

Recommendations from the Berkeley/Cal Identity Task Force

December 2022

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Introduction

The Berkeley/Cal Identity Task Force was formed in August 2022 and charged with developing a name framework for the campus. The task force was asked to “examine the various names used formally or informally to identify the campus and to determine when and how these names should be used moving forward.”

History

What is now the University of California, Berkeley was originally founded in 1868 as the University of California. The university was the state’s first land-grant university and was formed by merging the private College of California in Oakland with the recently-created Agricultural, Mining and Mechanical Arts College.

Soon after its founding, the university moved to its current location four miles north of Oakland. Leaders of the university movement named the surrounding township after the Irish philosopher George Berkeley.

Almost immediately, the makings of what is now the 10-campus University of California system began taking shape. In 1872, a medical department was established in San Francisco. In 1905, University Farm School was established in Davis. In 1909, money was bequeathed to the university to form a marine biological laboratory in La Jolla. In 1917, the Citrus Experiment Station opened in Riverside. In 1919, a southern branch of the University of California opened in Los Angeles.

While the early histories of what are now UC Davis, UCLA, UC San Diego, UCSF and UC Riverside began years prior, the university wasn’t organized into a system of campuses until 1952, 84 years after its founding. Various forms of the campus’ original identity as the University of California have endured to this day.

Background

Over the years, the campus has assumed two distinct identities: Berkeley and Cal. “Berkeley,” or “UC Berkeley,” is most often associated with academics and research. “California,” or “Cal,” is most often associated with athletics and is also an important part of the identity for alumni, students, faculty and staff. Some have said that Berkeley is the head and Cal is the heart of the institution.

Over time, decisions were made that further separated the two identities. Current guidelines preclude the mixing of Berkeley and Cal marks and names and the word “bears” and imagery of bears is not allowed to be mixed with the Berkeley name.

Having two distinct identities for one entity is highly problematic from a branding perspective. Some people do not realize that Berkeley and Cal are the same university, which means that the breadth of the institution is lost on them. Others may know that it is one university but continue to form independent associations with each name due to the way the identity is bifurcated.

Having two distinct identities has interfered with efforts to create a sense of belonging on campus. Some students, such as student athletes, feel excluded from the Berkeley identity because they're only allowed to use Cal in athletics contexts. Similarly, affinity groups have expressed concerns that current restrictions on the use of the Cal name hinder their equity and inclusion efforts.

Charge

The Berkeley/Cal Identity Task Force's charge was to develop a name framework for the campus. The task force was to examine the various names used formally or informally to identify the campus and to determine when and how these names should be used moving forward. Names currently used to identify the campus include "University of California, Berkeley," "UC Berkeley," "Cal," "California" and "Berkeley."

The task force's tasks were as follows:

- Review available data regarding the brand equity of the various names and marks currently in use.
- Review relevant best practices regarding branding and naming.
- Engage appropriately with relevant stakeholders, including: alumni, current students, faculty and staff, prospective students, donors and sponsors and peer institutions.
- Consider the implications of any changes to the way the campus is identified, including: national and international reputation; community pride and traditions; alumni and donor relations; faculty, staff and student recruitment and retention; licensing and sponsorship agreements; and budget.
- Develop a naming framework for identifying the campus moving forward.

Process

The Berkeley/Cal Identity Task Force met six times between August 2022 and December 2022. A smaller project team met frequently between meetings to help guide the process between task force meetings. The task force provided input on the research methodology

and reviewed the results, considered the implications of any changes, engaged stakeholders, considered several options for addressing these challenges and chose the final direction.

Recommendations

The Berkeley/Cal Identity Task Force is recommending that the campus take bold action to alleviate confusion, enhance the institution's reputation and better position the campus for the future.

The underlying assumption of these recommendations is that the sum of the whole is greater than its parts.

The goal is to enhance clarity, elevate community and clearly communicate the breadth of the campus' offerings and comprehensive excellence. The recommendations are informed by the research and best practices.

Recommendation #1

Adopt a unified campus brand strategy and framework that allows the Berkeley and Cal identities to coexist in an interconnected ecosystem. The framework should include common elements such as colors, graphics and typography that establish unity across all campus contexts.

Recommendation #2

Evolve and elevate Berkeley as the principal campus brand. Lead with Berkeley in academic, administrative, auxiliary, community, development and student life contexts, especially in naming campus units. Update the logo to reflect this change and look for ways to establish a visual connection to the athletics identity.

Recommendation #3

Shift the athletics identity to Cal Berkeley in both name and logo. Develop a visual identity that clearly communicates this shift.

Note: Following the approval of these recommendations, concerns were raised about George Berkeley's legacy of white supremacy. The vice chancellor for equity and inclusion has been asked to help lead the university's examination of these issues. These concerns are being considered as part of implementing these recommendations.

Recommendation #4

Define ways for Cal and Golden Bears to be used for community building within Berkeley contexts. Cal and Golden Bears may be used when naming athletic/fan offerings but not when naming institutional offerings.

Recommendation #5

Develop an implementation plan that drives impact but minimizes cost. Employ a “deplete and replace” strategy that prioritizes lower-cost and highest-visibility touchpoints first.

Considerations

The task force considered a wide range of factors before arriving at its recommendation. Below are some, but not all, of the key factors considered by the task force.

Comparison to other flagship universities

Many peer flagship universities are known informally by the name of their state. Some examples include:

- University of Michigan (Michigan)
- University of Minnesota (Minnesota)
- University of Oregon (Oregon)
- University of Texas (Texas)
- University of Wisconsin (Wisconsin)

Similarly, Berkeley has been known informally as “California,” or “Cal” for short, throughout its history.

For the first 84 years of its existence, Berkeley was simply the University of California. This changed in 1952 when the Regents reorganized the university into a system of semi-autonomous campuses. This legacy has led to the identity challenges that exist today.

Unlike with other flagship universities, when the Regents reorganized the university into a system, each campus was given equal footing. At most other flagship universities, the primary campus retains the university name and often has oversight over the other campuses. For example, it’s generally understood that for the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor is the primary campus of the university. Dearborn and Flint are considered regional campuses. The University of California is unique in being the exception to this rule.

The consensus of the task force, as supported by the research, was that it is not possible to hold onto “California” as the primary identity for the campus, given the history and structure of the UC system. The research shows that in both reputation and awareness, the campus’ strongest identity is “Berkeley.”

While it could be easy to begrudge the past actions of the university in catalyzing this shift, there is also much to be celebrated. In 2022, two of the UC campuses (Berkeley and UCLA) were ranked the #1 public university (tie) by U.S. News and World Report. And as of July 1, 2023, eight of the 10 campuses will be members of the distinguished [Association of American Universities](#). No other university has this distinction.

Confusion with Cal State

The task force considered whether shifting the athletics identity to Cal Berkeley would create confusion with the Cal State system. The research shows that there is less confusion about Cal Berkeley being part of the UC system than Cal on its own. In the Bay Area poll, 56% of respondents associate Cal Berkeley with the UC system as compared to 51% for Cal. An equal percentage, 26%, think Cal and Cal Berkeley are part of the Cal State system.

Comparison to other universities generally

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative research conducted for this project, the Additive and UC Berkeley teams conducted extensive desk research into how peers manage their academic and athletic identities. While some of our peers have very different visual identities in academics and athletics contexts, Berkeley is unique in lacking a verbal connection between the two. Many peer institutions have undergone efforts to better align their academic and athletic identities to create stronger associations between the two contexts.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research was conducted by the Additive Agency and Berkeley communications teams in September and October 2022. Alumni, students, faculty, staff and community leaders were included in this research, which included 37 interviews and five focus groups. A total of 63 individuals were included in the qualitative research.

Top-level findings

1. Berkeley is most strongly associated with “academic excellence,” the institution’s “public mission,” and as “the global brand.”

2. Cal associations and affinity transcend athletics, and it is seen as an “affectionate nickname” or “handshake” for those in the community.
3. There is some consensus that despite the legacy, there should be a move away from using “California” without context.
4. Although most agree that there is an identity challenge, there is some skepticism around the ability to implement and sustain change.
5. While many see a future where the identities co-exist, they are seeking empowering tools rather than rigid rules.

Quantitative research

Berkeley is a founding member of the Association of American Universities. The association's Public Opinion Research team was engaged to conduct quantitative analysis in support of the task force's work. This research was led by Ken Goldstein, Ph.D., senior vice president of survey research and institutional policy, and Giacomo Squatriti, senior research analyst. A summary memo on the results, encompassing surveys of both external public opinion and attitudes among internal stakeholders, is below.

Public opinion insights memo

Association of American Universities — Ken Goldstein and Giacomo Squatriti

Nov. 16, 2022

As a part of this project, seven different studies were fielded in October 2022 to investigate attitudes toward the various names associated with UC Berkeley — two national studies, a California study with an oversample of the Bay Area, and internal studies of alumni, staff, faculty, and students. Using a variety of measurement strategies, the general population studies determined that there is significant ambiguity about the UC Berkeley brand, while our internal studies revealed a clear preference for the "Berkeley" name over "Cal."

Brand ambiguity

There is widespread confusion about the UC Berkeley brand, especially at the national level. When Americans were asked if they knew the names "Berkeley," "UC Berkeley," "Cal Berkeley," and "Cal" referred to the same university, 42% said they didn't know, and another 24% said they weren't sure whether they did (66% total). This ambiguity exists even in California, where 36% of adults didn't know the names were connected, along with 21% in the Bay Area.

Name recognition

We also experimented with "Berkeley," "UC Berkeley," "Cal Berkeley," and "Cal" and found that external public opinion is much less familiar with "Cal" and it is significantly less recognized than "Berkeley." When Americans were asked to describe the reputation of "Cal," almost a third answered "Don't know" (29%), and another 43% answered "Never heard of it" (72% total unaware). "Berkeley" had the most awareness of all four names, with only 34% of Americans answering "Don't know" and 13% "Never heard of it" (47% total unaware, see table below). The same was true in California and the Bay Area, where the name "Cal" was significantly less recognized than the names "Berkeley," "UC Berkeley," and even "Cal Berkeley."

National

Q. How would you describe the reputation of INSERT SCHOOL?

Name	Excellent/Good	Not so good/Poor	Don't know/Never heard of it
Cal	19%	9%	72%
Cal Berkeley	29%	13%	58%
UC Berkeley	32%	16%	53%
Berkeley	36%	17%	47%

This lack of awareness of the name “Cal” emerged again in the national studies when Americans were asked which institutions are among America’s leading research universities. Less than one-in-ten Americans selected “Cal” (7%), while 17% and 18% selected “UC Berkeley” and “Cal Berkeley.” The name “Berkeley” ranked highest, with 21% of Americans selecting it as a leading research university. That said, across these formulations, UC Berkeley did underperform when compared to benchmark schools.

Name associations

Among the public and internal audiences like students, staff, faculty, and alumni, we found that the “Cal” brand is most associated with athletics, while the “Berkeley” brand has strong associations with everything else tested. In California, the trait most associated with the “Cal” script was athletics (47%), while the traits most associated with the “Berkeley” seal were academic prestige (59%) and high-achieving students (42%). Interestingly, school pride popped as a trait associated with either brand; however, across the board, most traits were generally more associated with the “Berkeley” brand than “Cal” (see table below). This trend was consistent in the internal studies, with students, faculty, staff, and alumni strongly associating the name “Berkeley” with everything outside athletics, and athletics and school pride standing alone as the main traits associated with the name “Cal.”

California

Q. Which of the following qualities do you associate with this image?

Traits	Berkeley seal	Cal script
Academic prestige	59%	26%
High-achieving students	42%	25%
School pride	34%	43%
Global leadership	25%	15%
Welcoming to all	20%	25%
Cutting-edge research	19%	12%

Athletics	9%	47%
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Audience preferences

When internal audiences were asked about their preferences for what UC Berkeley should be called, there was a notable preference for the name “UC Berkeley.” Among undergraduate students, more than a third said they prefer “UC Berkeley” (36%), and another one in five said they prefer “Berkeley” (20%). Alumni, staff, and faculty were more decisive, with 45% of alumni, 51% of faculty, and 53% of staff preferring the name “UC Berkeley.” The name “Berkeley” received the second highest support, while “Cal” received little support among internal audiences. That said, a significant portion of internal audiences also had no preference one way or the other (17% to 33%, see table below).

Internal

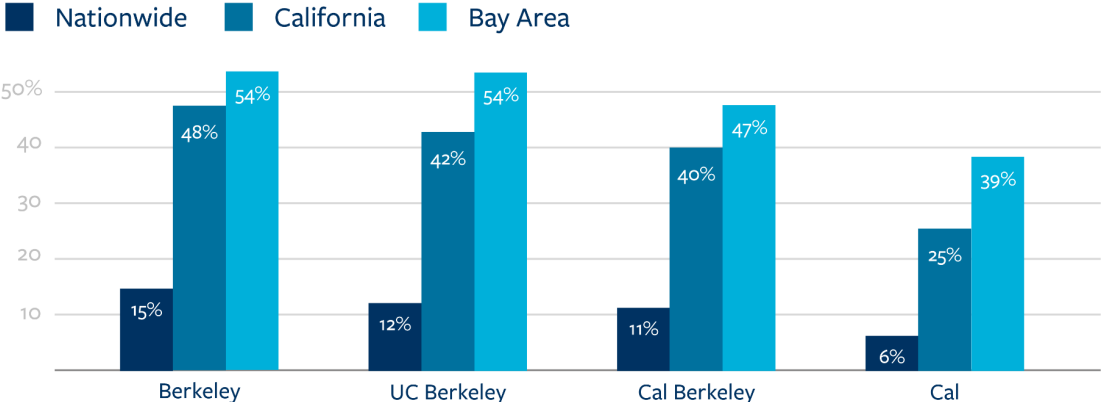
Q. Do you have a preference for how the university should refer to itself?

Preference	Undergraduates	Graduates	Staff	Faculty
Yes, I prefer UC Berkeley	36%	48%	53%	51%
Yes, I prefer Berkeley	20%	22%	7%	22%
Yes, I prefer Cal	6%	4%	6%	1%
Yes, I prefer some other way	3%	2%	5%	4%
Yes, I prefer Cal Berkeley	1%	2%	5%	3%
No. I don't really have a preference	33%	22%	23%	17%

Key findings

“Excellent” reputation % at national, state, local levels

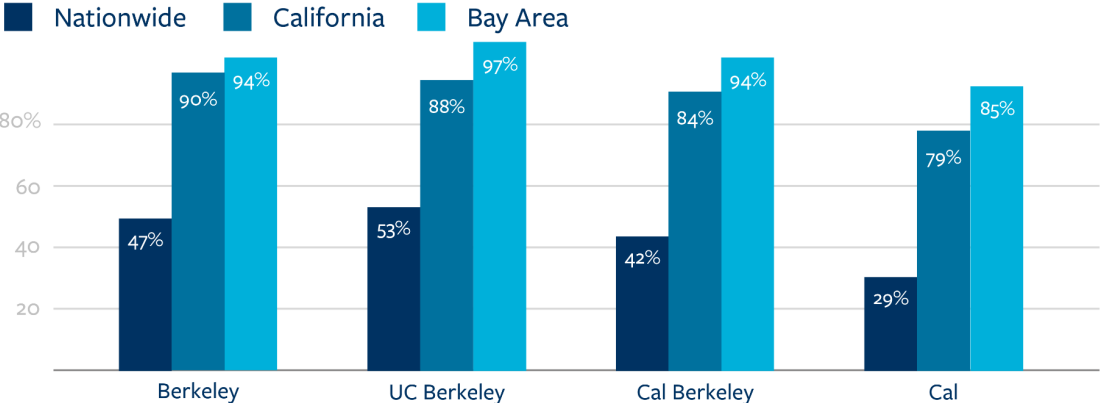
Percent of sample saying the institution’s reputation is “excellent,” using different names.



Data from studies of public opinion and attitudes at national, state, and local (9 counties) level. N = 3,088 US adults, 3,118 California adults, 1,163 Bay Area adults.

Institutional awareness at national, state, and local levels

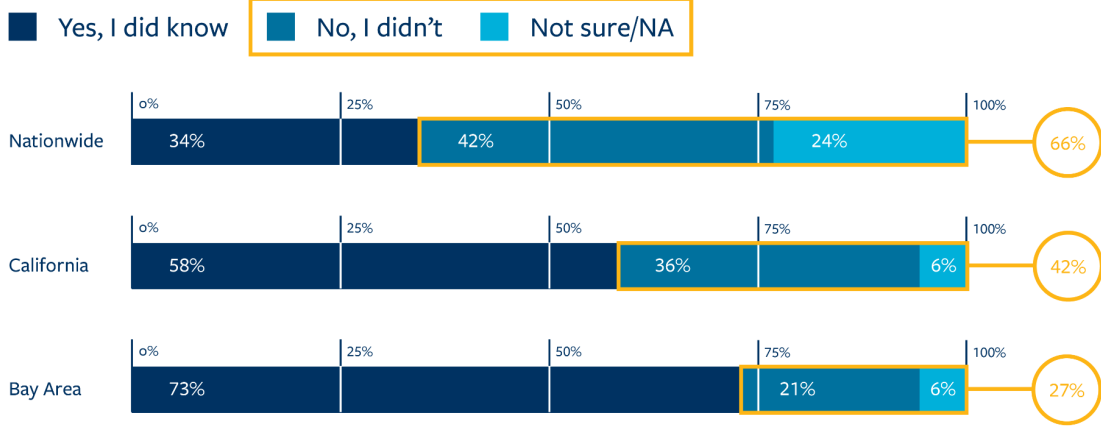
Awareness is a measure of the respondents who “have heard of” or “recognize” the institution.



Data from studies of public opinion and attitudes at national, state, and local (9 counties) level. N = 3,088 US adults, 3,118 California adults, 1,163 Bay Area adults.

Many unaware Berkeley and Cal are same school

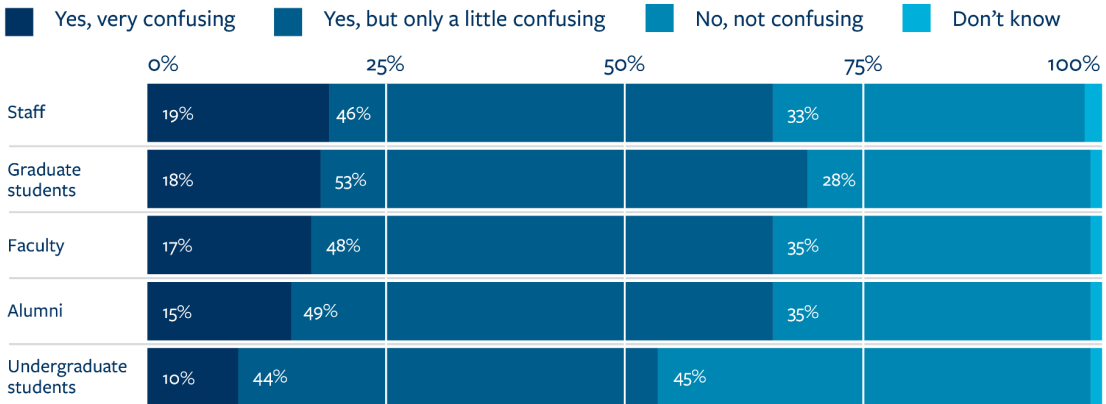
Q. The University of California, Berkeley is often referred to as either Berkeley, Cal, UC Berkeley, or Cal Berkeley. Before taking this survey, did you know that Berkeley, Cal, UC Berkeley, or Cal Berkeley are all names for the same university?



Data from studies of public opinion and attitudes at national, state, and local (9 counties) level. N = 3,088 US adults, 3,118 California adults, 1,163 Bay Area adults.

Confusion about names — internal groups

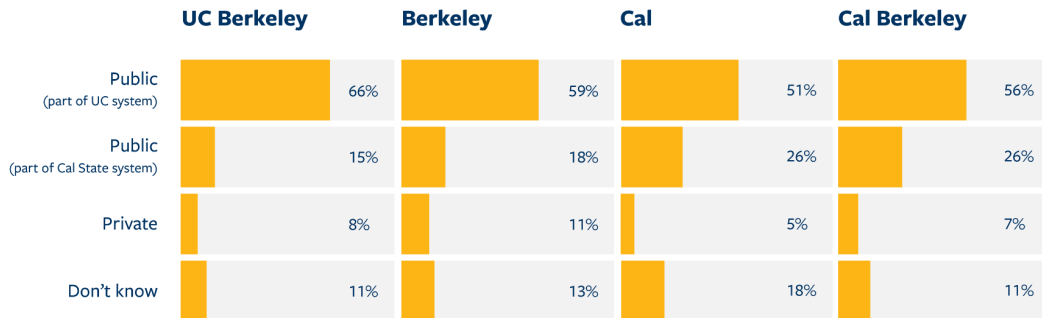
Q. Do you think that the different ways of referring to our university are confusing? (For example, Berkeley and Cal)



Data from studies of internal audiences' attitudes, fielded in October 2022. N = 1,669 alumni, 417 faculty, 1,442 staff, 1,030 undergraduate students, 870 graduate students

Bay Area — *Public or Private*

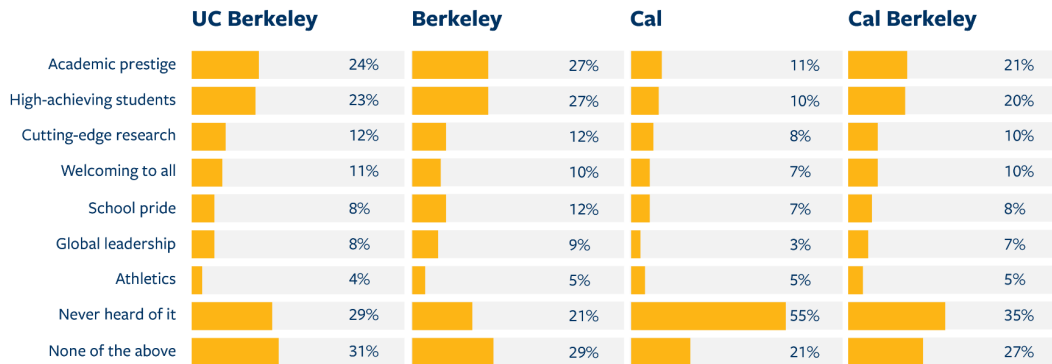
State Q30. As far as you know, which of the following describes INSERT best?



National — *Qualities*

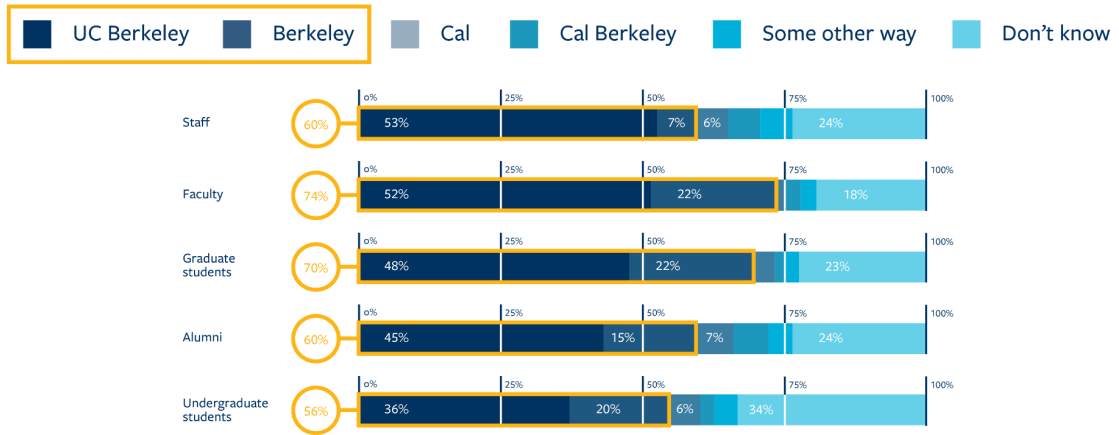
National Q3. Below is a list of qualities that people use to describe different colleges and universities.

Which of the following qualities do you associate with Berkeley? Select all that apply. **Split A-D**



Preferences — internal groups

Q. Do you have a preference for how the university should refer to itself?



Data from studies of internal audiences' attitudes, fielded in October 2022. N = 1,669 alumni, 417 faculty, 1,442 staff, 1,030 undergraduate students, 870 graduate students

Task force membership

- Patrick Holmes, Co-Chair, Executive Director of Communications & Marketing, Communications & Public Affairs
- Oliver O'Reilly, Co-Chair, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education
- Julie Conner, Deputy Campus Counsel
- Cameron Deptula '22, Undergraduate Student
- Jay Dillon, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, University Development and Alumni Relations
- Ty-Ron Douglas, Associate Athletics Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging & Justice
- Markeisha Everett, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Athletics
- Neil Freese, Creative Director, Communications & Public Affairs
- Khira Adams Griscavage, Associate Chancellor
- Diana Harvey, Associate Vice Chancellor, Communications & Public Affairs
- Eryn Hong, Associate Director of Brand Protection
- Elisa Diana Huerta, Interim Senior Director, Centers for Educational Justice & Community Engagement, Division of Equity and Inclusion
- Sarah Juckniess, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications, Cal Alumni Association Richard Lyons, Chief Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer
- Bahar Navab, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, Division of Student Affairs
- Bill Pearce, Continuing Professional Faculty, Haas School of Business
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- Mary Ann Smart, Chair, Berkeley Division, Academic Senate

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Association of American Universities

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