

May 23, 2024

Upcoming Congressional Testimony and Our Commitment to an Inclusive UCLA

Campus Climate

Chancellor Block shared the following message with the UCLA campus community.

Dear Bruin Community:

Later today I will be addressing the United States House of Representatives’ Committee on Education and the Workforce in a hearing focused on the troubling rise of antisemitism on college campuses. But before I speak to that committee, I wanted our community to know what I will say.

First, I will reaffirm something that I hope Bruins know well: All forms of discrimination on the basis of one’s background, identity, race or religion are completely antithetical to UCLA’s values and corrosive to our culture. We are committed to fostering an environment on campus where every individual can thrive, free from fear and exclusion.

Yet a recent rise in incidents of legally protected, but hateful speech — whether antisemitic, Islamophobic, anti-Arab or otherwise — underscores the fundamental tension that can come about when an institution is committed to both safeguarding free expression under the First Amendment and preventing discrimination that violates the law.

The challenge of upholding both of these obligations is significant. I do not think any universities or university leaders have achieved this perfectly, but it must always be our goal. This aim is behind many of the steps UCLA is taking to address discrimination, shore up campus safety and hold people accountable for recent criminal activity.

This week, we are initiating a broad-based review to address reports of antisemitic and anti-Arab or Islamophobic discrimination and harassment that may have interfered with students’ abilities to access the university’s educational programs and activities. We’ve hired an outside firm to support our Civil Rights Office’s review of these issues.

We will also be utilizing the experience and expertise of scholars from across our campus to combat discrimination, foster great teaching and uphold the ideals of respect and inclusivity. I know that healing and rebuilding from the past several weeks will take time, but we have significant expertise on campus to support and facilitate this process.

Additionally, UCLA staff are reviewing and updating our campus policies for events and First Amendment activity to make them more enforceable and enforce consistently.

And as I have shared, [accountability is critical to our ability to move forward](#). We have initiated necessary reviews of our security and have created a new Office of Campus Safety reporting directly to me. That office, in partnership with the LAPD, is continuing [investigations into those who perpetrated violence on our campus](#), including members of a mob who on April 30 attacked the encampment on Royce Quad.

It is essential that we make our campus a place where all people are welcome, feel safe and can thrive. I am grateful for the work of many community members who are helping us make progress towards this critical goal.

Gene D. Block
Chancellor

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