

May 29, 2019

To: Jerry Kang
Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

From: George Dutton, Chair 
Academic Freedom Committee

Re: Controversy surrounding Anthro M144P Speaker

Dear Vice Chancellor Kang,

Thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of the Committee. The following is a statement from the Academic Freedom Committee on this matter, supporting Prof. Park's freedom to invite speakers to her classes as she deems academically appropriate.

Statement, Academic Freedom Committee

In response to recent controversy surrounding the presentation by a guest speaker in Professor Kyeyoung Park's Anthropology M144P, the UCLA Senate Committee on Academic Freedom expresses its strong support for Professor Park's freedom to present materials in the classroom as she determines to be appropriate. The right to bring in speakers or to use classroom materials that a professor considers necessary and important for student learning should be, in our committee's view, inviolable. Indeed, the University's Faculty Code of Conduct guarantees faculty the "right to present controversial material relevant to a course of instruction." It may well be that students find the words of such speakers or the content of classroom materials objectionable, but this does not alter the fact that a professor has the right to introduce such course content. At the same time, the Committee notes that students should be given the opportunity to express their own opinions and objections in an appropriate manner in the classroom and through other avenues. An academic institution like UCLA must remain a place for the expression of a wide diversity of views and interpretations. It should also be a site of vigorous debate so that those exposed to or participating in these discussions have the opportunity to hear a range of opinions as they formulate their own views.

On behalf of Academic Freedom Committee Members: Kristy Guevara-Flanagan; Moira Inkelas; Mayumi Prins;
Eugene Volokh; Cesar Ayala; Mark Kligman

Academic Freedom Committee Student Representatives: Gabriela Gonzalez; Ying Zhou