By Riya Bhattacharjee

From The Berkeley Daily Planet | Original Article

(See the original article for the photos).

Four generations of UC Berkeley law school alumni joined activists, community members and lawyers on the Boalt Hall steps to protest former Bush administration lawyer John Yoo's return to campus Monday.

The group called for Yoo to be prosecuted and fired from his position as professor of law at UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law for writing memorandums which were used to justify extensive policies on detention and interrogation, even torture.

The Obama administration has so far showed little interest in prosecuting those who worked for the Bush administration. Despite criticism from protesters and from the National Lawyers' Guild about Yoo's continuing employment at UC Berkeley, Boalt Hall Dean Christopher Edley has defended Yoo's actions as academic freedom.

Chanting "Yoo should be ashamed," and "I am so over Yoo," the crowd assembled outside Boalt Hall at 1:30 p.m. Monday, closely watched by UC police, as students and professors walked in and out of the building.

The event was organized by the National Lawyer's Guild, World Can't Wait and Code Pink, whose members dressed up as "Pink Police" and included a dog sporting a pink "arrest torture" button.

When the UC Police Department told the event organizers they would not be allowed to use amplifiers outside the building, the speakers either talked loudly or stood on boxes to have their voices heard.

Members of the National Lawyer's Guild stressed that Yoo should be held accountable for his actions, which they said had led to the torture of thousands of U.S. political prisoners.

Sharon Adams, a guild member, called Yoo's memos "inane" and "secretive."

"In the name of democracy, Yoo did all he could to undermine democracy," she said, talking about the much criticized wiretapping and controversial interrogation techniques like waterboarding. "This is the kind of person who is teaching our next generation of lawyers. ... He should be prosecuted for war crimes."

The infamous Abu Ghraib torture pictures, which came to public attention in 2004, dotted Boalt's steps, with several individuals posing as hooded prisoners in chains, and one of them resembling the iconic man on top of a box.

Dan Siegal, a 1970 Boalt Hall alumnus and nationally known trial and appellate lawyer, said he was angry and frustrated that Edley, a staunch advocate of civil rights, continues to head a faculty which includes a "war criminal."

"There is little doubt that John Yoo is a war criminal," Siegal said. "There are some who try to bastardize the situation, as if Yoo wrote a law review. This person wrote an ideological and legal basis for torture. I am hoping that if Dean Edley doesn't get wise, we will march down to Yoo's office next time."

Ann Fagan Ginger, Boalt Hall Class of 1960, decried Edley using academic freedom as the basis of Yoo's actions.

Ginger, who leads the Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute in Berkeley, said UC Berkeley students should have the academic freedom to take classes from someone who had not been charged with being a war criminal.