

August 14, 2026

Dear President Dr. Joe Bertolino and colleagues,

We are writing on behalf of Academia for Equality (A4E) to protest in the strongest terms the decision by the university's administration — taken following a complaint by one of Stockton University's donors, Mr. John Scarpa — to remove from the MAHG program's webpage the Message from the Director written by the program's director, Dr. Raz Segal.

A4E is an organization of over 1,000 Israeli academics, Jews and Palestinians, in Israeli universities and colleges and around the world. A4E promotes democratization, equality, and access to higher education for all communities in Israel, seeking justice and equality in our society as a whole. We struggle against the complicity of Israeli academia with oppression and denial of education in the occupied Palestinian territories and stand in solidarity with scholars who are targeted for speaking up on justice for the Palestinian people. We are committed to an inclusive academia upholding both truth and justice, freedom of speech and respectful debate.

Dr. Raz Segal is a leading and highly respected scholar in the field of Holocaust and genocide studies, and under his direction the MAHG program has become a distinctive program and one of the finest in the field. In his message as program director, Dr. Segal pointed to several of the central challenges now facing Holocaust and genocide studies — a field whose moral guiding light is the imperative "Never Again." Among these, he named a number of contemporary events that cast a heavy shadow over that moral commitment, including the genocide taking place in Gaza. And indeed, anyone familiar with the field knows that Israel's campaign of destruction in Gaza is shaking the discipline to an unprecedented degree.

Mr. Scarpa, however, objected to Dr. Segal's characterization of what is unfolding in Gaza as genocide. This characterization, he contends, is a contested claim — a matter of political opinion rather than documented fact.

Mr. Scarpa is entitled to think whatever he wishes about what is happening in Gaza. Yet as things stand at present, the overwhelming majority of human rights organizations, research centers, and individual scholars in the field who have expressed a view on the question have concluded that it is indeed genocide. These organizations and commissions have, moreover, substantiated that conclusion thoroughly in lengthy, well-documented reports that they have published. At the same time, hundreds of scholars in the field have signed petitions describing the events in Gaza as genocide, and a great many of them have set out their reasoning in academic articles, press interviews, or opinion pieces. A few are perhaps worth singling out in particular: Professor Omer Bartov, one of the foremost scholars of the Holocaust and genocide; Professor William Schabas, author of the foundational work of international law on genocide, who has argued that Gaza is the strongest case of genocide ever to have reached an international court; the organization Genocide Watch, which specializes in the identification of, and early warning about, cases of genocide; the major professional body of genocide scholars, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), which determined by a decisive majority vote that this constitutes genocide; and the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, chaired by Judge Navi Pillay, who served as a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for eight years, four of them as presiding judge.

Few cases of genocide command so broad a professional consensus. Conversely, in almost every case of genocide — including the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide,

the Rwandan genocide, the Srebrenica genocide, and others — voices of denial have been heard, and continue to be heard, including from within academia, claiming that to characterize these events as genocide is a biased political opinion rather than a historical or contemporary reality.

For this reason, Mr. Scarpa's claims have nothing to rest upon and are the expression of a purely political position. We are therefore deeply troubled by the university's capitulation to Mr. Scarpa's political demand. In yielding to it, the university has gravely violated two sacred principles of academic scholarship and of the very idea of the university: the pursuit of truth and academic freedom. Without these two, the university has no right to exist. This is especially so in our own time, when a great many of those who hold authority and power seek to dismantle the university precisely because of its loyalty to these very principles. Stockton University's decision thus carries a significance that reaches far beyond its own walls.

We are not naïve. We recognize the great importance of financial donations to the university, and we also understand that Stockton University's financial position is not secure in present time. And yet we are deeply troubled by the decision to intervene so blatantly in academic content, and we therefore implore you — for the future of Stockton University, and for the future of the university as an institution — to restore Dr. Segal's message to the program's website.

Respectfully,

Academia for Equality