



September 12, 2014

Phyllis W. Wise
Office of the Chancellor
Swanlund Administration Building
601 E. John Street
Champaign, IL 61820
Via: pmwise@uillinois.edu
UIBOT@uillinois.edu

Dear Chancellor Wise and Members of the Board of Trustees*:

We write as elected leaders of the American Sociological Association to express our concern about the possibility that academic freedom has been violated in the decision of the Chancellor not to send Dr. Steven G. Salaita's faculty appointment to the board for approval, and the decision of the Board not to approve his offer. We ask you to reconsider your decision.

The decision appears to abrogate long-established principles of academic freedom of expression to which your university expressly adheres (see art. 10, sec. 2, at <http://www.bot.uillinois.edu/statutes>). It appears that the decision not to approve his appointment after the usual faculty evaluation processes was based on disapproval of some political views he expressed on electronic media or the way in which he stated them. As leaders of a scholarly association, we consider it important that decisions about whom to hire, tenure, or terminate be made based on scholarship, teaching, administration, and service, and not on whether individuals express views that administrators or board members disagree with. We believe that the right to express unpopular views on important issues in various media is critical to the health of our democratic society and to its institutions of higher education.

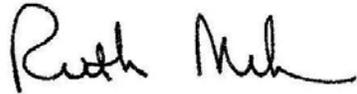
If Dr. Salaita's appointment process was discontinued because of the views he expressed, then, regardless of whether or not we agree with his views, we find the discontinuation deeply disturbing and inconsistent with academic freedom.

We urge you to consider whether important principles have been violated in this case, and if they have, to reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,



Paula England, President
New York University



Ruth Milkman, President-Elect
Graduate Center, City University of New York



Annette Lareau, Immediate Past President
University of Pennsylvania



Mary Romero, Secretary
Arizona State University

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