

LDB Deeply Concerned by UCLA Response to Milan Chatterjee

July 18, 2016, Washington, D.C.: The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (LDB) is disturbed by a recent report from the UCLA Discrimination Prevention Office (DPO) alleging that Milan Chatterjee, former President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), violated university policy by stipulating that the GSA would maintain neutrality regarding the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement in allocating funds for a campus event. LDB is a national civil rights legal advocacy organization, known for its work in fighting anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism in higher education.

BDS proponents harassed GSA President Chatterjee for months after the event last November because he would not fund either side of the debate over BDS, and led an impeachment campaign against him. In April, LDB's UCLA law student chapter wrote a [letter](#) to the GSA forum in his support, explaining that the threat of "ousting a student government official from office for his good faith pursuit of his responsibilities discourages student participation and sends a chilling message to the student body."

"The UCLA report sending a chilling message to not only to Jewish pro-Israel students but also to non-Jewish student government officials who recognize the divisiveness and hatefulness of the BDS movement," said LDB President [Kenneth L. Marcus](#). "It is troubling that the campaign by BDS supporters against Milan Chatterjee affected the administration's judgment, both in the report's findings and in allowing it to be leaked to the media in apparent violation of the Federal Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA)."

UCLA has had problems with anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism in the recent past. Last year, the UCLA student council denied undergraduate student [Rachel Beyda](#) an appointment to its Judicial Board because she is Jewish. Some council members cited their concerns that her Jewish faith might bias her decision-making. Eventually, the council reversed itself under pressure. LDB and its UCLA law student chapter initiated the fight-back against that discriminatory action by issuing a letter stating, "Even though the student was eventually voted in as a Justice, the discussion surrounding her appointment was blatantly discriminatory."

Other universities in the University of California system have had similar problems. For example, at [UC Irvine](#) on May 18, more than 50 individuals associated with Students for Justice in Palestine aggressively confronted and threatened a group of 10 UCI students, including LDB client Eliana Kopley, who were attempting to watch and discuss a documentary film about five Israel Defense Forces soldiers. Mr. Marcus noted, "Both of these cases suggest a pattern in which Jewish and non-Jewish students are under assault. The University's apparent failure to protect Jewish students at UCI, and the appearance that it is going after Chatterjee at UCLA, send a signal that should be disturbing to the Jewish and pro-Israel communities."

Earlier this year, at LDB and other groups' urging, the University of California Regents unanimously adopted the [Statement of Principles Against Intolerance](#), which included a contextual statement that "Anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism and other forms of discrimination have no place at the University of California." Mr. Marcus commented on the applicability of the Principles Against Intolerance to the incidents at UCLA and UCI, "We urge

the University of California to immediately apply the recent Regents' statement to address incidents across the UC system that involve official support for anti-Zionism and tolerance for anti-Semitic harassment.”

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ABOUT THE LOUIS D. BRANDEIS CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER LAW

The [Louis D. Brandeis Center](#), Inc., or LDB, is an independent, nonprofit organization established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. The Brandeis Center conducts research, education, and advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses. It is not affiliated with the Massachusetts University, the Kentucky law school, or any of the other institutions that share the name and honor the memory of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice. For more information, contact Anne Crowell at (202) 559-9296 or acrowell@brandeiscenter.com, or find us at [our website](#).