



UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTION

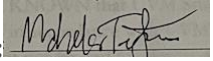
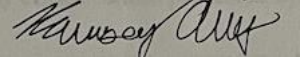
Senate Bill No. : R.F.1


Date Submitted: 10/29/2023

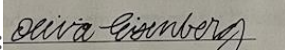
Date Introduced: 10/24/2023

Introduced By: Chair Teferra

Date Action Taken: 10/31/2023

Sponsored:  
Chair Teferra & Chair Anis

Certified: 
Speaker of the Senate Clark

Signed: 
President Eisenberg

Resolution Addressing UVM's Response to the Palestinian Community

WHEREAS The University of Vermont's, henceforth referred to as UVM, Common Ground in part reads "As a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community",¹

WHEREAS UVM's "Why Diversity Statement" states that UVM is committed to promoting cultural diversity in education and, in part, reads "... we must educate our students about the world in which they live and help them (as well as other members of the University community) acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for successful and productive lives"

WHEREAS UVM's "Why Diversity Statement" continues on to further emphasize "cultivating a safe and respectful climate for all members of our University community; supporting the development of cultural competency... and having co-curricular experiences that provide

¹<https://www.uvm.edu/president/our-common-ground>

community members with opportunities to engage across differences, as well as to develop and deepen critical life skills”²

WHEREAS the UVM’s initial response after the events that took place on October 7, 2023, fails to mention Palestinian students in an equitable manner,³

WHEREAS Mohammed El-Kurd, a prominent Palestinian writer and journalist, had been scheduled to speak at the University on Thursday, October 26, 2023, as part of The Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series, co-sponsored by UVM’s own departments of English and Sociology,

WHEREAS Helen Scott, a UVM professor of English and a board member of the Will Miller Lecture Series, said that last week, sponsors had been “assured that the university values academic freedom and would not cancel the event”,⁴

WHEREAS the UVM administration and Division of Safety and Compliance canceled Mohammed El-Kurds lecture, citing “safety and security concerns” without further elaboration,⁵

WHEREAS this cancellation was made against the wishes of the sponsoring departments, and additionally criticized and protested by the greater UVM community,

LET IT BE KNOWN that UVM Student Government Association, henceforth referred to as the UVM SGA, in accordance with UVM’s common ground, condemns any form of discrimination, including, but not limited to, racism, anti-semitism, and Islamophobia,

LET IT BE KNOWN the lack of appropriate response from the University of Vermont creates a hostile and unjust environment for Palestinian as well as Arab students on this campus,

LET IT BE KNOWN the cancellation of this event effectively alienates and silences Palestinian and Arab voices and perpetuates anti-Arab and Islamophobic tropes,

LET IT BE KNOWN that this response creates a negative reputation for the University and a precedent that will impede any further relationship with Mohammed El-Kurd, the Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series, and any other speakers that would otherwise be beneficial for the university to host,

BE IT RESOLVED that the UVM SGA is not satisfied with UVM’s initial response, that was not equitable in mentioning the hardships of the Palestinian community,

BE IT RESOLVED that the UVM SGA condemns the cancellation of Mohammed El-Kurd’s lecture and views this act as being a silencing of a Palestinian voice, which is in direct violation of UVM’s Common Ground and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,

²https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Top%20Tier%20files/UVM_Board_Why_Diversity_Strategic.pdf

³<https://www.uvm.edu/news/president/reflecting-tragedy-israel-and-gaza>

⁴<https://vtdigger.org/2023/10/23/citing-safety-concerns-university-of-vermont-cancels-event-with-palestinian-writer/>

⁵["Division of Safety and Compliance Email" Sent Oct. 21, 2023](#)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED UVM SGA encourages the UVM administration to issue an apology to the members of the UVM community that have been affected, acknowledging the impact of the cancellation despite its intent,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UVM SGA encourages the UVM administration to show equitable support to Palestinian and Jewish students on campus through language used,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UVM SGA encourages UVM administration to provide equitable resources to the Palestinian community to ensure that they feel heard and protected.