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# Assembly California Legislature



**NANCY SKINNER**  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

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PUBLIC SAFETY  
UTILITIES AND COMMERCE

November 23, 2011

Robert Birgeneau  
Chancellor, University of California, Berkeley  
Office of the Chancellor  
200 California Hall # 1500  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1500

Dear Chancellor Birgeneau,

Thank you for acknowledging that the actions by Campus authorities in response to the protest on November 9<sup>th</sup> were very disturbing. Your apology to the Campus and wider community and your commitment to do everything in your power to prevent such action in the future is leadership that is greatly needed.

I was extremely distressed to see the videos taken on the night of November 9<sup>th</sup>. There is no place for unprovoked violence in response to protest or passive civil disobedience. The violence depicted in the November 9<sup>th</sup> videos and those taken at UC Davis capturing the horrific use of pepper spray was appalling. This response seemed purposefully designed to summarily punish people for legal and legitimate protest, and further to intimidate and repress future free expression.

As a participant in nonviolent protest on campus and elsewhere, I know that we can do better in respecting the right of students and others to peacefully engage in protest and civil disobedience. I am confident that UC Berkeley and UC Berkeley PD can and will provide a model for the professional and respectful handling of crowds and protests in the future.

I enthusiastically accept your previous call to join with you and UC Berkeley student representatives in a public forum to debate the future of public higher education.

I am extremely proud and very impressed with how thoughtful and deliberate Cal students and student leaders have been in response to the circumstances they now face as they pursue their education. Faced with unprecedented increases in tuition and fees, crippling student loan debt and a bleak economic future, their clarity in understanding the larger context that led to these conditions is refreshing. The students are clear that we in California must once again fully fund public education and that to do so, must increase state revenues in an equitable manner.



As a product of California's public schools and a proud Cal alum who earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees at UC Berkeley, I strongly support investing in our public education system. Just as Cal and other students have so clearly articulated, I believe the focus of a debate on education funding must be on how to increase revenue and how to achieve a fairer contribution from corporations and the wealthiest among us.

I gladly make myself available for such a discussion with University officials, students, alumni and the public at large to continue this debate about the University's and California's future.

Sincerely,



NANCY SKINNER

Assemblymember, 14<sup>th</sup> District