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Dr. Timothy P. White
Chancellor
California State University
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Dr. Joseph I. Castro
President
California State University Fresno
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Dear Chancellor White and President Castro:

I write in response to letters and information I have received concerning the cancellation of the search for the Edward Said Professorship in Middle East Studies at California State University, Fresno, by Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Rudy Sanchez. Given what I have read, it appears that AVP may have violated widely accepted protocols and procedures for academic searches. I have watched this particular search as it interested my graduate students from the first call. I am greatly disappointed at the apparent violation of generally accepted procedures by AVP Sanchez. It is particularly disappointing to find myself having to explain to outstanding graduate students why such a thing could happen in one of our sister California public universities.

From what I have learned the search committee was formed according to normal procedure and approved by the Dean in Spring of 2016; candidates were interviewed; a ranked list was forwarded to Dean Saul Jimenez-Sandoval; then abruptly AVP Sanchez cancelled the search based on alleged violations of APM 301 which refers to the selection of the search committee. The material I have read indicates the search committee was selected through normal Cal State Fresno procedures and approved by the Dean. If there were violations of APM 301, would they not have been recognized in that initial selection process and identified by the Dean?

It seems highly unusual for a Dean's office to name violations one year after that process was complete and only after a ranked preference list is forwarded.

That fact that "concern" over the search committee selection was expressed by AVP only after the four finalists, all of whom are of Arab and Muslim origin, leaves open the serious "concern" that it was the identity of the finalists, rather than the procedure that lead to AVP's "concern". Should that turn out to be the case, it would not only be a violation of principles of academic freedom and Cal State's own principles of community, but also it would be a shameful mark on the face of Cal State Fresno. That search committee member Dr. Joe Parks has reported that all appropriate procedures were followed and approved by the Dean, and that leading Fresno scholar Dr. Vida Samiian, resigned in protest of the cancellation of the search, I am left with a conclusion that discriminatory and prejudicial factors in relation to the finalist

list were at play. The only way assure that others do not come to the same conclusion is to reinstate the search in precisely the form that it was carried out. I would like to believe that the conclusions the evidence points to are false. Please show us they are by reinstating the search – and show our young graduate student scholars that Cal State Fresno believes in and abides by the highest principles of community and academic freedom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suad Joseph".

Suad Joseph

Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

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