

May 6<sup>th</sup> 2017

Dear UCSC administration, UCSC Academic Senate, Stevenson college and students of UCSC

I am disturbed to see where the school is going. While I attended school from 2007-2011 I saw the administration change its priorities concerning colleges. UCSC used to be a place with different colleges with different themes and purposes. Each college has a different and unique spirit that contributes to the being that is UCSC. Our colleges are one of the most visible aspects that make UCSC distinctive when prospective students step onto our campus, and the colleges are the most distinctive elements that helps freshmen find a home and become introduced to our unique flavor of education. We take with us that unique spirit and share it with our fellow UCSC students in all the classes that followed and the life that follows college.

But we have seen the character of the college system change and degrade. Over the years, the core class has changed. Most students don't know that the core class used to be multiple semesters across the campus. The Core Class used to be largely integrated into the undergraduate education we all receive but it has faded as people turn to college for expediency and fail to look beyond their immediate major.

While I was a double major and filled up my units with classes until the very end, I always looked back wishing my core class was preserved as it used to be: a full year. But now I come to think I might be lucky to have had two quarters. I was lucky to attend UCSC at a time when my university found value in the original vision of our institution. I was lucky to have the opportunity to have the time and resources of our core class to learn about the important texts and ideas presented in these classes. I was fortunate to have my university believe in this goal and this mission enough to fund it without having to ask its alumni to preserve the very values and goals they instilled in us because they could not muster the funds to keep our core alive.

The core class is the unifying force for our colleges. It helps to make us citizens of our college. It is a common experience for us all. For some of us, it is why we chose our college because it spoke to us to learn about the subject it presented. Whether we understood it when we took the class or later but the class helps to expose us to thoughts and ideas from great works and great thinkers and engage with our fellow students. The class teaches us to refine our writing and engage with the readings in new and interesting ways. The core class provided a foundation not only for our education but for the four years that came afterward.

The core class is how I am told education should be. Small class sizes and engagement with the material and the professor. In some classes, we don't have that luxury but in the core class we did. We had that element of education realized. This should be duplicated across the campus and set as an example for other schools.

When we search for a university we all approach the task with different goals but UCSC presents a unique proposal. Whether that's why we accepted our position at this university at this school or not, it was a special package. The special package included the core class, the colleges, the opportunities, the weather, the terrain and the culture. These aspects make up what it is to attend UCSC, Stevenson, Cowell, Crown, Merrill, Oaks, Porter, Kresge, Carson, 9 and 10. We need to make progress and I dare not stop our university from doing that but deleting the core class, pulling back from this value is not progress but rather taking several steps back and away from who we are.

Let us keep our core class here at Stevenson and if threatened, campus wide.

A devoted Banana Slug, and a lifelong Stevensonian,  
Alex De Arana-Lemich, Class of 2011