

Hey Cal Poly Humboldt,

I hope y'all had a restorative break. I slept so much. Maybe too much. I think I skipped a whole day in there somewhere, and the email pile is commensurate.

My chair report today reflects the thinking of a small group of colleagues, consisting of Associated Students President Wysdem Singleton, Athletics Advisory Student Representative Megan Janikowski, Staff Council Chair Kathy Hudson, Provost Jenn Capps, and myself. We are calling our team "Campus Climate and Well-Being Stewards."

Our intention herein, and in the Senate meeting later today, is to prep y'all for a series of collaborative conversations and actions that we hope to help foster in the coming months in relation to the protests and related events that occurred on and off campus in the weeks following April 20th, 2024, and to seek material feedback regarding how the campus community would like for us to proceed, prior to any actions of conversations being undertaken.

I'm going to start by setting the stage of what has occurred thus far. Much of the writing that follows borrows heavily from notes taken by our colleague Dr. Lisa

At the onset of the Fall semester, President Spagna convened an ad hoc working group that initially and intentionally consisted of the

- President's Administrative Team (PAT): a group of Cal Poly Humboldt administrative institutional leadership;
- Two Student Representatives: Associated Students President Wysdem Singleton and Student Athlete Advisory Committee President Megan Janikowski,
- Staff Council Chair Kathy Hudson;
- and two members of the faculty, Provost Chair Advisory Council representative Dr. Lisa Tremain, and myself as Senate Chair

Our charge, as we understood it, was to assist the President in understanding what took place in weeks following April 20th and to plan for how we might engage the campus in meaningful dialogue about the protest and related actions that impacted the campus community.

This ad hoc working group met three times in the early weeks of the semester (9/16, 9/26, and 10/3). During those convenings, members of the PAT leadership, led by VPs Holliday and Gordon, presented structures and policies relevant to the protest and its handling as they had existed and how these structures were expected to work during an emergency. This included presentations on the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) structure and processes and the student code of conduct, inclusive of updates regarding ongoing student conduct cases/deliberations.

Following the last of these meetings, Dr. Tremain conveyed feedback to President Spagna, Adrienne Colegrove-Raymond (a vocal leader on campus and in those meetings), and myself via email, that faculty members she had shared the content of those meetings and discussions

with had been concerned by the makeup of the ad hoc group (largely consisting of the administrative team that had led aspects of the protest response in the Spring) and the content of the proposed presentations (this is less polite and more editorial than Lisa framed it, but, defensive, boilerplate reductions of harmful experiences).

In response to this feedback, President Spagna sought to decentralize and reframe the initiative to engage the campus community in dialogue around experiences from the Spring of 2024. He encouraged the development of the “Campus Climate and Well-Being Stewards” (we made up the name via email chain) as a group that would help to work out the logistics of dialogue, rather than lead the initiative in a top-down way.

He described his intention in a broader reset email on October 29th, 2024, entitled “Empowerment through Inclusivity, Transparency, and Communication”:

Campus Climate and Well-Being Stewards: A group of faculty, staff, and student leaders whose charge is to find and engage outside facilitators this semester to begin community conversations, reflections on the events of April, and working together to build trust and affirm care across our community. These reflections will involve broad information sharing of after-action reviews; conversations about lessons learned; and action planning for supporting future efforts. This group is meant to be responsive to the needs of campus constituencies and is not a standalone decision-making body. The members will help to gather campus feedback and then develop programming and logistics based on what is expressed. Please don't be shy with thoughts and feedback.

Since October 29th, our group has met four or five times. These meetings have been emotionally charged and meaningful, but our progress towards action items has been admittedly slow. We are already at the beginning of December, and though I swear we have been working on it, there has not been thorough and public accounting for the events of the Spring. With that said, we want to give the following updates/thoughts:

- Beginning with the Senate Meeting on December 3rd, and continuing through multiple meetings with constituencies across campus, we will be asking for help in determining what kind of facilitated dialogue we hope to affect with outside facilitators. Kathy Hudson has done really thoughtful work to consider what questions should be asked in informing our discussions.
- This dialogue will include discussion of the After Action Report of the Emergency Operations Center (“employees who represent departments from across campus” who are “tasked with making recommendations on operations, planning, logistics, administration, and communications to the decision-making body called the Policy Management Group (PMG)”) and After Action Report of the Incident Command (a group “composed of trained staff and law enforcement officials who are tasked with coordinating university emergency services, whose first priority is public safety”).

These reports are required by law in order to be compliant with the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) of California, and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). They represent two very specific and automatically biased interpretations of the events that are written in the manner of legally required government documents, and, as such, will automatically be unsatisfying to readers with personal stakes and alternative views. They should not drive our campus' understanding of the events. They will be released at some point during these discussions, because submission of reports without broad transparency is never ethically advisable, but we hope to think of them as two of many records of these experiences, and not our institutional position on what happened.

- This is mostly from jim: I think we need to “rip a band-aid off”. During the May 7th Senate meeting (it was a doozie, if you’ll remember) the Senate overwhelmingly passed a “Sense of the Senate Resolution on An Independent Investigation into University Decision Making related to the April 22, 2024 Protest Actions”, which was then supported through votes by the ASCSU and ERFSA. No resources have been allocated to such an investigation, and it is increasingly unlikely that such an investigation will be forthcoming, and
- Thus it falls to us, all of us, to develop and enshrine an understanding of the shared impact, inclusive of qualitative documentation of personal experience, of what happened this Spring. We as a Senate then need to make sure that strongly written, binding policy disallows the mistakes that allowed harm to happen to our community on so many levels.

I know that’s a lot. A colleague recently asked me “why are we doing this?”, and, honestly, I don’t think I have a good answer yet. I just know that I want to live in a community that cares for each other and works towards educating each other so that we can improve our shared world, and I don’t think we can get there without having talked through these hard things.

Thanks to all y’all for all you do to make this University run for each other,
jim (with lots of help from Lisa and the Campus Climate and Well-Being Stewards)