



CALIFORNIA
STATE
UNIVERSITY,
FRESNO

June 7, 2017

Beth Baron
MESA President
Professor, City University of New York

Amy W. Newhall
MESA Executive Director
Associate Professor, University of Arizona

Dear Dr. Baron and Dr. Newhall,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) regarding the cancellation of the search for the Edward Said Professorship at California State University, Fresno. Chancellor White has requested that I respond on his and my behalf.

The allegation that Fresno State cancelled and rescheduled the Edward Said Professorship search for next year because of pressure from outside groups is untrue.

The search was approved to be part of the Philosophy Department but the search committee was not formed through an election by the faculty members of that department, as is required by our Academic Policy Manual (APM). The APM, which is voted and agreed upon by the Academic Senate of the University, guides all searches. We did not recognize this issue and should have cancelled this search much earlier based on these academic policy violations.

We also discovered that an unauthorized party was participating in the search committee's deliberations, and that this party was sharing perspectives potentially influencing the committee, another clear violation of our academic policy. After assessing the violations to our academic policy, we acted immediately to cancel and reschedule the search.

During the search, no University official was pressured by any individual or group to cancel the search based on candidates' ethnic background or political point of view. In particular, the Academic Affairs individuals who made the

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decision to cancel the search and reopen it next year were not exposed to any pressure from any source at any point in time during the search. It is unfortunate that attention has been improperly directed to this unfounded allegation.

We stand by the University's academic policies, respect for fairness and academic freedom. We believe that it was best to adhere to our academic policy manual, which forms the core of our democratic system of shared governance. Indeed, our APM stipulates hiring procedures for our faculty in order to ensure the equity and integrity of our hiring decisions.

Our dedication to diversity remains strong and is sincere. We are committed to conducting a faculty search next year that is successful in attracting a qualified scholar who will enrich our curriculum in Middle East Studies and Said scholarship.

Thank you for sharing your concerns and I hope the above information is helpful in providing additional context regarding this situation.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Castro
President

Cc: Chancellor White