



October 20, 2016

Via email



Chancellor Nicolas Dirks
Vice Chancellor Na'ilah Nasir
Associate Chancellor Nils Gilman
Dean of Students Joseph Greenwell



Dear Chancellor Dirks, Dean Greenwell, Vice Chancellor Nasir, and Associate Chancellor Gilman:



We, the undersigned organizations, condemn the hateful and racist [posters](#) placed on UC Berkeley's campus last week, slandering multiple faculty members, a student and two student groups by name as "terrorists" and "Jew-haters" for their support for Palestinian rights. We appreciate that the administration condemned the posters, and we request that you do your utmost to protect the safety and speech of students and faculty who face intimidation, bullying and fear mongering.



The poster campaign has drawn sharp criticism and has been covered by the [LA Times](#), [The Guardian](#) and [NPR](#). Pulitzer Prize winner Junot Diaz also [expressed concern](#) over the posters. The UCLA administration has already [condemned the posters](#) as "a focused, personalized intimidation that threatens specific members" of the campus community.



The posters at Berkeley were created by the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a far-right, off-campus organization whose founder, David Horowitz, is labeled an extremist by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), which calls him a "driving force of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-black movements" in America. In recent years, the

Horowitz Center has become notorious for plastering campuses across California with posters that, like those found at Berkeley, slander students and faculty using hateful language and images. To track the names of targeted students and faculty on campus, the Horowitz Center used [Canary Mission](#), an anonymous organization that posts the names, universities, employers, and social media accounts of students and faculty who support Palestinian rights.

Students for Justice in Palestine seeks equality and freedom for Palestinians. Criticism of Israeli government policies, including support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian freedom, is principled human rights advocacy. It is also protected speech under the U.S. and California Constitutions, as well as U.C. policy. Administrators have a responsibility as educators to protect and promote campus discourse on the vital human rights issues of our time, including Israel/Palestine. We commend the brave and principled students and faculty who continue to organize in the face of outside intimidation and repression. We ask you to do the same.

As you know, the appearance of these posters at UC Berkeley is not a new or isolated incident. The Horowitz Freedom Center has taken credit for multiple poster harassment campaigns on campuses across California in recent years, including at Berkeley in spring 2016. As documented in recent reports by [Palestine Legal](#) and [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), these posters are part of a larger pattern of intimidation and suppression of Palestinian rights advocacy. A network of well-funded, pro-Israel groups across the country uses similar tactics of fear, intimidation, harassment, and misinformation to pressure administrators, stifle student voices, and chill First Amendment protected speech on campus.

The Horowitz Center works within this network. For example, on numerous occasions the Horowitz Center has co-signed letters from the AMCHA Initiative to the University of California demanding that the university restrict and punish academic speech discussing Palestinian rights.

This is also, unfortunately, not the only time Berkeley students have been targeted by campaigns of intimidation and disinformation. At the beginning of this semester, a student-led course was summarily suspended by the Berkeley administration after outside Israel advocacy organizations falsely claimed the course was anti-semitic indoctrination. Though the course was reinstated, the university's [egregious violation of academic freedom rights](#) targeting Palestinian perspectives has a severe chilling impact on campus life. The impacts are especially severe in a climate where David Horowitz and other Israel advocacy organizations have repeatedly waged disinformation campaigns to intimidate individual students and faculty.

In a national climate of [rising anti-Muslim and anti-Arab racism](#), Palestinian, Arab and Muslim students at UC Berkeley have been [repeatedly targeted with intimidation and hateful](#) speech not only by outside organizations, but often also from fellow students. It is the responsibility of

administrators to ensure a safe campus environment for all students, especially those most vulnerable to these attacks.

We call on the administration of UC Berkeley to join fellow [administrators](#) and faculty in condemning and publicly recognizing how harmful these tactics are to students' wellbeing and rights. Recently, over 1,000 faculty across the country signed onto [a statement](#) condemning Canary Mission's fearmongering, and insisting that the website 'should not be trusted as a resource to evaluate students' qualifications for admission.

We support the student demands for administrative action, including that Berkeley administrators: (1) publicly affirm support for SJP, the targeted students, and targeted faculty through a statement to the UC Berkeley community, co-written with SJP, as the students requested. (2) organize a UC-wide statement by the UC Regents and UCOP condemning the posters and Canary Mission, and defending individuals targeted in SJP (3) sign a statement [Against Canary Mission](#) to reassure students that UC Berkeley condemns blacklisting of students and faculty who advocate for human rights. (4) Provide letters of recommendation for each student targeted, as requested.

Signed,

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus
American Muslims for Palestine
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Jewish Voice for Peace
National Lawyers Guild- San Francisco Bay Area
Palestine Legal