



Dr. Paula Burns
President and CEO
snəwəyət lələm Langara College
100 West 49th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 2Z6
VIA Email

November 16, 2023

Dear Dr. Burns,

Re: Dr. Natalie Knight's offensive remarks

I am writing to express my serious concerns about the highly offensive statements made by Langara College faculty member Dr. Natalie Knight glorifying the heinous and barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7th, at the rally at the שׁח״לָּאנֶאָךְ Xwtl'e7énk Square (Vancouver Art Gallery Plaza) on October 28th, which have been shared on social media and reported on in the news media. I raise this with you as the local MLA for Vancouver-Langara and as a friend and supporter of snəwəyət lələm Langara College.

These statements run completely counter to the efforts that I have worked on in South Vancouver, including with Langara College and the Jewish community, to build a more inclusive community. Since the October 7th attack, I have heard from many members of the Jewish community who are feeling targeted, harassed, scared, and isolated. Dr. Knight's comments praising the mass murder of Jews only exacerbate these feelings. I have also heard from faculty, staff, and students at Langara College who do not feel safe on campus or in the classroom.

How Langara College handles the confidential investigation process during Dr. Knight's leave is crucial. The community and the College will be closely watching as it will be a significant measure of their ability to move forward and foster a more inclusive and positive environment.

As you may be aware, for many years I have been advocating for the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism in our province. Canada adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism in 2019 to provide a clear definition of antisemitism in our country. This definition sets out illustrative examples which include "denying the Jewish people their right of self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour," and "calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion." I urge your leadership team to utilize the IHRA definition of antisemitism in the investigation process for Dr. Knight, and all other considerations of how to ensure that faculty, staff, and students at Langara College, including on campus and in the classroom, feel safe and protected against antisemitic activities including taunts, harassment, incitement, and other acts of hate.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I urge Langara College to be a positive place of learning and teaching that fosters education, enlightenment, and inclusivity.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee
MLA, Vancouver-Langara
BC United Shadow Minister for Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Cc.: Hon. Selina Robinson
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

Coralee Oakes,
MLA for Cariboo North
BC United Shadow Minister for Advanced Education