

Subject: We are all Gauchos – An important message about civility at UCSB

April 13, 2016

Dear Student:

As the end of the academic year approaches, academic pressures can be accompanied by heated discussions and debates. We are electing new student leaders, and many of us are engaged in national and worldwide conversations: fierce debate over who will be the next President of the United States; questions over global security in the wake of terror attacks; allegations of corruption and greed of world leaders; and the list goes on.

We believe that it is imperative that the UCSB community be engaged in discussions about current issues. This is precisely the function of a University—to create critical thinkers, and to test both our own beliefs and those of others. Furthermore, we know and value the fact that Gauchos hold a wide variety of opinions on these matters. Recently, students from all parts of the spectrum have reported feeling criticized for their beliefs, and even fearful about expressing their opinions and confronting the opinions expressed by others.

Thoughts and opinions will vary, but we are *all* Gauchos, and all Gauchos have the right to physical safety. Regardless of your opinions, identity, or beliefs, you should *never* be the subject of physical abuse, threats of violence, stalking, harassment, or intimidation. Such acts are violations of campus policies and may also constitute violations of the law. They cannot be tolerated against any member of our community. Students who engage in violence or threats of violence are not exercising free speech and, if found responsible, may be subject to University sanctions. There are several University and community resources available to you if you witness or are subject to such behavior.

- UCSB Police Department, 805-893-3446 or police.ucsb.edu (911 in an emergency)
- Isla Vista Foot Patrol, 805-681-4179 (911 in an emergency)
- Office of Judicial Affairs, 805-893-5016, for violations, by individuals, of University policies
- Office of Student Life, 805-893-4569 for violations, by campus organizations, of University policies

University policies and the law do not protect us from being offended or from feeling uncomfortable with opposing views. The University supports you in challenging speech or expression you find offensive by exercising your own free speech rights, but we encourage and promote civility and respect in every exchange. The University does not, and cannot, censor content, but we can facilitate alternative events, programs, or expressions proposed by other members of the UCSB community which are conducted within our regulations.

Beyond policies and regulations, it is important for all community members to know that students, staff, faculty, and administrators created and agreed to [Principles of Community](#) in

2011. The Principles of Community are a call to all community members for common decency and mutual respect. Following these basic principles will allow us all to co-exist at UCSB in a way that recognizes each person's dignity, values every identity, and allows each person to express their thoughts and ideas to stimulate healthy, respectful and productive dialogue.

Support is available when you feel personally or emotionally impacted by the views and beliefs of others. The University provides counseling services through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), 805-893-4411. The Office of Student Life (OSL), 805-893-4569, provides advisors who can discuss community engagement, freedom of expression, and general student life issues. Additionally, the campus provides cultural resources, religious groups, veteran's services, services for Dream Scholars, services for Guardian Scholars, political organizations both liberal and conservative, LGBTQ services, disabled student services, athletic opportunities, a women's center, student government, etc. To see a complete list of Student Affairs departments and services, visit <http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/departments-and-services>.

Many of you have expressed that you would like to see more opportunities to discuss these issues. The Division of Student Affairs will be hosting three open "Coffee and Dialogue" sessions for the community. All voices are welcome.

April 15, 10:30am-Noon, Corwin Pavilion

May 13, 10:30am-Noon, TBD

May 27, 10:30-Noon, TBD

In closing, we are a diverse community of Gauchos, united not by our similarities but by a commitment to respectfully examining our differences. We call upon all members of our community to uphold the values and principles of civil discourse and mutual respect.

Take care of yourselves and one another,

Aaron Jones, President, Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Jimmy Villarreal, President, Associated Students (AS)

Miles Ashlock, Assistant Dean & Director, Office of Student Life (OSL)

Katya Armistead, Dean of Student Life

Debbie Fleming, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Margaret Klawunn, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Marisela Márquez, Executive Director, Associated Students (AS)