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## Letter to Sidney M. Ehrman, April 14, 1950: Banc Mss C-B 881, Box 177: 1950 #2 Loyalty Oath

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### [Letter, April 14, 1950]

April 14, 1950.

Mr. Sidney M. Ehrman  
700 Nevada Bank Bldg.  
San Francisco 4, Calif.  
My dear Sidney:

Mr. Neylan telephoned to me about his talk with you relative to working out some form of acceptable alternative statement.

I did not get the full text of the proposal, but told Neylan that anything that you and he might work out would be acceptable to me; and that I would endeavor to get the other southern Regents to go along with it.

Here is the situation, as I view it:

1. An overwhelming majority of our faculty have signed the loyalty oath—86%.
2. In the faculty poll, about the same percentage voted to bar Communists from the University.
3. Thirteen per cent have failed to sign the oath or to subscribe to the simple statement of non-Communist affiliation, and thirteen per cent in the faculty poll voted against excluding Communists.
4. Who constitute this unidentified thirteen per cent? How many of them are Communists affiliated with subversive groups? Somehow or other, we must identify this unidentified minority.

Obviously, the only thing to do is to require this unidentified minority—the non-signers—to sign an acceptable alternative statement

A member of our local staff suggested that the University's position would be strengthened, in case of a legal test, if the

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Regents should, at the next meeting, add the following implementation to the resolution adopted at the February 24th meeting. I am not sure that it has any particular merit, but pass it on to you for such consideration as you think it may deserve:

"Any employee who does not comply with the University policy announced at the February 24th, 1950, meeting of the Board of Regents, shall have the right to petition the President and the Academic Committee on Privilege and Tenure for a hearing to prove that he is not a member of the Communist Party, or a party to any agreement in conflict with the University's policy of excluding Communists; if the President and the Academic Committee on Privilege and Tenure shall find that the petitioner is not a Communist, the termination of employment shall not apply."

The situation here is approaching the proportions of a dangerous whirlwind. Every civic and patriotic organization—such as the American Legion, the Parent-Teachers' Association, the Native Sons, Chamber of Commerce, Realty Board, Republican Assembly, Federation of Women's Clubs, Friday Morning Club, Ebell Club (probably the strongest woman's organization in California), the Motion Picture Alliance, Knights of Columbus, Pro America, etc., have voiced their individual protest against any suggestion of abandonment of the loyalty oath, and now are organized into a joint committee for decisive action in the event that the Regents at their next meeting should vote to rescind the oath.

What all this may result in, no one can tell. Only one thing is certain, it will be a crushing blow to the University of California if the Regents—with their eyes wide open to the serious consequences—should take action to rescind.

There is violent talk here of circulating a petition throughout the State, through the medium of local branches of these patriotic organizations, for an Initiative directed against the University, and calling for drastic changes in University administration.

After all, Sidney, what does all this fanciful protest against curtailment of academic freedom amount to? Do not the splendid, broad, American views expressed by such distinguished scholars as Dean Roscoe Pound, Dr. Perkins—outstanding authority in the United States today on criminal law, Dr. Gustav Arlt—graduate Dean, Dr. Dale Coffman—Dean of U.C.L.A. Law School, Dr. Herbert Evans—Nobel Prize winner, of Dr. Carver—noted Harvard scholar and now on the U.C.L.A. campus, and who a year ago was awarded an honorary degree by our University, and numerous other deans and chairmen of departments—all uniting in denouncing the implication that the University's policy is in any remote degree a curtailment of academic freedom—constitute a sufficient answer to the ugly utterances of those who seek to conceal their un-American views under the cloak of academic freedom?

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This situation can not be permitted to rage. You and I—and I believe the whole Board—love Bob Sproul. He has been placed in a most unfortunate position, and his reputation is badly battered. We must all endeavor to restore not only the University's own prestige, but that of our President as well. The only sure way of doing this will be for the Regents to stand firm in their position. If the Board should, by any chance, adopt an innocuous, meaningless substitute for the University's present policy, it would, I am sure, result in the permanent injury to the University and to our President.

Trusting that you will be able to work something out, I remain

Cordially

Edward A. Dickson.

EAD/S