

To: CSU Trustees

July 22, 2014

Dear CSU Trustees,

On May 28, our organizations [sent a letter](#) to SFSU President Wong, Chancellor White, CSU Chief Audit Office Mandel and CSU Attorney for Conflict of Interest & Governance Reith, asking for an investigation of SFSU Professor Rabab Abdulhadi's potential misuse of more than \$7,000 of state university funds for a trip to the Middle East, which Abdulhadi described as "a political solidarity tour" to promote the academic boycott of Israel, and which included meetings with members of US State Department-designated terrorist organizations.

On June 24, President Wong defended Abdulhadi's use of public funds for her personal advocacy mission as "research" and [stated](#) that his investigation concluded it complied with "established rules without fault or violation." We are extremely troubled by President Wong's statement, as are many others throughout the state and across the country.

Hundreds of California taxpayers have written to State Controller Chiang to express their outrage in this matter and to urge him to investigate the potential misuse of state funds, [for example](#):

- "Please help put a stop to this outrageous abuse of power and resources by any faculty member or administrator."
- "I am appalled to read about state funds supporting the travels of SFSU professors for a purely political agenda. You have a fiduciary responsibility to better oversee public funds."
- "I am opposed to any professors using California State funds to go on political tours. It is essential that politics and research be separated very carefully, and not enough care was taken in at least this one circumstance."
- "This must be audited and the money reimbursed to the state by Rabab Abdulhadi."
- "[T]here is no legitimate personal political advocacy that taxpayers should fund, particularly when it involves taxpayer funds used for non-educational purposes, e.g. spent primarily for political advocacy..."
- "I am writing to you today to express my outrage over SFSU President Wong's decision to spend thousands of taxpayer dollars to meet with terrorists. As a California taxpayer and resident, I am calling on you to audit the university and put an end to President Wong's funding of terrorist trips."
- "I am...disturbed that funds designated for educational and research purposes are going for avowedly political purposes that encourage violence and intimidation here on US campuses as well as foster acts of terror overseas."

California faculty, too, are disturbed that President Wong has condoned the use of university funds for political advocacy:

- Twelve faculty members from UC San Diego [sent a letter](#) to the CA State Controller stating: "President Wong's justification of this abuse of California taxpayers' money as legitimate "research" is outrageous and so broadens the term "research" as to make it meaningless."
- Dozens of faculty from universities throughout California have [sent a letter](#) to the State Controller indicating that they are appalled that Prof. Abdulhadi has been allowed to use state funds "to advance her own political agenda...to promote an academic boycott of Israel" and they are "deeply disturbed that SFSU President Wong has condoned Prof. Abdulhadi's use of state funds as legitimate research."
- Individual faculty have written the State Controller with comments such as:
  - "As a professor, I always attended and reported to colleagues about any state and even self-funded conference in which I participated. I cannot imagine myself and my colleagues not keeping our fiscal and intellectual commitments to our employing university!"
  - "At my own university [Yale University], if I were to do this I would have to repay the university, at a minimum. Disciplinary action might also be undertaken for such misuse of university funds."

In addition, articles in more than 60 California and national media outlets, including *The Washington Times* and *Fox News*, among others, have demonstrated the broad-based public concern about the misuse of taxpayer educational funds for promoting a political agenda and meeting with terrorists. (You can see a selection of the articles [HERE](#)).

Therefore we are turning to you, as members of the CSU Board of Trustees with ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the University, with a question that many concerned citizens in our state and across the country are asking:

**Is a self-described "political solidarity trip" to promote the academic boycott of Israel, which itself has been declared as contrary to the values of the university by Chancellor White and hundreds of other University leaders, consistent with the educational mission of the California State University and a legitimate use of taxpayer funds?**

We urge you to do an independent investigation of this matter and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

AMCHA Initiative  
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel  
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations  
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East  
Simon Wiesenthal Center Campus Outreach  
StandWithUs  
Zionist Organization of America

Cc: California State Controller John Chiang  
Timothy White, Chancellor California State University  
Leslie Wong, President San Francisco State University  
Larry Mandel, CSU Vice Chancellor and Chief Audit Officer  
Carrie Hemphill Reith, CSU Resource Attorney for Conflict of Interest & Governance  
CSU General Counsel Framroze Virgee  
CSU Deputy General Counsel G. Andrew Jones  
Kenneth Monteiro, Dean of SFSU College of Ethnic Studies  
Sue Rosser, SFSU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Michael Martin, SFSU Associate Vice President, Enterprise Risk Management  
Dao VanQuate, SFSU Associate Risk Management  
Patricia Bartscher, SFSU Counsel  
Attorney General Kamala Harris  
Deputy Attorney General Stepan Haytayun  
California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson  
California State Senator Mark Leno (San Francisco)  
California State Senator Leland Y. Yee (San Francisco)  
California Assembly Member Philip Y. Ting (San Francisco)  
California Senator Carol Liu, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Education  
California Assembly Member Das Williams, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education  
California Assembly Member Shirley Weber, Chair of the Select Committee on Campus Climate  
California State Senator Marty Block, Chair of Legislative Jewish Caucus  
California Jewish Community Leaders