

March 15, 2024

Via email: regentsoffice@ucop.edu

Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Regents  
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear UC Regents:

We write to you to express our alarm regarding the rise in antisemitic incidents on University of California (UC) college campuses both before, and notably since, Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The safety and well-being of Jewish and Israeli students are under threat, and urgent action is needed to address their physical safety as well as the ongoing threats to their freedom of speech, expression, and religion.

Our nation's campuses, including UC schools, have become microcosms of the tension around the conflict in the Middle East, and the Jewish community on campus is bearing the brunt. Reported antisemitic incidents - including physical assaults, threats, discrimination, and harassment - have created a deleterious climate that negatively impacts Jewish students' ability to access all educational opportunities and fully participate in campus life.

While we recognize and support the ongoing efforts by Jewish campus organizations to help encourage and foster a thriving Jewish campus life, the increasingly untenable climate on campus has hindered some Jewish students from fully participating. Since October 7, 2023, there has been a 2000% increase in antisemitic incidents on college campuses across California compared to the same period last year, according to the ADL.

We are working in partnership with the California Legislative Jewish Caucus, which [recently](#) expressed its alarm regarding the intense rise in antisemitic incidents on UC campuses. Most notably, within the last month, Jewish students at UC Berkeley were threatened, harassed, and assaulted by protesters seeking to shut down a private event on campus hosted by three Jewish student organizations. [Students reported](#) being spat on, called derogatory names like "dirty Jew," and physically assaulted, while protestors smashed windows and blocked access to the venue. At UC Santa Barbara, signs were posted in the campus multicultural center seeking to stop students who support Zionism—those who believe in Israel's right to exist—from accessing public spaces. These signs also [directly targeted](#) the student body president, who is Jewish, with threatening language including, "You can run but you can't hide."

We appreciate President Michael Drake's recent [remarks](#) and [initiatives](#) to promote safety, inclusion, and belonging. We are also tremendously grateful to the UC Regents for their support and leadership at this moment. We urge this body to exercise its authority and influence to ensure the following proactive steps are taken:

1. During the upcoming Regents Meeting, support [Action J1](#), "Adoption of Regents Policy on the Use of University Administrative Websites."
2. Enforce all university policies, including nondiscrimination policies, student and faculty codes of conduct, and student group policies to protect all members of the university community, including Jewish and Israeli students, from discrimination and harassment based on their shared ancestral and ethnic identity connected to Israel. This includes, but is not limited to, partially blocking or impeding access for students on campus (see example from UC Berkeley's [Sather Gate](#)).
3. Ensure necessary action is taken to revoke official recognition and funding of any student or faculty group that engages in discriminatory practices and/or violates the code of conduct, making clear that university support including UC logos, facilities, and funding will not be used to advance these activities.
4. While free speech is fundamental to our democracy and our values, there must be zero tolerance for speech that threatens or incites violence. Furthermore, UC campuses should not tolerate a "heckler's veto" or platform denial -- freedom of speech does not afford the right to silence others. Finally, the fact that discriminatory harassment may involve speech does not relieve a school of its obligation to respond if the speech contributes to a hostile environment under Title VI. Schools must take these obligations seriously.
5. Ensure that the academic freedom of faculty and students is fully protected. Students should be made aware of their rights to academic freedom, including the right to question information presented in the classroom setting without fear of reprisal from faculty. Simultaneously, faculty should be reminded of the responsibilities that accompany the right to academic freedom, including the requirements of providing space for multiple, diverse viewpoints and ensuring the factual accuracy of the information and materials they present to students.
6. Support students who seek to exercise their freedom of expression and assembly. This must extend to ensuring designated speakers can safely and effectively address an audience, free from violence or disruption. If a program is forced to cancel, ensure that it is rescheduled immediately in an equally accessible place under the auspices of the respective UC campuses to ensure that the free speech rights of the targeted students are respected and protected.

7. Expand campus codes of conduct to include appropriate disciplinary measures for those who call for the genocide of a people. (see ADL Sample of [Student Code of Conduct](#))
8. Empower UC administrators to immediately, directly, unequivocally, and vociferously, speak out to condemn all forms of hate. This includes speaking out against antisemitism and expressions of support for U.S.-designated foreign terrorist groups, such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Use the UC's various speech platforms to make clear that Jewish students, like all other students, have a right to feel safe, secure, and included.
9. Promptly address antisemitic incidents on campus, ensuring investigation is swift, and, when appropriate, hold those accountable with immediate discipline. Creating a clear process and timelines for incident responses and reporting protocol and responsibilities, as well as ways to promote the [UC Incident Reporting Form](#), is critical. Additionally, committing to transparency regarding legal protections for all students and communication of the adjudication of outcomes is also an important element of bringing healing and closure to the community.
10. Invest in initiatives and a statewide curriculum that can help develop student skills to enable difficult conversations and diverse viewpoints with intellectual courage and openness.
11. Issue a directive that all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as anti-harassment/anti-discrimination education and training for higher education employees, and state employees, have a component of Jewish identity and antisemitism included. In consultation with one or more respected and recognized Jewish organizations, develop training modules on religious discrimination and antisemitism as part of the onboarding process for students, faculty, and staff.
12. Establish a standing Advisory Committee on Jewish Life on each campus, composed of Jewish leaders including students, faculty, and other stakeholders from the campus Hillel, Chabad, and mainstream Jewish community, who can help provide guidance and support for a thriving Jewish campus life. We also encourage UC campuses to collaborate with Hillel International and join Hillel's Campus Climate Initiative to address antisemitism on campus.
13. Thank you in advance for your attention to this pressing issue. We hope to serve as a resource, join forces, and collectively work together to combat antisemitism, support Jewish students, and pave the way for a future where antisemitism has no place in our universities and where excellence in education is synonymous with unwavering moral integrity.

Sincerely,

30 Years After  
ADL California  
Agudath Israel of California  
Alpha Epsilon Pi at UC Berkeley  
Berkeley Hillel  
Bet Tzedek  
Board of Rabbis of Southern California  
Democrats for Israel  
ETTA  
European Leadership Network (ELNET-U.S.)  
Hadassah, Central Pacific Coast Region  
Hillel 818  
Hillel at UCLA  
Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles  
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund  
Jewish Community Relations Council, Bay Area  
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties  
Jewish Family Service LA

Jewish Federation Los Angeles  
Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara  
Jewish Federation of Orange County  
Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys  
Jewish Free Loan Association  
Jewish Long Beach  
Jewish Silicon Valley  
Jewish World Watch  
Jews United for Democracy and Justice  
JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa  
JPAC – Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California  
JQ International  
Santa Barbara Hillel  
Simon Wiesenthal Center  
StandWithUs  
Temple Beth Hillel  
USC Hillel