



July 17, 2024

Statement Regarding Academic Freedom at the University of California, Los Angeles

On behalf of the American Political Science Association (APSA), we express deep concern regarding disciplinary proceedings taken by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) against faculty members and scholars associated with campus protest activities. In April 2024, a cohort of UCLA faculty, including political science faculty, participated as intermediaries between protesting students and administrative officials and law enforcement in efforts to protect students from violence. The members of this cohort include Dr. Graeme Blair and Dr. John Branstetter, faculty in UCLA's Political Science department and members of APSA. In May 2024, these protesting students and the cohort of faculty were subject to violence and arrest by police in an effort by the UCLA administration to clear the protests. Subsequently, the UCLA administration instituted changes to the disciplinary guidelines, broadening them to indicate that faculty arrested for participating in a campus protest may be cited through the employee disciplinary process. Dr. Blair and Dr. Branstetter have been cited or had investigations opened into their conduct, based on these after-the-fact changes to the disciplinary guidelines. These retroactive changes to the disciplinary process constitute violations of UCLA faculty's academic freedom and undermine the protections afforded to faculty.

As expressed in our [June 7 statement](#), APSA is a steadfast supporter of the fundamental principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression, and we call on academic institutions to foster students' and faculty members' freedom of expression and academic freedom without the threat of force or disciplinary action. We call upon the UCLA administration to halt these disciplinary proceedings and to reject arbitrary and post-hoc changes to the disciplinary process against scholars and to protect due process for faculty engaging in free speech and expression on campus, as should be protected under the fundamental principles of academic freedom. We also call on UCLA to recommit to not enlisting external police forces to respond to peaceful protests and demonstrations on campus by students or faculty and put the safety of their campus communities at the highest priority.

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