Statement on
Student Reaction to Allegations of Harassment and Proposed Reforms
Alexander L. Wolf, Dean
UC Santa Cruz Baskin School of Engineering
May 30, 2019

On May 22, 2019, Baskin Engineering students released a statement signed by 12 of the 16 representatives on the Baskin Engineering Student Leadership Council (BE-SLiC) regarding the response by the campus and by Baskin Engineering to allegations of harassment. The statement also provides a set of proposed reforms to how the university, campus, and school handles such cases in the future. On May 23, 2019, I met to discuss the statement with BE-SLiC, Ayo Banjo (president of the UC Santa Cruz Student Union Assembly), and members of my staff. The points raised by the students underscore the genuine need for the University of California and the Santa Cruz campus to improve its reporting and adjudication processes and cultivate an inclusive climate of mutual respect and trust in which our most vulnerable community members – including, and perhaps especially, our students – feel safe and heard.

I want to stress the importance of recognizing that allegations are not conclusive, and that we are obliged to maintain a system, as imperfect as it may be, that seeks to be fair and impartial. I have no doubt that students, faculty, and university administrators all have a shared goal and a common interest in supporting that system at the same time as actively finding ways to materially improve it.

While I am constrained by federal and state law, as well as university policy, regarding how I may discuss the details of any specific investigation, I have welcomed the opportunity to hear the concerns of Baskin Engineering students and reflect on the broader context in which those concerns are being raised. I state without qualification that the Baskin School of Engineering will continue to take affirmative and energetic action to promote a culture of mutual respect, accountability, and transparency. And as the administrative leader of the school, I would not tolerate anyone who is found to have engaged in the actions and behaviors alleged in this case. Although it is not in my authority to render judgment nor possible punishment, I would support the decision to terminate any staff or faculty found to be responsible for such an egregious violation of our policies and values.

In what follows, I summarize the ideas set forth in the list of proposed reforms provided by the students, categorized according to their administrative scope, and provide concrete steps to address the concerns articulated by the students. I remain in active conversation with Baskin Engineering student leaders, and look forward to the opportunity to update this statement based on our continued discussions and collective work.
Part 1: Summary of Proposed Reforms

1. A number of the student recommendations call for **changing the culture of the Baskin School of Engineering**. These include:
   a. “Increasing education about and access to reporting tools, including making abuse reporting via Faculty Code of Conduct and the Office of Conflict Resolution a component of incoming student orientation.”
   b. “Deans and/or Chairs of departments school-wide to take an active role in collecting reports of abuse from their students and if a clear and repeated pattern of abuse is evident to issue a Faculty Code of Conduct Complaint against said faculty member.”

2. A number of the student recommendations call for **changes in the policies and practices of UC Santa Cruz**. These include:
   a. “The implementation of a timeline for when accusations of abuse must be responded to,”
   b. “The removal of the requirement that all formal grievances must be filed within 60 days of the abuse,”
   c. “[The creation of] a separate, for Students, Faculty Code of Conduct Formal Complaint Form,”
   d. “Academic Employee Relations create an alternate FCC Formal Complaint Form and process for use in cases of Students protesting abusive faculty. The changes should focus on keeping students safe and must include the student’s email, phone number, and campus address not being given to the accused faculty member,”
   e. “The strengthening of safeguards to stop the preemptive revealing of the identity of accusers to their abusers as occurred in the ongoing incident,” and
   f. “The creation of resources for graduate students to leave abusive faculty without losing the funding, visas, and relationships that they rely on to live and study.”

3. A number of the student recommendations call for **changes in the policies and practices of the University of California**, encompassed under the statement that “we would like to see reforms to the Faculty Code of Conduct and related policy including:”
   a. “The removal of the ability for the university to settle with the abuser without the input of the abused,”
   b. “The creation of a student advisory board to perform an audit of the FCC and other policy related to faculty misconduct, this board must be empowered to submit amendments for approval by the UC wide Academic Senate,”
   c. A change to the statement of the University’s purpose to explicitly include protecting student welfare, with phrasing to be determined by the advisory board,” and
   d. The addition of witnessing or knowing of abuse and failing to report it to the list of unacceptable behaviors.”
Part 2: Plan of Action

Over the past academic year, with the active participation of a broad range of community members in Baskin Engineering, we have initiated several serious efforts to create an improved culture of inclusiveness within the school, including participation in the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) Deans’ Diversity Initiative, launch of the Baskin Engineering Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (BE-CDEI), creation of the Diverse Voices Speaker Series, and the development and deployment of a survey to gather information regarding the experiences of students in Baskin Engineering, in collaboration with the Student Success Equity Research Center. The importance of efforts such as these has never been more clear, as evidenced by the genuine concerns surfaced by BE-SLiC, which highlight the need for changes in policies and practices and a broader and deeper enculturation of critical values of respect, dignity, transparency, and fairness.

To this end, I will initiate the following concrete steps:

1. The dean’s office has created and posted to the BE-CDEI web page a document for students, faculty, and staff providing in one convenient place instructions on how to report incidents of bias, discrimination, harassment, and/or hate. The document also points to the office of Campus Conflict Resolution Services for support in dealing with conflict that does not involve allegations of discrimination, retaliation or harassment. We commit to sharing the document with all faculty, staff, and current students at the start of each academic term.

2. Currently, students entering UC Santa Cruz are provided three online learning programs that provide alcohol, Title IX, and diversity and inclusion education. While anecdotally students have described these programs as being helpful, they have also indicated a desire to learn more about reporting processes early in their academic careers, reinforcing what is already contained in the Title IX and diversity online programs. I will refer this to the Baskin Engineering office of Undergraduate Affairs to take the lead on this, both within the school and campus-wide with our relevant campus partners.

3. We recognize that there is a need to better understand patterns of disrespectful and/or alienating behavior and communications (including microaggressions), and I acknowledge the expressed request for the development of a process to identify “clear and repeated pattern[s] of abuse.” I commit to bringing forward to campus a proposal to create a mechanism to track and, where appropriate act upon, these incidents.

4. The campus Strategic Academic Plan directly addresses the goal of advancing a culture on our campus that embraces diversity and inclusion through its Design Principles (see Appendix). The pending leadership changes in the Office of the Chancellor and the CP/EVC will entail transitions on a broad range of competing fronts, so effective advocacy will be needed to ensure that the concerns raised by BE-SLiC are addressed as a matter of priority. In particular, I intend to spearhead efforts among the senior administration to update the University of California Faculty Code of Conduct (APM 015), and associated implementing processes and procedures local to campus (CAPM 002.015), so as to incorporate safeguards and clearly articulated reporting mechanisms specifically in support of students who believe they have experienced bias, discrimination, and/or harassments by a faculty member, as well as explicit statements regarding expectations of faculty conduct relating to students. I will also advocate for a formal mechanism by which University of California students may review and make recommendations regarding the Faculty Code of Conduct.
Part 3: A Continuing Partnership with BE-SLiC

In addition to my ongoing interactions with student leaders, I encourage BE-SLiC to form a subcommittee to: (1) continue the dialogue with the dean's office initiated in May 2019; (2) make a recommendation for a fair and effective mechanism by which to incorporate students into the Baskin Engineering Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; (3) participate in a collaborative effort with faculty and staff to propose and articulate a set of core values for the Baskin School of Engineering; and (4) provide funding recommendations to BE-SLiC and the dean's office for programming to advance a culture that enshrines and promotes the core values identified.

I further recommend that BE-SLiC identify a group of student interns to work with the Baskin Engineering communications team on a paid basis to develop a diversity, equity, and inclusion campaign for the school that would include: (1) identifying key audiences, e.g., faculty, prospective students, campus partners, alumni, and others; (2) developing messages that communicate the Baskin Engineering core values; and (3) creating and disseminating digital and print content.

Part 4: Timeline

The following table provides an initial timeline for mobilizing our joint efforts to address bias, discrimination, and harassment and create a culture of inclusion at the Baskin School of Engineering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>BASKIN ENGINEERING RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add Bias, Discrimination and Harassment Reporting Guidelines to BE-CDEI web page</td>
<td>Communications office (DONE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulate Bias, Discrimination, and Harassment Reporting Guidelines to Baskin Engineering students, faculty, and staff</td>
<td>Dean's office [to be completed at beginning of every term, beginning summer 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulate summary of findings of the Baskin Engineering Student Survey, for which responses are still being received</td>
<td>Undergraduate Affairs and Graduate Affairs offices [to be completed in fall 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate the existing Baskin School of Engineering Graduate Student Academic Rights and Responsibilities document into departmental Graduate Student Handbooks</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs and Director of Graduate Affairs [to be completed by the beginning of fall 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate information regarding reporting into new student onboarding/orientation materials</td>
<td>Undergraduate Affairs office [to be implemented in fall 2019 within Baskin Engineering; work with campus partners to implement more broadly across campus as soon as possible]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporate a module on rights, responsibilities, and reporting practices into graduate student orientation</td>
<td><strong>Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs</strong> and <strong>Director of Graduate Affairs</strong> [to be completed by the beginning of fall 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite BE-SLiC to form a subcommittee to combat bias, discrimination, and harassment in Baskin Engineering</td>
<td><strong>BE-SLiC</strong> [to be formed at the beginning of fall 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a Baskin Engineering Values Document</td>
<td><strong>BE-CDEI and BE-SLiC subcommittees</strong> [to be initiated in fall 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate a diversity, equity, and inclusion communication campaign within Baskin Engineering</td>
<td><strong>Communications office</strong> and <strong>BE-SLiC</strong> [to be initiated in fall 2019]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spearhead UC Santa Cruz advocacy for student-focused reforms to the UC Faculty Code of Conduct</td>
<td><strong>Dean</strong> [to be initiated in the 2019-20 academic year]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix: Campus Strategic Academic Plan Design Principles

1. **Drive research and creative work that transforms our world**
UC Santa Cruz seeks to be a pioneering research university, a home to faculty and students who not only lead their fields, but push them into new territory. Ranked 4th globally for research influence, the university's faculty is the single most cited in the world, with a reputation built by breakthroughs from sequencing the human genome to sparking the global sustainable agriculture movement. Identifying and building on its faculty’s unique strengths—in areas that cut across all of its academic divisions and school—will allow UC Santa Cruz to recruit the best faculty and expand its research in high impact areas that will help drive innovation, sustainability, and ethical technology.

2. **Create enriching experiential learning and research opportunities for students**
UC Santa Cruz aspires to be a place for students to think big. Already more enriching than most public and private colleges, UC Santa Cruz wants to be a place where students discover by doing, driven by profound curiosity and a spirit of engagement. World-class natural resources and off-campus experiences, coupled with innovative research and creative opportunities, provide unique learning environments for students. However, demand for these key hands-on experiences currently exceeds supply. By supporting the most transformative experiential learning and research opportunities, UC Santa Cruz can build on its strengths and find new ways to be inclusive and provide transformative experiences for its students. UC Santa Cruz can also expand its learning opportunities outside of the classroom by deepening its connections to external organizations, so enabling more enriching partnerships. The wide range of valuable on- and off-campus experiences will prepare students to be creative thought leaders who are sought after for their innovative thinking and who have capacity to impact powerfully the world around them.

3. **Engage and support a diverse faculty, staff, and student body**
UC Santa Cruz seeks to enhance its longstanding commitment to social justice. It understands that the campus community must work together to ensure that the education we deliver meets the needs of all our students, including those who are underserved and from diverse backgrounds. Among its achievements, UC Santa Cruz is a leader in graduating first generation students and is ranked 13th for social mobility. The university also ranks highly in terms of value and ethnic diversity. UC Santa Cruz is well-situated to demonstrate that diversity in academic environments has enormous social and material benefits. Much as the first organic farm at the university played a key role in the global organic revolution, UC Santa Cruz can assume a leading role as a champion of diversity in higher education. The students Entangled interviewed emphasized the importance they place on the institution’s diversity, noting that it enables and encourages them to embrace their individuality and thrive in our increasingly heterogeneous society. In the years to come, these students will be powerful advocates for diversity and inclusion throughout their professional careers.

4. **Support generative interdisciplinary connections to research and teaching**
UC Santa Cruz is committed to free expression, vigorous debate, and the examination of all viewpoints. By bringing together a global community of individuals with diverse backgrounds, UC Santa Cruz aspires to propel faculty and students to examine the intersection of seemingly unrelated fields, paving the way for innovative, inventive, and serendipitous discoveries that have big impacts. For example, a UC Santa Cruz
professor of ecology and evolutionary biology is looking at what enables seals to hold their breath for 90 minutes under the Antarctic sea, and the findings of this work might have implications for understanding aging in human beings. In addition, the Silicon Valley Regional Data Trust, a public-public initiative launched in 2017 by an interdisciplinary team of faculty will enable teachers, principals, social workers, public and mental health professionals, judges, and probation officers to share information in real time about students and the services they are receiving. However, currently, the university’s structure does not reflect an institutional priority on interdisciplinary work. UC Santa Cruz needs to break down barriers and create new connections between departments and divisions to further promote interdisciplinary work. Experts in the humanities could work with STEM professionals toward breakthroughs in technology ethics. Environmental science and engineering departments could team up to study ways to combat global health and climate change. UC Santa Cruz is primed for breakthrough research and teaching to emerge by lowering the barriers to and incentivizing the work of cross-disciplinary research and teaching.

5. Expand excellence in innovation in areas distinctive to UC Santa Cruz, such as social justice, diversity, & sustainability

UC Santa Cruz aims to reinvigorate its reputation as a gamechanger. It has an unparalleled commitment to social justice that extends far beyond its campus, targeting injustice, advancing diversity, and delving into new fields often overlooked by other universities. It is one of the “green” colleges and has participated in a global movement toward sustainability. Its student body is devoted to community service, and the university seeks out and supports visionary, socially driven faculty, fostering a community that is at once idealistic and practical, creative and analytic. With technology spurring fundamental social and economic transformations that are likely to hit underserved communities particularly hard, there is a growing need for UC Santa Cruz’s deep knowledge of and commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and sustainability. It is vital that UC Santa Cruz support these core areas of excellence. Doing so will enable the university to continue attracting the like-minded faculty, students, and staff that make UC Santa Cruz a vital, unique, world-class community of innovators.

Source: UC Santa Cruz Strategic Academic Plan (emphasis added)