



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

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August 24, 2020

TO: Pan-Afrikan Council

FR: Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Chancellor

SUBJECT: Pan-Afrikan Council Meeting Initiatives responses – Presented on August 7, 2020

In response to the initiatives presented by the Pan-Afrikan Council during an August 7, 2020, we submit the following responses and look forward to continued collaboration and partnership. We affirm our commitment to valuing Black lives and ensuring that our excellence is inclusive.

Initiative #1: Black Research Fellowship

- Chancellor will provide \$10K for two fellowships from his discretionary funding to support the program for one year and then reassess its continuation and growth based on demonstrable outcomes.
- Faculty/Staff would submit research proposal ideas related to anti-blackness, racial justice, conditions of Black life, etc.
- EJI and EDI Offices will review submissions and make selections
- Faculty/Staff work with EJI to hire students
- An event to share findings with larger community.
- Chancellor will provide an additional \$7K from his discretionary funding to provide additional funding opportunities for research based internships through the Student Success Internship program exploring anti-blackness, racial justice, conditions of Black life, etc.

Initiative #2: Budget Transparency & Accessibility | Budget Cut Expectations from COVID-19

As we approach Fall, UC Merced expects to face significant COVID 19 related budget challenges and we expect the impact will last long after the pandemic ends. With just a fraction of our students in on-campus housing, alongside other factors, UC Merced will face significant losses in the years ahead.

Our budget is largely informed by the revenues we receive from state appropriations, tuition and fees. Because the situation is changing daily, our budget must be equally fluid, which is why we haven't published it yet, however we do expect to publish it this September. In terms of the financial outlook, we anticipate expected revenues from state appropriations, tuition and fees to be approximately \$320 million, down \$7 million from the prior year and \$11 million below what we expected from State Appropriations. With the completion of the 2020 project however, our costs have increased significantly, which has created a budget deficit of approximately \$85 million for FY 2020/21 of which \$40 million is associated with our Auxiliaries.

We are addressing our immediate expected deficit through meaningful cost reductions (position control, hiring and compensation freezes, etc.), utilization of cash reserves, and through debt issued by the University of California, Office of the President. Our overall commitment and philosophy are to preserve jobs to as much extent as possible which is why we received \$100 million in debt proceeds from UCOP which will be paid back over the next 6-10 years. These proceeds will be critical to helping us smooth out our anticipated deficits.

To date, we have received approximately \$14.0 million from the CARES Act of which, \$6.3 million was distributed to students in the form of emergency financial aid grants and we expect to distribute more in the future using our recently awarded Minority Serving Institution portion of the CARES Act funding. The remaining amount is focused on institutional costs related to significant changes in the delivery of instruction, supporting student success in the coming years, and recouping our COVID-19 related financial losses. We used a significant portion of these remaining funds to cover the refunds we provided to students for housing, food and other services we were no longer able to provide during the Spring and Summer terms.

To date, we have experienced \$13.5 million in losses since March, primarily within auxiliary services as we distributed refunds to students, but our current financial projections indicate future losses could reach as high as \$160 million over the next five years. Working capital will remain very tight in the years to come but with the infusion of debt proceeds, our current reserves and the support of the University of California, we believe we'll be able to continue to provide students with the same level of instructional support and the level of student services you've come to expect from us.

Initiative #3: Professional Development Resources for Black Students

- Over 30K has been allocated to the Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs to focus on Black student success and racial justice (professional development, retreats, programs and initiatives, etc.) Below highlight specific initiatives.
- Over 10k has been allocated to the Office of Student Involvement to focus on professional development grants for student clubs and organizations.
- \$7,500 Chancellor's Commitments for Black Excellence Retreat and Student Equity, Justice, and Inclusion Board

2020-2021 Black Excellence Retreat (\$2,500)

October Fall Retreat (\$1,250):

Nothing Without Intention: Coalition Building, Accountability, and the Demand for a Transformative Reset

Organizers: Lorene Fisher, Dr. Maria Martin, Pan-Afrikan Council Member

Budget Narrative:

Recognition for Organizers (spot awards, etc.): \$75/person (\$225)

Keynote and Facilitator (Sharon Johnson): (\$500)

Supplies: Postage, Book chapters/journal articles and reflection journal given to all participants...themes from book will be utilized in Spring retreat (\$425)

Black Excellence at UCM Pins to be mailed to participants: (\$100)

TOTAL: \$1,250

Participants:

Invites will go out to all Black students, staff, and faculty.

Platform:

Zoom will be used for the virtual retreat.

Time:

10:00am-4:00pm

March Spring Retreat (\$1,250):

The Glory is in Us: Centering Radical Healing, Critical Hope, and Sustainability into Practice

Organizers: Onar Primitivo, Dr. Whitney Pirtle, BGSA Member

Budget Narrative:

Recognition for Organizers (spot awards, etc.): \$75/person (\$225)

Keynote and Facilitator (Sharon Johnson): (\$500)

Supplies: Postage, Book chapters/journal articles and parting gift (\$525)

TOTAL: \$1,250

Participants:

Invites will go out to all Black students, staff, and faculty.

Platform:

Zoom will be used for the virtual retreat.

Time:

10:00am-4:00pm

2020-2021 Student Equity, Justice and Inclusion (EJI) Board (\$5,000)

The Student Equity, Justice, and Inclusion Board serves as an official student-led board through the Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs that works towards empowerment and improved conditions for structurally marginalized groups on and off campus. The purpose of this board is to support student led initiatives that foster a campus climate of inclusivity through intersectionality and to advocate for greater equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion at UC Merced through recommendations toward improved practice.

Suggested Roles and Responsibilities:

- Identify student EJI concerns through data, research, and campus collaborations (IRDS, EDI Office, DOS Office, etc.)
- Serve on campus search committees
- Facilitate the review, revision, and submission of the annual OSJIIP Student EDI Grant Program
- Make EJI campus recommendations to various stakeholders
 - Meet with Chancellor/VCSA/DOS/CDO/etc. each semester
- Create and lead student EJI initiatives/campaigns

Membership and Board Formation:

- OSJIIP Student Staff member will serve as the 2020-2021 EJI Board Lead (student will be compensated)
- Board Lead will work with Onar Primivito, Director of OSJIIP
- Board made up of Undergraduate and Graduate Students
- All members will be recognized (spot award, etc.)
- Application Process created by EJI Board Lead
- 10-12 students on board with intersectional interests (race and ethnicity, gender and sexual diversity, religious background, (dis)ability, or economic circumstances, immigrant status, etc.)
- Bi-monthly meetings

Budget Narrative:

Compensation for Organizers: \$75/person (\$1,000)

Initiatives and Campaigns: (\$3,000)

Supplies, Food, and Other Expenses: (\$1,000)

TOTAL: \$5,000

Incorporated Responses from [June 25, 2020 Associated Black Student Leaders Memorandum](#):

Proposal #2: Black Student Resource Center Expansion

Proposal #5: Increased Professional Development for Black Student Leaders

Proposal #6: Unity Initiative: Student Led Diversity and Equity Board

[Point of Contact]: Onar Primitivo, Director of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs

**The university is committed to expanding services and resources to support Black student success. The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Program's (OSJIIP) for example, aims to enhance the retention of our historically underserved scholars and to foster an inclusive campus environment for all by providing opportunities for holistic development, intersectional community building, and student agency.*

Immediate (Summer 2020)

- The Dean of Students Office and the Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Program's (OSJIIP) co-sponsored a Radical Healing Workshop (Sharon Johnson...June 5th).
- OSJIIP continues to have Virtual Healing Talks (will be ongoing through 2020-2021).
- Funding Support for all Cultural Clubs and Organizations
 - OSJIIP has received funding to allocate to student clubs/organizations addressing social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion efforts, ways to build coalition and community in the form of EDI grants, application criteria is in progress.
- The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Program's (OSJIIP) increased student staff to support EDI work (already allocated in 2020-2021 budget)
 - Received funding for six (6) student employees to assist with outreach, engagement and collect data related to student experiences and success.
 - Implementation of a Cultural/Resource Center Advisory Board foundations with on-going outreach with student leaders and multicultural student clubs/organizations to gathering information and recommendations.
- Black Book website development (OSJIIP graphic designer has been working directly with Vice Chancellor, Charles Nies).
- Continue to provide healing/community circles, caucus/identity spaces for student scholars.
- Actively support AFRO Hall Living Learning Community and collaborate with AFRO student club, and Residential Education ensuring concerns and needs are being addressed.

Short-term (2020-2021)

- Implementation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Student Advisory Board for the Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs (OSJIIP) and identify scholars, staff and faculty. This advisory board will inform different approaches and provide recommendations in moving social justice, equity and inclusion framework with the pillars and priorities of OSJIIP.
- Reactivate the Multicultural Student Council within Associated Students of UC Merced- ASUCM as one option, another is to create a student-led equity and diversity advisory board and initiate:
 - Create Focus groups to identify:
 - Mission & Vision
 - Committee make up
 - Advisory Board's role

- OSJIIP Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Grants-EDI (already allocated in 2020-2021 budget) are available for all multicultural student organizations to apply and collaborate with other student organizations that can address ways of coalition building, addressing campus climate and social justice. The process, application will be finalized for the grants to be available for Fall 2020.
- OSJIIP has received additional funding for AFRO Hall Living Learning Community providing additional resources for programming, professional development and community/coalition building.
- OSJIIP collaboration with Leadership, Career and Service providing leadership training and development for all the Black/African American organizations. In the past, such trainings and workshops were provided for each organization such as AFRO Hall retreat, BSU executive board leadership workshops, and consistent outreach.
- OSJIIP is committed to community engagement and provide space for ongoing meetings with our Black/African American scholars and leaders for continued assessment of current needs and experiences.
- The Office of Student Involvement will be initiating grants (that clubs and organizations can apply for) to help clubs and organizations with professional development, community engagement, and leadership.
- With a focus on equity and access, Student Affairs will continue to build/strengthen community partnerships and expand K-12 outreach (Summer Youth Academy, Bright Success Center, Community Engagement Center, Enrollment Management, etc.).
- Dr. Mari Harris has accepted a new position, Director of Extension Education Programs. Dr. Mari Harris's current work around equity and access and the recruitment of Black student leaders at UC Merced will be continuously supported and expanded by Student Affairs (Black student admit receptions, initiatives, staffing, etc.).
- The Pan-Afrikan Council will be consulted with any future conversations about space moves at they relate to the Black Student Resource Center. Dr. Nies will notify students when these conversations begin.

Long-term (2021+)

- Creation of a Black Student Resource Center as a Retention Center (ongoing conversations stakeholders such as the Dean of Students and Bright Success Center). Students will play a pivotal role in the construction of this. Retention initiatives in cultural/affinity spaces is critical as a campus committed to the wholistic development of the student scholar. Cultural/affinity spaces moving forward will look at best practices such as the "Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement."
 - Cognitive Factors
 - Institutional/Systemic Factors
 - Social Factors
- Cultural/Resource Advisory Boards
 - Create Multicultural Center, LGBTQ+/Pride Center, Graduate Cultural Resource Center & Black Student Resource Center (Pan African Council) advisory boards by Dec 2020

- Social Justice Quad located between Kolligian Library and COB2- As part of 2020 Project and from previous focus groups with multicultural student organizations and graduate students, this area of campus can focus on programming, community building, multicultural events and tabling; e.g.: Cultural Night showcasing our multicultural student clubs and organizations showcased their culture and scholars having the opportunities to socialize and connect.
- Hiring of Full Time Employee-FTE Professional Staff member serving as a resource to the Black/African American student population
 - From OSJIIP , currently have Lorene Fisher, Coordinator of Womxn’s Programs and Social Justice Initiatives as the lead contact staff member and Onar Primitivo, Director of OSJIIP both committed to Black Excellence

Initiative #4: Increase the Hiring of Black Faculty, Staff, and Senior Administrators

(Senior Administrators and Faculty Responses incorporated from 8/17/20 Responses to H/CRES petition)

Senior Administrators Response:

We acknowledge that the representation of senior administrators of color, including Black/African American senior administrators, should be increased. When vacancies and new opportunities are anticipated, we will invest the necessary resources to increase access for potential leaders. Examples of efforts include but are not limited to: focused outreach to professional associations and networks; engaging current colleagues of color to assist with outreach and networking planning and efforts; and listing position announcements in specific publications that have demonstrated success in connecting with senior administrators of color.

In addition, we will assess our current recruitment and hiring practices with the goal of minimizing bias in hiring processes, mandating training for search committees, and ensuring that committees and review teams are more diverse and representative of our community’s diverse population.

Applicant pools for positions will be more carefully screened to ensure that they offer increased gender and ethnic diversity. The office of equity, diversity, and inclusion will develop enhanced trainings, resources and modules to assist search committees in identifying applicants that represent greater gender and ethnic diversity.

Moreover, the Office Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will be asked to develop an assessment strategy to better track and measure outcomes and progress related to this expectation. To that end, a new Deputy Diversity Officer position has been approved and will be tasked with monitoring this general area for opportunities and improvements.

Faculty Response:

Our desire to hire Black faculty remains a priority, and we acknowledge that we need and want more Black faculty at UC Merced.

We are gathering data specific to faculty diversity hires over time and will share once we have it.

The Provost, with support from the Chancellor, will commit to supporting additional opportunity hires that will endeavor to increase the percentage of Black faculty.

Related to the hiring process, we are taking active steps to ensure that Affirmative Action reporting occurs at the department level. Our Senate Diversity and Equity (D&E) Committee has crafted useful guidelines for departmental affirmative action (AA) reporting that go beyond tallying number of hires and separations. D&E asks for reporting about departmental climate as well as efforts to retain diverse faculty; we will ensure that such efforts center anti-racism to affect systemic change. These guidelines will sharpen or augment current efforts.

The Vice Provost for Faculty (VPF) office, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) office and school deans will work with the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost to advise departments on how to implement AA guidelines in academic year 2020-21. Each department is already developing a set of diversity goals in the context of departmental missions and strategic planning efforts. These will align with federal AA policies and with Academic Personnel Manual guidelines on maintaining departments that are “hospitable to creativity, diversity and innovation.” In the end, this collective effort will result in AA as an integral part of departmental operations.

Because retaining Black faculty is as important as hiring them, we will continue to collaborate with the Academic Senate, including Divisional Council, D&E and Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom (FWAF) to promote an inclusive climate for all faculty, in keeping with our [Principles of Community](#). We already have some initiatives, such as the faculty peer mediation program, to help address climate issues and are working with campus partners to help inform faculty of services we provide to resolve conflicts in departments or classrooms before they escalate. The VPF Office will continue offering workshops and events to support under-represented faculty, including mentoring programs and faculty learning communities.

Staff Response:

Similar to our efforts with Senior Administrators, we will have focused outreach to professional associations and networks; engaging current colleagues of color to assist with outreach and networking planning and efforts; and listing position announcements in specific publications that have demonstrated success in connecting with people of color.

In addition, we will assess our current recruitment and hiring practices with the goal of minimizing bias in hiring processes, mandating training for search committees, and ensuring that committees and review teams are more diverse and representative of our community’s diverse population.

In partnership with the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Human Resources will be developing a Staff Equity Advisor Program throughout the University. These Equity

Advisors leverage their direct experience with local culture and climate to advise their supervisors in terms of strategy, policy, training, climate, and accountability.

Roles and responsibilities will vary; however, many Equity Advisors play an important role in staff training, monitoring the staff search and other hiring processes, improving climate, and consulting on matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Although Equity Advisors report directly to their supervisors they will also work closely with and provide invaluable advice to the Associate Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer as well as the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Initiative #5: Increase Support of the Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Field of Education

Background and Initial Analysis of African American Hiring

Our recent Black faculty hires:

- Maria Martin (2018) (History/CRES)
- Sabrina Smith (2018) (History/CRES)
- Thelma Hurd (2019) (Public Health)
- Tracey Osborne (2020) (Management)
- Christina Baker (2020) (History/CRES)
- Nicosia Shakes (2020) (History/CRES)

We have one more who will start in January, and another with whom we are still negotiating, both in the School of Natural Sciences.

Please note that History/CRES has hired at the fastest rate of any department on campus the past 3 hiring cycles, substantially because I have authorized multiple hires from two searches, each time yielding two new Black faculty.

Regarding additional faculty for CRES, while we acknowledge that the dedicated CRES courses usually run at maximum capacity, the entire slate of CRES cross-listed courses run at about the campus average of 85%. With two new dedicated CRES faculty—Baker and Shakes—beginning this fall semester, CRES should be able to manage its current majors without difficulty. As CRES grows, we will add more faculty to manage the demand.

First and foremost, it is the faculty's opinion, that if UCM wants to meet these demands, the fundamental necessity is to invest in CRES and other areas with permanent resource allocations: faculty lines and space. It is not likely that a speaker series or temporary measures have the power to meet the depth of institutional change.

Some points that will be addressed below:

- Intercultural Competence, Connections, and Consciousness
 - Making yourselves more culturally aware
 - Avoiding future discrepancies in our respective fields of work while dismantling the ones that already exist

- Class Availability
 - Every year, we see an increase in students that are either interested in CRES courses or choose to major in that field. However, there aren't nearly enough seats available in required classes for those students to take.

- Allowing a well-rounded and diversified education for all students on campus

In terms of that investment, especially the question about CRES class offerings, we need more FTE. The other short-term solutions (raising class sizes or teaching more Spark) are problematic. Raising enrollment ceilings is difficult -- it compromises the nature of the teaching and the intimacy of the classroom which is essential to the kind of work we ask CRES students to do -- to analyze, be self-critical, challenge themselves, and build trust. So, the better solution at the UD level would be more classes offered, not more people in the room. Also, if we add more Spark, we won't be able to serve the rest of the students, as Spark teaching will eat up the class offerings of our newly hired faculty. Given that we expect demand to increase, an FTE investment is the only sustainable solution. We are happy to help in the short term, but we need a permanent investment for long term solutions.

On that front, we don't do independent ethnic groups in CRES. The vision of our major and the commitment of our faculty is to teach CRES across the experiences of racialized people in the US and the world. Consequently, to increase the robustness of CRES presence on campus, the need is to allocate FTE and space to CRES.

To address point 1, on Cultural Competency:

We see this as an issue that goes beyond CRES as a department, and instead touches the overall content of the UCM-wide curricular offerings, programming, and institutional culture. We have 2 suggestions on this front:

1. We suggest a broad, non-CRES specific cluster-hiring initiative in Africana Studies and Environmental Justice. These cluster hires could serve potential majors/minors in Africana Studies (we are interested in this) and Environmental Justice (work is underway by faculty on this). Moreover, this would allow UCM to hire faculty of color and augment curricula in all 3 schools to focus more on issues of race and racism beyond SSHA – imagine what a more robust curriculum in biology with faculty who study issues related to African and African Diaspora communities. Or environmental justice faculty who bring a critical lens to building design etc. This would broaden the University's base in addressing these questions across all 3 schools and modes of academic inquiry. This would be substantive and not limited to CRES.

Note that a cluster hire of 4 African American scholars was requested last year and the Provost graciously allotted two.

2. A Center for Antiracism. This would be a central node for student- and community-facing interaction. It would of course be tied to faculty and research as well. Rather than something

for one group or “diversity”, this would be an institutional commitment to addressing antiracism. This could include planning classes (with faculty), student and community events, sponsoring research, etc. This would require space, a dedicated staff, and permanent budget for programming, scheduling, social media, etc. Probably also some joint faculty leadership. The idea would be to serve the entire campus and area community. We reiterate this goes beyond the boundaries of the CRES curriculum to issues (social justice, public health, science studies, etc.) that go beyond the CRES major to serve the whole community. This again would be a landmark center for campus, demonstrate an institutional commitment to antiracism, and serve as a vital node for students and the community.

Note: We have been having discussions with the Chancellor, Provost and others about a social justice center that might include the above components.

Some additional comments:

- We are interested in developing an African/Africana Studies minor/major.
- Thematic Sparks are good, but if on load they are an exchange for upper division offerings, so we simply serve one group of students rather than another without increasing capacity.

Initiative #6: Disarm the UCM PD and Divest from both the Merced Police Department and Sheriff’s Office ([incorporated from 8/17/20 Responses to H/CRES petition](#))

Context:

The UCM PD prides itself on being a different kind of police department, yet it has already killed one student on campus in 2015. There are other less lethal options that police officers can use for engaging threats.

Response:

The UCM Police Department has had very few use of force incidents in its 15-year history. Most involved the arrest of non-affiliates on and off campus. “Use of force” is broadly defined under UC regulations to include any action involving application of force such as handcuffing or restraining an individual. We do not believe that disarming the UC Merced Police is the appropriate measure to address the safety of our community. While we have very few instances where the use of force is necessary, the UC Merced Police are sworn law enforcement officers who respond, as needed, on campus and within the community during acts of violence. Moreover, there have been instances on and near all UC campuses in which officers were confronted by armed individuals, including some whose intent was to attack students and faculty. Given these responsibilities, UC Merced Police officers are trained and equipped to deal with a multitude of situations. The University of California Police Department as a whole operates under statutory authority and department policy that authorizes which specific equipment is allowed. Per the Robinson-Edley Report recommendations, the UC Council of

Police Chiefs annually authorize the type of equipment that is acceptable. Finally, there are legal requirements and Cal OSHA regulations that necessitate that officers be properly equipped.

As discussed in the July 2020 Regents' meeting on the [University of California Presidential Task Force on University wide Policing](#) there are additional consequences associated with disarming campus police departments. If our campus does not employ sworn police officers who carry authorized weapons, the County Sheriff, who has concurrent jurisdiction with the UC Merced Police Department, will be the primary law enforcement agency to respond to incidents on campus that pose a threat to the campus (such as an armed assailant), resulting in longer response times and risk to the safety and property of students, staff, faculty and the University. We believe that the local city police or Sheriff's interactions with our student population will not be grounded in our educational mission and community policing principles.

- Should students, staff or faculty become aware of training that would be effective for our police officers, we encourage these suggestions to be submitted to the **UC Merced Police Advisory Board**. We commit to reviewing and implementing recommended improvements to our officer training program (Fall 2020).

Overall, the UC Merced Police Department has received few community complaints about its policing. All external complaint investigations not arising from within the department (*i.e.* personnel actions) are listed on the UCMPD website: <https://police.ucmerced.edu/Commendations-Complaints>.

Recent results from the annual [AY19-20 UCMPD Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey, conducted in March of 2020](#), indicates overall positive interactions with the UC Merced Police Department. The results of an independent ASUCM led survey in February 2020 are consistent with these results (data available upon request).

Some signatories of the faculty petition have pointed to long-standing complaints of racist behavior by the UC Merced Police Department. We are committed to developing a means for individuals to bring forward their concerns outside of the formal complaint process to allow individuals that do not want to bring a complaint to nonetheless have a means of identifying these issues. We support additional visibility, discussion and accountability around these issues.

- We will initiate an independent, well-publicized anonymous hotline for the entire community so these concerns can be shared safely and addressed promptly (Fall 2020).

We encourage individuals to file any formal complaints about individual police officers through the complaint form on the Police Department website or the new system-wide complaint hotline to ensure formal investigation as potential violations of UC policy. These complaints may also be filed anonymously.

Finally, although the [UC Merced Police Advisory Board](#) (PAB) is organized and operates in a manner consistent with the report of the [University of California Presidential Task Force on University wide Policing](#), our campus PAB has suffered from lack of engagement by faculty and

the perception that our PAB has less independence than is needed to fulfill its mission and effect change.

- The MOU also commits to an external review of the UC Merced Police Department to be conducted from an equity and justice framework. (Short-term Spring 2021)

Because the petition specifically mentions the one fatal use of police force on our campus, we would like to address the circumstances in that instance. In November 2015, a student armed with a large hunting knife entered a classroom after the class had commenced and attacked in an attempt to kill one of his classmates. After his plan was disrupted by other students, he proceeded out of the classroom building to return to his dormitory where he had planned to attack and kill two additional students. He attacked a worker in the hallway and two individuals in the plaza outside of the Lantern, including one person who suffered life-threatening injuries from a knife wound that punctured her lung. Two police officers intervened as the student was headed over to Scholar's Lane Bridge while students were walking up Scholar's Lane to classes. When confronted by the officers, he turned and approached them with the knife raised, ignoring numerous orders to drop the knife. When he was within 8 to 10 feet with his knife raised he was shot in the side. He continued to move toward the officers and was shot a second time and killed. The witness accounts from the individuals on the Bridge at the time confirm this account. These accounts are publicly available.

The level of force used against the student assailant was found by an independent review board to be appropriate given the facts of the incident, and was consistent with training provided to sworn police officers. We disagree that this incident constituted an inappropriate use of force. The police officer followed the training he had received and acted in a manner consistent with the level of threat to the students and employees on the Bridge, as well as his own safety.

The records of the November 2015 use of force incident were provided to the family of the student and subsequently made publicly available under the Public Records Act. The records, including the witness statements and information about the intended targets, substantiate the circumstances of the use of force. The University has not previously discussed the incident publicly given the sensitive information about the student that the records contain. The student's family took legal action to prevent certain of this information from being made public, given the negative public reaction to their son's action and the harassment they subsequently endured. The University worked with the family's legal representatives and the family itself during the period after the incident, and during their attempt to protect the records of their son's actions. Moreover, to avoid re-traumatizing the victims of the crime, the University has refrained from discussing the details of the attack; however, the records may be reviewed by anyone interested in assessing the circumstances of the use of force.

Context:

We need to seriously consider what functions of the UCM PD are actually necessary and whether they can be better embodied in civilian organizations not rooted in a long history of institutionalized violence against the people of color who make up the vast majority of our

student body. Reflexive reliance on police powers to deal with problems in our community is an outdated and dangerous approach, and UC Merced can and should do better.

Response:

We agree that there are functions that we could shift away from the UC Merced Police Department. Actions in this regard that have already been identified are outlined in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the University and various student groups, including reviewing current polices/practices and making recommendations for alternative approaches to specific activities (*e.g.*, RA training, faculty processes, 5150s, mutual aid, and reliance on UCMPD in Housing and classroom incidents) (Summer 2020)

The UC Merced Police Department currently operates under the Department of Public Safety umbrella. The UC Merced Police Department currently has the minimum standard staffing, that has two officers per shift to cover the campus, Castle, Promenade, the Downtown Center, the Olive Warehouse, the Fresno building, and off- campus events.