

Statement in Response to CA Mass Shootings Regarding Community Violence

This statement was written in response to the mass shootings that took place on January 21, 2023, and January 23, 2023 in the state of California.

Over the span of the two aforementioned dates, two different mass shootings occurred across California. The first was a mass shooting in Monterey Park, CA which claimed the lives of 12 people, wounding 9 others. The victim's names were Ming Wei Ma, Mymy Nhan, Diana Man Ling Tom, Xiujuan Yu, Valentino Marcos Alvero, Yu-Lun Kao, Hongying Jian, Wen-Tau Yu, Chia Ling Yau, Muoi Dai Ung, and LiLan Li.

The second shooting occurred in Half Moon Bay, CA, which claimed the lives of 7 people, and wounded 1 other. The victims' names were Yetao Bing, Qizhong Cheng, Zhishen Liu, Jingzhi Lu, Marciano Martinez Jimenez, Jose Romero Perez, and Aixiang Zhang.

The Graduate and Professional Student Association of the University of California, San Diego (GPSA) is the official representative body of over 8,000 graduate and professional students at UC San Diego. In response to recent events in the past month throughout the state of California, outlined above, the GPSA offers its sincerest thoughts and condolences to the victim's families, as this tragedy marks the most recent event in the continuation of violence and hate within the American community. The country is a society made up of various identities and beliefs, and the continuation and protection of those identities and beliefs should always be of the highest priority.

This event also highlights the importance of the conversation around gun violence in the context of American society. The discourse around these violent acts should not only be reserved for the moments of these atrocities but should be an ongoing discussion concerning the long-standing socio-economic, identity-based, and mental health concerns that lead to these tragedies taking place. Furthermore, only focusing on conversations around mass shootings fails to address gun violence arising from domestic violence and community violence, each of which has its own socio-economic and identity-based implications. Without addressing the larger picture at hand in an actionable manner, this vicious cycle will continue to be perpetuated for years to come with no change in behavior or policy, leading to the further detriment of the wider American society.

In light of these recent actions, GPSA looks to not only mourn and offer our thoughts on these tragedies, but also establish the following commitments and calls to action for the UCSD community.

We, GPSA, commit to the following new and ongoing actions:

1. Push for the expansion of mental health support systems such as CAPS and Case Management such that mental health is cared for in a holistic manner that meets students where they are. This includes identity-based support that is sensitive to the different needs of students from different backgrounds.

2. Ask that the UCSD administration implements a campus-wide active shooter drill, potentially as part of graduate student orientation, such that students know how to respond to such events in a way that maximizes their safety.
3. Encourage students to support each other and themselves through healthy stress-management strategies.
4. Ask that UCSD implement support for those experiencing domestic and community violence, especially for acts of domestic and community violence incidents that occur at Graduate and Family Housing, run by Housing, Dining, and Hospitality.
5. Partner with CAPS and campus community centers to create spaces that facilitate student reflection on the climate of the University and the Country and that foster healthy allyship between communities of all backgrounds.
6. Extend all possible support to CAPS and the campus community centers to provide and maintain spaces for students belonging to impacted communities as they negotiate their experiences of the University and the Country.
7. Maintain dialogues of student representatives with various campus entities charged with responding to incidents of hate and discrimination on campus so that they are held accountable to the student community.
8. Ensure that UCPD is made aware of student concerns and is held accountable for acting on this feedback to ensure that instances of concern are properly resolved.

We urge our faculty to:

1. Check in with graduate students and create a safe space for conversations about violence generally and gun violence specifically, with the aim to acknowledge the systemic factors, whether they be socioeconomic, racial, gender-based, or otherwise, that cause these events to occur. This echoes our previous call to action for faculty in our [2020 statement in response to the murder of George Floyd](#).
2. Recognize that your students, your teaching assistants, and your researchers are struggling with these events. Grant them compassion and leniency to enable their academic success in this time of great distress. This too echoes our previous call to action for faculty in our [2020 statement in response to the murder of George Floyd](#).
3. Push for access to active shooter drills for faculty so that faculty are as equipped as possible for emergency situations and responses.
4. Demand and, when possible, create stronger and more effective systems of accountability for protection of students in a system that resists accountability and dehumanizes graduate students for their labor. This includes providing mentees opportunities to evaluate their mentors and programs and providing anonymous reporting systems to address student concerns.
5. Demand and, when possible, by those qualified, create better mentorship training that is more sensitive to the individual backgrounds and needs of students under their leadership and dependent on them for support.
6. Re-evaluate the purpose and structure of UC San Diego's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion requirements and pedagogies to ensure that courses are effective, meaningful, and up to date with recent events.

We request that the Administration:

1. Review, with full transparency, and recognize the systematic practices within our University that perpetuate intolerance, discrimination, marginalization, and bigotry towards the student body.
2. As the main decision-making apparatus at UCSD, commit to fully supporting CAPS and the campus community centers as they build and maintain spaces for student well-being and support, both generally and specifically.
3. Ensure that faculty, staff, and students have the ability to protect themselves as best as possible via active shooter drills and by establishing safety mechanisms via investment in both infrastructure and non-law enforcement personnel, such as Triton CORE.
4. Develop stronger accountability mechanisms on campus by requiring evaluation of mentors and teachers from an EDI perspective, provide the necessary resources and autonomy to the Office of Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination, and provide resources to campus offices and centers for addressing the background conditions that lead to domestic and community violence.
5. Partner with faculty and students to re-examine UCSD's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies and requirements surrounding student mental health and academic well-being such that students feel supported and engaged in meaningful ways that are contextualized by recent events.

Finally, we encourage all members of the graduate and professional student community to actively engage with our political system, whether through voting, political activism, or personal education. Voting remains one of the most powerful acts a citizen can do in order to enact the change they hope to see, but it can be supplemented by a variety of political activities which can be shaped to meet that individual's ability and available resources.

In solidarity,

Giulia Corno, President

Emma Spillman, Chief of Staff

Peter "PJ" Wilborn, Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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