

# Order of The Golden Bear

ΔΙΩΚΩ

ESTABLISHED 1900

## **Virtual Meeting February 2, 2021**

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.

### **Items for the Good of the University: Return to On-Campus Events**

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 Return to On-Campus Events, here are some questions to consider:*

- How can we ensure a successful transition back to in-person classes and on-campus events?
- What did we learn from our virtual experience? What positives from online learning can we use when we return to in-person classes?
- Although online learning did have some benefits, it also highlighted the stark inequality of higher education and lack of resources for many students. How can we solve these problems as students come back to campus?
- What assistance will faculty require as they begin to teach in person again?

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

- A Fellow raises a concern about a recent report that 184 students in Berkeley had tested positive for Covid-19 as well as where they are isolating. The current quarantine location is the Foothill Dorms, but this

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location is full. As an older member of the Faculty with preexisting conditions, this fellow is worried about a safe return to campus given these conditions

- The Fellow notes that the rise in these cases are linked to the activities and gathering of students for social events while these are linked to rises in cases
- A Fellow raises the question of how significant this current number is in relation to previous case reports (higher, lower, is the situation getting better/worse, etc.)
- A Fellow responds to a previous speaker's question: The previous high for the case counts for a single week was 50
  - Campus has responded with a strict lockdown of the dorms
  - Limited reasons for leaving, essentially only for food from dining halls
  - Student workers are not allowed on campus if they live in the dorm
- A Fellow suggests that the rise in cases could be linked to the holiday season, but poses the question of why students at our university would be taking such risks knowingly
- A Fellow echoes the concerns of previous speakers in regard to the sharp rise in cases on campus
  - It is disconcerting that Berkeley students are not seeing the impacts of their actions on the greater population
  - This speaker notes that folks in the recently admitted freshmen and transfer class are feeling the burden of isolation in not being able to participate in the college experience
  - The Fellow raises the concept of having two separate classes (50% of the student body) who will not have a connection to the campus by the time they first set foot on campus when it reopens
- A Fellow notes that there is a sentiment among younger individuals having a lack of awareness that their actions could spread COVID, especially in the case where they don't think that they will not suffer from it
  - The Fellow poses the question of whether campus could create some incentive for people to stay home, form some message of hope
  - Students are not seeing any consequences to their actions, will keep gathering irresponsibly
  - Need to rally around a reason of hope

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- A Fellow notes that the students who are isolating in Foothill feel more at risk while in quarantine
  - Since many spaces are shared (hallways, bathrooms, etc.)
  - Are there solutions to fix the sequestration process to reduce the impact of increased exposure in this situation
- A Fellow, current student, notes that it is often the individuals who are fairly responsible who contract COVID
  - It is not just the students who are actively going out and partying
  - Trying to find a way to be safe while also engaging in safe social interaction
  - The methods that may have worked in the Fall might not be effective in these current conditions
  - The Fellow suggests restructuring the narrative which we portray in assuming all students who get COVID are out partying and being irresponsible
- A Fellow collects from previous speakers that it appears that more students are currently on campus than this past Fall
  - This Fellow suggests that it makes sense that cases are rising as more students are around
  - With more students are campus, are more campus resources available to account for this increase
    - Ways to increase safety from the University
  - What is the university's ability to respond given these increases in return to campus
- A Fellow echoes the sentiments from a previous speaker - that not all students on campus are out partying and being irresponsible
  - Can the university provide any sort of buddy/partner system to connect students together who might not have any experiences in Berkeley
  - Possibly help facilitate safe interactions and reduce the interest in wandering into unsafe activities
- A Fellow notes that Campus officials are aware that there is an increase in students returning to the Berkeley area
  - No hard evidence on this though
  - Surge in Off-Campus Gatherings

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- Encouraging students to report large gatherings to the Center for Student Conduct
- Take an educational approach
  - In the Fall, our COVID rates were fairly low for a school of our size
- Tap into the competitive nature of Berkeley
- In the Dorms, each Floor is its own household unit, ways to engage and be connected
- There is a student developed website – ConnectedAtCal
  - (<https://connected.berkeley.edu/>)
- Highlight innovation of Berkeley students to try to find ways to get through these difficult times
- A Fellow reiterates the need for a “Light at the end of the tunnel” message to bring hope and something to look forward to
  - This Fellow poses the question to alumni and other fellows “What would make you want to stay in and isolate during your college experience”
- A Fellow notes that it is not just our students, but our entire nation is tired of experiencing this isolation
  - The Fellow suggests that the media intake that we are viewing is significantly affecting the way we view this whole situation
  - We are tired of seeing everyone else going out when we are so limited
  - Berkeley has more restrictions than any other place that this fellow is aware of
  - Campus officials are actively staying up to date on what the restrictions are for the current week
  - We have a leadership team that is actively looking for ways to try to connect people during these trying times
  - Trying to get feedback from students
  - What can campus do to get people connected to everything available
  - How do we pass on the culture/How do we change the culture that we would want it to be?
- A Fellow echoes the pushback of generalizations about students who contract COVID
  - This Fellow notes that this is a much larger issue than just a singular pandemic, there are many more issues at play

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- It is difficult to continue to follow the rules when everyone else is breaking them
- Berkeley has a culture of rejecting leadership and establishment, possibly needs to be a grassroots movement
- Weight of a correction from a fellow student is possibly more effective than discipline from the administration
- A Fellow notes that the comments this evening have highlighted the seriousness of this situation
  - The mention of buddies and connections between students and alums could have a positive impact if enacted correctly
- A Fellow mentions that the gap in the presence on campus will affect many traditions and norms
  - Could possibly die out if not reinforced by campus or alumni
- A Fellow states that there are many events on campus that students should be made more aware of
  - This fellow suggests that Campus could have spirit organizations help give students a sense of belonging
  - Does Campus have the power to engage with these students?
- A Fellow notes that although we are planning to return back to campus in the fall, we are not sure what it will look like
  - There is a lot to be thought about during this process
  - We do not know exactly what this return plan will look like?
  - This Fellow raises the question of “what about online education has worked? Is there anything that is worth continuing after this pandemic is over?”
- A Fellow highlights an article about Santa Clara, where a large frat party occurred this past weekend
  - Santa Clara has an app to report irresponsible gatherings
  - This Fellow worries that students are going to try to cram in a lot of experiences in their last remaining terms, maybe pushing them to take more risks than normal
  - Worry about the general state of Student Health
  - The Fellow raises the question about how to ensure that Students will be vaccinated
- A Fellow, a student, addresses a previous point about implementing online videos or events for students

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- The Fellow notes that students are tired of Zoom, they are tired of looking at a computer screen all day
- They appreciate the work that goes into preparing these events, but they are just so tired of staring at a screen
- The concept of recording lectures could be useful for students who are unable to attend lectures due to a physical injury in a normal semester
- A Fellow responds to the question of what would incentivize students to be safe
  - Find a way to motivate students to put in the work to be safe now to create a reasonable sense of return to normalcy
  - The Fellow notes that hypothetically if this were a localized epidemic (just in the Berkeley community), students would not be able to attend lecture
  - There would be no chances for students to interact and continue with their academics
  - Some of the challenges hindering the concept of building a community involves the lack of presence on campus from students
- A Fellow raises the question of whether the possibility of creating a hybrid program is possible
  - For example, would it be possible to have a small group of students touring around the campus just to get a feel for the nature of campus
  - It would be interesting for students to learn about a wide array of aspects of the campus
- A Fellow commends the effort from campus to provide all students with adequate technology resources during the remote learning process
  - This Fellow suggests that this emphasis on students having adequate resources and technology continues after we return to campus
  - It is possible that this return to campus will have a long transition period, and it might not be back to normal immediately
  - How do we safely return to campus while also implementing group and club regulations
  - The Fellow also suggests that the implementation of safe outdoor activities would be very impactful
- A Fellow brings up some of the positives of remote learning:
  - Recorded Lectures: the ability to pause and rewind could facilitate learning and retention of information that is going on

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- Even in live lecture, it is easy to miss something a professor says or writes down
- Zoom: Work remotely with projects partners anywhere; being able to work on a project without being in the same physical space as collaborators
- A Fellow thanks the previous speakers who have contributed to this conversation
  - This Fellow reiterates the concept of a gradual return (not immediate) to campus
  - Hypothetically, if Covid were to disappear and we could return to campus, how would the Admin help those who felt isolated during this time
  - Question: What are some ways we could spark the excitement of all students who haven't been around yet?
- A Fellow notes that only students and essential employees are allowed on campus
  - It is a very different world than what we are allowed to do
  - The Campus has done a great job with implementing tiers
  - Piloting outdoor academic gatherings - 25 people max
  - Campus has been updating its response essentially hourly, as quickly as local guidelines change
  - Campus has to rethink on how we approach certain events which might not be reasonable
  - Campus will be in need of Golden Bear Orientation (GBO) Leaders for all the people that will be returning to campus
- A Fellow comments on the speed of return to campus:
  - We left campus very abruptly
  - We will not be returning to campus as suddenly as we left it
  - The return to campus began back in May and June, and it has been a very gradual process thus far
  - We are not going to be vaccinated overnight, it is not going to get eradicated permanently
  - In general, hope that everyone will be patient with the entire return process
- A Fellow poses the question of how many students are trying to access CAPS counseling services during this time

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- Second question: What would the vaccination rollout plan look like?
- A Fellow responds to the previous speaker's question:
  - 900 doses received and administered so far
  - Primary group: Campus Healthcare workers
  - As soon as we have the doses, Campus is ready to rollout a mass vaccination plan
- A Fellow also responds to the previous question:
  - 700 new doses arriving on campus this week
  - At the mercy of the State's determination about allocation
  - Emphasis on the Healthcare and Campus Communities
  - The possible return would most likely look like what would be a mix of what we were used to and what we could expect (Spring 2021)

The meeting closed with song and was adjourned at 7:24 pm.

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