



May 14, 2024

Dear Free Palestine Encampment,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and members of campus leadership to discuss the UCB Divest Coalition's demands. I found many of the conversations quite valuable and I want to recognize your efforts to maintain a professional, organized, and productive approach during a very difficult time. In addition, I want to again acknowledge your efforts to peacefully protest the extraordinary death and destruction in Gaza. I, too, am concerned about the horrific killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians as well as the destruction of the Palestinian educational infrastructure. I plan to make a public statement by the end of the month sharing my personal support for government officials' efforts to secure an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Such support for the plight of Palestinians, including protest, should not be conflated with hatred or antisemitism.

I understand that the UCB Divest Coalition believes that the current allocation of the University's investment portfolio is not consistent with our values.

In 2014, the University of California was the first American public university to commit itself to upholding the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, principles that include a commitment to avoid investing in "[b]usinesses whose profits are derived from direct harm to public safety, [or] the unlawful deprivation of human dignity." [1] I believe this standard requires us to avoid investing in companies that are complicit in, or derive profit from, serious human rights violations. [2]

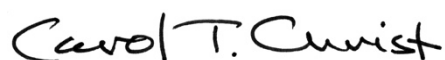
I strongly support, as I have always supported, investigating the alignment of UC Berkeley's investments with our institution's core values. Those values include a respect for equality, human rights, a commitment to fostering the conditions for human growth and development, and an abhorrence of war. The University of California has decided in the past to divest from businesses that were determined to not be aligned with our values. We should examine whether UC Berkeley's investments continue to align with our values or should be modified in order to do so.

I understand that the UCB Divest Coalition will continue its advocacy for divestment from Israel by demanding an end to direct and indirect investments in companies that derive profit from, or whose conduct is complicit in violations of international law and/or human rights. This includes companies that profit from weapons manufacturing, mass incarceration, and/or surveillance industries. As stated by the University of California Office of the President, divestment from companies on the basis of whether or not they do business with or in Israel is not supported. The sale of direct investments is not within the authority of the Office of the Chancellor but rather lies with the UC Regents.

I also understand the UCB Divest Coalition's demands include academic boycott. I do not support academic boycotts. However, as we are unified in our desire to ensure that our academic partnerships remain in alignment with the UC Anti-Discrimination Policy, including anti-Palestinian discrimination, the University will review all complaints about existing global exchange and internship programs and review new and future programs to ensure their compliance with the Anti-Discrimination Policy. As discussed, the UCB Divest Coalition will formally report any anti-Palestinian discrimination in institutions with which we have existing global exchange and internship programs. UC Berkeley will address (including termination if remedy is unavailable) its programs that violate this policy and will cease its student participation in programs administered by the University of California or other institutions that also violate this policy, if other appropriate remedy is unavailable.

To ensure we continue to meet our obligation under the UC Anti-Discrimination Policy, the University will establish a transparent process by December 2024 for the ongoing review of such complaints. The development of this process will include relevant stakeholder groups, including the UCB Divest Coalition and, upon its agreement, the Senate Academic Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate. As we begin our discussions about this process, I understand that the UCB Divest Coalition would like for the review to be co-led by the UC Berkeley Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination and the Division of Equity and Inclusion and to consider, as evidence of discrimination, reports from current and former students and faculty as well as reports by the United Nations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

I believe I have addressed all the demands stated by the UCB Divest Coalition in good faith as allowed by the authority of the UC Berkeley Office of the Chancellor, and I commit this Office to their enactment.



Signed by Carol T. Christ on May 14, 2024

[1] See Office of the President, "University of California joins UN-supported Principles for Responsible Investment" (Sept. 22, 2014); Office of President, "UC Investments," www.ucop.edu/investment-office/sustainable-investment/sustainability-framework/index.html.

[2] See, for comparison, the Ethical Guidelines for the Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund, which prohibit investments when "there is an unacceptable risk that the company contributes to or is responsible for: a) serious or systematic human rights violations b) serious violations of the rights of individuals in situations of war or conflict c) the sale of weapons to states engaged in armed conflict that use the weapons in ways that constitute serious and systematic violations of the international rules on the conduct of hostilities." Council on Ethics, Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund, *Guidelines for Observation and Exclusion of companies from the Government Pension Fund Global (GPF)*, Sec. 4 (Sept. 5, 2022).