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## Hundreds march through campus, rally for science

Aarya Mukherjee & Yashal Sarfaraz | Staff Mar 7, 2025 Comments



On Friday, several hundred protesters gathered on Sproul Plaza to speak out in support of science and against recent threats to federal research funding from the Trump administration.

Alessandra Aprile Borriello | Staff

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Several hundred protesters rallied on Sproul before marching through campus as part of a nationwide Stand Up For Science protest Friday.

The event began around noon with speeches from notable campus professors including Nobel laureate Jennifer Doudna, researchers, policymakers and activists. As the crowd grew, protesters began chanting in support of science and against recent threats to federal research funding from the Trump administration.

Stand Up for Science is a movement that held protests nationwide Friday, in cities such as San Francisco, Austin and Washington D.C. According to their website, its mission includes three goals: prohibiting political censorship in scientific publications, reinstating wrongfully terminated federal employees and restoring federal research funding and diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, initiatives.

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CHANGE LIVES

## CHANGE LIVES THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY.



"First of all, we want to inform people," said Edward Miguel, event organizer and campus professor of economics. "There have been such radical changes: firing government scientists, cutting government research grants — it's been really devastating for scientific research and threatens the fact that our universities and scientific institutions are the best in the world."

The protest comes as the Trump administration attempted to cut billions of dollars in National Institute of Health, or NIH, funding, the single largest contributor to UC research, before the order was blocked by a federal judge. Moreover, the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE — which is overseen by Elon Musk — has recently laid off thousands of federal workers, including scientists and researchers.

"We have to be strong, we have to stand up together as scientists, we have to explain why what we do has real value and that we are training the next generation of scientists who are going to form the workforce of the United States," said Doudna, who won the 2020 Nobel Prize in chemistry for developing the gene editing technology CRISPR/Cas9.

Doudna, along with other speakers, emphasized the importance of the scientific community, pointing to the history of ingenuity and innovation in the United States that developed the nation into both an economic and intellectual leader on the world stage.



The American flag is wielded by campus student River Richart during the protest.

Ian Leifer | Staff

However, among those whose work may be directly affected by federal grant freezes or cuts, researchers and professors expressed a palpable sense of weary uncertainty.

"Almost all of my funding, my personal funding, comes from federal contracts and grants," said Bryan Méndez, the campus Planetarium director. "The threats of pulling back any of that money is definitely a threat to my livelihood."

Rena Dorph, the director of The Lawrence Hall of Science expressed similar fear that federal funding cuts may affect the organization's ability to fulfill their mission, which, according to Dorph, includes inspiring and engaging students in scientific discovery in ways that advance equity and opportunity.

Since his inauguration, President Donald Trump has repeatedly attacked institutions that promote DEI. In a Feb. 14 letter sent from the Department of Education, the department threatened to cut federal funding from universities that do not comply with the administration's stance on DEI.

"The Lawrence Hall of Science does get many millions of dollars in federal grants for our work, and it's been really very difficult for all of our staff," Dorph said. "You can hear from our mission statement that we have a dual mission related to science learning and equity in science learning — so this is a big threat for us. More than a threat to us, it's a threat to all the kids and communities who we use those monies to work with."

The crowd of students, faculty and community members began marching through Sather Gate at around 1:00 p.m., looping past the Campanile and the Memorial Glade, before dispersing at Crescent Lawn 40 minutes later. The protesters chanted slogans such as "save democracy, protect science," and as they began marching, "hey hey, ho ho, Elon's got to go," and "no Nazis, no KKK, no anti-science USA."



Protesters march through campus as a part of the nationwide Stand Up For Science protest on March 7.

Ian Leifer | Staff

The Union of Concerned Scientists, or UCS, a nonprofit scientific advocacy program, cosponsored the event and passed out pins, posters and signs, including a "Stand Up for Science" flyer to attendees.

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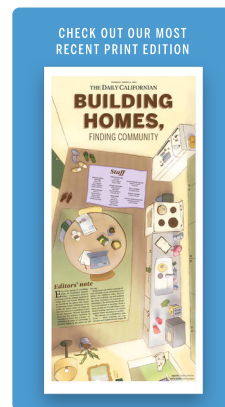
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Woman holds a sign at the protest on Sproul Plaza.

Alessandra Aprile Borriello | Staff

"We are working to ensure that science has a place in our democracy, even as President Trump is trying to dismantle science and federal law," said Coreen Weintraub, associate director of the UCS Western states office.

The Trump administration's record 400-plus executive actions since taking office six weeks ago, including his cuts to federal funding, were part of his campaign promise to bring the "dawn of the golden age of America." Yet some of the protestors feel that federal budget cuts are leading the country in the opposite direction.

River Richart, a campus political science major, marched through campus wielding an 8-foot American flag.

"American exceptionalism is empowering our people, empowering our scientists, empowering what makes America great. It allows our economy to grow and allows our people to live better lives," Richart said. "(Trump's threats) is everything against what allowed America to grow. Standing up for progress, standing up for exceptionalism — that's what's right."

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Aarya Mukherjee

Student Life Beat

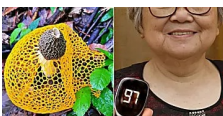


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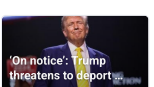


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