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**Anti-Defamation League
Foundation**

President

Milton S. Schneider



June 10, 2015

University of California Board of Regents
Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Regents
1111 Franklin St., 12th floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Honorable Members of the University of California Board of Regents,

We write to express our deep concern about the rise of anti-Semitic incidents on University of California campuses, to acknowledge the commitment of President Napolitano and the leadership of the UC system to deal clearly and directly with the problem of anti-Semitism and to share some recommendations about steps the Regents can take in light of these troubling developments. We know you are committed to safeguarding the security of all members of the university community, we appreciate your partnership in this endeavor, and we hope these suggestions will inform and enhance your efforts.

In order to adequately address any problem, one must be able to accurately identify its elements. Anti-Semitism is a multifaceted form of prejudice which can be, and is, manifested in many different ways. A clear and uniform definition of anti-Semitism will provide the UC system with a critically important tool to aid in counteracting anti-Semitism on campuses.

For this reason we support President Napolitano's recent public comments favoring adoption by the UC system of the definition of anti-Semitism in the State Department's Fact Sheet. The Fact Sheet offers a useful description of contemporary manifestations of anti-Semitism, including those that target Jews individually or collectively and includes useful examples of references to Israel which cross the line into anti-Semitism. Like the European Union Working Definition that was the basis for the Fact Sheet, these examples elucidate the kind of anti-Jewish themes that are often the backdrop of anti-Semitic incidents. Adopting this definition will heighten awareness and increase understanding of anti-Jewish expressions and behaviors, and will assist students, administrators and faculty on campuses to more effectively address anti-Semitic incidents when they occur.

At the same time, it is essential to keep in mind that the State Department definition of anti-Semitism was not created for use in a university setting. Rather, it serves as a guidepost for America's diplomats who report on incidents and trends around the world. Therefore, we urge caution in determining what consequences will flow from its adoption. For instance, we would not support its incorporation into a speech code designed to restrict First Amendment protected expression on UC campuses. The First Amendment protects even the ugliest and most anti-Semitic speech; the best response to hateful speech is for administrators, faculty and students to denounce it

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with better, more persuasive speech. Having the definition as a common reference point and guidepost will enhance the ability to engage in effective counter-speech.

Leaders and stakeholders in the UC community have the ability to make a significant impact on those targeted by hate when they utilize their bully pulpits and individual voices to speak out against hateful speech. UC Davis Chancellor Linda Katehi set a positive example when she immediately responded to despicable graffiti –including a swastika – found on the exterior of a Jewish fraternity. Chancellor Katehi appropriately labeled the incident a “reprehensible” violation of the principles of tolerance and inclusion. The statement that you and UC President Napolitano issued in the wake of this incident and several others was similarly compelling and effective.

ADL’s favored approach is holistic. These critical issues need to be addressed from pedagogical, legal and community relations perspectives. Our approach is drawn from our experience monitoring, reporting on and helping students respond to the anti-Israel movement that is active on many American college campuses, a movement that has, at times, created an atmosphere of tension and hostility for Jewish and pro-Israel students.

Most recently, ADL has facilitated the following programs on UC campuses:

- On April 21st, ADL staff delivered a presentation to the members of UCLA’s Undergraduate Students Association Council (USAC) on anti-Semitism, criticism of Israel, and freedom of speech, focusing on how these complex topics intersect. The presentation included a segment on the responsibilities of student leaders to use their governance positions to stand up for all members of the student body – even those with whom they disagree. ADL is the only off-campus organization to have presented directly to USAC as part of the response to the February 2015 anti-Semitic questioning of Rachel Beyda at UCLA,
- On April 15th, ADL presented *Words to Action* to UC Riverside Hillel students, faculty and staff. *Words to Action* is ADL’s national program designed to empower and equip students with constructive and effective responses to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Israel bias on campus. Through interactive workshops, *Words to Action* helps students to increase their understanding of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel bias and the distinction between them, and to gain the knowledge and skills to respond to the variety of ways anti-Semitism manifests itself, from insensitive or biased comments to hate-motivated incidents. ADL staff will be conducting similar *Words to Action* trainings at both UC Santa Cruz and UC Davis.

We also regularly consult with campus administrators, staff, faculty and students about how to prevent and respond to inter-group strife on campus. This includes training students on how to expose and discredit the boycott, divest and sanction (BDS) movement; providing students with resources, research and talking points about the BDS movement; and assisting students in forging coalitions to combat those resolutions that are harmful to campus climate.

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ADL's experience combating all forms of bigotry on and off campus has taught us that leaders and stakeholders must recognize, acknowledge and act on their responsibility to be vigilant and to mobilize the will and resources for the kind of multi-pronged, comprehensive approach that can make a difference in counteracting anti-Semitism and all forms of prejudice. ADL is committed to being an accessible resource for the campus community in fighting hate and in developing educational programs to help prevent it.

We look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Abraham H. Foxman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director

AHF:dj

cc: President Janet Napolitano
Seth Grossman