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*Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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July 16, 2019

**JANET NAPOLITANO, PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

RE: Academic Council Statement Regarding Racialization of Espionage Concerns

Dear Janet,

The Academic Council has endorsed the attached statement expressing concern about the increasingly racialized ways that scholars and students from specific countries and of specific ethnicities are being targeted as potential threats in national conversations about academic espionage. The statement acknowledges that there are real threats from foreign government and entities, but also notes that there are existing mechanisms to safeguard research and national security and that new restrictions will hurt the international research collaborations and open exchange of information that drives innovation.

As you may know, this issue has been of concern to academic leaders nationally. Chancellor Christ has remarked on this matter, and please see the statement from MIT President Reif (<https://news.mit.edu/2019/letter-community-immigration-is-oxygen-0625>) that speaks directly and forcefully to this issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Rob C May".

Robert C. May, Chair
Academic Council

Encl:

cc: Provost Brown
Academic Council
Senate Directors

Academic Council Statement Regarding Racialization of Espionage Concerns

July 2019

At the University of California, one of the foundational responsibilities of the Academic Senate is to ensure that faculty are supported in our efforts to generate and disseminate scholarly and scientific knowledge. Innovations and successes in our research often depend on collaborations facilitated by transnational networks of faculty, researchers, postdoctoral scholars, and students. We are thus alarmed by the increasingly racialized ways in which international scholars and students—especially those from China, Iran, and Russia—are being targeted in national conversations about academic espionage. We believe it is our ethical duty to challenge political and institutional efforts to introduce excessively stringent barriers to the international exchange of research, science, and scholarly ideas and to contest questionable investigations of researchers and scientists, particularly when such efforts are based on stereotyping and racial profiling.

We call attention to the many laws, regulations, and processes already in place to help the federal government, funding agencies, and educational and research institutions safeguard against academic espionage and threats to intellectual property and national security, including those that may derive from foreign governments working through international researchers and students. If there are notable deficiencies in such regulations, we believe the University of California is well positioned to be a national leader in developing and articulating best practices for protecting intellectual property and sensitive data *in general*, thus reframing the national conversation about academic espionage from one of *international* or *foreign* threats to one that addresses *all* threats to our research and other forms of confidential data.

Although the University of California—and several individual campuses—has already signed a letter in support of the Securing American Science and Technology Act (SASTA) we add our collective voice to those speaking publicly against the escalating racialization, racial profiling, and stereotyping that drives the national conversation about academic espionage. We also condemn the increasing number of federal and institutional investigations, suspensions, and dismissals—often initiated without adequate evidence—being brought to bear against both “foreign” and Chinese American researchers, scholars, and students suspected of such espionage.

UC Berkeley Chancellor Carol Christ’s February 21, 2019 statement underscores the acute dangers of such racial profiling: “As California’s own dark history teaches us, an automatic suspicion of people based on their national origin can lead to terrible injustices.” The University of California Academic Senate strongly echoes these concerns, and we urge others to speak out against them as well. We must remain vigilant against the racism that has emerged in the name of national security.