

Non-Senate Academic Employees

To the Chairman of the Academic Senate from the Teaching and Research Assistants and Lecturers, July 20, 1949
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The undersigned teaching and research assistants and lecturers of the University of California, although unaware of any conduct which warrants doubt about their loyalty and zeal, have no objection to declaring again their loyalty to the Nation and State of which they are citizens and their determination to discharge their duties faithfully.

However, the proposed Regent's loyalty oath is a matter of grave concern to the future of the teaching and research assistants and lecturers of the University. Therefore, we feel it is imperative that we state clearly the reasons for our firm opposition to this measure.

Our opposition is based on three objections:

First, the proposed oath dangerously interferes with intelligent preparation for an academic career. It is essential for the academic aspirant to develop, concurrently with a mastery of his subject field, a reasoned and mature social philosophy. This oath would create an atmosphere of suspicion and intolerance which might well force him to channel his conclusions along those narrow lines considered politically safe. We believe that the resulting attitude of apprehension will disastrously inhibit the prospective scholar in formulating that reasonable political perspective upon which his future career must rest.

Second, the proposed oath would demand conformity to safe political principles as a prerequisite to entrance into the academic profession. This is a club which the academic aspirant, having no tenure, is unable to defend against if he desires to continue in his chosen profession. Teachers whose social philosophy is thus irrationally motivated cannot successfully induce in their students that habit of independent and critical thought which is essential for a self-governing people.

Third, the proposed oath represents a grave interference with the independence of the profession which we desire to enter. We feel that freedom of thought cannot be maintained if determinations of academic competency are to be made exclusively by groups other than the faculty itself. The proposition that neither the University nor its faculty should be allowed to become victims of political hysteresis [sic] is made quite clear in Article IX, Section 9 of the state constitution: "The University shall be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free therefrom in the appointment of its regents and in the administration of its affairs".

As members of the University community, the undersigned teaching and research assistants and lecturers believe it both necessary and desirable to join with the Academic Senate in furthering the common goal of academic freedom. Therefore, we respectfully urge the Academic Senate to reject the new loyalty oath and to that end we give our unqualified support.