*(Presented by Senator Cole Marting at the A.S. Senate Meeting held on 4/12/17)*

Dear friends and fellow gauchos,

Today I come to this body not as a senator, not as a student, but as a lover of democracy. Never before has a nation such as ours, held individual liberties to be the most important foundation of a society. The fundamental right of an individual to express their desire for their own destiny is the most important of these individual liberties. In fact it is the first amendment to our great bill of rights.

    This evening you have the opportunity to uphold this greatest of the individual freedoms by giving a voice to those students by passing the ballot initiatives as they sit before you. I hope that you believe in the wisdom of the students at this great university and uphold the individual's right to choose their own fate in life. By voting to pass this ballot initiative, you are not personally endorsing the measure, but rather enabling true democracy and allowing the student body to decide. This isn't about politics, in fact I don't care about your politics, they are none of my business. What I do care about is the oath each and everyone of you took to uphold the voice of your constituents.

This type of democracy we live in rests on the assumption of good will of our fellow citizens. If this body fails to pass this ballot initiative by either voting no, or by abstaining, both of which are a vote in opposition of the goodwill of our fellow gauchos, we will have failed as a democracy.

I want to unpack this concept. If the measure passes the senate and achieves the 60 percent needed to pass in the general election then we have enabled the voice and desires of our community. However, if it fails in the senate, you have impeded the ability for the students to voice their own opinion. In fact, each vote no or abstention, is a vote for silencing the voice of roughly 800 students. A vote against this initiative in the senate is a vote against the liberties of the individual and an obstruction of our democracy. In the words of the great American political philosopher Friedrich Hayek,

*“Political freedom… (is) freedom from coercion, freedom from the arbitrary power of other men, release from the ties which left the individual no choice but obedience to the orders of a superior to whom he was attached.”*

An individual's ability to vote is the most unifying and equaling force that we have in this country. It is the only thing that makes the richest person in at UCSB and the poorest person at UCSB have the same amount of influence on our campus.

So we want to make college a better place. So now we just need a leader, a person to change a policy, create a source of funding, develope a new grant system. We are just waiting on that leader. Waiting on another Barack Obama, another Ronald Reagan, another Martin Luther King Jr. If we are waiting on a hero in a cape to fly in and change whatever you think plagues our school then it's going to be a long, long wait. You know who real the leader is? It's you.

So tonight I am hopeful that you will give a voice to the students, allow them to choose their own fate. I am hopeful that you will grant them their right to vote.