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August 9, 2025
(Signatures auto-updated)

President James B. Milliken
UC Office of the President
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Chancellor Julio Frenk
UCLA Office of the Chancellor
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90095

Dear President James B. Milliken and UCLA Chancellor Julio Frenk:

On behalf of the students of the University of California (UC), including over 63,000 graduate and professional students, 23% of whom are at UCLA, we write with grave concern regarding the Trump administration's recent attacks on public higher education, with UCLA as the primary target. While recognizing your responsibility to manage this serious financial risk, we urge your collaboration in supporting the following demands to uphold democratic principles and our shared UC values.

UCLA immediately faces the indiscriminate and unlawful suspension of approximately \$584 million in federal research funding. This suspension continues to jeopardize the approximately 800 critical research projects that not only provide a lifeline for training our students, but also supports healthcare, national security, scientific innovation, the economy, and more, for California, for our nation, and for the entire world.

We understand that the federal government has proposed that UCLA pay a \$1 billion fine and contribute \$172 million to a fund intended to compensate individuals allegedly affected by civil rights violations.¹ Beyond these financial demands, the proposal calls for sweeping changes across the UC system, including restrictions on campus peaceful protests, changes to admissions fair practices, limitations on gender identity accommodations in housing and athletics, elimination of scholarships based on race or ethnicity, and the appointment of an external monitor to enforce compliance. At UCLA specifically, the demands reportedly also include implementing a senior administrator whose sole purpose is to ensure UCLA's compliance with anti-discrimination laws, sharing admissions data with the federal government,

¹ LA Times. "Trump seeks \$1-billion fine against UCLA. Newsom says 'we'll sue,' calling it extortion." Accessed August 8, 2025.
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-08-08/trump-seeking-1-billion-fine-from-ucla-over-antisemitism-allegations>.

and halting gender-affirming care through the UCLA Health System.

In solidarity with the UCLA Faculty Association,² we urge the UC to stand firm against the Trump administration's illegitimate and bad-faith demands. The UC must reject these malicious efforts to weaken higher education in the United States and immediately challenge them vigorously in court. We further call on the UC Office of the President to work in close partnership with Governor Newsom and the California State Legislature to address any resulting financial shortfall, and to explore utilizing a portion of the University's over \$5 billion in unrestricted endowment funds to preserve the integrity of its mission.

We, the undersigned UC student leaders, cannot compromise on the following non-negotiables:

1. **Academic Freedom and Scientific Integrity** – Our research and scholarship cannot be compromised by ideological coercion and fascism.
2. **Institutional Autonomy** – Uphold our shared governance and resist concessions that undermine the University of California's autonomy.
3. **Public Mission** – Affordability, accessibility, and public benefit must remain central to our mission.
4. **Equity and Inclusion** – Institutional support and protection for international, undocumented, LGBTQ+, and historically underrepresented and marginalized students and scholars must remain unwavering.
5. **Student Privacy and Data Security** – Personal information must never be leveraged as collateral in negotiations.

We recognize the complexity of this situation, especially as it is unfolding early in your tenures as leaders of the University. Yet, even under this immense pressure, negotiations must not come at the expense of the University's values.³ In a press conference on August 7, 2025, the Governor of California and President of the UC Board of Regents, Gavin Newsom issued a firm admonition amplifying our stance followed by his recent proposed move to sue the Trump administration regarding this matter:⁴

*We're not Brown, we're not Columbia, and I'm not going to be governor if we act like that, period full stop. I will fight like hell to make sure that doesn't happen. There's principles, there's right and wrong, and we'll do the right thing. And what President Trump is doing is wrong, and everybody knows it.*⁵

² UCLA Faculty Association. "University of California: Stand Up For Our Values." Accessed August 8, 2025.
<https://tinyurl.com/ucstandup>.

³ UC Office of the President. "Mission, vision and values." Accessed August 8, 2025.
<https://www.ucop.edu/uc-operations/mission-goals/mission-vision-values.html>.

⁴ NBC Los Angeles. "Newsom: CA will sue Trump admin for \$1b settlement demand from UCLA." Accessed August 8, 2025.
<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/video/on-air/newsom-ca-will-sue-trump-admin-for-1b-settlement-demand-from-ucla/3761858/>

⁵ Forbes Breaking News. "'We're Not Brown, We're Not Columbia': Newsom Says UCLA Won't Buckle To Get Grants Back From Trump." Accessed August 8, 2025.

These words underscore a critical distinction: UC must not follow suit as these private institutions surrendered their core principles, compromised their students' constitutional rights, and mistakenly capitulated to the Trump administration in order to regain funding. In Newsom's defense of the UC, he explains,

He's attacking... one of the reasons California is the tentpole of the US economy, one of the reasons we have more scientists, engineers, more Nobel Laureates than any other state in this nation. He has threatened us through extortion with a billion dollar fine unless we do his bidding... We will not be complicit in this kind of attack on academic freedom on this extraordinary public institution, we are not like some of those other institutions that have followed a different path.⁶

Brown University has yielded admissions data, while also being forced to make decisions that cause major setbacks for transgender rights.⁷ Columbia University agreed to a \$220 million penalty while cutting diversity-related programs because they were deemed "unlawful."⁸

With over 280,000 students, 227,000 faculty and staff, and more than 2 million alumni worldwide,⁹ the UC has the collective strength, power, and unity to stand firm against unconstitutional federal overreach. Rather than engage in coercive negotiations, we reiterate the urgent need for the University to pursue immediate legal action against the federal government. Challenging this unprecedented interference through the courts would not only protect the UC's autonomy and reputation, but also set a national precedent for resisting ideological authoritarianism and upholding the rights of public institutions across the country. Ongoing legal action concerning the unconstitutional grant terminations are already yielding favorable early judicial orders, including preliminary injunctions, temporary restraining orders, class certifications, and grant reinstatements.^{10 11}

If the UC yields to politically motivated federal demands, it will set a dangerous national precedent threatening academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and civil rights protections. As the nation's leading public university system, home to the #1 public university nationwide, the UC must demonstrate

<https://youtu.be/pXwpDMqYfTc>.

⁶Gavin Newsom. "Governor Newsom, California leaders host Texas Democrats breaking quorum to fight GOP map-rigging" Accessed August 9, 2025. <https://www.youtube.com/live/yVBx55RXqyM?si=sMiRgiroo1HUsc7E>.

⁷ Brown University. *Resolution Agreement*. July 30, 2025.

https://www.brown.edu/sites/default/files/brown-and-united-states-resolution-agreement_July-30-2025.pdf

⁸ The Guardian. August 1, 2025. "Trump administration reportedly suspends \$200m in grants to UCLA."

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/aug/01/trump-suspends-ucla-funding-grants>

⁹ UC Office of the President. *Student and Equity Affairs: UC Workforce Diversity*. Accessed August 8, 2025.

<https://www.ucop.edu/student-equity-affairs/data-and-accountability/index.html#:~:text=UC%20Workforce%20Diversity.and%20working%20around%20the%20world>.

¹⁰ *Thakur v. Trump*, No. 3:25-cv-04737, (N.D. Cal.). <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/70459259/thakur-v-trump/>.

¹¹ *American Public Health Association v. National Institutes of Health*, No. 1:25-cv-10787, (D. Mass.).

<https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69835536/american-public-health-association-v-national-institutes-of-health/>.

principled and fearless leadership in defending its mission, values and commitments.

History warns us: in 1930s Germany, universities were purged of politically “undesirable” faculty, academic freedom was curtailed, and institutions became tools of propaganda.¹² The regime leveraged compliance to legitimize discrimination and suppress dissent. Today, similar rhetoric and tactics of political intimidation and coercion are being used by the Trump administration to erode civil liberties, dismantle inclusive excellence programs, weaponize data collection, and enforce ideological conformity.¹³

To acquiesce to the Trump administration’s coercive demands would compromise our integrity and embolden further attacks on public education. What happens to UCLA will reverberate across the country. Should the UC bend under the authoritarian threats disguised as anti-discrimination enforcement, it sets a dangerous precedent for others to do the same. This would mark the start of the dismantlement of public education through incremental surrender. This is not just about UCLA, or about the University of California; this is about defending the future of higher education.

Your students are urging you to lead with courage, conviction, and clarity, to challenge in court, and to refuse any settlement or agreement that results in financial obligations, compromises to academic freedom and autonomy, or any concessions whatsoever. Research funding has already been systematically slashed across all UC campuses. Past concessions to the Trump administration have done nothing to safeguard these resources, and striking a deal offers no guarantee they will honor it. We must stay strong in protecting UC values and priorities despite these attacks. We are eager to partner with you and support you on this matter.

Thank you for your service and commitment to our students. We look forward to hearing from you to discuss this matter forward. You can contact Stephanie Valadez, UCGPC President at president@ucgpc501c3.org or (415) 283-6918.

In solidarity,

University of California Graduate and Professional Council, UC Student Association, and select presidents of UC graduate and undergraduate student associations

¹² For more information on the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, see “Documents of the Holocaust.” *archive.today*, April 16, 2013. Accessed August 8, 2025.

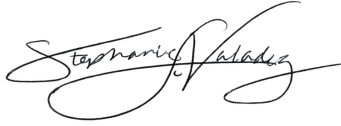
https://archive.ph/20130416051700/http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/documents/part1/doc10.html.

¹³ U.S. President. *Executive Order on Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking*. August 7, 2025.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/improving-oversight-of-federal-grantmaking/>.

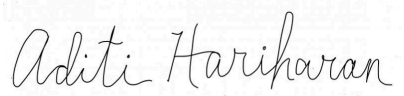
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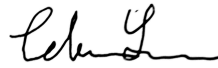
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