

May 2, 2024

Our Community is in Deep Pain

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Chancellor Block shared the following message with the Bruin community.

Dear Bruin Community:

Our community is in deep pain. We are reeling from days of violence and division. And we hope with all our hearts that we can find a place where our students, faculty and staff feel safe and, one day, connected again.

Our approach to the encampment that was established on Royce Quad last week has been guided by several equally important principles: the need to support the safety and wellbeing of Bruins, the need to support the free expression rights of our community, and the need to minimize disruption to our teaching and learning mission.

The events of the past several days, and especially the [terrifying attack on our students, faculty and staff](#) on Tuesday night, have underscored our efforts to live up to these principles and taken an immense toll on our community.

We approached the encampment with the goal of maximizing our community members’ ability to make their voices heard on a global issue. We had allowed it to remain in place so long as it did not jeopardize Bruins’ safety or harm our ability to carry out our mission.

But while many of the protesters at the encampment remained peaceful, ultimately, the site became a focal point for serious violence and well as a huge disruption to our campus.

Several days of violent clashes between demonstrators and counter-demonstrators put too many Bruins in harm’s way and created an environment that was completely unsafe for learning. Demonstrators directly interfered with instruction by blocking students’ access to classrooms. Indirectly, violence related to the encampment led to the closure of academic buildings and the cancellation of classes. Frankly, hostilities were only continuing to escalate.

In the end, the encampment on Royce Quad was both unlawful and a breach of policy. It led to unsafe conditions on our campus and damaged our ability to carry out our mission. It needed to come to an end.

Over the past several days, we communicated with and made a formal request to meet with demonstration leaders to discuss options for peaceful and voluntary disbanding of the encampment. Unfortunately, that meeting did not lead to an agreement.

To preserve campus safety and the continuity of our mission, early this morning, we made the decision to direct UCPD and outside law enforcement officers to enter and clear the encampment. Officers followed a plan that had been carefully developed to protect the safety of protesters at the site. Those who remained encamped last night were given several warnings and were offered the opportunity to leave peacefully with their belongings before officers entered the area. Ultimately, about 300 protesters voluntarily left, while more than 100 resisted orders to disperse and were arrested.

UCLA facilities teams are now in the process of taking down structures and cleaning up the quad, and we ask that students, staff and faculty continue to avoid the area.

I want to be clear that we fully support the right of our community members to protest peacefully, and there are longstanding academic freedom processes in place that allow students, faculty and staff to gather and demonstrate in ways that do not violate the law or our policies. We encourage Bruins to take advantage of these many opportunities, which were designed to support advocacy that does not jeopardize community safety or disrupt the functioning of the university.

I also want to recognize the significance of the issues behind the demonstrators’ advocacy. The loss of life in Gaza has been truly devastating, and my administration has and will continue to connect with student and faculty leaders advocating for Palestinian rights and engage in discussions that are grounded in listening, learning and mutual respect. Similarly, we will continue to support our Jewish students and employees who are reeling from the trauma of the brutal Oct. 7 attacks and a painful spike in antisemitism worldwide.

We will also continue to investigate the violent incidents of the past several days, especially Tuesday night’s horrific attack by a small group of instigators. When physical violence broke out that night, leadership immediately directed our UCPD police chief to call for the support of outside law enforcement, medical teams and the fire department to help us quell the violence. We are carefully examining our security processes that night and I am grateful to President Drake for also calling for an investigation.

The past week has been among the most painful periods our UCLA community has ever experienced. It has fractured our sense of togetherness and frayed our bonds of trust, and will surely leave a scar on the campus. While [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) and [Staff & Faculty Counseling Center](#) are available to lend support to those in need, I also hope we can support one another through this difficult moment and reaffirm the ties that unite us as a community of learning.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block
Chancellor

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