

December 3, 2015

Dear UC Santa Barbara Students,

As we witness protests and activism across the nation and on our campus, I am writing as the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs to affirm my commitment to supporting your success at UCSB by working in partnership with you to create a campus environment where all students can thrive. Along with my colleagues in the Division of Student Affairs, we pledge to do everything we can to advance your learning and to address acts of racism and discrimination. Among the greatest strengths of UCSB, of which we are all proud, is the extraordinary and rich diversity of our student population – diverse in race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, veteran status, citizenship, ability, and socio-economic status. We have made some progress, and there is much more that we want to do.

Over the last few weeks, important programs, trainings, protests, and discussions have been taking place on campus in response to local, national, and international events – some led by students, some by Associated Students, some by faculty, and some through the programs and centers in Student Affairs. As the fall quarter comes to a close, however, we want you to know that we are committed to building upon and continuing dialogues about equity, diversity, and social justice. We are working towards long term solutions that advance efforts to make our campus more accessible, inclusive, and safer for all students.

In this letter, I am providing you with:

- Updates about important diversity and inclusion initiatives;
- Information about a new mechanism for responding to bias incidents;
- An invitation for additional opportunities for dialogue.

Recent Events

Coming to the end of my first quarter at UCSB, I have been impressed by the deep passion of students here for improving our campus, our local community, and the world. This fall students led efforts for a safe Halloween, to improve conditions in Isla Vista, and to advocate for affordable higher education, as a few examples. Student initiatives brought about improvements in mental health services and the policies and procedures for responding to sexual violence. I have met with Associated Students, the leadership of Greek organizations, undocumented students, Mesa Directiva, the Black Student Union, the Graduate Student Association and others, and I look forward to continuing these discussions and initiating new ones.

On many campuses this fall, including here, students of color have brought increased attention to institutionalized discrimination and racism and are asking for improvements in recruitment, retention and faculty hiring to ensure a diverse and inclusive academic community. Last week we met with the leadership of the Black Student Union to advance these crucial goals and to discuss progress and plans. UCSB pledged to establish four North Hall endowed chairs to recruit tenured professors whose research and teaching includes “knowledge and traditions of the Black World.” To date, the Chancellor and the UC President have raised the funding for three recruitments that already have been authorized. The Black Resource Committee, a Student Affairs Committee with a mission to ensure a supportive educational and social climate, has brought forward additional recommendations for initiatives in recruitment, research, and outreach that we anticipate implementing.

In spring 2015, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities officially designated UCSB a Hispanic-Serving Institution. This September the U.S. Department of Education awarded UCSB a grant to improve student retention and success. The grant will focus on the first-year experience and provide new pedagogical training for faculty, as well as tutoring and other academic support for students. The university also received funding from the Office of the President, to expand academic advising and counseling and to develop new initiatives to assist students, including improved research and summer

support programs, and enhanced support for transfer students. UCSB will be applying for additional grants to aid in the success of transfer, first generation, and under-represented minority students.

As a campus, UCSB conducted a climate survey last year. The Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Academic Policy convened a Campus Climate Survey Implementation Committee to follow up in addressing concerns, including sexual violence as well as issues raised by LGBTQ and underrepresented minority students, faculty, and staff.

Over the past two years, UCSB has invested a lot of time, energy, and resources into creating a new sense of community in Isla Vista. This fall we opened the Gaucho Support Center at 970 Embarcadero del Mar to add counseling resources for students in Isla Vista. The Chancellor's Coordinating Committee on Isla Vista, led by co-chairs Executive Vice Chancellor David Marshall and Academic Senate Chair Kum-Kum Bhavnani is continuing to meet and is sponsoring a few pilot projects that will support students and others in their efforts to change the culture in Isla Vista. In addition, we are working with students on a proposal for more student involvement in keeping IV safe.

Bias Response Team

As important conversations about all of these topics move forward, we need to treat each other with respect and dignity. We can all step up as allies to each other by resisting racism, profiling, and scapegoating. We are concerned about purposeful attempts to intimidate members of our community that may be part of a backlash, and likely orchestrated by those who are not part of the UCSB community.

To ensure a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students, we need to be vigilant in responding to hate crimes or bias incidents that target any members of our community. Currently, students can report incidents through [the UCSB Police Department](#) and through [the Office of Judicial Affairs](#). Recent concerns, including incidents this fall on and off campus, such as vandalism at St. Michael's church, have encouraged us to enhance our educational efforts and communication. As a result, we are creating a campus-wide Bias Response team to bring together students, faculty, and staff to review incidents on campus and in Isla Vista, to examine trends, and to make recommendations on proactive efforts to educate our community. The Bias Response team will issue quarterly reports to the campus.

In addition, we are working to improve communication between law enforcement and students. UCSB Police Department and members of the University faculty and staff are participating in diversity trainings with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office. Additional opportunities will be offered for students to participate in workshops.

Dialogue

So that I may hear from many students, I am offering open hours for undergraduate and graduate students on Friday afternoons from 2-5pm starting in the winter quarter. Some of the Assistant Vice Chancellors, Deans, and Directors in Student Affairs will join me for these drop-in hours. I am also available to meet with individual students and groups on request, including in the remaining weeks of the fall quarter, and my office can be contacted at 893-3651 for appointments.

On behalf of the Division of Student Affairs, we reaffirm our promise to work with you in continuing efforts to realize a diverse and accessible educational environment for all of our students. Best wishes in completing the work for your fall quarter classes, and good luck with your exams.



Margaret Klawunn
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs