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## Letter to John Francis Neylan, March 13, 1950

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### [Letter, March 13, 1950]

March 13, 1950  
Mr. John Francis Neylan  
1 Montgomery Street  
San Francisco, California  
My dear Regent Neylan:

The circumstance that a faculty member of the University addresses directly a Regent is, itself, a heinous crime, subversive of respect for the elaborate organization of the University. I venture to commit this act, my dear Mr. Neylan, an act which I am impelled to perform solely from my convictions, because of my respect for the courageous position you have taken in the Board of Regents. My crime is not quite so great as it would otherwise be, of course, from the circumstance that I have but two more years to serve and from the further circumstance that our President, Mr. Sproul, has not deemed me worthy of any considerable service even during those two years.

I find it incomprehensible that some of my colleagues on the faculty consider it both an infringement of their rights and an insinuation of their disloyalty to be asked to take a special oath that they will protect their country. These gentlemen are aloof from the practical affairs of life and from the alarm which millions of Americans now feel as to the designs of Soviet Russia. Speaking in Washington and in Bethesda to government groups, I have taken special oaths and been finger-printed many times during the last three years. I have never considered that this indicated that I was especially suspect and I am astonished at the mental processes of my colleagues who do make such an interpretation. I will sign a fresh oath daily, as I arise from my bed, that I will have no congress with Communism and will not thereby or in any other way destroy my country. Who would not take such an oath?

Finally, the claim that the responsibility of the University is identical with the responsibility for the execution of our laws by the Governor of the State or a Sheriff of a county is absurd. I am astonished that my colleagues are willing to compare themselves in this way. The faculty of an institution of learning has a wholly unique relation to gifted youth, who assemble with respect at their feet and can be indoctrinated, if not easily at any rate ultimately. There is, therefore, defensible cause for demanding unique safeguards in the instruction of youth.

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Without the remotest idea of ingratiating myself in your esteem, it occurred to me as entirely proper for one man, whatever his station, to express his satisfaction at the behavior of a fellow man, however elevated the station of the latter.

I am, with assurances of respect

Sincerely yours  
Herbert M. Evans

HME:mz