Dear Students and Scholars,

The Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Immigration Policy is concerned that federal policies related to immigration may impact international students and scholars and their rights while engaging in activities on campus and in the larger local community. We write to emphasize that there may be serious and unexpected consequences to getting arrested in the current climate of heightened screening and immigration enforcement. Even if you are never prosecuted and/or convicted of a crime, an arrest may result in severe and irreversible implications for your visa status, including: visa revocations, denied re-entry to the U.S., loss of eligibility for benefits, or loss of eligibility for a future U.S. visa.

That is why we want you to exercise all your legal rights with full information about potential consequences. In particular, we want to underscore that the First Amendment guarantees rights to free speech, expression and peaceful assembly, which include the right to lawful protest. At the same time, we would like to remind you of the campus policies and legal limitations when participating in demonstrations and otherwise engaging in the community.

Please refer to the resources below to learn about your rights and campus policies to ensure that you engage in demonstrations and other activities lawfully, safely and responsibly:

UCPD Your Right to Demonstrate
Your First Amendment Rights as a UCLA Student
Dean of Students Student Conduct Code
General Resources on Free Speech on Campus (including primer) at Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

In particular, we emphasize that the right to protest does not include protests that are so disruptive so as to effectively silence an invited speaker from communicating with a willing audience. Although campus officials specifically warn individuals who create such a disruption at a UCLA-venue event, if they are escorted out of the venue, they are subject to arrest.

By providing you this reminder, we do not want to chill your lawful political expression and activity. Nevertheless, whenever exercising your constitutional rights, you are urged to do so mindfully.

Frequently asked questions about arrests:

How do I know if I was arrested?

If you are arrested by the police in the U.S., you may be placed in handcuffs, the officer may recite your Constitutional Rights – known as Miranda Rights – to you, and take you into custody.
What kinds of actions can result in an arrest?

Engaging in unlawful assembly
Resisting an officer
Any physical altercation leading to police interaction
Underage drinking (the legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21 years)
Carrying an open alcohol container or drinking in public
Public urination
Being on private property without permission (including abandoned buildings or vacant lots)
Any behavior deemed to be sexual assault or stalking
Possession of illegal drugs
Marijuana: There are laws prohibiting smoking and ingesting marijuana in public, while operating a vehicle, and while a passenger in a vehicle. These laws may result in arrest if violated. Marijuana is still prohibited on campus and university property as per UC policy, which is enforced by the UC Administration. For more information, see Marijuana: The Law in California.

In general, international students and scholars are encouraged to consult with their department and the Dashew Center before planning travel in order to ensure that you take all relevant factors concerning reentry to the U.S. into account to avoid unforeseen risks. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your department chair, advisor, or the Dashew Center at (310) 825-1681 or email snahidi@saonet.ucla.edu.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Abel Valenzuela, Jr.
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