

Office of the President
Associated Students
202 Highlander Union Building
Riverside, CA 92521

Statement on Proposed Changes to the 2020 UCR Commencement

As your ASUCR President, it is my responsibility to inform you, the student body, about decisions that are made by the campus that will impact you and the future. On Wednesday, October 14th, 2019 at the ASUCR Senate Meeting it was announced by the Dean of Students, Dr. Christine Mata and Assistant Vice Chancellor of Alumni and Constituent Relations, Jorge Ancona, that there would be significant changes to the Class of 2020 Commencement ceremony. These changes would get rid of many of the traditional aspects of the ceremony.

After posting my initial announcement on my personal social media, which I rarely do, the response has been overwhelmingly against these changes. Like many of you, I disagree with these changes as well. I am offended by the fact that our campus intentionally leaves students out of important decisions because they know we would fight back. Yet, they decide to come to us for “input/feedback” knowing they had already signed contracts and made final payments. As a student leader who has seen this happen time and time since I have been on campus is honestly tiring and discouraging. Based on what I have heard from all of you, this is a genuine disregard for the hard work and investments we and our families have given since the day we stepped foot onto the campus. I agree. We have all worked so much for this one moment and it seems that our campus leadership does not care. I do not want to use or have anyone view this statement as a way to attack our campus leadership. Rather, I want to shed light on the fact that this is not okay

for them to continuously do. I ran on uniting our student body, and I believe this is the perfect time to do it. It is finally time we say enough.

A lot of you have asked for details of what is changing, and to be as transparent as possible, I know as much as you know at the moment. Here is what ASUCR knows. The 2020 Commencement is going to be held at the Toyota Arena in Ontario, CA. The venue is already paid for. There will be three large ceremonies. The ticket system will still be used, but the amount of tickets students will receive is unknown. The biggest change of all: no graduates' name will be read aloud. In order to make Commencement "more personal", the campus will be hosting smaller events during the weekend to celebrate students and their families. The reasoning behind these changes were a result of the class being too big to accommodate and to address the concerns of previous graduates, staff and faculty. That is all I know at the moment.

Furthermore, many of you have asked, what can we do to stop this? I thought about this question for the past 48 hours and although I wish I had a perfect solution, I do not. But I have planned the next few steps and believe that we can have our voices heard if we unite behind this issue now. I have created a petition and survey to share throughout the campus, your families, the community and for any supporters to sign and participate in. The link will be on all ASUCR social media and website. I have also reserved a room for students to come, eat lunch, and brainstorm actionable solutions to present to Administration. More details will be posted soon on the ASUCR social media and website. The link to the petition and details to the event will also be sent out through mass email this upcoming Wednesday.

To conclude, I want to say, I agree with all of you. This is wrong. I feel like our families are being robbed of a moment that we have put blood, sweat and tears into. I do not know what the outcome of our fight will be. But this will be a fight where I need a lot of support from the

student body. I can't make any promises, but I can assure you I will give whatever I can to get the commencement every student in the Class of 2020 and those that follow deserves. I ran for President for times like this. I believe in us. I believe in our voice. I believe in our power.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Julian Gonzalez', written over a horizontal line.

Julian Gonzalez
ASUCR President