

ASUC Senate unanimously endorses Prop. 16 despite 'Zoom bombing'

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Body

The 2020-21 ASUC senators unanimously voted to endorse Proposition 16, which seeks to reinstate affirmative action in UC system admission, at its regular meeting Wednesday.

In the past, affirmative action has yielded positive results for BIPOC communities and women in terms of employment and higher education opportunities, according to an ASUC Senate resolution. With Black students making up less than three percent of the campus student population, students hope re-implementing Prop. 16 will help with campus and educational diversity, the resolution states.

"Affirmative action is about equitable and fair access," said ASUC Affairs Vice President Nicole Anyanwu during the meeting. "This bill has a lot of significance, UC Regents have endorsed Prop. 16 - it's time for a change and it's time for us to make education all."

Other campus students attended the meeting to advocate for Prop. 16 and its goal of increasing diversity throughout the UC system by taking race into consideration in university admissions. A majority of senators vocally pledged their support as well before passing the resolution with a unanimous vote.

During the meeting, however, Black Student Union External Vice President Kyra Abrams was disrupted by a "Zoom bomber" while speaking in support of Prop. 16. During the incident, the "Zoom bomber" played racially insensitive music and shared their screen with the N-word written across it.

"I'm a Black man at Berkeley (and) this Zoom call is yet another example of what being Black at Berkeley is like," said Nathan Mizell, director of policy for ASUC President Victoria Vera. "This has been a decades-long process; this has been a process of continued effort and struggle."

The "Zoom bomber" was immediately dropped from the call, after which Anyanwu requested that the participants list be sent to the proper campus officials.

After the incident, Black students attending the meeting shared their experiences of racism on or around campus, including being called racial slurs and being misjudged as athletes on multiple occasions.

"It's important to note that despite the regularity of what just happened, it should not be that way," said first year Cyn Gomez at the meeting. "As a first-generation student and a (person of color), there's no way around it - we need to change this."

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Beyond just passing the resolution, other senators and campus organizations are doing more for the cause, including promoting voter registration and planning outreach to other universities.

ASUC officials are also working to provide more resources in spite of remote learning, such as opening up individual workrooms by reservation in Eshleman Hall starting Sept. 14, handing out two free masks to students and trying to delay the late drop deadline until Reading, Review and Recitation Week.

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