

UC Berkeley community shows support for international students, protest threats to cut federal funding



By Kenny Choi
April 17, 2025 / 6:54 PM PDT / CBS San Francisco

Students, faculty and community members gathered in front of Sproul Hall on the UC Berkeley campus to support international students and protest threats by the Trump administration to cut federal funding to a growing number of elite universities.

Edward Miguel is an economics professor at Berkeley and is concerned about the impacts, as several universities across the country face federal funding cut threats.

"I'm really here to defend science and research. There's been so many attacks on government funding on research universities around the country in the last few months since the Trump administration took over," Miguel said.

Critics of the administration say that if Trump can dictate how a university uses federal funding, academic freedom is in peril.

"We have to speak, debate, tell the truth, and without freedom of speech, we really can't do our research," Miguel said.

Former U.S. Labor Secretary and now public policy professor at Berkeley, Robert Reich, applauded Harvard University's stance this week, not to comply with a list of demands by the administration, including changes to admissions policies.

Harvard could lose more than \$2 billion in federal funding.

"This is an issue that goes beyond issues of just academic freedom. It goes to the core meaning of freedom in this country," Reich said.

Reich also highlighted the more than 1,400 university students and recent graduates who have had their visas revoked since January, when Trump threatened to deport noncitizens who participated in demonstrations against the war in Gaza.

"I ask you to help international students understand that we have their backs," Reich said.

"I don't think we should even call them deportations since that would insinuate they are free on the other side," said Berkeley undergrad Eden Lange.

Walnut Creek resident and Army Veteran Brian Donohue and other community members wanted their voices to be heard in support of academic freedom.

"I support the faculty and the students' rights to express themselves. My God, if you can't think, how are we going to progress as a society," Donohue said.

"It's not just a rally. It's about keeping our democracy together, because it's being stripped apart right in front of us," said Berkeley resident Gwen Austin.

"It's such a special place. It's one of the best research environments in the world and we want to keep it that way for another generation of students and scholars," Miguel said.

Reich addressed the possibility of UC Berkeley being the next school to face funding threats.

He said a list of demands from the Trump administration "will be coming", and adding throughout his speech, the university's response should be "No."

In: [Berkeley](#) [UC Berkeley](#)

Kenny Choi

When Kenny Choi jumped into the backseat, he never thought he would be introducing his ride share driver to National Public Radio. The hour-long ride to the airport turned into a conversation that included politics, the economic divide, and the cultural differences between the East Coast and the West Coast.

© 2025 CBS Broadcasting Inc. All Rights Reserved.