



Dear Faculty Colleagues,

[See below for information about the RALLY TO DEFEND OUR UNIVERSITY, happening today, 12:30pm Sproul Steps]

The Senate message that went out last Friday was sent in error. That letter, written before the Columbia letter came out, did not strike the right tone or meet the current moment, but was inadvertently distributed. We are living through a federal assault on higher education and the values and mission we all hold so dear. This assault is top of mind for all faculty and thus is the Senate's top priority. I describe here the actions the Senate is taking.

In fall 2024, the Senate convened the committees on Academic Freedom (ACFR), Diversity Equity and Campus Climate (DECC), and Demonstrations and Student Actions (DSA) to begin scoping a project addressing some of the emergent challenges at the nexus of academic freedom, free speech, and diversity, within the context of higher education. The flurry of executive orders and other federal actions taken since January, that threaten the very core of our academic mission (academic freedom) and our guiding principles (e.g., diversity, access, innovation, public impact), have created a heightened sense of urgency for protecting our values and our mission.

In considering not only broader messaging but what we have been hearing that faculty need right now, the Senate is working on several items, and we welcome more ideas for how we can best support faculty in this moment:

- Please join us for an [emergency meeting](#) of the Berkeley faculty on **April 1st, 3:30-5:30p** in Booth Auditorium in the law school. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for faculty to voice concerns related to the current federal landscape and its implications for higher education, and for Berkeley; and get information from the campus administration on their planning efforts. Confirmed attendees include Chancellor Lyons, EVCP Hermalin, Vice Provost Vicky Plaut, Vice Chancellor Kathy Yelick, Chief Campus Counsel David Robinson, and Acting Vice Chancellor for Equity & Inclusion, Fabrizio Mejia. You may add this meeting to your calendar by clicking [here](#).
- Early conversations among members of Senate committees led to the open letter distributed on Monday. We are now working on a formal Senate statement, perhaps in collaboration with other Senates across the UC system.
- Approximately one month ago, we planned the topic for the spring Division meeting: Optimizing Research Infrastructure Investments Across Campus. As important as this is (#1 concern in the faculty pulse survey), this moment requires something different. Thus, we are working on confirming guests from the UC Office of the President for our spring division meeting to provide a more systemwide perspective of the federal landscape and its impacts on the University. More to come as our planning progresses. The spring division meeting will be held **April 24th 3-5p** in Banatao Auditorium in Sutardja Dai Hall.
- The campus administration has stood up a Government Activities Management Team (GAMT) which meets weekly. GAMT has a number of workstreams focused on planning in relation to impacts of federal activities

across various functional areas. These areas include, but are not limited to: immigration, research, instruction, student financial aid, finance, LGBTQ+, and personnel policies and impacts. The Senate is a member of the GAMT and the Chancellor's Roundtable and is actively engaged in these discussions.

Aside from formal Senate activities, the Senate thanks the broader Berkeley faculty for their leadership. The Berkeley Faculty for the Freedom to Learn, a self-organized group of Berkeley faculty, has planned a “**Rally to Defend our University: Freedom to Speak, Freedom to Teach, Freedom to Learn for Everyone**”. The rally, which has strong support throughout the University, will take place **today, Wednesday March 19th, at 12:30p** on the Sproul Plaza steps. This is a time for us to join together with one voice in support of our University and higher education, more broadly.

In solidarity,
Amani

