

Long Beach Community College District Board of Trustees Takes a Stand

Sunny Zia | LBCCD Board of Trustees Member, Area 3

After months of trial and tribulation, with your support, we prevailed in passing an important resolution defining antisemitism for the Long Beach Community College District (LBCCD) Board of Trustees. This definition was adopted in accordance with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism (IHRA).



While the IHRA definition has been adopted by the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of State, it was not without controversy and hesitation before it passed.

It is not breaking news that antisemitism has been on the rise. In fact, according to a 2019 Anti-Defamation League account, 2,107 antisemitic incidents were reported in the United States, more than in any year, and incidents of antisemitic harassment are on the rise on American college campuses.

In my years of public service, I have worked on combatting the rise of antisemitism in my community and across the political spectrum. I have learned that the first step in combating and defeating antisemitism, is to clearly define it. Carly Gammill, counsel for Stand with Us, stated it succinctly, "For without a clear definition of antisemitism, how will it be identified? And if it is not identified, how will it be exposed? And if it is not exposed, how will it be adequately addressed?"

The IHRA Definition provides a consensus tool,

adopted not only by the 34 IHRA member nations on behalf of IHRA itself, but also nearly 40 individual nations, as well as numerous government agencies, educational institutions, and civic organizations including the U.S. Department of Education.

While various academic institutions student groups and religious groups such as the Global Imams Council have condemned antisemitism under the IHRA definition, LBCCD Board of Trustees is the first higher education body to formally recognize this definition.

It gives me great pride to be able to serve our community and lead this effort. This was truly a collective effort by Jewish organizations across the country and our very own Jewish Long Beach. After four months of preparation, the Board Chair, Uduak Ntuk, agendized the resolution for a vote at our March meeting, and it passed unanimously.

This is a victory for our community and for the community-at-large in taking a stand against hate and bigotry. Thank you for all your calls, letters, and calls to action. Let us continue our work in having other educational institutions follow suit. Let us maintain focus on monitoring and holding these institutions accountable including ensuring that curriculum such as ethnic studies doesn't become grounds to espouse antisemitism. As our community leader and role model, the late Gene Lentzner taught us all about L'Dor V'Dor. I hope you will be my partner in ensuring that we are safeguarded from antisemitism from our generation to the next.

If I can be of service to you, feel free to contact me at info@sunnyzia.com, or my cell at 562.270.5017. 

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

