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Chancellor at Davis

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Chancellor Linda P.B. Katehi Town Hall Meeting
Tuesday, November 22, 2011
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Freeborn Hall

We all know that UC Davis is a wonderful, strong and peaceful community and that the events of last weekend were a terrible shock to all of us.

Over the past few days I have been meeting with student groups large and small and of course, I am pleased to be here this evening.

I want to unequivocally apologize to the entire community for the appalling use of pepper spray. It betrayed our values and did not reflect well on this university.

You have my word that I will do everything in my power to make sure nothing like that ever happens again.

I also want to be the first to tell you:

1. I am requesting that all charges against students who have been arrested be dropped.
2. Any medical expenses incurred by any students involved will be refunded.
3. As I requested, an independent task force will examine the events that took place and report directly to UC President Mark Yudof.

While the task force needs to be given room to do its job, it is important for people to understand my specific actions.

I explicitly directed the chief of police that violence should be avoided at all costs. It was the absolute last thing I ever wanted to happen.

Because encampments have long been prohibited by UC policy, I directed police only to take down the tents.

My instructions were for no arrests and no police force.

I honor and respect the rights of students to protest peacefully. It is part of our DNA and it is a right that needs to be proactively protected.

I am also very proud of how the entire student body has responded to these events, in a calm, peaceful and respectful manner.

I understand the frustration and anger students are feeling right now. Our economy is in poor shape, employment prospects are the worst in decades and tuition has been increased a number of times.

As the task force and other independent reviews are being conducted, our immediate job is to unify our campus.

That is why I wanted to come here this evening – to hear your concerns and do the best I can to answer your questions.

When we return to campus next week after enjoying quiet time with our families during Thanksgiving, there will be a Regents meeting here on campus.

I know you will let your voices be heard once again about the need to support higher education and stop the funding cuts and tuition increases.

I have been on your side on that issue and will continue to push for more funding.

And I know that if you protest, you will show California and the rest of the nation the best of UC Davis by doing it peacefully and respectfully.

Thank you very much.