

Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

Virtual Meeting October 27, 2020

The meeting was convened at 6:00 pm.

Items for the Good of the Order:

The Warden reviewed updated protocols for this semester's meetings due to these unique circumstances.

The Warden reported that the Arleigh Williams Forum, with keynote speaker Alexei Vranich, was a success, with over 100 attendees.

Items for the Good of the University: Campus Preparedness for Disaster

Prior to the meeting, the Warden prepared a set of questions and resources for the Fellowship to inform our conversation of the topic:

On the topic of Campus Preparedness for Disaster, here are some questions to consider:

- What have we as a community learned from previous interruptions (PGE blackouts, wildfire smoke, etc.) in order to be more prepared for unexpected, campus-closing events in the future? How has campus responded and adapted during these interruptions?
- What areas should the University work on to be more prepared for a situation like this in the future (given that wildfires only seem to be increasing and could have further effects on the campus in the future semesters)?
- Even though campus may be ready to quickly transition to online learning in the case of campus closures, how would the community be prepared to handle power outages which render online learning non-viable?
- What can the campus do to provide as many critical services (healthcare, counseling, student advising, etc.) in the case that the campus is not accessible? How has the University been doing so far in providing these services during this crisis?
- What can the University and the surrounding community do to maintain the health (physical and mental) of those both living on and off campus (with fires, power outages, etc.)?

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After a brief introduction from the Warden, the floor was open for the Fellowship for discussion:

- A Fellow highlights the importance of this discussion, especially outside of the context of COVID-related issues
 - The Fellow notes that these issues have been plaguing the campus for some time
 - There have been trainings for fire/earthquake safety, however, there was no preparation in the case of a large-scale event that could disrupt the campus
 - Issue of prioritizing different campus activities during these situations
 - If we are to be remote, the campus should create a tier list of campus services ranked by importance
 - Need to emphasize Non-Classroom related resources, such as Tang Center/Counseling services
- A Fellow highlights the importance of personal preparedness, but also that the University should be prepared as a whole
 - There has been some improvement in preparing students, however, there is a long way to go
 - Students should be prepared more than just on a regularly-scheduled drill level
 - Helpful for the University (with yearly turnover rates, completely new cohort every 4 years) to frequently refresh and review emergency procedures
- A Fellow notes that the Office of Emergency Management has a program through DSP whereby students with disabilities can bring up concerns regarding emergency procedures and request and assessment of emergency protocols
 - Can make adjustments if necessary
 - This program will be helpful for clarifications and assessment of current emergency procedures

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- A Fellow brings up the issue of continuous wildfire smoke every year
 - Many students have suffered with increasingly worse AQI year to year
 - The Fellow questions if there are filtration systems in place on campus to help reduce the effects for member of the community who will be on campus during these High-AQI events
- A Fellow notes that it is uncertain if the campus has its own water supply, just as it does its own power supply
 - EBMUD could lose power as well during rolling blackouts
 - EBMUD encourages residents to conserve water in the case of power shutoffs
 - Most water still needs to be pumped up to residents in the Bay Area
- A Fellow remarks that the response from the University has generally been lacking
 - Back when the wildfires were occurring in 2017, the University did not have enough N95 masks to provide for the students
 - The ASUC worked to provide N95 masks for the students
 - The University should work to provide a more rapid, coherent response in times of disaster
 - Campus can do a better job of providing academic accommodations during times of disaster, Professors seem to continue full steam ahead even when students are not in a position to prioritize academics (power outages, evacuations)
- A Fellow notes that communication has become more streamlined since the first round of PGE shutoffs up to the current COVID procedures
 - Campus should have more uniform guidelines and response for certain emergencies (e.g., AQI limits to cancel classes)
 - Campus should consider physical well-being as well as stressor effects from academics
 - Seemed to be little to no accommodations from professors (or at least no uniform response guidelines)

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- A Fellow highlights the importance of mental well-being while undergoing a disaster
 - Physical safety and well-being is important, but there also needs to be an emphasis on Students' mental well-being and the effects that these disasters could cause
 - Having a general sense of understanding, with as much transparency as possible, could help reduce mental stress at this time
 - There should be a more uniform response for academic accommodations depending on the severity of the disaster which campus and students are facing
 - Professors can also undertake their own form of accommodations to help students in their courses during times of disaster
- A Fellow emphasizes a point made by a previous speaker to have an emergency preparedness kit for all students
 - The Campus could also provide some resources for students to add to these
 - The Campus can clarify evacuation routes, contact information, and other emergency procedures
- A Fellow recalls that students only experience preparedness training while living in the dorms, nothing is covered afterwards
 - Vast majority of students move out of the dorms after freshman year, but they receive no training for emergency preparedness while living in apartments
 - Campus could provide some more training for these students who don't receive any guidance for emergency preparedness while living in off-campus housing
- A Fellow notes that we know what disasters we should expect in the coming years (wildfires, power shutoffs, etc.)
 - Campus should provide a module on how to deal with these events while attending Berkeley
 - It is becoming a way of life and part of the Berkeley experience
 - Students are going to experience these during their time at Berkeley, so we should work to prepare them when they first get on campus

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- A Fellow notes that since other colleges/universities have experienced these disasters, there has to be things that we can learn from them to help us prepare for these events
- A Fellow notes the importance of having an out of state contact in the case that communications are disrupted in-state
- A Fellow notes the importance of having information from the campus ahead of time so everyone has a general idea of what to do in the case of an emergency

The meeting closed with song and was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Meeting Minutes taken and compiled by the Chronicler for the Order.