

From: OCR
To: OCR San Francisco
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: FW: Title VI Complaint Against Stanford University
Date: Monday, November 20, 2023 11:31:00 AM

November 20, 2023

Dear OCR San Francisco Office,

The email below is being forwarded to your office for review and appropriate handling.

Thank you,

OPEN Center Customer Service Team

Office for Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Education

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)
Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 11:43 AM
To: OCR <OCR@ed.gov>
Subject: Title VI Complaint Against Stanford University

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

You don't often get email from (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C) [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon,

I am reaching out to you as a concerned American citizen. Ever since the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel of October 7, 2023, I have felt increasingly concerned about the well being of students on campus.

The October 7 Hamas attack on Israel killed over 1,200 innocent people including at least 30 Americans. This was the deadliest Palestinian militant attack on Israel in history and the single deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust.

Just days after the attack, a Stanford professor targeted students in their class based on their status as Jews. The instructor asked Jewish and Israeli students to identify themselves during a session for a required undergraduate course called "(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)"

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

The teacher told the Jewish students to take their belongings, stand in a corner, and said, "This is what Israel does to the Palestinians." The instructor then asked, "How many people died in the Holocaust?" When a student answered, "Six million," the lecturer said, "Colonizers killed more than 6 million. Israel is a colonizer."

The Jewish and Israeli students were afraid to speak up in class out of fear that they would be penalized grade-wise. The teacher (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

This professor was saying that (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
This is what Jewish students face at Stanford and other places. They are feeling isolated, under

attack and threatened.

Students in this professor's classes report the professor asking where their ancestors were from and labeled them as a "colonizer" or "colonized." "I feel absolutely dehumanized that someone in charge of students and developing minds could possibly try and justify the massacre of my people," student (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); told the San Francisco Chronicle. "It's like I'm reliving the justification of Nazis 80 years ago on today's college campus."

That very same weekend, pro-Palestinian banners went up on campus. One read, "The Illusion of Israel is Burning," and another showing a Palestinian flag and the words, "The Land Remembers Her People." Although the banners were taken down that Monday, students reported seeing chalked anti-Israel slogans around campus.

The Daily, Stanford's student newspaper, published an op-ed from the campus's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) which described the October 7th attacks on Israel as "part of the protracted struggle against settler-colonial oppression," saying that "no conversation about Palestine can be conducted without the context of the decades of systematic oppression, discrimination and violence the Palestinian people have faced." The group condemned Israel's attacks on Gaza as "illegal collective punishment under the Geneva Convention."

This all came just a month after a hate crime investigation was opened at Stanford because of antisemitic drawing discovered on a whiteboard attached to a Jewish student's dorm room door. And this past February, multiple swastikas, the N-word and the letters "KKK" were scratched into a metal panel in a bathroom on campus.

On October 20, nearly 1,000 people gathered on campus for an anti-Israel protest organized by the campus chapter of SJP. Protestors called for the University to explicitly acknowledge war crimes supposedly committed by Israel and the history of the Israel-Gaza conflict, including the 75-year-long "occupation" of Palestine.

The term "occupation" is employed in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to advance the argument that Israel bears ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the Palestinians, while limiting or denying Israel's right to defend itself against Palestinian terror, and relieving the Palestinian side of responsibility for its own actions and their consequences. The term is also employed as part of a general assault upon Israel's legitimacy, in the context of a geopolitical narrative that has little to do with Israel's status as an occupier under international law.

Students crowded around the stage with Palestinian flags and posters that read "your tax \$\$\$ are funding genocide," "stop the genocide in Gaza" and "stand w/Palestine." Protestors sang chants like "Free, Free Palestine," and "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

The phrase "from the river to the sea" supports the expulsion, and even genocide, of Israel's Jewish inhabitants. Additionally, it rejects a peaceful solution to the conflict, where Israel and Palestine could have a two-state solution and live side-by-side. It calls for the eradication of Israel in its entirety.

Starting on October 20, and taking place since then, SJP organized a "Sit-In to Stop Genocide" on campus in an effort to put pressure on Stanford administration to provide

resources to Palestinian students and divest from Israel, among other demands.

On October 25, over 300 students held signs that read, “Free Palestine,” “Stop Genocide” and “To stand with Palestine is to stand with humanity,” as they walked out of class as part of a national walkout “against genocide, settler colonialism and the siege on Gaza.” At the beginning of the walkout, some protestors chanted, “If there is the People for Liberation of Palestine, then we are the Students for Liberation of Palestine” — a reference to the terrorist organization Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command. One protestor’s sign read, “Decolonization is not a metaphor.” Another sign read, “Long live the Intifada.”

The “Intifada” refers to violent Palestinian unrest in the 1980s and 2000s that killed Israeli soldiers and civilians.

On November 9, SJP organized a “die-in” on the campus’s Main Quad to advocate for divesting and boycotting Israeli ventures and academic institutions as well as mourn Palestinian civilians who have been killed during the Israel-Hamas war over the last month. Participants wore red, white, and Stanford-branded clothes, with some draping themselves in white cloths painted with fake blood. Some held dollar bills with blood stains and signs that read “Stop murdering kids,” “Justice for Gaza” and “Stanford divest now.”

Students for Justice in Palestine is a recognized student group by Stanford and is eligible to receive funding from the university.

These violent words and actions justify the wanton slaughter of Jews that Hamas has committed, including raping, murdering, and kidnapping.

I am writing to you on the behalf of the 1,800 Jewish students on campus who are also afraid, as the University takes no action to protect them.

Members of Congress are currently discussing additional protections from the Department of Education for Jewish college students amid the current wave of antisemitic incidents. But Stanford University continues to allow very clear threats.

Therefore, I ask the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights to conduct an immediate investigation against Stanford University. We are seeking sanctions against the University to the fullest extent OCR is able to impose them as well as forcing the University to ensure its funds are not sent to organizations spreading antisemitism.

For the record, I do not give OCR my consent to disclose my name nor other personal information contained in this Title VI complaint to others for OCR’s investigation of, and enforcement activities related to, the complaint. I understand that OCR may have to close my complaint. I am not interested in participating in early mediation. I do not have an attorney representing me in this matter. I have not complained about these allegations to the University.

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

REGION IX
CALIFORNIA

50 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA
MAIL BOX 1200, ROOM 1545
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

December 7, 2023

Dr. Richard Saller
President
Stanford University
Office of the President
450 Jane Stanford Way, Building 10
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305

By email only to: president@stanford.edu

Re: Stanford University - OCR Case No. 09-24-2083

Dear President Saller:

On November 20, 2023, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) received the above-referenced complaint filed against Stanford University (the University). The complaint alleged the University discriminated against students on the basis of their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry and/or Israeli) when an instructor treated Jewish and Israeli students differently in class and by failing to respond to incidents of harassment of students on the basis of their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) in October and November 2023.

OCR enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d-2000d-7, and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department, the University is subject to Title VI.

OCR will investigate the following issue: whether the University failed to respond in a manner consistent with the requirements of Title VI to alleged different treatment and harassment of students based on their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry and/or Israeli).

Please note that opening an investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination with regard to its merits. During the investigation, OCR is a neutral fact-finder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence from the complainant, the recipient, and other sources, as appropriate. OCR will ensure that its investigation is legally sufficient and addresses the

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allegation as required by OCR’s Case Processing Manual (CPM) (July 18, 2022). Please open this link for additional information about OCR’s Complaint Processing Procedures.

OCR is committed to resolving complaints as promptly as possible. OCR will contact you or your designated representative soon to discuss the allegation and the complaint resolution process. To reach an efficient and timely resolution of this matter, OCR is providing you an opportunity to present the University’s response to these allegations and to submit supporting documentation. Please provide the information described in the attached data request by the date indicated at the top of this letter. OCR has determined that the information itemized in the attached data request is necessary to investigate the allegations. The regulations implementing Title VI, at 34 C.F.R. §§ 100.6(b) and (c), require that a recipient of federal financial assistance make available to OCR information that may be pertinent to reaching a compliance determination. Pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 100.6(c) and 34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(3)(iii), of the regulations implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, OCR may review personally identifiable records without regard to considerations of privacy or confidentiality. OCR will take all proper precautions to protect the identity of any individuals named in the documents.

OCR may close this complaint prior to making formal findings of compliance or non-compliance, provided that the circumstances or information gathered establishes an administrative or other basis for resolution in accordance with the CPM. OCR also would like to make you aware that individuals who file complaints with OCR may have the right to file a private suit in federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation.

On receipt of this letter notifying the University that OCR has opened an investigation of the above-referenced issue, **please contact OCR San Francisco at Lele.Yutzy@ed.gov** with the name, title, email, and telephone number of the person you designate to be OCR’s primary point of contact for the investigation of this complaint.

Please be advised that the University must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against any individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a separate retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, OCR will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released. Your cooperation is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Lele Yutzy, Attorney, at (415) 486-5514 or Lele.Yutzy@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

Yohance Edwards
Team Leader

Attachment