

**Gurman:**

Hello Everyone! My name is Gurman Sidhu. I am a Co-President of the Sikh Student Association at the University of California, Davis. I am honored to speak before you today with my Co-President Prabhjot Sambi and treasurer Bhavdeep Khalon. SSA, short for Sikh Student Association, is an organization that brings together Sikh and Punjabi American identities to provide students with an environment that allows greater exploration of Sikhi and the Punjabi culture through many events and opportunities during their time in university and after. During the year we have events such as Kirtan Night, where we all come together and recite the name of god. We also do guest speaker discussion nights where we communicate with each other our thoughts and feelings on important topics impacting the Sikh and Punjabi community. We have social events where students on this campus are able to build meaningful relationships with other people in the community.

Additionally, we have the Vaddha-Chotta program, which is basically a big little mentoring program. We match incoming members with existing students who are able to help students navigate through academics, personal life, mental health, culture, and religion on the UC Davis campus.

SSA strives to provide a sense of belonging and family to students on this campus. This year, my board and I are working to provide more professional benefits to our Sikh and Punjabi members. To support them during their time here and once they graduate, we are launching the first SSA Alumni Association at UC Davis.

It means so much to us that as we launch our Alumni Association, two amazing alumni whom we are gathered here for today, are setting an example of how alumni can give back and be an inspiration to the communities we foster here on the Davis campus. We are honored to have them as Sikh Student Association Alumni at UC Davis.

Thank you!

**Bhavdeep:**

Hello everybody. My name is Bhavdeep Kahlon and I just wanted to say thank you for having me speak today. A lecture hall is an important room that is used for instruction, typically for hundreds of students at a time. Such an important location for the learning that is taking place for the next generation. A significant piece of architecture, and a symbol for growth as a person in the pursuit of knowledge. It is a heartwarming and welcomed sight to see the name Khaira Lecture Hall being included at UC Davis. As a Punjabi student at this school, it is sometimes hard to find a place where I belong. Being in the Sikh Student Association, I found my home in the Sikh Punjabi community. For newer students and the next generation finding an immediate home at UC Davis is something

that is desired by every student. In the past, this may have been a challenge, but the added addition of this lecture hall may change that persona. Seeing the name Khaira Lecture Hall in an undergraduate science hall holds significant value especially since these halls are used mostly for newer incoming students. It holds a statement that our community is here and thriving at this wonderful university. It provides support for the diversity, equity, and inclusion of all students here at UC Davis. It motivates students to reach out to resources around the school, such as our club, and the Sikh Student Association to belong in this community and at this university. I hope that it brings joy to the hearts of my fellow undergraduate students and showcases that we can also do great things when we set our minds to it.

**Prabhjot:**

(Sikh Salutation) “Vaheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Vaheguru Ji Ki Fateh”

Hello everybody, my name is Prabhjot Singh Sambi, and I am a Biological Sciences major. I would like to start by thanking Dr. Ravinder Singh and Mrs. Kamaljeet Kaur Khaira, the College of Biological Sciences, and the Chancellor for allowing the Sikh Student Association to work with the university to get this event going!

Davis has been the land of agriculture since the 1900s. This land of Mother Earth was blessed more by the Sikh and Panjabi communities when they immigrated to the USA for work as Sikh and Panjabi communities back home in Panjab (Pakistan and India, both sides) had been the biggest agricultural sector for both countries. Panjabis did a lot in the agricultural sector, and they implemented those farming practices in Davis, too!

Munsha Singh was the first Punjabi and a farmer who settled in Davis in 1907. He was the right-hand man of the person, George Pierce Jr., who lobbied to build the University in Davis. A Sikh farmer was an essential part of the birth of the university.

Since the late 1900s, Punjabis and Sikhs have been an integral part of the community here in California and settled around the land of Davis. Some examples are Dr. Khush, who was the first person from Asia to be offered a faculty position at UC Davis in 1960. He played a key role in the development of rice variety in the Green Revolution and was given the UC Davis Medal in 2018. Narinder Singh Randhawa, who got his PhD at Davis, went on to head ICAR in India. Third, there's a wonderful professor at Davis named Paul Singh - he is a world-renowned food engineer who designed the meals for NASA's mission to Mars.

The community has increased over the years, and now, many students on campus represent the community.

As parents, they like to see their kids progress and find excellence in life; similarly, the community finds joy and pride when their people succeed and reach greatness. Today, the Sikh and Panjabi community has yet again painted a page in the history of the University of California to get a lecture hall named after the Sikhs and panjabis!

The regional community takes dignity and pride in this moment, and this will be remembered through generations! Some members of the community from Davis, Woodland, and Sacramento are present here today with us! When we told them about this fortunate day, they were all very delighted, spirited, and thrilled.

Also, this is exemplary for all regional and minority communities as well. It tells everyone that UC Davis is a diverse and culturally inclusive place. And bringing this awareness to the regional community, UC Davis can make a broader impact not just at our school but everywhere around. People can look at UC Davis as a leader in diversity and follow suit and apply this to other universities and organizations.

UC Davis is a place of inclusivity, and all are welcome here. Everyone has a chance to shine in the pages of history. This instance in the history of UC Davis gives us an insight into the value and importance of the regional communities here at Davis. And the regional community is extremely pleased and they are obliged to have this honor!