

August 2, 2008

To: UCSC Community

From: Chancellor Blumenthal

Re: Chancellor condemns attacks on faculty residences

Early this morning, two UC Santa Cruz faculty members and their families were targeted in what appear to be criminal acts of anti-science violence.

In one case, a fire was started in a vehicle parked in a faculty member's driveway. In the other, a fire was started on the porch of a faculty member's home. Injuries were sustained as the faculty member and his wife and children escaped the residence. UCSC and Santa Cruz police and fire personnel responded and quickly extinguished the fires.

The incidents are being investigated by the FBI; federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Santa Cruz Police; UCSC Police; and the state Fire Marshal's office.

These unconscionable acts put the researchers, their families — including their children — and their neighbors in grave danger. They follow earlier aggressive acts of intimidation, trespassing, vandalism, and a physical attack last spring and the discovery of leaflets this past week threatening UCSC research scientists.

These are odious assaults on individuals and on the principles of free inquiry by which we live.

The campus is taking this extremely seriously and is working closely with law enforcement agencies and our own campus resources to identify and apprehend the perpetrators as well as taking major proactive steps to support researchers in the face of violence and intimidation. The personal safety and security of all our students, faculty, and staff is our highest priority.

I am asking everyone in the campus community to be especially vigilant in the face of these criminal acts. We all must heighten our awareness. Please be aware of your surroundings on campus and in your neighborhoods and report any suspicious activities immediately. Call 911 or UCSC police at 831-459-2231.