



About AMCHA Initiative

Mission: AMCHA Initiative is a non-profit organization dedicated to investigating, raising awareness about, and combating acts of antisemitism at institutions of higher education in America. While diminishing antisemitic behavior is our central focus, what drives AMCHA is the desire to *protect Jewish students*. In identifying antisemitic activity, AMCHA is careful to use a systematic definition of antisemitism based on the U.S. State Department.

History: Founded in 2011 by UC Santa Cruz lecturer Tammi Rossman-Benjamin and UCLA professor emeritus Leila Beckwith, AMCHA has worked tenaciously to raise awareness about campus antisemitism at both the state and national levels. For their efforts with AMCHA, Rossman-Benjamin and Beckwith received the 2013 Heroes of Conscience Award from the American Freedom Alliance. Additionally, Rossman-Benjamin was awarded the Cohon Foundation award for benefiting the Jewish people in 2017, named one of the Top 100 People Influencing Jewish Life in 2014 by the *Algemeiner*, and received the 2012 Tikkun Olam Award from the Haiti Jewish Refugee Legacy.

Efforts: AMCHA's efforts are bolstered by a network of more than 10,000 members and supporters of the Jewish community who have joined together to ensure the safety and well-being of Jewish students on college and university campuses. AMCHA also collaborates with **58** other prominent education, civil rights and Jewish advocacy organizations.

A few of AMCHA's achievements include the following:

- After a year of AMCHA-led efforts, the University of California Regents passed a landmark policy stating, "Anti-Semitism, anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism and other forms of discrimination have no place at the University of California" in March 2016. This followed on the heels of a September 2015 meeting in which – for the first time – the UC Regents publicly stated that antisemitism is a serious problem on UC campuses and established a working group to address the problem. AMCHA's efforts are part of an on-going campaign urging UC, state and federal leaders to adopt a contemporary definition of antisemitism, and to use this definition to accurately identify and treat anti-Jewish bigotry with the same promptness and vigor as all other bigotry.
- In 2016, AMCHA produced two breakthrough studies investigating antisemitic activity at more than 100 public and private colleges and universities with the largest Jewish undergraduate populations. These studies provided the first-ever objective confirmation of student reports of escalating antisemitism, as well as clear evidence that the strongest predictors of anti-Jewish hostility – such as assault, harassment, destruction of property, discrimination, and suppression of speech -- are the presence of BDS activity, anti-Zionist student groups, and faculty boycotters. The results of AMCHA's studies have proven enormously useful to numerous allied organizations and government officials and have been featured in *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *Fox News*, *CBS-Sacramento*, *Washington Free Beacon*, *The Jewish Press*, and many others.
- In response to threats by the University of California's 30,000-member graduate student union (UAW 2865) to bring antisemitic BDS propaganda into UC classrooms, AMCHA notified UC President Napolitano that the union's actions would be in violation of University policies prohibiting the politicization of the classroom. As a result, UC Provost Dorr responded by sending letters to all 9 chancellors, with AMCHA Initiative's letter attached, reminding them about the policies and their obligation to adhere to them. Dorr further stated that faculty would also be prohibited from political indoctrination! This is a major precedent setting win and the first time UC administrators have publicly acknowledged these policies and their intention to enforce them.
- AMCHA has established and leads an at-will coalition of 58 organizations that has responded to dozens of specific incidents of antisemitism and worked collaboratively to ensure state and federal protections for Jewish students. The coalition includes: AEPi, Brandeis Center, CAMERA, CUFI on Campus, Israeli-American Council, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, Simon Wiesenthal Center, StandWithUs and Zionist Organization of America.

Additionally, AMCHA Initiative has worked tirelessly to call attention to and protect Jewish students from harassment and intimidation, as well as attempts to shut down Jewish student-hosted events. The organization has been a leader in identifying and publicizing university departments, faculty members, academic groups and administrative offices that sponsor, endorse, and/or fund events with antisemitic content –including lists of individuals/groups supporting an academic boycott of Israel.

Serving as a watchdog organization to monitor antisemitic activity on campuses, AMCHA Initiative has garnered media coverage worldwide, including in the *New York Times*, *The Economist*, *Newsweek*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Times of Israel*, *Jewish Journal*, *Jerusalem Post*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.