



Letter to Henry M. Wriston from Norris W. Rakestraw, March 10, 1950

March 10, 1950
President Henry M. Wriston
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island
My dear Dr. Wriston:

You are probably aware of the issue between the Regents and the Faculty of the University of California over the requirement of a special Non-Communist oath for future Faculty appointment. The Regents, on February 24, finally issued an ultimatum that all Faculty members (as well as other employees) would sign such an oath by April 29 or else.

The Faculty has no weapon but public opinion which, in the short time remaining, it is trying to muster. You will appreciate that if this movement gathers momentum here it can spread, with disastrous consequences to the principle of academic freedom.

The President and the Governor were two of the Regents who voted against this policy on February 24. Would you care to write to either or both of them (President R. G. Sprowl and Governor Earl Warren) in approval of their stand and expressing the hope that every effort, will be made to bring the Board of Regents to reconsider. I am inclined to doubt whether an impersonal appeal to the Regents would be effective but we hope that personal expressions from the Heads of other institutions may have some weight. I am therefore undertaking to write some of my personal friends, including yourself.

Within the last few days the Faculty has adopted resolutions recognizing—and actually accepting—the Regents' policy of 1940, that no member of the Communist Party will be employed by the University. It has also proposed an alternate means of enforcing this policy, within the established framework of University procedure, which is at least as effective as the proposed oath and which does not invade the right of the Faculty to academic freedom. It is hoped that this alternative will satisfy the Regents' lust for red blood.

Sincerely yours
Norris W. Rakestraw
Prof. of Chemistry
NWR:GB