

JUANA ALICIA, ARTIST AND EDUCATOR  
2016 NINTH STREET  
BERKELEY, CA 94710  
(510) 978-1060 [JUANAALICIAM@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JUANAALICIAM@GMAIL.COM)  
[JUANAALICIA.COM](http://JUANAALICIA.COM)



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To the Board of Trustees the Peralta College District:

I am respectfully requesting that you not make, nor accept, any cutbacks in services to our students, nor raise tuition, nor eliminate the transit Easy Pass. Furthermore, I request that you stand in solidarity with the masses of community college students, Cal State students and UC students from all over the state, as we turn the tide on the attack on the working poor and struggling middle class in California, the world's sixth largest economy. As evidenced last week at Berkeley City College at a packed meeting of BCC, regional community colleges, labor unions and U.C.B students, there is a new student movement, reminiscent of 1968, blossoming as the country sinks deeper into economic depression. Teach-ins at U.C. Berkeley on October 24<sup>th</sup>

and at BCC on November 7<sup>th</sup> are some of hundreds taking place all over the state to mobilize students to pressure the legislature and governor to think critically and creatively, to seek an oil drilling tax and other means of funding the state of California, other than on the backs of the poor.

I want to thank Nicky Gonzalez Yuen, Abel Guillen and Sy Gulassa for your ongoing support of the arts, particularly our public art and murals program at BCC. It is here that we educate thinking, activist artists and creative thinkers to create site-specific, community appropriate murals to advance our public vision to transform our society into a more just, humane and beautiful place. We prepare artists to think critically, to draw, paint and sculpt about issues relevant to their own lives and to put their work at the service of the greater society. There is overwhelming evidence that art education and practice expand critical thinking capacities and intellectual functions on many levels. The proposed tuition hikes and cutbacks in classes and services will make our jobs untenable and create exclusive institutions, driving away the very diverse populations we seek to serve. As a Latina that transferred from Hartnell Community College to UC Santa Cruz, I know from personal experience that I would not be teaching today if not for the opportunity to obtain a nearly free education. I am here to give back to my community, to serve all students, to provide a resource for immigrant, AB 540 and otherwise

marginalized populations, while striving to develop public art for a wider and wider world. I urge you not to turn your backs on all of us who have worked so hard to provide these resources to those who would otherwise we relegated to flipping tacos and burgers, gardening, nannying and waiting tables. An educated populace is essential to a democracy. Please help us fight for the educated, democratic society that is the vision of the community college.

Thank you,

Juana Alicia Montoya, Instructor and Public Artist,  
Berkeley City College