

Dear Students,

I want to thank the members of MEMSSA for taking the time and making the effort to meet with senior members of my leadership team. Please excuse my delayed response, I have been away from campus and needed to consult with colleagues to ensure I had updated information about recent events, and about all that is being planned and contemplated for the road ahead. They have shared with me your comments, concerns, and requests. I am sending this message to MEMSSA members, as well as members of other student organizations, such as Bears for Palestine, who mobilized in reaction to the resolution regarding the posters.

I am deeply troubled by what I learned about the tone and content of the discourse at the recent ASUC meetings. I understand and am unhappy about how difficult these events were for you, and members of your community. Through letters, meetings, and conversations, students who both supported and opposed the resolution have conveyed disturbing, mirror-image claims, allegations, and fears, as well as demands for the responsive actions they believe are needed. You are all being heard and your fears and concerns are being taken very seriously. Any meeting or event on campus that leaves so many participants--regardless of their perspective and identity--feeling afraid, disregarded, and disrespected must, I believe, call into question not just the conduct of those involved, but also whether we can do more as a community to facilitate dialogue that adheres to the values described in our [Principles of Community](#). There is no greater priority than our commitment to foster and sustain a campus community where everyone feels safe, respected, and welcome at all times, in all places; where everyone feels a true sense of belonging. Even as we in the administration reflect on our own ability to improve the quality of discourse, I can only hope that all involved will do the same.

In the interest of full transparency, I want you to know that I am writing a very similar response to students who supported the resolution. I want all to understand that while the campus acknowledges and understands that students have a constitutionally protected right to display the posters in question, using a campus location to honor those who killed unarmed Jewish civilians and/or bombed, or planned to bomb places frequented by unarmed Jewish civilians, is an affront to our [Principles of Community](#). So too were the words of a speaker at the latest ASUC meeting who proclaimed a desire to, "eliminate Palestinians from the world." I understand why these kinds of actions and statements have created fear and safety concerns among our Palestinian and Muslim communities, and I am telling Israeli students as well as Jewish students from the United States and elsewhere, the very same thing regarding their understandable fears and concerns about the poster's implications and interpretations. I am reaffirming to all involved that threats or acts of violence and harassment are unacceptable as per our Code of Student Conduct and/or the law.

In that context, we are urging any student who has been subject to harassment by another student because of their racial, ethnic or religious identity, to report the incident to our Dean of Students. A harassed student's report should include their own name and all information available to identify the harassing student. We will support the reporting student and direct that student to appropriate resources as we evaluate whether a conduct process or counseling

process needs to be initiated with regard to the harassing student's actions. By the same token, criminal activity, may be [reported to UCPD](#), violations of our student conduct code to the [Center for Student Conduct](#), and acts of discrimination to our [Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#). In addition, incidents or acts of intolerance, hate, harassment or exclusion that do not target a specific victim may be reported to [stophate@berkeley.edu](mailto:stophate@berkeley.edu). If you are uncertain where to turn or need other support, please consult with staff in our [Dean of Students' office](#).

Among the questions I am asking myself and my colleagues is how we can collaborate effectively with the ASUC and provide student government with the best possible support and guidance. Like our student leaders, we want to ensure there is consistent compliance with all campus rules and regulations, and we want to support the ASUC's ability to always serve as a venue for respectful debate. While we must respect the ASUC's legal independence and autonomy, I want to explore offering more resources to help the ASUC plan for ASUC meetings that involve controversial issues and deeply divided protagonists. In the wake of recent events, my colleagues in Student Affairs will, together with ASUC executives, be exploring opportunities for training in effective strategies and tactics for de-escalation, effective meeting management, and fostering a safe and secure environment. Student Affairs staff are also consulting with the Restorative Justice Center to explore avenues for facilitating constructive dialogue and discussion.

I am also, as always, intent on ensuring that we are providing UCPD with the support and guidance needed to provide appropriate security and respond to unlawful behavior---no matter the venue or circumstances---in a way that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of our diverse community. In response to questions from Jewish Students about UCPD's guidelines and procedures for responding to criminal behavior occurring at ASUC meetings, those students will be provided with an opportunity to meet with UCPD Chief Margo Bennett. UCPD, like every part of the administration, is open to and interested in constructive criticism and ideas that support and align with our values, our mission and our rules. If you are interested in having a similar discussion, please contact Jennifer Woods in Chief Bennett's office: [jwoods@berkeley.edu](mailto:jwoods@berkeley.edu)

I will continue to speak out loudly and clearly in condemnation of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Blackness, racism, and other hateful ideologies and perspectives that target people based on their identity, origins, or beliefs. We are in the process of assessing the best, most effective way to provide during the Golden Bear Orientation for all new students, educational information about Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Blackness, racism, and other ideologies that are antithetical to our Principles of Community. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Steve Sutton, and Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education, Cathy Koshland, will convene the Golden Bear Orientation Steering and Coordinating Committees to work on this important effort, in consultation with students. We are also accelerating our evaluation of similar, educational programs that can be provided to faculty, staff, and other members of our community. I am committed to keeping the campus updated on the progress and outcome of this work.

In addition, the Chancellor's Committee on Jewish Student Life, the Triad, and other ethnic and religious campus committees and community groups have played a profoundly important role in advancing a wide range of actions and initiatives in support of their community's needs and interests. I want all communities to have the same level of access to me and senior campus leaders. I have asked Oscar Dubon, Jr., Vice Chancellor, Equity and Inclusion, to seek your specific ideas and proposals for the establishment, charter, and membership of a Chancellor's Committee on Palestinian & Muslim Student Life. I am also asking Vice Chancellor Dubon to explore the possibility of re-establishing the Chancellor's Council on Students of Color and Multi-Cultural Engagement. These committees have been invaluable forums for discussion, and provide to me and other campus leaders input and ideas about emerging challenges and issues of concern, as well as opportunities for improvement. I am committed to keeping the campus updated on the progress and outcome of this work.

You have also brought to my attention your concerns about websites that attack and personally identify individual students. Ad hominem attacks have the effect, and often the intention, of discouraging people from participating in public discourse and advocating for their beliefs. I believe that practices such as doxing, posting home addresses and other private information on public websites, and inaccurately labeling people as criminals or terrorists are inconsistent with the values of a democratic society.

I am and will remain committed to improving communication with, and the support provided to your respective communities. A copy of this letter, as well as the one I am sending to student organizations who are on the opposing side of the discussion will be posted to my [website](#).

Sincerely,

Carol Christ  
Chancellor  
UC Berkeley