

July 27, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

I risk intruding on your summer breaks, prompted by last week's news, though I have other business to report as well.

Admissions. On July 22, the systemwide [Academic Council](#) charged the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) with a faculty-led review of standardized testing in undergraduate admissions and, separately, of the A-G course requirements. The *Los Angeles Times* covered it [the next day](#).

BOARS takes up testing first, reporting to the Council by February 12, 2027. Its recommendations will pass through the 90-day systemwide review in which divisions file formal comment. BOARS will then report to the Regents with a recommendation no later than June 2027. Review of the course requirements will proceed with an initial BOARS report in May 2027 and action by the Regents at a later date.

For students, nothing changes now. No test requirement is in effect; applicants who file for fall 2027 admission will submit no SAT or ACT scores. The Office of the President's [FAQ](#) is the reference for anyone already fielding questions.

Federal actions. The strains on the public research university are by now familiar—falling per-student state support, rising costs, a public grown skeptical of what we do. But the events of the last year are different in kind: grants cancelled midstream for subjects out of step with stated administration priorities; proposed OMB rules that would subordinate peer review to political judgment; agencies losing the staff who administer university research; visa rules that make it harder to bring students and scholars here; programs for access and inclusion eliminated as a condition of federal funding; and open attacks on academic freedom.

UC filed [comments](#) on the OMB rule this month, arguing that the proposal would make multi-year research commitments unreliable. Closer to home, [SB 895](#)—the \$12 billion research bond that UC sponsored and that many of you wrote to legislators about—did not reach the Assembly floor before the June 25 deadline and will not be on the November ballot, absent further legislative action. For what advocacy is possible now, I again direct you to UCSB [Government and Community Relations](#) (GOVCR), which works with Congressional offices on F&A reimbursement and the appropriations environment. The UC [Federal Updates](#) page remains the best single source.

Three new degrees. The Santa Barbara Division approved three new degree programs this year, which surely must be an institutional record. Courses for the [B.S. in Artificial Intelligence](#), based in Computer Science, will begin in the coming academic year (UCSB and UC San Diego are the first UC campuses to offer the degree). The [Master of Engineering and Technology Leadership](#), also in the Robert Mehrabian College of Engineering, received systemwide authorization in the spring and will be UCSB's first fully online master's program, with applications opening in September for an inaugural class in fall 2027. And the [B.A. in Education and Society](#), approved by the Faculty Legislature in May, is the Gevirtz School's first undergraduate major, drawing on two long-standing

minors whose enrollments have grown steadily for a decade; prospective students may apply this fall for classes beginning in fall 2027. The new Education degree arrives just as the University of California reopens the question of what it asks of California high schools: we will have undergraduates studying that relationship while the University renegotiates it.

My thanks to the committees that carried these proposals, above all the Graduate Council and the Undergraduate Council, whose review is the substance of the Senate's authority over the curriculum, under [Bylaw 40](#).

Inauguration. Dennis Assanis was formally installed as UC Santa Barbara's sixth chancellor on May 27 at the [Lobero Theatre](#), the first such ceremony here in more than thirty years. Speaking for the faculty, I described what we had sought in the search: a chancellor who understands that shared governance has particular significance in the UC system and is the bedrock of our academic freedom. We are fortunate to have found one who aspires to UC Santa Barbara as "a pluralistic university in service of the public trust."

Senate awards. At our final Faculty Legislature meeting on May 28 we announced and celebrated this year's Senate awards for research, teaching, graduate mentoring, and teaching assistance. The recipients are listed [here](#), with accounts of the work that earned them. These are honors the faculty confer on one another and on our TAs. Recipients are nominated by colleagues and students and selected by committees of faculty volunteers. The campus will hear from the Faculty Research Lecturer and the Plous awardees in 2026–27; dates for these lectures will be announced in the fall.

This has not exactly been a quiet summer, but I hope you are able to enjoy some of it in the months remaining.

Sincerely,

Rita Raley, Divisional Chair
Academic Senate