



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR
BIOETHICS + HUMANITIES

June 14, 2007

Ms Sally Hunt, General Secretary
University and College Union
27 Britannia Street
London
WC1X 9JP
United Kingdom

Dear Ms Hunt:

The American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) is an academic society whose members include approximately 1600 physicians, nurses, attorneys, historians, philosophers, professors of literature and the humanities, scholars of religion, social scientists and others who concern themselves with issues of morality and the human condition. ASBH stands in opposition to a recent action of the British University and College Union to consider a boycott of Israeli scholars from participation in academic life in the UK.

The ASBH includes members with academic appointments at Israeli universities, some of whom reside in the United States and others in Israel. Other ASBH members collaborate with Israeli professors on a variety of projects, including cooperative projects based in the UK. An academic boycott of Israeli faculty is contrary to the mission of the ASBH, impedes the work of our members, and compromises academic integrity.

The purpose of an academic community is to exchange ideas, promote open dialogue, and to facilitate frank discussion and debate among scholars from different cultures and belief systems. Academic boycotts run counter to these goals, particularly when they are targeted toward individuals of one particular ethnicity, religion, or nationality. The main hope for resolving the complex conflict in the Middle East is to increase frank and open discussion between parties. The ASBH encourages all academic institutions (British, Israeli, and Palestinian in particular) to use this opportunity to engage in deeper and more fruitful dialogue.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities

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