



Kshama Sawant
Seattle City Councilmember

March 21, 2016

Dear University of Washington President Ana Mari Cauce,

As I am sure you are well aware, Seattle is experiencing a severe homelessness crisis. The One Night Count carried out in February by the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness found at least 2,942 people without shelter in Seattle and 4,505 people without shelter in King County as a whole. This represents a 40% increase in homelessness in the last two years alone and has even prompted the City of Seattle to declare a State of Emergency due to homelessness.

Given the gravity of Seattle's homelessness crisis, I fully support efforts by University of Washington students, faculty, alumni, and administrators, together with numerous community groups and leaders, to bring Tent City 3 to the University of Washington. In addition to providing 100 of our city's most vulnerable residents with a desperately needed reprieve from the harshest difficulties and dangers of life on the streets, Tent City 3 activists point out that hosting a tent city will add further life to the University of Washington's mission to develop responsible global citizens and, in their own words, "provide students, faculty and community members with the opportunity to integrate academics with real world challenges."

Solving the homelessness crisis will require bold action on the part of City officials. This must include fully funding basic services for people already without shelter, making big developers pay a fee, building high quality, city-owned affordable housing, dramatically strengthening laws to protect tenants, and overturning the state's undemocratic ban on rent control so we can reign in skyrocketing rents. We will need mass movements of working people and youth to win any of these. Housing advocates and grassroots activists like those involved in the movement to bring Tent City 3 to the University of Washington will play a critical role in such movements.

As Seattle's largest employer and the focal point of activity for over 40,000 students, the University of Washington can play an important part in addressing Seattle's homelessness crisis. Please join the students, staff, faculty, and encampment residents to help bring Tent City 3 to the University of Washington's campus.

Sincerely,
Kshama Sawant

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant

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