

Dear Campus Community –

As I begin this note, I struggle to convey the many emotions I have felt in my heart these past few days. Words cannot begin to explain how gut-wrenching it has been for me to witness the hurt so many have felt and continue to feel regarding the Lambda Chi Alpha incident. And yet I know the discomfort I sit with cannot compare with what so many of our students, faculty and staff of color feel. Their pain extends far beyond this one incident. This incident is another reminder of the deep, historic and systemic inequities—including acts of racism—they have had to live with and endure on a day-to-day basis. To our underrepresented students, please know that I carefully consider and understand this fact—as best I can through the lens of my identity. I am committed to helping others with my identity understand your struggles and pain, make meaningful changes, and do better for you.

Students want action, and I heard this message very clearly during last week's town hall discussion. Students also asked me to directly address the disciplinary measures that can be taken against the individuals involved and to discuss specific details about the work we have done and are doing to foster and support greater diversity and inclusion on campus. I will respond to all of these questions and concerns in this letter.

As many are aware, Lambda Chi Alpha was suspended for a minimum of a year. After learning this morning about another incident of racial profiling and cultural appropriation that occurred at Sigma Nu six weeks ago, I am announcing today an indefinite suspension of all Panhellenic and Inter Fraternity Council fraternities and sororities. I understand this impacts Greek Life organizations that have been operating responsibly and with integrity. However, Greek Life is a privilege at this university and until all fraternities and sororities are conducting themselves in a manner that is respectful of all students—as well as holding each other accountable—they will not have a place at Cal Poly.

We want our Greek Life community to be a model for the rest of the nation. If Greek Life is to remain at Cal Poly, these students must re-invent their organizations and activities so they add value to our campus community and foster a culture of inclusion instead of undermining it.

We are also seeking to meet with our underrepresented students to address their concerns and discuss the actions we are taking to support them and diversity and inclusion on our campus. In addition, there are additional ideas that students are asking for that we believe can have a positive impact on our campus culture and that we intend to implement. We are eager to discuss these ideas and how we will incorporate them.

To help facilitate constructive dialogue around these ideas and issues, we are hiring an independent African-American diversity and inclusion specialist, Kimberly McLaughlin-Smith from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She will work with our administration, faculty and staff, and students to help us better understand the concerns and perspectives of the underrepresented members of our community and assist us in positively influencing our campus climate and culture.

Moving forward, we will also be requiring implicit bias training for all hiring committees, MPP and Confidential positions. We cannot require this training for faculty and staff, as they are represented employees, but we are strongly encouraging it.

Students asked me to detail the specific actions we have taken to create a more diverse and inclusive campus. Rather than go into specifics here, I have included below this letter detailed information about our diversity and inclusion initiatives. The list is not exhaustive, but it provides a summary of the work we have done, are doing and will continue to do. To ensure students can see and keep track of our work, we will publish the list on the Office of University Diversity and Inclusion website and keep it updated.

We have made great progress, but our work continues. When I joined this campus in 2011, 63 percent of our student body was Caucasian. Today, Cal Poly is more diverse than it ever has been, with a student body that is under 55 percent Caucasian. Applications from under-represented minorities for fall 2018 were more than double the number for fall 2008. Things are moving in the right direction, but we clearly have more to do. Cal Poly's faculty, staff and students should reflect the diversity of the state of California in every facet—gender, race, sexual orientation, class, ideology, ethnicity and more. Until that happens we have not finished our work.

Finally, I want to address the question of discipline for the students involved. I have to start by saying I abhor and denounce racist speech and actions—they are inconsistent with my personal values and those of Cal Poly. I wish we could forbid them from our campus and ensure they are never again expressed, but that is not realistic.

While this may anger and frustrate many, the laws governing constitutional rights to free speech are unambiguous and unequivocal. The First Amendment protects the free speech of everyone on our campus, and the university cannot sanction any campus community member or visitor who is legally expressing their views—even if we as a university find those views to be disgusting, racist, sexist, homophobic, or in any other way contradict our values. There are times when values conflict—when we are torn between a duty to oppose hate and a duty to protect free speech. As individuals, each of us can choose which value to put first, but as a state university, the law makes that choice for us. We cannot ban hurtful speech and expression on campus; we can only overcome it.

Part of the solution is to make our voices of acceptance so loud and our efforts toward inclusion so pervasive that there can be no questioning Cal Poly's stance of dignity and respect for all members of our community.

We hope and strive for a day when our campus no longer experiences actions that hurt or intimidate members of our community. This requires the ongoing and collective effort of every single student, faculty member, staff member, administrator, and alumni community member to take responsibility for upholding our values and keeping one another accountable through

educational and constructive action. I especially want to emphasize that it is not the burden of the groups who are the targets of hurtful actions to solve this problem or to keep the issue before our collective attention. These are the very members of our family who have had to endure systemic inequities throughout their lives. To our students who have been fortunate enough not to experience racism and hate throughout their lives, I ask you to honestly and deeply consider the perspectives of those who have. Again, I urge you to join me in making inclusion and diversity a reality for every member of our campus.

Together we will move forward and achieve this goal. And we won't stop trying until we do – it is my priority and promise to the campus community as president of Cal Poly.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Armstrong
President

Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Culture

- Last year, every member of the President's Cabinet participated in unconscious bias training and the university is requiring implicit bias training for all hiring committees, MPP and Confidential positions. In addition, we are strongly encouraging faculty and staff to participate in implicit bias training (we cannot make this mandatory for represented employees, but we can encourage it).
- In 2017, after discovering the Early Decision process disadvantaged low-income students, because they would not know the full extent of financial aid they qualified for prior to making a commitment, university administration made the decision to eliminate the Early Decision option.
 - It resulted in the most diverse incoming class in the history of Cal Poly.
- In recent years, the university established an Office of University Diversity and Inclusion (OUDI) to help us shift our campus culture and create a more diverse and inclusive environment supportive of all students.
 - The university created a new vice president and chief officer for diversity and inclusion position, reporting directly to the president and serving as a member of the president's cabinet. Jozi de Leon joined this position in 2017.
 - Through this VP position, the OUDI program director, an executive assistant, and three faculty associates, OUDI has the ability to effectively conduct outreach, serve on university committees and affect policy and process change.
- As one component of our efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion in a holistic way, Cal Poly is incorporating the Collective Impact Model. The idea is that no single policy, department, organization or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex problems we face as a society/university and that we must move forward with structured collaboration.
 - Our work on this began in 2017 with campuswide forums to introduce the Collective Impact Model to campus.
 - As a result, three strategy groups were created focusing on Campus Climate, Curriculum and Recruitment and Retention. These teams continue to meet and will provide short- and long-term recommendations related to their charges by June 2018. These recommendations will be reviewed by the university's Inclusive Excellence Council and implemented by OUDI through partnerships across campus.
- Recently, Student Affairs hired its first-ever assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion. The position oversees the implementation of a variety of programs and support for diverse students.
- The university's Week of Welcome orientation program now provides a Cross-Cultural Experience (CCE), which is devoted specifically to welcoming underrepresented minorities to campus.
- Student Affairs and OUDI have been incorporating additional diversity and inclusion topics and programming into all new student orientation programs.

- In support of undocumented students on campus, Student Affairs in 2017 opened a Dream Center and OUDI sponsored campuswide “UndocuAlly” workshops.
- Student Affairs has doubled the capacity of the university’s Cross-Cultural Centers (which include the Gender Equity Center, MultiCultural Center, and Pride Center) and expanded their events and educational offerings for students.
- The university created a Career Services Diversity Fund Committee that allocates funding to campus events related to diversity and inclusion. This program started this academic year.
- OUDI established an Equity Enrichment Fund to support opportunities for the Cal Poly community to learn, grow and professionally develop within areas of diversity and inclusion. The fund has provided financing to campus events and individual students attending diversity-focused professional development conferences.
- In the past year, the university’s colleges have begun establishing faculty and student diversity committees—and several colleges have created associate dean for diversity positions.
- OUDI is overseeing the BEACoN Mentor Network which matches faculty with underrepresented students for mentoring relationships and high-impact research engagement. This year, about 40 student/faculty mentoring relationships have been established and 16 paid research mentoring matches are underway.
- The university is creating and implementing an onboarding process for new Greek chapters that includes mandated education around diversity and inclusion.
- The university is working to launch a Greek chapter review process that engages each chapter in an in-depth look at the overall health of the organization along multiple vectors and provides recommendations for improvement.
- The Cross Cultural Centers’ Inclusive Excellence Institute is a campuswide initiative to create cohorts of social change agents. The institute offers attendees a series of 10 intensive sessions exposing students to theoretical perspectives (Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Queer Theory to name a few) and concrete methods for making positive change at Cal Poly.
- Student Affairs created the Center for Leadership.
 - A retreat for campus leaders this year brought 30 student leaders together to design action plans to increase inclusion on campus. Plans include using GE-required courses to address hate speech; creation of a peer-led inclusion and cultural awareness certification program on campus; and creation of a Mustang Mentorship pairing underrepresented students with mentors to increase their sense of belonging and support.
- The university hosts Black Alumni and Chicano/a Alumni chapters.
- Student Affairs fosters student activism by working with students and sending student leaders to conferences and workshops to help them foster their interest in social justice and moving Cal Poly forward.

- Through Student Affairs' Vantage Point Program, the offices of the President and the Vice President for Student Affairs jointly provide co-sponsorships to qualified individuals or groups for a variety of campus events and guest speakers. Many recipients use the funds to attend conferences to learn about social justice, civil discourse, and other diversity/inclusion matters. The program also funds speakers to come to campus to provide education on various topics — many of them related to diversity and social justice.
- Staff throughout University Housing (including student staff, live-in staff, custodial staff, programming staff, and management staff) participate in trainings on topics including social identities, bias, and micro-aggressions.
- Student Affairs and Kennedy Library collaborated to establish a multi-faith prayer and meditation room in May 2017.
- The university converted all possible single-stall restrooms on campus to all-gender restrooms. (In addition, all restrooms in the new yak?it'ut'u residential community will be gender neutral)

Recruitment

It is important to note that Proposition 209 prohibits the university from providing preferential treatment to faculty or students based on race, gender or ethnic origin. However, there are many things the university does within the limits of Prop 209 to help recruitment of students and faculty members from diverse backgrounds. These efforts include:

Students

- Cal Poly continues to recruit low-income first-generation students (the unfortunate reality is that many of these students are also underrepresented minorities) to increase diversity in the student population.
 - The change in student demographics supports this trend as the number of students identifying as Caucasian in 2011 (63 percent) has decreased in 2017 (55 percent).
- The university has developed the Cal Poly Scholars program that recruits low-income and first-generation students to attend Cal Poly by partnering with high schools that have a high percentage of these students.
- The university has proposed the creation of the Cal Poly Opportunity Grant, which would provide financial assistance for high-achieving, low-income California students who meet Cal Poly's rigorous academic admission requirements but can't afford to attend the university.
 - By serving a greater cross-section of California residents, the university can significantly increase diversity on campus and impact the campus culture. The grant is currently under consideration by the president.
- In conjunction with the California Community Foundation, Cal Poly has partnered with donors to directly support underrepresented minority students by providing high impact scholarships.

- These scholarships fund McCoy and Meritorious scholars on campus.

Faculty

- The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) successfully carried out a cluster hire of seven tenure-track faculty positions with a focus on academic areas related to diversity and inclusion across multiple disciplines.
- After the CLA effort, the university has proposed and received \$150,000 from the CSU for an Advancing Faculty Diversity Plan — a cluster hire of up to 10 faculty positions that focus on diversity and inclusion in a variety of scholarly areas throughout the university's six colleges.
- In consultation with OUDI, the Academic Personnel office revised campus procedures for recruiting tenure-track faculty to attract diverse candidates to Cal Poly; improve the university's ability to obtain diverse pools of highly qualified faculty candidates; advance diverse candidates in the interview process; and highlight our university's value of diversity and inclusive teaching.
- OUDI and Academic Personnel conduct training on hiring and implicit bias for all tenure-track faculty search committees, with the goal of developing deep and diverse applicant pools.
- Student Affairs has worked with Human Resources to expand its recruiting outreach efforts, create a talent pipeline of diverse candidates, enhance its onboarding programs to welcome diverse staff and expand professional development opportunities around diversity and inclusion.

Academic Affairs

- Updated the University Diversity Learning Objectives (DLO's)
- Carrying out a complete review of diversity courses and United States Cultural Pluralism courses to ensure they meet the required learning outcomes

Programmatic

- Multicultural Business Program in Orfalea includes an inclusive community for students by students where students are connected to community and resources. This program provides personal, academic and career development services for traditionally underserved and historically underrepresented minority students in the college, with a focus on community development.
- CAFES: New Minor: Agricultural Leadership – curriculum contains courses related to diversity and inclusion
 - CAFES Multicultural Agriculture Program (MAP) Center
 - New center director: Dianne Korth
- Queer Studies Minor approved and now included in the 2017-2019 catalog
- CTLT and OUDI host a complete "diversity in the curriculum" course each summer to assist faculty in enhancing diversity and inclusion in their curriculum. Their primary work

occurs in the summer with further work and activities carried out throughout the year and culminating in each faculty member completing a course offering.

- College of Liberal Arts: Hired Associate Dean for Diversity and Curriculum
- College of Science and Math: Hired Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion
- Other colleges have associate deans whose positions include diversity and inclusion as significant parts of their duties
- Colleges have established college diversity committees.
- CLA hired a multicultural advisor
- CLA: Development of templates for a "Diversity Statement" to be completed by candidates as part of the faculty hiring process.
- Developed and implemented Implicit Bias training for search committee members
- Enhanced/increased growth of the BEACON Mentor Network (Faculty mentoring students of color or from underserved groups in undergraduate research. Most of the faculty involved are diverse. Program is now run out of OUDI).e
- Faculty and staff launched the diversity and inclusion campaign Love, Empathy, Respect w/ the hashtag of #MustangsUNITED

Faculty

- OCOB has been focusing on increasing the diversity among our faculty. Several new faculty members hired in Accounting, Economics, Information Systems, Management, and Industrial Technology/Packaging during the past three or four years are female or from an ethnically diverse background.
- CAFES: 5 Recent hires that expand our capacity to address diversity and inclusivity in a specific disciplinary context: Dr. Greg Brown, Department Head in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. Social and Environmental Justice; Dr. Job Ubbink, Department Head in Food Science and Nutrition. Food Science; Dr. Jeta Rudi-Polloshka, Agricultural Business. Food Economics; Dr. Samir Amin, Food Science and Nutrition. Culinary and Product Development; Dr. Keri Schwab, Experience Industry Management, Social and Environmental Justice
- CSM: 5 new faculty of color hired in 2016-2017

What's still to come?

- OUDI's three Collective Impact Strategy Groups (focusing on Campus Climate, Curriculum, and Recruitment and Retention) will provide short- and long-term recommendations related to their charges by June 2018. These recommendations will be reviewed by the university's Inclusive Excellence Council and implemented by OUDI through partnerships across campus.
- Student Affairs is focused on improvement of student retention and graduation rates through additional academic, personal and financial support for vulnerable student populations: first-generation, low-income, transfer and foster youth.
 - These new high-impact practices will be data-informed and assessed regularly to ensure that these student populations are matriculating and achieving success through their college experiences.

- Student Affairs will focus on providing support to fledgling underrepresented student organizations attempting to charter and within their first year as an organization. (Current processes are challenging for smaller groups of students with little resources to become chartered. The Dean of Students Office wants to better understand the unique needs of these students and provide the necessary support to help them through the process.)
- The Dean of Students' Office is planning to provide support for more students to experience cultural immersion programs such as Alternative Breaks and Study Aboard, and to identify and remove barriers (including resources, awareness and access) that prevent students from taking part.