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August 1, 2025

James B. Milliken Office of the President University of California 1111 Franklin Street Oakland, CA 94607

## Dear President Milliken,

Welcome to the University of California. We are writing with deep concern regarding UCOP and UC campuses' continued implementation and expansion of the Trellix endpoint detection and response (EDR) surveillance software—despite the clear and unambiguous resolution passed on June 12, 2025, by the University of California systemwide Academic Senate calling for a halt to this program.

The systemwide Academic Senate resolution follows similar calls for a halt to implementation on May 9th by the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate, the Representative Assemblies at UC Irvine on May 13, 2025, UC Santa Barbara on May 29, 2025. On the same day, UC Riverside's Senate Executive Council also called for a halt. And, on Friday, June 20, UCOP received a petition signed by over 1,000 faculty members urging a halt to the implementation of any EDR-technology solution in order to explore existing technologies that give equal weight to security and academic freedom. On June 26th, the Council of UC Faculty Associations sent a letter to former President Drake requesting, among other items, for these cybersecurity changes be subject to a process of approval in accordance with AAUP's recommendations regarding Academic Freedom and Electronic Communications, and for Academic Senate to be recognized as the decision making authority on this academic matter.

Academic freedom, privacy, and autonomy form the bedrock of scholarship, research, and teaching excellence at the University of California. These principles are now gravely threatened by the deployment of Trellix monitoring software across faculty computing systems. Trellix Endpoint Detection and Response – also known as EDR – is software that grants itself unrestricted administrative or root-level access to faculty computers, thereby enabling comprehensive and invasive surveillance capabilities. Such unchecked access allows the monitoring, extraction, alteration, and even deletion of files without explicit user consent or notification. This represents an unprecedented intrusion into the privacy and intellectual security of faculty, undermining fundamental principles that underpin the university's educational and research missions. Some administrators call Trellix an industry standard, but it should be clear that our mission as a university is fundamentally different from that of industry.

Faculty experts in computer security across UC campuses have identified alternative cybersecurity solutions that robustly protect computer systems without compromising faculty autonomy or privacy, including remote browser isolation technology. These alternatives avoid the alarming prospect of warrantless governmental access to sensitive academic materials, a distinct risk enabled by Trellix's participation in the Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative, a federal initiative explicitly designed for rapid sharing of so-called "threat information" with government agencies.

Moreover, the risk of unwarranted intrusion is not hypothetical: Trellix's predecessor, FireEye, was significantly compromised during the SolarWinds cyberattack in 2020, impacting numerous U.S. federal agencies. Such vulnerabilities emphasize that a centralized and powerful system, as proposed by the Trellix implementation, introduces a significant security risk. Any breach could simultaneously expose vast amounts of sensitive and confidential academic and personal data, leading to potentially catastrophic consequences.

The threat posed by Trellix extends beyond privacy invasions and technical vulnerabilities. Many UC faculty members conduct research at the frontiers of knowledge—work that includes Nobel Prize-winning discoveries, sensitive health data subject to stringent privacy regulations, technological innovations with billions of dollars in market impact, and research areas subject to intense political controversy. Allowing unrestricted monitoring and data collection jeopardizes not only individual privacy but also the integrity, economic value, and societal impact of faculty research.

UCOP's assurances about privacy protections based solely on policy commitments, without corresponding technical barriers, offer insufficient protection. Trust alone cannot safeguard against overreach or misuse, whether by internal university actors or external governmental entities operating under broad and often opaque security mandates. Such a fundamental lack of technical safeguards creates a scenario equivalent to giving Trellix and UC administrators master keys to every aspect of faculty intellectual life, accompanied only by promises against misuse.

The systemwide Senate resolution, passed by an overwhelming majority of voting members, articulated the significant threat that Trellix poses to academic freedom, faculty autonomy, and the core principles of shared governance. Yet, the UC Office of the President prior to your joining has shown no indication of adhering to this faculty-led mandate.

In fact, by extending Trellix's mandatory installation to essential functions such as learning management systems like Canvas, VPN access, reimbursements, and timesheet submissions at UC Irvine, the administration appears to be doubling down on a policy that has been soundly rejected by the representative body of the Academic Senate.

This raises critical questions: What does shared governance mean to the UC Office of the President? If a formal, systemwide vote by the Academic Senate can be disregarded without explanation or engagement, what then is the role of the Senate in guiding university policy—especially in matters that so directly affect the daily work, rights, and privacy of faculty?

## We are writing to try to recover trust and confidence in the UC administration given this current rift.

The strength and credibility of the University of California Office of the President rests on its commitment to shared governance. We respectfully request a direct response from you or your office explaining:

- 1. Why the implementation of Trellix is continuing in contradiction to the Academic Senate resolution.
- 2. What steps you will be taking to halt the implementation of Trellix.
- 3. How your office interprets shared governance in this context.

4. What steps you will take to rebuild trust with the faculty whose voices have been sidelined.

As faculty who have led the Academic Senate and Council of UC Faculty Association efforts for halting invasive monitoring software, and adoption of proper cybersecurity measures, we look forward to your response and to a restoration of the commitment to meaningful shared governance in the University of California system.

Sincerely,

633 Signatories

Kevork N. Abazajian Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Walter S. Leal Distinguished Professor Molecular and Cellular Biology UC Davis

Jonathan Feng Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Hiram Beltran-Sanchez Professor Community Health Sciences UCLA

Frederick Dolan Professor Emeritus Rhetoric UC Berkeley

Barbara Herman Professor Philosophy UCLA

Katherine Meltzoff Associate Professor School of education UC Riverside James Porter Professor Rhetoric UC Berkeley

Jochen Ditterich Professor Dept. of Neurobiology, Physiology & Behavior UC Davis

Noopur Raval Assistant professor Information studies UCLA

James Gelvin Professor Department of History UCLA

Michael Saler Professor History UC Davis

Katherine Marino Associate Professor History UCLA

Michael Kapovich Distinguished Professor Mathematics UC Davis

Richard Hooley Professor Chemistry UC Riverside

Susan Zieger Professor English UC Riverside Chris Tilly Professor Urban Planning UCLA

Ozcan Gulacar Professor of Teaching Department of Chemistry UC Davis

Petr Krysl Professor Structural Engineering UC San Diego

Enrique Iglesia Distinguished Professor of the Graduate School Chemical and Biological Engineering UC Berkeley

John Rundle Distinguished Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Davis

Susan Morrissey Professor History Department UC Irvine

Zach Eilon Associate Professor Earth Science UC Santa Barbara

Eve Darian-Smith Distinguished Professor Global and International Studies UC Irvine

Celeste Langan Associate Professor Department of English UC Berkeley Richard McCleary Professor Criminology, Law and Society UC Irvine

Victoria Reyes Associate Professor Department of Gender & Sexuality Studies UC Riverside

Alexander Spokoyny Professor Chemistry and Biochemistry UCLA

Daniel Vitkus Professor and Endowed Chair Literature UC San Diego

Courtney R. Baker Associate Professor English UC Riverside

David Howitt Professor Materials Science UC Davis

Andrew Rypel Professor Wildlife, Fish & Conservation Biology UC Davis

David Shorter Professor World Arts and Culture UCLA

Natalie Holt Associate professor EEOB UC Riverside Hector Rodriguez Professor Public Health UC Berkeley

Kristie Koski Associate Professor Chemistry UC Davis

Yael Sharvit Professor Department of Linguistics UCLA

Joachim Vandekerckhove Professor Cognitive Sciences UC Irvine

Elizabeth Pérez Associate Professor Religious Studies UC Santa Barbara

Joseph Blankholm Associate Professor Religious Studies UC Santa Barbara

Norman Ellstrand Professor Emeritus Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Julia Ortony Associate Professor Department of Chemistry UC San Diego

Vinay Lal Professor History UCLA David A. Smith Professor Sociology UC Irvine

Amy Bauer Professor Music UC Irvine

Kristen Monroe Distinguished Professor Political Science UC Irvine

Marco Aurelio Silva Fonseca Assistant Professor of Teaching East Asian Studies UC Irvine

Fernando Pérez-Montesinos Associate Professor History UCLA

Susan Kauzlarich Distinguished Profezsor Chemistry UC Davis

Alexander Chernyshev Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Daniele Zaccaria Professor of Cooperative Extension Land, Air, and Water Resources (LAWR) UC Davis

Nameera Akhtar Professor Psychology UC Santa Cruz Goldberry Long Associate Professor of Teaching Creative Writing UC Riverside

Paul Hamilton Associate Professor Physics and Astronomy UCLA

Charis Kubrin Professor Criminology, Law & Society UC Irvine

Daniele Piomelli Distinguished Professor Anatomy and Neurobiology UC Irvine

Brian Harvey Teaching Professor Emeritus EECS UC Berkeley

Wilfrido Terrazas Associate Professor Music UC San Diego

Susan Slyomovics Professor Anthropology and Near Eastern Languages & Cultures UCLA

Peter Burke Professor EECS UC Irvine

David Jewitt Professor Earth, Planetary and Space Sciences UCLA Laurence Smith Professor Emeritus Geography UCLA

Georges Van Den Abbeele Professor English and European languages and studies UC Irvine

Michael Li Assistant Professor Family Medicine UCLA

Peter Krapp Professor Humanities UC Irvine

Wes Campbell Professor Physics & Astronomy UCLA

Alan Fiske Professor Anthropology UCLA

Regina Ragan Professor Materials Science and Engineering UC Irvine

Kelly Kay Associate Professor Geography UCLA

Annie McClanahan Associate Professor English UC Irvine Rene Ong Professor Physics and Astronomy UCLA

Stephen McSorley Professor Anatomy, Physiology & Cell Biology (Vet Med) UC Davis

Emiliano De Cristofaro Professor CSE UC Riverside

Claudia Holguín Mendoza Associate Professor Hispanic Studies UC Riverside

Kevin Kou Assistant Professor Chemistry UC Riverside

Luke Shepherd Lecturer of Music Music UC Santa Cruz

Marek Chrobak Professor Computer Science UC Riverside

Elizabeth DeLoughrey Professor English and IoES UCLA

Marissa Baskett Professor Environmental Science and Policy UC Davis Eraldo Souza dos Santos Assistant Professor Criminology, Law and Society UC Irvine

Paul Spickard Distinguished Professor History UC Santa Barbara

Dequina Nicholas Assistant Professor Molecular Biology Biochemistry UC Irvine

Renee Tajima-Peña Professor Asian American Studies UCLA

Silvia Bermúdez Professor Spanish and Portuguese UC Santa Barbara

Thomas Strohmer Professor Department of Mathematics UC Davis

Sharon Dolovich Professor of Law Law UCLA

David Casper Associate Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Christine Hunefeldt Professor History UC San Diego Lilith Mahmud Associate Professor Anthropology UC Irvine

Alessandro Ossola Associate Professor Plant Sciences UC Davis

Craig Reinarman Professor Emeritus Sociology UC Santa Cruz

Young Jik Kwon Professor Pharmaceutical Sciences UC Irvine

Carlos Varon Gonzalez Associate Professor Hispanic Studies UC Riverside

## J. J. Emerson

Professor Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UC Irvine

Filipp Furche Professor Chemistry UC Irvine

Marco Iacoboni Professor Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences UCLA

Rebecca Davis Associate Professor English UC Irvine Margaret Amis Senior Lecturer Writing Program UC Santa Cruz

Grant Kester Professor Art History UC San Diego

Rana Jaleel Associate Professor Department of Gender Studies, Department of Asian American Studies UC Davis

Daniel Treisman Professor Political Science UCLA

Heather Berg Associate Professor Labor Studies and Gender Studies UCLA

Geoff Gusoff Assistant Professor Department of Family Medicine UCLA

Erwan Monier Associate Professor Department of Land, Air and Water Resources UC Davis

Catherine Benamou Professor Film and Media Studies, School of Humanities UC Irvine

Jesse Drew Professor Cinema and Digital Media UC Davis Joshua Samani Associate Teaching Professor Physics and Astronomy UCLA

Edward Dimendberg Professor School of Humanities UC Irvine

Katharine Burnett Professor and Director Art History and the Global Tea Institute UC Davis

Syee Weldeab Professor Earth Science UC Santa Barbara

Jhonni Carr Continuing Lecturer of Spanish Linguistics Department of Spanish & Portuguese UC Berkeley

Keramet Reiter Professor Criminology, Law & Society UC Irvine

Nicholas C. Spitzer Distinguished Professor Emeritus Neurobiology UC San Diego

Kevin Thornton Professor Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UC Irvine

Karen Umemoto Professor Asian American Studies UCLA Mary Bucholtz Distinguished Professor Linguistics UC Santa Barbara

Pauline Yahr Professor Emerita Neurobiology and Behavior UC Irvine

Mason Porter Professor Mathematics UCLA

Namhee Lee Professor Asian Languages and Cultures UCLA

Sherene Seikaly Associate Professor History UC Santa Barbara

Carter T. Butts Chancellor's Professor Sociology UC Irvine

Bruce Rannala Professor Evolution and Ecology UC Davis

Erik Petigura Associate Professor Physics and Astronomy UCLA

Laurie Freeman Associate Professor Political Science UC Santa Barbara Kristie A Boering Professor Chemistry and Earth & Planetary Science UC Berkeley

Gawain Antell Assistant Professor Geography UCLA

Mohsen ElHafsi Professor School of Business UC Riverside

Melissa Bain Professor of Clinical School of Veterinary Medicine UC Davis

Sanjai Parikh Associate Professor Land, Air and Water Resources UC Davis

Stephanie Jed Professor Emerita Literature UC San Diego

John Gamber Associate Professor Comparative Literature UC Irvine

Steven Allison Professor Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UC Irvine

Amro Hamdoun Professor Scripps Institution of Oceanography UC San Diego Joyce Keyak Professor Emerita Department of Radiological Sciences UC Irvine

Joseph Biello Professor Mathematics UC Davis

Ethan Ligon Professor Agricultural & Resource Economics UC Berkeley

Hearne Pardee Professor Emeritus Art and Art History UC Davis

John Voss Professor Biochemistry & Molecular Medicine UC Davis

Grace Hong Professor Asian American Studies and Gender Studies UCLA

Jorge Mazza Rodrigues Professor Department of Land, Air and Water Resources UC Davis

Mark Haiman Professor Mathematics UC Berkeley

Natalia Ramos, MD Assistant Clinical Professor UCLA DGSOM UCLA Xi Dong Associate Professor Physics UC Santa Barbara

Craig Martens Professor Chemistry UC Irvine

Dean Mathiowetz Associate Professor Politics UC Santa Cruz

Houri Berberian Professor History UC Irvine

Enoch Baldwin Associate Professor Molecular and Cellular Biology UC Davis

Venkatesan Sundaresan Distinguished Professor Plant Biology and Plant Sciences UC Davis

Michael Hooker Professor Drama UC Irvine

Milton Azevedo Distinguished Professor Emeritus Spanish and Portuguese UC Berkeley

Constance Penley Professor Emerita Film and Media Studies UC Santa Barbara Matt Jacobs Assistant Professor Mathematics UC Santa Barbara

Jeff Share Lecturer School of Education and Information Studies UCLA

Robert Steele Professor Emeritus Department of Biological Chemistry UC Irvine

Eric Sheppard Distinguished Research Professor Geography UCLA

Jean-Luc Margot

Professor

Department of Earth, Planetary, and Space Sciences; Department of Physics and Astronomy UCLA

Will Styler Associate Teaching Professor UC San Diego Linguistics UC San Diego

Alyson Mitichell Professor Food Science and TEchnology UC Davis

Josh Stuart Professor BME UC Santa Cruz

Momoko Watanabe Assistant Professor Anatomy and Neurobiology UC Irvine Ghislaine Lydon Professor History UCLA

Colleen Lye Associate Professor English UC Berkeley

Marek Kaminski Professor Political Science UC Irvine

Thomas Sy Associate Professor Department of Psychology UC Riverside

Andrew Norris Professor Political Science UC Santa Barbara

Robin Derby Professor History UCLA

Claudio Fogu Professor French and Italian UC Santa Barbara

Meredith Cohen Professor Art History UCLA

Gregory E. O'Malley Professor and Chair History UC Santa Cruz Richard Wittman Professor Department of the History of Art and Architecture UC Santa Barbara

José Juan Pérez Meléndez Associate Professor History UC Davis

Francesco Bullo Professor Mechanical Engineering Department UC Santa Barbara

Olivier Cinquin Associate Professor Developmental & Cell Biology UC Irvine

Michele Barbato Professor Civil and Environmental Engineering/CITRIS and the Banatao Institute UC Davis

Rich Whittle Assistant Professor Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering UC Davis

Louise Fortmann Professor Emerita Environmental Science, Policy and Management UC Berkeley

Felix Schweizer Professor Department of Neurobiology UCLA

Margarita Azmitia Distinguished Professor Psychology UC Santa Cruz Leah Stokes Associate Professor Political Science UC Santa Barbara

Jean Lave Professor Emerita Education UC Berkeley

Luca Comai Distinguished Professor Plant Biology and Genome Center UC Davis

Anna Markowitz Associate Professor Education UCLA

Manuela Martins-Green Professor Cell Molecular and Systems Biology UC Riverside

Nancy Burley Professor Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UC Irvine

Pieter Stroeve Distinguished Professor Emery Department of Chemical Engineering UC Davis

Smriti Srinivas Professor Anthropology UC Davis

Tiffany Lowe-Power Associate professor Plant pathology UC Davis Khalid Kadir Continuing Lecturer ISSP/Civil and Environmental Enginering UC Berkeley

Yogita Goyal Professor English/African American Studies UCLA

Nicholas Marantz Associate Professor Urban Planning & Public Policy UC Irvine

Clayton Nall Associate Professor Department of Political Science UC Santa Barbara

Ryan Galt Professor Human Ecology UC Davis

Taisha Paggett Associate Professor and Chair Dance UC Riverside

Eileen Zurbriggen Distinguished Professor Psychology UC Santa Cruz

Pei-te Lien Professor Political Science UC Santa Barbara

Julia Lupton Distinguished Professor Emerita English UC Irvine Thu-huong Nguyen-vo Professor Asian Languages and Cultures & Asian American Studies UCLA

Steven Justice Professor emeritus English UC Berkeley

Paul Fine Professor Integrative Biology UC Berkeley

Dan Garcia Teaching Professor EECS UC Berkeley

Amir Saeidi Assistant Professor of Teaching Materials Science and Engineering UC Davis

Susanne Gahl Professor Linguistics UC Berkeley

Brian Bailey Associate Professor Plant Sciences UC Davis

Heidi Hardt Associate Professor Political Science UC Irvine

Annabeth Rosen Distinguished Professor Dept of Art & Art History UC Davis Joseph Hankins Associate Professor Anthropology UC San Diego

Siobhan Brady Professor Plant Biology and Genome Center UC Davis

Megan Dennis Associate Professor Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, Chancellor's Fellow UC Davis

Oliver Fiehn Professor Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology UC Davis

William Marotti Professor History UCLA

Michael G McNally Professor Civil and Environmental Engineering UC Irvine

Aaron Barth Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Varykina Thackray Professor Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences UC San Diego

Yannis Dafalias Distinguished Professor Emeritus Civil and Environmental Engineering UC Davis Susan Ustin Distinguished Professor, emeritus Land, Air and Water Resources UC Davis

Christina Ghanbarpour Lecturer History UC Irvine

Jacquelynne Eccles Distinguished Professor School of Education UC Irvine

Jenny Liu Professor and Director Institute for Health & Aging UC San Francisco

Ryan Hayes Assistant Professor Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

Cort Anastasio Professor Land, Air & Water Resources UC Davis

Fernando Pérez Associate Professor Statistics UC Berkeley

Adam Burgasser Professor Astronomy & Astrophysics UC San Diego

Amanda Lewis Professor Ob/Gyn UC San Diego Gregory Weiss Professor Chemistry UC Irvine

Emily Grossman Professor Cognitive Sciences UC Irvine

Claire Moore-Cantwell Assistant Professor Linguistics UCLA

Daphnie Sicre Assistant Professor TFDP UC Riverside

Aimee Edinger Professor School of Biological Sciences UC Irvine

Shirley Li Assistant Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Michael Gutperle professor physics and astronomy UCLA

Mohammad Javad Abdolhosseini Qomi Associate Professor Civil and Environmental Engineering UC Irvine

Tobias Hollerer Professor Computer Science UC Santa Barbara Simona Murgia Professor Physics&Astronomy UC Irvine

Mary Cadenasso Professor Plant Sciences UC Davis

Lilly Irani Associate Professor Communication UC San Diego

Jessica Rett Professor Linguistics UCLA

Allison Perlman Associate Professor History, Film and Media Studies UC Irvine

Melody Jue Professor English UC Santa Barbara

Philip B. Stark Distinguished Professor Department of Statistics UC Berkeley

Ryan Bennett Professor Linguistics UC Santa Cruz

Vasan Venugopalan Professor and Department Chair Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine Walter Gekelman Distingushed Research Professor Physics UCLA

William Fleming Associate Professor and Chair East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies UC Santa Barbara

Steven P. Briggs Distinguished Professor Department of Cell & Developmental Biology UC San Diego

John Owens Professor Electrical and Computer Engineering UC Davis

Kellie Breen Church Associate Professor Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences UC San Diego

Jay Hauser Professor Dept. of Physics and Astronomy UCLA

George Amis Retired Literture (English) UC Santa Cruz

Mariane C Ferme Professor Anthropology UC Berkeley

Wesley Y. Leonard Associate Professor Ethnic Studies UC Riverside Munjal Acharya Associate Professor Anatomy & Neurobiology UC Irvine

Eduardi Lopez Lecturer Education UCLA

Elliot Botvinick Professor Biomedical Engineering and Surgery UC Irvine

Lin Tian Professor Physics UC Merced

Greg Okin Professor and Chair Department of Geography UCLA

Jianwen Su Professor Computer Science UC Santa Barbara

Elizabeth Neumann Assistant Professor Chemistry UC Davis

Farah Godrej Professor Political Science UC Riverside

Giuliana Perco Continuing Lecturer Italian Studies UC Berkeley Patricia Morton Associate Professor Media and Cultural Studies UC Riverside

Dennis Lettenmaier Distinguished Professor of Geography (ret. ) Geography UCLA

Gina Bloom Professor English UC Davis

Darrel Jenerette Professor Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Mark LeVine Professor History UC Irvine

Stacey Harmer Professor Department of Plant Biology UC Davis

Anna Leshinskaya Assistant Professor Cognitive Sciences UC Irvine

Christo Sims Associate Professor Communication UC San Diego

Geoffrey Attardo Associate Professor Department of Entomology and Nematology UC Davis Adam Moore Professor Geography and International Institute UCLA

Wolf-Dietrich Heyer Distinguished Professor and Chair Microbiology and Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Julia Bailey-Serres Professor Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Jonathan Bragg Asst Professor of Teaching Microbiology and Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Neil Hunter Professor Microbiology & Molecular Genetics UC Davis

David Nelson Professor Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Anthea Kraut Professor Dance UC Riverside

Jacqueline Barlow Associate Professor Microbiology & Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Rebecca Jean Emigh Professor Sociology UCLA Shawn Shadden Professor ME UC Berkeley

Keith Topper Associate Professor Political Science UC Irvine

Lieba Faier Professor Geography UCLA

Howard Winant Distinguished Professor of Sociology Sociology UC Santa Barbara

Nikki Barry Assistant Professor Education UCLA

María Regina Firmino-Castillo Assistant Professor Department of Dance UC Riverside

JoAnn Kuchera-Morin Distinguished Professor Media Arts and Technology and Music UC Santa Barbara

Adam J Lukaszewski Professor BPS UC Riverside

Joseph Lewnard Associate Professor School of Public Health UC Berkeley Richard B. Norgaard Professor Emeritus Energy and Resources Group UC Berkeley

AnnaLee Saxenian Professor School of Information UC Berkeley

Julia Schaletzky Professor MCB UC Berkeley

Cathy Lussier Associate Professor of Teaching School of Education UC Riverside

Jack Lerner Professor of Teaching Law UC Irvine

Déborah Blocker Professor French UC Berkeley

Rose Scott Professor Psychological Sciences UC Merced

David Steigmann Professor Mechanical Engineering UC Berkeley

Meryem Kamil Assistant Professor Film & Media Studies UC Irvine Seth Davis Professor of Law UC Berkeley School of Law UC Berkeley

Roberta Millstein Professor Emerit Philosophy UC Davis

Alan Schoenfeld Distinguished Professor Education UC Berkeley

David Teplow Professor Neurology UCLA

Qing-Zhu Yin Professor Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences UC Davis

Catherine Liu Professor Film and Media Studies UC Irvine

Elide Valarini Oliver Professor Department of Spanish and Portuguese UC Santa Barbara

Jeff Krichmar Professor Cognitive Sciences UC Irvine

Ian Duncan Professor English UC Berkeley Janet Sorensen Professor English UC Berkeley

David Stern Professor Emeritus Education UC Berkeley

Carole H Browner Professor Semel Institute UCLA

Andy Kehler Professor Linguistics UC San Diego

John Rotenberry Professor Emeritus Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology UC Riverside

Richard Levenson Professor Pathology and Lab. Med. UC Davis

Daniel F. Melia Professor emeritus Rhetoric and Celtic Studies UC Berkeley

Lyle Massey Associate Professor Art History and Visual Studies UC Irvine

Rafael Pérez-Torres Professor English UCLA Simonetta Falasca Zamponi Professor Sociology UC Santa Barbara

Mariel Vazquez Professor Mathematics and Microbiology & Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Michael Urban Professor Emeritus Politics UC Santa Cruz

Laura Chavez-Moreno Assistant Professor Chicana/o & Central American Studies UCLA

Nicola Ulibarri Associate Professor Urban Planning & Public Policy UC Irvine

Luca Ferrero Professor Philosophy UC Riverside

Leopoldo M Bernucci Professor of Latin American Literature Department of Spanish and Portuguese UC Davis

Michael Ratz Professor Physics & Astronomy UC Irvine

David Kirkby Professor Physics UC Irvine Richard J. McKenneyu Professor Molecular and Cellular Biology UC Davis

Paul Ong Research Professor UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs UCLA

Kaily Heitz Assistant Professor Geography UCLA

Sascha Nicklisch Assistant Professor Environmental Toxicology UC Davis

David Romps Professor Earth and Planetary Science UC Berkeley

Ray Luo Professor Molecular Biology and Biochemistry UC Irvine

Christopher Olivares Assistant Professor Civil & Environmental Engineering UC Irvine

Chris Lowman Assistant Professor of Teaching Anthropology UC Irvine

Derek Schaeffer Assistant Professor Physics and Astronomy UCLA Caren Kaplan Emerita Professor American Studies UC Davis

Greg Grether Professor Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UCLA

Pamela Hieronymi Professor Philosophy UCLA

William Elison Associate Professor Religious Studies UC Santa Barbara

Anneka Lenssen Associate Professor History of Art UC Berkeley

Valerie Matsumoto Professor History and Asian American Studies UCLA

Benjamin Cowan Professor History UC San Diego

Terry Regier Professor Linguistics UC Berkeley

Stacy Fahrenthold Professor History and Middle East/South Asia Studies UC Davis Slobodan Mitrovic Assistant Professor Computer Science UC Davis

Carlos Garcia Cervera Professor Mathematics UC Santa Barbara

Leslie R Lewis Senior Continuing Lecturer Urban Studies and Planning UC San Diego

C. D. Blanton Associate Professor English UC Berkeley

Constantin Teleman Professor Mathematics UC Berkeley

Steven Furlanetto Professor Physics & Astronomy UCLA

Isabella B. Arzeno Soltero Assistant Professor Civil and Environmental Engineering UCLA

Jonathan Eacott Associate Professor History Department UC Riverside

Óscar Perea-Rodríguez Lecturer in Spanish Studies Spanish & Portuguese UC Berkeley Lynna Dhanani Assistant Professor Religion UC Davis

Patrick Guidotti Professor Mathematics UC Irvine

Juana María Rodríguez Professor Ethnic Studies UC Berkeley

Geoffrey Lee Associate Professor Philosophy UC Berkeley

Greg Levine Professor Emeritus History of Art UC Berkeley

Philippe Rolshausen Professor of Cooperative Extension Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Arcelia Gutierrez Assistant Professor Department of Film and Media Studies UC Irvine

Daniel Sargent Professor History and Public Policy UC Berkeley

Angela Zivkovic Professor Department of Nutrition UC Davis Miriam Markum Associate Professor of Teaching Microbiology and Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Katherine Seto Associate Professor Environmental Studies UC Santa Cruz

George Bunch Professor Education Department UC Santa Cruz

David Mobley Professor Pharmaceutical Sciences and Chemistry UC Irvine

Francisco Zaera Distinguished Professor of Chemistry Chemistry UC Riverside

Sean Collins Associate Professor Microbiology & Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Jonathan Balkind Assistant Professor Computer Science UC Santa Barbara

Maxwell Millar-Blanchaer Assistant Professor Department of Physics UC Santa Barbara

Maria Rendon Associate Professor Urban Planning and Public Policy UC Irvine Jeffrey Streets Professor Mathematics UC Irvine

Travis Wiles Assistant Professor Molecular Biology and Biochemistry UC Irvine

Samantha Vortherms Associate Professor Political Science UC Irvine

Lee Swindlehurst Distinguished Professor Electrical Engineering & Computer Science UC Irvine

Michael Szalay Professor English/UCI UC Irvine

Seth Pipkin Associate Professor Urban Planning and Public Policy UC Irvine

Kishore Gadde, MD Professor Department of Surgery, School of Medicine UC Irvine

Hun Kim Assistant Professor Urban Planning and Public Policy UC Irvine

Bob Meister Professor History of Consciousness UC Santa Cruz Eitan Schechtman Assistant Professor Neurobiology and Behavior UC Irvine

David Van Vranken Professor Chemistry UC Irvine

Rhea Anastas Associate Professor Department of Art Dept. of Art UC Irvine

Ted Martin Associate Professor English UC Irvine

Bruce L. McNaughton Distinguished Professor Neurobiology and Behavior UC Irvine

John McCarthy Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering UC Irvine

Naomi Chesler Professor Biomedical Engineering UC Irvine

Tryphon T. Georgiou Distinguished Professor Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering UC Irvine

Laura J. Mitchell Associate Professor History UC Irvine Rainer Doemer Professor EECS UC Irvine

John Christopher Dobrian Professor Emeritus Music UC Irvine

James Smith Professor Chemistry UC Irvine

Larisa Castillo Associate Professor of Teaching Humanities UC Irvine

Matthew Inlay Associate Professor Molecular Biology & Biochemistry UC Irvine

Dae Seok Eom Associate Developmental and Cell Biology UC Irvine

Liron Mor Associate Professor Comparative Literature UC Irvine

Kevan Aguilar Assistant Professor History UC Irvine

Anye Taffard Professor Physics & Astronomy UC Irvine Herschel Farbman Associate Professor Comparative Literature UC Irvine

Gregory Hickok Distinguished Professor Cognitive Sciences, Language Science UC Irvine

Lisa Uperesa Associate Professor Asian American Studies UCLA

Cynthia Haq Clinical Professor Emerita Family Medicine UC Irvine

Sylvia Croese Assistant Professor Global and International Studies UC Irvine

Katherine Xue Assistant Professor Molecular Biology and Biochemistry UC Irvine

Nivedita Nath Assistant Professor History UC Irvine

Brett Walker Associate Professor Earth System Science UC Irvine

Sven Koenig Professor Computer Science UC Irvine Daniel Epstein Associate Professor Informatics UC Irvine

Adriana Johnson Associate Professor Comparative Literature UC Irvine

Catherine Loudon Professor of Teaching Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UC Irvine

Ian Straughn Assoc. Prof. Teaching Anthropology UC Irvine

Hooshang Meshkinpour Emeritus Professor of Medicine Medicine UC Irvine

Zhou Li Associate Professor EECS UC Irvine

Catherine Albiston Jackson H. Ralston Professor of Law School of Law, Sociology, Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program UC Berkeley

Ian Dicke Professor Music UC Riverside

Kristen Hatch Associate Professor Film and Media Studies UC Irvine Braxton Soderman Associate Professor Film & Media Studies UC Irvine

Griffin Hosseinzadeh Assistant Professor Astronomy & Astrophysics UC San Diego

Ayman Mosallam Professor CEE UC Irvine

Haik Mkhikian Assistant Professor Pathology and Laboratory Medicine UC Irvine

Associate Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Hamed Helmy Professor School of medicine UC Irvine

Clare Yu Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Natalie Shapero Associate Professor English UC Irvine

Bruce Berg Professor Cognitive SCiences UC Irvine Weifeng Gu Associate Professor MCSB, UCR UC Riverside

Alexander Huezo Assistant Professor Global and International Studies UC Irvine

Cindy Sangalang Assistant Professor Social Welfare and Asian American Studies UCLA

Michael Smy Researcher Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Veena Dubal Professor Law UC Irvine

Stan Ng Assistant Professor Biological Chemistry UC Irvine

Erin Ninh Professor Asian American Studies UC Santa Barbara

Andrew Flanagin Professor Communication UC Santa Barbara

Alexander Cho Assistant Professor Asian American Studies UC Santa Barbara David Low Distinguished Professor Emeritus MCDB UC Santa Barbara

Ryan Giordano Assistant Professor Statistics UC Berkeley

Amrah Salomon J. Assistant Professor English UC Santa Barbara

Patricia Holden Professor Bren School UC Santa Barbara

Jorge Luis Castillo Professor Department of Spanish and Portuguese UC Santa Barbara

Jigna Desai Professor Feminist Studies and Asian American Studies UC Santa Barbara

Mireille Miller-Young Associate Professor Feminist Studies UC Santa Barbara

Kevin Whitehead Associate Professor Sociology UC Santa Barbara

David Novak Associate Professor Music UC Santa Barbara Kai Thaler Assistant Professor Global Studies UC Santa Barbara

Raphaele Clement Associate Professor Materials UC Santa Barbara

Susanne Stemmer Professor Materials UC Santa Barbara

Nancy McLoughlin Associate Professor History UC Irvine

Carolyn Kurle Professor Department of Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution UC San Diego

David Neumark
Distinguished Professor
Economics
UC Irvine

Morgan Raven Associate Professor Earth Science UC Santa Barbara

Leila Carvalho Professor Geography UC Santa Barbara

Ivano Caponigro Professor Linguistics UC San Diego Kevin Anderson Professor Sociology UC Santa Barbara

Daniel Lane Associate Professor Dept of Communication UC Santa Barbara

Joël Porquet-Lupine Associate Professor of Teaching Computer Science UC Davis

Jeannine DeLombard Professor English UC Santa Barbara

Kip Fulbeck Distinguished Professor Art UC Santa Barbara

Mark Rose Distinguished Professor Emeritus Rnglish Department UC Santa Barbara

Mark Walter Professor of Teaching Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering UC Irvine

Debra Richardson Professor Emerita Informatics UC Irvine

Amit Shilo Associate Professor Classics UC Santa Barbara Cristina Venegas Associate Professor Film and Media Studies UC Santa Barbara

Zhaoxia Yu Professor Statistics UC Irvine

Ivan Jeliazkov Associate Professor Department of Economics UC Irvine

Laury Oaks Professor Department of Feminist Studies UC Santa Barbara

Richard Scalettar Distinguished Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Davis

Matthew Foreman Distinguished Professor Mathematics UC Irvine

Jan Nederveen Pieterse Distinguished Professor Global Studies & Sociology UC Santa Barbara

Volker M. Welter Professor History of Art & Architecture UC Santa Barbara

Thomas Burke Assistant Professor Microbiology and Molecular Genetics UC Irvine Darci Trader Associate Professor PharmSci UC Irvine

Zheng Liu Assistant Professor Mathematics UC Santa Barbara

Julie Carlson Professor English UC Santa Barbara

Deborah Lutterschmidt Professor Ecology and Evolutionary Biology UC Irvine

Kyle Paredes Associate Professor Anesthesiology UC Irvine

Steven Gaulin Professor, Emeritus Anthropology UC Santa Barbara

Gordon Lee Professor Plastic Surgery, School of Medicine UC Irvine

Charles Hunt Professor ECE Department UC Davis

Elisabeth Weber Professor Germanic and Slavic UC Santa Barbara Stephen Bell Prifessor Geography and History UCLA

Arash Kheradvar Professor Radiological Sciences and Biomedical Engineering UC Irvine

Steven Gross Professor Emeritus Music UC Santa Barbara

Kyle Parry Associate Professor History of Art and Visual Culture UC Santa Cruz

Aaron Trammell Professor Informatics UC Irvine

Long Bui Professor Global studies UC Irvine

Linda Petzold Distinguished Professor Mechanical Engineering UC Santa Barbara

Javiera Barandiaran Associate Professor Global Studies UC Santa Barbara

Kate McDonald Associate Professor History UC Santa Barbara Ian Coller Professor History UC Irvine

Kourosh Saberi Professor Cognitive Sciences UC Irvine

Keith Murphy Associate Professor Anthropology UC Irvine

Kyle Crabtree Associate Professor Chemistry UC Davis

Anne Calof Professor Depts of Anatomy & Neurobiology and Developmtal & Cell Biology UC Irvine

Iris Holzer Assistant Teaching Professor Environmental Studies UC Santa Barbara

Nolan Zane Professor Emeritus Psychology and Asian American Studies UC Davis

Isgouhi Kaloshian Professor Department of Nematology UC Riverside

Eileen Boris Hull Professor and Distinguished Professor Feminist Studies UC Santa Barbara Steven Carlip
Distinguished Professor
Department of Physics and Astronomy
UC Davis

Zhiyun Qian Professor Computer Science and Engineering Department UC Riverside

Robin Russin Professor and Chair Theatre, Film and Digital Production UC Riverside

Matthew King Professor Study of Religion UC Riverside

Donatella Galella Associate Professor Theatre, Film, and Digital Production UC Riverside

Jacques Lezra Distinguished Professor Hispanic Studies UC Riverside

Boris Baer Professor Entomology UC Riverside

Manu Sridharan Professor Computer Science and Engineering UC Riverside

Judith Rodenbeck Professor Media & Cultural Studies UC Riverside Jorge Leal Assistant Professor History UC Riverside

Chrstopher Kutz Professor Law UC Berkeley

Howard Wettstein Professor Philosophy UC Riverside

Ruoxue Yan Associate Professor CEE UC Riverside

Antoine Lentacker Associate Professor History UC Riverside

Curt Burgess Professor Emeritus Psychology UC Riverside

Markus Petters Professor Chemical and Environmental Engineering UC Riverside

Daniel Wong Associate Professor Electrical and Computer Engineering UC Riverside

Yongtao Cui Associate Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Riverside Nicolas Barth Associate Professor Earth & Planetary Sciences UC Riverside

Jason Weems Associate Professor History of Art Department UC Riverside

Robert Clare Professor Emeritus Physics and Astronomy UC Riverside

Polly Campbell Associate Professor EEOB UC Riverside

Kathlyn (Kara) Cooney Professor of Egyptian Art and Architecture Near Eastern Languages and Cultures UCLA

Erika Suderburg Professor Emerita Media and Cultural Studies UC Riverside

Dana Simmons Associate Professor Society, Environment and Health Equity UC Riverside

Vivian-Lee Nyitray Professor emerita The Study of Religion UC Riverside

Imani Kai Johnson Associate Professor Dance, Black Study UC Riverside Worku Nida Associate Professor of Teaching Department of Anthropology UC Riverside

Anusha Kedhar Associate Professor Dance UC Riverside

Stephen Antonoplis Assistant Professor Psychology UC Riverside

Greg Ver Steeg Associate Professor Computer Science UC Riverside

Elyse Ambrose Associate Professor Black Study and Study of Religion UC Riverside

Alan Brelsford Associate Professor Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology Dept. UC Riverside

Wallace Cleaves Associate Dean and Director, Associate Professor of Teaching University Writing Program, English UC Riverside

Mark Chappell Professor emeritus Evolution, ecology, and organism biology. UC Riverside

Perry Link Distinguished Professor emeritus Comparative Literature UC Riverside Douglas MacLaughlin Professor Emeritus Physics and Astronomy UC Riverside

Carolyn Rasmussen Professor Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Johannes Endres Professor History of Art UC Riverside

Thomas Weimbs Professor Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology UC Santa Barbara

Theodore Garland Distinguished Professor Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology UC Riverside

Sara K. Becker Associate Professor Department of Anthropology UC Riverside

Salman Asif Associate Professor ECE UC Riverside

Kambiz Vafai Distinguished Professor Mechanical Engineering UC Riverside

Lisa Fortuna Professor Psychiatry and Neuroscience UC Riverside Michelle Porche Professor In-Residence School of Medicine, Department of Internal Medicine UC Riverside

Alexander Korotkov Professor Emeritus ECE UCLA

Traise Yamamoto Associate Professor English UC Riverside

Shawn Westerdale Assistant Professor Physics & Astronomy UC Riverside

Tamara Harms associate professor ENSC UC Riverside

James F. Brooks Professor VI, Emeritus History and Anthropology UC Santa Barbara

Jaimie Van Norman Associate Professor Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology UCLA

Claire Vaye Watkins Professor English UC Irvine

Susan Laxton Assoc Prof art history UC Riverside Yue Li Assistant Professor Geography UCLA

Peter Homyak Associate Professor Environmental Sciences UC Riverside

Emma Stapely Associate Professor English UC Riverside

Weihsin Gui Professor English UC Riverside

Trisha Remetir Assistant Professor Comparative Literatures and Languages UC Riverside

Hai-Bo Yu Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Riverside

John Crawford Professor Dance UC Irvine

Michael Jayme Associate Professor Creative Writing UC Riverside

Nien-Hui Ge Professor Chemistry UC Irvine Urmee Khan Associate Professor Economics UC Riverside

Padma Rangarajan Associate Professor English UC Riverside

Annika Speer Associate Professor Theatre, Film, and Digital Production UC Riverside

Darleen DeMason Professor Emerita Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Miles Coolidge Professor Art UC Irvine

Bevan Baas Professor Electrical & Computer Engineering UC Davis

John Baez Emeritus Professor Mathematics UC Riverside

Emily Carian Assistant Professor of Teaching Sociology UC Irvine

George Becker Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Riverside Stephen Barley DIstinguished Professor Emeritus Technology Management UC Santa Barbara

Elizabeth Berger Associate Professor Anthropology UC Riverside

Alexander Kauffman Professor OBGYN UC San Diego

Szu Wang Professor Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

Erdem Sasmaz Associate Professor Chemial and Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

Adam Norris Assistant Professor Biochemistry UC Riverside

Ali Mohraz Professor Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

Scott Jordan Professor Computer Science UC Irvine

Katherine Ralston Associate Professor Microbiology and Molecular Genetics UC Davis Melanie Cocco Professor Mol Bio Biochem UC Irvine

Kyle Meng Associate Professor Bren School and Economics Dept. UC Santa Barbara

Asad Abidi Distinguished Professor Electrical and Computer Engineering UCLA

Patricia Phelps Professor Integrative Biology and Physiology UCLA

7/31/2025 15:12:16 7/31/2025 15:12:16 7/31/2025 15:12:16 7/31/2025 15:12:16

Alex Frano Associate Professor Physics UC San Diego

Benjamin Blackman Associate Professor Plant & Microbial Biology and Integrative Biology UC Berkeley

M. Ty Assistant Professor Critical Race and Ethnic Studies UC Santa Cruz

Cristina Moya Associate Professor Anthropology UC Davis Fuzheng Guo Associate Professor Neurology UC Davis

Raphael Rouquier Distinguished Professor Mathematics UCLA

Roberta Wue Associate Professor Art History, Visual Studies UC Irvine

Amy Litt Associate Professor Botany and Plant Sciences UC Riverside

Rohan French Associate Professor Philosophy UC Davis

Robert Johnson Professor Physics UC Santa Cruz

William Horwath Distinguished Professor and Chair LAWR UC Davis

Adam Benkato Associate Professor Middle Eastern Languages & Cultures UC Berkeley

Cecelia Lynch Research Professor Political Science UC Irvine Regina Langhout Professor Psychology UC Santa Cruz

Eric naiman Professor Comparative Literature UC Berkeley

Iona Cheng Professor Epidemiology and Biostatistics UC San Francisco

R. Anthony Reese Chancellor's Professor School of Law UC Irvine

Megan Peters Associate Professor Cognitive Sciences UC Irvine

Colin Allen Professor Philosophy UC Santa Barbara

Stephanie Lain Continuing Lecturer Languages and Applied Linguistics UC Santa Cruz

Carey Seal Associate Professor Classics UC Davis

Bernard Sadoulet Professor of the Graduate School, Department of Physics, UC Berkeley Department of Physics UC Berkeley Suma Ikeuchi Associate Professor East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies UC Santa Barbara

Leah Karliner Professor Medicine UC San Francisco

Clelia Donovan Lecturer, Language Program Coordinator Spanish & Portuguese UC Berkeley

George Baker Professor and Department Chair Art History UCLA

Maike Sonnewald Assistant Professor Computer science UC Davis

Asma Sayeed Associate Professor NELC UCLA

Caroline Streeter Associate Professor Department of English & Department of African American Studies UCLA

Ricardo Dominguez Professor Visual Arts and CALIT2 UC San Diego

Bob Jacobsen Professor Physics UC Berkeley Peter Richerson Distinguished Professor Emeritus Environmental Science and Policy UC Davis

King-Kok Cheung Professor English UCLA

Jasper Kok Professor Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences UCLA

Al a n Page Fiske Professor Anthropology UCLA

Jeffrey Esko Distinguished Professor Cellular and Molecular Medicine UC San Diego

Alvaro Sagasti Professor Molecular Cell and Developmental Biology UCLA

Satish Rao Professor EECS UC Berkeley

Richard Cardullo Professor EEOB UC Riverside

Teo Wickland Assistant Professor Urban Studies & Planning UC San Diego Catherine VandeVoort Professor Obstetrics and Gynecology UC Davis

Jawdat Al-Bassam Associate Professor Molecular Cellular Biology UC Davis

Meghan Morris Professor Epidemiology and Biostatistics UC San Francisco

Alon Gorodetsky Associate Professor Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

Tianchen Qian Assistant Professor Department of Statistics UC Irvine

Han Li Associate Professor Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

Steven Theg Distinguished Professor, Emeritus Plant Biology UC Davis

Carla Mazzio Associate Professor English UC Riverside

Margaret Larkin Professor Emerita Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures UC Berkeley Yuri Shirman Professor Physics and Astronomy UC Irvine

Plamen Atanassov Chancellor's Professor Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering UC Irvine

David Sanchez-Migallon Guzman Professor VME UC Davis

Mitchell Singer Professor Microbiology and Molecular Genetics UC Davis

Zachary Dietz Associate Professor of Teaching Drama UC Irvine

CC: Provost Newman, CIO Williams