

Dear Kresge Alumni,

I'm writing to share some stories with you about the tumult, and hope, that have affected the Kresge Community in the last few months ... but for fear of losing an opportunity, in that complex message — let me start by asking you simply: *please consider helping Kresge, in a unique moment in history*, by making a small contribution to **Kresge's Giving Day project**. Our goal is to raise the profile of the visitors and supportive lecturers, who help make our first year core course, *Power and Representation*, and our **Media and Society Series**, all that it is: a magnet for energies the campus community, and a powerful anchor for the heart of what it means to be a Kresge student.

Please consider **setting an alarm, for tomorrow—March 8**—to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$5 or more. We'd especially like to encourage Kresge supporters to **donate between 12–2 p.m.**, which would put us in the running for a matching donation, if our project receives the largest number of unique donations. If you have any questions or if you'd like to help spread the word, please get in touch with Beth Hernandez-Jason.

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Just four short months ago, few could have guessed that by this date, a new presidential administration would guide our nation with such sweeping intensity toward a precipice of immanent change. The Trump movement—as it is called by its advocates—is no longer just the surge of reactionary populism that many hoped it would be. Our new administration's plans will impact our students' lives directly. And—in many ways—Trump's language, and style of leadership, already have.

It's not my intention in this letter just to provoke a political conversation—one that would probably echo what you can read a dozen times a day on national news or social media. Instead, **I hope to share with you a spark of renewal and revolution at Kresge, and in some small way, to connect you with the grace and complexity of our students' responses to a suddenly changing world**. Some of that response, as you'll see, begins with our core course, but some of it arises with students direct experiences of injustice. Students here are reaching beyond the starting point of everyday listening and learning, to speak to a larger audience, and to take action...to affirm the rights and protect the welfare and liberties of every member of our community. I want to share some of this with you—but please don't miss the final section of this letter (and skip ahead if needed!): I also want to invite you to reaffirm your ongoing membership in this community, in some new ways—not only through our **Giving Day initiative**, but through our **Media and Society** series, and through our

**Alumni Weekend panel on the Kresge rebuild.** It's our hope that a stronger connection between alumni and students will help Kresge gain an even better footing to thrive in an often painful, and often uncertain, but sometimes very promising new world.

To a great many of our students, our president's **intent to greatly expand deportation of undocumented Americans** is a call to action, to protect families, and to provide sanctuary for some of the best and brightest among us. To a smaller number of us, that intention is a direct threat to family, security, and life. And of course, we are a community that values dissent: some students may also regard open immigration, and Obama-era "**path-to-citizenship**" ideas with skepticism. But at Kresge—where we're privileged to read nuanced work by **Jose Antonio Vargas**, **Adam Davidson**, and a **groundbreaking collection of oral histories** on undocumented life and struggle—conversations about immigration never lose sight of how politically motivated anti-immigrant policies can affect us much more deeply—both in the substance of **what ICE has been directed to do by executive order**, and in the **vague and racist rhetoric** that continues to fuel its national popularity.

So how do we, at Kresge, positively reflect on our development as a living and learning community, in these contexts? Current first-year student Isabelle Ansari, writing about her learning process in core, described her aim to "find her own voice regarding her own experiences of injustice," and internalized the experiences of the core texts to find—in her words—"the importance of staying in the struggle, of not falling asleep." But Isabelle also discovered something greater: that the struggle to raise her own voice, and relate her own experience, "helped me recognize the relevance of my experiences in relationship to social justice for all people." Altruism of this kind resonates powerfully at Kresge, whether we are called to it through literature and journalism or in our own personal relationships; more and more of us seem to discover that we are in a struggle not only for our own futures, but for a chance to find, and affirm, the integrity of a community.

Students have found another call to action in Trump's campaign to restrict travel from seven nations—repeatedly rallied by gross misstatements of fact. Again, this transcends politics and strikes at the heart of who we are, not only because we embrace students of Arab, Persian, and North African descent in our community (some of whom will face chaos if Trump succeeds in court), but because we aspire to membership in a truly free and open society. As another first-year Kresge Core student Diego Martinez argues, it isn't merely the policy implications, but what we at Kresge would call the rhetoric, of the ban—the rhetoric at the highest level of our leadership—that has a destructive effect on conversations in everyday life. For Diego, it was as though millions of Americans had "forgotten the struggle of those Trump spoke out against" ... as though "now that the

nation had decided its identity, they were no longer important.” I have heard students like Diego—across the political spectrum—praising free international cooperation as ingredients in some of the most important advances in global justice, medicine, technology, and culture.

And the list goes on: daily, we are confronted with new threats of overwhelm—accumulating threats to [imperial international education and research](#), to diminish our investment in [global environmental cooperation](#), to transform and [politicize our approach to national security](#), and—in the last week—threats to the human rights of our transgender and non-gender-binary students.

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To respond to this moment in history, our students raised their voices, but their voices weren't just reactions to Trump, or to the crisis of a moment. Instead, thanks to the leadership of core instructors at Porter and Kresge Colleges, we saw an opportunity in Trump's inauguration, and in our celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King—an opportunity to have, and to express, a dream -- a way of imagining the future of our country. In the week of the inauguration, over 150 students contributed free-writing on the subject of our hopes and aspirations for the coming years. Together we composed a poetic four-part inaugural speech, and we named it a **People's Inauguration**. What a joy it was on the morning of January 19, as more than a hundred of us gathered at Kresge Town Hall to read it together, then marched through campus, building our ranks, in numbers and in passion, along the way. By serendipity, the still cool air was filled with sunlight, and although we have not resolved any of our deepest concerns, some of us could not help but feel that lightness transforming something in our world-views, unexpectedly. This is a document created in love, and in innumerable perspectives; a celebration of our chance for deeper dialog in society. I hope you'll get from it an opportunity to read emotion, sense, stability, and a long view, into the challenge of what has been, for many in our nation, the most difficult time in memory.

Since that great morning, our students have continued to engaged in the active pursuit of truth—through a new student-directed seminar, [Education for Sustainable Living](#), led by “[Women in Green Youth Trailblazer](#)” award recipient, Maxine Jimenez (Kresge '19), or through the work of students Mac Dreyer (Kresge '19), Imani Outen (Kresge '19), and Hana King ('19), to critically study our core curriculum, and improve the way it incorporates student mentorship and student activism. And many more—these kinds of effort proceed from many directions, toward many goals, but all of them return us to an

reaffirmation of the inclusive and activist community that we have always been, and always will be, at Kresge College.

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One of the best things a community in transition can hope to do, is to return to its everyday life, and demonstrate the strength of it regardless of circumstances. To that end, I invite you to join in the following events and initiatives:

## **MEDIA AND SOCIETY**

We have been grateful to build on the excitement of our [Media and Society](#) series last quarter with journalists Julie Snyder, and more recently Anna Maria Barry-Jester, of Nate Silver's [Fivethirtyeight.com](#), to make clear one of the core values Kresge has upheld uniquely on this campus: the value of a free, and freely inquiring, press. Now more than ever, it is clear that the role of the media—social media, traditional newspapers, podcasts, and data-driven journalism—is vitally important and changing. Our office is working with staff and student members of [Student Media](#) to ensure that some of the best educational opportunities in journalism will be maintained and strengthened at Kresge College. With that in mind: **I hope you'll join us on Tuesday, April 11, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. to hear Rob Irion's talk about his experiences collaborating with Neil DeGrasse Tyson and as a science journalist with National Geographic.**

## **ALUMNI WEEKEND**

During [Alumni Weekend](#), we'll be hosting a brunch and panel discussion on the Kresge Rebuild on **Sunday April 30**. I hope you'll join us from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. to hear from Kresge students and UC Santa Cruz alumni. If you can [RSVP](#) to us, we'd really be grateful, but you'll be welcome here even if you arrive unannounced. Among our esteemed panelists, you'll meet Kresge student Maxine Jimenez, who has helped coordinate student activism and awareness around campus growth; and one of the leadership in our alumni panel, the architect and alumni council member Matthew Waxman (Porter, 06) who has contributed to our Power and Representation blog this informative meditation—on [Kresge's legacy of architectural and natural stewardship](#), past, present, and future. We hope to see you there.

## GIVING

Again: **Kresge's Giving Day project** aspires to raise the profile of our first year core course, *Power and Representation*, and our *Media and Society* series... but our need for support doesn't end there. Please reach out to us if you'd like to be a bigger part of this conversation.

If you are interested in being involved with Kresge's efforts to connect with alumni, provide inspiring lectures to current students, or other initiatives, please connect with us in whatever way makes sense to you! Look for upcoming events on our [Facebook](#) page, reach out to Beth Hernandez-Jason, at [bhj@ucsc.edu](mailto:bhj@ucsc.edu), about our academic programs, courses, and outreach, or reach out to me at [kresgeprovost@ucsc.edu](mailto:kresgeprovost@ucsc.edu) for ideas about how to get more involved in our campaign to plan for Kresge's amazing future.

Sincerely,

Provost Ben Leeds Carson