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What's inside Trump's \$1.2-billion settlement demand letter to UCLA? It's finally public

BY LYNN LA
OCTOBER 27, 2025

The UCLA campus in Los Angeles on Feb. 18, 2022. Photo by Raquel Natalicchio for CalMatters

At a planned rally today at UCLA, the faculty associations of UCLA and the wider University of California are taking a victory lap and urging Gov. Gavin Newsom to join their fight against President Donald Trump's demands for a \$1.2-billion settlement with the renowned public university.

The federal administration's [27-page settlement proposal](#) was made public Friday after the UCLA Faculty Association and the Council of University of California Faculty Associations sued the public university to disclose the information under the California Public Records Act. The proposal outlines the administration's vision for higher education that is free from efforts to promote diversity and transgender inclusion.

The university system argued that making the proposal public would cause it "[irreparable harm](#)" during ongoing negotiations with the administration, but released the information after a California [superior court judge ordered it to do so](#), and the state Supreme Court rejected its appeal.

UCLA is currently grappling with the administration's bid to force it to pay \$1.2 billion after the U.S. Department of Justice in July accused the university of not doing enough to combat antisemitism during last year's pro-Palestine protests, and for allegedly [violating federal civil rights law](#). Newsom has characterized the fine as "[extortion](#)," and UC President James Milliken said that paying the settlement would "[completely devastate](#)" the university system.

In issuing the demands, the Trump administration initially withheld more than \$500 million in research grants to UCLA. But its leverage remains unclear now after a federal judge ordered the administration to restore nearly all those grants in [August](#) and [September](#).

Some of the administration's demands requires UCLA to:

- Hire a senior administrator to review UCLA's policies related to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, and eliminate "identity-based preferences" in faculty hiring and scholarship programs.
- Prohibit the use of "personal statements, diversity narratives, or any applicant reference to racial identity as a means to introduce or justify discrimination" in its admissions process. (A [2023 U.S. Supreme Court ruling](#) already prohibits race-based admissions, though students are free to submit essays that detail how race affected their lives.)
- Prohibit the UCLA School of Medicine and its affiliated hospitals from performing gender affirming surgeries or hormone therapy for patients under 18.
- Issue a public statement saying that it will comply with [Trump's executive order](#) that recognizes male and female as the only two sexes.
- Ban female transgender student athletes from participating in women's sports.
- Establish a process so that "foreign students likely to engage in anti-Western, anti-American, or antisemitic disruptions or harassment" are not admitted to UCLA. (That seems to be at odds with the letter's goal of protecting UCLA "faculty and students from retaliation for expressing minority opinions or engaging in free expression.")
- Develop training materials to "socialize international students to the norms of a campus dedicated to free inquiry and open debate."

Some of the administration's demands are already UC policy, including the elimination of diversity statements in faculty hiring, [which the UC banned earlier this year](#), and [banning overnight demonstrations](#) at university locations.

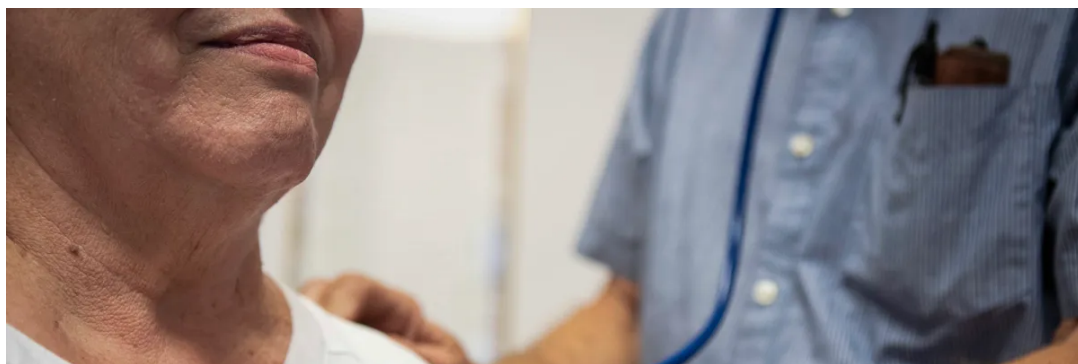
- **Anna Markowitz**, president of the UCLA Faculty Association: If UCLA goes through with the demands, "It is not just today's students and workers who will be harmed by this gross federal overreach — but generations of Californians."

More than 600 UC Jewish students, faculty and alumni also publicly opposed the settlement [in an open letter](#) posted in August.

CalMatters events: Last week CalMatters, California Forward and 21st Century Alliance hosted a Governor Candidate Forum at the California Economic Summit. Top candidates for governor addressed pressing economic challenges and opportunities facing California. [Watch the recording here](#).

OTHER STORIES YOU SHOULD KNOW

Proposing a wealth tax on CA billionaires





A doctor listens to a patient's heartbeat at the Mountain Valley Health Center in Bieber on July 24, 2019. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters

As California faces a potentially tough budget year, labor and health care groups are pushing for a 2026 ballot measure that would levy a [one-time tax on California billionaires](#), writes CalMatters' Kristen Hwang.

The Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West and St. John's Community Health in Los Angeles are proposing a 5% wealth tax on the roughly 200 billionaires who live in the state. Unlike an income tax on someone's earnings, a wealth tax — which Newsom has historically opposed — levies a tax on a person's net worth, including assets such as property value, pensions and owned artwork. Proponents say the tax would generate about \$100 billion in revenue, which would go into a special fund for health care and K-12 education spending.

But Susan Shelley, the vice president of communications for the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association — a nonprofit that lobbies for lower taxes — said the proposal could set a troubling precedent if passed. Over time, the tax “could come all the way down to the middle class” by going after home equity wealth, said Shelley.

[Read more here.](#)

Federal personnel at CA voting stations



Voters cast their ballots at the Sacramento County Registrar of Voters office in Sacramento on June 7, 2022. Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters