Dear President Zingg, Catherine Toma, Lorraine Hoffman, and Karla Zimmerlee,

My name is Courtney Silver and I am a proud Chico State student! I am currently finishing up my BS in Biology with an option in Ecology. I will, hopefully, be starting Graduate School this Fall here at Chico State. I am writing to you now to ask a very large and important favor, please keep the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve open and return it to its previous availability! This invaluable piece of land is vitally important to my program and my future, as well as many other students.

The thought of the BCCER closing is absolutely heart breaking to me! As a student, I have the right to pursue knowledge and to better my education. By closing the reserve you will be taking away from students the invaluable opportunities to gain knowledge about the natural world. I’m pursuing my graduate degree at Chico State solely so to conduct research in the BCCER. If you close it, what am I supposed to do? What are the many other grad students studying or hoping to study the reserve supposed to do?

I plan on doing my graduate research on *Rana boylii* – Foothill Yellow Legged Frog. The populations of *R. boylii* in the BCCER are flourishing, yet they are dying all over California. I believe I can help find the answer to the puzzling question of why they are dying everywhere else but here. But, to find this answer I need to be able to do my research in the BCCER, and I need to be able to do this research while not being chaperoned or limited by the availability of staff. Last year, I won the Michael Abruzzo Outstanding Scientist of The Year Award from the Biology Department at Chico State for my research on *R. Boylii*. I would not have been able to complete my award-winning research if I weren’t able to collect data during the most opportune time for spotting these creatures and by being able to go back for numerous days in a row. The new rules of mandatory chaperoning and being limited by the schedules chaperones would severely disrupt my further research and the results. The BCCER has functioned without student incident for so long and has done so with great success, why change things now? I do understand that there are liability issues that need to be assessed, but the unfortunate incident last October was in no way related to students. By shutting down the BCCER or enforcing these new rules, you are greatly impacting the students who rely on this land for research.

I chose to further my education in Chico because of the incredible opportunities it offers, like the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve. We are one of the only schools in the nation that have pristine outdoor natural research facilities in our back yard! By closing the BCCER you will be severely damaging this schools notoriety and credibility. I fear that we will also lose potential students because the draw to come to this great school will have been diminished.

Underneath my letter you will find many other letters that students have signed or written to urge you to keep this amazing place open and accessible. I hope that you read them and hear our outcries. I am in no way trying to organize a student rebellion, I am just trying to make our voices heard. Hopefully you hear them and take them to heart, please realize the impactions of closing the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve. The subsequent letters state other reasons to keep it open, these are mine.

Thank you for reading my letter and please feel free to contact me,

Courtney Sage Silver

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