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*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate  
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1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
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August 7, 2020

**PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE MICHAEL DRAKE  
PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MICHAEL BROWN**

**Re: Statement on PAC-12 Players' Well-Being**

Dear colleagues,

The Academic Council has endorsed the attached statement expressing support for the students in PAC-12 athletics who issued the [#WeAreUnited Statement](#) on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

As the PAC-12 players' statement notes, athletes are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including within the University of California. Academic Council's support for the players' statement offers solidarity with students who seek to protect their personal safety during COVID and challenge racial injustice as they participate in athletics and further their education.

Council has requested that in this instance I include, with my letter, the Council vote on the statement, which was 15 in favor, 4 against, with one abstention.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kum-Kum Bhavnani".

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Chair  
Academic Council

cc: Chief of Staff Kao  
Chief Policy Advisor McAuliffe  
Academic Council  
Senate Division Chairs

## **Academic Council Statement on PAC-12 Players' Safety Protections August 2020**

Academic Council wishes to strongly support the PAC-12 players who issued the [#WeAreUnited Statement](#) on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020.

The PAC-12 players' demands raise glaring racial and other social justice issues for scholarship and walk-on athletes who are required to be present, in-person, at their colleges or universities for fall 2020 *amidst* the ongoing global public health crisis.

In the context of a deepening understanding of racism within U.S. society, Council firmly advocates for the safe treatment of all college athletes, many of whom are Black. We recognize that colleges and universities are creating health and safety guidelines for their respective campuses. We urge athletic administrators to provide more robust protections for athletes during this crisis, including not revoking their scholarship funds if they decide not to play for health reasons.

PAC-12 athletes are telling us that their institutions have not gone far enough to protect their collective well-being. If university administrators, coaches, NCAA executives, and other college athletics stakeholders fail to address and engage with the players' demands, particularly those for increased health and safety protections during this global pandemic, it would signal that they have decided to prioritize their own self-interests and revenues over the well-being of athletes. Such a message, even if unintended, will be particularly chilling for the disproportionate number of Black athletes who participate in football, the Pac-12's highest revenue-generating sport.

Council further shares in the athletes' collective voices demanding the need for increased focus on advancing racial justice and combatting antiblackness in college sports. Thus, we urge President Drake, the University of California, and the PAC-12 Conference to engage with the athletes in discussing their demands as a matter of racial justice. We further encourage UC and Pac-12 leaders to strive to be national role models by making significant progress towards fair treatment and against racial injustices in college athletics.

Council proudly stands, shoulder to shoulder, with the PAC-12 college athletes and #WeAreUnited.