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To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2017.1403180

Accepted author version posted online: 13 Nov 2017.
Published online: 13 Feb 2018.

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College Presidents and Black Student Protests: A Historical Perspective on the Image of Racial Inclusion and the Reality of Exclusion

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ABSTRACT
This essay revisits college presidents during the early 1960s to investigate the long history of how academic leaders manage racial unrest on college campuses. Throughout time, the concept of a welcoming and inclusive climate for black students on majority-white campuses has functioned as an illusion alongside the prevailing reality of racism on and off American campuses. In turn, this essay exhibits how political structures, as well as university hierarchy, have shaped academic leaders' approach to social change in higher education. Therefore, this work demonstrates the need to reevaluate higher education history as a lens for understanding the current American sociopolitical context that shapes present-day academic leaders and their challenges of addressing racism on college campuses. In summary, this work renders a richer and more nuanced understanding of the complexities college presidents, students, and campus stakeholders, such as governors and boards of trustees, face to provide equal and meaningful educational opportunities to all students.

On a rainy Sunday in February 1962, Franklin D. Murphy, the chancellor of the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA), stood before a crowd of worshipers at the First African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in downtown Los Angeles. On that day, Murphy served as the keynote speaker for First AME's celebration of its founding (“First AME Praised,” 1962). Established in 1872, it was the oldest church organized by black residents in Los Angeles (Campbell, 2016; First African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2016; Stanford, 2010). Ninety years later, at the corner of Eighth and Towne Avenue, Pastor H. H. Brookins and his congregation listened intently as Chancellor Murphy praised the members of the historic black church for their civic achievements and contributions to the city of Los Angeles. Indeed, it was a joyous occasion; however, the title of Murphy's message was more sobering: “Los Angeles, Its Image and Its Reality” (“First AME Praised,” 1962).

For the rain-soaked congregation, Murphy's gloomy title for his speech could not have been more appropriate. Black Americans long envisioned an image that the West was a racial oasis. It was perceived as more tolerant of blackness than the U.S. South, with its legal racial segregation, and offered more opportunities than the Midwest and Northeast regions of the country, with its rampant racial discrimination (Flamming, 2005; Sides, 2006; Taylor, 1998). Because of factory and shipyard jobs and other economic opportunities, as well as the promise of a western racial oasis, California experienced an increase of more than 300,000 new black residents in the 1940s during World War II and its post-war boom (Taylor, 1998).
However, in reality, as more blacks settled in the West, racial discrimination in urban housing markets, employment, and education became more pervasive. At the start of the 1960s, Black Los Angeles still had no political representation at the municipal or state level despite the economic contributions from thousands of black residents, and several of the newest housing developments in Los Angeles refused to sell homes to interested black buyers (“Los Angeles CORE,” 1962; “Monterey Highlands Pickets,” 1962; Taylor, 1998). By this point, the black youth who were born and raised in Los Angeles were growing less tolerant of, and more vocal about, the local racial inequalities. Sides (2006) explained that black youth in the city “compared their opportunities not to what blacks in other cities had, nor to the opportunities their parents had, but rather to the opportunities enjoyed by their white peers in Los Angeles” (p. 172). As Murphy discussed the city’s image and its reality in front of the First AME congregation in 1962, it was clear that, despite its image as a racial oasis, civil rights were as real an issue for Black Los Angeles as they were for the blacks elsewhere in America.

Murphy was well aware of this disconnect between the racial image and reality of Los Angeles. Upon his July 1960 arrival from the University of Kansas, he quickly gained a firsthand view of racism in Los Angeles. For example, the chancellor inherited a UCLA campus where previous administrators had repeatedly denied the campus chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) recognition as a student organization. Off campus, Murphy soon learned that some barbers and apartment building managers in the Westwood community did not serve black students (“NAACP Given On-Campus OK,” 1960; Dundjerski, 2011; Singleton, 2011). This was not the California he envisioned when he accepted the job. In fact, shortly after being named UCLA chancellor, Murphy glowingly wrote California Governor Edmund “Pat” Brown about his excitement to join a state where colleges and universities guaranteed “opportunity for all young people…” (Murphy, 1960d). The reality, however, was that black students at UCLA did not have equal opportunity. As a result, his first years as chancellor included several UCLA students protesting against racial discrimination locally and in the South. Murphy was immediately tasked with responding to the Los Angeles student civil rights uprising, forcing him to quickly recognize that, despite the image, racism was a reality deeply embedded into the fabric of the city and UCLA.

**College presidents and the civil rights era**

To better understand Chancellor Murphy’s challenges at UCLA, it is important to revisit how college presidents are situated in the civil rights history of the early 1960s. College presidents’ responses to the student civil rights uprising have rarely, if ever, been the focal point of scholarship about this era. Their responses, if mentioned, are usually a supplement to a study about another aspect of the civil rights movement. For example, commonly, scholars focus on the student activists who led the movement or the segregationists who opposed the student demonstrations (see Bynum, 2013; Henderson, 2008). On the rare occasion academic leaders are discussed, historians have typically focused on the leaders of southern black colleges because students on those campuses organized and led the sit-in movement. Those presidents of southern state-supported black colleges are generally portrayed as powerless against the demands of segregationist legislators, governors, and businessmen (Cohen, 2013; Lovett, 2005; Smith, 1994). Rightfully, scholars have credited several black college presidents’ limited authority to the prominence of white supremacy and its ability to extend to, and control, the administrators of many black institutions since their founding through the early 1960s (Fairclough, 2001; Kendi, 2012). An example of that prominence can be seen in Joy Williamson-Lott’s (2008) in-depth look at black colleges in Mississippi in the 1950s and 1960s. She explained how the state’s white political leaders appointed black college presidents who had fewer academic credentials than leaders of white colleges and were more likely to accommodate their demands as segregationists (Williamson-Lott, 2008). Considering the social limitations several black college presidents endured, it makes some sense why there are so few accounts of college presidents’ voices during the student civil rights uprising. Put simply, this uprising is usually framed as an issue within the South, and more specifically, an issue for only southern black college campuses.

In turn, historians have generally talked around academic leaders and have not considered college presidents significant to the student civil rights uprising. Even the histories focused on the desegregation
of major southern universities treat college presidents more as footnotes than prominent thought leaders on civil rights (see Clark, 1995; Daniels, 2001; Lambert, 2010; Tilford, 2014). Perhaps this is why the general populace can name prominent student activists or southern governors during this era, but college presidents remain virtually nameless when recounting student civil rights activism. Based on this void in history, one could assume that no college presidents had an opinion or voice in the national conversation about desegregation, civil rights, and educational opportunity. This omission also provides some insight as to why contemporary college presidents routinely struggle with how to respond to black students’ demands for racial equality and inclusion on college campuses. The dominant account from the early 1960s, which remains one of the nation’s most notable racial crises, suggests that college presidents made little meaningful contributions. Therefore, it would appear there is little to learn about racial unrest and higher education from the study of past academic leaders.

This essay steps into the margins of history to revisit one college president’s responses to the student civil rights unrest. Based on a larger national study of the college presidents at more than two dozen colleges and universities, I use archival research to investigate UCLA Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy in an effort to reimagine the long history of college presidents and black students’ protests. In the process, I challenge the notion that the only college presidents under pressure from student civil rights unrest were in the Deep South. This wave of student unrest transcended regional boundaries, and Murphy offers an understudied account of higher education’s ongoing tension between the image of racial inclusion and the reality of exclusion.

From here, I will detail Murphy’s perceived image of California as a forward-thinking, progressive state where he would flourish as UCLA chancellor. He envisioned being able to mold UCLA into an institution free of discrimination and among the best institutions in academic quality. However, Murphy eventually faced resistance from conservative supporters of UCLA, especially after several students were arrested in the South while participating in civil rights protests. This left Murphy to face the reality that many Californians, despite the state’s racially harmonious image, would oppose students’ civil rights efforts. In closing, I will discuss the historical lessons learned from Chancellor Murphy’s challenges with students’ civil rights protests at UCLA and offer considerations for the contemporary racial unrest on college campuses.

**Image: UCLA, “An irresistible magnet”**

It was not easy for Franklin D. Murphy to resign from his chancellor position at the University of Kansas (KU). Professionally, he served the university for 12 years, briefly as dean of medicine before becoming the chancellor (Murphy, n.d.). Personally, he and his wife, Judy, were born in the area, and he was an undergraduate alumnus of KU (Murphy, n.d.; Murphy, 1960a). “This is probably the most difficult decision Mrs. Murphy and I will ever have to make,” he stated. “Certainly, no decision in the future could ever involve as much soul searching” (Murphy, n.d.). Yet, not even being chancellor of his alma mater or living near family was enough for Murphy to tolerate the ongoing conflict with Kansas Governor George Docking. For four years, starting in 1956 during Docking’s gubernatorial campaign, the two were caught in a political debate with opposing views on education. Murphy called for more state-level support in funding initiatives to grow KU into a premiere research university while Docking adamantly wanted to trim the institution’s budget to make the institution more efficient (McCool, n.d.).

By March 1960, when Murphy’s acceptance of the UCLA chancellorship became public, KU regent Harry Valentine described the “frequent attacks made by Governor Docking on education” as a key factor in Murphy leaving Kansas (“Murphy Quits,” 1960). Henry A. Bubb, president of Capital Federal Savings and Loan in Topeka, said losing Murphy was worse than the most brutal snowstorms or massive floods common to Kansas (Abrahamson, 2013). Murphy was beloved by many, and KU students, trustees, alumni, and others wrote supportive letters to him, one of which came from Theno F. Graves, president of the KU Alumni Association of Greater Los Angeles. Disappointed by the news, Graves welcomed Murphy to Los Angeles “with mixed feelings,” but then invited Murphy to an alumni meeting when he got settled so that the Los Angeles KU alumni could honor him for his service as chancellor (Graves, 1960). In response, Murphy again explained the difficulty in leaving his beloved Kansas. Yet,
there was an upside: “… the tremendous and unlimited creative educational opportunities at UCLA proved to be an irresistible magnet” (Murphy, 1960). The “irresistible magnet” was a common phrase Murphy used to describe UCLA before his arrival. The new chancellorship was Murphy’s opportunity to build the dream university he wished for in Kansas. In fact, he was drawn to UCLA because of its “intense and active interest and support of Californians at all levels” (Murphy, n.d.).

On March 15, 1960, the same week it became public that Murphy was leaving Kansas, UCLA students led the first Los Angeles iteration of the national student civil rights demonstrations when they picketed Santa Monica’s F. W. Woolworth store, a national company that was a frequent target of students’ lunch counter sit-ins in southern states. Two days later, California State University—Los Angeles (L.A. State) students started picketing a different Woolworth store located in downtown Los Angeles (Morris, 1960). By the end of March, 17 Woolworth and S. H. Kress stores in Los Angeles had been picketed by students from UCLA, L.A. State, University of South California, and Los Angeles City College (“Seventeen Chain Stores Picketed,” 1960). These demonstrations, perhaps by coincidence, coincided with the announcement of the new chancellor at UCLA.

As a man of faith, Murphy long preached the importance of equal rights and opportunities for all people. In fact, on June 6, 1960, less than a month before assuming the UCLA chancellorship, Murphy continued to profess the need for equality in his farewell speech to KU graduates. It was the responsibility, he said, of KU students to pursue:

... the opportunity and the obligation to assist his fellow man, to insist that all of us are God’s creatures, regardless of race or creed, and as such the possessors of the right to equality of opportunity for personal self-development and liberation (Murphy, 1960a).

For Robert Singleton, a UCLA student at the time and member of the campus NAACP chapter, Murphy’s reputation was known. “This presented a problem for some of the more conservative administrators at UCLA,” he recalled, and “when Murphy accepted the position, Dean of Students Milton Hahn abruptly resigned” (Singleton, 2011, p. 2).

The student members of Platform, a liberal-leaning UCLA student political party, wrote a welcome letter to the incoming chancellor (Goldstein, 1960). For Platform members and other UCLA students interested in civil rights, Murphy’s arrival was a new opportunity to advance their cause. To do so, students in the campus chapter of the NAACP still wanted formal recognition from the university as a student organization, which would offer them access to facilities for meetings and a voice before other student groups. To the delight of Singleton and other campus NAACP members, one of Murphy’s first actions as chancellor was granting recognition to the NAACP, approving them as a student organization under the name “Bruin NAACP” (Singleton, 2011). This was notable, especially since the University of California had system-wide restrictions dating back to the university’s founding that banned partisan activity among political or religious groups on campus. These rules also restricted any speakers from discussing political or religious topics on campus.

By the time Murphy arrived in 1960, the Kerr Directives, a revised set of rules named after University of California President Clark Kerr, were being developed for the campus (Kemper, 2004). The new directives lifted the bulk of the limitations placed on speakers who visited campus; however, it expanded the restrictions placed on students’ speech and their ability to join or affiliate with any off-campus political and religious groups (Kemper, 2004). The development of the Kerr Directives explains why it was no small feat that the new chancellor immediately recognized the NAACP as a student organization. In fact, it was so significant that the Los Angeles Times covered Murphy’s decision. The recognition finally opened UCLA facilities to civil rights “meetings, debates, and rallies,” according to the news article. The group’s purpose, Singleton told the Los Angeles Times, was the “abolition of discrimination against all minorities, in all its spectrum of forms.” After “a five-year fight” between past UCLA administrators and students, Murphy approved the Bruins NAACP’s fight for civil rights in only a few weeks on the job (“NAACP Given On-Campus OK,” 1960).

Murphy’s inauguration address—his first, large-scale remarks as UCLA chancellor—echoed this sentiment. He first mentioned California’s Master Plan for Higher Education, which focused on streamlining different higher education responsibilities across the state’s two-year colleges, the state colleges,
and University of California campuses (Kerr, 1960). Murphy said, “This plan should, in fact, become a model for the other states in the nation as they struggle to solve the problems created by more young people…” (Murphy, 1960b). Yet, to achieve this, there was a pressing fact crucial to Americans: all citizens did not enjoy freedoms. Murphy asked: “… a concept of man—does he have dignity and freedom to find his own opportunities and destiny within broad and workable ground rules. … In short, is he free or is he not free?” Murphy continued: “… in this great struggle of our time, with everything that is really important at stake, the long-term advantage must be with the point of view that speaks for truth and freedom” (Murphy, 1960b). His words were matched with actions.

Upon Murphy’s arrival, several UCLA students complained that some Westwood barbers refused to serve black patrons. In response, Murphy threatened local barbers that if they continued to discriminate, he would open a barbershop on campus that served all customers. When some barbers continued to discriminate, Murphy opened that barbershop in Kerckhoff Hall (Dundjerski, 2011). UCLA students also tested Westwood apartment offices to determine which ones discriminated against black students. Murphy removed landlords who discriminated from the university’s list of recommended housing options (Dundjerski, 2011).

As his second year as semester began, Murphy continued to prioritize efforts to stop racial discrimination against UCLA students when he organized the Chancellor’s Committee on Discrimination. The committee of two students and three professors had three objectives. First, the group would make sure discrimination did not occur on campus. Second, the committee aimed to investigate the campus fraternities and sororities for discriminatory clauses in their charters. Last, off-campus businesses would be examined for discriminatory practices (Seigel, 1961). “Segregation is immoral, and all university activities dealing with discrimination will be geared toward its end,” Murphy was quoted on the front page of the Daily Bruin (Seigel, 1961). The committee was expected to regularly monitor discrimination on and off campus, and Murphy said of the group’s approach: “We plan to be friendly but firm. By explaining the problem, we hope there will be complete cooperation” (Seigel, 1961).

Murphy’s truest test, however, in handling student civil rights demands would come that summer when some UCLA students took their efforts to the South. At the start of the summer of 1961, James L. Farmer, a co-founder of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), spoke at UCLA. Afterward, several Los Angeles residents, including a dozen UCLA students, traveled to the South as Freedom Riders (Dundjerski, 2011; Singleton, 2011). The riders were a group of civil rights supporters who intentionally attempted to challenge segregated (i.e., whites-only) public facilities along southern highways, and the violent resistance to civil rights demonstrators in the South made the likely outcome of the Freedom Rides predictable for those in California.

A headline in a July 1961 issue of the Los Angeles Times predicted the “Likely Jailing” of a dozen Freedom Riders who had just left California headed to Mississippi (“Twelve L.A. ‘Riders’ Off for South,” 1961). As the group of eight white and four black Freedom Riders departed, dozens of arrests had already occurred in the South. About 30 of the more than 200 Freedom Riders arrested by mid-July 1961 were from Southern California, and Los Angeles Times reporters were correct that the newest Freedom Riders were “headed for almost certain confinement in the jail of Jackson, Miss., this weekend” (“Twelve L.A. ‘Riders’ Off for South,” 1961). On July 30, 15 people from Los Angeles were arrested in Mississippi. Among them, nine were UCLA students, including Robert Singleton of the Bruin NAACP (Dundjerski, 2011; Singleton, 2011). Afterward, several Freedom Riders were eventually sentenced to 40 days at Parchman Farm, Mississippi’s notorious state penitentiary. Each arrested Freedom Rider had to pay $1,000 to remain out on bail until their trial in the South (Dundjerski, 2011). No longer confined to campus or local pickets, UCLA students’ civil rights activism was now, more than ever, part of a national controversy, and the UCLA Freedom Rides were a turning point in Murphy’s pro-civil rights actions.

In the fall of 1961, many of the California Freedom Riders returned to much praise in Los Angeles, and they were regularly asked to speak locally about their experiences. At Santa Monica’s Calvary Baptist Church, in September, 10 Freedom Riders discussed the gruesome treatment they received in Jackson, Mississippi and in Houston, Texas. One UCLA student discussed the police brutality they experienced when arrested and white southern leaders’ plans to bankrupt CORE by requiring every jailed Freedom Rider to pay $1,000 for bail. The forum at Calvary Baptist concluded with a pledge to raise $15,000 for
the 15 Freedom Riders from Santa Monica because they had to return to the South “to carry their legal battle to end segregation to higher courts” (“Meeting Hears Freedom Riders,” 1961).

The rallying call to financially support the Freedom Riders, like the event held at Calvary Baptist in September, eventually made its way to Chancellor Murphy’s office. By December 1961, the UCLA Student Legislative Council offered a special referendum to be voted on by the student body in the upcoming spring semester recommending that student funds be loaned to the UCLA students arrested (Dundjerski, 2011; “Vote Slated,” 1961). Students in favor of the loan argued that it would help keep the students in school while those opposed feared a loan for the UCLA Freedom Riders would set a precedent that any other students could argue student funds should be used to support their cause. Regardless, the upcoming student vote was to determine whether to recommend to the Associated Students UCLA’s (ASUCLA) Board of Control to offer the loan (“Vote Slated,” 1961). As students dismissed for winter break, Murphy also questioned what to do regarding the Freedom Loan. On one hand, the image of UCLA suggested there should be full support of students’ civil rights efforts. On the other hand, Murphy knew the reality of the interests and financial holdings of the university: not everyone on campus or in the University of California system supported the loan idea or the interests of the Freedom Riders.

Reality: UCLA “Noteworthy because of its contradiction”

On that rainy Sunday, February 11, 1962, when Chancellor Murphy addressed the First AME congregation about image and reality, his subject was not happenstance. As he discussed the city’s image and its racial realities, polls were scheduled to open on the following Wednesday, February 14, for UCLA students to vote on the Freedom Rider Loan ballot measure (“First AME Praised,” 1962; “UCLA Votes on Freedom Rider Loan,” 1962). The recommended loan was $5,000 to help five of the students remain enrolled while they “prosecute their appeal from their conviction” in Mississippi for the Freedom Riders (Dundjerski, 2011; “Freedom Rider Loan Voted,” 1962). This was no small amount for five students, equivalent to approximately $40,000 in 2017 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017), and the Los Angeles Times covered the story with great interest because, regardless of how conservative previous administrators were, UCLA, like the city, had a reputation for being progressive. Therefore, leading up to the student vote, the underlying question among several Los Angeles residents was whether UCLA administrators would live up to the progressive image of their university in forward-thinking Los Angeles.

For instance, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, UCLA was the first major university to have four black student athletes in pivotal positions on the football team (Horne, 1997). Furthermore, prominent former black students, such as Jackie Robinson and Ralph Bunche, were cherished alumni of UCLA by the 1950s (Kerr, 1964). In that case, it may have seemed obvious how UCLA students would vote. When the voting closed on February 15, the results were 2,086 students in favor of sending the loan request to the Board of Control and 1,435 against. At the time, it was the largest turnout for a student referendum in university history (“Freedom Rider Loan Voted,” 1962). Three weeks later, on March 8, the eight-member Board of Control would meet and determine if they would grant the loan (Lawton, 1962a). In the meantime, there was clear dissent among the student body, mainly in disagreement with the outcome of the student vote, as they awaited the Board of Control meeting on March 8.

Gargoyle Weekly, a conservative student publication, questioned the request for the loan. The students who published the two-page newsletter called the Daily Bruin’s coverage of the referendum vote “one-sided” (“Election Interpretation,” 1962). The Gargoyle students argued the Freedom Rider Loan was passed by 651 votes, which represented only 5% of the UCLA student enrollment. Therefore, in their opinion, “pro-loan groups” such as Bruin CORE, Bruin NAACP, and Daily Bruin actually did not have widespread student support. In fact, a counter-petition in opposition of the loan had also secured significant student support. Thus, Gargoyle staffers assessed that the student referendum outcome “hardly seems to be a clear mandate” (“Election Interpretation,” 1962).

On March 8, the Board of Control met to “determine its action” on the loan request (“Freedom Rider Loan Voted,” 1962). The eight-member board comprised four UCLA students and four employees, and a heated debate ensued among the board members as journalists and other onlookers attended the highly anticipated meeting. Gerry Corrigan, a student member of the board, argued the $5,000 was a small loan
considering that the ASUCLA held $200,000 in its general fund. The opposition argued that with UCLA’s roughly 12,000 students, a vote of only 2,000 in favor of the loan was not substantial enough to use funds earmarked for the entire student body on the Freedom Riders. In the end, the Board of Control denied the loan request by a 5–3 vote (Lawton, 1962a). Three of the student members voted in favor of the loan and the five other members of the board, including student representative Lindsay Nielson, voted against (Lawton, 1962a).

Several UCLA students held protests contesting the Board of Control’s decision. Also, the Daily Bruin, which endorsed the referendum, editorialized, “the administration is obviously and irrevocably dedicated to the idea that the students should not have control of the income of (ASUCLA) operations” (“A Sham,” 1962). The only appeal of the Board of Control’s vote could be made to Murphy and Edwin W. Pauley, regent chairman (“Appeal BOC Loan Decision,” 1962). A week later, on March 16, Murphy announced before a group of 200 student protestors who had picketed the Administration Building that he would not overturn the board’s decision. “To do otherwise would be to create a precedent without limit or bounds,” Murphy explained (Lawton, 1962b). Yet, after he announced his support of the Board of Control’s vote, the Daily Bruin reported that the chancellor also “made a personal contribution of undisclosed size” to another fund intended to help the Freedom Riders (Lawton, 1962b). It was a gesture symbolic of his approach to civil rights: personally supportive of equal rights but constrained by the university.

In the aftermath of the spring of 1962 Freedom Rider Loan debacle, Murphy withdrew the on-campus recognition of the Bruin NAACP as a student organization. To many, the reality at UCLA and in Los Angeles was that conservatives’ countermovement against the direct-action campaign on racial discrimination prevailed. Regents and conservative student groups, such as those behind the Gargoyle Weekly, were able to halt progressive student movements on campus. To Singleton (2011), the conservatives at UCLA succeeded in “delaying action on the findings of the Chancellor’s Committee (on Discrimination) and convincing the chancellor that the organization engaged in too many protests” (p. 7). That is just one assessment of Murphy’s decision to revoke Bruin NAACP’s recognition. In all likelihood, it was President Kerr, who oversaw each campus in the University of California system, and his enforcement of the Kerr Directives that led Murphy to reverse course in support of the Bruin NAACP. The same semester, in an interview with the Daily Bruin, Kerr maintained that the strictness on political activity had been in place since the previous president, Robert Sproul, interpreted university restrictions to mean no Communist activity on any University of California campus (Shearer, 1962).

It should come as no surprise, however, that black students and their supporters continued protesting racial discrimination on and off campus, considering Murphy’s embrace of their activism. A week after the loan denial at UCLA, the Los Angeles branch of the NAACP held a membership rally. Famed UCLA alumnus Jackie Robinson was honored and served as the keynote speaker for the event held at Second Baptist Church (“Jackie Robinson Sparks NAACP,” 1962). About the same time, Bobby Liley, a UCLA doctoral student and physicist at a local defense firm, was denied a home in the Monterey Highlands housing development. This provoked a number of CORE-led pickets at the development, where the builders told journalists covering the story that they reserved the right to refuse a home sale to anybody (“Los Angeles CORE Stages Housing Sit-in,” 1962). This attitude only highlighted how many whites in Los Angeles felt about black residents, and the same opposing views were present among UCLA students.

Back on campus, on April 4, 1962, members of the Platform student political party published Campus Issues, a two-page newsletter with entries critical of Murphy and campus discrimination. In one instance, UCLA student Marilyn Eisenberg argued the Board of Control needed a student majority because “the final authority on the student purse strings belongs in the hands of the students who are fitting the bill” (Eisenberg, 1962). She assessed that Murphy and other administrators had a “monopoly of power in student affairs …” (Eisenberg, 1962). Another entry argued, “despite clearly stated university policies against racial or religious discrimination in student housing and employment, reports of discrimination persist” (“What About Campus Discrimination,” 1962).

A week later, on April 11, the conservative Gargoyle Weekly responded with a rebuttal calling Robert Singleton’s Campus Issues entry about the Bruin NAACP’s purpose “noteworthy because of its contradiction” (“Freedom Riders,” 1962). The Gargoyle students also questioned why CORE had not covered the
Freedom Riders’ jail expenses instead of having UCLA students vote on a university loan: “Don't these loan grants indicate a failure of individual donations to satisfy CORE's 'need?’” (“Freedom Riders,” 1962). These attacks and others from the Gargoyle Weekly are examples of how racial discrimination manifested itself in the West. Whitaker (2005) explained in his study of Phoenix, Arizona, how black people in the West “did not suffer under the yolk of lynchings and other forms of physical terrorism, but they were socially ostracized by the local press dominated by whites” (p. 134). These various forms of racism were the reality Murphy faced as his second year at UCLA concluded. A group of vocal conservatives—students, regents, and others—would resist nearly every university initiative in support of fighting racial discrimination, and this proved that Murphy’s “irresistible magnet” was not as strong as he perceived when he accepted the chancellor position two years earlier.

The University or racial equality

The interests of the University of California, ultimately, were larger than Chancellor Murphy's efforts to end racial discrimination on and near the Los Angeles campus. For instance, alongside Murphy's arrival as chancellor, the previously mentioned Kerr Directives were being developed for implementation on every University of California campus (Kemper, 2004). The importance of these rules, of course, cannot be understated. Not only did the directives ban student organizations from partisan political or religious activities, they also further limited student speech (Kemper, 2004). These mandates were especially important to corralling student resistance on a number of issues—not just civil rights—because the University of California led all U.S. universities in military contracts during the Cold War (Murch, 2010). Therefore, stopping student protests against local discrimination or the federal government’s military activities was a priority for the University of California entering the 1960s.

Murphy was aware of the directives as well as Kerr and the UC Regents’ top-down approach to administration in California. In turn, before accepting the UCLA position, Murphy offered a few directives of his own to Kerr and the Regents, considering his previous run-ins with state officials in Kansas. Regardless of his speeches on the morality of equal opportunity for all citizens, KU was largely segregated when he started as chancellor. Similar to the Deep South, several restaurants, movie theaters, and hotels did not serve black customers in Lawrence, Kansas (Davis, 2007). Additionally, several campus student organizations, academic majors, and campus facilities were not open to black students, and, notably, Murphy was “not a radical like the abolitionists who had founded the university” (Davis, 2007, pp. 9–10). However, he took the initial steps that eventually led to KU desegregation, such as supporting prominent black speakers on campus and recruiting black student athletes (Davis, 2007). His greatest challenge in Kansas was Governor Docking.

Therefore, when leaving Kansas, Murphy was aware of the challenges that his leadership style and values brought. He wanted to make sure these challenges did not follow him to California. In April 1960, before leaving Kansas, Murphy wrote to a friend:

I made several trips out to talk to Clark Kerr, the Regents (several times), the faculty committee, deans, etc. My major concern on all of these trips was to get spelled out in satisfactory fashion the fact the continuing decentralization of the University would guarantee the chancellor at Los Angeles the necessary authority, responsibility, and flexibility. (Murphy, 1960c)

Murphy was adamant about having the freedom to mold UCLA into his own image. His letter also explained Murphy's need for UCLA faculty to understand he would always seek advice from the faculty, but the “ultimate and final decision” on matters was left to the chancellor. “I do not think I am naïve when I say I feel these assurances were obtained from regents and the state-wide administration both and at joint meetings,” he wrote (Murphy, 1960c). However, Murphy’s ensuing conflicts suggest that perhaps he was a bit naïve, or at least misled by Kerr.

Publicly, Murphy and Kerr immediately conveyed a shared message when it came to student organizing. On June 12, 1961, the two academic leaders issued a reply to a State Senate Un-American Activities subcommittee report. Notably, this followed the May 1960 protests where dozens of Bay Area college students, mostly from the Berkeley campus, picketed the House Un-American Activities Committee
hearings in San Francisco ("Any Radical Groups at UCLA,” 1961; Murch, 2010). Now, a year later, the Un-American Activities’ fact-finding subcommittee warned that Communists would “plague California campuses in the near future” ("Any Radical Groups at UCLA,” 1961). The Los Angeles Times reported that Murphy assured state legislators that no “radical student groups” listed in the report are recognized student organizations at UCLA, and Kerr followed by explaining the Kerr Directives, such as the university’s commitment to not employing Communists and maintaining “law and order” on each campus ("Any Radical Groups at UCLA,” 1961). Together, both the chancellor and president offered this unified message. Privately, however, Murphy was oftentimes in conflict with Kerr.

Murphy wanted UCLA to receive the same financial treatment as the Berkeley campus, develop its own identity, and cultivate a tighter relationship with Los Angeles. Yet, a number of issues simmered between the two academic leaders: Kerr’s policy that a campus chancellor needed his permission to speak with a regent, UCLA being referred to as the “Los Angeles Branch,” and Kerr monitoring the UCLA chancellor’s office without Murphy’s knowledge (Davis, 2007). In short, Murphy’s initial years at UCLA were limited by what he was allowed to do as chancellor, particularly when it came to his support of students’ engagement with political and social issues.

It should also be noted that Murphy’s efforts did not go unnoticed, especially in Black Los Angeles. On April 8, 1962, a month after the Board of Control’s controversial Freedom Loan decision, Murphy and his wife, Judy, were honored by the Los Angeles Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. The event hosted by the prominent black sorority was attended by more than 1,500 guests at the Los Angeles Wilfandel Club, and it recognized Murphy for his commitment to a new International Student Center ("Fifteen Hundred Attend Delta Fete,” 1962). "We believe we are honoring a great man,” said Jerolean Sneed, president of the alumnae chapter ("Sorority Fetes UCLA Head,” 1962).

Proceeds from the event were to support the new center at UCLA, and more than $3,500 was raised by established black civic organizations in Los Angeles, such as the Links Incorporated, the South Los Angeles Chapter of Jack and Jill, and the alumni associations for Langston and Howard Universities, among others ("Fifteen Hundred Attend Delta Fete,” 1962). Additionally, Ralph Bunche, famed UCLA alumnus and then-undersecretary for the United Nations, offered his personal thanks to the Deltas for honoring Murphy ("Dr. Bunche Commends Delta,” 1962). In less than two years as chancellor, Black Los Angeles recognized the chancellor’s efforts to eliminate “all forms of discrimination” ("Deltas to Honor UCLA Chancellor,” 1962). Richard C. Mills, director of the International Student Center, at the event honoring Murphy, said the center would form “a community in which persons from varying backgrounds can come together and find that their similarities outnumber their differences” ("Deltas to Honor UCLA Chancellor,” 1962). In response, at the benefit where he was honored, Murphy gracefully told the 1,500 guests: “We hope that you will continuously hold your hands out to us as we hold out our hands to you and that we put our hands together …” ("Fifteen Hundred Attend Delta Fete,” 1962). In the end, despite Kerr’s and the regents’ university-first interests, local black residents and several students welcomed Murphy’s response to their demands to eliminate racial discrimination at UCLA and in Los Angeles.

**Conclusion**

Franklin D. Murphy’s first years as UCLA chancellor were not unique. As the race question loomed over UCLA, several college presidents elsewhere were also tasked with responding to student civil rights protests in the early 1960s. In the San Francisco Bay Area, students at the University of California–Berkeley and San Francisco State protested San Francisco hotel managers’ racist employment practices while Stanford University students helped organize support for black Mississippians’ fight for freedom (Crowe, 2000; Lyman, 2009). In the Midwest, University of Michigan students boycotted Ann Arbor’s national department stores because the franchise’s southern locations were segregated, and University of Chicago students led on-campus sit-ins because the institution owned property where landlords would not rent to black people ("UC Admits Housing Segregation,” 1962; “Don’t buy at Woolworth or Kresge,” n.d.). In the Northeast, Syracuse University faculty and students protested the city’s urban renewal efforts and unfair housing practices against the city’s black residents ("Demonstrations, Arrests Continue,”
In essence, the challenges that welcomed Chancellor Murphy to UCLA were indicative of the civil rights era's stalemate in advancing racial progress on several U.S. college campuses.

Murphy would remain UCLA chancellor until 1968. Upon his resignation, Murphy—just like in Kansas—was rumored to have stepped down due to a conflict with the governor, Ronald Reagan, who took office in 1967 (Honan, 1994). He denied that allegation, but regardless of Murphy's rationale, Reagan quickly pushed his conservative agenda as a new governor. In fact, in his first UC Regent meeting as governor, Clark Kerr was dismissed as president of the University of California (Rorabaugh, 1990) at a time when student demonstrations had increased in size and scope. Since then, student demographics on college campuses have evolved, and hundreds of colleges and universities with histories of racial discrimination now have administrators who tout diversity and inclusion as a mainstay of their institutions. Yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Recently, collegiate communities have challenged practices that extend the long history of institutionalized racism to the present. Student demands to rename buildings named after staunch racists, acknowledge institutions' benefit and legacy of slavery, and reprimand perpetrators of racism and racial incidents are being directed toward college presidents (Gladney, 2015; Kitchener, 2017; Swarns, 2016; Wilson, 2016). Princeton University, Yale University, and the University of Missouri are notable examples, with the system president and a campus chancellor resigning in November 2015 at Missouri following local and national scrutiny of their responses to black students' demands that the university's hostile racial climate—one that fostered several racial incidents—be addressed. This is one instance that demonstrates that racism remains a major determinant in shaping the access to and quality of higher education for students of color, something Franklin D. Murphy quickly observed when he arrived at UCLA in July 1960. For today's college campuses, similar to the 1960s, several state lawmakers, governors, and as of January 2017, the president of the United States, are offering legislation at the state and federal level that attacks the inclusivity espoused by many college presidents (Harris, 2017; Svrluga, 2017).

This current moment presents an opportunity to embrace the understudied history of college presidents and civil rights to more fully comprehend the tension between the image of inclusion at U.S. colleges and universities and several students' lived realities with racism on campuses. Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy's trials at UCLA demonstrate how the interests of governing board members and elected officials regularly take priority over academic leaders' responsibility to create a welcoming campus environment, even at universities that have marketed themselves as more inclusive than others. In turn, for decades, students have been left to shoulder the burden in the fight for equality on college campuses, especially as college presidents do not have or demand the autonomy to facilitate change. Yet, college presidents' voices remain important in the national conversation around race, civil rights, and educational opportunity, but it will require historical understanding to utilize those past voices such as Murphy's and others to formulate the critical perspective needed to champion racial equality in higher education alongside the hierarchical structures that reward systematic oppression in the name of the institution rather than all its students.

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