

## **A Resolution in Support of the Bruin Excellence and Transformation Grant Program**

**WHEREAS**, on May 30, 2016, UCLA’s Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Jerry Kang announced the creation of the Bruin Excellence and Transformation Grant (BEST) Program to give institutional support for “countless Bruins who engage in equity-building projects, self-organizing from the bottom-up, who struggle with the lack of institutional support”<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEST program provides crucial funding to several student organizations through a simplified, flexible structure that avoids the typical bureaucratic barriers of other funding bodies at UCLA<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, this flexibility is essential to ensure accessibility to funding for organizations, allowing student activists to be efficient and effective in their goals to make social justice impact in their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEST program provides mentorship geared specifically toward student activists, who face unique emotional stressors and strain<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEST program conducts trainings, workshops, and classes such as Labor Studies 97-2 which provide necessary information for the personal development of student leaders and activists, which is not found or taught elsewhere on campus; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEST program is a student-led program receiving funding primarily from the UCLA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and

**WHEREAS**, Vice Chancellor Kang has stated: “I chose to fund the BEST Grant Program because we cannot build equity for all -- my Office’s mission -- without investing in “bottoms-up” initiatives... BEST offers a prime example of grassroots action that complements the “top down” strategies born in Murphy Hall<sup>4</sup>,” and

**WHEREAS**, on September 5, 2019, Chancellor Gene Block announced that Vice Chancellor Jerry Kang decided to step down from his position by June 30, 2020<sup>5</sup>; and

---

<sup>1</sup><https://equity.ucla.edu/news-and-events/vc-kang-announces-the-creation-of-the-bruin-excellence-student-transformation-grant-program-best/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://bestucla.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.browndailyherald.com/2016/02/18/schoolwork-advocacy-place-strain-on-student-activists/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://bestucla.com/history>

<sup>5</sup> <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/vice-chancellor-jerry-kang-to-step-down>

**WHEREAS**, Vice Chancellor Kang has unilaterally decided, without soliciting input from the BEST program nor the student organizations that rely on it, to cut all funding from the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the program. He gave no performance-based reasoning for the cut, but rather explained that it was to give the new Vice Chancellor a “clean slate”; and

**WHEREAS**, cutting funding for the program would thereby end the program, both shutting off funding, femtorship, and trainings for student organizations and leaving five employees jobless during COVID-19 and the ensuing economic depression; and

**WHEREAS**, the BEST program has supported student-led campaigns which have resulted in several important victories, including the implementation of Pamilya Housing to provide low-cost housing alternatives, increased access to culturally-competent counseling for Muslim students in CAPS, student support for the AFSCME 3299 contract demands, and institutionalized funding for the Graduate Undergraduate Mentorship program<sup>6</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Afrikan Student Union, the Beautiful Minds Project, MEChA de UCLA, and Students for Justice in Palestine all voted to sign on to this resolution as supporting organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, students have organized petitions and testified in support of the BEST program, demonstrating the importance of the program; and

**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED**, the USAC condemns the decision of outgoing Vice Chancellor Jerry Kang to end the program without consulting its employees or the students it serves.

**FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED**, the USAC calls for the BEST team leaders to have a meeting with the new hire for Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to discuss the history and importance of the program.

**FINALLY LET IT BE RESOLVED**, the USAC demands that Chancellor Gene Block and Provost Emily A. Carter rescind outgoing Vice Chancellor Jerry Kang’s decision and continue funding the BEST program for the 2020-2021 school year, regardless of the new hire for Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://campaigns.organizefor.org/petitions/save-best-ucla?bucket&source=facebook-share-button&time=1589866100&utm\\_campaign&utm\\_source=facebook&share=bc4a1da9-6279-423f-9af2-65af4c52cce8&fbclid=IwAR3QH-dKzqmTtHJBOydxpdDBbjEP8mBHoShpBlfJa4Ht3mzxVXoW6-XR9gg](https://campaigns.organizefor.org/petitions/save-best-ucla?bucket&source=facebook-share-button&time=1589866100&utm_campaign&utm_source=facebook&share=bc4a1da9-6279-423f-9af2-65af4c52cce8&fbclid=IwAR3QH-dKzqmTtHJBOydxpdDBbjEP8mBHoShpBlfJa4Ht3mzxVXoW6-XR9gg)