

CALIFORNIA

UC asks California Supreme court to block release of Trump's UCLA settlement offer



UCLA students on the Westwood campus in September. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)



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- UC asked the California Supreme Court to block the release of a \$1.2-billion settlement proposal the Trump has made to UCLA.
- UCLA faculty sued for the release, demanding more transparency in federal negotiations.

- The proposal includes demands for stricter admissions policies and campus protest restrictions, among other demands.

The University of California on Thursday made a last-minute plea to the state Supreme Court, asking justices to block the release of a \$1.2-billion UCLA settlement proposal from the Department of Justice as UC battles faculty members who are calling for more transparency about negotiations with the Trump administration.

In the [California Supreme Court filing](#), UC asked for an “immediate temporary stay” of a lower court decision ordering the university to give faculty, by Friday, a 28-page document of federal demands for vast policy changes at UCLA that are in line with President Trump’s vision for higher education.

If the information is released, UC said in the filing, it will “suffer irreparable harm” to its dealings with the Trump administration as well as to other potential settlement negotiations in the future with other parties.

UC filed its request a day after an appeals court declined to reverse a lower court’s order that UC release the settlement proposal. The [one-sentence decision](#) signed by 1st Appellate District Division Three acting Presiding Justice Carin T. Fujisaki did not explain any reasoning. In a [separate filing](#) Thursday, UC also asked the California Supreme Court to order the appeals court “to issue a reasoned appellate opinion on these issues.”

Last month, the [UCLA Faculty Assn.](#) sued UC after the university rejected its public records requests. The association is an independent organization unaffiliated with the Academic Senate, the body that formally represents all UCLA faculty in relations with campus administrators.

An [Oct. 14 order](#) from an Oakland-based judge gave UC until Oct. 24 to release the document. That judge, Rebekah Evenson, of the Alameda County Superior Court, said the Public Records Act and public interest in deliberations over one of the nation’s top universities compels UC to disclose the more than 7,000-word proposal.

[UC appealed the order](#), arguing that settlement conversations should be confidential and exempt from public records disclosure requirements.

In a statement Thursday, UC spokesperson Rachel Zaentz said UC is “committed to being transparent about the challenges facing the university, but we must also evaluate our response to the administration’s settlement proposal that, like all settlement communications, is confidential. UC remains committed to protecting the mission, governance, and academic freedom of the university.”

The August settlement proposal came after the Trump administration accused UCLA

of violating the law in its handling of antisemitism complaints, admissions practices and gender identity on campus. The Trump administration suspended \$584 million in research funding over the alleged civil rights violations. The vast majority of that [funding has now been restored](#) as part of a lawsuit filed by UC-wide faculty.

UCLA has said its policies comply with state and federal laws.



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The Times reviewed the settlement proposal and, last month, [published a detailed summary](#) of its contents.

They include demands for changes to admissions to prevent alleged affirmative action, stricter protest rules and a ban on gender-affirming healthcare for minors at UCLA medical facilities. The document calls for UCLA to prevent the admission of “anti-Western” international students and to pay the costs for an outside monitor to oversee the agreement.

The proposal also says that “the United States and its consultants and agents will have full and direct access to all UCLA staff, employees, facilities, documents, and data related to the agreement, in coordination with legal counsel for UCLA, except any documents or data protected by work product or the attorney-client privilege.”

Faculty at the Westwood campus have increasingly aired frustrations over the university's closed-door negotiations with the federal government. A team of top UC lawyers and five regents are at the table. At campus rallies, meetings and events, campus community members have complained that UCLA and UC leaders have given them minimal information on what changes the government is demanding from UCLA and the progression of the talks.

In court documents, UC lawyers argued that releasing the settlement proposal would create an untenable “fishbowl” inviting “every member of the entire public to express each one's views on every settlement,” creating an “uncontrollable public fray” impeding negotiations.

“This concern is most pressing where, as here, the settlement communication is an opening salvo. The intense public reaction to disclosure at an early stage of an initial proposal could easily end any opportunity for discussion at its inception and hamper the ability to fully and fairly evaluate a response,” UC wrote in a court filing.

Faculty members who sued disagreed.

“We believe that the content of these demands are important for the public to know about and have the opportunity to comment on,” said [Anna Markowitz](#), president of the UCLA Faculty Assn. and an associate professor in UCLA’s School of Education and Information Studies.

“UC is a public university. It provides education, jobs, and medical care. There are faculty, staff, workers, alumni, students, and parents who care about and will be affected by these negotiations,” she said in a statement. “We went to court for us, but also for them — because UC’s lack of transparency isn’t consistent with UC’s position as a major public good in our state.”



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UC President James B. Milliken has said that the roughly \$1.2-billion fine — composed of a \$1-billion payment to the government and a \$172-million claims fund — would be [near impossible to pay](#).

He has been less detailed on the other demands but has said broadly that UC will protect academic freedom as well as its mission and values in any potential Trump agreement.

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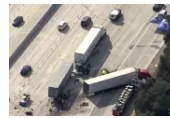
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