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**Sent:** Thursday, May 03, 2012 8:22 AM  
**To:** [cnr\\_allfaculty@lists.berkeley.edu](mailto:cnr_allfaculty@lists.berkeley.edu)  
**Subject:** Dean's Comments On The Gill Tract

Folks,

Berkeley is the birthplace of the University of California's research, instructional, and cooperative extension programs in agriculture and natural resources. Those programs have evolved over time in response to social needs and opportunities. The process of change is never comfortable, but to be productive it must be based upon a civil and inclusive dialogue.

Any dialogue about the future of the Gill Tract must include the College of Natural Resources (CNR) faculty whose research depends upon the site, as well as those interested in expanding our programs in metropolitan agriculture. Undergraduate and graduate students passionate about biology, environmental education, nutrition, urban planning, food security and access, and social movements all need an opportunity to participate. The diverse voices of the residents of the City of Albany must also be heard.

As the dean of CNR, I have consistently expressed my willingness to facilitate a meaningful dialogue about the future of the Gill Tract. There is a good foundation for such a dialogue we can draw upon from previous planning efforts, but finance, governance, and legal issues remain that must be resolved before CNR or UC Berkeley can be expected to commit to launching any new program.

Those issues are not resolvable in a few days, which is all the time we have before CNR staff need to prepare the site for this year's research activities, and a constructive dialogue cannot take place while the site is occupied. Some have suggested that we partition the site between our ongoing activities and the occupiers, but I find this suggestion highly problematic for many reasons. That said, I firmly believe that biology research and a well-organized metropolitan agriculture program could ultimately not just co-exist on the site, but benefit from interaction.

The only way we can move forward to reconcile the needs and aspirations of everyone is for the current occupation to end so that CNR's staff can prepare the site. As dean, I cannot be a party to any resolution to this unfortunate conflict that does not respect the academic freedom of CNR's biologists to conduct their research, or in which I relinquish the rights of my faculty and students now or in the future to help chart the course of the University's research, teaching, and extension activities.

It's possible for us to achieve something wonderful together at the Gill Tract. The politics of confrontation also make it possible for us to fail completely.

Respectfully,

JKG

**J. Keith Gilless**  
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