



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Position Statement by the Executive Committee of

University of Virginia Chapter of the American Association of University Professors

Regarding the

“Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education”

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The federal government recently sent a document entitled “Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education” (posted at <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Compact-for-Academic-Excellence-in-Higher-Education-10.1.pdf> and hereafter referred to as the “Compact”) to the University of Virginia (UVA) as well as eight other leading institutions of higher education in the United States. This document stipulates numerous mandates involving admissions, speech, hiring, grading, curricula, diversity, disciplinary policies, tuition, foreign students, and enforcement with which the universities must comply in order to prevent restrictions on access to federal support including student loans, grants, contracts, approval of visas for foreign nationals, and treatment under the tax code. Many provisions of the “Compact” address issues covered under existing federal law with which UVA is already required to comply. However, other provisions are new, violate existing university policies and/or federal law and, if implemented, would effectively suppress academic freedom, freedom of expression, shared governance, and diversity as defined by the American Association of University Professors and would also impose improper financial mandates that amount to an ideologically motivated intrusion into core functions. In essence it would put the University under perpetual federal oversight in direct conflict with the Code of Virginia, which stipulates that, at all times, UVA and its Board operate under the authority of the State Legislature.

Notably, both compliance and noncompliance with the “Compact” would result in significant negative financial consequences for targeted institutions. The threat of restricting access to federal support for noncompliance amounts to extortion, plain and simple, which would

profoundly impact all aspects of a university's operations and its mission. However, compliance would require implementation of a 5-year freeze on tuition charged to American students, and a 15% cap on enrollment of foreign national students and the associated tuition. In addition, institutions with large endowments relative to numbers of students would (with few exceptions) be required to wave tuition for students pursuing hard science programs. These mandates would negatively impact the financing of institutions that agree to comply with the "Compact".

This "Compact" is the most significant threat to the mission of higher education since the McCarthy era. Complying with these mandates would suppress the independence of UVA and its ability to achieve the vision of its founder, Thomas Jefferson: to be "bold in the pursuit of knowledge, never fearing to follow truth and reason to whatever results they led." The "Compact" represents a bright red line for academic freedom and free speech at universities that cannot be crossed.

We join the UVA Faculty Senate (<https://facultysenate.virginia.edu/resolution-opposing-compact-academic-excellence-higher-education>), the UVA College of Arts and Sciences Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Ethics, and the Senate of Virginia (<https://bloximages.newyork1.vip.townnews.com/richmond.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/1/2/b1/2b1b34d9-7ed4-40a6-88e4-da6afbe0dd92/68e6893307a90.pdf.pdf>) in vehemently opposing the "Compact". We urge the Rector Sheridan, the Board of Visitors, and Interim President Mahoney to refuse to discuss or negotiate with the administration any aspect of the "Compact"; this extreme overreach by the federal government should be rejected outright and in its entirety.

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