

Dear _____,

I hope this email finds you well and (insert some pleasantry)

I am writing as a devoted alumna and the parent of a current student to express my deep concerns regarding the recent _____ College / University webcast featuring (insert name of individual speaker) represents a particular view on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one which denies the Jewish people's historical connection to Israel and portrays Israel as an occupier and illegitimate state. During the webcast, which I listened to very carefully, (insert name of individual speaker) disregarded historical facts including, for example, stating that Israel was recognized, starting with the Balfour Act in 1917 and finally with the UN General Assembly in 1947, and disregarding over 5,000 years of Jewish history, including such historical people and facts as Moses, Kings David and Solomon, as well as Jerusalem's Temple, first built by Solomon in 957 BCE.

I am well aware that the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is a contentious issue and I am not suggesting that (insert name of individual speaker) should have been prevented from speaking. However, given the controversy involved and the importance of the topic, it seems that the _____ College / University students would have been much better served if another speaker had also been invited with the background and experience to debate (insert name of individual speaker) assertions. This is particularly true given the well-documented relationship between rising incidents of anti-Semitism on campuses with significant anti-Zionist activities, See, for example https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2016/07/26/anti-semitism-spikes-on-u-s-campuses/?utm_term=.f4b1d3f7b26e.

You are probably well aware of the bullying and harassment of Jewish students that has occurred on many of our college campuses, including such elite schools as Vassar, Brown and UCLA. The sad fact is that today, anti-Zionism is the new and acceptable form of anti-Semitism. Instead of railing against Jews, those promoting Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and other anti-Zionist campaigns are demonizing and delegitimizing the collective Jew—i.e., the Jewish state of Israel. When these anti-Zionists falsely portray Israel as racist, apartheid and otherwise beyond the pale of civilized nations, they engender and inflame hatred of Jews—at least those Jews who refuse to support their cause by publicly renouncing Israel. Leaders throughout the world, including our own President Obama, have reacted to this new form of anti-Semitism by clearly identifying it as

such. <http://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/191196/obama-denying-israels-right-to-exist-as-a-jewish-homeland-is-anti-semitic>. Indeed, the US Senate has recently adopted a bill called the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, which includes among the definitions of anti-Semitism demonizing Israel, delegitimizing Israel or subjecting it to a double-standard that is not applied to any other state. In his/her webcast (insert name of individual speaker) did all three, which precisely fits the definition of anti-Semitism. See <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2016/12/02/anti-semitism-awareness-bill-passes-senate>.

I am extremely grateful that ____ College/University has not yet experienced the type of anti-Semitic/anti-Zionist bigotry that has erupted on so many other campuses. However, if students at ____ College/University are not exposed to a diversity of viewpoints regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it may only be a matter of time before our special campus becomes infected with this type of hatred and divisiveness. And this is, of course, entirely apart from the fact that to provide a true liberal arts experience, schools must present all legitimate viewpoints, so that their students can arrive at their own conclusions through critical thinking and analysis.

In short, I urge the _____ administration to invite additional speakers who will address the Israel-Palestinian conflict in a much more comprehensive and fair way than (insert name of individual speaker) did, including speakers who will present the Israeli perspective. And I also urge the College administration to ensure that in courses dealing with Israel-related matters, faculty are true to their obligations to encourage critical thought by presenting all relevant scholarship on the issues, rather than trying to indoctrinate students to their own particular perspective. I have not heard that this is an issue at ____ College yet, and it is my fervent hope that it never becomes one.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Regards,