

12 Organizations Write to UCLA Chancellor Block to Condemn Antisemitism After Blatant Discrimination of Jewish Candidate for Judicial Board Position

February 20, 2015

To: UCLA Chancellor Gene Block

CC: Vice Chancellor Waugh, Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs Reed, Vice Chancellor of UCLA External Affairs Turteltaub, and Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Montero

RE: Inadequately addressed anti-Semitism at UCLA

Dear Chancellor Block:

The 12 organizations listed below are deeply concerned by your administration's inadequate response to the anti-Semitic incident on February 10, 2015, when four UCLA Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC) members questioned UCLA Judicial Board candidate Rachel Beyda's qualifications solely on the basis of her Jewish identity and affiliation with the Jewish community. The discussion was overtly anti-Semitic, stereotyping Beyda's political affiliations based on her ethnicity and resurrecting the traditional anti-Semitic canard of divided loyalty. These council members, elected to represent the entire student body, instead demonstrated unabashed discrimination against Jews.

We call on you to condemn this incident publicly, and to define anti-Semitism using the U.S. Department of State's criteria, in order to educate students about this persistent bigotry. We also urge you to email the entire UCLA community, calling the incident for what it was: anti-Semitism. Noting the public apology made by the four council members, we urge USAC council members to undergo anti-bias training, focusing on the importance of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate. If they refuse to do so, we urge you to consider calling for their resignation from the USAC. In short, we ask you to take this incident as seriously as you would had it been perpetrated against any other racial or religious group.

While we thank Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Janina Montero for her statement, her response did not adequately redress the problem or teach students how to respond fully to intolerance, anti-Semitism and bigotry. We commend USAC President Avinoam Baral for immediately rebuking a council member who asked Beyda, "Given that you're a Jewish student and very active in the Jewish community [...] how do you see yourself being able to maintain an unbiased view in your position?" We also commend the faculty member present for finally weighing in—after thirty minutes of discussion—and informing council members that their discussion was "really disturbing." Finally, we applaud the Daily Bruin Editorial Board for swiftly condemning the meeting for "its flat-out discriminatory nature." We now ask you to do the same.

Thank you very much for your immediate attention to this matter,

1. Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
2. AMCHA Initiative
3. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law
4. Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)
5. Hasbara Fellowships
6. Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel (IBSI)
7. Israeli-American Council (IAC)
8. Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
9. Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME)
10. StandWithUs
11. Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
12. Zionist Organization of America

Roz Rothstein, CEO,

