

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

Oakes College

1156 HIGH STREET
SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95064

January 8, 2016

Dear Oakes Community,

This past fall quarter, several acts of racism led to protests and other forms of social action, locally and across the country. With the winter quarter now upon us, we would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our continued commitment to, and advocacy for, the diversity in our community, in all its forms.

Protests for racial justice have occurred across institutions of higher education and are a reflection of the equity work that all colleges and universities need to do, including here at Oakes. We acknowledge the power student protests have had in disrupting racially oppressive institutionalized policies and practices against historically marginalized peoples – the very people who have been at the forefront of creating the vision of Oakes, past and present.

Striving for educational equity is a fundamental principle at Oakes College. We continuously reflect on our own practices and aim to enact a socially just educational experience. We work to create a critical multicultural community of scholars, practitioners and activists. We hire staff and faculty who are trained and dedicated to social justice education and activism. We envision the Oakes core course as a space for students to read, think, and write about social structures and how to transform them through collaborative action. Critical partnerships with other campus units, students, and community organizations are also central to our social justice work because they deepen understanding, provide multiple perspectives, lead to relevant and meaningful initiatives, and yield collective support systems for our community. For these reasons, Oakes staff, faculty, and student leaders serve as connections to campus resources and dedicate themselves to creating opportunities for students to become engaged in the leadership of the college.

Nevertheless, we recognize that there is more we can be doing. We also know that ideas are often better when groups come together to deliberate on them. For these reasons we are interested in hearing how Oakes might come together to discuss, learn, grow, and progress as a community. If you have an idea, please [click on this link](#) to share your response with us. All ideas are welcome as we seek to deepen our conversations as a community.

Social justice movements across the nation provide our Oakes family with unique opportunities to learn together and improve our individual and institutionalized efforts for social transformation.

We believe that social action is essential in communicating and progressing a stance against racism and all forms of violence. We commit to continuing our educational equity work with you as we further shape Oakes's vision and operate within a social justice framework.

Sincerely,

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