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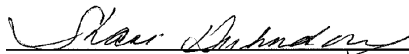
SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNIC STUDIES
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18 September 2016

TO: Carla Hesse, Dean, Division of Social Sciences

FROM: Shari Huhndorf, Chair, Department of Ethnic Studies 

RE: **Department assessment of ES 198: Palestine: A Settler Colonial Inquiry**

As you requested, our department has thoroughly reviewed the DeCal course Ethnic Studies 198: Palestine: A Settler Colonial Inquiry to ensure that it is in compliance with all relevant campus policies. The departmental executive committee, which is composed of four senior members of the faculty, undertook this examination with particular attention to Regents Policy 2301: Policy on Course Content and specific requirements for DeCal courses. Additionally, the committee considered the three specific concerns raised by the administration: 1) that the course is consistent with the academic mission of the Ethnic Studies Department; 2) that the course is structured by open inquiry rather than a specific agenda; and 3) that the course does not cross the line between teaching and political advocacy and organizing. The faculty supervisor and I have also worked with the student facilitator to revise the course description and syllabus with the aim of removing any ambiguity about whether the course complies with campus policies. The executive committee reached a unanimous recommendation that the course meets all of these criteria and therefore should be reinstated. For reasons described below, I concur with this decision.

Our judgment is that the course subject is consistent with the academic mission of our department. The histories and dynamics of settler colonialism, structural inequality, and social marginalization are central to our teaching and research, and several of our faculty work on these issues in transnational contexts. The syllabus begins with a comparative historical framework that engages the Palestinian situation in relation to indigenous histories in the Americas and Australia, areas that are central to our own research. Several assigned readings, including those by Patrick Wolfe and Edward Said, are frequently included in courses by ladder-rank faculty.

We have also determined that the course focuses on scholarly discourse, intellectual inquiry, and open debate. To make this determination, we reviewed the course materials and met with the student facilitator to discuss how he presents those materials. We are impressed by how thoughtfully the student facilitator has constructed the course. The readings are authored by academics, journalists, and organizations such as the United Nations. The faculty sponsor, a well-known expert on Palestinian history and politics, has thoroughly reviewed the syllabus, and he continues to provide

guidance and oversight. No course, and certainly no one-credit course, can fully engage the entire range of viewpoints on a highly complex topic, but we are satisfied that the course aims to facilitate informed thinking, in the words of the syllabus, about the "the possibility for justice and equality for all peoples in the region." Nothing in the syllabus indicates that a single viewpoint is taught uncritically; on the contrary, the syllabus indicates that multiple viewpoints are welcomed and debated in the class. We also find that the open letter from the students enrolled in the course provides compelling evidence that this is the case. The students describe the focus of the course as "academic discussion surrounding Israel and Palestine," they refute the suggestion that the course only "tolerate[s] a single or particular view," and they describe their engagement with the issues as "mature and respectful... open academic inquiry."

For these reasons, I hereby request the reinstatement of Ethnic Studies 198: Palestine: A Settler Colonial Inquiry. If I can provide additional information in support of this request, please let me know.