

Katherine Canales-Molina: Testimonies by students, staff, and alumni
April 2019

“As for the past 3 years Kat has been so influential in my time here at UCSC. As a Black student on the Santa Cruz campus, it has been rough finding clubs, organizations, etc to call family while finishing my higher Education. My sophomore (year) when I decided the organization I was looking for wasn't here, Kat instantly asked me how can she help us to get this org here. Since Then Kat has helped our Organization reactivate here on campus. She has spent countless amount of hours and energy on supporting us with our journey. Since our reactivation Kat has done everything in her power to keep us here and further our interests. Without Kat I don't think I would have found the one thing that has kept me here at UCSC. She is one of the most selfless human beings that I have encountered my whole 4 years here at UCSC. She has made UCSC a place where I feel welcomed, a place where I found people that are like me. Kat is deserving of this Award because when I think about Black student Retention, Kat is the first person to come to mind. When I think about those in power that our on my side, Kat comes to mind, and when I think of my UCSC family, Kat comes to mind. This recognition is long overdue!!!!”

Zohnice Terrell
President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

“I love Kat as my adviser because of how extremely supportive she is with anything I can deal with. Whether it's organizing, emotional struggles, academic struggles, all of it. The support Kat shows shows that advising is more than just a paycheck to her. She cares about folks overall well-being and that is not common anywhere else on this campus from the experiences I had. Kat stays focused on empowering disempowered folks and it shows throughout her mission as an adviser.”

Donnaven Bradley, Alumnus
Former Vice President, Black Student Union (BSU)

“Kat is honestly the rock of many organizations on campus. She's the driving force to see each and every program we come up with to completion. Not only does she advise us with our organizations she's also there for each and everyone of us personally. With every situation I go through I know I can go to her for advice and clarity. We share laughs, cries, cheers, and so much more. As a black woman in stem on this campus Kat is really the support I need to see my undergrad to completion.”

Ananda Brooks
Destination Higher Education (DHE) Coordinator
BSU

“Kat has provided me with immense support, not only during my time at UCSC, but also post graduation. She has served as a great support system and has enabled me to be a proactive student. She provided me with the resources to do community focused work in Santa Cruz and has instilled an agency in me to continue this work post graduation. Her support allowed me to contribute to many clubs that focused on the retention of students of color on campus and create safe spaces for us as well.”

Naomi Tesfuzigta, Alumna
Former Co-Chair, ASU
African Student Union, National Society of Black Engineers and Scientists

“I had the opportunity to work closely with Katherine Canales my 3rd and 4th year as an undergraduate. I did so, through the planning of our annual Multi-cultural festival at UCSC. Planning for MCF allows different students and cultures (to) come together as a team. Kat was essential to the direction of our committees. Through her sensibility, students from different

backgrounds felt their ideas were validated. From Kat's leadership, I learned to step back, so that I could allow other leaders to develop. I learned to listen effectively and quiet my own voice. This allowed everyone to feel included oppose to having one person direct the whole committee, which resulted in an image that best represented MCF. Most of the committee consisted of students who held positions in their respective organizations; Kat helped us understand that we need to take our seed of knowledge and allow it to bloom within our organization. This was accomplished through her experience in facilitating, coordinating, and educating diverse populations. Her presence brought tranquility to all our students at the table even when things became intense because she helped us be sure of ourselves."

Ashley De La Rosa
Former MCF Committee Chair
Hermanos Unidos de UCSC, Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority Inc.

"Kat is a leader who leads behind those directly affected. That is why she is such a great advisor. She knows how to center voices so that they become the leaders they have been looking for. She challenges and is patient with learning styles and backgrounds. Kat has changed the culture of student organizing in a positive way by modeling transformative leadership and training others on how to do it."

Tiffany Dean Loftin, Alumna
Former SUA President & Vice President
ABSA, Rainbow Theater, African American Theater Arts Troupe

"I worked with Kat while coordinating Student-Initiated Outreach weekend. They were an advisor, a mentor, and a friend. Kat is not only hard-working and organized, but also showed care and respect for the communities. She did so by helping each of us when it comes to logistics and facilitation by treating us students as equals. I felt as if they understood my weaknesses and guided me towards working through my weaknesses especially when it came to the intentionality in everything for the programs."

Menard Mayo
Chair, engaging education (e²)
Former A Step Forward (ASF) Coordinator

"Kat is a caring and extremely supportive mentor/advisor. Kat has been a great ally, using her position and voice in support of equity/justice for all communities of color on campus, especially during times of tremendous injustice. She has demonstrated that she does not need to be of the same background to support the needs of all communities. She is fearless and has dedicated herself to providing her expertise to support the outreach and retention of people of color at UCSC for many years."

Amari Williams, Alumna
Former DHE Coordinator

"As co-chair of the Greek Life group, Katherine is deliberate in ensuring discussions on Greek-letter organizations includes multicultural and non-traditional Greek Life organizations (e.g., ethnic, orientation, etc.). She uses her experiences and knowledge on how to best support and engage the members so that they feel a safe space on the UCSC campus. As the UC Greek Life community continues to flourish, so does the need to ensure that all students are welcome to be a part of such a dynamic system. One way to accomplish has been for the Greek Life Coordinators to not only discuss but to share best practices for ensuring students from various backgrounds are provided such a space. As a leader, Katherine does this by sharing the best practices she has developed in working with diverse groups as well as challenging her peers to consider their own ways of working with diverse students, especially for students of color and the LGBTQ+ communities."

“Just as important, in my experience and interaction with Katherine, has reflected her awareness and sensitivity of students from diverse backgrounds extends beyond the Greek Life community. She also has an understanding and sensitivity of students from diverse background who are not a part of the Greek system but are nonetheless in need of support and student services. As a woman of color, she recognizes the inequities and hidden barriers that may hinder a student’s success, and works towards providing the necessary to support that fosters a positive student experience whether mentoring, counseling and advising. She works endlessly at making sure all students are supported.”

Belinda Vea, Ph.D.
Student Development & Engagement
University of California Office of the President

“I had the pleasure of working with Katherine Canales and the S.O.A.R office for two great years. Though I was originally reluctant to get involved with S.O.A.R due the lack of black professional staff, I found the office to be a true resource. I can personally speak to working with my advisor Kat, who was instrumental in the advancement in all organizations she advised under my leadership. In the first year and working with Kat as an Afrikan//Black Student Alliance Co-Chair she really helped introduce and orient myself and my co-coordinator on the processes of the university and how we should best move forward as an organization. She made herself available afterhours and when needed, and the same continued into this year working with Katherine as A DHE Co-coordinator and more specifically as the president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Katherine was incredibly helpful in reactivating our chapter on campus, and it has been a pleasure working with her as we produced a series of small events and a successful large-scale event. The S.O.A.R office, and Kat specifically have been a valuable resource to my community and I know this will continue in the future.”

Imari Reynolds, Alumna
Former President, Black Student Union (BSU)
Former Destination Higher Education (DHE) Coordinator
Former President, Delta Sigma Theta Inc.

“Aside from her role as advisor where Kat encourages many marginalized community through her help in program planning/leadership, Kat makes sure to build genuine connections with students she works with. Whether it be through saving some time at the beginning of a meeting to talk about how we as students are doing, or taking some time during her lunch hour to laugh with us and engage in casual conversations Kat makes us feel cared for and important in our roles in student organizing.”

Valery Mendoza-Martinez
MEChA Co-chair, Student Union Governance Board (SUGB) Vice chair

“I have the privilege to work with Kat as a peer advisor and she is one of the most supportive and hardworking individuals I know. She mentors so many orgs like Los Mejicas and other POC groups, greek life and non profits. She does everything and anything for her students from staying late or working with students on the weekends. Kat makes herself available to listen and to be a mentor. She has helped me become a stronger leader and she makes me feel confident in harnessing those skills.”

Paola Gomez
Treasurer for Hermanos Unidos, Former Co-director for Los Mejicas

“Kat is a relatable and involved mentor. I have known her for 6 years and our relationship has grown tremendously. Kat knows how to let students exercise their agency while assisting in best practices for them to achieve their goals. She is always busy helping a different organization make their cohort stronger and still makes the time to check in on our personal progress as

students. She supports the culture backgrounds of the communities she work supporting them in their fight to be visible.”

Keiera Bradley, Alumna
Former DHE Coordinator
Former BSU Co-Chair

“Kat is always providing support for me as a Peer Advisor at SOAR as well as a signer within the different orgs that I am a part of. She does this by checking in frequently, catering to the different, unique needs that I or my org has through emotional support and constant guidance and advice. She is always giving me the opportunity to challenge myself and the end result is always growth. She's known to ask for consent in terms of whether we have capacity or time to do certain tasks in the office.”

Alexandria Saelua
Motivational Cconference Coordinator
Asian American/Pacific Islander Student Alliance (APISA), ONE

“Stepping into a leadership position with little experience the fear of losing my personality as an individual was my biggest concern. As a member among the minorities, I never expected I would be now benefiting from the opportunity I was given to put my culture--and newly adapted management and organization skills at the forefront of my identity in the "real world". This truth was instilled into generations of alumni by many, however, Katherine Canales, would, and always will be considered as one of the most influential person(s) to hold a position of leadership with students dedicated to building a coalition in THE realest form. From building strong personal relationships, emphasizing time management and financial literacy to students, and sacrificing countless hours of mental capacity to stretch resources farther than what is available, Katherine Canales has encompassed the light that I have witnessed to be missing within the connection between students and many academic administrators even beyond this university.”

Destinee Barnes, Alumna
Former DHE Coordinator
engaging education, BSU

“Every time I see Kat, they would demonstrate this caring, nurturing personality no matter the day and time it is. They are an advisor for so many diverse organizations under SOAR and they treat them all equally whenever they walk in to meet her. They take the time to remember names and listen to the students and work to just do what is best for us. For most of my life, I would always second guess my own abilities, but Kat would always support me and remind me about the potential I have as a leader and contributor to the community. They always make sure that all the students that are in the SOMeCA space to have their voices be heard and valued.”

Millie Angulo
CUIP Intern, Community Unified Student Network (CUSN)
Professional Development Chair for Rotaract Club of Santa Cruz County
APISA, Bayanihan

“Katherine Canales brings a fresh an invigorating perspective as an advisor by propositioning strategic ways to ignite real change through student organizations. Her knowledge and approach shed light to my own understanding and relationship with social justice as a student organizer, she enables us to engage in dialogue because of the safe space she creates. She embodies every ounce of support and understanding needed in the POC community at a higher ed institution.”

Evelyn Benitez, Alumna
Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority Inc.

“Kat has made a great impact by being a Student Organization and Advising Resource advisor for student organizations. Kat makes sure students feel welcomed and have a safe space on campus. Kat has helped guide my organization into the right direction. Kat goes beyond her advising role to give students the resources they need to have a successful events and a strong organization.”

Perla Ibarra
Secretary, Sigma Lambda Gamma

“When I was the co-chair for Black Men's Alliance last year, Kat was an absolute life saver. I came into the position not knowing what I needed to do to push BMA forward. Kat was there with me every step of the way. She helped me not only have a successful year in BMA, but, in my opinion, the best year BMA has ever seen. She was able to give me the full rundown of how events work, how to reserve spaces, and just moral support in general. She would be a perfect candidate for the award!”

Louis Odiase
Senior Advisor, Black Men's Alliance (BMA)

“Kat is a wonderful leader who's always willing to dialogue with students. She is thoughtful with her word choice and demonstrates sensitivity and understanding towards feelings and emotions and also student's identities. I've worked under Kat for two years and never once have I heard her say anything condescending, demeaning, or hurtful toward any marginalized group. She's up to date and applies her knowledge and awareness to her work- that's priceless.”

Nayoung Isabella Kim
President, Kappa Gamma Delta
Treasurer, Inter-Greek Council

“Regardless of Kat not being my direct advisor, she still played a significant role in my retention in UCSC and my growth. She would check in with me in passing and made sure that any questions or concerns were clarified. Not only that but she made herself accessible to our organization's programming, she understood the importance of having programming for communities of color. It was also great to have her because as an org alumni herself, she understood our history and struggle.”

Oscar Montiel, Alumnus
Former Co-chair, Movimiento Estudiantil ChicanX de Aztlan (MEChA)
Former Chair, SUGB
SOLB & MCF

“Katherine Canales & the SOAR Office efforts and support for Black students provides evidence that the UCSC administration is inadequate when conceptualizing the need for Black students on campus. Katherine has been doing an outstanding job advising us since our community can recall and has supported our communities in ways that should be awarded. This can be seen by the recognition that she has received by the students she works with and additionally in the recognition she received by being awarded the 2018 Regional Advisor of the Year by a national organization.”

Basheera Ali-El
Former President, Black Student Union (BSU), former CUIP, Umoja

“Kat is able to work with a diverse body of students/organizations, all with different kinds of challenges and adapt appropriately to the issues of those respective conflicts. She was also always willing to work as long and hard as she needed to help us, often times beyond what we expected or asked of her. She is warm, welcoming, and inclusive individual, always willing to go

above and beyond for others, and is without a doubt a great advocate for diversity. Kat certainly deserves this award!"

Eron Lake, Alumnus
Director, The Kadence Keys, Co-Chair, BMA, Senior Advisor, NSBE
Member, A/BSA, Engaging Education, SOLB, The Cruz Steppas, Rainbow Theater

"Kat is someone who sees you; you as a person and a leader. As a mentor, she's open minded and genuinely cares. I would describe her as someone who allowed me to grow and helped open the possible potentials I had. Kat empowers others (including me) to see a possible future, and believes it can be obtained. She's humble, but not timid. She's proud, but not arrogant. Kat wants to see student leaders succeed. In doing so, she helps them, teach them, encourage them, and guide them."

Mercy Lee, Alumna
Former Cultural Chair, Hmong Student Association

"When it comes to developing and maintaining a strong multicultural community amongst staff and students, Kat is a name that is first to pop up. From the countless hours of meeting with students to being a roll model to them, she never fails to make everyone feel appreciated and valued. Even if sick and at home, we can all depend on her for advice and general help. She has mentored many student leaders and staff. Her dedication to the students is above and beyond and she embodies what a leader in the professional world is and should be."

Gavin Huynh
Vice President, Sigma Lambda Beta

"Working with Kat as KAMP CUIP (2017-2018) was an amazing experience. Although she wasn't my direct mentor, she served as a mentor to me regardless of whether I was assigned to her or not. Kat showed me what it means to be an active agent at UCSC by speaking up around certain issues of concern, showing what it means to be an ally and supporting other organizations in time of solidarity and need. Additionally, she has played a part in my growth as a student leader. Never did I think that I would hold such a position that could impact the Pilipinx community as well as other ethnic groups. She saw the potential in me that I couldn't see, and her consistent drive and push toward student leaders is purposeful and remarkable. Had I not learned from her, I wouldn't be where I am, graduated and employed for a nonprofit as an advisor. Kat is deserving of the Chancellor's Achievement Award for Diversity 2019 because she is an outstanding force of change!"

Isabela Pante, Alumna
Former CUIP Intern, Kuaya-Ate Mentorship Program (KAMP)
Bayanihan

"Being a transfer student from a completely different academic structure, I had so many questions about the processes and paper work involved with my role in BSU. If I was having trouble with a class or needed a specific resource I knew could count on Kat for advice. I am beyond thankful to have a hardworking advisor like Kat Canales, that consistently demonstrates her commitment to holistic and critical student success. From Everybody in BSU - THANK YOU"

Colby Riley
Vice President
BSU

"Being advised by Kat, I have seen her continuously take time out of her schedule to guarantee all of her organizations needs are met. She provides us with all the information she can to see us strive as organizations and POC. But most importantly she understands what our organizations stand for and produce to ensure that she can guide us appropriately. Her passion towards our

organizations is a huge reason for why we are still on this campus and why I know she is deserving of this recognition.”

Fabiola Pérez-Cataño
Finance Chair and Fundraiser Chair in Sigma Pi Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Former Director and Costume Director for GF Los Mejicas

“In 2016, I was the Motivation Conference coordinator and she was the SOAR advisor that looked over. Having all those weekly meetings with her always meant, to me, the development of a master piece. Kat Canales is someone who knows the blueprint of UC Santa Cruz. She knows the ins and outs of the institution and uses that information to navigate other student leaders based on their wants and needs.”

Ilaisaane Fuka
Coordinator, Motivation Conference

“Kat has been an invaluable supervisor for my nearly four years at SOMeCA. There are few people I have met on campus with her breadth and depth of knowledge regarding student organizations and the policies they navigate. Kat’s approach to advising — student or staff — is simple in focus, but complex in implementation: empower others with the information and skills necessary to make responsible, effective decisions. Whether she’s your supervisor or advisor, she engages you as a peer. Kat shares the experience and knowledge she has and invites you to build on that with her, and that openness and leadership has been critical to my development as staff.

We co-manage a lot of complex programming with students, and the most impactful programs have a history of 10 or more years (e.g. the Student-Initiated Outreach and Multicultural Festival). For the last eight years, those programs are consistently safe and successful because, directly or indirectly, Kat has played a significant role in their design and implementation. She knows the policies, budgets, history and challenges, but she doesn’t keep that information to herself. She creates a team-oriented learning environment, allowing us to enrich and add to the legacy of those programs.”

Cory Fong
Program Manager/Advisor
Student Organization Advising and Resources (SOAR)

Organizations listed for identification purposes only.