

117* Organizations Urge Investigation of UC Santa Cruz Department

January 18, 2024

SENT VIA EMAIL

**Original letter was 115. Updated to 117 organizational signatories.*

Dear University of California Regents, President Drake, and Attorney General Bonta:

We are 117 education, civil rights and religious organizations, who are deeply concerned about the relentless promotion of anti-Zionist propaganda and activism by the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) department at UC Santa Cruz, that appears to be in flagrant violation of UC policy and California law.

As documented in the detailed [report](#) you received, “Anti-Zionist Advocacy and Activism of the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Department at University of California Santa Cruz,” in numerous official statements, sponsored events and web postings, CRES has committed itself, as a department and as a core element of its discipline, to anti-Zionist political advocacy and activism to undermine and ultimately dismantle the Jewish state.

For example, in May 2021, CRES pledged departmental allegiance to “the struggle for Palestinian liberation” and committed its faculty to bringing the academic boycott of Israel (the academic arm of the antisemitic BDS movement) onto campus and into their classrooms. More recent incidents include blaming Israel for the October 7th Hamas massacre of Israeli civilians and calling Israel’s defensive measures a “genocide”; incorporating anti-Zionist propaganda, including clear falsehoods, into their teaching and teacher training programs; shutting down their department as part of a “Global General Strike” against Israel and calling for students to boycott their classes; and promoting and participating in the “Shut It Down for Palestine” protest rally of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) that illegally blocked access to the campus. Even after a clear warning from the UCSC Provost highlighting UC policies prohibiting political advocacy and activism “in the classroom and other instructional spaces,” CRES faculty doubled-down on their political activities, recently announcing on their university website the launch of Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP), a group designed to serve as the faculty-arm of SJP.

While CRES’s substitution of political indoctrination and activism for scholarship and education ultimately hurts everyone in the academic community, we are especially concerned about its deleterious impact on the campus community’s Jewish members. Against the backdrop of an [explosion](#) of campus antisemitism since Hamas’ massacre of Israeli civilians on October 7th, CRES’s behavior gives academic legitimacy to virulent antisemitism and can’t help but contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students, faculty and staff at UCSC.

Furthermore, given CRES's new teacher certification program and the aggressive efforts of CRES faculty to develop the state-wide standard for teaching ethnic studies in required high school courses, CRES's anti-Zionist approach to the discipline - and the antisemitism it will inevitably incite – are likely to spread to K-12 classrooms throughout the state.

Recent [statements](#) by government officials and UC leaders acknowledge that faculty who use their university positions and public resources to promote anti-Zionist propaganda and activism are responsible for inciting campus antisemitism, and they recognize that such behavior violates University regulations and the law, and must be stopped. In a letter to the leaders of California's public universities and colleges, Governor Newsom remarked, "Antisemitism globally and at home has proliferated at a shocking speed and scale. And some faculty have inflamed the discourse with violent rhetoric...This is unacceptable and demands action." In response to the "explosion of antisemitism" on California campuses in the wake of the October 7th massacre, the CA Legislative Jewish Caucus released a statement expressing that its members were "deeply troubled by reports of UC and CSU faculty egregiously abusing their authority...to amplify antisemitic and anti-Israel propaganda," concluding, "In light of these abuses, the UC and CSU systems must take immediate action to protect Jewish students." And at the latest meeting of the UC Board of Regents, UC Regents Chair Leib recounted hearing from many Jewish students who "believe their rights have been violated by episodes of academic abuse...in violation of the faculty code of conduct and our University policies," emphasizing, "that is not OK."

These statements are a good first step. But to prevent further erosion of public confidence in the University, they must be followed by concrete action.

The abundant evidence that UCSC's Critical Race and Ethnic Studies department has violated UC policy and the law suggests one such action: **an immediate and thorough investigation of the department, with punitive action taken for all violations.**

Thank you for considering our concerns and for your leadership in these challenging times,

A Time to Stand
Academic Council for Israel
AJC Los Angeles
AJC San Diego
AJC San Francisco
Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies
Alliance of Blacks and Jews
Alums for Campus Fairness - National
Alums for Campus Fairness - Tufts
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside
Amariah
AMCHA Initiative

America Israel Cooperative Enterprise
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists
American Council of Trustees and Alumni
American Jewish Congress
American Russian-Speaking Jews Alliance
Americans Against Antisemitism
Americans Fighting Antisemitism
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
Association of Jewish Educators
Atlanta Israel Coalition
B'nai B'rith International
Binghamton University Zionist Organization (BUZO)
BIPACT (Bipartisan Action Against Antisemitism)
Bnai Zion Foundation
Boston Israel Action Committee
Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law
Bulldogs for Israel (Brooklyn College)
California Association of Scholars
Californians for Equal Rights
CAMERA Education Institute
CAMERA on Campus
CAMERA's Partnership of Christians and Jews
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore
Christians and Jews United for Israel
Club Z
Coalition for Jewish Values
Coalition of Hindus of North America
Combat Anti-Semitism Movement
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA)
Creative Community for Peace
Davis Faculty for Israel
Eagles Wings
Education Without Indoctrination
Educators Caucus for Israel (UTLA)
EndJewHatred
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)
FAIR Education Santa Barbara
Fight Back Now
Fuel for Truth
Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors

Hillel at Davis and Sacramento
Hillel of Silicon Valley
Inland and Desert Hillel
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization
Israel Committee of Santa Barbara
Israel in NYC
Israel Matters
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)
Israeli-American Civic Action Network
Israeli-American Civic Education Institute
JAM
Jerusalem Education Fund
Jewish Affairs Caucus of the National Education Association
Jewish American Affairs Committee of Indiana
Jewish Institute for Liberal Values
Jewish Studies Zionist Network
Jewish TV Channel
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)
LatinX for Quality Education
Legal Insurrection Foundation
Middle East Forum
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
National Association of Scholars
National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel
NH4Israel
North Carolina Coalition for Israel
PeerK12
Persian American Civic Action Network (PACAN)
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Psychologists Against Antisemitism
Rabbinical Alliance of America
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel
Russian Jewish Community Foundation
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
StandWithUs Center for Combating Antisemitism
StandWithUs Saidoff Legal Department

Stop Anti-Semitism Now
Stop BDS on Campus
Stop Antisemitism
Students Supporting Israel at Hofstra University
Students Supporting Israel at University of California Santa Barbara
Students Supporting Israel at University of Central Florida
Students Supporting Israel National
Students Supporting Israel of Santa Monica College
Students, Alumni, and Faculty for Equality on Campus (S.A.F.E Campus)
Swarthmore Alumni Against Antisemitism on Campus
The Daniel Pearl Foundation
The Deborah Project
The Israel Christian Nexus
The Lawfare Project
The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Unified Jewish Voices
World Jewish Congress North America
Young Israel of Century City
Young Israel of Orange County
Zachor Legal Institute
Zion Academy of Music and Arts
Zionist Organization of America

CC:

UC Chancellors
UC General Counsel
Chair of UC Academic Senate James Steintrager
Vice Chair of UC Academic Senate Steven Cheung
Governor of California Gavin Newsom
California Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond
California Legislative Jewish Caucus