
Fwd: A Message of Gratitude

1 message

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To: pb919@georgetown.edu

Sat, Apr 4, 2020 at 4:33 PM

Begin forwarded message:

From: Carol Christ Chancellor <CALmessages@berkeley.edu>
Subject: A Message of Gratitude
Date: March 20, 2020 at 7:54:18 PM EDT
To: calmessages_communication@lists.berkeley.edu



Chancellor's Office

Dear Campus Community,

As we head into spring break, I would like to take a moment to express my deep gratitude to each and every one of you for helping our campus navigate the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the course of just a few weeks, the rapid spread of the virus into the Bay Area has turned a relatively normal Berkeley semester upside down. To slow the rate of infection and keep our community safe, we canceled in-person gatherings and asked instructors to move hundreds of classes out of lecture halls and onto the internet. Researchers were directed away from their labs and encouraged to think creatively about what work they could do from home. Staff took on new responsibilities as they shepherded our campus through a period of incredible change. And students endeavored to keep up their studies, undeterred by new class formats and without the support of nearby friends and mentors.

These transitions would have been monumental on their own, but their effects have been compounded by the upheavals taking place throughout society. Many of us are now playing the role of full-time teacher to our children or grandchildren, unexpectedly sharing homes with our parents, turning kitchen tables into office or study spaces, and adapting to other transformations in our ways of life. The effects of the outbreak are uneven, too, exposing disparities based on age, wealth, living situation, access to childcare, access to food, and more. Beneath daily disruptions lie greater worries about the virus itself, and the lasting effects this pandemic may have on our world.

Given the context, the efforts you are making to keep our community safe and our academic enterprise moving forward are nothing short of heroic. I want to thank you, on behalf of our whole campus and from the bottom of my heart.

In a 2009 book, Berkeley alum and author Rebecca Solnit set out to uncover how local communities responded when faced with catastrophic events like the 1985 Mexico City earthquake or 2005's Hurricane Katrina. She found that out of chaos and grief there often emerged, paradoxically, a profound spirit of generosity, connection, and collective purpose. During dark times, she wrote, we

tend to become more supportive of those around us, more understanding, more giving and forgiving, and more in touch with our common humanity.

This phenomenon is now taking shape right in front of our eyes. I see it when our staff bring cookies from canceled events to workers providing essential services to the campus. I see it in the way our teaching listservs buzz with instructors sharing tips on improving digital pedagogy. I see it in the relentlessness of our biomedical researchers, who are working nonstop to develop diagnostics, vaccines, and treatments for COVID-19. I see it in the huge outpouring of support we've received from alumni to our [student emergency fund](#). I see it in the fact that campus offices are coming together for digital happy hours at the close of a long work day. I see it in the creative ways our students are using technology to keep in touch, building strong bonds even in a time of turmoil.

We are in the midst of a disruption unlike any in recent memory, but I am so proud and grateful to see such a spirit of community emerge even in spite of that. Though our friends and colleagues may appear only on a screen, and though our memories of a lively campus - the bustle of Memorial Glade on a sunny afternoon, the coziness of the Morrison Reading Room on a dark evening - feel far away, we are nevertheless keeping our sense of Berkeley alive through these many acts of love, generosity, and connection-building.

I am certain that our old way of life will come back, and promise to keep you informed as we learn more about how and when this will occur. For now, please be vigilant about protecting your health and the health of others. Work hard and study hard. This too shall pass, and when it does, we will return to Berkeley and each other with an even greater appreciation of what our wonderful community represents.

Thank you for everything you do for our institution.

Sincerely,

Carol Christ
Chancellor

This message has also been sent to all UC Berkeley faculty, staff and students.

If you are a manager who supervises UC Berkeley employees without email access, please circulate this information to all.

Please do not reply to this message

The logo for the University of California, Berkeley, featuring the word "Berkeley" in a large, white, serif font, with "UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font underneath, all set against a dark blue background.

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