We wish to call a special meeting of the Riverside division of the Academic Senate, in order to discuss a faculty resolution regarding the protection of free speech and assembly on campus. We feel that such a faculty response is urgently needed in light of the police brutality that we witnessed in response to the January 19 protests.

We are aware of the fact that a number of students were shot with rubber paint pellets at the January 19 protest. Astonishingly, the campus leadership not only failed to express concern regarding the use of violence against our own students, but also initially avoided even acknowledging this fact. The responses that we have received since that time have been extraordinarily vague and slippery, replete with unsubstantiated claims about the “threats” posed by these nonviolent protests. As faculty members on this campus, we feel a moral obligation to demand serious answers regarding what happened that day, not only in the interest of accountability, but also in the interest of establishing guidelines for protecting freedom of speech and assembly on campus in the future.

We wish also to examine the crowd control methods used by both the UC and Riverside police departments (and authorized by the campus leadership), which we feel were disproportionately violent. These officers moved directly to the violent use of batons and rubber bullets, rather than engaging in strategies for de-escalation or relying on the minimal use of force. Our special meeting therefore, will seek to emphasize that all response to campus protest cannot and must not be led by the presumption that force should always be an option, based on the unsubstantiated assumption that all protest presents a potential threat.

In addition to the use of violent force against our own students and others gathered that day, we are concerned about the fact that the protest was deemed an “unlawful assembly” with absolutely no explanation or justification. The special meeting will thus call for discussion of the question of who authorized the use of force on January 19th, what the grounds were for this authorization, what form it took, and how it was transmitted to the police confronting the demonstrators. We are also concerned with various reports about campus administrators engaging in surveillance and disciplinary actions that function to intimidate student protesters. In requesting this meeting, we also wish to observe that a number of our own faculty members and faculty members from other UC campuses, including a number of highly prominent academics, have signed a petition requesting answers regarding the events of January 19.

The goals of the special meeting would be the following:

1. To review, discuss, clarify and amend the resolution recently passed by the Senate regarding the protection of speech and assembly on our campus

☐2. To open a broader discussion regarding the official administrative response to the protests

3. To identify a set of principles that will complement the resolution in protecting speech and assembly on campus in future contexts, so that the university can adopt policies that *encourage* rather than intimidate robust debate and peaceful protest

The special meeting seeks to introduce an amendment to the existing legislation. The existing legislation reads:

*The right of assembly and expression of views shall not be suppressed. Such assemblies and*
expressions, however, shall not interfere with the lawful conduct and public safety of others at the University."

The special meeting will therefore discuss the following amendment to the existing legislation:

"The right of assembly and expression of views shall not be suppressed. The Senate affirms, moreover:
(i) that peaceful protest is not only permissible but protected and valued as a vital form of speech;
(ii) that responses to campus protest should be led with the presumption that force should never be used against demonstrators."