



US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel

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From:

US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (USACBI)
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USACBI writes to denounce the San Francisco State University (SFSU) administration's cancellation of the Palestine Travel Abroad Trip organized by the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) studies program and hosted by An-Najah National University, in Nablus, Palestine. We call upon the SFSU administration to reverse a decision made in violation of the academic freedom and right to education of the AMED students and faculty, including Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi and Saliem Shehadeh, who organized and planned to participate on this trip—and in disrespect to the An-Najah faculty and administrators, Dr. Saida Affouneh and Acting President Dr. Maher Natsheh, who worked for this partnership. And we also call upon the SFSU administration to cease its ongoing efforts to suppress AMED and to silence, censor or criminalize any criticism of Israel or advocacy for Palestine.

Administrators' decision to cancel the program is rife with hypocrisy, and constitutes politically motivated support for Israel—and its practices of apartheid. At the same time as administrations are condemning and refusing initiatives by students and faculty at universities including [NYU](#) and [Pitzer](#) to cancel their Study Abroad in Israel programs because of Israel's discriminatory practices, or [punishing faculty](#) who choose not to write letters in support of students who wish to study in Israel, we see SFSU denying students the opportunity to study abroad in Palestine.

What these administrative actions share in common (on the one hand, supporting study abroad in Israel, on the other, denying study abroad in Palestine) is a support for Zionism and a discrimination against Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and anyone advocating for Palestine. What these administrative actions also share is a flagrant disregard for the academic freedom, and a right to education—the very values that they often promulgate in justifying their denials of these rights.

AMED students and faculty at SFSU have worked for over six months to organize the Study Abroad in Palestine trip, going through all the formal channels, including an MOU with An-Najah National University. They have met with many attempts to block the program on technicalities and in each instance, AMED has addressed these concerns. SFSU insisted that An-Najah sign a new agreement and when An-Najah did, they rejected it. The SFSU administration also has objected to the program on grounds that the travel was “high risk,” even though SFSU has been sending students to a full-year Study Abroad program to Israel, despite Israel’s inclusion in the same list of high risk countries. SFSU Information Technology Services blocked faculty advisor Prof. Rabab Abdulhadi’s emails that contained attachments for the trip when she sought to prove to the administration that organizers of the study abroad trip had submitted the necessary paperwork for the program. When resubmitted, SFSU officials claimed that they could not open the attachments. In mid-May, SFSU asked AMED to print and send by express mail almost 100 pages of documents for rerouting. Though AMED has no operating budget, a volunteer student printed them and hand-delivered them. When all else failed, SFSU claimed that signatures that were not and are never required for international travel authorization were missing. Such attempts to block this trip have been ongoing since October 2018, and AMED students and faculty have worked to meet any and all trumped-up challenges with patience, good faith, and dedication.

This is but the latest chapter in a [war of attrition](#) to shut down AMED, and to censor, silence, and stop dialogue and academic partnerships between students and faculty at SFSU and students and faculty in Palestine. This is also yet another instance of Zionist repression on US college campuses, and yet another effort to censor, delegitimate and criminalize the Palestinian struggle for freedom and all those who participate in it.

Just as students and faculty with AMED at SFSU will continue to fight for their program and for Palestinian freedom and justice in the face of years of continuous lawfare and assaults such as this most recent one, so too will those of us who work in alliance with them. The hypocrisies and violations that attend this latest attack on SFSU’s proposed study abroad in Palestine trip are the same ones that have prompted USACBI to initiate a [campaign to boycott Study Abroad Programs in Israel](#).

USACBI stands with the students and faculty at SFSU who have worked so hard to make possible their planned trip to study in Palestine at An-Najah National University. We call for the SFSU administration to reverse its decision to cancel this trip, and we call for them to support AMED, and to respect the academic freedom and right to education of *all* students at SFSU and beyond.