



December 14, 2016

Dear Colleague,

The California Faculty Association (CFA) is committed to protecting academic freedom, including the rights of faculty, students, and staff to engage in debate and public protest.

The California Faculty Association will support and defend all members of our campus communities from racist, sexist, nationalist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-Muslim, and anti-Semitic attacks. CFA condemns all hate speech and hate crimes on campus and in our surrounding communities.

There have been specific incidents on CSU campuses of hate speech, hate crimes, and violations of academic freedom in the past few weeks. In addition, we have seen the rise of illegal surveillance designed to intimidate, and websites intended to threaten and silence those who speak truth to power. These are unacceptable in any democratic society, and especially on our university campuses.

Hate crimes, violence motivated by the group membership of the victim, are clearly out of bounds in any segment of human civilization, much less on our CSU campuses. However, hate speech, targeting an identity group or an individual based on group membership, contains its own sort of violence and should be condemned in every case on our campuses.

As faculty and members of university communities, we uphold and practice academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas. A genuinely free exchange of ideas fosters more conversation, more ideas, and more interlocutors who can challenge us and help us arrive at the truth. We affirm these values and practices as particularly important today when, for the first time in our history, the CSU better mirrors the class, race, and gender diversity of our society.

Hate speech has the opposite effect. It silences other voices, deliberately excludes both specific members and entire groups from the debate. Hate speech shuts down discussion. Hate speech does not search for truth or make an argument, but rather shouts invective or etches a symbol that scares others away.

Such speech and expression must be anathema on our campuses and be taken as acts of violence that threaten both our academic pursuits and our community of free inquirers.

*—Collectively signed by the 23 Chapter Presidents of the California Faculty Association*