

## ***Chabad Jewish Student Center at UC Berkeley Rabbi Gil Yosef Leeds' Remarks to UC Regents***

November 19, 2015

*As a UC Berkeley alum myself from almost 15 years ago, I vividly recall anti-Semitic incidents punctuating my years of study there and now as a Rabbinic leader of the Jewish Student Community on Cal's Campus, I have witnessed the same – if not more so.*

*Looking as I do, as an observant Jew, there are parts of campus that I simply must avoid – day or night – unless I want to be greeted with an anti-Semitic slur or worse... Last year at UC Davis, the Jewish Fraternity was vandalized – swastikas were graffitied on the AEPi house. Just this week, a Jewish UCSC student was told that he should abstain from a vote because of his "Jewish Agenda." Antisemitism across the globe has already reached a fever pitch and I believe that no one wants to see anything short of absolute tolerance, total acceptance and unconditional love throughout our beloved UC System.*

*So what is the solution to this problem you ask? Let's go back in time 2,372 years ago and examine how an anti-Semitic plot in ancient Persia (known as the story of "Purim" ) was thwarted... Of course the Jewish people prayed to G-d and did what ever they could to defended themselves from physical aggression - that goes without saying. But, what was exceptionally unique to the Purim story was that through a series of political and governmental petitions, the Persian King Achashverosh (known as Xerxes in ancient Greek) was convinced to annul the anti-Semitic decree – allowing the Jewish people to continue to live peacefully in the land of Persia.*

*So what I am suggesting today, is that those who have the power to create a safe environment for Jewish students suffering from intolerance, utilize their responsibility to do so by adopting the State departments definition of Antisemitism. UC Berkeley's motto is "Fiat Lux" in Latin, "Let there be light" in English and "Vayehi Ohr" in the original Hebrew, and the first step in allowing there to be "light" on UC Campuses, is to drive out the darkness of hate speech and antisemitism, and to actively pursue tolerance and co-existence As Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." So let us rally behind this cause today by bringing our candle of light to the world and together we will illuminate the entire world.*