

A Statement of Position Regarding the University's Responsibilities Amid Federal Actions on Higher Education Institutions

Whereas, the federal administration has issued aggressive and unconstitutional threats that endanger the core mission of higher education institutions across the United States;

Whereas, these threats include proposals to withdraw or freeze funding from colleges and universities,¹ which directly violates the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964² and the First Amendment rights to free speech and association;³

Whereas, the federal government has enacted significant policy changes, including executive orders,⁴ that undermine constitutional protections and adversely affect

¹ Weissert, Will, Cheyanne Mumphrey, and Susan Haigh. "About \$1.8 Billion in Federal Money for Cornell, Northwestern Is Frozen: White House." *AP News*, 10 Apr. 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-cornell-northwestern-federal-funding-frozen-37192b49730304960929dc b72f09469c>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Sandoval, Edgar. "Harvard Professors Sue Trump Administration Over Threat to Cut Funding." *The New York Times*, 12 Apr. 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/12/us/politics/harvard-professors-trump-lawsuit-funding.html>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Otterman, Sharon, and Liam Stack. "White House Cancels \$400 Million in Grants and Contracts to Columbia." *The New York Times*, 7 Mar. 2025, www.nytimes.com/2025/03/07/nyregion/trump-administration-columbia-grants-cancelled-antisemitism.html. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Hartocollis, Anemona, Alan Blinder, Michael C. Bender, and Vimal Patel. "Trump Administration Set to Pause \$510 Million for Brown University." *The New York Times*, 3 Apr. 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/03/us/trump-administration-brown-university-funding-pause.html>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Luscombe, Richard. "Trump Administration Cuts \$4M to Princeton's Climate Research Funding." *The Guardian*, 10 Apr. 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/10/trump-administration-cuts-princeton-climate-research-funding?CMP=share_btn_url. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Jameson, J. Larry. "An Update to the Penn Community on Federal Funding." *University of Pennsylvania*, 25 Mar. 2025, <https://president.upenn.edu/announcements/update-penn-community-federal-funding#:~:text=Last%20week%2C%20we%20learned%20through,women's%20swimming%20team%20in%202022..> Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

² United States, Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. 24 Mar. 2025, www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

³ U.S. Const. amend. I. *Constitution Annotated*, Library of Congress, <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

⁴ United States, Executive Office of the President Donald Trump. Executive Order 14159: Protecting the American People Against Invasion. 29 Jan. 2025. *Federal Register*, vol. 90, no. 19, pp. 8443–8448, <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-02006/page-8443>; United States, Executive Office of the President Donald Trump. Executive Order 14161: Protecting the United States From Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats. 30 Jan. 2025. *Federal Register*, vol. 90, no. 20, pp. 8451–8453, <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-02009>; United States, Executive Office of the President Donald Trump. Executive Order 14163: Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions

members of the University of Connecticut (UConn) community, including undocumented, Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals (DACA), international, refugee, and other immigrant students and scholars;

Whereas, as of 2:00 p.m. EDT April 15, 2025, 180+ colleges and universities have reported nearly 1,200 international students and recent graduates whose legal status has been altered by the Department of State;⁵

Whereas, historically and currently, international students, scholars, and staff have been critical contributors to UConn's educational and research excellence. Their rights, freedom, and dignity must be protected to maintain the university's international standing;⁶

Whereas, significant concerns have been raised by students organizations regarding the adequacy of legal resources for students and the potential for federal law enforcement to appear on campus;

Whereas, the administration at UConn sent campus-wide emails on January 28, 2025,⁷ February 18, 2025,⁸ March 6, 2025,⁹ April 4, 2025,¹⁰ and April 10, 2025¹¹ stressing the university's commitment to continuing its support of all Huskies, explaining critical

Program. 30 Jan. 2025, *Federal Register*, vol. 90, no. 20, pp. 8459–8461.
<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-02011>.

⁵ Mowreader, Ashley. "Where Students Have Had Their Visas Revoked." *Inside Higher Ed*, www.insidehighered.com/news/global/international-students-us/2025/04/07/where-students-have-had-their-visas-revoked. Accessed 15 Apr. 2025.

⁶ University of Connecticut. *UConn Global*. <https://global.uconn.edu/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; University of Connecticut. *Interactive Partnership Map*. Global Affairs, <https://partnerships.global.uconn.edu/partnership-map/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; University of Connecticut. *Universitas 21*. UConn Global, <https://partnerships.global.uconn.edu/universitas-21/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

⁷ Maric, Radenka, and Anne D'Alleva. "Message on Recent Executive Orders and Federal Actions." *UConn Today*, University of Connecticut, 28 Jan. 2025, <https://today.uconn.edu/2025/01/message-on-recent-executive-orders-and-federal-actions/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

⁸ Maric, Radenka, and Anne D'Alleva. "A Message to UConn Faculty and Staff." *UConn Today*, University of Connecticut, 18 Feb. 2025, <https://today.uconn.edu/2025/02/a-message-to-uconn-faculty-and-staff/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

⁹ D'Alleva, Anne, et al. "UConn Assessing Impacts of Federal Directives." *UConn Today*, University of Connecticut, 6 Mar. 2025, <https://today.uconn.edu/2025/03/uconn-assessing-impacts-of-federal-directives/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁰ "Legal Resources and Community Partners." *UConn Today*, University of Connecticut, 4 Apr. 2025, <https://today.uconn.edu/2025/04/legal-resources-and-community-partners/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹¹ University Communications. "Supporting Our International Students and Scholars." Email to the UConn Community, 10 Apr. 2025.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s7MW4s0ouwjHM9FsA3PmQ2SPmrB5L97q/view?usp=sharing>.

limitations on that support, providing links to legal resources for affected students, and commenting on the impact of existing federal directives;

Whereas, the administration at UConn has acknowledged the “fraught and complicated moment”⁸ we are currently experiencing;

Whereas, the administration at UConn has articulated an unchanging “collective goal”⁸ to “support and protect higher education across the United States”⁸ and reaffirmed its mission as a land-grant institution “to expand access and opportunity and to serve all people from every walk of life;”⁹

Whereas, the administration at UConn has committed to supporting its students, faculty, and staff by stating that they are actively “plan[ning] for contingencies in affected areas,”⁹ providing “specific guidance...on mitigation strategies”⁹ and “information and resources that may be useful to those community members who are impacted, or potentially impacted;”¹²

Whereas, the administration at UConn explicitly stated that if community members were “accused of being out of compliance with immigration law,”¹² regardless of the validity of those accusations, UConn “cannot devote resources to funding or otherwise supporting what would be considered the personal costs of individual students and employees based on their association with UConn;”¹²

Whereas, the administration at UConn has noted that UConn’s International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) unit is immediately contacting students upon any change to their visa status, informing them of the change and “ask[ing] them to visit the Center for International Student and Scholar Services (CISS) to meet with a staff member who can connect the student to legal resources and university support services;”¹¹

Whereas, the administration at UConn has made clear that “UConn is prohibited from and would not provide information about a student’s class schedule or classroom location”⁷ to federal immigration authorities, and that UConn police “will not ask individuals about immigration status,”⁷ “detain a person solely on the belief they are in the country illegally,”⁷ or “detain or make arrests solely pursuant to an ICE [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement] detainer;”⁷

¹² “Information and Resources for the UConn Community.” *UConn Today*, University of Connecticut, 10 Apr. 2025, <https://today.uconn.edu/2025/04/information-and-resources-for-the-uconn-community/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

Whereas, the university is public, and as such, ICE officials are permitted to enter public, open spaces without a warrant;

Whereas, for any space on campus, UConn is “legally required to adhere to arrest warrants or other orders authorized by a judge;”

Whereas, remaining silent in the present moment will not protect the UConn community from future political or legal attacks on students and higher education, and the pattern of escalating threats is likely to continue beyond the end of the semester;¹³

Whereas, appeasing federal authorities will not protect UConn, as it has not protected other universities who have willingly acquiesced;¹³

Whereas, acquiescence would not just be a betrayal of UConn's values and mandate as an institution of learning, but have a detrimental impact on UConn's relationships with our international partners, on the investments that sustain UConn's endowment, and the caliber and reputation of the university;

Whereas, the nature of these attacks demands that UConn do more to *proactively* defend its community, the institution, and higher education more broadly, as the university has claimed it is committed to;⁷

Whereas, universities face a choice: allow students to be detained while drawn-out legal challenges—many of which they may not have the resources to pursue—play out, subjecting them to trauma, fear, and a lack of support;^{14, 15} or, take collective action now;

¹³ Bromwich, Jonah E., Michael S. Schmidt, and Devlin Barrett. “Trump May Seek Judicial Oversight of Columbia, Potentially for Years.” The New York Times, 10 Apr. 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/10/nyregion/columbia-trump-consent-decree.html>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Speri, Alice. “A Huge Cudgel’: Alarm as Trump’s War on Universities Could Target Accreditors.” The Guardian, 11 Apr. 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/11/trump-war-on-universities>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; United States, Executive Office of the President Donald Trump. Executive Order 14242: Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities. 25 Mar. 2025. Federal Register, vol. 90, no. 59, pp. 13679–13680. <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2025-05213>; Binkley, Collin, and Chris Megerian. “Trump Orders a Plan to Dismantle the Education Department While Keeping Some Core Functions.” AP News, 20 Mar. 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/trump-education-department-shutdown-b1d25a2e1bdcd24cfde8ad8b655b9843>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁴ Fadel, Leila, et al. “‘Citizenship Won’t Save You’: Free Speech Advocates Say Student Arrests Should Worry All.” NPR, 8 Apr. 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/08/nx-s1-5349472/students-protest-trump-free-speech-arrests-deportation-gaza>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁵ Singh, Maanvi. “Tufts Student Says She Has Suffered Multiple Asthma Attacks in ICE Custody.” The Guardian, 10 Apr. 2025,

Whereas, it is understood that any singular institution is not capable of preventing these attacks, but now is certainly not the time for our isolated silence;

Whereas, there are members of our community already directly being attacked with 13 known visa revocations as of April 15, 2025 and more than 50 across Connecticut colleges and universities;¹⁶

Whereas, it is unconscionable to allow students' lives to be the collateral when institutions can leverage their collective resources to more safely absorb that risk;

Whereas, we must share resources and maintain a unified, express commitment to one another to actively defend our institution and all those within it;

Whereas, Harvard University has firmly rejected federal demands that threaten its institutional independence, affirming that it "will not accept the government's terms" when they undermine constitutional and academic freedoms, even at the risk of losing billions in federal research support;¹⁷

Whereas, the University of Michigan's Central Student Government issued a public declaration outlining the threat posed by ICE presence on campus and has committed to keeping students informed and protected, asserting the university will "not take affirmative steps to advance enforcement of federal immigration law;"

Whereas, the Rutgers University Senate has proposed a Mutual Academic Defense Compact (MADC) across all Big Ten Academic Alliance members, calling for a shared legal defense fund, coordinated countersuits, and joint action to protect academic freedom and institutional autonomy against "politically motivated actions by governmental bodies;"¹⁸

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/10/tufts-student-ice-asthma-attacks>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁶ Otte, Emilia. "More than 50 Visas Revoked at CT Colleges and Universities." *The Connecticut Mirror*, 14 Apr. 2025, <https://ctmirror.org/2025/04/14/visas-revoked-uconn-yale-students/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁷ Burck, William A., and Robert K. Hur. Letter to Josh Gruenbaum, Sean R. Keveney, and Thomas E. Wheeler. 14 Apr. 2025. *Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP and King & Spalding LLP*, <https://www.harvard.edu/research-funding/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2025/04/Harvard-Response-2025-04-14.pdf>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025; Patel, Vimal. "Trump Administration Will Freeze \$2 Billion After Harvard Refuses Demands." *The New York Times*, 14 Apr. 2025, updated 15 Apr. 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/14/us/harvard-trump-reject-demands.html>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁸ *Resolution to Establish a Mutual Defense Compact for the Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance in Defense of Academic Freedom, Institutional Integrity, and the Research Enterprise*. Rutgers University Senate, 28 Mar. 2025, <https://senate.rutgers.edu/report/resolution-to-establish-a-mutual-defense-compact-for-the-universities-of->

Whereas, Brown University has joined a federal lawsuit, alongside leading institutions such as MIT, Princeton, Caltech, and Cornell, challenging unlawful funding cuts by the U.S. Department of Energy, which jeopardize vital research in AI, quantum science, and national security, asserting such actions “will devastate scientific research at America’s universities;”¹⁹

Whereas, universities can collectively challenge these orders, require action against them in place of their students, challenge the penalties issued for engaging in that defense, and do everything legitimately possible to protect their communities;

Whereas, a contingent of institutions can and must be immediately convened to resist these efforts, and UConn can and should play an active role in achieving that;

Therefore be it resolved, as representatives of the student body, the University of Connecticut Storrs Undergraduate Student Government calls upon the UConn administration to commit *publicly* and *unequivocally* to defend our community against these attacks wherever possible;

[the-big-ten-academic-alliance-in-defense-of-academic-freedom-institutional-integrity-and-the-research-enterprise/](#). Accessed 13 Apr. 2025.

¹⁹ “Brown Joins Federal Lawsuit Challenging Cuts to U.S. Department of Energy Grant Funding.” *Brown University News*, 14 Apr. 2025, <https://www.brown.edu/news/2025-04-14/doe-funding>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2025.

Therefore be it further resolved, the Undergraduate Student Government urges President Maric and the UConn administration to convene partner institutions to collectively and affirmatively state they will:

1. Ban ICE from all private spaces on campus;
 - a. To that end, this entails the following:
 - i. UConn clearly identifies and marks all private and thus “safe” spaces accessible to its community;
 - ii. UConn makes free campus housing available to vulnerable members of the community currently living off campus, as well as vulnerable on-campus students who lack reliable housing over the summer in order to more directly protect them from being detained;
 - iii. UConn cultivates active partnerships with the leadership of cities in Storrs, Mansfield, Hartford and near all regional campuses to protect our communities from unlawful contact with and apprehension by authorities;
 - iv. UConn facilitates remote learning and teaching so that students and professors at risk of detention in the United States can safely complete their programs and/or carry out their teaching responsibilities;
 - v. UConn implements a yearly mandatory “Know Your Rights,” training for all members of the UConn Police Department, UConn faculty, staff, and students regarding protocols for what to do if ICE or any external law enforcement official requests an affiliates’ information;
 - vi. UConn implements “Know Your Rights” training for all dormitory building resident advisors (RAs), residential housing directors, and all staff members working within dorm buildings, instructing them on proper conduct during engagement with external law enforcement officials in UConn dormitory buildings;
 - vii. UConn trains administration, staff, and faculty to be effective bystanders—and, if necessary, interveners—in the face of an unlawful abduction;
 - viii. UConn instructs members of the UConn community that if any external law enforcement official arrives at a university office or contacts a university office, they shall not:
 1. Answer questions about UConn students, staff, and faculty, request credentials or identification of agent(s);
 2. Grant permission to access UConn records or to search UConn premises without first consulting with the UConn

Police Department and/or the Office of the General Counsel,
or;

3. "Accept service" of any subpoena, warrant, or request from ICE or external law enforcement officials, as only the UConn Police Department and the Office of the General Counsel are authorized to review such documents;
 - ix. If UConn or a UConn official is required by law to give information to any external enforcement official (including ICE agents, FBI agents, or other state or local police), UConn should, to the fullest extent legally possible, provide prompt notification to individuals whose information is requested by external enforcement agencies;
 - x. UConn files an injunction against being compelled to share student records with immigration officials;
 - xi. UConn expands access to free legal services through new and existing initiatives, including but not limited to: the university should fund a full-time clinical teaching fellow and/or a staff attorney in the Asylum and Human Rights Clinic at UConn Law to support the UConn international community. The university should monitor the expanded capacity to assess whether the clinical fellow and/or staff attorney is meeting the representation needs of the most vulnerable immigrants at UConn;
 - xii. In the case that an international student breaks the Student Code of Conduct in the process of demonstrating or advocating, under their First Amendment rights, UConn ensures that that student's punishment does not invoke or possibly invoke a cancellation of their visa. This means the Office of Community Standards refraining from the harshest punishments, such as sanctions that may lead to de-enrollment, and thus the revocation of a student visa;
 - xiii. In the case where an undocumented member of the UConn community is charged with a non-violent crime in relation to a demonstration, UConn will ensure the administration and members of the UConn Police Department will not release the individual's immigration status or personal information publicly or to federal forces unless legally obligated;
 - xiv. UConn continues to transparently and promptly communicate what actions will be taken to actively maintain and protect the rights of students, scholars, and staff, as well as the type of legal and other resources the school will allocate to defend them;
2. Refuse to negotiate and/or settle with regard to changes to university policies and procedures sought by the Trump administration;

- a. UConn must:
 - i. Commit itself to resisting and legally challenging unlawful demands that threaten academic freedom and university self-governance; protecting departments and programs against political threats; preserving science and other research from funding cuts by providing legal and financial support to affected scholars and research units; and promoting the exercise of free expression and a culture of civil discourse;
 - ii. Refrain from all retaliation, including termination of employment or threats of termination of employment. The university should support students, scholars, staff, and alumni as we continue to speak up and agitate for what is right;
 - iii. File immediate suit/amicus briefs to prevent any further encroachments into the UConn community, using the many resources available to universities thanks to the work of civil rights organizations;

Therefore be it finally resolved, the Undergraduate Student Government calls upon President Maric and the UConn administration to work with the UConn Foundation to establish a dedicated fund to support impacted members of the UConn community;

- 1. This fund could be supported by donations from UConn alumni and other independent donors to create a 'Husky Defense Fund,' housed in the UConn Foundation and committed to meeting any of the needs of those impacted by current federal action or inaction, including but not limited to legal funds for students and faculty and restoring withdrawn research grants or federal funding;
 - a. Disbursements must be qualified with no greater restraints or requirements than those already applicable to UConn's 'Students First Fund;'
 - b. The committee reviewing each application must include members of the targeted class at the subject of each decision as voting members;
 - c. There must be no inquiry into applicants' immigration status, criminal conduct or accusations thereof, code of conduct violations or accusations thereof, or participation in any political activity, and these cannot be a basis for deciding any grant issued through this fund.

Authors:

Andy Zhang, President

Sponsors:

External Affairs Committee

Haritha Subramanian, Vice President

Phoenix Harper, Chief Diversity Officer

William Lipinski, Comptroller

Lorien Touponse, Former President of the Student Body

Angelo Montes-Diaz, Director of Organization Support Services, UndocuHuskies Admin Relations

Nolan Busalacchi, Alumni Quadrangle Residential Senator, Staff of Organization Support Services

John Guthrie, Hilltop Residential Senator

Deborah Kyerematen, Director of Communications

Nahum Valiente, PRLACC Ex-Officio Senator

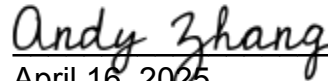
Certified:

Enacted:

April 16, 2025

Kyle Lowry

Speaker of the Senate



April 16, 2025

Andy Zhang

President of the Student Body