Good evening Senate,

My name is Mayela Morales, a fourth year here at UCSB. This year, i serve as National People of Color Student Coalition Co-Chair for the United States Student Association and as the Head Organizer for the Santa Barbara Student Activist Network.

USSA is the largest and oldest student-led organization that has fought for the student movement for the past 70 years. The association organizes under its Educational Justice Platform, which means that we stride to accomplish access to higher education for historically marginalized communities that have systematically been and continue to be left out of higher education institutions.

This summer, students from across the nation voted on the campaign that USSA will focus on for the year. These students believe we should be fighting for tuition-free higher education as well as student hunger and homelessness.

On Friday, we met with Senator Bernie Sanders in D.C. in order to discuss how we will continue to collaborate with him in the campaign to make college tuition free for all. It was clear that he remains passionate about this issue as he agreed to fulfill our asks to his availability. This includes endorsing our platform, having a campus tour with USSA member campuses, and potentially attending our National Student Power Summit in the spring.

We plan on continuing our collaboration with Bernie and other politicians that support our platform in order to change the narrative around access to higher education. This includes joining the campaign for the $48 fix, encouraging other USSA member campuses to endorse and adopt it, as well as collaborating with other states to join the effort to make college tuition free again.

For the past year, the Student Activist Network has joined the student movement by empowering already existing efforts to fight back against tuition increases within the UC system. In less than 12 months, we have faced a tuition increase, which the Regents justified by stating that workers were going to get a salary increase, yet they have been contracted out as Chancellors and Regents put more money in their greedy pockets.

I, along USSA at UCSB and SAN, believe this campaign has the capacity to serve students across the state and I hope that as responsibility to serve students on campus as senators, y’all choose to support it too.

Thank you.