

The XIV Dalai Lama Endowed Scholarship

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

LETTER FROM THE UCI DALAI LAMA SCHOLARS

Moran Cohen and Ali Malik

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As the 2008-09 UCI Dalai Lama Scholars, we are proud to call UC Irvine a safe and ethnically diverse campus. UCI allows students to express their views and beliefs, including religious and political ones.

UC Irvine encourages students to take on leadership roles and invokes students to advocate challenging topics they are passionate about. Students are motivated to get involved and are able to engage in genuine discussions and activism. As students of the Jewish and Muslim faith, we have both followed these guidelines and have become active members in our respective campus organizations. We would like to inform the community that UCI is a campus that provides students with a great educational environment and encourages students to learn how to deal with difficult controversies.



In September of 2008, as a continuation of this commitment to dialogue, the Olive Tree Initiative at UCI embarked on a journey to Israel and the West Bank. The group consisted of fourteen UCI students from diverse backgrounds, including Muslim and Jewish students. We were both present on the trip and have since engaged in numerous civil discussions and debates surrounding the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. We feel that the Olive Tree Initiative has contributed significantly to the community in promoting ethics, compassionate leadership, and local and global responsibility.

In addition to having engaged over forty public audiences and receiving a community leadership award from the Orange County Human Relations office, the Olive Tree Initiative hosted a UC-wide student leadership summit during the weekend of April 24 to 26, 2009. We – the Dalai Lama Scholars and the Olive Tree Initiative – hosted student leaders from UC Irvine, UCLA, UC Merced, UC Riverside, UC San Francisco, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego and UC Santa Cruz in which we engaged compassionate dialogue surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The summit was designed to engage and support University of California student leaders committed to authentic and civil dialogue, and inform them about the need for new diplomacy in the Middle East. The summit provided useful tools for creating and sustaining student organizations at UC campuses that advance collaboration and cooperation.

We hope UCI will continue to bring together dynamic students of diverse political, religious, and ethnic backgrounds to commit themselves to challenge controversial issues in constructive manners.

Moran Cohen
2008-09 Scholar

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