

August 31, 2016

To members of the campus community:

Last week we announced that the physical development of the Berkeley Global Campus in Richmond Bay has been suspended. We would like to clarify a few important points about what this means for both the university and for the community and city of Richmond.

First, this decision in no way signals a diminishment of our commitment to making Berkeley a more global university. In the 21st century, a great college education and a great research enterprise must be global in reach and scope. Berkeley will continue to broaden and deepen academic partnerships with universities across the world, including research partnerships with universities such as Cambridge, the National University of Singapore and Tsinghua, and student study abroad programs in dozens of countries, from Peru and Germany to France and India. Programs of this sort are an essential part of what makes Berkeley special, and we have every intention to continue developing more and more such programs with partner universities across the globe.

On the other hand, there have been significant changes in recent months to our plans for the development of the campus in Richmond Bay. The significant budgetary challenges facing the university require that we focus our attention for the time being on the main campus. While we still have significant hopes for how the Richmond site will be developed – ranging from new housing to international programs to expanding and adding to our many industry research partnerships – such opportunities will need to be evaluated in light of the campus's evolving strategic priorities. At present these priorities include exploring opportunities to build housing for students and faculty on the site, as well as possible joint ventures with UCSF.

Last week I met personally with the members of the Richmond Community Working Group, where we discussed this change in plans. This working group had engaged in an eighteen-month process to develop recommendations designed to ensure that the development of the Richmond Bay campus would broadly benefit the Richmond community. In April, it submitted a robust set of recommendations to the campus around education, housing, local employment, procurement, and workforce training. This built on the longstanding commitments the University has made to provide educational support and employment opportunities for the residents of Richmond.

While I expressed my regret that the project for Richmond Bay will not be moving forward as quickly as we would like, I also conveyed my sincere respect and appreciation for the time and effort expended by so many Richmond community members in developing the working group's recommendations. I also reassured them that despite recent changes in our thinking about how best to move forward with the Richmond campus, the University is continuing to explore options for what is still a valuable and important asset for the future development of UC Berkeley. I have no doubt that when we are in a position to commence new projects on the Richmond Bay campus, the working group's recommendations will provide an important foundation for our work, in the context of continuing our productive engagement with the community.

Above all, the university remains 100% committed to ensuring that whenever the further development of the site does take place, in whatever form, that it will be done in a way that provides benefit not only to the University, but also the city and community of Richmond.

Fiat lux,
Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks