Good Evening Senate and Members of the Public,

I hope that you all are having a great week!

I have a few updates from my office. On Friday I had my monthly one on one meeting with Dr. Nies. We discussed the efforts that his office is taking to increase outreach efforts to Native American and African American students. He also mentioned that the Gateway Scholarship Program here, which provides scholarships for students from Merced High School who will be attending UC Merced, will be recognized by the White House as an outstanding program. For the lunch with Dr. Nies and the senators, I have posted the dates/ times that works with his schedule. I still have not heard from a few senators, for those who have not told me what day/time works for you please let me know by the end of tonight so that we can move forward with getting the lunch scheduled.

With the recent events that occurred at UCLA last week and the events that have happened at UC Davis earlier this year I asked Dr. Nies if the University would be considering adding a diversity requirement since UC Merced is currently reevaluating its general education requirements. He said that this is something that they have been considering.

The Director of Compliance search committee is currently scheduling interviews with candidates. We did a preliminary ranking of candidates and the second interview will be taking place next week.

The Director of Compliance coordinates university­wide compliance programs by identifying compliance issues, leading projects and policy redesigns, implementing new initiatives, coordinating and facilitating communications and ensuring compliance­related matters are handled in a timely and appropriate manner.

Last Saturday I attended the Merced Chapter of the NAACP annual Freedom Fund Banquet where one of UC Merced's very own professors, Mark Harris is the keynote speaker. Dr. Nies and Chancellor Leland were in attendance as well.

Today I had a follow up meeting with Vernette Doty who is the head of the Food Panty. As previously mentioned, the proposal that was submitted on behalf of our campus for UCOP’s Global Food initiative included a proposal for a van that would be used to provide transportation for students attending the food pantry. During our initial meeting we talked about the ways that ASUCM can support the food pantry and its initiatives. One of the ideas that came up was that once the van was purchased, ASUCM would provide for the maintenance of the van once it is purchased. The cost for maintenance would come out of new services and programs which has a little over $19,000. Vernette said that she would be more than excited to have the van wrapped so that it says sponsored by ASUCM. The maintenance would be around $2000-$3000. I would like to gauge your thoughts on this.

As you all know, we create the strategic investments committee which was tasked with finding ways in which ASUCM would have the opportunity to engage in cross-campus collaboration with various campus departments. The strategic investments committee decided that the best way to do so would be to provide departments with financial support for projects that departments may be currently working on or planning to start within the semester or year. The committee has set aside an allocation of $125,000 to provide financial assistance for these projects and all campus departments may submit a proposal to be considered for funding. I am excited to announce that the application for departments to submit proposals will go live tomorrow!

Regent Ruiz has been confirmed to be our guest speaker in February which is exciting considering that we have never had a regent as a guest speaker.

Lastly, my office will be creating a monthly speaker series entitled “Students Speak.” In these series we will invite local leaders, senior leadership, directors, elected leaders and whoever else is deemed appropriate. There will be topics that students are interested in discussing with whoever is invited so that there is a forum where students will be able to directly address concerns. From these series, we can develop an action plan if needed to address student issues. I think that this will be a great way to engage in dialogues as a campus and collectively develop action plans.