

June 12, 2018

Dear Students,

Over the past few weeks, the Associated Students Senate has been engaged in a contentious debate over a resolution calling for an end to the University of California's investments in companies that allegedly profit from human rights violations against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Advocates on all sides have expressed feeling disrespected and frustrated as some policies and procedures of the Associated Students Senate meeting have been used to shut down discussion rather than facilitating it.

We plan to work with incoming elected student leadership and with AS staff to review these procedures so that rigorous debate can happen with all students and all perspectives heard. Unfortunately, the discussion of this resolution has been limited by hateful online and on-campus messaging and posts, sometimes by individuals affiliated with the university and other times by external entities. Specifically, students have been targeted in comments in the Daily Nexus and during AS Senate meetings. Those who are supporting Palestinian rights have reported that they have been called "terrorists". On May 22, when they protested the lack of opportunity to formally present their resolution at Senate, the resolution was still not heard as no deliberation took place, and the police were called reinforcing the perception that their perspective means they are dangerous or even violent. Other students reported that statements made about their Jewish identity and about Israel evoked anti-Semitism. These are issues that give rise to strong feelings, but we can do better by listening to each other and allowing space for a diversity of opinion. There are certainly other issues on campus that give rise to similarly strong feelings, but this is one debate that has played out here over the past few weeks and has been recurring over the years.

UC Santa Barbara has [resources](#) for support and to report concerns about bias or discrimination.

As part of our work with Associated Students, we will seek to develop more productive processes for encouraging constructive engagement around complex ideas and controversial subjects. Our standing as an academic institution relies on our ability to encourage and support difficult dialogue.

Thank you for your commitment and interest, and best wishes for success on your final exams of the spring quarter.

Sincerely,

Margaret Klawunn, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Marisela Marquez, Executive Director, Associated Students
Lecturer for Chicano/Chicana Studies and Political Science