

March 26, 2024

President Jere W. Morehead
Office of the President
University of Georgia
220 South Jackson Street
Athens, Georgia 30602-5000
president@uga.edu

Dear President Morehead:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, a coalition of the 40 most prominent Hispanic and Latino organizations in the country, we write in urgent concern for the safety and well-being of Hispanic students on the University of Georgia campuses. First, we send our most sincere condolences to the UGA community for the loss of student Laken Riley. We condemn violence in any form and were equally horrified by her death. However, we urge you to not let this isolated incident endanger other students on your campuses. In this hyper-aggressive environment of political rhetoric, [Hispanic students, faculty, and staff on the UGA campuses now find themselves the target of online and in-person harassment and threats](#) because the alleged killer is an undocumented immigrant of Hispanic descent. In this moment, your university community needs their president to reassure them that they should not be judged for the actions of others and they are safe on their own campuses.

We respectfully request an in-person meeting with you and Hispanic student leaders to address these concerns in open forum. Their fears are palpable and we believe that the presence of a number of our national Hispanic leaders can provide an additional layer of support, as well as send a message to the UGA community that Hispanics are welcome on your campuses. We understand that [Hispanic organizations and leaders nationwide](#) have expressed their concern. Quite simply, it is past time for action. We are not only looking to you for leadership to protect the students, faculty, and staff of UGA, but are offering our support in this endeavor.

Among the measures that can be taken in the short-term, the university leadership can publicly oppose hateful speech and rhetoric in any form; adopt a zero-tolerance policy for physical threats; reiterate the measures being taken by campus police and security apparatus to ensure safety; and reassure students, faculty, and staff that they are valued members of the UGA community who should feel safe any time they are on campus. Open lines of communication can be the bridge to understanding, but accountability will ultimately determine if your administration is committed to long-term solutions. We urge you to hold a town hall for Hispanic students, faculty, and staff with the university leadership to reinforce these messages. Allow your community to be part of the solutions to both safety and normalizing campus relations.

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

We hope to work with you to assuage this emotion-laden and difficult circumstance, and to ensure the safety of Hispanic students, faculty, and staff on your campuses so they can focus on their academic endeavors confidently. We look forward to your prompt reply and to meeting with you soon. Should you need any additional information or to schedule a meeting, please feel free to contact our Chair, Amy Hinojosa, at ahinojosa@hermana.org.

Sincerely,



Amy L. Hinojosa
Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda
President and CEO, MANA, A National Latina Organization



Ramiro Cavazos
Vice Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda
President and CEO, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



Brenda Victoria Castillo
Secretary, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda
President and CEO, National Hispanic Media Coalition



Dr. Juan Andrade
At-Large, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda
President and CEO, United States Hispanic Leadership Institute



Al Gallegos
President, National Association of Hispanic Federal Employees
Co-Chair, NHLA Education Committee



Marco Davis
President and CEO, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute