

What is the VEST?

In 2025, UCSC students voted overwhelmingly (96%) in favor of Measure 82, to establish the VEST Commission (Voices for Empowerment and Safety in Transportation), because students found the UCSC administration lacks effective mechanisms to include student voices in its decisions, and this contributed to an unreliable, unsafe and costly transportation system.

The VEST Commission is a student-majority, student-led commission that invites the participation of faculty and staff to join in a democratic process to improve campus transportation services. The 2026 VEST includes representatives of the Student Union Assembly (SUA), Graduate Student Assembly (GSA), Student Union Governance Board (SUGB), Registered Student Organizations and staff organizations.

In this first year of the VEST Commission, commissioners and staff will focus on:

- **Accessibility:** Initiating an information hub to share and receive transportation ideas and concerns
- **Accountability:** Establishing commission operations that serve the campus community
- **Integrity:** Upholding a collective structure and processes that hold commissioners and staff accountable
- **Representation & Respect for Lived Experiences:** Reaching out to survey student, staff and faculty needs and ideas
- **Learning Orientation:** Generating new ideas for parking and transit based on research and feedback
- **Responsiveness:** Holding public forums to share information and develop responses to transportation issues
- **Shared governance:** Initiating information sharing protocols with TAPS/UCSC and developing relations with staff and faculty
- **Transparency:** Reporting to the student body on its operations and progress through posting updates

The VEST is a work in process that belongs to the student body. We invite your questions and suggestions as we develop resources and clear methods for students, staff and faculty to have a say in the transportation policies and decisions that affect our lives. Please check back for our email and contact information, as our website gets updated.

Our Story

UCSC students pay the highest transportation fee in the UC system and contribute over \$10 million to the Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS) office each year. But for multiple years, students found TAPS' services to be consistently unreliable, causing them to miss or be late to classes and work. Students also raised safety concerns for several years after experiencing bus accidents, broken windows and a bus that caught on fire. Student concerns were not validated until the publication of the 2024 California Highway Patrol report that determined UCSC transit operations to be an "Imminent Danger to Public Safety."

In campus wide elections in 2023 and 2024, over 90% of student voters called for greater budget transparency and agreed/strongly agreed that TAPS needs to do a better job providing parking and bus/shuttle services for students and agreed to support a measure that gave students the power to hold TAPS accountable to student concerns and needs. In 2025, Measure 82 was initiated by the Student Union Governance Board (SUBG) in partnership with the Student Union Assembly, Graduate Student Association, and student organizations. In Spring 2025, the measure passed with overwhelming support from the student body.

In Fall 2025, the founding organizations (SUGB, SUA, GSA) immediately started working on setting up operations to serve the campus community. An interim commission completed fair hire processes to bring student staff on board and to appoint commissioners. In Winter Quarter, the commission began meeting with faculty with expertise in transportation systems and democratic engagement. The commission also organized its first campus forum with TAPS administrators. At the forum, TAPS presented and answered questions about the campus proposal to raise parking permit fees and to add restrictions to parking.