

## Letter to SFSU President: 80 Organizations Concerned About Unlawful Use of CSU Name to Promulgate Anti-Zionist Propaganda and Promote BDS

SENT VIA EMAIL

July 25, 2019

Dear President Mahoney,

Thank you for your email. Our 80 civil rights, human rights, religious and educational organizations appreciate that in fulfillment of a [legal settlement](#) last spring, your university has committed itself to taking forthright steps to address the rampant anti-Zionist harassment of Jewish students on your campus, including by issuing a public statement affirming that “for many Jews, Zionism is an important part of their Jewish identity,” as well as by agreeing to independent, outside investigation of all complaints of religious discrimination. We hope that these measures will help to create a healthier campus climate.

However, the recent [re-posting](#) by “AMED Studies at SFSU” to its AMED Facebook page of a [message](#) from AMED’s Director Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi stating “Zionism = Racism” and “Boycott! Divest! Sanction!”, along with the continued presence on the AMED Facebook page of a several-months-old [posting](#) by “AMED Studies at SFSU,” stating that the program’s Director considers “welcoming Zionists to campus, equating Jewishness with Zionism, and giving Hillel ownership of campus Jewishness to be a declaration of war against Arabs, Muslims, [and] Palestinians,” are cause for grave concern.

As justification for doing nothing about these departmental postings, you have stated that Facebook pages are not officially sanctioned university web pages and do not represent the university’s positions or sentiments. But AMED, **as an official academic unit of SFSU**, and Prof. Abdulhadi, **in her capacity as the administrator of that academic unit**, certainly *do* represent the university. The positions and sentiments disseminated by “AMED Studies at SFSU” under the AMED logo, which includes the words “San Francisco State University,” must be considered official university positions and sentiments, not unlike those disseminated on the official [SFSU Facebook page](#), which bears the university’s official logo with the words “San Francisco State University.”

Moreover, as we have written to Chancellor White and copied to CSU General Counsel Jones and California Attorney General Becerra, **these official departmental postings are undoubtedly in violation of the law**. Unless the CSU Trustees have given Abdulhadi permission to use the name of SFSU to promote a boycott of Israel and disseminate anti-Zionist rhetoric, the postings directly violate [section 89005.5](#) of the California Education Code:

"All of the following names are the property of the state: California State University...San Francisco State University...No person shall, without the permission of the Trustees of the California State University, use this name...in connection with...propaganda, advertising, or promotional activity of any kind which has for its purpose or any part of its purpose the support, endorsement,

advancement...of **any...boycott** or of **any political...movement, activity, or program**...Every person violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.”

**This matter cannot be ignored.** The on-going refusal to address these hateful, discriminatory and illegal postings promulgated by an official SFSU academic unit belies your statement that “creating a welcoming and inclusive campus for our students is a top priority for all of us,” calls into question SFSU’s commitment to honoring its obligations under the recent legal settlement, and leaves us deeply concerned for the safety and well-being of Jewish and pro-Israel students, and all students, on your campus.

We look forward to hearing how you will address this issue.

Sincerely,

Academic Council for Israel  
Academic Engagement Network  
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)  
Alums for Campus Fairness - National  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside  
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA  
AMCHA Initiative  
America Israel Cooperative Enterprise  
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists  
American Council of Trustees and Alumni  
American Institute for Jewish Research  
American Truth Project  
Americans Fighting Antisemitism  
Americans for Peace and Tolerance  
B'nai B'rith International  
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 Combating Antisemitism  
Christians and Jews United for Israel  
Club Z  
Coalition for Jewish Values  
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)  
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 in NYC  
Israel Matters  
Israel on Campus Coalition  
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)  
Israeli-American Civic Action Network  
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute  
JAM  
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana  
Jewish War Veterans of the USA  
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)  
Middle East Forum  
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)  
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel  
National Conference on Jewish Affairs  
National Council of Young Israel  
NCSY  
NH4Israel  
North Carolina Coalition for Israel  
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations  
Rabbinical Alliance 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 Christian Nexus  
Tufts Friends of Israel  
WoMen Fight Antisemitism  
Young Jewish Conservatives  
Zionist Organization of America  
ZOA's Fuel for Truth

Cc: Winston & Strawn, LLP

The Lawfare Project, Brooke Goldstein Executive Director  
California State University Chancellor Timothy White  
California State University Trustees  
California State University General Counsel Andrew Jones  
California Attorney General Xavier Becerra  
Senator Connie M. Leyva, Chair California Standing Committee on Education  
Assembly Member Jose Medina, Chair California Assembly Higher Education Committee  
Senator Ben Allen, Chair Jewish Legislative Caucus

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On Jul 20, 2019, at 7:09 AM, Lynn Mahoney wrote:

Dear Ms. Rossman-Benjamin,

Thank you for reaching out to me with your concerns. I just concluded my first week on campus and am excited by all the opportunities at San Francisco State and in the region. Creating a welcoming and inclusive campus for our students is a top priority for all of us. I want to assure you that we have implemented a variety of initiatives to ensure a welcoming climate for our Jewish students. These include anti-Semitism awareness trainings; a revision of our policies to ensure that all can exercise their free speech and participate in University activities; the creation of the Division of Equity & Community Inclusion; and ongoing collaboration with SF Hillel and JCRC. I am particularly pleased to announce that we just hired a Jewish Student Life Coordinator to ensure our ongoing commitment to these initiatives and to our Jewish students.

I understand your concerns about the Facebook posts, but please know that sentiments expressed on Facebook pages reflect the opinions of the professor or others who post them. Facebook pages are not officially sanctioned university web pages and do not represent the university's positions or sentiments.

Again, thank you for reaching out to me. I look forward to working with our Jewish students and leaders in the Jewish community to ensure that our students succeed and that San Francisco State be a model of inclusivity.

Best,

Lynn

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For the previous letter sent by 80 groups to California State University Chancellor White on July 11, 2019 you may [see this link](#).