

September 19, 2011

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

Dear President Yudof:

We are members and supporters of the California Jewish community – rabbis, cantors, principals, teachers, alumni, parents, grandparents, family and friends of Jewish students – who are deeply distressed by the harassment and intimidation of Jewish students on many University of California campuses.

On June 28, 2010, twelve Jewish organizations wrote to you to urge you, the Chancellors, and the Regents to address this serious problem. In your reply, you urged these Jewish leaders to be patient and have faith in the ability of the newly-established Advisory Councils on Campus Climate, Culture, and Inclusion to address the problem.

However it has been over a year, and the Advisory Councils have recommended no policies and issued no public statements informing the UC community about the problem of anti-Semitism or how it will be addressed.

At the same time, evidence has mounted that there is a persistent and pervasively hostile, discriminatory environment against Jewish students on several UC campuses. There is now a lawsuit pending against UC Berkeley, from a Jewish student who was physically assaulted by a Muslim student on that campus. Her lawsuit alleges that the administration over the years did not effectively deal with anti-Semitic harassment and intimidation by Muslim and anti-Israel student groups, leading to a “dangerous and threatening” environment for Jewish students.

Further, a faculty member at UC Santa Cruz has filed a federal complaint alleging that faculty and administrators on that campus have misused their official university positions to promote a virulently anti-Israel political agenda that has created a hostile environment for many Jewish students. The complaint is now being investigated by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights.

Moreover, the Olive Tree Initiative (OTI), an interfaith program touted by UC administrators as a remedy to anti-Semitic bigotry and harassment, has been revealed as deliberately exposing students, many of them Jewish, to a confirmed terrorist and leader of Hamas, an organization whose stated mission is the murder of Jews and the destruction of Israel. Yet even after it was revealed that students had not only met a Hamas leader but also been instructed to cover up the meeting, the OTI was given prestigious awards and generous funding by UC administrators.

More than a year after you urged Jewish leaders to have patience and trust, the problem

of anti-Semitic bigotry has not been adequately addressed on UC campuses. Now we, as Jewish community members, urge you to address this problem effectively and promptly.

We ask the following:

1. Can we, the Jewish community, be given a timeline of when substantive measures to address the problem of the harassment and intimidation of Jewish students will be taken on UC campuses, including one or more of the following actions?

a) Define anti-Semitism and provide concrete examples in accordance with the EUMC and U.S. State Department “Working Definition”;

b) Provide clear guidelines for reporting and resolving complaints about the harassment and intimidation of Jewish students and for disciplining anti-Semitic behavior;

c) Incorporate these policies and practices on anti-Semitism into appropriate training for students, faculty, administrators, and staff, consistent with best practices for addressing other forms of discrimination, eg., racism and sexual harassment.

2. Can we, the Jewish community, be given assurance that the University of California will issue no awards, funding, or recognition of programs, such as the Olive Tree Initiative, which associate with organizations that call for the murder of Jews or the elimination of the Jewish state?

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Members and Supporters of the California Jewish Community

(You will find a full list of signatories in Attachment 2)

CC: University of California Chancellors
University of California Regents
University of California Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture, and Inclusion
California Governor Jerry Brown