

June 14, 2010

Mr. Mark G. Yudof
President, University of California
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

Dear President Yudof:

We appreciate your concerns about the problems Jewish students currently face on many University of California campuses. However, we firmly but respectfully disagree that the newly established Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture, and Inclusion will address the unique nature of those problems. If there is no explicit focus on anti-Semitism, the experiences of Jewish students will not be recognized or addressed as straightforwardly and unequivocally as the problems of other minority groups.

Bigotry against Jewish students has occurred over many years and on many University of California campuses. Jewish students have been subjected to: swastikas and other anti-Semitic graffiti; acts of physical and verbal aggression; speakers, films and exhibits that use anti-Semitic imagery and discourse; speakers that praise and encourage support for terrorist organizations that openly advocate murder against Israel and the Jewish people; the organized disruption of events sponsored by Jewish student groups; and most recently, the promotion of student senate resolutions for divestment that seek to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish State. It is important to emphasize that the demonization and delegitimization of Israel are a contemporary form of anti-Semitism, as defined by the United States Department of State, the United Kingdom Parliament and the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe.

More than 700 students have signed a petition on-line that protests this growing problem. The petition states:

“We are Jewish students at the University of California and we are outraged and deeply offended by the behavior of some student groups on campus who sponsor speakers, films and exhibits that use hateful anti-Jewish rhetoric and imagery and openly support terrorism against Israel and the Jewish people. As Jewish students, we are also deeply disturbed by student initiated boycott and divestment campaigns which falsely accuse the Jewish state of crimes against humanity. Please understand that these speakers, exhibits, events and campaigns are as offensive and hurtful to Jewish students as a “Compton cookout” or noose are to African-American students. We demand that the UC administrators recognize and address the concerns of Jewish students in the same way as they respond to those of all other minority groups.”

Many Jewish students, responding to an on-line questionnaire, described feeling harassed and intimidated at UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and UC Berkeley. More than two-thirds felt

that anti-Israel events and campaigns promoted hatred of the Jewish State and of Jews, and even expressed the concern that such hatred might lead to violence against Jewish students on their campus. Almost all the students felt that their administrators do not treat Jewish concerns as sensitively as they treat those of other minorities. (Attached is a selection of student responses to the questionnaire).

Therefore, we respectfully request that you pursue the following course of action, which we believe would significantly improve the campus climate for Jewish students:

1. Issue a written statement to the entire University of California community which:
 - unequivocally condemns all forms of anti-Semitism (i.e. hatred toward Jews) at the University of California, including language or behavior that demonizes and delegitimizes Israel, as per the U.S. State Department's "working definition of anti-Semitism;" for example:
 - Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, for example, by claiming that the existence of a Jewish State is a racist endeavor.
 - Applying double standards by requiring of Israel a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
 - Using symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism, such as claims of blood libel to characterize Israel or Israelis.
 - Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
 - acknowledges that anti-Semitism has been a problem on UC campuses and has created an environment of harassment and intimidation for many Jewish students;
 - commits the UC administration to vigorously addressing the problem of anti-Semitism on all UC campuses.
2. Incorporate into campus policy language that:
 - defines anti-Semitism and provides concrete examples according to the U.S. State Department's "working definition;"
 - singles out anti-Semitism from other forms of bigotry and discrimination and provides clear guidelines for the prosecution of anti-Semitic behavior;
3. Call on each of the UC Chancellors to:
 - issue a written statement to his/her entire campus community which:
 - unequivocally condemns all forms of anti-Semitism (i.e. hatred toward Jews) on his/her campus, including the examples of language or behavior that demonizes and delegitimizes Israel, as per the U.S. State

- Department's "working definition of anti-Semitism;"
- acknowledges the specific manifestations of anti-Semitism that have occurred on his/her campus and the hostile environment these have created for Jewish students;
 - commits the campus administration to vigorously addressing the problem of anti-Semitism on his/her campus.
- publicly condemn, by name, speakers who demonize Jews and Israel by for example, comparing Jews to Nazis or who promote terrorist entities such as Hamas and Hezbollah; also denounce, by name, those student groups who regularly promote this vicious hatred.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Leila Beckwith
Professor Emeritus, University of California at Los Angeles

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin
Lecturer, University of California at Santa Cruz

Roberta Seid
Lecturer, University of California at Irvine

[Names of Jewish Organizations]

CC: University of California Chancellors
University of California Regents
Governor of Arnold Schwarzenegger
Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Congressman Brad Sherman
Congressman Chuck DeVore
Congressman John Campbell