

Recommendations of the UCLA Task Force on Anti-Palestinian, Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim Racism

We wish to begin by recapitulating the recommendations made in our earlier reports, none of which have been addressed by the UCLA administration even as it has doubled down on the atmosphere of militarized surveillance and policing of students and faculty engaging in their constitutionally protected right to free speech and protest. Above all, we urge the university to drop all charges against students and to stop penalizing the advocacy of Palestinian rights and speech on Palestine in general. As we emphasize in our third report, administrators, faculty, staff and students must be held accountable when their actions in suppressing speech on Palestinian human rights contravene codes of conduct and the law and proper disciplinary action must be taken against anyone engaging in racist conduct.

Not only is Palestine by and large (with notable pockets of marginalized exceptions) not taught at UCLA, but, as the third report shows, on far too many occasions when Palestine *is* taught, that teaching has been disrupted and penalized. When individual instructors take on the question of Palestine at UCLA, they do so at their own risk in terms of facing harassment, intimidation and attempts at censorship, on all of which the administration remains silent and inactive. We recall that the crisis year of 2023 on our campus began with a teach-in led by two senior faculty members; under massive off-campus Zionist pressure, that teach-in was forced off campus and onto a remote platform, and students who gathered to attend it in a campus building were attacked by a group of Zionist vigilantes. That attack set the tone for the months to follow and established the pattern that talking about Palestine at UCLA is dangerous—and that the university does not offer protection from that danger.

We note, furthermore, that whereas our campus offers plenty of space and facilities and resources for the free discussion of Zionism and Israel—in the Center for Jewish Studies, the Center for Israel Studies and the campus adjacent Hillel—there is no space for Palestine studies at UCLA. Even our Center for Near Eastern Studies, under constant pressure, avoids addressing the question of Palestine. There is no safe space to talk about Palestine on our campus.

In view of the aforementioned circumstances, these, then, are our recommendations:

1. In view of the intense repression of the Palestine narrative on campus and in this time of unprecedented genocide, the suppression of knowledge demands a proactive approach to creating an equitable and just environment. The silencing of the Palestinian narrative by an organized group of faculty (as documented in our third report) should be met with a deliberate effort by the administration to create intellectual and scholarly space for Palestinian voices and Palestinian narratives. We strongly recommend the affirmative and active protection of the right of students and faculty at UCLA to work on Palestine and speak freely on Palestinian rights without fear of repression or punishment.
2. The return of the Trump Administration has emboldened off-campus vigilantes as well as repressive faculty on our campus to step up their harassment of those speaking about or

teaching Palestine. We recommend active measures to hold accountable students, faculty and staff whose anti-Palestinian actions contravene applicable codes of conduct and the law. Proper disciplinary action must be taken against anyone engaging in anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism. We urge that the university take bold action to protect its campus constituencies from off-campus interdiction, harassment and intimidation, all of which are likely to increase in the prevailing national political atmosphere.

3. As noted above, there is a glaring absence of teaching and organized disciplinary scholarship on Palestine at UCLA. And there are escalating forms of prohibition, interdiction, suppression, censorship and intimidation for those who do teach Palestine, especially racialized minorities. We recommend that the university create and invest in space for the study of Palestine and the elaboration of Palestinian narratives. Specifically, we strongly recommend a well-funded center for Palestine studies and 20 faculty lines distributed across the disciplines and divisions in Palestinian, Palestinian American, and Arab-American history, literature, art, cinema, gender studies, geography, music, architecture, public health, medicine, sociology, and journalism.

Signed:

Gaye Theresa Johnson

Robin D.G. Kelley

Saree Makdisi

Sherene H. Razack

Shannon Speed