

[NOTE: Please personalize the message below to make it your own! Personalized messages are often taken more seriously than a bunch of identical emails.]

SUBJECT: Request for Universal Access

Hello **INSERT PROF'S NAME**,

I hope that you've been okay, all things considered.

I'm reaching out because I have an urgent equity concern I'm hoping you can assist with.

The recent announcement that UCI will be returning to in-person instruction on Jan. 31 has caused considerable mixed feelings among graduate students.

In addition to the fact that Provost Stern's email [falsely claims that student government leaders were consulted](#) in making this decision, students have urgent concerns with the University's recent guidance.

Although some are eager to return to in-person instruction, many students are terrified--and I do not mean this hyperbolically--at the prospect of being forced to return to classes during the current Omicron spike. Additionally, there are students whose childcare support has evaporated during the Omicron spike, for whom a forced return to in-person instruction would be essentially impossible. Moreover, the one week of notice is inadequate for any students who are abroad to return to UCI (especially if they correctly follow the University's sequestration policy).

Perhaps most alarmingly, although the Disability Services Center is helping as many students as they can, some students are, unfortunately, having their accommodations requests denied. Moreover, the DSC is simply unable to assist students who are not themselves disabled or immunocompromised but who live with or care for someone who is.

I'm reaching out to see if you could pass this letter along to all faculty in the department.

I strongly urge the department to commit to providing an online option for all courses at least until the end of the Winter quarter (and ideally until at least the end of this academic year). I understand that this request has the potential to create more work for faculty, but this is an equity issue, since a forced return to in-person would disproportionately negatively affect international students, disabled or immunocompromised students, students who live with and/or care for individuals who are disabled or immunocompromised, and students who are caregivers.

Additionally, I encourage the department to draft a letter in solidarity with the student body. Specifically, I encourage the department to stand in solidarity on the following: 1) that it is alarming that that Provost Stern's email falsely claims that student government leaders were consulted in the re-opening decision; and 2) that the department opposes the University's apparent disregard for international students, student caregivers, and those who are disabled and/or immunocompromised.

Some departments, including the Department of Dance and the Department of Sociology, have committed to accommodating all students who request a continued online learning option. I would like to urge our department to provide Universal Access as well, which would allow students to continue learning online (no documentation required, no questions asked).

Here is the statement that UCI Sociology has sent to all students:

"Faculty in the Department of Sociology commit to accommodating continued online learning for all students who self-determine that they need such accommodations, no questions asked, for the remainder of winter quarter. We require no documentation. We make this commitment on equity grounds, and we support the call of student government leaders for greater transparency and consultation vis-à-vis the decision to begin in-person instruction."

I understand that this request has the potential to create more work for faculty, and I am angry that the University's lack of proper planning has created this situation. But again, I see this as an equity issue and I hope that the department will show up in solidarity with vulnerable students at UCI.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
YOUR NAME

IF YOUR DEPT CHAIR SAYS NO:

Forward the email chain to [your DECADE mentors](#) and ask them to get involved and advocate. It's part of their role: you're asking them to fulfill that role. Do the same with your [Equity Advisors](#). They are here to help you, but many of them will need to be nudged.