Good Evening Senators, Executives, Staff and Students,

As you all know, my name is Josephine Ampaw and I have had the honor and privilege to serve you all as your Student Advocate General and oversee the Office of the Student Advocate.

First and foremost, I would like to take this time to thank people who have got me through this year. Individuals who supported me, cared for me, and loved me beyond all my mistakes.

The first person I would like to thank is God. He was, is, and continues to be my strength every day. He is the reason why I wake up each day, and fight. I thank Him for bringing me joy in the hardest of times and for loving me, past my mistakes, and past everything. I would not be here if not for Him overall.

Secondly, I would like to thank my parents and my older sister. They are the foundation that I stand on. As the baby of the family, I have always been the risk taker and I appreciate their support throughout this term. I would like to thank my mom for every prayer she said on my behalf, my dad for every word of encouragement, and my older sister for showing me the ins and outs of student affairs. I would like to thank my cousin Sakhile, for her humor, her jokes pop in my head and I laugh for ten minutes straight. I also want to thank her for always reminding me of the things that matter most. I would not be who I am and would not have made it to this spot without these individuals. I would also like to thank my aunts and uncles. They always reminded me that I should create goals, implement plans for those goals, and beat those goals. They taught me about my culture, my existence, and my ancestry. Even though my advisor, Mr. Jones in EOP, is not biologically related to me. He has become family to me and I thank him for his infinite amount of wisdom. Throughout this term and the past four years, he has helped me get to where I am today, so I thank you.

I would like to thank my grandmother, who passed away in January 2014. Every word of wisdom she gave to me as a child has been applicable in this past year. As I campaigned, I thought about the many times she stood on sidewalks selling food, so that I could eventually not have to do the same. I thank her for always reminding me that hard experiences are meant for growth and that growth comes from hard things.

I would like to thank my friends. My friends: Joselyne, Rosie, Cyrus, DJ, Conrad, Ibukun, Dami, Alagie, Alexa, Andrea, Kwabena, Danny, Joe, and many more for being my source of support, for being safe people in my life, for always knowing how to make me smile, for reminding me to eat three times a day, sleep at least 8 hours (which I never do), and to eat. I thank you for always being my go to people. I thank you for inspiring me to be the best Student Advocate General I could ever be.
I would now like to talk about my spunky, diverse, million person staff. They have been my rock through it all. They supported me even through the most difficult times and I thank them. I thank you OSA 2016-2017 for never agreeing on anything, that forced me to think critically and to always consider every perspective. I would like to thank my former Chief of Staff Nawar, for holding me down from the beginning. You are one of the strongest people I know. You taught me to keep pushing, even when there are haters. You taught me the power of determination and hard work, and I also am beginning to get your love of stationery. I would now like to thank my deputy chiefs. To my Internal Deputy Chief, Catt, you were there from the beginning of this journey. Thank you for running my campaign. Thank you for putting up with every tear, fear, and insecurity I had. Thank you for telling me that I could do it, even when I did not think it was possible. Thank you for being so energetic and enthusiastic, it rubbed off on me and taught me to always find the positive in everything. You have held this position with grace and poise. To my External Deputy Chief, Ladijah, I met you during FSSP in July 2013 and you have held me down since the first day we met. I remember that you were going through a great deal of loss during that year and you were not being treated well. I am so grateful that I, a complete stranger, walked up to you in front of DLG and asked, “Hey is everything okay? I’ve been hearing a lot strange things and wanted to see if they were true.” This question gave me one of my closest comrades. I am so grateful that in that time you crashed with me in my small bed in San Nicolas Hall. From that year, I knew you would be not only my friend, but someone that I could trust. You have held the position of External Deputy Chief with grace, charm, and poise, making it look so easily. I would now like to thank my community organizers: Angela, Angelica, Leanna, Marla, Edan, and Veronica. You are the most intelligent group of women of color I have met on this campus. You have, along with last years community organizers, set the standard for what that should be. You held this difficult job with such beauty and grace. I thank you for all your hard work and I honor and will treasure you in my heart forever. I would now like to thank my caseworkers: Roshni, Brooke, Alan, Liz, Shriya, Emily, Kalina, and Amy. You have handled some of the hardest cases I have ever seen, and I did this for a while. You all took this difficult job of being caseworkers and made it your own. Thank you for teaching me what it means to care for clients and bring in new ideas. I would lastly like to thank my amazing Director of PR Corniche. I am telling you that this woman is the best PR I could have ever asked for. I am grateful and would like to thank you for keeping me organized, for making, great posters and fliers, and for being a cool person. My staff has checked me and keeps me grounded. I will treasure you all and know that this is the beginning. I want to let the world know that these people are about to change the world and I am so grateful that they all agreed to work with me this year. Many say my staff is divided but frankly I am so grateful for their many opinions, they make me, OSA, and this campus a better place. I love you all and I thank you for everything you have done.
I would now like to thank my executive team. Neha, I have come to love you with my whole heart. Thank you for honesty, and for always asking good questions. Thank you for the many times we cuddled and the many times you called people out when I was too scared to. Natalie, you’ve become my little sister in my head. Thank you for showing me that if I want to have a crazy amount of jobs, while being an amazing student, and IVP, that it is possible. I am so thankful for the many hugs and laughs we shared, and I am so glad we got to work together. Ashcon, thank you for knowing how to keep me calm. You never used your words of wisdom to show your superiority, but to show your humility. Thank you for the many times you had to explain things not once, or twice, but three times. Your patience and wisdom will take you far and I am excited to see the many things you will do in the future. Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank Austin. At the beginning of the year, I thought you were a frat boy who just sat on privilege. I have had the joy to learn so much about you. Thank you for always being willing to learn about my perspective and for allowing me to learn about yours. I have enjoyed the many times we chatted about life and campus. You taught me the importance of having conversations, it taught me to appreciate the many things we don’t have in common. Thank you to the executive team.

I would now like to thank the past Student Advocate Generals and past executives. These individuals: Joseline, Harrison, Kristian, Mohsin, Paola, Jonathan, and Yoel kept my sanity. Thank you for always being willing to talk to me and comfort me. Thank you for confirming that I indeed am not crazy and not out of my mind. Thank you for always encouraging me to be the best that I can be and thank you for supporting me through this term. I appreciate the many times I called you four in tears and hung up knowing that I would be okay. I honor you and appreciate you individually and collectively.

Another group of people I would like to thank is our administrative team at UCSB. Dr. Margaret Klawunn, Miles Ashlock, Danielle Quinones-Ortega, Katya Armistead, Sandra Vasquez, Joaquin Becerra, Matt Bowman, Mark Signa, and many more. Thank you for your patience first and foremost. Thank you being willing to listen to my perspective as a student. Thank you for always encouraging me. I also want to thank you all for pointing out my strengths. As I work, I tend focus on the things I need to work on so thank you. I also want to thank this team for your great amount of wisdom. I advise every executive member and senator to talk to our staff in student affairs. They are a group of brilliant people and I am so glad I have had the opportunity to work with them.

Lastly, I would like to thank my amazing advisors. Marisela and Ladonte. Marisela, you are such a role model for me. Thank you for not only for the amazing SAG advice, but for being a part of my life. Im thankful for every moment where you advised me, picked me up from the Amtrak station, and did more than your job entails. Thank you from the bottom of my heart and I am so
excited to come back and visit you. I would also like to thank LaDonte. I appreciate the many moments where you encouraged me and still do. I appreciate your infinite amount of wisdom. It has helped me take good decisions and to not stress out. I will miss you both and I am eternally grateful for the opportunity I had to work with you.

Now I would like to take a minute to share words of wisdom that I have acquired over the course of this year.

1. Take care of yourself: It is SO important to take care of your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. These aspects allow you to be alive so take this time, while you are young, to take care of your health

2. For the incoming execs: I would like to first and foremost wish you the best of luck in your terms in your respective positions. I have two pieces of advice I received at the beginning of the year that I think are super helpful for you to have. Firstly, write everything you say down. Every exec report, every public forum statement, everything you say in your position. This will be super important for whoever replaces you and so that the words you say cannot be misquoted or misinterpreted. Secondly, the best advice that I can give you is to put students and student groups first. If there is an issue with a certain community, GO AND TALK TO THEM. Make yourself and ally to them early so you can assist them throughout the year. Student leaders are a great source of wisdom and they get a lot done, so talk to them and be there for them. Throwing your budget is one thing, standing is solidarity is a whole other thing. Hold senate accountable, and if they have a problem with it refer them to legal code.

3. For the incoming senators: Stay humble and remember that it is not easy for students for students to get here on a Wednesday night when they have papers, assignments, readings, and many other obligations. So, it is important to give every student, regardless of your personal opinions on whatever issue they are talking about, your complete attention and complete respect. If you look disinterested, it makes it harder to build those bridges and develop trust.

I would like to end with a quote by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, who I quoted at the beginning of the year.

'Divided we are weak; united, Africa could become one of the greatest forces for good in the world. I believe strongly and sincerely that with the deep-rooted wisdom and dignity, the innate respect for human lives, the intense humanity that is our heritage, the African race, united under one federal government, will emerge not as just another world bloc to flaunt its wealth and strength, but as a Great Power whose greatness is indestructible because it is built not on fear, envy and suspicion, nor won at the expense of others, but founded on hope, trust, friendship and directed to the good of all mankind.' --Prime Minister Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah
This quote is so powerful and I think it can be applicable to our association. Divided, we are weak and nothing good can get done. However, if we unite, as the large nonprofit in the area, we can be one of the greatest forces for good. Frankly, I do not think we are there. I think that execs and senate positions in AS have been a force for resume building. We need to move past that and think of the greater good. OSL orgs have been greater forces of good WITHOUT the 12 million dollar budget, and with it we can not only continue to support them monetarily, we can be a force for change. In every step we take, and in every move we decide to do, let us always remember that we need to respect human lives. In this space, I felt that my life was not always respected. Respect Jack’s life, and every life that is SAG after him, so that we may grow and cause powerful change. AS cannot just be another building that takes up space with wealth, it has to be one built on hope, trust, friendship, and for the good of all mankind. This association had a great deal of envy, fear, and suspicion but I urge the next team to move past that and focus on the good of mankind.

Thank you for listening and it has been my honor to be your Student Advocate General. This year will be an experience that I carry with me through the rest of my journey. I wish you all the best in your endeavours and hope we all can take the experiences from this year and grow.

Thank you.