

## Bay Area Students ICE out Tech Companies

By: Kelsey Miller, J.D. Candidate 2021 | March 8, 2019

Tech companies have long regarded elite schools like UC Berkeley and Stanford as rich talent pools integral to their hiring pipelines. And since the schools [receive fees](#) from the companies for the privilege of recruiting on campus, the relationship is generally considered to be a symbiotic one.

However, in recent months, students at Berkeley and Stanford have protested the on-campus recruiting efforts of companies including Salesforce, Amazon, and Palantir because of their [contracts](#) with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

[Student groups](#) like Students for the Liberation of All People (SLAP) at Stanford, with the support of national organizations such as [Mijente](#) and the Immigrant Defense Project, allege that by providing services such as facial recognition, hiring technology, and predictive deep learning systems to ICE agents, these companies are not only complicit in but profiting off of the [humanitarian crisis](#) along the southern border.

Palantir, for example, has a \$41 million contract with ICE to provide an [Investigative Case Management](#) system, partly supported by FALCON, another Palantir platform that [tracks immigrants'](#) cross-border activities. Microsoft contracts with ICE to provide cloud computing software and deep learning for identification of immigrants. Palmer Lucky, the [controversial founder](#) of VR company Oculus, has been working on a defense technology company that would create a “virtual border wall” using infrared sensor, radar, and cameras.

Student activism serves as yet [another example](#) of how tech companies are being asked to reconcile their profit-seeking behavior with both their largely progressive employee base and their largely progressive public image. While as public companies, Salesforce, Microsoft, and Amazon have a fiduciary duty to maximize profits for their shareholders, the recent blowback has shown that there are limits to putting profits over people—limits that, if they have enough of a chilling effect on these companies' recruiting pools—are bad for business.

