Dear Chancellor Larive, iEVC Kletzer, AVC Scott, and Chief Oweis,

As military veteran members of the UCSC community (students and faculty) we are morally and ethically compelled to voice our condemnation of the employment of militarized police in our academic setting. As veterans, the position we occupy is not easy, having been part of an organization that has been ordered to subjugate people of color for decades, with no end in sight; it is therefore our duty to speak up against perpetual war and metaphysical catastrophe, whether it be abroad or in the US.

Especially on Mon-Wed (2/10-2/12), the similarities of tactics, techniques, and procedures, regularly called TTPs by those “in the know,” were alarming and disappointing. The intimidation tactics utilized those days, such as batons, body armor, and paddy wagons in plain sight, were distressing. To us, who can receive or have received COLA via the GI Bill, we recognize these tactics as tools to ramp up fear and intimidate those already in precarious situations. The penultimate example of how inappropriate the response was exists in the rifles presented on Wednesday, 2/12. We, as veterans, are intimately familiar with them as tools to inflict death from near and far. The rifles from Wednesday were, of course, to our military trained observation, non-lethal. Yet, imagine being a 20ish-year-old civilian, where rifles are tools of domestic murder, oppression, mass shootings, and fear; this is especially the case for people of color in our community, whose neighborhoods are over-policed and who are more likely to experience police intimidation, violence, and murder.

Many of us have been present since day one of this struggle. We have witnessed the progression of events. Students have shown passion, frustration, joy, anger, and love as they have engaged in nonviolent political protest, yet they have been labeled as dangerous. This is a farce, especially when the structural violence perpetrated by a system that pays staff, lecturers, and graduate students too little to live on is not held accountable. In the military, there is a process in terms of who calls for escalation and subsequent accountability. We demand transparency and accountability in the UC, in terms of our leaders, and institutionally. Our criticism is therefore directed toward administrators who readily employed personnel, funding, and equipment disproportionately and, as a result, escalated this situation and implied brutality against those with little institutionally recognized power: those trying to make it on poverty wages, which is more likely to be first generation students and people of color, but especially students who are undocumented and Black. We call on administrators to show constraint and de-escalation as this wildcat strike advances and as tensions rise with this continuing strike, as was mostly shown from 2/13 to 2/21, which we recognize and appreciate. We also call for a drawing down of resources spent on police presence.
Respectfully submitted,

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