



LA Jews for Peace

Info@LAJewsforPeace.org

www.LAJewsforPeace.org <https://www.facebook.com/LAJP.org>

March 20, 2016

TO: University of California Regents
THROUGH: Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Regents
1111 Franklin St., 12th floor, Oakland, CA 94607
email: regentsoffice@ucop.edu
SUBJECT: Comment on Jan. 22 Draft Intolerance Rules

Honorable Members of the University of California Board of Regents,

LA Jews for Peace is a group of Jewish Angelenos and allies committed to peace in the Middle East. We are focused on ending the Israeli occupation, and have interests for peace throughout the entire region.

LA Jews for Peace is disappointed in the Final Report of the Regents Working Group on Principles Against Intolerance dated Jan. 22, 2016. The report purports to provide broad-based guidelines against discrimination and bigotry in the University of California community. But the Report does not do that. Rather, the Report focuses almost exclusively on anti-Semitism (giving short-shrift to other issues) and also conflates anti-Semitism with any political discussion or critique of Zionism. That is a mistaken and an unfortunate position that was elaborated upon by Rabbi (and UCLA alumnus) Brent Rosen in a March 18 *Ha'aretz* article "Anti-Zionism Isn't a 'Form of Discrimination,' and It's Not anti-Semitism" (<http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.709457>).

Members of LA Jews for Peace oppose the Israeli occupation and Israel's apartheid regime in the West Bank, a regime that oppresses Palestinians. Yet none of us is anti-Semitic. The proposed guidelines make it all too easy for our protest against American support for Israel's policy to be demonized as anti-Zionist when, in fact, our criticism is directed at Israel's occupation and does not question the legitimacy of the state of Israel itself.

Also, by focusing so heavily on Jewish anti-Semitism, the Report almost entirely ignores real problems including Islamophobia, racism, sexual and gender aggression issues, and discrimination against Palestinians.

The LA Jews for Peace analysis suggests that the Report's effect will be to shut down any real political criticism of Israel's policies, thereby undermining the University's mission, as stated in the Report's first Principle, "to promote discovery and create and disseminate knowledge, to expand opportunities for all, and to educate a civil populace and the next generation of leaders."

A March 16 *LA Times* editorial suggested adopting the Report's ten Principles, and rejecting the Report's narrative sections. We reject that suggestion. We don't think the ten Principles can realistically be separated from the background of why and how they were produced.

LA Jews for Peace urges the Regents to reject the Final Report of the Regents Working Group on Principles Against Intolerance. We urge replacing it with a broader, less politically biased, and more tolerant version.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

LA Jews for Peace
Jeff Warner, Action Coordinator