

APPEAL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Stop your involvement in the development and improvement of nuclear weapons!

To the President and Regents of the University of California:

Universities play an important role in society. They are institutions that bring together experts to transmit knowledge to successive waves of young adults coming of age. In the process, they train citizens and future societal leaders. Universities should set an example to the youth they train and to the general society, reflecting the highest standards of civilization and ethical behavior.

An important question to ask about any university is: Whose interests does it serve? Ideally, a university serves the interests of society as a whole. But in too many instances, universities are corrupted by money and power to serve entrenched and narrow interests, including those of the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned about in his Farewell Address.

The size of military budgets in many countries makes it likely that a high percentage of research dollars funneled through universities will be military dollars, a situation that diverts attention from research on urgent problems confronting humanity, such as alleviating starvation, preventing the spread of infectious diseases, protecting our air and water from pollution, preventing catastrophic climate change, and finding sustainable solutions to energy needs.

Throughout the Nuclear Age, the University of California has played a particularly egregious role, managing and providing oversight to the two main US nuclear weapons laboratories: the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Every nuclear weapon in the US arsenal has been designed and developed at these laboratories. Should these weapons ever be used, by accident or design, they will, in effect, come with a tag saying, "Made at the University of California."

Continued work on designing and developing nuclear weapons may well be illegal under international law. In 1996, the International Court of Justice, the world's highest judicial body, found that "[t]he threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of law applicable under armed conflict, and particularly the principles and rules of humanitarian law."

The University of California, a great but compromised university, has contributed its stature and provided a fig leaf of respectability to research laboratories engaged in the creation and maintenance of nuclear weapons that could destroy civilization and possibly end human life on Earth. It now does so in partnership with Bechtel and other defense contractors.

We in the academic community – students, professors and staff – join together in protesting against this misuse of science and technology and the role of the university in society, and call upon the University of California to end its relationship with laboratories that design, develop, maintain and improve these weapons of mass annihilation.

To sign the appeal see rear page →

