

June 2, 2020

Chancellor Gene D. Block
UCLA

Executive Vice-Chancellor & Provost Emily Carter
UCLA

Dear Chancellor Block and Executive Vice-Chancellor Carter,

It has come to our attention that last evening, June 1, 2020, a UCLA facility, the Jackie Robinson Stadium, was used by LAPD to detain protesters and process arrests, including arrests of UCLA students. We have heard from the National Lawyers Guild-Los Angeles volunteers, arrested UCLA students, and other arrested protesters on this matter.

Testimony from arrested protesters is chilling. Arrested for violation of curfew in downtown Los Angeles, protesters were crowded into LA County Sheriff's Department buses and brought to UCLA. As they arrived, they looked out of the small windows on these prison buses only to see Bruins logos and signs greeting them at the Jackie Robinson Stadium. Protesters were held on these buses at UCLA for five to six hours, without access to restrooms, food, water, information, or medical attention. Indeed, there was a medical emergency on one of the buses, one that received a response from the fire department several hours later. All protocols of social distancing were violated by the LA County Sheriff's Department and LAPD with protesters deliberately crowded into buses and officers not following rules and recommendations established by the City, the County, and the CDC, including wearing masks. The cruel irony that this took place at a location used as a COVID-19 testing site is not lost on those arrested or on us. When protesters were taken off the buses, they were subject to processing in the parking lot of the stadium and then released, which meant that they were directed to find their way home late at night (between 1:30 am and 3:30 am) from the Jackie Robinson Stadium. Without working cell phones and under conditions of curfew, this was a near impossible task, especially for those unhoused Angelenos who had also been arrested for curfew violation for simply being on the streets of downtown Los Angeles and were now marooned at UCLA. In addition, protesters, including UCLA students, were arrested in Westwood, again for violation of curfew. They were brought to Jackie Robinson Stadium on LAPD buses after LAPD tried to commandeer a 720 Metro Bus but failed to maneuver it through the streets. We share these details because if you do not already know them, you must know them now.

We write to express our deep concern about these events and the matter of UCLA collaboration with LAPD and other police forces. In recent days, UCLA leadership has shared statements of solidarity denouncing institutionalized racism and recognizing the importance of protest against such racism. Last night's use of Jackie Robinson Stadium stands in sharp hypocrisy to these statements. We have heard from our students and we agree that such solidarity statements must be accompanied not by collaboration with the police but by concrete steps that move us towards the divestment of UCLA from LAPD and other forms of policing, similar to the prompt action taken by the President of the University of Minnesota following the murder of Mr. George Floyd. In the coming months, we intend to work towards this goal in partnership with student and community organizations. We look forward to being in dialogue and alliance with you on this.

That said, we also seek a full accounting of the events of last evening. The Jackie Robinson Stadium is a UCLA facility, implicating all of us in the use of that space to detain protestors and process arrests. It is our understanding that UCLA holds the lease to the Jackie Robinson Stadium and its parking lots, which sit on VA grounds. We ask for a detailed, public statement on the chain of events, decisions, and command lines that led to the use of this facility by LAPD and its mobile processing units last evening and a copy of any agreements that may govern LAPD's use of this UCLA facility. We also ask for an immediate cessation of the use of this facility or any other UCLA facility by LAPD and other police forces.

Last evening, UCLA students were arrested for engaging in the constitutionally protected right to peacefully protest against racial injustice, which is pervasive in American policing. They were detained and processed at a stadium on their own campus named after Jackie Robinson, an icon of the long and unfinished struggle for Black freedom. Today many of them are trying to complete final examinations and final assignments. This is not the UCLA education and experience that they deserve.

But this is not just about our students. As UCLA faculty, we refuse to allow our university to serve as a police outpost at this moment of national uprising and at any other time. As a public university, we serve the public and our students, and this in turn requires dismantling the mechanisms of punishment that have historically caused undeniable harm to communities in Los Angeles.

A few days ago, we were glad to read [your statement](#) which noted: "Still, we recognize that UCLA also can and must do better. As campus leaders, we recommit ourselves to ensuring that our policies and actions value the lives, safety and dignity of every Bruin." This is our chance to do better.

We look forward to receiving a full and detailed accounting of last evening's incident and to working with you and the rest of the UCLA leadership on divestment from collaborations with LAPD and other police forces.

Sincerely,

Ananya Roy
Professor of Urban Planning, Social Welfare, and Geography
The Meyer and Renee Luskin Chair in Inequality and Democracy
Director, UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy

Hannah Appel
Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Global Studies
Associate Director, UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy

Laura Abrams
Professor and Chair of Social Welfare

Karen Umemoto
Helen and Morgan Chu Chair, Asian American Studies Center
Professor of Urban Planning and Asian American Studies

Michael Lens
Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Public Policy