Resolution To Invest In The Middle Eastern Peace Process


WHEREAS, “the Student Union Assembly [is] the product of the growing desire amongst students for an umbrella establishment to organize and sustain various campus groups as well as to advocate the collective student voice” and “shall promote activism, civic participation, discussion, debate, and awareness of public issues from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints”; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the UCSC Student Union Assembly to maintain the values of respect, intellectual curiosity, integrity, commitment, and empathy which includes the commitment to learning, teaching, creativity, and research, as well as the promotion of human rights, equality, and dignity for all people without distinction; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative for students to stand unequivocally against such and all forms of racism and bigotry globally and on campus, including but not limited to Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, sexism; and

WHEREAS, the UC prides itself on welcoming students from any race, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, the University of California has identified the issue of campus climate as a priority for administration, staff, and students across the UC system; and

1 http://sua.ucsc.edu/about/governing-documents/constitution2012
WHEREAS, the past response to Islamophobia and anti-Semitism has not started important conversations about hate speech and campus climate for Jewish or Muslim students that need to happen in order to ensure these students receive the protections they deserve; and

WHEREAS, the Student Union Assembly can play an essential role in illustrating and counteracting the resurgence of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia by investing in ways to build dialogue and bring these two groups together; and

WHEREAS, our institution, that values holistic and multi-faceted approaches to complex issues must fairly represent the diverse interests and views of all students at UC Santa Cruz in order to foster dialogue, learning, and an inclusive campus environment; and

WHEREAS, to maintain a safe and inclusive campus environment, tensions between students related to foreign conflicts including but not limited to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, should be resolved in a healthy and collaborative manner rather than be exacerbated and should not confuse political debate with interpersonal strife; and

WHEREAS, to maintain a healthy and rich political climate on campus, students engaged in debates related to foreign conflicts, including but not limited to the topic of Israel/Palestine, should not confuse political debate with interpersonal strife; and

WHEREAS, a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires mutual respect, recognition of multiple narratives, and political compromise; and

WHEREAS, Israelis and Palestinians who are willing to reach out to each other peacefully deserve our support; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians are necessary to lay the foundation for a sustainable and just peace; and

WHEREAS, strengthening the Palestinian economy, encouraging economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians as long as both Israelis and Palestinians mutually agree upon it, and breaking down discrimination between these two communities can help lay the necessary foundation for peace between Israelis, Palestinians, as well as Jews and Arabs both in the Middle East and in our local community; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ongoing tragedy with far too many lives having been lost in this long struggle over land and national narratives; and

WHEREAS, both Israelis and Palestinians deserve the right to self-determination, including the right to live in a secure, free and independent manner with the ability to determine their own futures; and

WHEREAS, both Israelis and Palestinians should take steps to increase the chances for peace and resolving the conflict, including engaging in direct negotiations, with each party acknowledging and respecting the other’s legitimate narrative, grievances, and vulnerabilities; and
WHEREAS, free and open debate conducted with civility and mutual respect is a UC Santa Cruz value and we must look to the future so lives can be saved and improved;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED we call upon the UCSC Student Union Assembly to commit intellectual energy and resources to become a catalyst for a just peace by demanding that the UC Regents invest in, support, foster and/or collaborate with organizations whose mission is to bring Jews and Arabs together, worldwide, financially and socially, in order to tackle discrimination, and continue building dialogue in Israel, Palestine and the greater Middle East, including but not limited to:

1. The Parents Circle which is an organization of Israeli and Palestinian families that have lost a family member from the ongoing conflict through projects such as:
   a. Crack in the Wall, “which brings together Israelis and Palestinians to engage in dialogue and provides a platform for members to express themselves in their native language”;
   b. “Dialogue meeting programs between Israelis and Palestinians that connect over 25,000 students annually to talk about their personal narratives and reconcile the two “sides”.

2. The Peres Center For Peace, which “promotes lasting peace and advancement in the Middle East by fostering tolerance, economic and technological development, cooperation and well-being” through:
   a. “Facilitating life saving medical treatment of over 10,000 Palestinian children and training over 170 Palestinian doctors in Israeli hospitals”,
   b. “Enhancing cooperation across borders in the fields of business, Information and Communications Technology, agriculture and the environment”,
   c. “Utilizing sports, new media and the arts as peace education tools that bring together thousands of Arab and Jewish youth every year”.

3. The Middle East Insurance Initiative (MEII), which is endorsed by such leaders as current Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, former Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and former Presidents Bill Clinton and Shimon Peres. MEII “is a non-profit organization, [that] leverages public and private resources to deliver finance and technical assistance programs to stimulate sustainable economic activity and long lasting job creation in the Middle East and North Africa”, including but not limited to in Palestine, Jordan, Israel and Tunisia through such projects as:
   a. Launching “a ten-year Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) in the West Bank and Gaza to stimulate bank credit to primarily small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). LGF is managed by a dedicated team of Palestinian professionals working out of MEII offices in Ramallah”.

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2 http://www.theparentscircle.com/
3 http://www.peres-center.org/our_mission
4 http://www.meiinitiative.org/?TemplateId=info&Pageld=2&MenuId=6&Lang=1
5 http://www.meiinitiative.org/?TemplateId=projects&catId=1&MenuId=3&id=3&full=1&Lang=1
mortgage loans with tenors of up to 25 years, thereby increasing home affordability. By rejuvenating the Palestinian housing sector and its related industries, which together generate thousands of jobs in the Palestinian territories, AMAL stands to spur significant economic growth in Palestine. c. “Palestinian Political Risk Insurance (PPRI), which will protect Palestinian exports against certain political and security risks for the first time” and “will increase trade predictability for export businesses with the goal of encouraging private sector investment and job creation, the pillars of sustainable economic growth,”

d. Providing financial inclusion whether in the form of SME access to credit, affordable housing loans, or banking for the poor, MEII designs and deploys finance programs that strike a balance between development and profits to stimulate sustainable economic development and investments in the Middle East and North Africa.

4. The EcoPeace Water Project which brings together Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian scientists to help solve the water crisis in the Middle East through such initiatives as:

a. Good Water Neighbors (GWN), which “raises awareness of the shared water problems of Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis. The GWN methodology is an original idea that is based on identifying cross border communities and utilizing their mutual dependence on shared water resources as a basis for developing dialogue and cooperation on sustainable water management. GWN has created real improvement within the water sector by building trust and understanding that has led to common problem solving and peace building among communities”

b. Undertaking research projects detailing the geographical characteristics of the Mountain Aquifer, which provides water to both Israelis and Palestinians, “identifying the major sources of pollution from (1) sewage and (2) solid waste. The reports describe the different solutions that have been proposed and the factors that prevent the implementation of sewage solutions or solid waste disposal facilities, as well as drawing conclusions and recommendations to protect the Mountain Aquifer.”

5. The Shades Negotiation Project is an innovative program which brings Israeli and Palestinian leaders together for a year-long executive training program sponsored by the Harvard Law School Program on Negotiation. Participants come from the Israeli and Palestinian ministries of justice, education and finance as well as civil society groups and spend one weekend a month learning each other’s narratives as well as valuable skills in negotiation and peacemaking.

LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED, that we call upon the UC Regents to commit themselves to creating campuses where all members of the community address local and global concerns in

6 http://www.meiinitiative.org/?TemplateId=projects&catId=1&MenuId=3&idd=1&full=1&Lang=1
7 http://www.meiinitiative.org/?TemplateId=projects&catId=1&MenuId=3&idd=4&full=1&Lang=1
8 http://foeme.org/www/?module=projects&record_id=32
9 http://foeme.org/www/?module=projects&record_id=53
10 http://www.shadesnp.org/
a manner enriched by diverse perspectives in a civil and thoughtful manner, fostering reconciliation rather than division, and working towards safer campus climates for all.