

UC SANTA BARBARA

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## **A message from UC President Michael V. Drake: Working together toward inclusive excellence**

UC Office of the President

October 2, 2024

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The fall term is well underway at the University of California and we welcome our students, faculty, and staff to a new academic year. We are part of a truly vibrant community, home to a wide diversity of thought, identity, belief, and people. We recognize and indeed cherish our responsibility to honor our free speech traditions. We are resolute in our commitment to cultivating academic spaces of intellectual curiosity and moral courage.

This past year has been unusually challenging in many ways. The impact of the war in the Middle East is deeply felt in communities across the world, including ours, and this international conflict continues to evolve. We have witnessed seemingly endless waves of violence and death, images so horrible that they would have exceeded our imaginations a year ago. We hope desperately for a swift and lasting end to the war.

We understand that many in our University community — students, faculty, staff and others — seek to share their views and stand up for what they believe, on this as well as other issues. That is understandable and appropriate. We know that violence and upheaval that happen in other parts of the world often affect our very own community members in profound ways.

We hold innumerable diverse and even conflicting opinions, and we have well-worn and long-held policies to help create a space for us to share our ideas and our concerns; we are simultaneously and steadfastly committed to protecting the safety of everyone in our community. We all deserve to feel supported in our ability to express ourselves while also pursuing our studies, research, work, medical care, and other endeavors. No one in our community should be left feeling fearful, unsafe, or excluded.

All of us have important roles to play in building and maintaining this space. An important step is recommitting ourselves to our Principles of Community and familiarizing ourselves with our codes of conduct, processes for how to report a problem, and where to find support. Much of this information is available on [a new systemwide campus climate webpage](#), which includes links to campus-specific information.

As we move forward, let us strive to be our best selves. We can listen and learn from others even if we are not convinced by their arguments. We can disagree without resorting to harsh or disrespectful rhetoric. And we can continue to pursue our common aspirations—including working together to help create and model a society that is built on the tenets of inclusion and mutual respect.

The University of California is a community like no other — one that feeds the creativity and wholeness of our society. We must all do what we can to protect this rare resource. We must all strive to be empathetic and respectful of others, even when we disagree with them. And we must all work together to nurture an environment of inclusive excellence.

I wish you all an engaged, safe, and productive year ahead.

Fiat Lux,

Michael V. Drake, M.D.

President

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.