

Save Cal Men's Lacrosse!



-  **From:** Matt Curie
-  **from:** 94720 Berkeley, CA
-  **To:** Chancellor Carol Christ, Vice Chancellor Sunny Lee and Director Jim Knowlton **in:**
Berkeley
-  **Subscription period until:** 05/22/2024

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Save Cal Men's Lacrosse!

The Cal Men's Lacrosse program is a 60-year-old, self-financed institution at UC Berkeley that faces an existential threat from within the University itself. The signatories to this petition represent the entire program spanning current student athletes, coaches, staff, alumni, parents, family, and friends, all of whom bleed blue and gold and have provided unwavering support for the University on the field and off, as evident by their on-going financial contributions.

Since August 2022, our specific program and numerous other club sports have been stripped bare of support and resources from the Recreational Club Sports ("RCS") department and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

I. RCS

The basic needs of the team are not being met, while the RCS administrator is slow, late or fails to execute, stonewalls requests, repulses the cooperation and assistance of parent volunteers, excludes the professional head coach, a nationally recognized coach in his 10th contract year, from planning consultations, and has created an atmosphere of workplace intimidation, including threats to withhold resources. Every member of the team has lost confidence in the RCS department's ability to provide basic timely support. They also must contend with a hostile environment and fear of retribution.

Here is a partial list of the impediments the team has faced from RCS:

- Reduced in-season practices from five to two times a week, while field space remains available, then censuring coaching staff for trying to find a workaround
- Just last week, cancelled the on-campus venue for a league game vs. UCSB (a game properly scheduled months in advance) with less than 48 hours' notice, very nearly causing a forfeiture, in order to provide field space to a non UCB-related flag football league
- Failed to provide appropriate medical training staff to meet RCS's own guidelines, placing student athletes at risk
- Delayed on-boarding and paying coaching staff, who remain unpaid a full calendar year later
- Denied staff bonuses and salary increases that were unanimously approved by team officers, parents and program alumni, who are responsible for 100% of the team's funding
- Failed to procure travel services (food and lodging) in a timely fashion, then failed after multiple pleas to reimburse team officers and parents who stepped-in to personally cover the expenditures and have yet to be reimbursed
- Required use of a hotel booking website, which subjects the team to a significant cost increase versus the direct procurement
- Failed to pay league dues last year for 9 months despite multiple pleas from team officers and threats from the league of suspension

II. Intercollegiate Athletics (IA)

IA has excluded men's lacrosse from Memorial Stadium and rugby fields. We do not know how this decision was made, whether from the Chancellor's office, AD's office, or one of their assistants or committees, but:

- It was done without consultation or negotiation for a team that has been using these fields for 10 years
- The football program does not own the stadium and should have no right to bar other groups from using it
- All students pay recreation fees as part of their tuition and should have access to the limited number of playing fields on campus
- The excuse that has been given is that lacrosse creates too much wear and tear on the field. This is specious and foreclosed discussion of alternative solutions such as shifting the lacrosse field overlay from year to year or having Men's Lacrosse contribute to repairs, as necessary.

Cal Men's Lacrosse raises ~\$270,000 a year for their annual budget and the University withholds ~ \$22,000 from those dues and donations for administrative support. However, the support has greatly diminished to an unacceptable level and the team has been unfairly and irrationally excluded from what little field space is available on campus.

What is most egregious in all this is the denigration of the student athlete experience. Part of the reason these student athletes chose to attend Cal was because of the culture of excellence and because of the support of the team from the University – most symbolically in the promise of practicing and playing home games on campus. These club athletes accept their responsibility as managers of a self-funded program, but the bureaucracy doesn't reciprocate with support. Tuition paying student athletes should be provided every opportunity to study, practice, play and socialize without the impediment of ineffective and hostile administrators and byzantine protocols. One would hope that both RCS and IA would do everything in their power to support the pursuit of academic and athletic excellence in a tradition bound program such as Cal Men's Lacrosse.

We seek these immediate actions:

- **Change the attitude and approach of the University towards the Men's Lacrosse program and other RSC club programs. Fulfill the basic needs of the programs, as spelled out above, with the priority being field space, HR matters for the coaching staff and timely expense payment and reimbursement. Cooperate with team officers, parent volunteers and the Head Coach to find practical solutions and delegate functions moving forward.**
- **Reestablish a working relationship between RSC and IA to include non-varsity programs and restore Men's Lacrosse's access to the stadium and rugby fields.**
- **We expect an immediate and supportive response to an urgent situation.**

Matt Currie

President, Cal Men's Lacrosse Alumni Society

B.A. 1998, U.C. Berkeley



I SUPPORT THE PETITION WITH MY SIGNATURE:

Save Cal Men's Lacrosse!



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Notice

Entry only in person and handwritten. Sign only once (either online or by hand). Please mail this list **by 05/22/2024** to: Matt Curie, 102 Sproul Hall, 94720 Berkeley, CA or scanned/photographed by email to mcurrie@cmcommercialinc.com