



Varner & Brandt LLP
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Dear Regent Varner:

Our organizations are deeply grateful to the Board of Regents for acknowledging the growing threat that Jewish students face at the University of California, and for establishing a Working Group to draft a Statement of Principles Against Intolerance that will address modern anti-Semitism along with other forms of racial, ethnic and gender bigotry.

We understand that the Working Group's statement will be voted on at the March Regents meeting, and we are hopeful that it will provide a necessary first step in ensuring that Jewish students, and all students, are afforded a campus climate free from hatred and discrimination.

A recent survey of Jewish students at the University of California underscores the importance and urgency of a Regents statement that adequately identifies contemporary manifestations of anti-Semitism. More than 70% of the respondents had experienced or witnessed anti-Semitism on their campus, with close to 80% of them reporting that anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS)-related activities were the source of hostile actions towards Jewish students.

These students' perceptions indeed match the reality. In 2015, anti-Zionist activity — particularly BDS — was linked to more than 20 recorded incidents of Jewish students on UC campuses being threatened or targeted for harmful or hateful actions. With a wide range of manifestations, these actions included physical or verbal assault, destruction of property, blatant anti-Semitic discrimination, harassment and suppression of speech, as illustrated by the following examples:

- A female student at UC San Diego was stalked and verbally harassed by an SJP member, who called her a "racist Zionist cow";

- Large swastikas were spray-painted on a Jewish fraternity at UC Davis one day after a contentious and divisive student government vote on an anti-Israel divestment resolution;
- Jewish students at UCLA and UC Santa Cruz were told by BDS-promoting student senators that they were not fit to participate in student government because of their Jewishness; and,
- Two Jewish student events at UC Santa Cruz were disrupted and effectively ruined by student protesters acting in solidarity with the BDS movement.

The relationship between anti-Zionist expression and the direct targeting of Jewish students for anti-Semitic action is not surprising given that denying Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state and actions which seek to harm or destroy Israel are identified as modern forms of anti-Semitism by all mainstream Jewish organizations, as well as the vast majority of Jews worldwide. World leaders, too, have unequivocally affirmed that denying Israel's right to exist is anti-Semitism, including Pope Francis, President Obama, British Prime Minister Cameron and French Prime Minister Valls, who just last month stated with regard to the unprecedented rise of anti-Semitic activity in his country: "It is perfectly obvious how we have shifted from criticism of Israel to anti-Zionism and from anti-Zionism to anti-Semitism."

The Regents Statement Against Intolerance must acknowledge what these world leaders have confirmed: there is a crucial distinction between criticism of Israel's policies (which should be part of healthy discussion and debate on any university campus), and anti-Zionism (denying Israel's right to exist or calling for Israel's destruction), which is blatant anti-Semitism. A statement merely condemning anti-Semitism without recognizing that anti-Zionism is a form of contemporary anti-Semitism and a major source of anti-Semitic behavior will do nothing to improve the campus climate for Jewish students, and will undoubtedly even contribute to the problem.

As helpful background, we are enclosing a list of some of the recent anti-Semitic incidents on UC campuses, testimonies from UC Jewish students about their personal experiences of anti-Jewish bigotry on campus, as well as additional materials clarifying when criticism of Israel crosses the line into blatant anti-Semitism.

Thank you again for your continued efforts on behalf of Jewish students. We greatly appreciate your leadership and commitment to addressing the frightening and growing problem of anti-Semitism at the University of California.

Sincerely,

Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
Alums for Campus Fairness
AMCHA Initiative
AMCHA UCLA Alumni
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists

American Institute for Jewish Research
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA)
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
Club Z
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)
CUFI on Campus
Davis Faculty for Israel
Eagles Wings
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Fuel For Truth
Hasbara Fellowships
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Israeli-American Council (IAC)
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)
Jerusalem U
Jewish Law Students Association at UCLA
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)
National Conference on Jewish Affairs
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Project Genesis
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pi
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
Stop BDS on Campus
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
Students Supporting Israel at UCLA
The Israel Christian Nexus
The Israel Group
Training and Education About the Middle East (T.E.A.M.)
Zionist Organization of America