



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM (UCAF)
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Assembly of the Academic Senate
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**ROBERT MAY, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE**

RE: CANARY MISSION

Dear Robert,

In our meeting of March 21, members of the University Committee on Academic Freedom resolved to urge Academic Council to take notice of the activities of Canary Mission, an organization devoted, in its own words, to identifying "people and groups that promote hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses," principally by creating a searchable online database (canarymission.org) accessible to the public. To the extent that any institution uses Canary Mission's characterizations to evaluate academics or discipline students, it would constitute a threat to academic freedom.

Canary Mission's definition of "hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews" appears to include not only support of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, but also failure to advocate its suppression. By contrast, the American Association of University Professors opposes any academic boycott but also opposes interference with the scholarly activity of BDS supporters.¹ UCAF has not taken a position for or against the BDS movement. We do hold the view that support or opposition to BDS must not affect evaluation of academic work by faculty or students. The AAUP's stance is consistent with UCAF's position; the work of Canary Mission is not.

Canary Mission's website features the slogan "because the world should know." Its own staff and funding are not listed. Its methods reportedly include contacting employers of people on its list, as well as tagging them on social media, and using search engine optimization so that its entries appear early on internet searches. The objective appears to be to influence admissions, hiring, promotion, grant applications, and other decisions affecting the lives and careers of people listed on its site.

In 2016, the chair of AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure, Hank Reichman, wrote that "Canary Mission is a blacklist, pure and simple. It echoes the long-discredited and horrific blacklists of the

¹ AAUP Statement On Anti-BDS Legislation and Universities, 8/8/18 < <https://www.aaup.org/news/statement-anti-bds-legislation-and-universities#.XJqk8qeZPUI>>.

McCarthy era."² Reichman wrote to support the petition of faculty who serve, or might serve, on graduate admissions committees, who concluded that "the Canary Mission website should not be trusted as a resource to evaluate students' qualifications for admission."³

UCAF members hold that the University should take a similar position with respect to the evaluation not only of prospective and current students, but academics. UCAF members believe, in keeping with APM - 010, that "Academic freedom requires that teaching and scholarship be assessed by reference to the professional standards that sustain the University's pursuit and achievement of knowledge. The substance and nature of those standards properly lie within the expertise and authority of the faculty as a body." Those standards have led to the appointment and advancement of UC academics who appear on the Canary Mission site. Those standards, alone, should continue to inform the University's evaluation of scholarly work. Canary Mission's reports do not meet those standards.

Sincerely,



Eric Rauchway, Chair
UCAF

² Hank Reichman, "Another Blacklist Emerges," Academe Blog 8/1/16 < <https://academeblog.org/2016/08/01/another-blacklist-emerges/>>.

³ "University Faculty Condemn Canary Mission Blacklist."
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_SsqroBqmKANYy1KsHobZ3DTdI9j4HjLNOkK3PDx9TNzMXA/viewform>.