

Subject: Follow-up letter regarding departmental sponsorship of upcoming conference

Date: October 11, 2023 at 8:22:22 AM PDT

Dear Chancellor Larive,

We are writing this letter as a follow-up to the letter we sent last week, for which we have not received even an acknowledgment. We are deeply dismayed by your silence.

Furthermore, we are profoundly disappointed by the [statement](#) that was issued by your office yesterday about the “Israel-Hamas conflict.” On Saturday, more Jews were murdered for simply being Jews than in any day since the Nazis rampaged. The unprecedented, horrific events unfolding in Israel cannot in good conscience be described as a “conflict.” Hamas terrorists went door-to-door hunting down Jews, slaughtering babies, burning families alive, gunning down hundreds of young people at a music festival, raping women and kidnapping over 100 Israelis, including children, the elderly, Holocaust survivors. Yesterday, President Biden [described](#) these atrocities as “pure, unadulterated evil” perpetrated by “Hamas, a group whose stated purpose for being is to kill Jews.” UCSC should be ashamed for issuing a statement suggesting that these acts are simply a “regional conflict” or that there is some kind of moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas.

President Drake and Regents Chair Leib, in their shared [statement](#), got it right, calling out the “horrific attack on Israel,” the “unspeakable terror,” and the “sickening and incomprehensible violence,” forcefully stating the attack “deserves and requires our collective condemnation.” It is imperative that no less is stated by your office, especially in light of the inaugural conference of the so-called “Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism,” scheduled to begin on Friday, that is being sponsored by three UCSC academic units.

We remind you that the openly antizionist conference is intended to provide academic legitimacy for the movement to deny Jews the right for a national home. This is what antizionism means. The barbaric attack by the Palestinian terror group Hamas – whose [charter](#) explicitly calls for waging a “Jihad” or holy war to “obliterate” the Jewish national home and ethnically cleanse it of Jews - should make it clear to you that a conference claiming that “antizionism is not antisemitism” is not only incomprehensible, it is deeply antisemitic and a threat to Jews everywhere, including at UCSC.

Moreover, as conference organizers have recently made clear, this conference will be used to justify and support Hamas and its genocidal goals. On Sunday, Emmaia Gelmen, co-founder and director of the “institute” putting on the conference, [celebrated](#) the Hamas terrorists who used bulldozers to break through the Gaza security fence to murder Israelis. The day before, as Hamas’ heinous, genocidal attack was in full swing, Gelman’s fellow “institute” founder and conference organizer Rabab Abdulhadi [defended](#) Hamas’ actions as legitimate efforts “to defend themselves against [Israel’s] colonial & racist violence.”

As world Jewry reels from the most devastating attack on Jews since the Holocaust, the sponsorship of this grotesque conference by three UCSC academic units can’t help but incite antisemitism at our university and lead to the targeting of its Jewish members for harm.

Your first priority must be guaranteeing the safety and well-being of Jewish members of the UCSC community – students, faculty and staff; it is wholly unacceptable to hide beneath the mantle of academic freedom. Indeed, we believe that using UCSC’s name and departmental authority to justify, even implicitly, the barbaric slaughter, torture, mutilation, rape and kidnapping of Jews is **a clear abuse of academic freedom**, and that not acknowledging this is a dereliction of duty.

We therefore urge you to:

1. Issue a strong, morally unambiguous public statement condemning the barbaric Hamas attack, expressing solidarity with the Jewish campus community, and reassuring them that you will do everything in your power to ensure their safety and well-being.
2. Demand that the three UCSC campus units remove their sponsorship from the upcoming antisemitic, pro-Hamas conference being organized by several UCSC faculty members.

Sincerely,

Ilan Benjamin, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry

David Kliger, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus and former Executive Vice Chancellor

Darrell Long, Distinguished Professor of Engineering, Emeritus

Marc Mangel, Distinguished Professor of Mathematical Biology, Emeritus

Ethan Miller, Professor of Computer Science and Engineering, Emeritus

Ike Nassi, Adjunct Professor of Computer Science