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Bicycle safety gets major boost with collaborative new effort led by Associated Students

With a new academic year set to begin, thousands of students have now returned to UC Santa Barbara, bringing energy, excitement … and bikes. So many bikes. The campus's vibrant biking culture is one of its strengths, but it's not without its stresses, as anyone who's tried to cross a bike path in between classes can attest.

To alleviate concerns and ensure safety for all who traverse campus — pedestrians, cyclists, et al — Associated Students (A.S.), Administrative Services, Transportation & Parking Services (TPS) and UCPD are partnering on a new bike safety campaign.

"The goal of this initiative is to promote a culture of bike etiquette and safety across campus, reduce the number of cyclist/pedestrian collisions on the walkways, and to improve accessibility overall," stated Anthony Woo and Rita Kharadjian, co-chairs of the A.S. Bike Committee.

The central focus of the campaign is education over enforcement. Though there will be more of that, too.

After an extended pause that began during the pandemic, UCPD will once again be issuing citations for bicycle infractions. However, anyone cited can avoid a formal traffic violation and a fine by completing a self-administered online training module,

developed by A.S. Bike Committee, via TPS. If not completed within 30 days, the citation will be referred back to UCPD for processing.

To alert cyclists that riding on sidewalks is not permissible, informational signage reminding riders to walk bikes when not on the bike paths has been installed at key locations on campus. Signage also is in place on Henry T. Yang Drive, formerly Mesa Road, where bicyclists are prohibited between Ocean Road and Steck Circle. (The section of that drive from Los Carneros to Ocean Road is designated as a shared vehicular and bicycle facility.)

“With thousands of bicyclists on campus, and the start of a new academic year, we hope to facilitate an obstacle free environment where pedestrians and bicyclists can coexist on campus in a safe and harmonious manner,” said UCPD Interim Chief Matthew Bly. “We recognize the variety of benefits that come from such a large portion of our campus community choosing methods of transportation other than driving, and we aim to provide them with guidance on legal and hazard free pathfinding. We hope our efforts result in a campus where all community members can consistently get to their destinations without creating, or being harmed by, transportation based public safety hazards.

To that end, the A.S. Bike Committee has a long-term goal to restore the bike path in the corridor between UCSB Library and the Interactive Learning Pavilion, and has been meeting regularly with campus administrators to get it done. That project, according to the committee co-chairs, is now underway, in pre-construction.

“We see this as the most impactful way to improve safety and mitigate our community’s frustration with inadequate biking infrastructure,” said Woo and Kharadjian. “We hope that restoring this route for cyclists will greatly reduce the number of people riding in pedestrian areas, therefore reducing the amount of ticketing and police-student interaction on campus.”

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About UC Santa Barbara

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