

To: Chancellor Cynthia Larive
The University of California, Santa Cruz

March 7, 2020

Subject: Meeting with UC Students from Hawai'i Re: Thirty Meter Telescope

Dear Chancellor Larive,

As current and former UC Santa Cruz students who also belong to the Hawaiian community, we are writing to ask for your help in our efforts to reach UC leadership regarding the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project. We would like to formally invite you to meet with us to discuss the TMT project, its impacts on our families and Hawaiian community, and how you may be able to work with us to ensure that our message is heard and action is taken.

Mauna Kea is the most sacred mountain to Native Hawaiians; it is the space in which life was first created and centers us back to our cultural values. Historically, Mauna Kea is a kapu (sacred) space, where only those who possess spiritual mana (power) were able to travel to the summit. In Hawai'i, we are taught from a young age to mālama (care for, preserve) our 'āina (land), including sacred spaces.

As you likely are aware, the University of California system has been one of the driving forces behind the TMT Project since its inception. UC Santa Cruz faculty, in particular, have played leading roles in advancing the project. Currently, the UC is one of six owners of the TMT International Observatory, LLC (TIO), which manages the TMT project. UC officials occupy numerous TIO leadership posts, including UC Santa Cruz Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics Michael Bolte, who is a TIO associate director. "The TMT has its roots at UC Santa Cruz, where astronomers have been working for years on the design of this powerful new telescope," a [UCSC news article](#) stated in 2014.

Last July 15th, as the UC and its TIO partner institutions attempted to initiate construction of the TMT project, hundreds of Mauna Kea Kia'i (protectors) established a peaceful encampment and blockade at the base of the mountain, which drew international attention and brought construction activities to a halt. Tragically, thirty-three of our kūpuna (elders) were arrested. Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Native Hawaiians have reduced their presence on the mountain, but the threat of TMT construction remains.

The construction of an 18-story, five-acre telescope complex on our most sacred grounds is unacceptable to us. For the UC to build a telescope that will irreversibly damage the culture and environment at Mauna Kea is an act of violence and utter disrespect to the Native Hawaiian community and our kupuna (elders). When the UC funds and stands behind projects that promote the desecration of Indigenous peoples' sacred sites in the name of scientific discovery, this harms indigenous students and community members. As a result of great

distress regarding the crisis on Mauna Kea, many of us have felt compelled to spent large portions of our 2019 and 2020 academic years attending meetings, educating the public and fellow students, and pouring our energy into community organizing for Mauna Kea — just as our communities back home in Hawaii have been forced to do.

Most of us have attended meetings of the UC Regents and attempted to communicate urgent messages regarding the TMT, and have felt largely disregarded in that process, challenged by how inaccessible the decision makers of the UC system are. We understand that as Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz, you do not have any direct decision making power in regards to the UC's ties with the TMT project, or the involvement of UCSC's departments with the project. However, you are a leadership figure within the UC that, we hope, may be more accessible and able to engage with us and potentially help represent our interests and convey our messages to those who do have the power to make decisions regarding the TMT.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, invite you to meet with us— over Zoom or a similar platform—for a discussion of the harmful impacts of the Thirty Meter Telescope project and what can be done regarding the UC's investment and involvement. We hope to hear from you soon.

Kū Kia'i Mauna,

Signed,

Karli DeRego, Native Hawaiian, UCSC Graduate Student
