

RESPONSE FROM UC IRVINE TO 61 ORGANIZATIONS

From: Douglas M. Haynes

Subject: Honoring Free Speech and Promoting Inclusive Excellence at UCI

Date: May 21, 2018 at 9:51:37 AM PDT

To: Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

Dear Dr. Rossman-Benjamin,

Thank you for your letter and our continuing conversation about the importance of free speech. I am responding on behalf of Chancellor Gillman.

As you mentioned, the Chancellor is a national thought leader on free speech and consistently advocates equal protection of all students to express ideas. He issues a [free speech letter](#) to students at the start of the academic year and has formally issued [statements](#) against hate, particularly actions affecting our Jewish community.

Regarding the incident on May 3, I believe it may be helpful to provide an overview of what transpired beyond the video shared with the media. When we learned that Reservists on Duty would participate in the College Republicans meeting, which was open to the public, our Constructive Engagement Team proactively met with the club's president to discuss how potential disruptions should be addressed. It was agreed that representatives from UCI's student affairs and police departments would be stationed outside the meeting room to respond to disruptions should they occur. These representatives responded immediately once they heard chanting from the room. Police escorted the eight disrupters from the room within minutes and required that they stay behind a do-not-cross line outside. Although their chanting continued and could be heard in the room, the meeting continued without interruption. The eight left peacefully when the program ended on schedule and all of the meeting's attendees were able to exit without incident.

As we know, protecting free speech is difficult but necessary in order to advance the mission of our university. In fact, both the College Republican president and a reservist acknowledged that those who disrupted the meeting should be allowed to express their views, despite the message.

Your request for a statement that emphasizes the protection of free speech will be accommodated this fall, as classes begin, in our Chancellor's annual letter to students. This will continue to be supplemented by frequent notifications about our policies and activities related to harassment and discrimination, coordinated by a variety of offices throughout the UCI campus. My [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#) is one of many, including the Chancellor's, that addresses these issues on a regular basis. Please know that I am available to speak with you by phone.

We appreciate your interest in UCI and the well-being of our students.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Haynes

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