



# 2019: AMCHA's Mission at Work

## MISSION

AMCHA Initiative is a non-partisan, non-profit organization founded by two University of California faculty members that is dedicated to investigating, documenting, educating about, and combating antisemitism at institutions of higher education in America.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2019

- **COMBATING:** AMCHA leads a coalition of more than **100 religious, civil rights, education and advocacy organizations and thousands of grassroots activists.** In 2019, AMCHA engaged the coalition and grassroots activists in more than a dozen highly impactful [campaigns](#) at the university, state and federal levels primarily focusing on addressing attempts by faculty to bring their anti-Zionist advocacy and activism, including support for academic BDS, onto campus and into their classrooms and conference halls. These efforts included:
  - **UNIVERSITY LEVEL:**
    - **#NoAcademicBDS Campaign:** A year ago, AMCHA launched a campaign to educate university leaders, campus communities, government officials and the public about the direct harms the academic boycott of Israel causes students and faculty on American campuses. Since launching the campaign, university leaders at the University of California, the University of Michigan and Pitzer College have issued excellent statements acknowledging the harms of academic BDS for students and faculty, and condemning its implementation on their campuses.
    - **University of Massachusetts Amherst:** AMCHA coordinated an 80-group coalition effort urging Chancellor Subbaswamy to rescind all university sponsorship of a departmentally-sponsored pro-BDS event and to issue assurances that UMass faculty would be prohibited from using the university's resources to promote their personal political agendas. In response the Chancellor sent a strong letter to the event's academic sponsors requesting the event does not become an "echo chamber." He also urged the Faculty Senate to establish guidelines on the departmental sponsorship of political events.
    - **University of Massachusetts System:** In response to more than 100 UMass faculty members assailing UMass Amherst Chancellor Subbaswamy for issuing an excellent statement against academic BDS, AMCHA collaborated with the Academic Engagement Network on a letter to the University of Massachusetts System President Martin Meehan urging him to issue a "system-wide statement...that the University is opposed to academic boycotts" and to "ask their faculties to engage in frank discussions about the scope...of academic freedom in the context of academic boycotts."
    - **San Francisco State University:** AMCHA coordinated multiple 80-group coalition letters to CSU Chancellor White and SFSU President Mahoney following the discovery of a pro-BDS post from the director of an SFSU academic program on an official university Facebook page, in apparent violation of California law. CSU's Deputy Counsel General assured the groups that the university was investigating the matter and working to create a faculty-wide policy on this issue.
  - **STATE LEVEL:**
    - **California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum:** AMCHA coordinated an 83-group outreach to California Board of Education officials demanding safeguards against political indoctrination after learning that drafters of a California-mandated high school ethnic studies model curriculum, some of them faculty members on California campuses, were attempting to use the curriculum as a tool for promoting anti-

Zionist propaganda. A few days later, the California school board president issued a statement acknowledging, “The current draft model curriculum...needs to be substantially redesigned” as it was not “free of bias” - an idea that came directly from AMCHA’s coalition correspondence. Soon after, AMCHA coordinated another outreach to the school board from 94 organizations, urging the board to guarantee the model curriculum it approves will be free of political indoctrination and “will not promote hatred...against any race, religion, group or individual.”

○ **FEDERAL LEVEL:**

- **Title VI Higher Education Opportunity Act:** AMCHA coordinated an 88-group effort calling on U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to ensure that federal funds will not be used to implement an academic boycott. Our close monitoring has found that some directors and affiliated faculty at federally-funded Middle East Studies programs have attempted to implement the academic boycott in ways that violate the legislative intent of Title VI. The Department of Education confirmed they are investigating the matter. The campaign received widespread media coverage, including in the leading Capitol Hill publication *Politico*, and eight members of Congress supported the effort in their own letter sent to the Department of Education echoing the campaign and referencing an AMCHA-coordinated letter sent about the issue previously.

- **INVESTIGATING: AMCHA’s studies provide crucial data utilized by leading organizations and government officials.** In 2019, our annual [report](#) illuminated a number of critical shifts and increases in campus antisemitism and included recommendations to help university administrators take immediate action to address many of the alarming trends. The report found a 70% spike in Israel-related harassment of Jewish students, and that faculty, in their zeal to promote academic BDS, are the driving force behind this dangerous increase. Also this year, AMCHA’s survey on “*Antisemitism on U.S. Campuses and Efforts to Address It*” was a featured mini-report in the Tel Aviv University Kantor Center’s report on global antisemitism. AMCHA’s work was also featured in the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs report on BDS and antisemitism and cited in the Alums for Campus Fairness report on antisemitism at Columbia University and in the Zachor Legal Institute report on the BDS Movement.
- **EDUCATING: AMCHA successfully brings the problem of campus antisemitism to national awareness with effective media campaigns.** In 2019, over 350 [articles](#) and radio/podcast shows covering AMCHA’s comprehensive report and efforts to combat antisemitism appeared in media outlets including the *New York Times*, *CNN*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Times*, *Politico*, *Newsweek*, *Orange County Register*, *Mercury News*, *Apple Podcasts*, *Jerusalem Post*, *Arutz Sheva*, *Times of Israel*, *Jewish Journal*, *JTA*, *JNS*, *Forward* and many more. In addition, AMCHA’s director, Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, spoke and participated in several conferences across the globe, including her invited participation at the U.S. Department of Justice Summit on Combating Antisemitism, where two speakers [cited](#) AMCHA Initiative’s research as being critical to understanding campus antisemitism.
- **DOCUMENTING: AMCHA Initiative’s website continues to be the only publicly-accessible database of antisemitic activity on over 400 campuses nationwide, and remains a critical resource for university stakeholders, journalists, researchers, allied groups, legislators, and scholars.** AMCHA’s numerous incident trackers, BDS-related [databases](#), and video libraries are accessed worldwide, with the website garnering 5,000 page views a month stemming from a wide-range of users including parents, students, alumni, researchers, journalists, legislators and public policy makers. AMCHA’s Antisemitism Incident Tracker has documented over 600 incidents of antisemitic activity on nearly 150 campuses in 2019, and 200 student quotes have been logged.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Get involved:** Share the data in AMCHA’s [antisemitism databases](#) and sign up to receive our [bulletins](#)
- **Help us to continue our impactful work – DONATE!** Donate online with a single or recurring donation at [AMCHAinitiative.org/donate](https://AMCHAinitiative.org/donate); or by check made out to *AMCHA Initiative* at P.O. Box 408, Santa Cruz, CA 95061

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