Dear Faculty and Teaching Assistants,

In response to the recent tragedy, the Division of Student Affairs would like to share some resources and tips that may be helpful as you assist your students during this very difficult time. While acts of violence can impact individuals in deep and different ways, our entire campus is experiencing various forms of grief and mourning. Faculty and teaching assistants are very important in this phase of recovery for the campus. You are in a role that may assist students in regaining some sense of normalcy with both their lives and schoolwork. Many students will feel safer by re-establishing a sense of routine. Others will be helped by a referral to campus counseling services for support (Counseling and Psychological Services, 24/7 805-893-4411, located in Building 599). If you observe anyone who seems in distress please let them know how much you care and call the Distressed Student Office at 805-893-3030. Additional campus resource information is listed at the end of this email.

We encourage faculty and teaching assistants to consider the following suggestions:

1. Acknowledge the Isla Vista tragedy and its impact on students, on our campus and the larger community. Let students know that you understand that they may be experiencing many different feelings that can be challenging to process alone. Suggest that they reach out to others. Perhaps observe a few minutes of silence at the start of the first class. For smaller classes, if you are considering allowing time for students to voice their feelings and sense of loss, it is recommended that you do not prolong the discussion and that you distribute the CAPS documents attached here. If one of the deceased students was in your class, it would be appropriate to acknowledge this to the class, but we suggest you keep it brief.

2. Students who are grieving and processing the trauma would be helped psychologically by having reasonable flexibility with turning in assignments and being able to meet with you if you are able to offer extended office hours or additional review sessions.

3. Encourage your students as well as your colleagues to reach out. Don’t experience this tragedy alone. There is a natural relief in talking to others, especially trusted loved ones. We can all be resilient if we help the process along.

4. Monitor your own stress level and take care of yourself. Don’t ignore your own feelings (e.g., anxiety, grief, and anger). Get appropriate sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Talking to friends, family members, religious leaders, and mental health counselors can help. It is okay to let your students know that you are sad, but that you believe things will get better.
For Faculty and Teaching Assistants if students wish to have a discussion

During this time of grief and recovery, students may want to discuss their feelings about these tragic events. If your students desire a discussion, we advise you follow the approach below.

In order to help in understanding what some members of our community may be experiencing, please note that common reactions to an act of violence include: shock, disbelief, fear, guilt, grief, confusion, depression, shame, sense of loss, irritability, lack of sleep, anxiety, apprehension, mistrust, anger, and difficulty concentrating. These emotional responses are often linked and take place over time and may not happen in any particular order. These emotions can affect student behavior, ability to function and complete assignments, ability to process and recall information and overall sense of well-being. The intensity and ways we express reactions vary based on personal experience, general mental health, stress factors in our lives, coping style, ability to self-monitor our emotional state, and our support network. Students who have had a past traumatic experience or personal loss, who suffer from depression or other mental illness, or who have special needs may be at greater risk for more severe reactions than others.

Preparation (in case discussion is requested)

1. The focus on any meeting should be to help our students learn how to take care of themselves for the remainder of the quarter and encourage them to use the resources available on campus to achieve this goal. We suggest keeping “self-care” as the center of any discussion framework.
2. Please review the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office press release to understand the details of the tragedy. The link is: [http://www.sbsheriff.org/05241402.html](http://www.sbsheriff.org/05241402.html).
3. Review the Understanding Grief and Strategies for Managing Grief handouts.

During the Meeting

1. Acknowledge the magnitude of the tragedy and the impact that it is having on our campus, the Isla Vista community, and the nation.
2. Expect that many questions will be raised. Don’t take on the responsibility to have or know all the answers. Clarify facts, when necessary, based on your knowledge from the sheriff’s press release, but be brief.
3. Primarily allow a space for students to express their feelings, but not engage in cross-discussion. Keep in mind that such discussions may be sensitive and even traumatizing for some students. Do not prolong the discussion. Limits and boundaries will help create a safe environment for all.
4. Make sure that the discussion remains supportive and respectful of all students.
5. Be sure to share campus resources provided below. It is vital that each student knows how to access support and professional services if needed.
6. If desired, comment on the process of grief and recovery (refer to handouts as needed). All students and members of our community are experiencing trauma, which impacts our biological functioning. It disrupts sleep cycles, energy levels, ability to concentrate and process.
information, and emotional regulation. Reassure students that these changes are expected and that recovering from a trauma requires passage through stages, which we all go through at our own pace.

**Campus Resources**
Counseling and Psychological Services (805) 893-4411
Student Health Social Work Services (805) 893-3087
Distressed Student Response (805) 893-3030

**Available 24 Hours**
UCSB After-Hours Phone Counseling (805) 893-4411
Emergency/Police/Paramedics 911 or 9-911

The **Division of Student Affairs** stands ready to assist and support you. Please join us at Corwin Pavilion May 28th 9am-11am for reviewing the **Distressed Student Protocol** and a discussion on “**Responding to the Isla Vista Tragedy: Resources and Suggestions for Faculty, Staff and TAs.**”

In sorrow and solidarity,

Angela Andrade, Associate Dean, Student Wellness Services
Edwin Feliciano, Director, Behavioral Health Services
Claudine Michel, Assistant Vice-Chancellor Student Academic Programs & Wellness Services
Jeanne Stanford, Director, Counseling & Psychological Services