

## Email Comments on for May 9 Academic Senate Item 6.7 Draft Resolution to Support Student Success and Mental Health, to Uphold Academic Freedom in regard to the Gaza-Israel Conflict, and to Affirm the Associated Students of Cañada College in their Call for a Ceasefire

### ++++ Public Comment

1. I still strongly believe that such a resolution is not in the purview of the Cañada College Academic Senate.
2. One thing that strikes me off the bat is that there is **No mentioning of atrocities committed by Hamas. No condemnation of Hamas, a terror organization, who was the aggressor, continues to shoot rockets at Israel as we speak, and vows to repeat Oct'7 events again and again once allowed. For someone who has no background and reads this resolution, one might think that this is all Israel's fault.**
3. See my feedback embedded in the resolution draft **below**

RESOLUTION of the Cañada College Academic Senate to support student success and mental health, to uphold academic freedom in regard to the Gaza-Israel conflict, and to affirm the Associated Students of Cañada College in their call for a ceasefire.

WHEREAS Cañada College regards itself as a “student-centered institution, [putting] the needs of students first”<sup>1</sup>

1. **“WHEREAS Cañada College regards itself as a “student-centered institution, [putting] the needs of students first”: What about the needs of Jewish/Israeli students?**

(“College Values”);

WHEREAS in April 2024 the Associated Students of Cañada College (ASCC) issued a statement of Solidarity for the People of Palestine “[demanding] that the administration of our campus breaks its silence on the humanitarian crisis and collective punishment of those in Gaza,” noting that “Israeli forces have murdered over 30,000 Palestinian people since October 7th, almost half of whom were children,” and asserting that they “stand together to amplify and strengthen student voices, condemning any form of racism, Islamophobia, or anti-semitism, while “[acknowledging] the Jewish community’s pain from the October 7, 2023 events and [empathizing] with all people suffering”<sup>2</sup>

2. **“Israeli forces have murdered over 30,000 Palestinian people since October 7th, almost half of whom were children,” -> Really? Really? Let me take a quick stab at it**
  1. **“murdered?” -> These people were killed and not murdered. War is a terrible thing, and as such, so is what’s happening in Gaza. Many were killed, but not murdered. On the other hand, Hamas is the one that butchered, and murdered over 1200 people (including babies, kids, teenagers, men/women, elders)**
  2. **“30,000” -> I’m not even denying that many were killed in Gaza, but as an academic institute, I would expect you to lead by example and do a fact check and unbiased reporting:**
    - a. **The #s are provided by Hamas, a terror organization with NO CREDIBILITY.**
    - b. **Hamas itself acknowledged that ~10K from that list are unaccounted for (e.g. no name / ID info)**
    - c. **The #s reported include: Hamas terrorist that were killed, civilians that were killed by Hamas themselves, etc.**

i. Here is a link to a 3 min. video, which provides an example to the way Hamas operates: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/moshe-davis-31bb6b42\\_i-was-privileged-to-interview-idf-captain-activity-7186420260965691392-8RK4/?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_android](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/moshe-davis-31bb6b42_i-was-privileged-to-interview-idf-captain-activity-7186420260965691392-8RK4/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android)

ii. Here is a link to “How Hamas Manipulates Gaza Fatality Numbers” article: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/how-hamas-manipulates-gaza-fatality-numbers-examining-male-undercount-and-other>

3. “condemning any form of racism, Islamophobia, or anti-semitism, while “[acknowledging] the Jewish community’s pain from the October 7, 2023 events and [empathizing] with all people suffering””: Interesting choice of words...why when it comes to the Palestinian suffering, you chose such strong and inaccurate language as (partially) described by bullet #3 above, but when it comes to the Israeli/Jewish side, you chose such a benign words “[acknowledging] the Jewish community’s pain from the October 7, 2023 events” -> Why don’t you mention the over 1200 that were murdered, butchered, mutilated, raped, burnt alive, beheaded? Why don’t you mention the over 200 that were kidnapped and taken hostages, in which 132 are still in Gaza. Those include babies as young of ~10 months old when kidnapped, kids, teenagers, men/women, elders as old as 85

;

WHEREAS our college prioritizes social justice and equity, and strives to “provide equitable access and resources to students, staff and faculty, in consideration of all their identities to ensure a community of support and successful educational outcomes,”<sup>3</sup> and yet face-to-face personal counseling for Cañada College students remains unavailable three out of seven days per week including many evenings, Fridays, and weekends<sup>4</sup> while rates of anxiety and depression have increased amongst college students since 2020<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> and since the conflict in Gaza began, according to the ASCC Statement, students have indicated additional stress by “directly [expressing] their pain and anger”<sup>7</sup>

4. “WHEREAS our college prioritizes social justice and equity, and strives to “provide equitable access and resources to students, staff and faculty, in consideration of all their identities to ensure a community of support and successful educational outcomes”
  1. If you truly care about the above...ask yourself...what about our Jewish students? What about our Israeli students?
  2. Have you asked yourself...what about our LGBTQ+ students?...those students won't even survive a day as long as Hamas is in power.

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WHEREAS the San Mateo Community College District’s “Statement on Academic Freedom” asserts that we are “dedicated to maintaining a climate of academic freedom encouraging the sharing and cultivation of a wide variety of viewpoints. Academic freedom expresses our belief in inquiry, informed debate and the search for truth; academic freedom is necessary in order to provide students with a variety of ideas, to encourage them to engage in critical thinking and to help them understand conflicting opinions. Academic freedom encompasses the freedom to study, teach, and express ideas, including unpopular or controversial ones, without censorship or political restraint”<sup>8</sup>

5. “informed debate and the search for truth” -> I encourage you do so, but unfortunately, you’re contradicting yourself in this resolution as you’re so far away from the truth (see above)

;

WHEREAS criticizing the policies of governments and their militaries are fundamental democratic rights<sup>9 10</sup>, and the 2020 Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA), distinguishes such criticism from antisemitism, which is “discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish)”<sup>11</sup>;

WHEREAS the US government is funding and arming the Israeli military<sup>12 13</sup>, recently passing a bill to provide Israel an additional \$26 billion (including \$9.1 billion for humanitarian needs)<sup>14</sup> and prioritizing U.S. military spending (\$825 billion)<sup>15</sup> over education (\$90.0 billion)<sup>16</sup>;

6. As for the funding:

1. Yes – The US is providing financial aid to Israel.
  - a. Israel is the ONLY true democratic in the region, defending itself against the forces of evil, that is: Iran, Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, Hamas and other terror organizations in Gaza and West bank, etc.
  - b. Israel is and has been the CLOSEST ally of the US in the region.
  - c. Israel is helping the US with developing technologies to protect the US from threats coming from countries like Russia, Iran, North Korea, China, etc.
2. The US is also providing \$ to Ukraine as yet another stronghold against the forces of evil. It's unfortunate that there is so much directed evil in the world, that we, in the west should fight at all costs to ensure we prevail.
3. The US is also donating hundreds of millions of US\$ to organizations like UNRWA, which was shown many times assisted Hamas in their Oct'7 -> Why don't you mention that

Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that Cañada College Academic Senate work with the college to develop and offer culturally responsive mental health support services for Palestinian, Palestinian-American, and Jewish students, faculty, and staff impacted by the events of October 7th and the ongoing conflict;

7. “support services for Palestinian, Palestinian-American, and Jewish students” -> what about Israeli and Israeli-American students?

RESOLVED that Cañada College Academic Senate affirms our commitment to the protection of academic freedom in online academic environments and on campus, despite calls to censor texts, discussion, and activism around the current conflict in Palestine and Israel;

8. “Conflict in Palestine and Israel” -> please be accurate. Palestine does not exist / this is not an official state. Suggest you say “conflict in Gaza and Israel” like you were stating in the beginning of the resolution.

RESOLVED that Cañada College Academic Senate work with AFT1493 to protect academic and intellectual freedom, including the rights of all faculty, adjunct and full-time, to develop curriculum, educational programming, and resources, and to discuss the current conflict in Palestine and Israel in the classroom, in office hours, in counseling and library sessions, and at all campus activities without being subjected to intimidation, censorship, retaliation, or threat of reduction or termination of employment or assignment;

9. “Conflict in Palestine and Israel” -> please be accurate. Palestine does not exist / this is not an official state. Suggest you say “conflict in Gaza and Israel” like you were stating in the beginning of the resolution.

10. I encourage such dialogue. Can you please share more information on this, in particular, who/how/what is your plan to represent the Israeli/Jewish part. My concern is that if the same people who drafted this resolution will be the owner in such activity, then the material won't be accurate at best.

RESOLVED that for humanitarian reasons and to support the expressed mental health needs of our students, Cañada College Academic Senate calls for an immediate ceasefire and for US taxpayer funds to be used to prevent further loss of life and to be invested in our nation's educational system to improve mental health services and allow for greater student success.

11. "Cañada College Academic Senate calls for an immediate ceasefire" ->

1. I don't think this is in the purview of the Cañada college Academic Senate. This is a foreign affair, and a very complex one, which is being negotiated at the HIGHEST governments level
2. If you chose to do so, why don't you also call for the surrendering / disarming of Hamas?
  1. Hamas is the one responsible for the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza
  2. Hamas, in its own words, will repeat Oct 7 again and again once allowed.

12. "Cañada College Academic Senate calls ... US taxpayer funds to be used to prevent further loss of life"

1. One might say that by providing the help to Israel is exactly that! Without this help, Israel, the ONLY Jewish state in the world, will cease to exist and the will be yet another holocaust / genocide of the Jewish people.
2. See my comment about UNRWA above

#### ++++ Public Comment

In regards to the upcoming meeting to discuss the resolution, I wanted to express my support for the resolution for Palestine via email.

#### ++++ Public Comment

Members of the Cañada College Academic Senate,

Below are my comments to some of the points in this draft resolution:

1. The paragraph: "WHEREAS in April 2024 the Associated Students of Cañada College (ASCC) issued a statement of Solidarity for the People of Palestine "[demanding] that the administration of our campus breaks its silence on the humanitarian crisis and collective punishment of those in Gaza," noting that "Israeli forces have murdered over 30,000 Palestinian people since October 7th, almost half of whom were children," ..."

A. It must be said that on October 7th, palestinian terrorists did murder (defined as planned and deliberate killing) over 1,000 innocent israeli civilians including children and women in the most barbaric ways possible, which precipitated an intense Israeli military response in Gaza resulting in the unintentional death (not murder) of many thousands of innocent civilians, including

women and children - alongside many thousands of terrorists - as unfortunately happens in urban warfare regardless of how careful an army campaign is.

B. The 30,000 deaths quoted obviously includes the terrorists and is a number reported by a terrorist organization and which has been disputed many times. I completely agree however that even a single innocent life lost is too many.

C. I also take exception to the term 'collective punishment'. Many military experts concede that in urban warfare terrible things happen and when terrorists hide behind civilians in a densely populated urban environment, it will be even more terrible - although not as bad as when other armies in the world conduct battle in such environments. Still, innocent lives lost are horrible, regardless of the actual numbers and circumstances.

2. On the topic of academic freedom, I would like to attach an excellent article by David French in the New York Times. It is worthwhile reading so you can apply its logic to the very important topic of academic freedom and help the college not to 'go off the deep end'.

[Colleges Have Gone off the Deep End. There Is a Way Out. By David French in the New York Times](#)

#### ++++ Public Comment – Tal Shalon

We are incredibly disappointed with the new suggested resolution. As we suspected, our voice was not heard. Obviously, when most committee members represent one side, we will get a divisive resolution that only sees one side. The suggested resolution is still one-sided, promotes blatant lies, and is discriminatory.

With all due respect, we cannot understand why the Academic Senate feels obliged to express its members' political views on a matter on which none of them are experts when its objective is to support all students affected by conflicts.

The Academic Senate can promote academic freedom and students' well-being without at the same time demonizing and delegitimizing Jewish, Israeli, and American Israeli students and faculty.

The suggested resolution we sent (attached below) or any other similar resolution will accomplish the goal of supporting students without promoting hate and antisemitism. Why not choose the latter?

In your resolution, you declared the following: "Canada Collage regards itself as..putting the needs of student first" "prioritize social justice" "provide

equitable access and resources...in consideration of all their identities ...” Your suggested resolution indicates that all the above statements are false. The Academic Senate shows interest only in the well-being of Palestine students. The resolution didn’t even mention your Israeli and American Israeli students, which is an absolute disgrace and proves again how one-sided the suggested resolution is. Just in the last meeting, you discussed a resolution to change the terminology of “academic probation” to avoid offending some students. I wonder why, when it comes to Jewish and Israeli students, the same moral standards do not apply. On the contrary, offending Jews and Israeli students and faculty has become a mission of the Academic Senate.

This week, we commemorate the Holocaust. German universities took a significant part in ostracizing and delegitimizing Jews. The educated and “liberal” German faculty members operated under the guise of serving the public good and social justice with the support of the majority of their students up until and including the mass killing of the Jews. They demonized Jews as traitors and promoted other lies. Your suggested resolution uses the same tactics, labeling Jews and American Israelis as supporting murders. The next step is for the Jews/Zionists to pay the price for their behavior and beliefs.

6 million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. Most of the Jews were gassed or burned alive in the Germans’ concentration camps. Even though you can visit the concentration camps, and there is much evidence that proves what happened, there are still many Holocaust deniers.

It’s hard to change someone’s opinion when he/she holds strong hate and certain beliefs. As we tried to explain many times, Israel’s goal is to fight Hamas and release the hostages. Israeli forces did not murder 30,000 Palestinians. This is a blood libel and a blatant lie. Hiding behind some of your student statements as if they are credible sources is ridiculous. Many students think differently. How did you decide who is right? Wars are horrible. In every war, innocent civilians are affected. Murder has a different definition. Words have meaning and consequences. I’m sure you will not accept any paper of a student citing slogans without any actual proof. There are endless sources that refute your claim of the numbers, who is responsible for the killing, and the difference between war casualties and murder. I have attached some of them below.

That is why it is so essential to be aligned with the law and regulations. The Academic Senate is not the body that can declare the number of Palestinians that were killed, who killed them, and if these killings were a consequence of a war, a war crime, or a murder. This is out of the Academic Senate's purview and expertise. The same is true for the other political statements in the resolution: America's government support of Israel and the call for an immediate ceasefire. Not surprisingly, there is no call for the release of the innocent Israeli civilians who are held in Gaza. The attempt to connect political statements to student mental health is unnecessary, and even if true, only applies to one student group while discriminating against other students. The Academic Senate's political statements will promote anxiety, isolation, and other mental health issues in Jewish and American Israeli students. The resolution also fails to address many other world conflicts affecting students.

A resolution cannot establish or expand academic freedom, as it cannot limit the First Amendment right or decide its boundaries. With all due respect, the Academic Senate is not a court of law. These subjects are outside of the Academic Senate's purview.

[According to the American Association of University Professors](#) (AAUP) and the Supreme Court, academic freedom is protected only when relevant to a professor's academic field of practice. A math teacher doesn't have the academic freedom to discuss the conflict in Gaza with his students. A professor's First Amendment rights are protected outside the classroom. For example, a pro-Trump professor doesn't have the right to prompt Trump's agenda in class and indoctrinate students. The resolution confuses academic freedom and First Amendment rights.

According to the AAUP, while faculty *"are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matters which are unrelated to their subject, or to persistently introduce material which has no relation to the subject."*

The Resolution advocates the opposite of this policy. If the Resolution is implemented, professors and instructors will violate AAUP policy and their obligation to Canada College and their students, who have the right not to be indoctrinated. Furthermore, the Resolution is highly discriminatory to faculty members who would like to talk or develop a different political curriculum that is not related to the Palestine and Israeli conflict.

We can agree to disagree, but we all need to obey laws and regulations. There is a reason why the Academic Senate has to follow the 10+1 responsibilities and only makes decisions within its purview. In this case, the law protects the minority from the majority abusing its power. Foothill's Academic Senate decided to refrain from issuing a political resolution. The board president came to the meeting to inform the Senate of the legal ramifications of issuing a discriminatory resolution. Even the encampments in many universities didn't bring universities to issue a similar resolution to the one suggested by the Canada Academic Senate. Regarding Skyline's resolution, we know that Jewish organizations are planning to take legal action against Skyline College.

As the suggested resolution violates the law, discriminates, and is out of the Academic Senate's purview, we ask that the Academic Senate vote against it. If the Academic Senate feels it has to issue a resolution, we suggest that it issue the resolution below.

Sincerely,

Tal Shalon,

In the name of many concerned members of the community

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/how-gaza-health-ministry-fakes-casualty-numbers>

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/apr/18/israels-war-against-amas-posts-lower-civilian-to-/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8581199/>

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/israel-is-not-committing-genocide-in-gaza/>

<https://www.thejewishstar.com/stories/counting-casualties-and-comparing-wars,23373>

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**RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING SUSTAINED PEACE AND SAFETY FOR ALL STUDENTS**  
RESOLUTION No.

WHEREAS, [ ] Academic Senate is committed to creating inclusive and just conditions where all students, staff, and faculty feel a sense of belonging; and

WHEREAS, [ ] Academic Senate cherishes our cultural richness and strives to ensure all students, staff, faculty, and community members feel safe, respected, and heard, regardless of race,



ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, immigration status, country of origin, or any other characteristic; and

WHEREAS, [ ] Academic Senate recognizes that times of war and strife impact students in our classrooms and encourages all staff to support students by creating environments in classrooms that build empathy and compassion and promote constructive dialogue where no student or staff member feels singled out for their identity, nationality, ethnicity or religious affiliation; be it

RESOLVED, that the [ ] Academic Senate will take proactive measures to provide resources and support to individuals who may be affected by ongoing conflicts, including access to counseling services, support groups, and educational materials aimed at fostering understanding and empathy; be it further

RESOLVED, The [ ] Academic Senate will actively engage in dialogue and educational initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the complexities surrounding the Middle East conflict, with the goal of promoting empathy, tolerance, and peaceful conflict resolution within our community; be it further

RESOLVED, The [ ] Academic Senate will work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders, including student organizations, faculty members, community leaders, and mental health professionals, to develop and implement initiatives that promote peace, understanding, and mutual respect among all members of our community; be it further

RESOLVED, The [ ] Academic Senate calls upon other institutions and organizations to join us in our commitment to promoting safety, equality, and inclusivity amidst the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, recognizing that solidarity and collaboration are essential in fostering a more peaceful and harmonious world.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by [ ] Academic Senate meeting held  
, by the following vote:

**++++ Public Comment**

I support the Palestinian movement and I want the resolution for Palestine to pass! Everyone should be against genocide.

**++++ Public Comment**

I want the resolution for Palestine to pass!

**++++ Public Comment – Mira Ben-tzur**

Board of Trustees  
Canada College

4200 Farm Hill Blvd.  
Redwood City, CA 94061

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the recent resolution document issued by Canada College regarding the conflict between Gaza and Israel. As a member of the community, I believe it is essential to promote peace and understanding in all circumstances, especially in times of conflict.

First and foremost, I want to emphasize the importance of acknowledging the tragic loss of life on both sides of the conflict. Every life lost is a profound tragedy, and my heart goes out to all those affected by the violence.

It is crucial to remember that the recent escalation of violence was initiated by Hamas, not Israel. The deliberate targeting of innocent civilians, including children and families, by Hamas militants on October 7th is a clear violation of human rights and international law. Israel, like any other sovereign nation, has the right to defend its citizens against such attacks.

Furthermore, it is disheartening to see the misuse of funds intended for humanitarian aid in Gaza. The diversion of funds to support terrorism and violence only perpetuates the cycle of suffering and undermines efforts for peace and stability in the region.

I also urge the college to consider its approach to international conflicts and resolutions. While it is essential to address injustices around the world, it is equally important to maintain a balanced and nuanced perspective. Ignoring other conflicts, such as those in Sudan or Ukraine, sends a troubling message of selective outrage and undermines the credibility of the college's stance on global issues.

In addition, the language and tone of the resolution document are concerning, as they appear to perpetuate stereotypes and contribute to the rise of antisemitism. As an educational institution, Canada College has a responsibility to foster a culture of inclusion, respect, and critical thinking. Instead of issuing divisive resolutions, the college should focus on promoting dialogue, understanding, and empathy among its students and faculty.

I respectfully urge the Board of Trustees to reconsider the college's position on this matter and to refrain from issuing resolutions that may fuel further conflict and division. Instead, let us work together to promote peace, justice, and reconciliation in our community and beyond.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Mira Bentzur PhD

#### ++++ Public Comment – Roy Shay

First paragraphs

The Jewish/ Israeli community is devastated by the ASCC claim please add the following to the first paragraph

On October 7 Hamas broke the ceasefire with Israel and committed the worst atrocities since WW2 including burning alive of children , raping and torturing women (before murdering them) and kidnapping civilians all the way from one year old to 80+ years old  
Israel was forced into a war it didn't want for practically its existence  
So far close to 15000 Hamas terrorists were killed and unfortunately unknown number of civilians who were used as Human shields by the Hamas

Regarding the US funding for Israel

The facts are wrong , the bill was funding for Israel , Ukraine and Taiwan

It is part of US strategy to protect its allies which is a critical US interest and in the case of Israel is to protect against Iran and its proxies Hamas , Hutus, Hezbollah and others

Regarding mental health support add the Israeli students

Regarding the last paragraph

Call for ceasefire and return of all the Israeli hostages

Take out the line about how to use the American tax money

Our stand is that the US continues to support its allies including Israel, Ukraine, Taiwan all the NATO members, Egypt and all other countries supported by the US

Btw, it is not that money really goes to Israel, the US is sponsoring the acquisition of arms from US companies so most of the money is actually supporting US companies

#### +++++ Public Comments

The draft resolution you are considering is deeply flawed and I'd like to point out a few ways.

1. It's the Israel-Hamas war (or Hamas-Israel war) not Gaza-Israel war.

Hamas is the aggressor and our ally Israel is fighting for a future free of attacks like those of October 7, 2023.

2. We all want peace. But the ASCC call for a ceasefire refers to Israeli genocide against Palestinians. By referring to the ASCC document you adopt that inflammatory accusation. This should be a stand alone document.

3. There should be context on the war's start and that it's a defensive action on Israel's part.

4. Remove the outrageous use of "collective punishment" and "murder". The numbers of

civilians killed is horrific. But it's not as stated. Many were combatants, including many "children" who were underage Hamas fighters. We can still recognize the tragedy without exaggerating the numbers or using language that has never been applied to much larger numbers of civilian casualties of our own wars in the Middle East.

5. Use the definition of antisemitism passed by the US House of Representatives. Calling for the destruction of Israel is antisemitic. Anti-Zionism is antisemitism.

6. Note somewhere that anti-Zionist chanting and rallies create a hostile environment for Jewish students, the vast (90?) majority of whom are Zionists of some sort. There are left wing and right wing Zionists. They think that by saying Zionist they're not being antisemitic; it needs to be clear that they are.

7. What evidence is there of their increased anxiety?

What about anxiety over the hundreds of thousands of innocent Arabs killed in Syria or Iraq, or thousands Africans killed and kidnapped by Jihadists?

8. Don't use the JDA definition. See 5 above.

Under RESOLVED

9. Remove "calls to censor...Israel". What evidence is there of that?

If one side is being silenced and marginalized, it's not the proPalestinian one.

10. Develop educational materials reflecting Both sides. Otherwise it's just indoctrination. Is that your goal?

11. Ceasefire for this conflict only for mental health is absurd. What about stress about Ukraine, for instance? Can you imagine German Americans calling for a ceasefire in WWII because it was affecting their mental health?

12. A community college does not decide how to use taxpayer dollars. America's defense must be strong. Iran is an enemy of the US and Hamas and Hezbollah and the Houthis are their proxies. What kind of education would we have under Iranian rule? There is no American education system without American defense. And with Korea lobbing missiles, we'd better have defensive systems in California.

Can you imagine what would have happened on April 13, 2024 without Defense when Iran blasted 300 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and killer drones at Israel? It was a trial run; their goal is genocide. When they chant "Death to Israel, Death to America" believe them.

Also know that Hamas continues to launch rockets at Israeli towns from Rafah in Gaza. Your students' news sources probably don't mention that. Nor do they mention the Israeli soldiers being killed in this war.

I hope you can be open minded enough to revise this document into something that doesn't vilify Israel and by extension vilify Zionists and by extension vilify Jewish students on campus.

I was born and raised in this country and I am horrified by the antisemitism my grandchildren are facing on campuses. We're America and we're better than that.

**++++ Public Comment – Yigal Blum, Shlomit Blum, and California Jewish Community Voice**

Dear Cañada College Academic Senate members,

We appreciate your efforts on some corrections to the initial draft. Still, more corrections are needed, if you truly put “the needs of students first” by having a 2-side balanced resolution. Unfortunately, the current draft falls very short! You need to also consider your Jewish students, who are under a massive antisemitic attack in the various academic systems as explicitly recognized today (5/7/2024) by President Biden and last week by HR resolution 6090. You also need to recognize the suffering of students of other minorities, whose families came from countries in which millions and hundreds of thousands of civilians were killed in the past 20 years due to various internal and external atrocities.

The Jewish students are hurt terribly by Hamas’ atrocities, district families have lost family members, and have been experiencing anxiety and deep concern for their families in Israel and their family members in California and elsewhere. Jewish students are afraid of exposing their Jewish identity on campuses across the USA, especially in California, where the exponential rise of antisemitic incidents has amounted to over 50% of the national cases. The attitude demonstrated by your Senate has added to their fears. This has already made some families reconsider their children’s education in San Mateo and adjacent Counties.

One distinct piece of evidence for further pushing a one-sided resolution is missing words such as “Hamas”, “peace”, “two-state solution”, “the right of Israel to exist”, “the right of Jewish students to be Zionist”, and many more. It suggests that this resolution still follows the rhetoric of organizations supporting Hamas actions and causes, and its antisemitic charter and causes.

From your draft resolution: *“Israeli forces have murdered over 30,000 Palestinian people since October 7th”*:

Hamas MURDERED over 1,200 innocent Israelis on October 7, and is still trying to murder more. **Fighting Terror is not murdering!**

You were already alerted to the fact that the numbers are unreliable at best and based on Hamas data. This was officially stated by the UN and even by the Palestinian data collectors.

Terrorists were killed in the war they had initiated. How many? None of us know the accurate total but can currently assumed to be around 15,000 out of the 30,000 mentioned in your resolution.

Civilians were killed mainly because said terrorists had been using them as human shields by hiding in 300 to 500 miles of tunnels under highly populated urban areas, preventing them from seeking shelter. These are all recorded facts.

War is terrible, and there are always innocent victims. How about condemning the initiating aggressor, HAMAS, and not Israel? How about showing some empathy to the brutally murdered innocent Israelis and their families? Arab Israelis were among the murdered victims of Hamas! You are prioritizing “social justice and equity”, aren’t you?

Remember: There was a ceasefire in effect on October 6, 2023!

Remember: Hamas attacked Israel in the worst pogrom in Jewish history since the Holocaust.

Remember: Relatively, 1,200 terror victims in Israel would be about 40,000 people in the USA = fourteen (X14) 9/11!

Six Million Jews were murdered between 1933 and 1945. The Muslim leader, the Grand Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni met with Hitler in 1941 to strengthen the understanding that the Arabs and the Nazis have a mutual enemy to annihilate—the Jews, and they both support the elimination of the Jewish National Home. Hamas had adopted the same goal in its charter and demonstrated it most horrifically on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

From the draft resolution: “*Academic freedom encouraging the sharing and cultivation of a wide variety of viewpoints. Academic freedom expresses our belief in inquiry, informed debate, and the search for truth; academic freedom is necessary to provide students with a variety of ideas, encourage them to engage in critical thinking, and help them understand conflicting opinions. Academic freedom encompasses the freedom to study, teach, and express ideas, including unpopular or controversial ones, without censorship or political restraint.*”

You need to make good on your word! Your draft resolution lacks historical research and facts. Alternatively, you deliberately omit “data” that does not fit your hypothesis or ideological agenda. It is painfully biased. Surely, you are aware of the existence of very different narratives, but you keep ignoring them.

Likewise, you chose to relate to the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism but ignored the **IHRA** definition that is widely recognized worldwide.

How widely?

1,116 global entities have adopted and endorsed the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s Working Definition of Antisemitism](#) by the end of 2023.

The IHRA was adopted several years ago as the official definition of antisemitism by the US government. Last week it was adopted as a House Resolution 6090 by a significant bipartisan vote. Yesterday (5/7/2024) it was echoed by President Biden in his speech against antisemitism, especially in the academic systems. It is also going to pass in the Senate of the USA.

Then what would become of any such biased Antisemitic Resolutions?

The [U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism](#), issued in May 2023, states: *"Antisemitism is a stereotypical and negative perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred of Jews. It is prejudice, bias, hostility, discrimination, or violence against Jews for being Jews or Jewish institutions or property for being Jewish or perceived as Jewish. Antisemitism can manifest as a form of racial, religious, national origin, and/or ethnic discrimination, bias, hatred, or a combination thereof. However, antisemitism is not simply a form of prejudice or hate. It is also a pernicious conspiracy theory that often features myths about Jewish power and control."*

The military funding for Israel and Humanitarian aid to the Palestinians passed two weeks ago by an overwhelming bipartisan margin, alongside aid to Ukraine and Taiwan. All three countries are USA allies facing attempts of annihilation by enemies who are also threatening the USA. Aside from the threat of HAMAS, Israel must also protect itself from Iran and its other proxies in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, all of whom have vowed to eliminate the Jewish State. The aid money for Israel actually stays in the USA for manufacturing the equipment, also helping the US economy. Furthermore, the \$26B for the combined aid to Israel and the Palestinians is only a very small fraction compared to the \$4.5 trillion, spent each year by the US government for our health care, about 5 times higher than the military budget that you are so concerned about.

Sincerely,

Yigal Blum, PhD

Shlomit Blum, MA, M.Ed

**On behalf of**

**California Jewish Community Voice**

[jewishcommunityresponse@gmail.com](mailto: jewishcommunityresponse@gmail.com)

#### ++++ Public Comment

1. Let's start by saying that I strongly believe it's not in the Cañada College Academic Senate purview to issue the resolution in its current form.
  1. Issuing the resolution in its current form may lead to future legal actions against Cañada college. Please inform the entire Cañada College administration (including Cañada College President)
  2. As an FYI, Foothill College Academic Senate in Los Altos Hills voted down a similar resolution for the samirae exact reason.
2. In the event that you decide to proceed with such a resolution,...I believe "Lisa Palmer," who was part of the workgroup that drafted the resolution stated that the intent was to have an unbiased resolution, which is clearly not the case based on today's discussion. Lisa also asked, "What should be changed in order for it to be unbiased." Please convey to her and the other workgroup members the following:
  1. **The resolution needs to mention the atrocities committed by Hamas, a terror organization, and condemn its acts!**

1. For someone who has no background and reads this resolution, one might think that this is all Israel's fault.
  2. Hamas, a terror organization, who was the aggressor on Oct-7
  3. Hamas continues to shoot rockets at Israel as we speak.
  4. Hamas is funded and is a proxy of Iran who just recently launched over 300 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones.
2. **The Academic Senate / resolution should NOT discuss foreign affairs such as ceasefire, but in the event that the workgroup insists of calling for a ceasefire, then a permanent ceasefire should be bounded by:**
1. **The return of ALL 132 hostages from Gaza** (and let's not confuse the Hamas terrorists held in prison in Israel, with the 132 baby/toddler/Women/Men/Elder that are being held in tunnels in Gaza)
  2. **The surrender / removal of Hamas from power.**
    1. Hamas is the one that has it in its charter to eliminate the state of Israel
    2. Hamas is the one that vows to repeat Oct 7 again and again once allowed
    3. If you TRULY want to help the Palestinian people, Hamas it the one responsible for the suffering of the Palestinian people in the past/present/future.
3. **The resolution must be accurate**
1. I must say I'm disappointed, and I hope it's not a reflection of your writing standards from the students of Cañada college
  2. You say that "Israeli forces have murdered over 30,000 Palestinian people since October, almost half of whom were children"
    1. "Murdered:"
      1. I understand that many were killed, and I understand that this is a tragedy, but these people were killed as part of the war and not murdered.
      2. On the other hand, Hamas is the one that murdered, butchered, raped, burnt alive, beheaded over 1200 people (including babies, kids, teenagers, men/women, elders), yet you neglect to mention that.
    2. "30,000:"
      1. The numbers are provided by Hamas, a terror organization with NO CREDIBILITY.
      2. These numbers include Hamas terrorists that were killed, as well as civilians that were killed by Hamas themselves.
      3. These numbers include people who died from natural causes.
      4. Anyone that is under the age of 18 is being counted as a kid, even if they were active Hamas terrorists.
      5. Hamas itself acknowledged that ~10K from their list are unaccounted for (no name/ID).



3. “Conflict in Palestine and Israel:” Palestine does not exist / It is not an official state. Suggest you say “conflict between Israel and Hamas” or “conflict in Gaza”
4. **The resolution needs to call for mental health support for ALL students** (currently neglecting to address many groups, including American-Israelis)
5. **The resolution should NOT discuss any US funding policies as this is outside your purview.**
  1. You call for “US taxpayer funds to be used to prevent further loss of life”  
-> One might say these funds are doing exactly that!
    1. Without this help, Israel, the ONLY Jewish state in the world, has existential threat. Are you looking for yet another holocaust / genocide of the Jewish people?
    2. Israel is an ally of the US. These funds are also being used to develop technologies such as Iron Dome to help protect the US from similar threats coming from Russia/China/North-Korea/Iran/etc.
  2. The US is also providing \$ to other allies such as Ukraine as yet another stronghold against the forces of evil. Are you suggesting that the US shouldn't do that?
  3. The US is also donating hundreds of millions of US\$ to organizations like UNRWA, which has direct connection with Hamas and assisted Hamas in their Oct'7 -> Why do you mention Israel, but don't you mention that?
  4. We are facing dark times of good vs. evil war. It's unfortunate that there is so much evil in the world, but The US and its allies should support each other and fight at all cost to ensure the good prevails.

#### ++++ Public Comment

For a campus that claims to care about its position on land stolen from the Native Americans, it is ridiculous for us to not put the most basic statements of solidarity toward the students advocating for an end to this genocide and struggling because of the pervasive support for it amongst our institutions, that it is being conducted in our name and the blood splatters on all of our our hands. It is imperative that we take at least the smallest of steps forward in advocating for it and the students with a shred of empathy in their hearts.

That people in or around our community would go so far to defend a western settler-colonial state dedicated utterly in its definition to its expansion/western-promoted definition of ownership of the full boundaries of what was Palestine, and the violence inherent in the definition of the state, is quite sad. The fact that it was originally created to extradite the Jews themselves from Britain due to bigotry, and that they chose to do this violence to that Arabic land, was an intentional choice that ignored the sovereignty of this primarily brown-skinned nation.

If this campus is to truly honor its values as a welcoming and diverse institution, I implore the academic senate to put forth this humble resolution.

**++++ Public Comment – Joshua Parker**

1. Regarding the working group's process, I think they should make public their reasoning that a cease fire is the proper move, from a military and political perspective.
2. The title of the resolution is incorrect. Both Reuters and The Economist (as well as other sources but those are regarded as neutral) refer to it as the 'Israel-Hamas War' or 'Hamas-Israel War.' Israel is at war with Hamas, not Gaza.
3. The resolution does not address what happens after the cease fire. It does not address what happens to the hostages. Whether or not this is intentional, I do not know. But it should address them in some respect.
4. The resolution refers to what happened on 10/7 as 'October 7, 2023 events.' It should at least mention that people were killed. And it should clearly state that it was Hamas, so as to not conflate innocent people in Gaza with Hamas.
5. The resolution mentions 'collective punishment of those in Gaza.' First of all, it makes no mention of the losses that Israelis are experiencing. There are casualties on both sides of this war. It is also misleading to call it 'punishment.' It's a war. They are not being punished. This is no more of a punishment than Hamas' attack at the border crossing this past weekend is a punishment.
6. The resolution contradicts itself regarding whom should receive mental health support. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Whereas says Cañada strives for equitable access. But the 1<sup>st</sup> Resolved is not equitable.
7. The resolution uses the JDA definition of antisemitism. I don't know why they chose this but it would make much more sense to use the US House definition which is the same as the IHRA definition which is the same as what the past 3 administrations used.
8. There are many statements that are not factual. The estimated death toll in Gaza, while horrific, is almost impossible to confirm. That number comes from the Gaza Ministry of Health. That same ministry cannot confirm the names of ~1/3 of the dead. That's quite a conundrum. Also, that number includes all people who have died of all causes—heart attacks, cancer, strokes. It is not an accurate representation of the number of casualties of the war.
9. The final Whereas says that money is sent to the Israeli military. That is not technically correct: It's to the country. It's not earmarked for the military. It also omits the fact that the same bill sends funding to Ukraine and Taiwan. It's the same bill. The resolution should be more thorough.
10. The 1<sup>st</sup> Resolved is exclusionary. It offers increased mental health services to 3 groups of people. It neglects students who are Black, Chinese, Gay, Mexican, etc...

It also underscores the relative lack of understanding of the writing group. To say it is for 'Jewish students' offers even more of an opportunity to conflate anti-Israel sentiment with antisemitism. What about Christian Israelis? Or Arab or Muslim Israelis? Or completely secular Israelis? By offering it only to Jewish students it neglects Israelis of other (or no) religion who may also have increased mental health needs.

11. The final Resolved states that there should be a ceasefire because of the mental health needs of Cañada students. While important, the emotional and psychiatric state of your students should not dictate military policies of 2 completely unrelated bodies. And even if you thought the mental health needs were a good reason for calling for a cease fire, you'd have to say that the increased mental health needs were a result of the war. For example, what if there was some local event that caused massive and prolonged distress among your students but was completely unrelated to the war. This resolution would propose that there should be a cease fire based on that.

Furthermore, by only calling for a cease fire in Gaza because of the increased mental health needs the resolution neglects all other wars currently going on. It creates the impression that Cañada only cares about the war in Gaza.

#### ++++ **Public Comment**

I support the draft of this document, particularly in regards to the call for ceasefire and for the support of academic freedom. Some commenters argue that it would be inappropriate to discuss or educate on this issue in class. But only three years ago, during the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement, my professors taught lessons on the prison industrial complex and highlighted black authors. Education on current events is not new territory for Cañada classes. Professors and students must be allowed to speak and teach on the genocide in Gaza without fear of repercussions. Again, I support this resolution to secure academic freedom and the call for ceasefire.

#### ++++ **Public Comment**

As a Muslim student who has been personally attacked in the past (and my family as well), I am experiencing symptoms of PTSD (as has been confirmed by my therapist, my doctor, my psychologist, and my professor who has a PhD in psychology). This is especially difficult as I am balancing a lot: preparing for finals, raising a young child, working, and dealing with family hardship. I am all for more mental health services for students, especially for those who may not have access otherwise.

To the two folks on the Academic Senate who stated they don't think this is the place for a ceasefire resolution: one stated that they don't want Canada to be known for picking a side. It's not about picking a side. It's about integrity, ethics, and basic human dignity. To the human who stated it's not an academic matter but a political one, and Canada is no place for a political

statement - education has always been political. In America, most colleges only admitted white male students for a long time. People of color and women fought for their rights to education. There was a civil rights movement in the 1960s and a disability rights movement in the 1970s. Citizens had to take a stand and make a statement to receive rights to free and appropriate education! Many of these governmental changes happened because college students were taking action to move it forward. **Students** have led the fight to establish departments such as African American studies and Chicano studies in their colleges & universities. Think about equity, diversity, and inclusion. The definition of affirmative action is (and I quote from the Oxford dictionary) "(in the context of the allocation of resources or employment) the practice or policy of favoring individuals belonging to groups regarded as disadvantaged or subject to discrimination." These individuals are disadvantaged because of systemic inequity. Why does systemic inequity exist? Think critically. **Education is always political.**

To those who mentioned that the resolution doesn't include Jewish students. It clearly states very specifically Jewish students. I agree with other folks who want to include all black and brown students who are also affected by war & varying inequities, whether it's because of systemic racism or generational trauma or anything else. Shoutout to the black Jewish student who spoke - thank you for speaking and we support you!

#### ++++ Public Comment

I've been a resident of San Mateo county for 28 years, and I'm a proud supporter of public education not only through my significant financial contribution but also being a student at CSM myself. I am against the ceasefire resolution in the way it is written for the following reasons:

**SMCCD:** The RESOLVED that Cañada College Academic Senate work with the college to develop and offer culturally responsive mental health support services for Palestinian, Palestinian-American, and Jewish students, faculty, and staff impacted by the events of October 7th and the ongoing

**Natasha Gurevich:** Mental health support services should be available to all students, regardless of the cultural, ethnic or racial background and irrespective of the external events. Creating conditions for mental support further divides already disintegrated communities. Regardless of the political positions and believes, the mental health support should be a part of the offering in public education.

**SMCCD:** RESOLVED that Cañada College Academic Senate affirms our commitment to the protection of academic freedom in online academic environments and on campus, despite calls to censor texts, discussion, and activism around the current conflict in Palestine and Israel. RESOLVED that Cañada College Academic Senate work with AFT1493 to protect academic and intellectual freedom, including the rights of all faculty, adjunct and full-time, to develop curriculum, educational programming, and resources, and to discuss the current conflict in Palestine and Israel in the classroom, in office hours, in counseling and library sessions, and at all campus activities without being subjected to intimidation, censorship, retaliation, or threat of reduction or termination of employment or assignment;

**Natasha Gurevich:** the purpose of any institution is to educate its students based on the facts and objective measures. Critical thinking, comprehension, problem solving skills and healthy debates should be developed on the basis of verified information, not individual opinions or emotional biases. The Math professor spoke earlier today and questioned whether Israeli women were raped and babies were burned alive. An academician should know his facts, especially when these gruesome events were recorded and publicized by Hamas terrorists on the world wide web. If ignoring facts and published evidence represent an academic freedom, I can't support it. What I would support if Canada College would explain to its students that advocating for Hamas is advocating for the regime that wishes not only destruction of Israel, which is anti-semitic, but also the death to all Americans, which is anti-American.

The events of the last couple of months (SJSU, as an example) demonstrated that when the subject matter experts are invited to come to Colleges/Universities and share their perspectives, they are not listened to. They are booed out of the room, thrown things at and purely assaulted. This is not an academic freedom. This is chaos and anarchy. I doubt that you'd like your college to become the ground for breeding anarchy. I lived in the Soviet Union for 27 years, and treasure freedom of speech as the most fragile gift but this resolution doesn't represent freedom of speech - it just represents anger that will lead to further segregation.

**SMCCD:** RESOLVED that for humanitarian reasons and to support the expressed mental health needs of our students, Cañada College Academic Senate calls for an immediate ceasefire and for US taxpayer funds to be used to prevent further loss of life and to be invested in our nation's educational system to improve mental health services and allow for greater student success.

**Natasha Gurevich:** The students do not possess deep enough subject matter expertise to determine the right timeline and potential geo political consequences for ceasefire. Equally, faculty who are not well versed on global conflicts, geopolitics, and the history of a specific region should not be instructing students on the conflicts occurring in that region. Professors are hired based on their expertise in a specific field and cannot spontaneously claim expertise in areas outside of their academic specialty. They can certainly share their opinions, but to use their position of authority and trust to misrepresent opinion as fact is unacceptable.

As a taxpayer, I see how my contribution at times goes towards the causes I support, and sometimes it's distributed into the areas that are outside of my values. But I recognize that there are many factors that go into the decisions that government make, and not all of them are known to me. So, I trust that the care for American people and societal wisdom will prevail. My wish is that the students will trust that the government makes the best possible choice given current circumstances and start focusing on becoming valid contributors to the society vs diverting their time and energy fighting the cause they simply do not have enough factual knowledge about.

#### ++++ Public Comment

Based on Cañada's College Goal item #2, creating an Equity-Minded and Antiracist College Culture, it only seems right that they adopt this Gaza resolution (agenda item 6.7) and take action on it. They, being the school that claims to "honor diversity, mitigate implicit bias," and "promote empathy in a manner that acknowledges power imbalances and supports all community members" (2022-27 Cañada College Educational Master Plan); I can see this resolution is the way to do that. No one needs to be an academic expert, have military or lived experience in Gaza to conceptualize the prolonged murder of 40,000 people as condemnable.

I also reject the idea that this doesn't fall within the concern of the local college community, considering the significant Palestinian-American student population in SMCCD, some of whom watched their families die in the Gaza Strip. On the contrary, I believe it is absolutely within the realm of the district to be taking a stand on this issue. A committee dedicated to handling this matter is a great start, but I'd like to point out the Skyline College academic senate was completely capable of moving forward with their stance and even passing a resolution. I don't see why Cañada can't do the same, especially since the two share many similar values as written in their EMP packets.

And rather than play oppression olympics, I would say this resolution is quite the opposite of exclusionary action, because support for Palestinian students is support for everyone. Liberation of Palestine calls for the liberation of all oppressed peoples. Therefore I don't see why a committee designated to (2.10) "increase student voice in college processes" is hesitating to (CG #2) "promote social justice" when the students ask it.

At this point, as we witness the Israeli military's current invasion of Rafah on the 1.5 million people trapped in the city, there is no more time for discussion. It's been 7 months of an I.C.J.-classified genocide on the Palestinian people. The resolution won't bring the 600,000 displaced/malnourished children in Rafah to health and safety, but it will bring the Cañada College institution affirmed in a place of solidarity and moral clarity - for now and the future. That currently resides in your hands.

Please do more to implement the cultural empathy your institution so passionately claims to have.

Bring this resolution to action.