

June 18, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

As the academic year comes to a close, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your invaluable contributions during what has been a very difficult year. Despite the challenges we have faced, I have no doubt that UC Santa Barbara will continue to thrive, thanks to your tremendous scholarly achievements and your unwavering commitment to our students.

It is this commitment to our students that prompts my writing today. In my letter last week regarding safety improvements in Isla Vista, I discussed the important role that we as faculty members can play in the lives of our students beyond the classroom.

With the goal of promoting faculty-student engagement off campus — and specifically in Isla Vista — I am launching a new initiative. I'd like to ask you to consider inviting a group of students who live in IV to join you on occasion for dinner in Isla Vista. Interacting with students in that setting will not only allow for us to get to know our students better in their living environment, beyond our classrooms, library, and laboratories on campus, but also to show them that we are interested in their lives off campus. It might also offer opportunities for us to begin to understand and address in depth some of the problems we are identifying in Isla Vista during nights and weekends.

To support this project, we are raising private support to make resources available to cover the cost of these events. We hope to have funds and details in place by the beginning of fall quarter. I will be consulting with our Academic Senate and administrative colleagues, as well as with faculty, staff, and students, on the details of this initiative.

This initiative is one of many I hope our campus community will explore in an effort to engage with students and encourage them to consider more wisely the choices they make when they are not on campus. I look forward to hearing any ideas you may have.

Again, I offer my sincerest thanks for all you do individually and collectively on behalf of the University and our community.

Sincerely,
Henry