



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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April 4, 2019

To the members of the Academic Senate, Graduate Student Association, and Associated Students, as well as the leadership of unions of workers at UCSB*Dear colleagues and neighbors,*

On the morning of Tuesday, April 2nd a man entered the hallways of the UCSB Sociology department wearing a “Waffen SS” (Nazi death squad) t-shirt. Because of the quick action by a graduate student in the department in notifying department staff and calling campus security, and their subsequent actions, police officers patrolled the department to ensure that this man was not engaging in violent behavior. Officers were not able to locate this man as he was gone by the time officers arrived. This incident occurred the morning immediately following the posting of anti-Semitic flyers on cars and buildings surrounding the residences of Jewish students in Isla Vista. It also follows anonymous social media postings in our region praising the terrorist attack that took the lives of six students here in Isla Vista several years ago. And it follows an incident two weeks ago in which a man appeared at our campus library and handed staff a text they had written that praised the perpetrator of that attack, as well as recent incidents involving the display of a white supremacist symbol at the campus mourning event for the Muslim victims of Christchurch attack, and the use of a knife to threaten campus workers.

We are obliged to write to you to and to urge immediate preventive action. These local incidents are indicative of an ever-growing tide of terrorist threats against students, staff, and faculty both here and at campuses across the United States. In particular, students and workers who belong to or are identified with communities that have come under attack from white supremacist, xenophobic, homophobic, and misogynist terrorism –people of color, Jews and Muslims and Sikhs, immigrants, LGBTQ+, as well as women as a broad class— find ourselves increasingly vulnerable.

We are compelled to demand that campus officials, including administrators, campus leaders, and union and organizational leadership, take swift action and assume a firm stance in supporting the campus community. While campus security and departmental personnel have stated their support for student safety and encouraged students to report potentially threatening

behaviors to officials, there has yet to be any wide announcement to the campus community of the calculated dissemination of Nazi materials or of the sighting of Nazi apparel on campus. We believe that such a warning and a call for action is necessary not only because students, staff, and faculty already vulnerable to violence have a right to know about about potential threats, but more so because it is a certainty that someone in the broader community knows the person or persons making these terrorist threats. As we were drafting this letter, we became aware of a notice sent to the campus community that identified community principles and a bias reporting line. We reasonably fear that by failing to provide specific information about the threats that have already been made, the notice sent today will provide insufficient.

Additionally, we insist that campus and union officials publicly recognize that the act of (uncritically) displaying Nazi symbols is a terrorist act, and that posting violent threats to Jews is racial terrorism that must not be tolerated anywhere, including our campus community. We cannot imagine that such activity carried out by ISIL or some other group would be tolerated. White supremacist terrorism is more dangerous and much more pervasive in the United States than any other form of terrorism. We urge you to heed the historic call of Frederick Douglass to “Stamp Out the Klan!” We further urge you to engage our communities in developing protocols for responding to these kinds of incidents in the future. While we recognize that you and we are incapable of *entirely* ending the threat of violence, we know that with the appropriate institutional response centered on student and employee safety and well-being, there lies the *potential* to prevent or at least minimize the severity of any future attack.

As reported by Weiyi Cai and Simone Landon in yesterday’s April 3, 2019 edition of the New York Times (see <https://nyti.ms/2WM6sfY>), terrorist attacks by white supremacists are increasing in number and severity and are increasingly networked. You will note that the Isla Vista attack of 2014 is mentioned and that four subsequent terrorist attacks included mentions by the perpetrators of Isla Vista.

Sincerely,

Marisa D. Salinas, Zachary King, Ben Manski, Oscar Soto,
David Feldman, William Haywood Carey, Ryan J. Fisher,
Shawn Van Valkenburgh, Amanda Pinheiro, Sarah Manski,
Andrew Johnson, Elliott Finn, Mariah Brennan Clegg

*Graduate student workers at UC Santa Barbara in Sociology, Political
Science, Global Studies, and Environmental Studies*