

## 85 Organizations Commend University of Michigan for Adoption of Blue Ribbon Panel Report

SENT VIA EMAIL

May 15, 2019

Dear President Schlissel and Provost Philbert,

We heartily commend you for accepting the exceptionally thoughtful and thorough [report](#) and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel that you appointed last fall, specifically the core statement of principle that **"as faculty members make judgements and act in their role as teachers, they must do so based solely on educational and professional reasons,"** as well as your commitment to establishing clearly defined procedures for handling challenges to the core statement.

While the panel was established in response to a particular incident regarding UM faculty members who, in compliance with an academic boycott of Israel, refused to write letters of recommendation for students wanting to study at a university-approved program in Israel, we are grateful that you framed the investigative question posed to the panel quite broadly, asking: "What ought to be the intersection between political thought/ideology and a faculty member's responsibility to students?" As you clearly understood, refusing to write letters of recommendation for students is just one of many ways that faculty members can privilege their own personal politics over the welfare of their students, and by so doing, not only harm their students but undermine the academic mission of the university.

This becomes particularly evident when faculty members choose to implement an academic boycott of Israel, whose official guidelines call on faculty to not only refuse to write letters of recommendation for students wanting to study abroad in Israel but to work towards shutting down the study abroad programs altogether; to attempt to cancel faculty and student-organized educational events and activities about Israel on their own campuses; and to work towards scuttling research collaborations between U.S. faculty and students and Israeli scholars. Faculty who use their academic positions to implement an academic boycott of Israel, or to engage in any other type of ideologically-driven behavior, are impeding the educational rights of their students, blocking access to a body of knowledge critical for understanding a complex topic of global importance, and are in direct violation of UM's new core statement of principles.

The adoption of this core statement of principles and your commitment to establishing explicit procedures for bringing forward concerns about faculty who violate it will make a significant and positive difference for the entire UM community. We hope that universities across the country will follow your lead and adopt their own version of this very important statement.

Sincerely,

Academic Council for Israel  
Academic Engagement Network  
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)

Alums for Campus Fairness - National  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA  
Alums for Campus Fairness - University of Michigan  
AMCHA Initiative  
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists  
American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
American Institute for Jewish Research  
American Jewish Congress  
American Jewish International Relations Institute  
American Truth Project  
American Values  
Americans Fighting Antisemitism  
Americans for Peace and Tolerance  
B'nai B'rith International  
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources  
Bobcats for Israel at Ohio University  
Boston Israel Action Committee  
Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law  
Bulldogs for Israel (Brooklyn College)  
California Association of Scholars  
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore  
Center for Righteousness and Integrity  
Christians and Jews United for Israel  
Coalition for Jewish Values  
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)  
Creative Community for Peace  
CUFI on Campus  
Dartmouth Students for Israel  
Davis Faculty for Israel  
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)  
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)  
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors  
Hasbara Fellowships  
Herut North America, U.S. Division  
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel  
Iranian American Jewish Federation  
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization  
Israel Allies Foundation  
Israel in NYC  
Israel Matters  
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)  
Israeli-American Civic Action Network  
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute  
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana  
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)  
Legal Insurrection Foundation  
Mercaz USA

Middle East Forum  
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)  
National Christian Leadership Conference  
National Conference on Jewish Affairs  
National Council of Young Israel  
Nazareth College Hillel  
NCSY  
NH4Israel  
North Carolina Coalition for Israel  
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations  
Rabbinical Alliance of America  
Religious Zionists of America  
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel  
Russian Jewish Community Foundation  
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East  
Simon Wiesenthal Center  
Slugs for Israel (University of California Santa Cruz)  
StandWithUs  
StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department  
Stop Anti-Semitism Now  
Stop BDS on Campus  
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism  
Students Supporting Israel at Columbia  
Students Supporting Israel at Drake University  
Students Supporting Israel at San Jose State University  
Students Supporting Israel at UCLA  
Students Supporting Israel National  
Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus  
The Israel Project  
Tufts Friends of Israel  
WoMen Fight Antisemitism  
Young Jewish Conservatives  
Zionist Organization of America  
ZOA's Fuel for Truth

Cc: Members of the Blue Ribbon Panel