup>55</sup> According to Young, the consolidation of the HPP with the pre-existing Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) was likely going to happen regardless of the killings.<sup>56</sup> In contrast to the EOP, a systemwide commitment, the HPP was founded as a program specific to UCLA’s

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<sup>54</sup> Thomas Scully to Charles E. Young, January 29, 1969, Black Panther Party, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>55</sup> Charles E. Young, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, Victoria Pfau, and Sarah Son, March 19, 2021, interview 2, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

<sup>56</sup> The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) originated in 1965 at the University of California, Berkeley as an initiative to address inequities in college enrollment. It was meant to increase college access for “risk students” who did not meet the usual admission requirements for high school grades and standardized assessment scores. EOP admittees were typically low-income and ethnic minority students. Other University of California campuses followed suit and developed their own EOPs throughout the late 1960s, including UCLA during the 1966-67 academic year. By 1969, EOPs were established at all California State University campuses as part of a statewide initiative to provide counseling and academic support to low-income and first generation college students. See Allen, Bernadene V. “The Success of the EOP: A Refutation of the Immutability of Scholastic Achievement.” *The Journal of Negro Education* 45, no. 1 (1976): 70–77. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2966543>.

campus, was operated as a separate unit independent of other academic programs, and was funded on a year-by-year basis.<sup>57</sup> To resolve this issue, university leaders sought ways to incorporate the HPP as a permanent program that it could not be easily defunded altogether. Given the EOP's similar purpose of increasing disadvantaged students' access to college education, there were rationales for combining the HPP so that both programs could pool resources.

Moreover, the HPP had already been experiencing its own challenges in its formative years. For instance, there was public criticism of UCLA's efforts to support ethnic minorities or other underrepresented students. Critics were dismissive of having specialized academic services for specific student populations. Additionally, incidents involving HPP students and weapons led some people to question the qualifications and suitability of HPP admittees to be on UCLA's campus. These concerns gave weight to claims that the program was a "failure" and "demands that [the HPP] show the immediate results of [UCLA's] dollar investment," both of which were cited in a mid-year evaluation of the program in February 1971.<sup>58</sup> In fact, conclusive reports and statistics on students' progress and achievements were not available in the middle of the academic year, further complicating efforts to defend the program against its critics. Thus, transformation was already on the horizon for the HPP in 1969. The Carter-Huggins murders, political tension between the Black Panther Party and the US Organization, and the transformation of the HPP were interconnected.

### *Reactions to Crisis: Administrative, Institutional, and Community Responses*

#### Administrative Actions

As the face of the campus, Chancellor Young was called upon to determine the university's reaction to a moment of violence, grief, and reckoning with racial and ethnic inequities. In line with Scully's recommendation to distance politics and violence from perceptions of the HPP, Young attempted to convince the public and the UCOP administration that the Campbell Hall incident was an isolated event that would not

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<sup>57</sup> A Rough Draft of a Proposal to Incorporate the High Potential Program into the Ethnic Studies Center and the Department of Urban Affairs, March 22, 1971, High Potential Program - 1969, 1970-1971 March, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>58</sup> A Brief History of the High Potential Program, February 19, 1971, High Potential Program - Asian Students, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

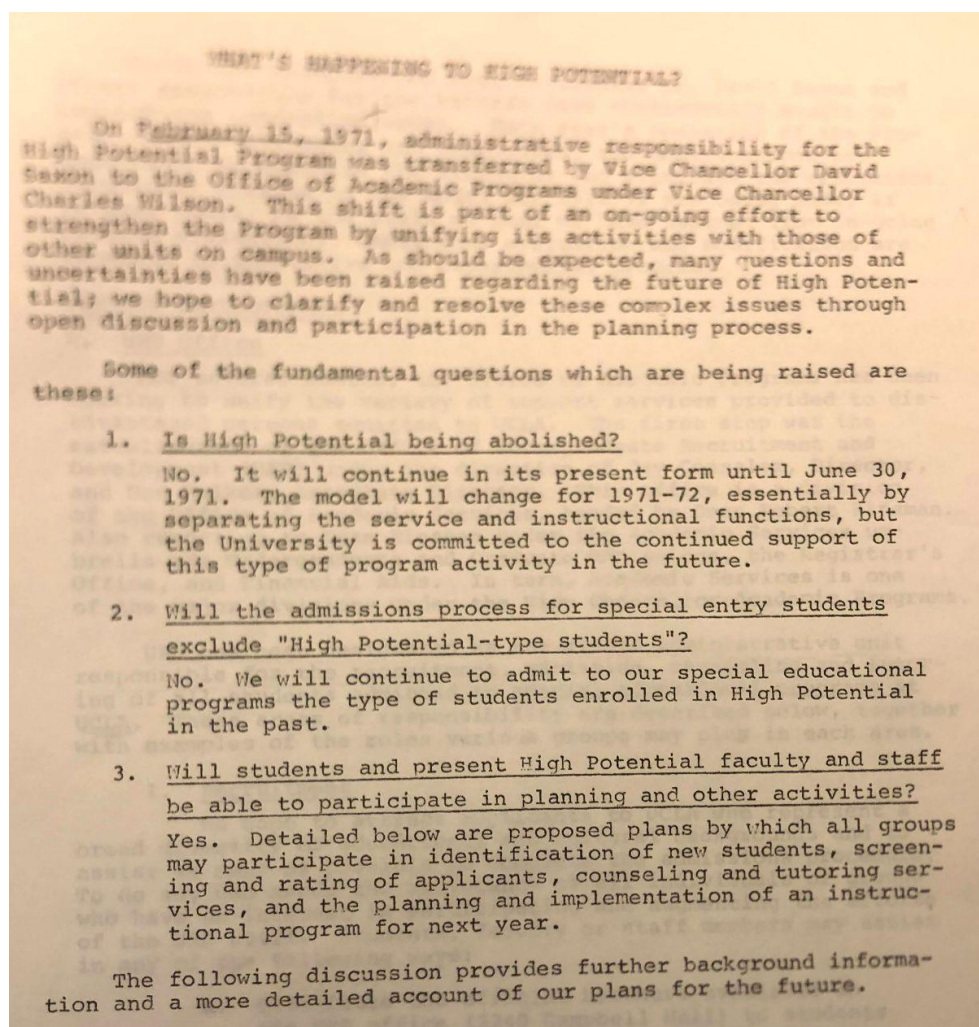
happen again. He also issued an official statement affirming that the killings would not undermine the university's commitment to developing the Ethnic Studies Centers and expanding minority students' pathways to higher education. Meetings were held with students, administrators in student affairs, and Vice Chancellor Saxon to decide how UCLA should move forward with investigating the killings and addressing the larger tensions in the Black community that led to them. From Young's perspective, there were meaningful, intentional efforts to include student and faculty voices in the aftermath of the Campbell Hall tragedies. He recalls spending a long night in the Chancellor's Office talking with students—and conducting generally smooth, successful negotiations over the future of the HPP.

Young's positive outlook was mirrored in the university's public narrative about the Campbell Hall killings and future of the HPP. Given that the events occurred just one year into his term as chancellor, how he managed the crisis could potentially be an important indicator of his ability—and qualifications—to lead the university moving forward. Maintaining an image of stability, confidence, and commitment to the campus community was crucial to maintaining his chancellorship. This motivation was reflected in official announcements to the campus and communications with local organizations, politicians, and others who expressed concerns about the HPP's survival. An FAQ sheet titled "What's Happening to High Potential?" published in February 1971 outlined the anticipated changes for the coming academic year, noting that UCLA would continue admitting students who would have qualified for the HPP under other academic programs.<sup>59</sup> A brochure distributed to students elaborated further on the institution's plans, which included the establishment of the Office of Undergraduate Recruitment to operate both the new version of the HPP and EOP.<sup>60</sup> By publicizing and sharing detailed information about the remodeled HPP, the administration appeared to showcase in strategic fashion its ability to formulate decisive solutions to help the university move forward in a time of crisis.

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<sup>59</sup> What's Happening to High Potential?, n.d., Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 7, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>60</sup> Special Education Programs at UCLA 1971-72, n.d., Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 8, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.



A page from an administrative memorandum titled “What’s Happening to High Potential?”<sup>61</sup>

Correspondence with government officials inquiring about the HPP exhibited the same tone of firmness and preparation to revamp UCLA’s special admissions programs. In a letter to Senator Alfred S. Song, Chancellor Young asserted that “the student [Song] refer[s] to as needing a second chance will continue to be the focus of our program,”<sup>62</sup> while Academic Vice Chancellor Charles Z. Wilson wrote to Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles that “the essence of the High Potential Program is very much

<sup>61</sup> What’s Happening to High Potential?, n.d., Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 7, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>62</sup> Charles E. Young to Alfred H. Song, May 25, 1971, Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 10, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

alive.”<sup>63</sup> Various other communications from Wilson’s office on the topic of the HPP similarly confirmed that the program would not be canceled, and that his office was taking the proper steps to include campus stakeholders in decision-making processes. UCLA’s administration presented a consistent account of the university’s commitment to enrolling minority students, which calmed the public’s fears and anxieties over a potential loss of the HPP.

*Road to Restructuring: How the HPP Became the Academic Advancement Program*

As the university moved towards revamping the HPP for the 1971-72 academic year, conversations among administrators, faculty, and students were characterized by competing priorities, demands, and narratives. On the administrative side, Vice Chancellor Wilson and HPP Head Coordinator Winston Doby were the main agents of action in what Chancellor Young recalled as a group of three to four people making executive decisions and pushing negotiations forward. Among faculty and students, those involved in the development of the Ethnic Studies Centers also had a hand in conversations about the HPP, given the overlapping goals and communities of interest in both matters.

Vice Chancellor Wilson established the HPP Joint Proposal Task Force as the committee in charge of the restructuring process. According to reports prepared by his assistant, Susan Mieves, the task force consisted of “HPP faculty and staff, L&S counselors, Learning Center staff, [and] representatives from the University Extension.”<sup>64</sup> The task force’s goal was to identify problems and needs within the current HPP and draft plans for a new program to succeed it. A major objective in redesigning the HPP was to merge it with the EOP to officially institutionalize the program. This step was taken with the formation of the Academic Advancement Program, which was housed under a broader department, the Office of Undergraduate Recruitment, along with all other special education initiatives. Additionally, the task force proposed designating the Department of Urban Affairs as a co-sponsor for the new

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<sup>63</sup> Charles Z. Wilson to Wilson Riles, July 7, 1971, Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 7, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>64</sup> Susan Mieves to Philip Borden, July 1, 1971, Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 7, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.



HPP to assist with its daily operations and provide administrative staff. These changes successfully addressed the structural issues of the HPP and secured its continuation, but at the cost of its existing autonomy.

Contrary to claims that the task force was inclusive of and responsive to HPP stakeholders, HPP staff, students, and ethnic center communities were united in opposition to administrative decisions about the HPP's transformation. From the composition of the task force itself to communications with administrators, former HPP members felt a lack of agency. In notes from a meeting on March 23, 1971 between Vice Chancellor Wilson and HPP staff and students, HPP members directly questioned the credibility of the task force, which was not representative of ethnic minority communities and led by a white chairperson.<sup>65</sup> On April 9, 1971, members of the American Indian, Asian, and Chicano components of the HPP met again and formally rejected the legitimacy of Wilson's committee, stating that it "[does] not believe in self-determination for minority programs"<sup>66</sup> and was helping, by cooperating with the university administration, to dismantle the current HPP and its core values.

A report titled "A Brief History of the High Potential Program" from an incomplete mid-year evaluation of the HPP elaborated on staff and students' perspectives: "From January 1970, it was clear that the HPP administrative staff would not be allowed to make any decisions"<sup>67</sup> regarding matters such as the number of students the program could recruit, budget allocations and uses, staff hiring requirements, and organization of an administrative system. Moreover, participants of the program characterized their experiences as "a continual state of crisis, both real and artificial."<sup>68</sup> They contrasted the immediate and fundamental problems that the HPP aimed to address—through culturally-relevant academic content and psychological, social, and economic support to students— to external obstacles created by the university

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<sup>65</sup> Meeting between Vice Chancellor C. Z. Wilson and Representatives of the High Potential Staff and Students, March 23, 1971, High Potential Program - 1969, 1970-1971 March, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>66</sup> The HP staff/student meeting to consider the Daytime Extension Committee and the presentation of our joint proposal, April 8, 1971, Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 8, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>67</sup> A Brief History of the High Potential Program, February 19, 1971, High Potential Program - Asian Students, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>68</sup> A Brief History of the High Potential Program, February 19, 1971, High Potential Program - Asian Students, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.



(e.g., standards of success that did not match the HPP's own measures), negative perceptions from the campus community regarding HPP students, and financial strains. The report likened the HPP's ties to UCLA to "the manner of a colonial territory to an imperialist power,"<sup>69</sup> reflecting an imbalanced power dynamic between the people of the HPP and executive decision-makers at the university.

Despite HPP members' objections to the unrepresentative task force, Vice Chancellor Wilson elected to maintain his initial committee instead of selecting new members, arguing that the task force needed to develop a new program in time for the next academic year. In an open letter addressed to Chancellor Young, HPP staff, students, and their respective ethnic communities revealed that Wilson not only refused to meet with them to collaborate on a proposal but also rejected their recommendations for a successor program.<sup>70</sup> They cited the restriction of students' rights to determine their own educational needs, loss of ethnic communities' influence over recruitment criteria, exclusion of a large number of target students under new HPP guidelines, and a reduced budget for the entirety of the program's instructional needs as additional failures of the task force to act with sensitivity and meaningful concern for HPP stakeholders. Ultimately, the administration's decisions throughout the restructuring process appeared to them to be evidence of a "breach of commitment by the university."<sup>71</sup> Contrary to the university's outward presentation of smooth proceedings and positive cooperation, our findings suggest that the true nature of the relationship between the HPP and UCLA—perhaps even from the inception of the HPP to its end—lacked intention, mutual understanding, and respect for the program's mission and needs.

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<sup>69</sup> A Brief History of the High Potential Program, February 19, 1971, High Potential Program - Asian Students, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>70</sup> The High Potential Crisis, April 19, 1971, Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 8, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

<sup>71</sup> The High Potential Crisis, April 19, 1971, Administrative files of Charles E. Young (594), Box 200, Folder 8, UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library.

## **Discussions on Crisis Response**

### *Leveraging the Familiar: The Case of the Ethnic Studies Centers*

“We had on both sides of the table groups that were prepared to listen to each other and to find common ground... An administration willing and able to listen, negotiate, and move forward within the context of a research institution.”

– Carlos Haro, Former Assistant Director of UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center<sup>72</sup>

The establishment of the Ethnic Studies Centers as an academic response to the crisis of student protest and unrest provides insight into how an institution of higher education, particularly UCLA, decided to bridge the areas of research and change during this period of turmoil.

In times of crisis, institutions tend to revert to structures already in place in order to address a new issue, even while trying to implement new projects and changes. Although the concept of a center devoted to Ethnic Studies was new, its structure was based on the extant model of an ORU and followed the same process of approval and implementation. This model provided an opening to the students at the time, who could leverage a pre-existing avenue to realize their Ethnic Studies demands. However, there were bumps in the road, reflected in the rigors of the approval process for some of the centers and differing standards of scrutiny with regard to approval criteria. And yet, the case of the Ethnic Studies Centers at UCLA shows that—during a crisis—existing frameworks within relevant departments and in the broader institution can be modified. This was exemplified by Chancellor Young, who consistently used his growing power to side-step the typical process, as seen with the appointment of Robert Singleton as director of the Afro-American Studies Center. The formation of the Ethnic Studies Centers parallels a shift in power roles, as the chancellor’s position became more understood as the chief administrator on campus through consolidation of authority and visibility. It is difficult to imagine a sudden establishment of four distinct entities—all initiated by student demand—without this combination of familiar structures to reference and a chief administrator open to negotiation.

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<sup>72</sup> Carlos Haro, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, Victoria Pfau and Sarah Son, April 2, 2021, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

The notion of familiarity also played out through the ways the university administration framed its engagement with the demands being made of them. For instance, by positioning himself as a younger leader and an active listener to students, Chancellor Young created an aura of familiarity that students could look forward to—as opposed to an institutional inaccessibility that past chancellors may have cultivated. Perhaps partially self-serving for legacy purposes, Young was able to capture students’ interest in meeting with him regarding their demands, which may have prepared his administration to make proactive linkages to existing frameworks or precedents. By understanding students’ priorities for the Ethnic Studies Centers, the Young administration may have homed in on the potential research outputs as being aligned with the university’s overall interest in expanding its research mission. Through this strategic alignment, the administration could save face by shrewdly messaging to the public that Ethnic Studies under the ORU model was in its plans all along.

Still, the case of the Ethnic Studies Centers also showcases the potential cynicism of administrative familiarity. By engaging in proposals to address several constituencies early on—through establishment of all four centers, as opposed to only the first proposal of the Afro-American Studies Center—the Young administration could have been attempting to cover its bases in order to forestall other conflicts that would likely arise in the future. The eventual outcome of four Ethnic Studies Centers may have been inevitable given the student constituencies; by placating all during the same time period, Young may have saved his administration significant time and resources by avoiding repetitive negotiations.

### *Optics and Opportunity: The Case of the High Potential Program*

“Any institution will do as little as possible to keep from having to rearrange the tectonic plates... As little as possible to get the maximum bang for their buck.”

– Mary Corey, Senior Lecturer in UCLA Department of History<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Mary Corey, interview by Jazz Kiang, Grace Shin, Victoria Pfau and Sarah Son, April 9, 2021, transcript and recording, University and Crisis collection, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy.

The story of the HPP at UCLA reveals several underlying themes from our examination of university actions during times of crisis. Most notable is the disparity between the actual experiences of faculty, staff, students and the way in which the story was communicated by the administration and in public outlets. Given increased political activism and unrest on college campuses during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the university wanted to avert a full-blown public crisis over the future of the HPP. To achieve this, administrative leaders employed strategic messaging efforts to convey a sense of equal, productive partnerships between them and HPP stakeholders. To those outside of the immediate HPP community, it appeared that conscientious efforts were being made to transition the HPP into its future as the Academic Advancement Program; however, to those involved in—and more importantly, excluded from—those conversations, it was clear that the future of the program was endangered. For the former members of the HPP, the struggles to hold onto the integrity of the program and, more generally, the autonomy of ethnic minority groups at UCLA amounted to a crisis.

This strategy of maintaining optics can be interpreted as a compromise between the university's obligation to consider students' and faculty's voices and the reality of externally imposed pressures. Although faculty members do play a key role in determining admissions policies and academic standards via the Academic Senate, the execution of institutionally supported programs is ultimately determined by administrative leadership. The story that our research has uncovered on the history of Campbell Hall and the HPP is consistent with this pattern of the university's control of the message over its decision-making.

The resolution of the HPP problem is also representative of an attempt to balance the interests of community stakeholders with budgetary and time limits. The need to refashion the HPP in time for incoming students in the fall of 1971 took precedence over the need to conduct careful, inclusive deliberations on how best to preserve and elevate the program. Although it would have been ideal to gather and consider the collective concerns of HPP members, Ethnic Studies Centers, and other relevant parties, these conversations would require time and labor that the university either could not or was not willing to afford as the next academic year approached. Drawing out the HPP situation would have also interfered with the university's narrative of a swift and successful resolution. Oftentimes, ideals and practicality are brought head to head in

crisis moments, with the latter winning out when institutions are not yet ready to embrace fundamental changes to their values and power structures.

At one level, the fact that UCLA was even able to initiate the original HPP and retain vestiges of it via the Academic Advancement Program is a remarkable feat. HPP's existence as a unique education program specific to UCLA not only reflected gains in the power of chancellors amidst decentralization of authority within the UC system but also the further delineation of UCLA's distinctive character. Today, programs for increasing the access of disadvantaged and underrepresented students to higher education remain a crucial facet of UCLA life.

Our investigation of the killings at Campbell Hall and the HPP brings new perspectives to the historical record. Though these two events were not directly related, they are intertwined because of their shared significance for ethnic populations at UCLA, whose visibility, representation, and spaces on campus were all affected by the deaths of Carter and Huggins and the university's process for transforming the HPP. In response to these crises, administrative leaders acted to prevent further disruptions on campus by, first, denying overarching political implications from the Campbell Hall killings and, second, by enforcing swift executive decisions concerning the HPP's transition despite internal dissent. These choices were made with the intent to conserve the university's public image and a functional operational structure during a time of social and political turmoil.

### **Then & Now: Parallels and Persistence of Crisis**

"Then & Now" is an ongoing series of historical case-study comparisons that the Luskin Center for History and Policy highlights across its many platforms, including its signature podcast. In that spirit, the research team recognizes that the phenomenon of crisis is persistent and ever-pervasive, especially at institutions of higher education. Parallels between the past and present abound, and the totality of this report would be incomplete without comparing the past crises of the Ethnic Studies Centers and High Potential Program with some that are relevant today. Two parallels emerged as the research team contextualized the dynamic circumstances of the two crisis moments analyzed for this report.

First, the demands for Ethnic Studies at the university level more than half a century ago call to mind current debates over school curriculum and sweeping bans on teachers referencing Critical Race Theory. Critical race theory and ethnic studies are two distinct subject matters, but critics of both often misunderstand them and target them similarly.<sup>74</sup> While the demand for Ethnic Studies undoubtedly led to group-relevant education curriculum and expanded research on different populations, teachers and school districts today are increasingly bearing the burden of a new crisis: the blowback from right-wing political activists many decades later.

Second, the restructuring of the High Potential Program and the university's subsequent scaling back of race-based recruitment programs after the killings at Campbell Hall mirror ongoing challenges to affirmative action in college admissions. Since the Supreme Court's landmark *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* case in 1978, anti-affirmative action lawsuits have slowly chipped away at race-conscious college admissions, with the current Court seemingly ready to take precedent-changing action.<sup>75</sup> A sweeping change in this domain would likely prompt a crisis in student diversity on a national level.

At the time of this report's publication, the discourse and decision-making regarding both of these present-day issues are ever-developing. Whether through policy, electoral campaigns, or judicial proceedings, the eventual outcomes of these hotly contested battlegrounds are unclear. In terms of curriculum, colleges and universities generally operate with a degree of autonomy compared to K-12 schools. Nonetheless, higher education institutions may increasingly experience the stresses from political polarization as a result of these present-day "culture wars" that bleed into state funding, accreditation, and campus climate. Perhaps most likely, colleges and universities will have to adjust to any new precedent set by the Supreme Court with regard to affirmative action in college admissions—requiring a scaling back of current practices for institutions that do not already operate with a ban on race-conscious criteria.

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<sup>74</sup> Stephen Sawchuk, "What Is Critical Race Theory and Why Is It Under Attack?" *Education Week*, May 18, 2021, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05> (accessed January 31, 2022).

<sup>75</sup> Nicholas Lemann, "The Supreme Court Appears Ready, Finally, to Defeat Affirmative Action," *The New Yorker*, January 27, 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-supreme-court-appears-ready-finally-to-defeat-affirmative-action> (accessed January 31, 2022).



Institutions with recruitment, outreach, and other group-based programs designed to increase student diversity—like the High Potential Program—will have to adjust in response. If so, a new and serious crisis in assuring diversity and equity on university and college campuses will ensue, requiring administrators, faculty, students, and staff once again to negotiate over their distinct and often competing interests.

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