



Letter to Members of the Academic Senate from the Student Progressives, September 17, 1949

[Letter, 17 September 1949]

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TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Dear Sir:

As members of the student body of the University of California, we wish to urge upon your attention our conviction of the unacceptability of resolution #1 of the resolutions to be presented, by the Advisory Committee to President Sproul, to the Academic Senate, Monday, in lieu of the originally proposed loyalty oath.

In spite of the fact that acceptance of this resolution would obviate the necessity for any individual oaths, we feel that it would place the same restrictions upon freedom of academic pursuits at our university. It would, moreover, in any future actions, place the Administration in the position simply of implementing a policy of the Senate — a policy which directly contradicts the principled stand of the AAUP and of the Senate itself in its determination to maintain the "freedom of human mind and spirit" from administrative pressure for conformity in thought.

Resolution #1 would, in principle, just as the oath, put "the individual faculty member in a position where he is liable to suspicion for his associations, and for his statements and writings." "Such an atmosphere of intimidation might well dissuade capable educators from joining our faculty." It would certainly "imperil the high standards of scholarly excellence from which we, as students, have gained so much." (quotes from Student Petition to Academic Senate)

We agree in principle with the following positions of the AAUP and Harvard University, and urge that on the basis of these you reject the new resolution, as well as the oath itself:

"... on the theory that 'guilt is personal', the committee said that charges should be brought against a teacher individually....

"If, it was stated these accusations were sustained at a hearing, the teacher should lose his job 'because of his acts of disloyalty or because of professional unfitness and not because he is a Communist.' " (AAUP position as paraphrased in the NY Times 7/12/49)

"...Harvard University today reaffirmed its support of complete freedom for teachers and members of the student body.

"The University said it would never attempt to keep watch on either faculty or student body as far as ideas and opinions are concerned and that it would refuse to discipline those who express unpopular views." (San Francisco Chronicle, 6/20/49)

Along with the thousands of students who have signed the Student Body Petition to the Academic Senate, we "do respectfully urge that our teachers in the Academic Senate defeat any and all attempts to limit the scope of education, and particularly to reject the proposed loyalty oath."

Respectfully yours
Student Progressives
Berkeley Chapter
Leon Litwak, chairman