

On Nov 19, 2013, at 7:26 PM, President's Office wrote:

Professor Rossman-Benjamin,

Thank you for your message to President Wong. He has asked that I share his statement with you. It can be found on his website at the following link: <http://president.sfsu.edu> . I have also provided it below.

Thank you and regards,

Shawn Whalen

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Statement on Campus Discourse

San Francisco State University is recognized worldwide for making social justice a strategic priority; it is an integral part of our DNA. As president, I was deeply disturbed by incendiary language that marred an annual commemoration of a cultural mural on campus.

On November 7, 2013 members of the campus community gathered to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the installation of a mural honoring Edward Said. Nearby, several student organizations were staffing tables to raise awareness of their groups' activities. One table was set up to allow passers-by to create their own placards with a pre-made stencil, which read, "My heroes have always killed colonizers."

I am dismayed by the glorification of violence that this message conveys. There is no place at SF State for celebrating violence or promoting intolerance, bigotry, anti-Semitism or any other form of hate-mongering. We are a university community committed to furthering civil dialogue. Each of us must remain vigilant in working to achieve this goal.

The university is a place where dialogue, debate and the marketplace of ideas are cherished. We must also maintain a safe environment. Engaging in expressions that threaten and intimidate are counter to these goals. In addition to conveying my firm commitment to a safe and civil campus environment directly to any students involved, I will be meeting with members of the campus community to express my concerns, and to learn more about their perceptions of our current campus climate. University leadership will continue to gather information about this occurrence and address it appropriately. We prize our role as a forum for open discourse and we will continue to work toward a campus culture that cherishes civility.

Les Wong
President