
To: Chancellor Howard Gillman
Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor Hal Stern
Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs Willie Banks
Vice Chancellor, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Dyonne Bergeron
Professor, School of Law and Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) Chair
Katie Tinto

CC: Associate Dean of Students & Executive Director, Student Government Student
Media Stephanie N. Van Ginkel
Associated Graduate Students Executive Cabinet
Associated Students of UCI Executive Cabinet

Subject: Campus Climate and Policing Concerns

Dear Chancellor Gillman, Provost Stern, Vice Chancellor Banks, Vice Chancellor Bergeron, and PSAC Chair Tinto,

We hope this email finds you well. Recognizing the campus climate of other institutions of higher education across the U.S., especially those that have taken steps to repress the voices of students demanding an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people, we write to you today to, in the strongest of terms, proactively urge the university not to take excessive and retributive action against our students. Whether by restricting and banning peaceful public demonstrations or increasing police presence on our campus, such actions would run counter to the university's core mission to enlighten our communities and point the way to a more brilliant future.

The purpose of higher education has always been to foster the leaders of tomorrow, to equip them with the skills necessary to speak out against injustice and transform our society for the better. As we speak, across the nation, we are seeing hundreds of students embrace these skills and this charge to demonstrate for a free Palestine, as is their right to do. As stated by President Drake, "Ials an epicenter for social movements and research that serves the public good, the University of California has never shied away from challenging conversations about systems and practices that perpetuate racism, inequality, or injustice."¹ These current demonstrations are a part of this important mission and legacy — to suppress them in the name of a faux sense of "order" would contravene the very foundational principles that make us the UC. Especially in this Year of Free Speech, we encourage you as leaders of our university to honor the principles we have been learning about and remain stalwart in your commitment to promoting free speech for all members of our UCI community.

¹ President Drake, Community Safety Plan 2021

This statement is the express view of the signatory officers and does not reflect the official position of AGS and ASUCI.

An increased police presence, in particular, would only serve to heighten tensions across our campus and contribute to an unsafe environment for our students. As we've seen at Columbia, Yale, NYU, and UT Austin, increased police presence and the arrests of peaceful demonstrators have only amplified feelings of isolation and increased safety concerns of students and faculty alike, resulting in a public outcry about these universities' actions against their own peacefully demonstrating students. The UC's history of police violence, from the UC Davis pepper spray incident to the stifling of Opportunity for All organizers at the January Board of Regents meeting, should inform us of how ineffective and divisive hyper-policing is and the threat it poses to our students, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds. As acknowledged in the UC Community Safety Plan, "[s]ystems of policing and law enforcement have not safeguarded people equally. Too often, the same systems charged with providing protection have become a source of great distrust and fear."² As a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) that claims a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we must be cognizant that these concerns are particularly salient for many members of our UCI community who have specific experiences with hyper-policing and the unsafe environments it creates.

Recognizing our own institution's past history of direct Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian action, from the charges against the Irvine 11 in 2010 to the charges being currently brought by the university against the organizers and participants of peaceful demonstrations for Gaza on our campus, we are concerned that measures in the name of "safety" may again be weaponized against our students to suppress their speech. As student leaders, we feel strongly that all students should feel safe on our campus, from our Palestinian students to our Muslim students to our Jewish students and more. We acknowledge that these are delicate times, and we absolutely do not condone threats of violence towards any members of our community, whether by faculty, staff, or students. However, we also acknowledge that repression in response is not the answer — escalating police presence is not the answer. When evaluating additional campus climate measures, we caution you as administrators to refrain from defaulting to escalation, conduct due diligence when comparing our campus' response mechanisms with those of other universities, and confirm claims of ill intent before acting upon them.

As the UC Regents meet to discuss campus security concerns under Item B.1(X), we believe there is an opportunity for UCI to model a different path by working to de-escalate and bringing together different perspectives "to advance our understanding of the world around us."³ We know UCI has already been capable of such a path — we acknowledge that although armed UCIPD officers attended early vigils and demonstrations, since then, at recent protests about Gaza, our campus has prioritized non-police responders. Speaking with students from a wide variety of backgrounds, we know this response is appreciated by the community. We hope UCI maintains this commitment moving forward so we can

² President Drake, Community Safety Plan 2021

³ UCI, Mission and Values, [About Us | UCI](#)

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Associated Student Governments
Memo to UCI Administration
Date Issued: April 25, 2024



continue to be leaders modeling a more measured approach based on the needs of our population.

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In Solidarity,

Zoë Chaetana Miller-Vedam & Jun Jang

Presidents, 2023-2024

Associated Graduate Students & Associated Students of UCI

Rebecca Angela Ruiz & Michelle Dong

Vice President Externals, 2023-2024

Associated Graduate Students & Associated Students of UCI

Amelia Roskin-Frazee & Justin Nguyen

Vice President Internals, 2023-2024

Associated Graduate Students & Associated Students of UCI

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