



VIA EMAIL [cchrist@berkeley.edu](mailto:cchrist@berkeley.edu)  
May 13, 2020

Chancellor Carol Christ  
Office of the Chancellor  
University of California Berkeley  
200 California Hall, #1500  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1500

Dear Chancellor Christ,

We hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones well. As your neighbors we appreciate what you and your colleagues are doing to ensure the campus and community are safe and healthy during this challenging moment. We are particularly grateful for the university's support of the Berkeley Relief Fund, testing, and other local COVID 19 efforts.

The plans for the fall semester are a top concern for the business community in Berkeley. We recognize that the safety of your students, faculty and staff are of the utmost importance in making your decision regarding the fall semester. We are committed to partnering with you and ask that you consider the following concerns:

1. Many of our merchants, hotels and retail businesses are hanging on by a thread. A loss of students, faculty, staff and visitors, in addition to the shelter in place order, has resulted in permanent closures and 50-90% loss in revenue for many of our members. Moreover many businesses anticipate closing their doors for good if the University does not open in the fall.
2. Your students, faculty and staff provide vibrancy to our community. The absence of a large portion of the UC Berkeley community leaves our streets and sidewalks empty. The dramatic shift in the environment has led to an increase in homeless encampments and anti-social behaviors. The Downtown has already witnessed a 60% increase in homelessness and a surge in anti-social and violent behaviors.
3. The Downtown and Telegraph districts are particularly vulnerable to the economic disruption stemming from campus closure. Moreover our arts district will be one of the last sectors to reopen, so the loss of campus and arts customers is devastating. If UC Berkeley does not reconvene in the fall it may take years to rebuild a vibrant, healthy, and welcoming near-to-campus environment.

The UC Berkeley community is the economic and cultural engine of our city. We hope to see the University back in session this fall, with proper precautions such as masks, social distancing, testing and contact tracing. We realize the significant challenges of allowing a return to campus, but without the University in session large portions of our economy will not have a fighting chance for survival.

Respectfully,

Kirsten MacDonald, CEO  
Berkeley Chamber

John Caner, CEO  
Downtown Berkeley  
Association

Alex Knox, Executive Director  
Telegraph Business  
Improvement District

Barbara Hillman, CEO  
Visit Berkeley

Cc: UC President Janet Napolitano, Christine Treadway, Ruben Lizardo, Mayor Jesse Arreguin, Berkeley City Council, Berkeley City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley, Berkeley Public Health Officer Dr. Lisa B. Hernandez