

“Drop the I-word” Resolution: A Resolution Calling for the End of the Use of the Term *Illegal*

WHEREAS we take great pride in the diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds represented at UCLA and our continuing commitment to enhance our great legacy of preparing leaders from all segments of society to make significant contributions all over the world, and

WHEREAS the next generation of leaders understands that immigrant rights is an urgent issue of our day that has been clouded by increasingly hateful and hostile public discourse in media and government, and

WHEREAS we are aware that certain racially derogatory language used in media, political discourse and other institutional settings has historically bolstered the foundation for racially harmful actions including racial profiling practices, punitive policies targeting socially marginalized groups, hate crimes and violence, and

WHEREAS the use of the term illegals (the “I-word”) and its derivatives when referring to people dehumanizes and divides communities, contributing to punitive and discriminatory actions aimed primarily at immigrants and communities of color, and

WHEREAS undocumented students at UCLA and across the UC have expressed their concerns and fear with the recent appointment of Janet Napolitano, former US Secretary of Homeland Security, as the new University of California President, and

WHEREAS a coalition of UC undocumented student organizations and allies released a statement that emphasizes the need to create a safe campus environment for all students, given the recent political climate of our University, and

WHEREAS the racially derogatory I-Word endangers basic human rights including the presumption of innocence and the right to due process guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, and

WHEREAS the I-Word is legally inaccurate since being out of status is a civil rather than criminal infraction and

WHEREAS journalists have an obligation to use neutral language that promotes democratic dialogue and upholds professional ethics and standards, and the term illegals is incorrect and inaccurate usage, as well as unfair and offensive, therefore

LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Undergraduate Students Association Council believes: No human being is illegal; Human beings need to be central in immigration discussions in order to move toward a more civilized and humane tone in public discourse and policies on immigration; Foreign nationals, undocumented immigrant, unauthorized immigrant, immigrant without papers and immigrant seeking status are examples of terms we can use that do not dehumanize people. We can all stop unintentionally fueling racial profiling and violence directed toward immigrants, when we Drop the I-Word.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that as a community we: Affirm the dignity and human rights of all persons; Use language that reflects our most basic values; Promote racial equity, justice and unity for a brighter future.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that USAC will encourage campus partners within student and campus life, student affairs, and student media to endorse the Drop the I-Word campaign to create a more humanizing, inclusive campus community for undocumented students.

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED that USAC endorse the Drop the I-Word campaign and joins communities across the country in asking all media organizations and journalists to uphold ethical and professional journalism standards **by dropping the I-Word today.**