

## **SUNY University Faculty Senate Executive Committee: Oppose the McMahon-Mailman Compact**

13 October 2025

A [new day is dawning](#).

It's time for us to [rise up](#).

It's time for us to [stand together for higher education](#).

It's time for us to [defend our campuses](#).

It's time for us to say NO in thunder to the [now-national-in-scope McMahon-Mailman Compact](#):

- NO to patronage, bribery, and corruption.
- NO to coercion, extortion, and “offers you can’t refuse.”
- NO to censorship, loyalty oaths, thought policing, ideological capture, and authoritarian power grabs.
- NO to unconstitutional, unlawful, and antidemocratic federal executive branch interference and overreach.
- NO to grifters, sycophants, and their enablers trying to turn our colleges and universities into partisan propaganda mills or dictating who belongs on our campuses, what can be taught and researched, and how dissent is expressed and protest conducted.

To higher education presidents, chancellors, and boards: you are the stewards of a great legacy, a collection of institutions respected around the world. Do not compromise your mission and values. Show that nothing is worth betraying your foundational principles and functions for. Work with your faculty, staff, and students to demonstrate your value to your communities, states, nations, and the world.

Thank you, [Massachusetts Institute of Technology \(MIT\) President Sally Kornbluth](#), for showing how to steadfastly resist any and all forms of political pressure that attempt to override and undermine:

- the academic expertise and professional judgment of the faculty;
- the rigor and integrity of established shared governance systems and processes; and
- the leadership, autonomy, and democratic accountability of campus administrations and boards.

The United States needs colleges and universities to be:

- Free to pursue knowledge, truth, and wisdom for the public good;
- Free to cultivate freedoms of thought, inquiry, speech, expression, assembly, and association for the future of democracy in America;

- Free to safeguard the integrity of academic research, teaching, and learning so as to push the boundaries of human understanding and potential and foster an informed citizenry;
- Free to provide educational programs and services to all students in the safest and most supportive environment possible so no student is left behind;
- Free to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion so that we may become a more perfect union; and
- Free to practice academic freedom, shared governance, and peer review for the sake of institutional autonomy and democratic accountability.

As governance leaders of the State University of New York (SUNY), we recommit ourselves to the work of our colleges, universities, and teaching hospitals. We urge everyone at SUNY to recommit to this work of transforming our students' and patients' lives and future prospects and serving our state as:

- generators of knowledge, creativity, and innovation;
- magnets for students, workers, families, businesses, and private investment;
- anchors of neighborhoods, localities, and regions;
- catalysts for sustainable communities and ecosystems;
- engines of economic opportunity, social mobility, and workforce development;
- pathways to the life of the mind, the care of the self, and the middle class and beyond;
- seedbeds for health, wellness, well-being, and human flourishing;
- platforms for civic engagement, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning; and
- foundations for democracy, civil society, truth-and-justice seeking, and vigorous, rigorous examination of “the American way” at home and in the world.

To the SUNY Faculty Council of Community Colleges, CUNY University Faculty Senate, campus governance bodies across SUNY and CUNY, the National Council of Faculty Senates, and national, state, system, and campus higher education governance bodies everywhere, along with your members, constituents, friends, allies, champions, and all other good-faith supporters of foundational principles and functions of U.S. higher education: we invite you to join us.

- ☑ Choose [Public Good U](#) over Grift U, Police U, and Vichy U.
- ☑ Choose [mutual academic defense compacts](#) over mutual assured destruction compacts.
- ☑ Sign the [petition](#) “We Stand for Education and Against the Trump Higher Education Compacts” and the [petition](#) “Reject Trump’s ‘Loyalty Oath’ Compacts.”
- ☑ Endorse the American Federation of Teachers-American Association of University Professors [statement](#) and the Stand Together for Higher Ed [statement](#) on the federal compact.
- ☑ Help create a [better future for higher education](#).

***If not now, when?***

## FOR FURTHER READING

16 October 2025

Our statement was in the process of being voted upon by the voting members of the Executive Committee when the news broke that [President Christina Paxson](#) has explained why “Brown University is respectfully declining to enter” the McMahon-Mailman “Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education.” Thus, our statement has not been informed by President Paxson’s [letter to the White House](#) or [message to the Brown community](#), although it has been informed by reactions from other college and university presidents issued before 14 October 2025 (including Dartmouth College’s [Sian Leah Beilock](#), the University of Southern California’s [Beong-Soo Kim](#), Trinity Washington University’s Pat McGuire, the University of Pennsylvania’s [J. Larry Jameson](#), Williams College’s [Maud Mandel](#), the University of Arizona’s [Suresh Garimella](#), and Wesleyan University’s [Michael Roth](#)).

Similarly, our statement has been informed by, and is in dialogue with, a growing host of reactions beyond the ones we reference directly in the statement, including from respected and representative national higher education organizations (including [AAUP and AFT](#), [AAC&U \[twice\]](#), [ACE \[twice\]](#), [ACLS](#), and the leaders of [AGB and Ed Trust](#)); campus governance bodies at the nine institutions invited to join the compact (including the [University of Pennsylvania](#), [University of Virginia](#), [Vanderbilt University \[twice\]](#), the [University of Arizona \[twice\]](#), and a [coalition statement](#) from seven of the nine campuses’ student government leaders); faculty, [students](#), and alumni at those institutions (including the [University of Virginia](#), [University of Southern California](#), [Vanderbilt University](#), [Dartmouth College](#), [Brown University](#), and the [University of Texas at Austin](#)); and op eds, articles, and essays by [Timothy Burke](#) (Swarthmore College), [Erwin Chemerinsky](#) (University of California, Berkeley), [Tyler Coward](#) (Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression), [Genevieve Lakier](#) (University of Chicago), [Adam Harris](#) (New America), [Joseph Fishkin](#) (UCLA), [Brendan Cantwell](#) (Michigan State University), [Eugene Volokh](#) (Hoover Institution/UCLA), [Catherine D’Ignazio](#) (MIT), [Larry Kotlikoff](#) (Boston University), [Lisa Fazio and Brendan Nyhan](#) (Vanderbilt University and Dartmouth College, respectively), [L. Rafael Reif](#) (MIT), [Siva Vaidhyanathan](#) (University of Virginia), [Benjamin Nathans](#) (University of Pennsylvania), [Jan-Werner Müller](#) (Princeton University), the [Steady State](#) (a group of more than 330 former senior national security and law enforcement professionals), [Neal McCluskey](#) (Cato Institute), [David Ramadan](#) (George Mason University/the University of Virginia), [Ben Olinsky](#) (and others at the Center for American Progress), [Walter Olson](#) (Cato Institute), [Beth Akers](#) (American Enterprise Institute), [Greg Martin](#) (and others at Stanford University), and the [Daily Pennsylvanian Editorial Board](#).

Our statement is in the spirit of others that have been released since 13 October 2025, including by the [MIT Council on Academic Freedom](#), [Iowa Higher Education Coalition](#), and [University of Pennsylvania Faculty Senate](#), as well as actions taken by [Stand for Campus Freedom](#), [Education for All](#), and the [national rally against the Compact](#) on 17 October 2025.

Our statement is written in opposition to attempts to advance, defend, excuse, apologize for, or otherwise justify the worst elements of the McMahon-Mailman Compact in the name of values, principles, and practices higher education is already committed to, responsible for, and working to improve on—including by [Kevin Altife](#) (leader of the University of Texas system’s Board of Regents), [Danielle Allen](#) (Harvard University), [Marc Rowan](#) ([reported](#) to be the Compact’s [primary author](#)), and [Christopher Rufo](#) (and others supporting the [Manhattan Institute Statement on Higher Education](#), who also claim influence on the Compact, although [John Tomasi](#) has noted similarities to and differences from Heterodox Academy’s reform agenda).