Hello Grecia and ISAB,

Here is my statement --please use this or edit to what you feel would be helpful:

International students are a vulnerable population that require institutional support to avoid marginalization or segregation. The creation of a BCU is an important step in validating the role international students have on campus. The BCU provides a structure for supporting programs that encourage cultural exchange for the benefit of ALL students, international and domestic. In order for international students to participate fully in student life at UCSB, it is not enough to leave the door unlocked—there must be a clear invitation that makes manifest that international students are welcomed and expected to participate in creating campus programs.

The Global Gaucho Fund institutionalizes support for cultural programming and sends a clear message to international students that they are a part of the UCSB student community and that there is a place in Associated Students for international voices.

Further, the benefit to domestic students is lifelong. Intercultural communication is a skill that ALL UCSB students can develop if given opportunities to interact with difference, a skill which expand the opportunities they have for relationships and employment anywhere in the world. International voices enrich the campus experience for all of us. Cultural programming benefits all members of the UCSB community.

As a member of the International Student Advisory Board and a member of the OISS staff, I am concerned that there may be some bias against fully funding this BCU. There may be misconceptions about the need for this BCU. As to the ability of international students to design and implement effective programs: the presence of dozens of cultural RCOs based on ethnic heritage or nation of origin speaks to the vibrancy and efficacy of the international community. In terms of translation issues, there may be a need for AS to make an additional effort to explain AS procedures, rather than attributing poor communication to “language barriers.”

This BCU offers an important opportunity for our campus: building intercultural communication skills and embracing the diversity that international students bring from all over the world. Thank you to our AS Senators that initiated the BCU. We look forward to increasing visibility and engagement for our Global Gaucho community with AS support.

Thanks for all your work!

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