

From Student Politics to Capitol Insurrection:
The Intensification of Extremism at UCLA and Beyond

Grace Johnston-Glick and James Nee (National); Lacy Green and Gavin Quan (State);
Brandon Broukhim and Talla Khelghati (UCLA)

Edited by Erin Onarecker

With support from David N. Myers, Maia Ferdman, and Ann Major

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This report is a follow-up to the UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy report
from November 2019

*All is Not Well in the Golden State:
The Scourge of White Nationalism in Southern California*

Preface

In June 2020, the Luskin Center for History and Policy released a report “All is Not Well in the Golden State: The Scourge of White Nationalism in Southern California.” Produced by a team of undergraduate researchers from UCLA, the report provided extensive background to and mapping of the rise of extreme white nationalist activity in the region and state. Since the release of that report, there has been a marked uptick in white nationalist activity in the national sphere. The tumultuous final month of the Trump presidency, especially prompted by the false claim of a stolen election and culminating in the January 6 Capitol assault, pushed from the margins to the center of public attention a loose coalition of far-right actors, often motivated by conspiracy theories such as QAnon, some of whom are intent on violent insurrection.

The highly polarized political climate—and even extremist expressions—have now made their way to college campuses in the United States, including to UCLA. In light of that development, a team of six undergraduate and recently graduated UCLA students have written an update to the “All is Not Well” report that offers a detailed description of developments within the conservative political ecosystem at UCLA, with a particular focus on the actions of Christian Secor, a UCLA student who was arrested for his participation in the January 6 insurrection. To place the UCLA story within context, the report offers brief summaries of the intensification of extremist expressions and actions at the national and state levels, thus yielding three layers of interconnected activity.

Professor David N. Myers
Director, UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy

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National Context: The Capitol Riot and its Aftermath

By Grace Johnston-Glick and James Nee

The four years of Donald Trump's presidency were marked by an uptick in the number of disaffected individuals and groups prepared to act on their radical beliefs.¹ Within months of Trump's departure, FBI Director Christopher Wray noted in U.S. Senate testimony that domestic terrorism has "metastasized across the country for a long time now," particularly among right-wing groups.² A force multiplier was the November 2020 election, which featured a mix of misinformation and conspiracy theories alleging that President Trump in fact won re-election.³ A Facebook group named "Stop The Steal" was formed in early November during the vote count that followed Election Day and before the race was officially called for Joe Biden.⁴ Twelve hours prior to its creation, Trump posted unsubstantiated claims of election theft on Twitter and Facebook that declared: "They are trying to STEAL the Election."⁵ Fewer than 22 hours from its inception, the group turned into one of the fastest growing groups in the history of Facebook.⁶ It had over 320,000 members and, during a particularly high spike in engagement, gained 100 new members every ten seconds.⁷ This meteoric rise was noticed by Facebook executives, who shut down the group because it included threats to incite violence – a violation of the company's terms of service.⁸ By that point, however, the damage had been done. Testimonials, photographs, and videos alleging voter fraud were recirculated on Twitter, Youtube, and other right-wing websites where they found new life.⁹ Facebook announced it would be removing all content from both Facebook and Instagram that featured the phrase "stop the steal."¹⁰

Far-right agitation built up over the course of November and December, as the Stop the Steal rhetoric migrated to Parler and Telegram, culminating in the events of

¹ According to Miles Taylor, former chief of state to the head of the Department of Homeland Security during the Trump presidency: "I can say, unequivocally, when it comes to the issue of domestic terrorism, this White House was completely out to lunch. That warped perspective essentially held back administration policy on the issue of domestic terrorism so significantly that I believe it has lost American lives." See Will Carliss, "After years of denial under President Trump, experts expect Joe Biden to confront domestic extremism," *USA Today*, December 9, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/12/09/biden-trump-challenges-domestic-extremism/3825616001/>. See also the report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States," November 7, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states>.

² Eric Tucker and Mary Claire Jalonick, "FBI Chief Warns Violent 'Domestic Terrorism' Growing in the US," *Associated Press*, March 3, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/fbi-chris-wray-testify-capitol-riot-9a5539af34b15338bb5c4923907eeb67>.

³ Jonathan Chang and Meghna Chakbrati, "Online Extremists And Law Enforcement: Lessons From The Capitol Hill Insurrection," On Point, *WBUR*, January 11, 2021, <https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2021/01/11/online-extremists-and-law-enforcement-lessons-from-the-capitol-hill-insurrection>.

⁴ Sheera Frenkel, "The Rise and Fall of the 'Stop the Steal' Facebook Group," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/05/technology/stop-the-steal-facebook-group.html>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Brakkton Booker, "Facebook Removes 'Stop the Steal' Content; Twitter Suspends QAnon Accounts," *NPR*, January 12, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/insurrection-at-the-capitol/2021/01/12/956003580/facebook-removes-stop-the-steal-content-twitter-suspends-qanon-accounts>.

January 6.¹¹ As is well known, President Trump gave a speech at the “March to Save America” rally organized by Women for America First, declaring that, “We’re going to walk down to the Capitol and we’re going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women and we’re probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them.”¹² He also declared to the audience: “if you don’t fight like hell you’re not going to have a country anymore.”¹³ To be sure, some of those at the rally came to engage in peaceful protest; but it is now known that others came with the express intent to foment violent insurrection.¹⁴

As of February 2021, over 250 individual riot participants have been arrested by federal authorities.¹⁵ Three of the primary militias present at the Capitol riot were the Three Percenters, the Oath Keepers, and the Proud Boys. According to an NPR report, the Three Percenters believe that “a small group of trained and well-armed individuals with a just cause are within their rights to overthrow the government.”¹⁶ The group evolved out of an extremist wing of the gun rights movement in 2008¹⁷, and took its name from the myth that only three percent of colonists took up arms against the British throughout the American Revolution.^{18, 19} Mike Vanderboegh, a notable Three Percenter, explained that those in the movement “are committed to the restoration of the Founders’ Republic, and are willing to fight, die and, if forced by any would-be oppressor, to kill in the defense of [them]selves and the Constitution that [they] all took an oath to uphold against enemies foreign and domestic.”²⁰ Meanwhile, the Oath Keepers were founded in 2009 by Stewart Rhodes, a Yale Law School graduate and former U.S. Army paratrooper, partially in response to Barack Obama being elected as the first African-American president.²¹ The FBI categorizes the Oath Keepers as “a large, loosely organized collection of militias that believe the federal government has been overtaken by a shadowy conspiracy that aims to strip citizens of their rights.”²² According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Oath Keepers claim that tens of

¹¹ Craig Timberg and Drew Harwell, “Pro-Trump forums erupt with violent threats ahead of Wednesday’s rally against the 2020 election,” *Washington Post*, Jan 5, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/05/parler-telegram-violence-dc-protests/>.

¹² Brian Schwartz, “Pro-Trump dark money groups organized the rally that led to deadly Capitol Hill riot,” *CNBC*, January 9, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/09/pro-trump-dark-money-groups-organized-the-rally-that-led-to-deadly-capitol-hill-riot.html>.

¹³ Georgia Wells, Rebecca Ballhaus, and Keach Hagey, “Proud Boys, Seizing Trump’s Call to Washington, Helped Lead Capitol Attack,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 17, 2021, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/proud-boys-seizing-trumps-call-to-washington-helped-lead-capitol-attack-11610911596>.

¹⁴ Devlin Barrett and Matt Zapotosky, “FBI report warned of ‘war’ at Capitol, contradicting claims there was no indication of looming violence,” *Washington Post*, January 12, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/capitol-riot-fbi-intelligence/2021/01/12/30d12748-546b-11eb-a817-e5e7f8a406d6_story.html.

¹⁵ NPR Staff, “The Capitol Siege: The Arrested and Their Stories,” *NPR*, February 24, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/09/965472049/the-capitol-siege-the-arrested-and-their-stories>.

¹⁶ Jaclyn Diaz and Rachel Treisman, “Members of Right-Wing Militias, Extremist Groups Are Latest Charged in Capitol Siege,” *NPR*, January 19, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/sections/insurrection-at-the-capitol/2021/01/19/958240531/members-of-right-wing-militias-extremist-groups-are-latest-charged-in-capitol-si>.

¹⁷ Mike Vanderboegh, “All about the Sipsey Street Irregulars & Absolved,” *Sipsey Street Irregulars* (blog), *Blogspot*, November 15, 2008, <https://sipseystreetirregulars.blogspot.com/2008/11/placeholder-for-now.html>.

¹⁸ Diaz and Treisman.

¹⁹ Marie Fazio, “Notable Arrests After the Capitol Riot,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/10/us/politics/capitol-arrests.html>.

²⁰ Mike Vanderboegh, “What is a ‘Three Percenter’?”, *Sipsey Street Irregulars* (blog), *Blogspot*, February 17, 2009, <https://sipseystreetirregulars.blogspot.com/2009/02/what-is-three-percenter.html>.

²¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, “Oath Keepers,” <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/oath-keepers>.

²² Diaz and Treisman, “Members of Right-Wing.”

thousands of former and active duty law enforcement officers and military veterans are members of the organization.²³

These militia groups were created prior to the Trump years, but the Proud Boys were founded in the midst of Trump's rise to power in the 2016 presidential election by VICE Media co-founder Gavin McInnes.²⁴ Indeed, it was this group that Trump mentioned in the first presidential debate on September 29, 2020 in response to moderator Chris Wallace's question about whether he would condemn white supremacists and militia groups. Notably, President Trump mentioned the Proud Boys on that occasion, telling them: "Stand by and stand back."²⁵²⁶²⁷

Far-right voices on social media reacted to the January 6 rally and insurrection in a variety of ways. Some suggested, in classic antisemitic fashion, that it was Jews who sought to "instill more unrest between the right and the left" (post01; post12)²⁸, or that the storming was a psychological operation (psyop) orchestrated by the combined forces of Antifa, federal law enforcement officers, and agents of the People's Republic of China (post07; post 08). The latter explanation is similar to the claim made by many Trump supporters on Parler: that Antifa was behind the storming, not "real" Trump supporters. In response to this claim, however, one user retorted, "This is Q tier disinfo that only a f----- idiot would fall for" (post09). Others expressed skepticism about the claim that the storming was a false flag (post10; post13; post15). Conversely, some QAnon supporters on the 8kun board dedicated to the conspiracy theory did indeed dismiss the events at the Capitol as a false flag (noanonso1).²⁹

This diversity of themes attests to the diversity of perspectives on the landscape of far-right extremism in this country. To help understand these extremist variants, the tables below categorize different movements and organizations. The extent to which a group identifies with a position is rated either: No; Rarely; Sometimes; Often; or Yes.

²³ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Oath Keepers."

²⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Proud Boys," <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>.

²⁵ USA Today Staff, "Read the full transcript from the first presidential debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump," *USA Today*, September 30, 2020, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/09/30/presidential-debate-read-full-transcript-first-debate/3587462001/>.

²⁶ Per Wells, Ballhaus, and Hagey the Proud Boys organized an earlier rally in Washington, D.C. on November 14 to protest the outcome of the election; blaming Trump's loss on antifa. Trump addressed the rally in a Tweet hours after it had ended: "Antifa SCUM ran for the hills today when they tried attacking the people at the Trump Rally, because those people aggressively fought back."

²⁷ According to the SPLC, Trump's first electoral win led to an increase in Proud Boy membership, see <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>.

²⁸ All in-text citations refer to screenshots that are archived here:

<https://cryptpad.fr/drive/#/2/drive/view/W8MmbfgNIwoAb783vjzEFa7Cc7mRLy3f3BDyKCEQx8/>.

²⁹ Some saw the storming as an event that had potential—"This was our chance and they blew it" (post 02; post 05)—while others thought it was inherently misguided (post 03; post 06), or "not an 'assault' at all, [... but rather] just qn---er [QAnon-supporting] idiots at most" (post04). One user in line with the "inherently misguided" interpretation specified, "I expected this to accomplish nothing. What I didn't expect is for Trump to so completely abandon his people" (post11). In contrast, a different user expressed that Trump was not dependable from the start because both he and the Republican Party operate within the confines of so-called "jewish control" and "jewish power" (post14). In the far-right ecosystem, a key point of reference is *The Turner Diaries*, a novel published in 1978 by the white nationalist William Luther Pierce. The protagonist, Earl Turner, participates in an insurgency against the United States that culminates in a massive race war. In the aftermath of January 6, one user excitedly speculated that a *Turner Diaries*-esque civil war will erupt: "So what I believe will happen is more Anthony Warners, more Timmothy[sic] McVeighs, more Robert Bowers, more Brenton Tarrant until "we" as White dissidents can progress beyond mere lone wolf attacks that accomplish little into organized insurgency against the regime" (post16).

GROUPS	PRO-...	TRUMP	CHRISTIANITY	WHITE SUPREMACY
Stop the Steal		Yes	Often	No
3%ers		Yes	Sometimes	No
Oathkeepers		Yes	Sometimes	No
Proud Boys		No ³⁰	Often	No, but identify as “Western chauvinists”
Groypers		Sometimes	Yes	Often
“Level 4”s		No	Rarely	Yes

GROUPS	PRO-...	NONLETHAL DIRECT ACTION	LONE WOLF TERRORISM	CIVIL WAR
Stop the Steal		Yes	No	Sometimes
3%ers		Yes	No	Yes
Oathkeepers		Yes	No	Yes
Proud Boys		Yes	No	Sometimes
Groypers		Yes	No	No
“Level 4”s		Sometimes	Yes	Yes

³⁰ The organization was founded to be explicitly pro-Trump, ardently supporting the Trump administration during most of his presidency. However, following the Capitol insurrection, many in the organization have turned against Trump (Sheera Frenkel and Alan Feuer, “A Total Failure’: The Proud Boys Now Mock Trump,” *The New York Times*, updated March 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/technology/proud-boys-trump.html>).

California and the Trump Presidency

By Lacy Green and Gavin Quan

Parallel to developments at the national level, California also saw a rise in white nationalist activity during the Trump years. In fact, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center's "Hate Map," California is the state with the largest number of white nationalist groups.³¹ Both Northern and Southern California saw an increase in white nationalist presence and activity over the past two years.

Northern California

Northern California is often viewed as less diverse and inclusive than the rest of the state, but recently, Stockton, Sacramento, and Oakland have been ranked among the most diverse cities in the country.³² This demographic shift may explain why two white nationalist groups (American Identity Movement and Counter-Currents Publishing) have become active in Sacramento, and why there has been an increase in white nationalist activity in that area.

At times, this activity has assumed violent form. In one of the most notorious incidents, Santino William Legan, a lone wolf gunman, went on a rampage at the Gilroy Garlic Festival in 2019, killing three and wounding 17. Legan killed himself when confronted by law enforcement. Prior to his attack, Legan urged people to read *Might is Right*, a fascist and antisemitic manifesto that promotes racial violence.³³

Further examples of increased white nationalist activity from Northern California include Eddie Block, a member of the Proud Boys Central Valley Chapter, who travelled to Washington D.C. and live streamed other Proud Boys members from across the country climbing over perimeter fences and breaking into the Capitol building on January 6, 2021. On the same day, hundreds of Trump supporters also gathered around the California State Capitol building to protest the certification of the Electoral College vote. Proud Boys joined the Trump supporters, and violent tensions escalated between them and counter protestors.³⁴

Southern California

Southern California has a long and continuing history of white nationalism. The Anti-Defamation League reported a 120% increase in white nationalist propaganda in Southern California from 2018 to 2019. Ninety percent of extremist flyers were produced by three white nationalist groups: the American Identity Movement, Patriot

³¹ "Hate Map," SPLCenter, Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed February 7, 2020, <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map?ideology=white-nationalist>

³² Summer Lin and Simone Jasper, "These three California cities are the most racially diverse in the US, study says," Sacbee.com, Sacramento Bee, published January 22, 2020, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/article239529383.html>

³³ Matthew Ormseth et al, "Disturbing portrait emerges of Gilroy Garlic Festival shooter," *LA Times* online, July 30, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-07-29/gilroy-garlic-festival-shooting-suspect>.

³⁴ Rosalio Ahumada, Sam Stanton, and Jason Pohl, "Clashes in downtown Sacramento as pro-Trump mob invades U.S. Capitol," Sacbee.com, Sacramento Bee, updated January 8, 2021, <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article248312575.html>

Front, and the New Jersey European Heritage Association.³⁵ The flyers were posted at high schools, community colleges, universities, and other public spaces around Southern California. Their propaganda is designed to target those who might sympathize with the white nationalist movement.

White nationalist activity has also taken a dangerously violent turn in the region. Most significantly, on April 27, 2019, John Timothy Earnest attacked the Chabad Synagogue in Poway, killing one and injuring three, including the rabbi. While Earnest had no known affiliation with white nationalist groups, he did author an antisemitic and racist manifesto on 8chan before the attack.

With respect to January 6, a significant number of Southern Californians participated in the Capitol riots, including a number of military veterans and law enforcement officers. Ashli Babbitt, a Southern California resident who became interested in far-right politics after leaving the Air Force, was killed by Capitol police during the riot. On January 14, 2021, Los Angeles Sheriff Alex Villanueva announced that his office was investigating a deputy who had attended the Capitol riot.³⁶ Six days later it was reported that the Orange County Sheriff's Department was also investigating a deputy who was alleged to have participated in the riot. The Orange County Sheriff's department had come under scrutiny earlier that summer after one of its officers displayed an Oath Keepers patch on his uniform during a Black Lives Matter protest. In addition, UCLA student Christian Secor participated in the January 6 insurrection and has since been arrested. Secor and his activity at UCLA are discussed in the next section of this report.³⁷

The white nationalist group Patriot Front continues to be responsible for spreading hateful rhetoric throughout California by posting flyers around cities and college campuses.³⁸ The American Identity Movement (originally known as Identity Evropa) remained one of the most active groups in Southern California until November 2020 when its leader, Patrick Casey, announced the group's disbandment in order to join forces with Nick Fuentes and the "Groyper Army."³⁹ The Anti-Defamation League reports that the Patriot Front and American Identity Movement were responsible for 90% of the flyering in California since 2019.⁴⁰

Most recently, several other white nationalist groups have emerged, or become more active in California. The Hundred Handers is an international white supremacist sticker producer whose stickers have reportedly been posted around Southern

³⁵ Deepa Bharath, "Southern California heavily targeted in 120% increase in white supremacist propaganda in U.S.," LA.ADL.org, Anti-Defamation League, published February 18, 2020, <https://la.adl.org/news/southern-california-heavily-targeted-in-120-increase-in-white-supremacist-propaganda-in-u-s/>

³⁶ Josh Haskell, "Off-duty Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy at Capitol Hill during riot," ABC7News.com, ABC, published January 14, 2021, <https://abc7.com/capitol-hill-us-riots-los-angeles-county-sheriffs-department-off-duty-deputy/9667421/>

³⁷ Nick Gerda, "OC Sheriff Investigating Whether Employee Took Part in U.S. Capitol Riot," VoiceofOC.org, Voice of OC, published January 20, 2021, <https://voiceofoc.org/2021/01/oc-sheriff-investigating-whether-employee-took-part-in-u-s-capitol-riot/>

³⁸ Patriot Front is a rebrand of the group's original name, "Vanguard America." The group rebranded itself following the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville because event images of James Alex Fields Jr - the man who drove his car into and killed Heather Hyer - showed him standing with VA and holding their symbol.

³⁹ <https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/american-identity-movement-aim>

⁴⁰ <https://la.adl.org/news/southern-california-heavily-targeted-in-120-increase-in-white-supremacist-propaganda-in-u-s/>

California.⁴¹ The Goyim Defense League (GDL) – originally from Petaluma, California, and named ironically after the one-time extremist Jewish Defense League – is another group that engages in spreading antisemitic rhetoric. In addition to its large online presence, the GDL also disseminates propaganda stickers, flyers, and banners around California. In 2020, GDL’s main form of activity was hanging antisemitic banners on freeway overpasses, with members sometimes dressed as Orthodox Jews.⁴² Additionally, the Proud Boys, a far-right group known for staging violent rallies and stoking civil unrest, has three chapters across California: in Sacramento, Anaheim, and Modesto. The Proud Boys participated in the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, N.C., the pro-Trump “Stop the Steal” rallies, and the US Capitol insurrection.⁴³ Incidents related to the Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters have been recently identified in California.⁴⁴ Lastly, the white supremacist group the Groyper Army – headed by “America First” podcaster, Nick Fuentes – has recently emerged at UCLA.⁴⁵

Aside from currently active groups, the map also includes all Californians who took part in the U.S. Capitol riot. These Californians include: Proud Boys member Eddie Block, an unnamed L.A. County sheriff’s deputy, extremist media personality Vincent James Foxx, Ashli Babbett (who was fatally shot during the Capitol insurrection), Hunter Emke of Glendora, former USC swimmer and Olympic gold-medalist Klete Keller, and three Beverly Hills residents: Gina Bisignano, John Strand, and Simone Gold.⁴⁶

The map also includes the newest form of hate crime that has emerged since the COVID-19 pandemic: “zoombombing.”⁴⁷ Since the beginning of COVID-19, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of Zoom. There have been numerous incidents of individuals hacking into Zoom meetings, and the character of these attacks has mostly been antisemitic. “Zoombombings” have primarily targeted Jewish events, such as religious services conducted over Zoom.

⁴¹ <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/adl-heat-map?s=eyJhcmVhcyI6W3siY2loeSI6IkxvcyBBbmdlbGVzLCBDQSI6InR5cGU6IjEjaXR5InoseyJzdGFoZSI6IkNBliwiZlhwZSI6InNoYXRlIn1dLCJpZGVvbG9naWVzIjpbIlJpZ2hoIFdpbmcgKFdoaXRlIFN1cHJlbWFjaXNoKSJdLCJpbmNpZGVudHMlOlsiQW50aSI6IjZlZW1pdGljIEluY2lkZW50IiwiaGVhZGVyYm9yaXNoIFBsb3QvQXRoYWNRliwiRXhocmVtaXNoIE11cmRlciIsIkV4dHJlbWlzdC9Ob2xpY2UgU2hvb3RvdXQiLCJXaGloZSBTdXBvZW1hY2lzdCBFdmVudCI6IldoaXRlIFN1cHJlbWFjaXNoIFByb3BhZ2FuZGEiXSwieWVhcnI6W2lWmJAsMjAyMFosInppcGNvZGVzIjpbXXo%253D>

⁴² <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/goyim-defense-league>

⁴³ <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>

⁴⁴ These incidents will be highlighted in more detail on the map.

⁴⁵ <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/11/11/20948317/alt-right-donald-trump-jr-conservative-tpusa-yaf-racism-antisemitism>

⁴⁶ <https://www.dailynews.com/2021/01/19/3-from-beverly-hills-face-federal-charges-in-capitol-riot/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/05/05/why-white-supremacists-are-targeting-zoom-meetings-during-covid-19-pandemic>

The Fracturing of Conservatism and the Rise of Extremism at UCLA

By Talla Khelghati and Brandon Broukhim

Introduction

The events and actions described at both national and state levels are also connected to local developments on the UCLA campus. Indeed, the divisions between mainstream and extremist positions on the right-side of the political spectrum were present within the conservative political ecosystem at UCLA during the 2019-2020 academic year.

At the beginning of that academic year, Bruin Republicans (BR) could be described as the leading conservative organization at UCLA in terms of public recognition and influence. In previous years, BR had gained renown for contentious events featuring prominent conservative figures, such as Ben Shapiro⁴⁸ and Milo Yiannopoulos.⁴⁹ In fact, BR fostered an ideologically diverse membership, serving as an umbrella organization to the various strands of conservatism on campus. This ideological diversity and relative camaraderie were made possible by BR's lack of a platform-driven mission statement. Instead, the organization affirmed its broad-based commitment to serving as an outlet for conservative opinions and debate. As a result, BR frequently enjoyed event sponsorship from national conservative organizations such as Turning Point USA (TPUSA) and Young America's Foundation (YAF).⁵⁰

The aforementioned camaraderie waned throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. New forms of right-wing extremism found a home in the BR's conservative coalition, which alienated more traditional members. A particularly polarizing figure was Christian Secor, who wished to bring ethno-nationalist politics to the center of BR's – and the GOP's – ethos. Secor participated in the January 6 Capitol insurrection and was subsequently arrested by the FBI on February 16, 2021. His extreme political ideology, which can be identified as "Groyperism" or "America First," sowed division within the small conservative community on campus and raised fears regarding campus safety.

This portion of the report will chart the evolution of BR during the 2019-2020 academic year and the internal divisions that developed within the club. Following a brief introduction to Christian Secor and "Groyperism," the report will go on to describe

⁴⁸ Protests arose at a BR event featuring conservative commentator Ben Shapiro. At first, UCLA administration required the organization to cover security fees for the anticipated protests outside the building (which materialized), but rescinded this demand in the leadup to Shapiro's November 13, 2017 appearance. See Sharon Zhen, "Bruin Republicans hosts 'Ben Shapiro: The Rise of Campus Fascism' event," *Daily Bruin*, November 13, 2017 <https://dailybruin.com/2017/11/13/bruin-republicans-hosts-ben-shapiro-the-rise-of-campus-fascism-event>

⁴⁹ In February 2018, Bruin Republicans' leadership cancelled a scheduled talk by right-wing personality Milo Yiannopoulos titled "10 Things I Hate About Mexico" following internal divisions and organized student pressure. See Teresa Watanabe, "Milo Yiannopoulos' UCLA talk on what he hates about Mexico canceled," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-milo-ucla-mexico-20180214-story.html>

⁵⁰ Young America's Foundation, "Speaker's Bureau," <https://www.yaf.org/speakers/>

four phases that chronicle the unraveling of BR and the growing prominence of more extreme voices in the conservative political ecosystem at UCLA. Phase I documents the first public entanglement between traditional conservatives and the extreme right. Phase II highlights significant infighting among BR's leadership over the club's ideological direction. It is important to note that the first two phases went largely unnoticed by the UCLA student body, even amongst the campus' most politically engaged students. Phase III concerns the growing public awareness of Christian Secor as a leader of the America First movement at UCLA. Phase IV addresses the implications of Secor's ideology culminating in his eventual arrest. We have proposed a set of recommendations to the UCLA administration for consideration in order to provide for an open, but safe, campus environment.

Christian Secor and His Connection to "Groyper" Ideology

Christian Secor is a fourth-year transfer student studying political science at UCLA with a documented record of extremist statements. Secor's now-deleted Twitter feed contained language describing fascism as "epic," expressed support for the 2017 Charlottesville "Unite the Right" white supremacist march, suggested that Jews and the state of Israel control the politics of other governments,⁵¹ and at the start of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, asked ICE to cough on undocumented individuals.⁵² Consciously rejecting traditional Republican and conservative values, Secor gave voice to a reactionary ideology closely linked to Groyperism or "America First."⁵³

The so-called Groypers are followers of Nick Fuentes, a Holocaust denier⁵⁴ and founder of the *America First* podcast.⁵⁵ "America First" was a favored slogan of former President Donald Trump that has deep isolationist and antisemitic origins.⁵⁶ The America First Committee (AFC), founded in 1940 during World War II, strongly advocated against the United States' intervention in the war.⁵⁷ Renowned aviator Charles Lindbergh delivered an infamous 1941 speech lambasting excessive Jewish influence on American media and urging the US government to prioritize its national interests above the plight of European Jews—all in the name of America First.⁵⁸ President Trump used the phrase to promote policies such as a more isolationist foreign

⁵¹ United States of America v Christian Secor (2021) <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/case-multi-defendant/file/1367791/download>

⁵² Leila Miller, "Before Far-Right UCLA Student Stormed Capitol he faced complaints over offensive tweets," *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-21/ucla-student-charged-in-capitol-riot-had-stirred-political-tensions-at-ucla>

⁵³ At the time of publication, Secor's status as a UCLA student could not be publicly confirmed.

⁵⁴ Caleb Hull (@CalebJHull), Twitter Post, October 30, 2019, accessed February 23, 2021, <https://twitter.com/CalebJHull/status/1189594371030695937>

⁵⁵ "America First," Podbay, accessed February 21, 2021 <https://podbay.fm/p/america-first>

⁵⁶ "Donald Trump: 'America first, America first,'" BBC, January 20, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-38698654>

⁵⁷ Krishnadev Kalamur, "A Short History of 'America First,'" *The Atlantic*, January 21, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/trump-america-first/514037/>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

policy agenda and tighter, more ethnically-targeted immigration restrictions. Building on Trump's frequent invocation of the term, Groypers have used it to hark back to the white nationalist undertones of the 1940s.

Groypers seek to infiltrate the Republican Party by espousing anti-immigration, pro-white, and Christian values that are commonly associated with white nationalist groups, though they refrain from explicitly identifying as white nationalists.⁵⁹ Groypers' leader, Nick Fuentes, offers this explanation: "In a way I think it's almost redundant to say that you're a white nationalist. We know that the word nation almost implicitly talks about ethnicity and biology... So I think if I call myself a nationalist, it's almost implicit in that word that it's, well, you know America does have a heritage of being a European Country."⁶⁰ Fuentes has been criticized by the mainstream conservative establishment for his views. For example, he was banned from attending the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in both 2019⁶¹ and 2020⁶² and is unwelcome at TPUSA events.⁶³

Phase I: Mainstream GOP Conservatism meets Groyperism

Discord between traditional GOP conservatives and the extreme right within UCLA's student body broke out into the open on November 10, 2019 with a speaking engagement by Donald Trump Jr. who was invited to discuss his 2019 book, *Triggered: How the Left Thrives on Hate and Wants to Silence Us*. The event was hosted by the campus chapter of Turning Point USA (TPUSA), a group generally aligned with Trumpism. On stage with Trump Jr. were his girlfriend, former Fox News personality Kimberly Guilfoyle, and Turning Point USA leader Charlie Kirk.⁶⁴

Prior to the event, there was concern among UCLA administrators and UCLA's undergraduate student government (USAC) that this event could either be a target for left-wing protests or cause emotional harm to minority communities. These concerns were specifically addressed by UCLA Administrative Vice Chancellor Michael Beck at a November 5, 2019 USAC meeting, where Beck noted there would be law enforcement

⁵⁹ Anti-Defamation League, "Groyper Army," Anti-Defamation League, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/groyper-army>.

⁶⁰ RWW Blog, "RWW News: Nick Fuentes Denies Being A White Nationalist By Explaining That He's A White Nationalist," Youtube Video, 02:00 May 8, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP2Vax9EKsE&feature=emb_logo

⁶¹ Anti-Defamation League, "White Supremacists and Other Extremists Welcomed at CPAC 2019," Anti-Defamation League, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-and-other-extremists-welcomed-at-cpac-2019>

⁶² Anthony L. Fisher, "CPAC 2020 was all about worshiping Trump, hating socialism, and feeling victimized by media and the left," *Business Insider*, March 1, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/cpac-2020-trump-worship-hating-socialism-bullied-victim-left-2020-2>

⁶³ Anti-Defamation League, "Groyper Army"

⁶⁴ See video of event: CNN, "Donald Trump Jr. leaves stage after boos at UCLA event," YouTube Video, 06:21, November 11, 2019, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEp2Z7VvVAc>. See also Mihir Zaveri, "Donald Trump Jr. Event at U.C.L.A. Disrupted by Far-Right Group," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/11/us/politics/trump-jr-ucla-protest.html>.

officers present to ensure the event's security.⁶⁵ Groups including Revolution Club UCLA and Refuse Fascism eventually did appear to protest outside Moore Hall.⁶⁶

TPUSA anticipated additional disruptions from *inside* the event from Groyper-aligned students and attendees. As a preventative measure, they decided prior to the event that Trump Jr. would not answer questions.⁶⁷ This would disable one key Groyper tactic: confronting mainstream conservative speakers such as Trump Jr. or Kirk, whom they believed were insufficiently right-wing, with questions that contain strong antisemitic or racist undertones in order to both attract media coverage and push the speakers' positions to further extremes.⁶⁸ Despite preventative measures, as Trump Jr. spoke on stage at UCLA, he was interrupted by members of the audience who began chanting "Q&A! Q&A!" Christian Secor was amongst these audience members.⁶⁹ Trump Jr. refused to answer questions, declaring that "you have some people spreading nonsense, spreading hate to try to take over that room."⁷⁰ While the event was scheduled for two hours (including a book signing), it ran only 35 minutes.⁷¹ This event marked the beginning of a Groyper or "America First" presence at UCLA.

Phase II: "Mommy's In the House:" The Mother of All Groypers comes to UCLA⁷²

On November 14, 2019, a few days after Trump Jr. visited UCLA, BR hosted Michelle Malkin for a speaking engagement funded by the Young America Foundation (YAF), a group affiliated with Reagan-style conservatism.⁷³ Malkin is a right-wing activist and political commentator who would later reveal her support for Fuentes' "America First" movement.⁷⁴

On the basis of a pre-event online interview with Malkin, BR leadership was under the impression that she would be discussing issues related to immigration.⁷⁵ Instead, Malkin discussed the TPUSA event from the previous Sunday and the divisions

⁶⁵ Marilyn Chavez-Martinez, "USAC Recap – Nov. 5," *Daily Bruin*, November 10, 2019, <https://dailybruin.com/2019/11/10/usac-recap-nov-5-2>

⁶⁶ Bernard Mendez *et al.*, "Donald Trump Jr.'s Book Promotion Event Attended By Over 400, Marked by Protests," *Daily Bruin*, November 10, 2019, <https://dailybruin.com/2019/11/10/donald-trump-jr-s-book-promotion-attended-by-over-400-marked-by-protests>

⁶⁷ Zaveri, "Donald Trump Jr. Event at U.C.L.A. Disrupted."

⁶⁸ Anti-Defamation League, "Groyper Army."

⁶⁹ Nick Reidy, "America First Bruins w/ Christian Secor | #8 New American Patriots," Youtube Video, 1:30:45, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://youtu.be/79A6SbHx1Vo?t=117>

⁷⁰ CNN, "Donald Trump Jr. Leaves Stage."

⁷¹ Turning Point USA at UCLA, "Triggered: Donald Trump Jr. Featuring Charlie Kirk," Eventbrite, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/triggered-donald-trump-jr-featuring-charlie-kirk-tickets-78222267909#>. See also Zaveri, "Donald Trump Jr. Event at U.C.L.A. Disrupted."

⁷² "Mommy's in the House" is Michelle Malkin's self-description to a group of Groypers at the 2020 America First Pac (AFPAC). J S, "Michelle Malkin #AFPAC speech #1. #groypers #cpac #Trump #massmigration," Youtube Video, 16:22, February 28, 2020, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4nr02705MA>.

⁷³ Bruin Republicans at UCLA, "Michelle Malkin at UCLA 2019," Youtube Video, 01:05:59, November 14, 2020, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w2NuVwNoUw>.

⁷⁴ "Michelle Malkin," United Talent Agency, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.unitedtalent.com/speaker/michellemalkin/>.

⁷⁵ Bruin Republicans at UCLA, "Interview with Michelle Malkin at UCLA 2019," YouTube Video, 16:29, November 14, 2020, accessed November 14, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvxIIAW1pKQ&t=669s>.

surfacing within the American conservative movement.⁷⁶ In her speech, she denigrated conservative media personality Ben Shapiro, expressed support for Groyper leader Nick Fuentes, and refused to disavow far-right groups and figures such as the Proud Boys, Laura Loomer, and Faith Goldy.⁷⁷ “We’re the majority in this room, and we’re the majority in this country,” Malkin emphasized.⁷⁸

Malkin’s remarks exacerbated existing tensions within UCLA’s conservative population, separating those who believed in a more traditional form of small-government conservatism from those who supported the “America First” agenda.⁷⁹

Her appearance at UCLA attracted national attention from her longtime associates at YAF, whom she criticized at the event. Malkin’s 17-year relationship with YAF came to a close following her speech.⁸⁰ The organization denounced her actions and removed her from its roster of speakers available to university campuses.⁸¹ In turn, Malkin began attacking YAF on Twitter, naming them “the Keepers of the Gate:”

The Keepers of the Gate have spoken. [#AmericaFirst](#) is not "mainstream." My defense of unjustly prosecuted [sic] Proud Boys, patriotic young nationalists/groypers & demographic truth-tellers must not be tolerated. SPLC is cheering.⁸²

Meanwhile, on the UCLA campus, BR student leadership raised concerns with the university’s Student Organizations, Leadership & Engagement (SOLE) office about some of its own members, including Christian Secor, whose enthusiastic support for both Fuentes and Malkin alarmed club leadership. SOLE is the body responsible for regulating UCLA student organizations, and potentially has the power to act as an intermediary to club disputes. Notwithstanding the concerns raised by some BR officials, SOLE leadership did not take any action, citing university policy on

⁷⁶ Michelle Malkin, “America First: the Torch Is Being Passed,” *The Unz Review*, November 19, 2019, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www.unz.com/author/michelle-malkin//2019/11/15/america-first-the-torch-is-being-passed/>

⁷⁷ Ibid.; Nick Anderson, “Far-Right Agitators Roil the Conservative Movement on College Campuses in Battle to Define Trumpism,” *The Washington Post*, November 16, 2019, last updated February 21, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/far-right-agitators-roil-the-conservative-movement-on-college-campuses-in-battle-to-define-trumpism/2019/11/16/a757d88a-0723-11ea-b17d-8b867891d39d_story.html.

⁷⁸ Will Sommer, “Conservative Group Fires Michelle Malkin Over Support for Holocaust Denier,” *The Daily Beast*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/conservative-group-yaf-fires-michelle-malkin-over-support-for-holocaust-denier>.

⁷⁹ Later, the Anti-Defamation League would point to this event as a transformation in Malkin’s public presence, where she turned from an immigration skeptic towards more nativist tones by supporting the far-right “America First” elements of the Republican Party in their call to close all borders to immigration. See Anti-Defamation League, “Michelle Malkin Is Attempting to Normalize White Supremacy,” Anti-Defamation League, August 5, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/blog/michelle-malkin-is-attempting-to-normalize-white-supremacy>.

⁸⁰ Sommer, “Conservative Group Fires Michelle Malkin.” <https://www.thedailybeast.com/conservative-group-yaf-fires-michelle-malkin-over-support-for-holocaust-denier>.

⁸¹ YAF (@YAF), Twitter Post, November 17, 2019, <https://twitter.com/yaf/status/1196110778534903808>.

⁸² SPLC refers here to the Southern Poverty Law Center, perceived by Malkin as an anti-conservative left-wing organization. See Michelle Malkin (@michellemalkin), Twitter Post, November 19, 2019, https://twitter.com/michellemalkin/status/1196152045285175296?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1196152045285175296%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thedailybeast.com%2Fconservative-group-yaf-fires-michelle-malkin-over-support-for-holocaust-denier.

noninterference in student organizations and free speech issues.⁸³

Phase III: The UCLA Campus Culture War over America First Bruins

Evidence of a Groyper presence among conservative students at UCLA was not restricted to Christian Secor. In fact, in January 2020, three students – including Secor – registered as signatories to “America First Bruins” with the university’s SOLE office.⁸⁴ All three signatories were active members of BR, with fellow signatory Sam Roth – BR’s Internal Vice President – and Secor pictured at the quarterly BR trip to a local shooting range on March 7, 2020.⁸⁵ Secor also attended CPAC 2020 where he met Fuentes (who was prevented by CPAC’s organizers from physically entering the conference hall) and posted a photo with Fuentes on his personal Twitter account.⁸⁶ In addition, Secor tweeted a photo of the press pass⁸⁷ he used while working as Malkin’s intern.⁸⁸

America First Bruins was a chapter of the emerging nationwide network of “America First” or Groyper student organizations that support “closed borders, traditional families, the American worker, and Christian values.”⁸⁹ The organization’s origins can be traced back to Kansas State University’s “America First Students,”⁹⁰ whose founder, Jaden McNeil, is no longer enrolled at KSU following his participation in the January 6 U.S. Capitol insurrection.⁹¹

In tandem with the founding of America First Bruins, the internal political disputes within BR that began with Malkin’s on-campus event intensified. By early March 2020, a majority of the executive board of BR had resigned. Conflict increased within BR when Roth, the club’s Internal Vice President, signed an “America First” letter in the name of the entire organization, without the authorization of the executive board.⁹² America First Bruins also signed the letter, which drew new attention to the existence of the club. The letter demanded that “the Trump Administration should implement a moratorium on all immigration and re-dedicate its efforts to complete the

⁸³ Personal notes of a Bruin Republican Executive Board Member

⁸⁴ See Figure 1 (Appendix).

⁸⁵ Bruin Republicans, “Thank you to everyone who came out to our quarterly shooting range trip today,” Facebook, March 7, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/BruinRepublicans/posts/1380283515492479>

⁸⁶ See Figure 2 (Appendix)

⁸⁷ See Figure 3 (Appendix)

⁸⁸ It is worth noting here that Jaden McNeil, the former Kansas State student who founded one of the original America First Students organizations, explained that meeting Nick Fuentes at CPAC helped facilitate the shift in his ideology towards Groyperism and against more mainstream, TPUSA and YAF conservatism (the two were introduced by white supremacist Faith Goldy who attended the far-right “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville in 2017). See Jane Coaston, “Steve King Endorses a Bona Fide White Supremacist for Toronto Mayor,” *Vox*, October 18, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/10/18/17990718/steve-king-faith-goldy-white-supremacist-canada-iowa-republicans>

⁸⁹ America First Students (@AmFirstStudents), Twitter Post, January 21, 2020, 9:14 AM, <https://twitter.com/AmFirstStudents/status/1219669531599278082>

⁹⁰ Judy L. Thomas, “Report: White nationalists turn focus to college campuses, with trial run at K-State,” *The Kansas City Star*, February 11, 2020, <https://www.kansascity.com/news/nation-world/national/article240185832.html>

⁹¹ AJ Dome, “Far-right figure seen at US Capitol no longer enrolled at K-State,” *The Mercury*, January 8, 2021, https://themercury.com/news/far-right-figure-seen-at-us-capitol-no-longer-enrolled-at-k-state/article_5dcc772b-442f-58a5-9e36-9b0c880b623d.html

⁹² See Figure 6 (Appendix)

border wall, preempting the spread of the virus.”⁹³ It made national news, earning a segment on Tucker Carlson’s nightly Fox News show.⁹⁴ The remaining BR leadership, including two out of three executive board members (excluding Roth), published a response asserting that the sentiments expressed in the “America First” letter were explicitly rejected by the majority of club leadership.⁹⁵

Upon reading the “America First” letter, a number of UCLA student activists grew concerned that a group such as America First Bruins was recognized as an official student organization through the SOLE office. Even Secor was surprised that the UCLA administration was “pretty good” at welcoming his organization.⁹⁶ One left-wing student activist, Matthew William Richard, took to Twitter to write an investigative account of Secor’s activities in which he deemed Secor an “active danger” and ended up calling for his expulsion.⁹⁷ Richard’s Twitter thread gained attention on social media and prompted other students to submit emails to the office of the Dean of Students expressing concerns with Secor’s conduct.⁹⁸ Additionally, undergraduate student Grayson Peters authored a piece about Secor in UCLA’s Jewish student newspaper, *Ha’am*, and followed up with a complaint about Secor to SOLE leadership.⁹⁹ SOLE leadership reiterated that the university was limited in its ability to act because of free speech issues.¹⁰⁰ Neither then nor later did UCLA make a public comment on Secor or move to take disciplinary action.

Phase IV: Monoliths, Invasions, and Arrests

December 3, 2020 marked Secor’s first documented public transgression, which was made public through a live-streaming website called “Dlive.” Deliberately cultivating an extremist persona, Secor adopted the alias “Scuffed Elliot Rodger” on his now-deleted “Dlive” account.¹⁰¹ Elliot Rodger, a Santa Barbara City College student, was the 2014 Isla Vista mass murderer and incel¹⁰² who killed six people in a stabbing and

⁹³ See Figure 4 (Appendix)

⁹⁴ Tony Krvaric, “SDSU College Republicans President Oliver Krvaric on Tucker Carlson,” Youtube Video, 04:38, accessed February 21, 2021 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZQgSHl6Ei4&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3xIYuGLGCMXxlLNfsEx7HoYv4jnWQQD2Qq6BHpd_PiOuigXbt8d4MAWfc

⁹⁵ See Figure 5 (Appendix)

⁹⁶ Reidy, “America First Bruins w/ Christian Secor.”

⁹⁷ Matthew Richard (@mattainable), Twitter Post, March 31, 2020, 6:21 PM, <https://twitter.com/mattainable/status/1245159309543170048>

⁹⁸ Steph (@steph_batres), Twitter Post, March 31, 2020, 5:25 PM https://twitter.com/steph_batres/status/1245145130874494976.

⁹⁹ Grayson Peters, “Disloyal: Fascists Come to UCLA,” *Ha’am*, April 1, 2020, <https://haam.org/disloyal-fascists-come-to-ucla/>.

¹⁰⁰ Leila Miller, “Before Far-Right UCLA Student Stormed Capitol”

¹⁰¹ Harvey Eisner, “Here’s the Nazis Who Toppled the Monolith,” *Left Coast Right Watch*, January 8, 2021, <https://leftcoastrightwatch.org/2021/01/heres-the-nazis-who-toppled-that-monolith/>

¹⁰² Rodger called his spree the “Day of Retribution” and proclaimed he had “no choice but to exact revenge on the society” that had “denied” him sex and love. See “Elliot Rodger: How misogynist killer became ‘incel hero’,” *BBC*, April 25, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43892189>

shooting spree.¹⁰³

Within the Groyper internet community, members conduct “IRL Streams,” which are live streams of activities conducted “in real life” (IRL). These activities often include verbal and physical harassment of minority communities and unhoused populations.¹⁰⁴ On December 3, Secor joined a group of Groypers on an IRL stream that included the toppling of the monolith erected in Astacadero, California and its replacement by a Christian cross.¹⁰⁵ Monoliths have been erected internationally as part of a global art phenomenon originating in Utah.¹⁰⁶ Secor is caught on live stream¹⁰⁷ toppling the monolith, replacing it with a cross¹⁰⁸, and chanting “Christ is King” and “America First.”¹⁰⁹ This incident, along with its footage, was reported to the UCLA Dean of Students’ office in January 2021. Again, UCLA did not make any public comment or take disciplinary action.

Christian Secor’s own path of extremism took him, on January 6, 2021, to Washington, DC, where he joined a group of rioters in storming the U.S. Capitol. Photos of Secor were first identified on January 15, 2021 via Twitter user @chip_nooo; in the photographs, Secor is pictured on the Senate floor carrying an America First flag,¹¹⁰ which was a piece of merchandise sold by Fuentes to promote his podcast.¹¹¹ Secor was identified by his ARCTERYX brand jacket, the same jacket he wore to a pro-Trump rally in Huntington Beach in late 2020.¹¹² Secor is also identified as sitting in the Vice President’s chair on the U.S. Senate floor. After Secor was identified as a UCLA student, members of the UCLA student community called upon the administration to expel him and have filed multiple complaints through the Dean of Students’ reporting system.¹¹³ At the time of this report, it is not known what Secor’s status is and whether any disciplinary action has been taken by the university.

On February 13, 2021, an affidavit filed in a federal district court for the District of Columbia requested a court-ordered arrest warrant for Secor.¹¹⁴ On Tuesday,

¹⁰³ “California Shooting Suspect Elliot Rodger’s Life of Rage and Resentment,” NBC News, May 24, 2014, accessed February 23, 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isla-vista-rampage/california-shooting-suspect-elliott-rodgers-life-rage-resentment-n113996>.

¹⁰⁴ Harvey Eisner, “Here’s the Nazis Who Toppled the Monolith”

¹⁰⁵ Sarah Bahr, “California Monolith Is Removed and Replaced With a Cross,” *New York Times*, December 4, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/04/arts/design/monolith-destroyed-california-atascadero.html>

¹⁰⁶ Constance Grady, “Mysterious Monoliths Are Appearing Across The World. Here’s What We Know,” *Vox*, December 8, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/culture/22062796/monoliths-utah-california-romania>

¹⁰⁷ Culture War Criminal (@CULUTREWARCRMNL), Twitter Post, December 3, 2020, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://twitter.com/CULUTREWARCRMNL/status/1334522742964690945>

¹⁰⁸ See Figure 7 (Appendix).

¹⁰⁹ STREAM, <https://streamable.com/1sngco>

¹¹⁰ CHIP NOOO (@chip_nooo), Twitter Post, January 15, 2021, accessed February 21, 2021, https://twitter.com/chip_nooo/status/1350261338086363137.

¹¹¹ Nicholas J. Fuentes (@NickJFuentes), Twitter post, October 3, 2020, accessed February 24, 2021, <https://twitter.com/nickjfuentes/status/1312337670962638848?lang=en>

¹¹² CHIP NOOO (@chip_nooo), Twitter Post, January 16, 2021, accessed February 21, 2021, https://twitter.com/chip_nooo/status/1350528845426749440.

¹¹³ Aidan Arasasingham (@aidanaras), Twitter Post, January 17, 2021, accessed February 21, 2021, <https://twitter.com/aidanaras/status/1350925913307824128>

¹¹⁴ United States of America v Christian Secor (2021) <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/case-multi-defendant/file/1367791/download>

February 16, 2021, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) arrested Secor at his mother's home in Costa Mesa, California. He has since been charged with "assaulting, resisting or impeding officers; violent entry and remaining on restricted grounds, civil disorder and obstructing an official proceeding." At the request of Magistrate Judge Zia Faruqui, he is being held without bail.¹¹⁵ The current Bruin Republican leadership, which had been closely aligned with Christian Secor, issued a statement on February 17, 2021 on Facebook¹¹⁶ and Instagram stating¹¹⁷:

Someone who was expelled from our organization since last year has been arrested in connection to the Capitol Hill protests. We found out about his inappropriate behavior and banned him long ago. We expect the media to lie and slander us, but this is nothing new.

It is worth noting that the 2020-2021 president of the Bruin Republicans is UCLA undergraduate Sam Roth, who was previously a signatory for American First Bruins with Secor and serves as one of three signatories for Bruin Republicans.¹¹⁸ In addition, Secor and Roth served in the leadership of the statewide California College Republicans organization, holding the roles of Executive Director and Activism Director, respectively, for the 2020-2021 term.¹¹⁹

In conclusion, the developments described in this section chart the growing infiltration into conservative circles at UCLA by far-right activists associated with the "Groypers" / "America First," which seek to reorient Republican politics in a more radical, ethnonationalist direction.

Recommendations

The authors of this report have submitted a set of recommendations based on this research to UCLA administration.

¹¹⁵ Eric Licas and Jonah Valdez, "UCLA student from Costa Mesa arrested, suspected of role in Capitol riot," *The Orange County Register*, February 17, 2021, <https://www.ocregister.com/2021/02/16/ucla-student-from-costa-mesa-arrested-suspected-of-role-in-capitol-riot/>

¹¹⁶ Bruin Republicans, "Someone who was expelled from our organization since last year," Facebook, February 17, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/BruinRepublicans/posts/1667943443393150>

¹¹⁷ Bruin Republicans (@bruingop), "Someone who was expelled from our organization since last year," Instagram photo, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CLYxnNVgoXX/>

¹¹⁸ See Figure 8

¹¹⁹ In the aftermath of Secor's arrest, references to Secor's relationship with the California College Republicans have been removed. However, records of Secor's association to the organization can be found via the "Wayback Machine" internet archive. See California College Republicans, "Ortiz Administration (2020-2021)," Wayback Machine: Internet Archive, October 28, 2020, accessed February 25, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20201028120811/https://www.cacollegegop.com/ortiz-administration.html>.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Evidence and Figures

Figure 1: The official student organization registration information of America First Bruins. (Source: Now removed, but previously publicly searchable on the SOLE website.)¹²⁰

America First Bruins

Conservative campus group that aims to spread and discuss conservative positions, enable debate, invite speakers, and stoke political conversation

Category: Political, Social Activism

Email: AmericaFirstBruins@gmail.com

Website:

Signature 1: Christian Secor	Signature 2: Sam Roth	Signature 3: Simon Loroña
-------------------------------------	------------------------------	----------------------------------

Advisor: MICHAEL Cohn

Figure 2: Christian Secor (right) pictured with founder of America First podcast, and fellow Groyper, Nicholas Fuentes. (Source: Photo from Secor's now-deleted Twitter account)



¹²⁰ "Student Organizations," UCLA Student Organizations, Leadership, & Engagement, <https://sa.ucla.edu/RCO/public/search>

Figure 3: Christian Secor's official press pass for serving as Michelle Malkin's intern.
(Source: Photo from Secor's now-deleted Twitter account)



Figure 4: College Republicans Letter/Emergency Resolution (Source: Maine College Republicans Facebook Page)¹²¹



*Emergency Resolution
For Greater Immigration Restrictions*

In times of crisis, Americans have come together to keep our country safe. We, as young American patriots, have united to support a resolution urging President Donald J. Trump to pass an indefinite moratorium on all immigration to the United States of America. We have entered an unprecedented time and must prioritize the safety and security of our citizens. Many public health measures have already been enacted to protect the American people, but we fear these measures may not be enough.

It is uncertain when the Wuhan Virus will be eradicated and we must take every precaution to prevent its spread. The need for secure borders--air, land, and sea--could never be greater to prevent the disease from being reintroduced to our country. Most overseas flights have been halted and tourist destinations shut down, but a porous land border combined with continued importation of refugees, guest workers, and foreign students render these policies ineffective. Consequently, the Trump Administration should implement a moratorium on all immigration and re-dedicate its efforts to complete the border wall, preempting the spread of the virus. These policies will ensure the safety of our citizens and do everything necessary to combat the spread of the Wuhan Virus. Specifically, we as a coalition of College Republicans nationwide, resolve together in calling on President Trump to use his emergency powers to:

- Stop all resettlement of unaccompanied minors claiming asylum status on the southern border;
- Suspend the refugee resettlement program;
- Suspend issuance of any and all new foreign student visas under the F-1 student visa program;

¹²¹ UMaine College Republicans, "In times of crisis, Americans have come together to keep our country safe," Facebook, March 25, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/MaineYR/posts/2607648752677024>

- End the Optional Practical Training program allowing hundreds of thousands of F-1 foreign student visa holders to extend their stays and gain employment in the U.S. displacing U.S. workers;
- Suspend the H-1B visa lottery for foreign tech workers from China and India who are displacing American tech workers and undercutting American STEM undergrads and grad students whose livelihoods have been upended by the Wuhan Virus pandemic;
- Suspend the EB-5 citizenship-for-sale program that primarily benefits wealthy Chinese investors;
- Block any “DACA deal” granting amnesty and work permits to 800,000 illegal alien “DREAMers;”
- Tax all alien workers’ remittances (cash transfers back to their home countries which totaled more than \$573 billion in 2019); and
- Finish the southern border wall and shore up air, land, and sea assets on our northern border as well.

Furthermore, during the COVID-19 crisis, it has become abundantly clear that America should at minimum be self-sufficient for pharmaceutical drugs and other necessary medical supplies. As a result of the globalization of the U.S. economy, several essential production and supply lines have been offshored to foreign countries--leaving all of us young and old alarmingly vulnerable to shortages and unacceptably dependent on the Communist regime from which the virus originated in the first place.

As College Republicans who reject the dangerous open-borders agenda, we are united in calling on President Trump to adhere to and implement a platform to Buy American, Hire American, and put America First--beginning with an immediate and indefinite immigration moratorium that protects the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens against globalist threats.

Resolution Cosponsors:

The Real University of Maine College Republicans, Bruin Republicans at UCLA, America First Bruins, Berkeley College Republicans, College Republicans United at Arizona State University, San Diego State University College Republicans, and Hussan University College Republicans

###

Figure 5: America First Bruins Twitter account (now deleted)



Follow

AMERICA FIRST BRUINS

@afbruins

We are the official America First Students club at UCLA. Make sure to follow us and our President @fullautonat

Joined March 2020

17 Following 221 Followers

Not followed by anyone you're following

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media

Likes



Pinned Tweet



AMERICA FIRST BRUINS @afbruins · 6d



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 25, 2020

CONTACT: UMaine College Republicans
(207) 240-8231
umainecollegerepublicans@gmail.com

Emergency Resolution For Greater Immigration Restrictions

In times of crisis, Americans have come together to keep our country safe. We, as young American patriots, have united to support a resolution urging President Donald J. Trump to pass an indefinite moratorium on all immigration to the United States of America. We have entered an unprecedented time and must prioritize the safety and security of our citizens. Many public health measures have already been enacted to protect the American people, but we fear these measures may not be enough.

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- Suspend the EB-5 citizenship-for-sale program that primarily benefits wealthy Chinese investors;
- Block any "DACA deal" granting amnesty and work permits to 800,000 illegal alien "DREAMers;"
- Tax all alien workers' remittances (cash transfers back to their home countries which totaled more than \$573 billion in 2019); and
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As College Republicans who reject the dangerous open borders agenda, we are united in calling on President Trump to adhere to and implement a platform to: **Be American, Hire American, and put America First**—beginning with an immediate and indefinite immigration moratorium that protects the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens against globalist threats.

Resolution Co-sponsors:
The Bad University of Maine College Republicans, Bruin Republicans
America First Bruins, Berkeley College Republicans, College Rep
at Arizona State University, San Diego State University College
Hassan University College Republicans

18

78

272





**Figure 6: March 20, 2020 Statement by Bruin Republicans 2019-2020 Leadership
Regarding America First Bruins**

**Rejecting “America First Bruins”,
Recent Changes within the Bruin Republicans**

As former Bruin Republicans, we have prided ourselves on providing a platform for right-leaning students at UCLA. Our goal was to inspire political discussion and to enhance the campus culture by increasing ideological discourse among students and faculty. We welcomed all members of the political spectrum to join us in our mission to broaden the diversity of opinions within the UCLA campus community.

We are angered by recent developments within Bruin Republicans. The Bruin Republicans IVP inquired with the President of the Bruin Republicans on March 22 about signing a letter titled *Emergency Resolution For Greater Immigration Restrictions*. The President promptly rejected the notion of co-signing the letter, as the sentiments reflected within it do not accurately represent the values and beliefs of our former membership.

On March 25, members of the Bruin Republicans woke up to emails and phone calls demanding statements regarding the letter the Bruin Republicans had unwittingly cosponsored. For many board members and general members, this was the first time they had seen the letter, let alone read it. The IVP had consulted with pro-“America First” organizations across the country using his own personal email account, rather than our club account, constructing the cosponsorship entirely on his own accord without the consent of the board and executive board, and at the blatant refusal of the Club President. Club members and board members were left with little option but to resign, or be forced to align themselves with what they viewed to be the alt-right.

We believe that xenophobia and racism have no place within the conservative movement. Our club, prior to the resignation of the vast majority of the board on March 25th, was a racially and ethnically diverse club. Many members are children of the very immigrants the letter rails against. The sentiments reflected in the letter repulsed the majority of our membership. The IVP abused the power of his office, violated our club's constitution, maligned the Bruin Republican name, jeopardized the voting authority of our board, and falsely attributed alt-right sentiments to our membership. Within a week, the Bruin Republicans have gone from having a functional organization (board, general membership, etc) to being a group composed of only a few students. Because the IVP is responsible for the Bruin Republican's campus publicity under the organization's constitution, his decision to change the login credentials of all Bruin Republicans social media and communications have made it impossible for us to reject these messages from an official platform.

Regarding the recent Bruin Republican alignment with the America-First Bruins: this would not have happened under the former Bruin Republicans leadership. We unequivocally condemn the sentiments reflected by so-called “America-First” Bruins. Its current president was part of our general membership, and reflected frightening views early this past Fall Quarter. Out of abundance of caution and in response to complaints from members of the club's general membership, members of our executive board talked to officers with UCPD regarding this individual's social media posts, and consulted with SOLE looking for any possible way to distance the Bruin Republicans from this intense and offensive member of the alt-right. We were told that the social media posts did not constitute enough of a threat and that, as a campus organization, we were stuck with this individual until he became a violent or disturbing threat to our club.

Due to the way our club is structured under our club constitution, the IVP and Policy Director, both of whom remain on the Bruin Republicans board and now serve as SOLE signatories, choose debaters. Despite combative disagreement by the rest of the board, they chose to place the now-President of America First Bruins as our representative for BPU's Crossfire Debate, pushing many board members to the verge of resignation. Many members protested the decision for this individual to debate by not attending the event, choosing not to resign in the belief that 2020-2021 board elections were only a few weeks away, giving ample opportunity for moderation in future leadership. Previously in the year, board members were again on the verge of resignation in concern about the conduct of the Policy Director. In hindsight, most board members would have resigned in this instance or because of later club stressors, but we stayed on the board in belief that we could somehow reassert the club's trajectory, overcome past difficulties, and strengthen our organization. We did not realize the extent to which some of the members of the club had deviated to the alt-right. We continue to urge SOLE and the UCLA Dean of Students office to take immediate action against students who pose a serious threat to the UCLA community.

Furthermore, we urge the UCLA campus community to avoid associating the sentiments of 2-3 individuals with the views of all campus Republicans. We also hope that UCLA/SOLE will allow organizations more autonomy in the future regarding their own membership. Racism and xenophobia have no place on campus, and no place in campus conservatism.

We must stand united against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and all forms of hatred during a global pandemic, which can only be solved through cooperation and unity.

*Former Bruin Republicans President [REDACTED] Bruin Republicans External
Vice President [REDACTED] Former Bruin Republicans Policy Director [REDACTED]
(2018-2019), and other Former Board Members*

Figure 7: Christian Secor (back, right) and Ryan Sanchez (front, right) pictured with two fellow America Firsters with their newly erected cross after toppling the Atascadero Monolith. (Source: Now-deleted photograph from Ryan Sanchez’s Twitter page)¹²²



Figure 8: Bruin Republicans official club registration from the SOLE website.¹²³

Bruin Republicans			
As the premiere right wing political organization on campus, the Bruin Republicans pride themselves on offering conservative students an outlet for their opinions and a niche for their values. Like many College Republican organizations, we attempt to stimulate the campus dynamic with thoughtful debate.			
Category:	Political, Social		
Email:	bruingop@gmail.com	Website:	https://www.bruingop.com
Social Media:	Facebook , Instagram , Twitter , Youtube		
Signatory 1:	Sam Roth	Signatory 2:	[Redacted]
Advisor:	MICHAEL Cohn	Signatory 3:	[Redacted]

¹²² Culture War Criminal (@CULUTREWARCRMNL), Twitter Account, last accessed February 21, 2021, <https://twitter.com/CULTUREWARCRMNL>

¹²³ UCLA Student Organizations, Leadership, & Engagement, “Bruin Republicans,” Student Organizations, last accessed: February 21, 2021, <https://sa.ucla.edu/RCO/public/search?q=republican>

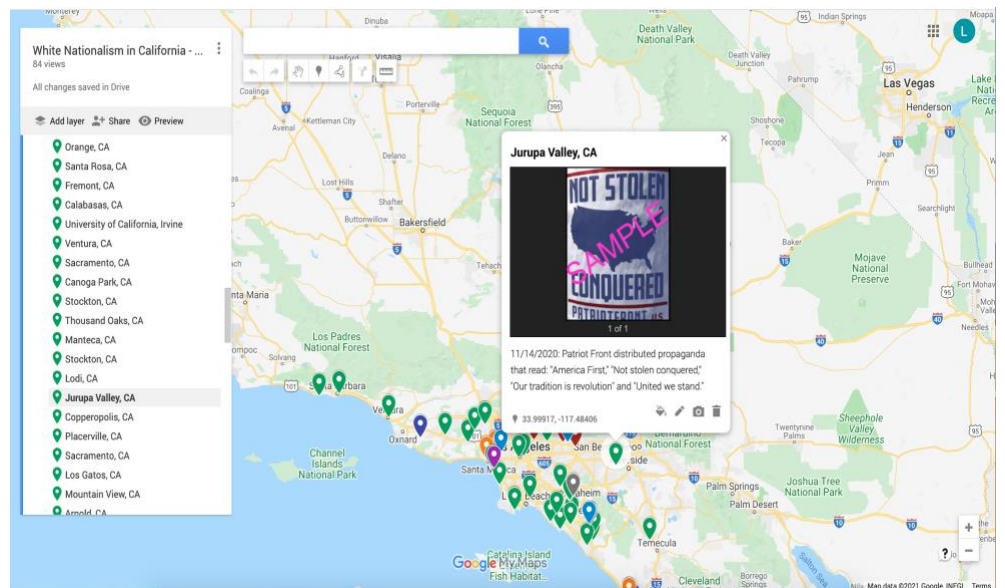
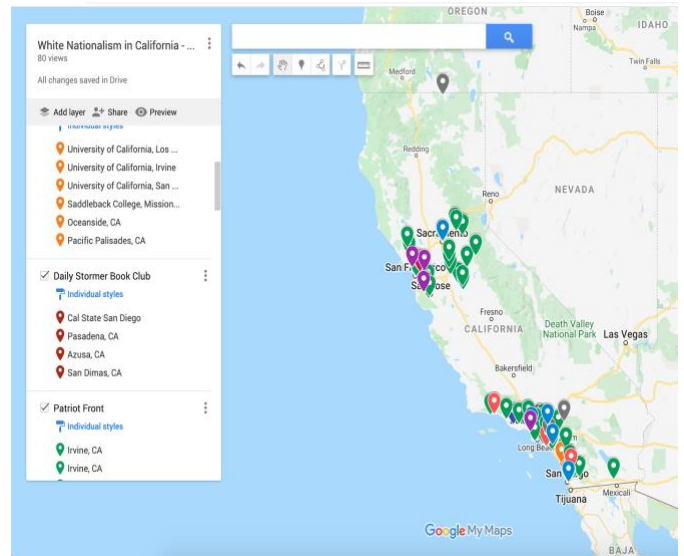
Appendix B: LCHP White Nationalism in California Map

Since the Luskin Center of History and Policy presented its first White Nationalist map in November 2019, that mapped the presence of white nationalist groups in Southern California, major developments have contributed to changes in Southern California's most active hate groups.

In 2019, Southern Poverty Law Center tracked eighty-eight different hate groups across the state of California. In 2020, that number dropped to seventy-two statewide.¹²⁴ The changing numbers of active groups and the nature of their mobilization can be attributed to three factors.¹²⁵ First, the outbreak of COVID-19 has led to a decline in white nationalist group activity and in-person meet-ups. Second,

groups are harder to track because they are being removed from social media platforms, and are moving to encrypted chat rooms. Despite the decrease in reported hate groups, the number of hate crimes independent of group association has continued to increase. The most recent Los Angeles County hate crimes report revealed that the violent hate

crime rate has reached its highest level since 2009 - a 38% overall increase¹²⁶ - and 2020 marked the seventh consecutive year of an increase in hate crimes.¹²⁷ Most notably, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a spike in hate crimes against



¹²⁴ <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map?state=CA>

¹²⁵ <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2021/02/01/year-hate-2020>

¹²⁶ <https://hrc.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2019-Hate-Crime-Report.pdf>

¹²⁷ <https://xtown.la/2021/01/19/hate-crimes-record-increase/>

Asian Americans. This leads to the third point: the Trump presidency not only emboldened white nationalists, but also encouraged a violent insurrection on the U.S. Capitol that included a heavy white nationalist presence.

The updated map seeks to identify which white nationalist groups remain active and if any new groups have emerged in California since its previous report. It also identifies California residents who took part in the US Capitol riot. The updated map also includes white nationalist activity throughout the entire state of California. **View the [complete interactive map at this link](#).**¹²⁸

¹²⁸ All reported incidents and their descriptions provided by the Anti-Defamation League.

Appendix C: Key Terms

National Conservative landscape:

America First/Groypers: Followers of “Groyperism.” Supporters of podcaster and political commentator Nick Fuentes, founder of the *America First* podcast.¹²⁹ “Groypers” seek to infuse the Republican Party with anti-immigration, pro-white, and Christian values traditionally associated with more extreme white nationalist groups.¹³⁰

“America First” Political Action Conference (AFPAC): An annual, far-right political conference offered as an alternative to CPAC, by scheduling it on the same weekend, hosted by “America First” leadership: Nick Fuentes and Patrick Casey.¹³¹ AFPAC has featured speakers such as United States Representative Paul Gosar.¹³²

Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC): An annual, conservative political conference since 1974 for politicians and activists hosted in Washington DC by the American Conservative Union (ACU) and Young Americans for Freedom (YAF).¹³³

Michelle Malkin: Conservative blogger, author, and political commentator with antisemitic, racist, and nativist views.¹³⁴ Malkin is strongly associated with the America First/Groyper movement.¹³⁵

Nicholas Fuentes: founder of the Groyper movement (“Groyper Army”)¹³⁶ and a self-described American nationalist¹³⁷ and paleoconservative¹³⁸ with a history of white-nationalist and antisemitic views, such as Holocaust denial.¹³⁹

¹²⁹ “America First,” Podbay

¹³⁰ Anti-Defamation League, “Groyper Army.”

¹³¹ Steven Lemongello, “Hilton Orlando Hosted Secret AFPAC Conference, Where Organizers Spouted White Nationalist Rhetoric,” *Orlando Sentinel*, March 1, 2021, <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/politics/os-ne-hilton-america-first-conference-20210301-okkxr54zt5cpfexfm2yvniavny-story.html>.

¹³² Gina Spocchia, Republican congressman appears at white nationalist conference whose founder called Capitol riot ‘awesome,’ *The Independent*, February 28, 2021, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/paul-gosar-afpac-cpac-fuenetes-b1808678.html>

¹³³ Don Gonyea, “What Is CPAC? A Room That Didn't Always Love Trump, But Owes Him A Lot,” *NPR*, February 22, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/02/22/516535373/what-is-cpac-a-room-that-didnt-always-love-trump-but-owes-him-a-lot>

¹³⁴ Anti-Defamation League, “Michelle Malkin Is Attempting to Normalize White Supremacy.”

¹³⁵ Anti-Defamation League, “Groyper Army.”

¹³⁶ Jeffrey L. Kidder and Amy J. Binder, “In the Trump era, campus conservative groups are fighting one another,” *Washington Post*, February 19, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/02/19/trump-era-campus-conservative-groups-are-fighting-one-another/>

¹³⁷ RWW Blog, “RWW News: Nick Fuentes”

¹³⁸ Kalina Newman, “Citing threats, student withdraws from BU after attending Charlottesville rally,” *USA Today*, August 17, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/college/2017/08/17/citing-threats-student-withdraws-from-bu-after-attending-charlottesville-rally/37434915/>

¹³⁹ Caleb Hull (@CalebJHull), Twitter Post, October 30, 2019, last accessed February 23, 2021, <https://twitter.com/CalebJHull/status/1189594371030695937>

Turning Point USA (TPUSA): A Conservative youth organization that is largely aligned with Donald Trump and aims to “...educate students about the importance of fiscal responsibility, free markets, and limited government.”¹⁴⁰

Young America’s Foundation (YAF): A Conservative youth organization that is guided by Reagan-style politics and ensuring that young people are inspired by “... the ideas of individual freedom, a strong national defense, free enterprise, and traditional values.”¹⁴¹ YAF offers resources to start high school or college chapters at schools nationwide. They also work closely with schools, with or without chapters, in order to bring conservative speakers to campuses.¹⁴²

UCLA landscape:

Bruin Republicans (BR): The umbrella organization representing Conservative viewpoints at UCLA. Officially self-described as the following: “As the premiere right-wing political organization on campus, the Bruin Republicans pride themselves on offering conservative students an outlet for their opinions and a niche for their values. Like many College Republican organizations, we attempt to stimulate the campus dynamic with thoughtful debate.”¹⁴³

Student, Organizations, Leadership, and Engagement Office (SOLE): The UCLA office responsible for the registration, oversight, assistance, and funding of the over 1,200 official student organizations on campus.¹⁴⁴

Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC): The governing body of 15 elected council members to the Undergraduate Students Association (USA) — representing every undergraduate student at UCLA.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ “Our Mission,” TPUSA, <https://www.tpusa.com/ourmission>

¹⁴¹ “About,” YAF, <https://www.yaf.org/about/>

¹⁴² “Speakers Bureau,” YAF, <http://www.yaf.org/speakers/>

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ “About SOLE,” SOLE, <https://www.sole.ucla.edu/About-Us>

¹⁴⁵ “What is USAC?,” USAC, <https://usac.ucla.edu/about/>