

From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Patricia Prelock](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: FW: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker
Date: Monday, October 9, 2023 9:02:17 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Patty,

Jenn Strickler met today with [REDACTED] and a few other students. Below is a summary of their meeting sent to the Will Miller Speaker Series Board. Jenn also suggested that we consider an event to allow students to have a respectful and open conversation about the issue of antisemitism on campus or in the US. I think that is a great idea. Is there a student group we can connect with to organize such a discussion?

Bill

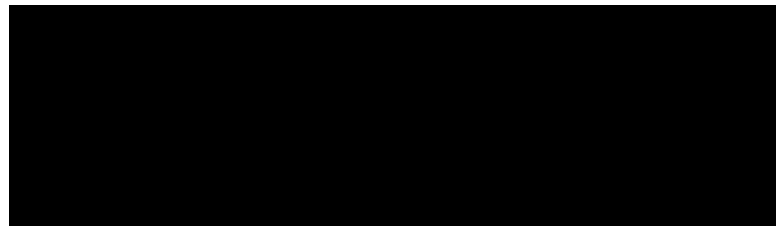
William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
Dean
Professor of Psychological Science
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Vermont
Lattie F. Coor House,
438 College Street, Burlington, VT 05405

william.falls@uvm.edu

(802) 656-3166 (Tel)

(802) 656-4259 (fax)

<http://www.uvm.edu/cas/>



From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Date: Monday, October 9, 2023 at 8:22 PM

To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>

Subject: Fwd: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

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From: Jennifer Strickler

Sent: Monday, October 9, 2023 5:24:11 PM

To: Frederick Magdoff <fmagdoff@uvm.edu>

Subject: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

Hi Fred,

I just spent an hour with four Jewish UVM students after they contacted me to discuss the upcoming event featuring Mohammed El-Kurd. As a co-sponsor, I would like to pass on the following information to the Will Miller Speaker Series board:

Some Jewish students are very concerned about antisemitism on campus (which has been documented as a problem that the UVM administration has not handled well). They are worried that El-Kurd's speech will inflame antisemitism on campus, and they are concerned about their safety, especially in light of the war that began this past weekend. These are students who are critical of Israeli policies and they are interested in learning about the experience of Palestinians in a respectful dialogue, but they fear that the inflammatory language that El-Kurd sometimes uses will incite hateful language and actions at UVM.


They had some suggestions for the board to consider:

- Having security at the event (or someone skilled in de-escalation)
- Making a statement at the beginning that UVM and the Will Miller Speaker Series do not condone hate speech or hate crimes of any kind
- Screening questions via a moderator to make sure that audience members do not use the event to promote antisemitism here at UVM

I offer this information in the spirit of promoting a respectful and enlightening discussion on October 26th. I'm looking forward to it!

Best,
Jenn

--

Jennifer Strickler, PhD (she/her)
Interim Chair, Sociology Department
Associate Professor of Sociology
31 South Prospect St., Room 200
University of Vermont
Burlington VT 05401
Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu




From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 11:50 AM

To: [REDACTED] Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>; Patricia Prelock <pprelock@med.uvm.edu>; Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture Series Concern Followup

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for the information you have shared about Mohammed El-Kurd's social media presence. It is clear that you put a great deal of time and effort into documenting your concerns about Mohammed El-Kurd's tweets, retweets, and Instagram posts. I have viewed all of the links you sent, as well as watching several speeches and interviews of Mohammed El-Kurd and reviewing his twitter feed posts over the past few weeks. As I said when we met on October 9th, the safety of all students on campus, including Jewish students, is very important to me, and I do not take your distress at the invitation to El-Kurd and your fear of an antisemitic response on campus lightly. Based on our conversation last week, I initially recommended to the Will Miller Lecture Series board that they implement the three suggestions that we brainstormed together:

- Having security at the event (or someone skilled in de-escalation)
- Making a statement at the beginning that UVM and the Will Miller Speaker Series do not condone hate speech or hate crimes of any kind
- Screening questions via a moderator to make sure that audience members do not use the event to promote antisemitism here at UVM

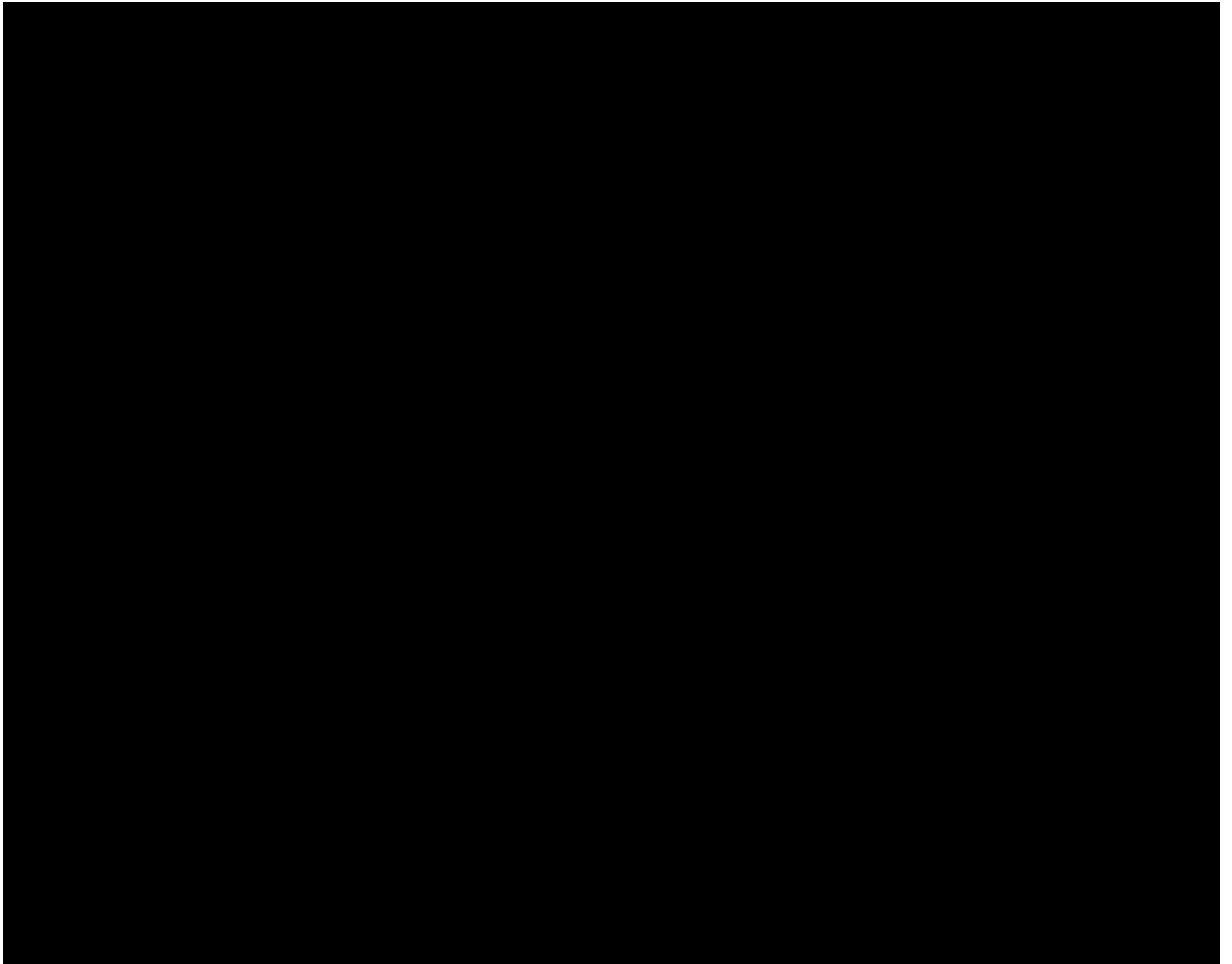
However, our conversation was only 2 days into the current military conflict in Israel/Palestine, and since then it has become clear that the violence and bloodshed have created a great deal of pain, grief, and fear on all sides. Because of the difficult current situation, the Sociology Department recommended to the Will Miller Lecture Series board that Mohammed El-Kurd's visit be postponed to a future time, when people will be better able to absorb information without feeling the existential threat that is so overwhelming at this current

historical moment.

Additionally, the Sociology Department is open to cosponsoring other campus events that address issues of antisemitism on campus or in the United States. We feel that the university should be a safe place for people to have difficult conversations in a safe and supportive environment, and we aim to foster that climate for all students of all backgrounds. This is not to say that no one will feel uncomfortable in these conversations, but organizers of campus events have a responsibility to provide safety and respect for all students. If you would like to discuss future campus events, speakers, or dialogues, I would be happy to do so.

Best,

Prof. Strickler



From: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
To: [English Exec Committee](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: FW: Will Miller Lecture Series Concern Followup
Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 1:17:51 PM

From: "Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)" <mkete@uvm.edu>

Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 1:15 PM

To: [REDACTED] Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>, Patricia Prelock <pprelock@med.uvm.edu>, Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture Series Concern Followup

[REDACTED]

These are very difficult times and I share your concerns about antisemitism on campus. The special world of academia, a unique domain for the free exchange of ideas and the expansion of consciousness, is hard to maintain at any time. It isn't easy and it isn't without risks. This is especially true when, as now, so many in our community are directly affected by, or implicated in, violence. Censorship, though, neither protects individuals nor the ability of us to pursue the goals of liberal education. At this time, the Department of English has no plans to withdraw our support of this lecture.

Students (like you) and faculty alike are struggling with new grief, anger and despair while we continue to advance our studies. I have been in contact with the Interfaith Center which will be announcing two upcoming sessions for community members to give voice to their grief and pain and find ways to prevent these ugly feelings from generating rage and more violence. I will forward more information when I get it.

Warmly,
Prof Kete

Mary Louise Kete (she/they)
Chair and Professor
Department of English
Old Mill Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT, 05401

[REDACTED]



From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 11:50 AM

To: [REDACTED] Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>;
Patricia Prelock <pprelock@med.uvm.edu>; Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture Series Concern Followup

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for the information you have shared about Mohammed El-Kurd's social media presence. It is clear that you put a great deal of time and effort into documenting your concerns about Mohammed El-Kurd's tweets, retweets, and Instagram posts. I have viewed all of the links you sent, as well as watching several speeches and interviews of Mohammed El-Kurd and reviewing his twitter feed posts over the past few weeks. As I said when we met on October 9th, the safety of all students on campus, including Jewish students, is very important to me, and I do not take your distress at the invitation to El-Kurd and your fear of an antisemitic response on campus lightly. Based on our conversation last week, I initially recommended to the Will Miller Lecture Series board that they implement the three suggestions that we brainstormed together:

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However, our conversation was only 2 days into the current military conflict in Israel/Palestine, and since then it has become clear that the violence and bloodshed have created a great deal of pain, grief, and fear on all sides. Because of the difficult current situation, the Sociology Department recommended to the Will Miller Lecture Series board that Mohammed El-Kurd's visit be postponed to a future time, when people will be better able to absorb information without feeling the existential threat that is so overwhelming at this current historical moment.

Additionally, the Sociology Department is open to cosponsoring other campus events that address issues of antisemitism on campus or in the United States. We feel that the university should be a safe place for people to have difficult conversations in a safe and supportive environment, and we aim to foster that climate for all students of all backgrounds. This is not to say that no one will feel uncomfortable in these conversations, but organizers of campus events have a responsibility to provide safety and respect for all students. If you would like to discuss future campus events, speakers, or dialogues, I would be happy to do so.

Best,

Prof. Strickler

From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Kristen Flynn \(she/her\)](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Meeting re: Will Miller Lecture Series
Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:41:33 PM

[REDACTED]

My name is Bill Falls and I am the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. Professor Strickler mentioned that she met with you regarding the upcoming Will Miller Lecture Series. I'd enjoy the opportunity to meet with you as well. If you are interested in meeting, please let me know and I can ask my assistant Kristen Flynn to find us a time.

Please know that I am appalled and deeply saddened by the horrific events of this past weekend and my thoughts and prayers are with you, your families, and the entire Jewish community.

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
Dean
Professor of Psychological Science
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[REDACTED]



From: Michael Schirling <Michael.Schirling@uvm.edu>

Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 9:25 AM

To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Cc: Jonathan D'Amore <Jonathan.DAmore@uvm.edu>, Erica Caloiero <Erica.Caloiero@uvm.edu>, Prelock, Patricia A <patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu>, Michael Schirling <Michael.Schirling@uvm.edu>, Timothy Bilodeau <Timothy.Bilodeau@uvm.edu>

Subject: Re: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

Thanks, Bill.

Can we start by ensuring that the organizers (and all sponsors/organizers of speakers) have received and acknowledge the need to follow these two policies (I downloaded them but they are always available at uvm.edu/policies).

From there I can touch base with them re: planning.

Thanks

On Oct 10, 2023, at 08:56, Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu> wrote:

Dear Mike,

The event is part of the Will Miller Speaker Series. The events calendar indicates the English Professor Helen Scott is the contact. It also appears that Frederick Magdoff is involved through his involvement with the Will Miller Speaker Series (Fred is affiliated with Plan & Soil Science). The event is also sponsored by the Departments of English and Sociology. Here is the calendar entry for the event.

<https://www.uvm.edu/events/index.php?Page=EMS&event=4750913>

Bill

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From: Michael Schirling <Michael.Schirling@uvm.edu>
Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 8:34 AM
To: Prelock, Patricia A <patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu>, Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Cc: Jonathan D'Amore <Jonathan.DAmore@uvm.edu>, Erica Caloiero <Erica.Caloiero@uvm.edu>
Subject: Re: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

Could someone provide the details - when, where, who the sponsor/key point of contact here is, etc.?
Thanks

On Oct 9, 2023, at 22:07, Prelock, Patricia A <patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu> wrote:

Jenn's suggestions are all good. I have copied Mike Schirling so he is aware of this event and can do an assessment. Student life was working with Jewish students last year to help them form a Jewish Student Union. I don't know if that is in place as that would have been a good group to work with. I copied Erica in case she knows where it stands. There are student leaders at Hillel and Chabad and they will all have different views on how to handle such an event.

The four students who met with Jenn Strickler, do they have the capacity to work with the Jewish Studies program or the Holocaust Center? Seems like Jonathan Heuner has funds to provide some support for such activities. You might also want to bring in Erika LaLa as I think planning an event is challenging for students.

I wish faculty would consider ways to bring speakers where you can have a point- counter point opportunity to facilitate learning from multiple perspectives

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From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Sent: Monday, October 9, 2023 9:02 PM
To: Patricia.Prelock <Patricia.Prelock@uvm.edu>
Subject: FW: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

Dear Patty,

Jenn Strickler met today with [REDACTED] and a few other students. Below is a summary of their meeting sent to the Will Miller Speaker Series Board. Jenn also suggested that we consider an event to allow students to have a respectful and open conversation about the issue of antisemitism on campus or in the US. I think that is a great idea. Is there a student group we can connect with to organize such a discussion?

Bill

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From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Date: Monday, October 9, 2023 at 8:22 PM
To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
Subject: Fwd: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

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From: Jennifer Strickler
Sent: Monday, October 9, 2023 5:24:11 PM
To: Frederick Magdoff <fmagdoff@uvm.edu>
Subject: Meeting with Jewish students about upcoming speaker

Hi Fred,

I just spent an hour with four Jewish UVM students after they contacted me to discuss the upcoming event featuring Mohammed El-Kurd. As a co-sponsor, I would like to pass on the following information to the Will Miller Speaker Series board:

Some Jewish students are very concerned about antisemitism on campus (which has been documented as a problem that the UVM administration has not handled well). They are worried that El-Kurd's speech will inflame antisemitism on campus, and they are concerned about their safety, especially in light of the war that began this past weekend. These are students who are critical of Israeli policies and they are interested in learning about the experience of Palestinians in a respectful dialogue, but they fear that the inflammatory language that El-Kurd sometimes uses will incite hateful language and actions at UVM.

They had some suggestions for the board to consider:

1. Having security at the event (or someone skilled in de-escalation)
2. Making a statement at the beginning that UVM and the Will Miller Speaker Series do not condone hate speech or hate crimes of any kind
3. Screening questions via a moderator to make sure that audience members do not use the event to promote antisemitism here at UVM

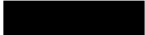
I offer this information in the spirit of promoting a respectful and enlightening discussion on October 26th. I'm looking forward to it!

Best,
Jenn

--

Jennifer Strickler, PhD (she/her)
Interim Chair, Sociology Department
Associate Professor of Sociology
31 South Prospect St., Room 200
University of Vermont
Burlington VT 05401

Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu



From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Zalman Wilhelm](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#); [Prelock, Patricia A](#)
Subject: Re: Antisemitic speaker coming to UVM
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 5:55:16 PM

Dear Rabbi Wilhelm,

As Provost Prelock said, I am very supportive of working with [REDACTED] and her colleagues on an alternate program. I will be meeting with [REDACTED] and other students tomorrow.

I too am deeply concerned about the talk. I'd be happy to chat with you to share what I know about the English and Sociology departments' sponsorship of the talk.

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (He/Him)
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From: Prelock, Patricia A <patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu>
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 2:52 PM
To: Zalman Wilhelm [REDACTED]
Cc: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Subject: Re: Antisemitic speaker coming to UVM

Dear Zalman,

I am away from my desk right now, but [REDACTED] and her peers have been speaking with the Chair of English and the co-sponsor in Sociology. Dean Falls is also aware of the concerns. The English and

Sociology departments were planning to postpone the event as El-Kurd was not in the states, but I understand as of a few minutes ago he has now in the US and they plan on holding the event. I am copying the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, Dean Bill Falls as he can share with you the perspectives of his departments. I am aware of the controversial nature of El Kurd's online and social media presence. The university is working to find an alternate location to ensure safety on campus. I believe Dean Falls and his colleagues are also supportive of our Jewish students offering a panel that would provide a different point of view than is presented by El Kurd.

I will also try to give you a call when I am a back in front of my computer.

Hope you and your family are doing okay in light of all that is going on.

Sincerely,
Patty

--

Patricia A. Prelock, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-CL, FNAP-SLP
Provost and Senior Vice President
University of Vermont
304 Waterman Building
85 South Prospect Street
Burlington, VT. 05405
802-656-4400
Patricia.prelock@uvm.edu

From: Zalman Wilhelm [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 1:58 PM
To: "Prelock, Patricia A" <patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu>
Subject: Antisemitic speaker coming to UVM

[This message was sent from an address outside the Larner College of Medicine.
Please exercise caution when clicking links or opening attachments from this source.]

Hi Patty,
I would like to discuss this with you.
Please give me a call at your earliest convenience at 802-373-5017

Thank you!
Rabbi Wilhelm

From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Jan Feldman](#)
Cc: [Jan Feldman](#); [Prelock, Patricia A](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: Campus climate and our Jewish students
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 5:59:40 PM

Dear Jan,

Thank you for your letter. Can I be frank?

I am deeply troubled that our colleagues have chosen to exercise their academic freedom in this way and at this time when so many of our community are suffering. There seems to be a deafness accompanied by rationalization that El-Kurd is not antisemitic, only anti-Zionist.

The El-Kurd talk was organized by the [Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series](#), which is an independent organization. A few of our colleagues sit on their board. This is a "UVM event" only in that it is sponsored by English and Sociology. According to Mary Lou Kete (chair of English) and Helen Scott (principal supporter) it was scheduled over a year ago.

I asked that Mary Lou and Helen to consider postponing the event. I explained that while I support academic freedom and their right to invite controversial speakers, exercise of this right must be done responsibly and in the full in light of its consequences. I further explained that as Dean I have deep concerns for our community and fear the damage their choice will produce. Furthermore, I question whether their intellectual and academic goals for inviting El-Kurd a year ago can truly be achieved at this moment in time when so many a taking sides and so many innocent lives have been taken.

While Jenn Strickler wrote to the Will Miller Board recommending that the event be postponed, English decided against recommending that it be postponed. The event is proceeding despite my pleas.

I am stuck between censorship (requiring the event to be cancelled) and risking harm to the community. I had hoped that our colleagues would see the consequences of their choice for our students, the College, and UVM, and postpone. So far, they have not.

I have spoken with students from the Jewish Student Union (I understand you are their advisor!) and Rabbi Zalman from Chabad UVM. I've explained the corner that we are in. The students were amazing, and Rabbi Wilhelm was incredibly thoughtful and respectful. However, both acknowledged that even though the event is sponsored by Sociology and English, the appearance is that CAS and UVM condone the event. We do not, I do not. But the community will suffer and CAS and UVM will receive the blackeye (or worse), not the event sponsors.

Jan, you are going through so much. I'm sorry that this is adding to it. The only path forward is for the sponsors to recognize the harm they risk at this moment in time and decide to not hold the event.

Bill

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From: Jan Feldman <Jan.Feldman@uvm.edu>
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 at 2:04 PM
To: Prelock, Patricia A <patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu>, Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Cc: Jan Feldman <Jan.Feldman@uvm.edu>
Subject: Campus climate and our Jewish students

Dear Provost Prelock and Dean Falls,
At the behest of a number of our students, I am attaching a brief letter containing a request that you reconsider the invitation and sponsorship of a divisive speaker who we believe will do harm to our campus community. I will be very grateful if you will do me the kindness of reading it at your convenience.

All Best Wishes,
Jan Feldman
Professor of Political Science

From: William.Falls@uvm.edu
To: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: Concerns about Upcoming Event with Mohammed El-Kurd
Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 6:54:02 AM

Dear Jenn,

The Provost would like me to reach out to the students that you met with. Would you mind sharing their names?

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
Dean
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On Oct 9, 2023, at 8:20 PM, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu> wrote:

Hi Bill and Mary Lou,
Yes, I met with [REDACTED] today for over an hour. I'll forward you the email that I subsequently sent to the Will Miller board about our conversation. I think it would be great if UVM sponsored an event that would allow students to have a respectful and open conversation about the issue of antisemitism on campus or in the US, but that is not what Mohammed El-Kurd will be addressing.

Best,
Jenn

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From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Jennifer Strickler](#); [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: Re: Concerns about Upcoming Event with Mohammed El-Kurd
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2023 5:19:17 PM

Thanks, Jenn and Mary Lou. Please let me know how the conversation goes. While I share concerns over antisemitism on our campus, we also cannot censor speech.

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
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From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Date: Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 2:24 PM
To: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>, Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
Subject: Re: Concerns about Upcoming Event with Mohammed El-Kurd

I am going to offer to meet with  to address her concerns, but we will not withhold our sponsorship of the event

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From: William.Falls@uvm.edu
To: [Prelock, Patricia A](#)
Cc: [Patricia Prelock](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: El-Kurd Event
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 7:31:51 PM

Agreed!

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
Dean
Professor of Psychological Science
College of Arts and Sciences
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On Oct 20, 2023, at 7:21 PM, Prelock, Patricia A
<patricia.prelock@med.uvm.edu> wrote:

Hmm- thanks for this update. It needs to be moved off campus

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From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 6:02 PM
To: Patricia.Prelock <Patricia.Prelock@uvm.edu>
Subject: El-Kurd Event

Dear Patty,

According to Helen Scott, Sherwood is going to moderate the event. I had hoped that they could not find a moderator forcing UVM sponsorship to be removed, but at least we have someone who knows the policies and will pull the plug when and if El-Kurd

spouts hate.

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (He/Him)
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<image003.jpg>

From: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 at 4:35 PM
To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
Subject: Re: Update

Dear all,

I'm happy to report that Sherwood Smith has agreed to moderate the Q and A. I think he would be very good in this role. WE will be meeting early next week to go over details.

All best

Helen

From: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>
Date: Friday, 20 October 2023 at 14:14
To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
Subject: Re: Update

Dear Bill,

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If you think there is a chance someone with the authority to do so will decide to pull the plug, please let us know. We are all working hard to make this event a success.

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Helen

From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Date: Friday, 20 October 2023 at 13:22

To: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>, Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>

Subject: Re: Update

Mary Lou,

His office is dealing with it. Sorry for the confusion. I had Matthew check in case there was an easy substitution. Michael is checking venues to see if a swap can be made. I do not have that clout.

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
Dean
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438 College Street, Burlington, VT 05405

william.falls@uvm.edu

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(802) 656-4259 (fax)

<http://www.uvm.edu/cas/>

<image002.jpg>

From: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 at 12:39 PM
To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
Subject: Re: Update

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ML

Mary Louise Kete (she/they)
Chair and Professor
Department of English
Old Mill Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT, 05401

From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 at 12:30 PM
To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, "Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)" <mkete@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Subject: Update

Dear Jenn, Helen, and Mary Lou,

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I will keep you posted on the logistics.

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<image001.jpg>

From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Helen Scott](#); [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#); [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: Update
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 5:13:45 PM

Dear Helen,

I feel strongly about academic freedom. And yes, I've heard from many (community members, students, and faculty) who honor academic freedom but believe that the timing should be considered in its exercise.

I have no knowledge of anyone in administration who is considering censoring the event.

Bill

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From: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 at 2:14 PM
To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>
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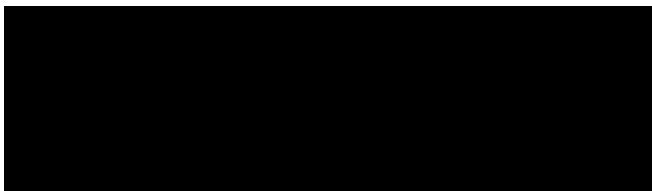
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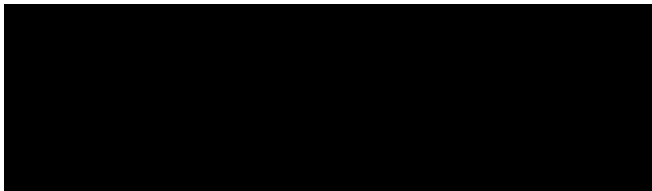
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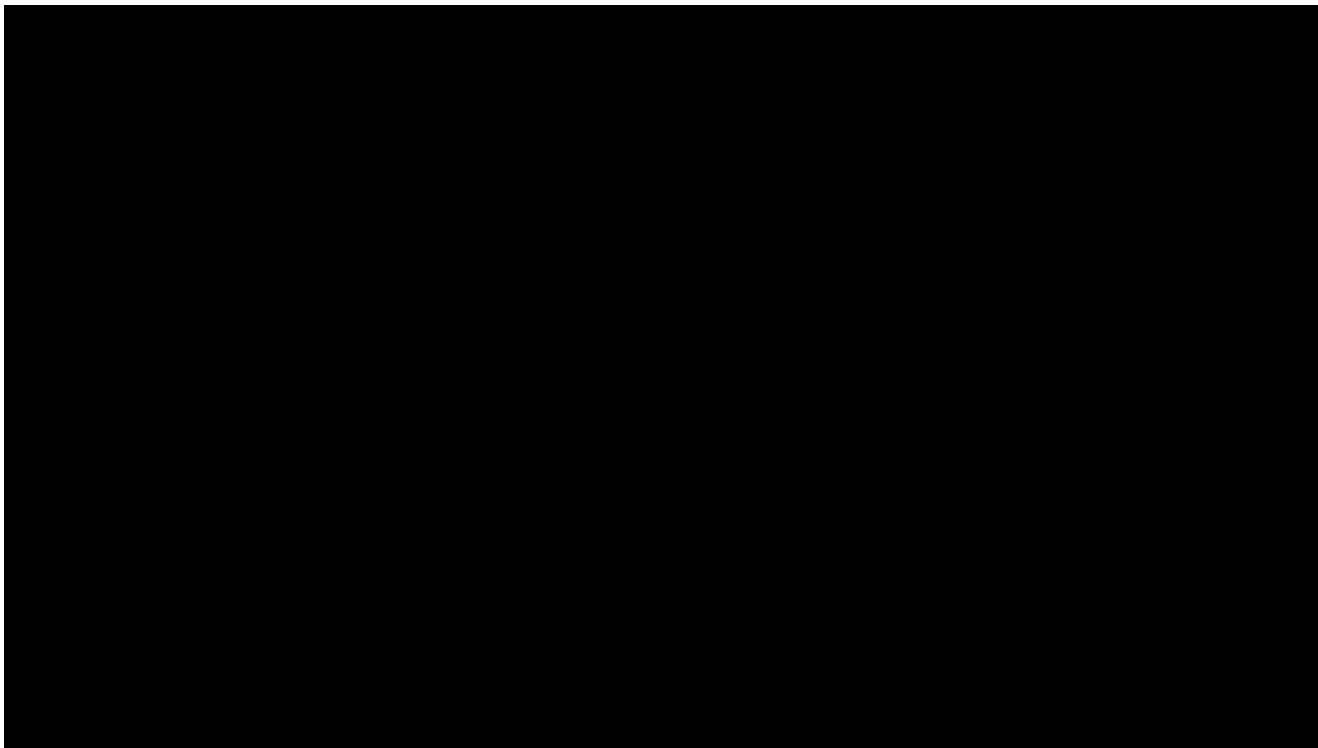
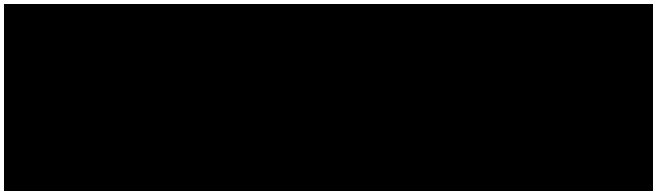
From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture Series Concern Followup
Date: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 6:38:44 PM

Thank you, Jenn. I agree that postponing is the best course. Can you keep us posted on whether the board decides to postpone?

Bill

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From: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
To: [Jennifer Strickler](#); [Bill Falls](#); [Helen Scott](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 8:59:49 AM

Dear Bill,

Just want to second this. Helen M-P is still considering this but my feeling is that she's going to say no.

ML

Mary Louise Kete (she/they)
Chair and Professor
Department of English
Old Mill Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT, 05401

From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 8:47 PM

To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, "Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)" <mkete@uvm.edu>

Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture

Hi Bill, One other thought about who would be a good UVM to be a moderator – Erika Lala is officially a faculty member of the Sociology Department and she is the person who comes to mind with the skills necessary to handle sensitive and contentious conversations. I would recommend her as a moderator if you want a faculty member and she's willing.

Best,
Jenn

From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 6:02 PM

To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>; Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>; Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Subject: Will Miller Lecture

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From: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
To: [Bill Falls](#); [Helen Scott](#); [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 8:47:16 PM

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From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 6:52:00 AM

Thanks, Jenn.

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On Oct 19, 2023, at 8:37 PM, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu> wrote:

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The sociology department offered a contribution of \$100 to the event, which would come from our general fund.

I hope that his helpful.

Best,
Jenn

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To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>; Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)

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<image002.jpg>

From: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
To: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 8:37:55 PM

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From: William.Falls@uvm.edu
To: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 6:51:39 AM

Thanks, Jenn.

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<image002.jpg>

From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#); [Helen Scott](#); [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 6:15:30 PM

It does, thank you!!

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To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
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From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 6:01 PM

To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, "Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)" <mkete@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

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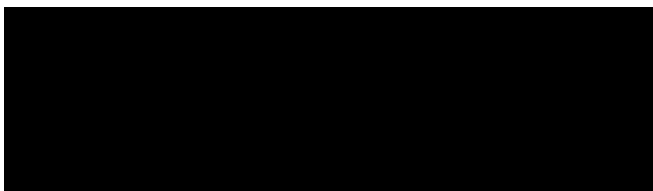
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Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Bcc: [Bill Falls](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 6:15:28 PM

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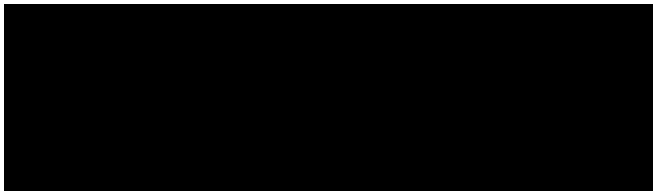
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From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 6:01 PM
To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, "Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)" <mkete@uvm.edu>, Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
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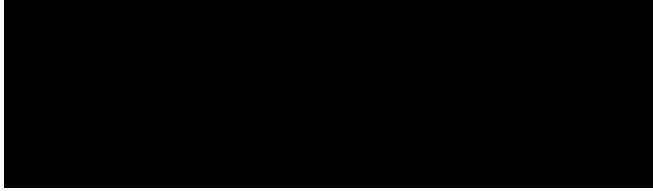
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(802) 656-4259 (fax)

<http://www.uvm.edu/cas/>



From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#); [Jennifer Strickler](#); [Helen Scott](#)
Cc: [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 9:11:22 AM

Jenn and Mary Lou,

Erika is away and from her calendar it does not look like she will be back next week.

Bill

William A. Falls, Ph.D. (he/him)
Dean
Professor of Psychological Science
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Vermont
Lattie F. Coor House,
438 College Street, Burlington, VT 05405

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From: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>

Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 at 8:59 AM

To: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>, Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>

Cc: Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>

Subject: Re: Will Miller Lecture

Dear Bill,

Just want to second this. Helen M-P is still considering this but my feeling is that she's going to say no.

ML

Mary Louise Kete (she/they)

Chair and Professor
Department of English
Old Mill Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT, 05401

From: Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 8:47 PM

To: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>, Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>, "Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they)" <mkete@uvm.edu>

Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture

Hi Bill, One other thought about who would be a good UVM to be a moderator – Erika Lala is officially a faculty member of the Sociology Department and she is the person who comes to mind with the skills necessary to handle sensitive and contentious conversations. I would recommend her as a moderator if you want a faculty member and she's willing.

Best,
Jenn

From: Bill Falls <William.Falls@uvm.edu>

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 6:02 PM

To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>; Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>; Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>

Subject: Will Miller Lecture

Dear Helen, Mary Lou, and Jenn,

The Provost asked a few questions that I could not answer and I wonder if you can help me out. Is the Will Miller Lecture Series a UVM entity? That is, is it a UVM organization with funding held by the UVM Foundation?

Also, are the departments supporting the lecture financially? If so, do you know if the funds are from gifts and endowments or are they general funding?

Bill

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From: [Jennifer Strickler](#)
To: [Bill Falls](#); [Helen Scott](#); [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#)
Subject: RE: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023 8:47:17 PM

Hi Bill, One other thought about who would be a good UVM to be a moderator – Erika Lala is officially a faculty member of the Sociology Department and she is the person who comes to mind with the skills necessary to handle sensitive and contentious conversations. I would recommend her as a moderator if you want a faculty member and she's willing.

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Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 6:02 PM
To: Helen Scott <hscott@uvm.edu>; Mary Louise Louise Kete (she/they) <mkete@uvm.edu>; Jennifer Strickler <Jennifer.Strickler@uvm.edu>
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From: [Bill Falls](#)
To: [Helen Scott](#); [Mary Louise Louise Kete \(she/they\)](#); [Jennifer Strickler](#)
Subject: Update
Date: Friday, October 20, 2023 12:30:24 PM

Dear Jenn, Helen, and Mary Lou,

No news yet on an alternate venue. I had Matthew Claeys look to see what might be free and it is only a room in Waterman and a room in Ifshim. Perhaps Public Safety will be able to locate something. I will keep you posted.

In the meantime, I am getting a lot of feedback and concern from all sides. As I said yesterday, I fully support academic freedom and your right to sponsor this event. However, as I listen to all sides I want to say out loud that as with any freedom of choice, there is responsibility. I understand that you have goals for this talk, the same goals you had a year ago when you invited Mohammed El-Kurd. However, in the current climate I am struggling to see how those intellectual academic goals can be achieved.

Again, I support your freedom to host Mohammed El-Kurd. However, as Dean I have deep concerns for our community, particularly the impact this will have on our students, Jewish, non-Jewish, pro-Israel, and pro-Palestine and I question whether your academic goals can truly be achieved at this moment in time.

I will keep you posted on the logistics.

Bill

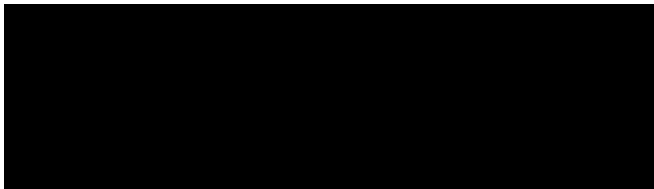
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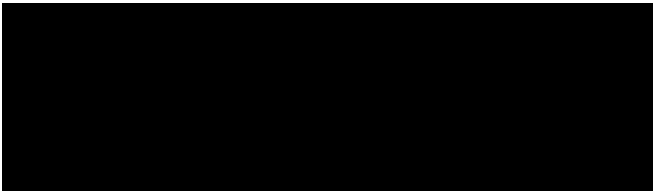
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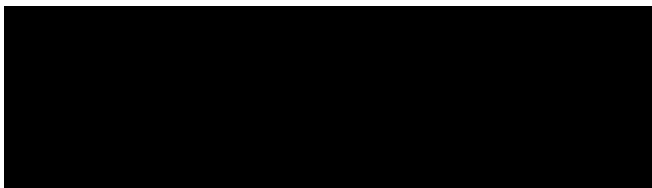
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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Suresh V. Garimella](#)
Subject: A Jewish person in support of Will Miller Social Justice Lecture at UVM
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023 9:51:59 AM

Dear President Garimella,

I'm extremely interested in listening to Mohammed El-Kurd's talk this coming week at the Will Miller lecture. Hearing his perspective on Palestinian "Women and Children" is crucial to helping us open our eyes to what is happening on the ground in Israel/Palestine. Hosting this lecture will also help UVM be part of the necessary movement that takes our world beyond genocidal, denialist, and silencing practices in a time of war.

As a Jewish person, retired college professor, and now interfaith community chaplain, it would be a great loss to me personally, as well as to our diverse learning community, if the administration at UVM silenced a Palestinian journalist and poet, especially since Israel is censoring Palestinian journalists in Gaza as we speak.

Mr El-Kurd is not Hamas. He is not responsible for the horror of the Hamas attack. He speaks for ordinary Palestinian civilians who suffer beyond what words can say given the unprecedented escalation of war and perpetuation of occupation in Gaza and beyond.

How are we to learn to wrestle with hard truths if we don't step into uncomfortable spaces, take risks, and build connections rather than turn away from "the other." I attended the candlelight vigil for Palestine at UVM on Thursday as well as the candlelight vigil for Jews on the State House lawn on Friday. Both events featured speakers from Palestinian as well as Jewish representatives. The talks, poetry, and prayers were offered in the pain and beauty of truth telling, understanding, and mutual mourning. It is in this spirit that I urge UVM to continue its original plan to sponsor Mr. El-Kurd as part of the urgent need our world has now to listen to the most dis-possessed.

Sincerely, Suzanne Richman
[REDACTED]

From: [Office of the Provost](#)
To: [Jonathan D'Amore](#); [Suresh V. Garimella](#); [Patricia Prelock](#)
Subject: Fw: Urgent concern regarding upcoming speaker event
Date: Monday, October 23, 2023 6:15:56 PM

Dear Patty, Jonathan, and Suresh,

The Provost's Office has received about 40 "form" messages asking us to reconsider hosting the speaker (see the message at the bottom of this string). I have been sending the standard response developed for the press and some folks are responding back by thanking us for the decision.

I think we have only received about 3 messages urging us to host the event.

(I don't have firm numbers because I delete and empty the trash on this account frequently...it attracts all manner of messages...)

Best,
Kerry



From: Adina Lemeshow [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 1:02 PM
To: Office of the Provost <Provost.Office@uvm.edu>; Suresh V. Garimella <President@uvm.edu>
Subject: Urgent concern regarding upcoming speaker event

Dear Mr. Suresh Garimella and Mrs. Patricia Precook,

I hope this message finds you well. I would like to express my appreciation for the University of Vermont's commitment to diversity and inclusion as stated in your charter. It is imperative to uphold these principles in both words and actions.

I wish to draw your attention to an upcoming event scheduled for October 26th, featuring Mr. Mohammed El-Kurd as a speaker.

However, it is essential to consider the factual record of Mr. El-Kurd's statements:

1. Mr. El-Kurd has made the following statements:

- "they [Israelis] harvest organs of the martyred [Palestinians], feed their warriors our own."
- "Zionism is a death cult."
- "I don't care who this offends they have completely internalized the ways of the nazis."

2. These statements have been reported in various reputable sources, including:

- <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/mohammed-el-kurd>
- <https://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2022/03/03252022-ahdoot>

I respectfully request that you reconsider hosting Mr. Mohammed El-Kurd as a speaker on your campus. Such statements, documented in credible sources, raise concerns about the potential promotion of racism and hate. It is vital to maintain

consistency in opposing hate speech, regardless of the targeted group, to ensure that UVM's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence is upheld.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will make a decision that aligns with the principles and values that the University of Vermont stands for!

Sincerely,

Adina Lemeshow

NY, NY

A Concerned Citizen and Epidemiologist with 3 Children, ages 5, 9 and 11

From: [Andrew Simon](#)
To: [Suresh V. Garimella](#)
Cc: [Jonathan D'Amore](#); [Janis Audet-Krans](#); [Division of Safety & Compliance](#)
Subject: Mohammed El-Kurd event
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023 2:34:16 PM

Dr. Garimella,

I am writing to affirm my support for the Will Miller Lecture Series and their upcoming speaker, Mohammed El-Kurd. I am dismayed and discouraged to learn that UVM has cancelled the 10/26 lecture. Dismayed that our community is so intolerant of free and open discussion that a lecture by an esteemed poet, journalist and academic would present a danger to public safety. And discouraged that the University of Vermont would give in to pressure (by whom exactly?) to cancel or postpone the event.

As an alumnus of UVM (MA, 1984), a former lecturer in the Romance Language Department and as a Jewish Vermonter, I want our university to have more courage, integrity and chutzpah than you have shown with this decision.

Andrew Simon
Burlington, VT

From: [Jory Hearst](#)
To: [Suresh V. Garimella](#); [Janis Audet-Krans](#); [Jonathan D'Amore](#); [Patricia Prelock](#)
Subject: please re-instate El-Kurd event @ UVM
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023 11:19:29 PM

Dear President Garimella & Provost Prelock,

I am writing to you as a Jewish member of the Burlington community (a member of the Ohavi Zedek Synagogue). I am so disappointed to hear of your cancellation of the Mohammed El-Kurd event as this year's Will Miller lecture at UVM.

I have been looking forward to this event all month --El-Kurd is an amazing human being, poet, activist, and journalist, and cancelling sends the wrong message to our community and the world: one of cowardice, of bowing to pressure of other Jews in our community, of fear.

This moment calls on all of us to be a little more brave. I am feeling enough fear for the world -- I need academic institutions to stand tall. I need this kind of event happening to be my own best, brave, Jewish self. We need access to thinkers and creators as we all try to navigate a way forward in this painful moment, and I was counting on this event as I find my own way forward.

Please be brave. For all of us.

Thank you,

Jory Hearst
Burlington, VT

From: [Prelock, Patricia A](#)
To: [Kerry Castano](#); [Michael Schirling](#); [Adam White \(he/him\)](#)
Cc: [Jonathan D"Amore](#)
Subject: Re: El-Kurd lecture update
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023 10:20:29 PM

Hi Kerry,

We are getting tons of letters from students and the community. Here is what we are using: *The October 26 lecture was organized by the Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series, an independent not-for-profit organization, and supported by various sponsors, including two UVM academic departments. The event was planned many months ago, prior to this month's escalation of conflicts in Israel and Gaza that have had profound impacts around the world and within our community.*

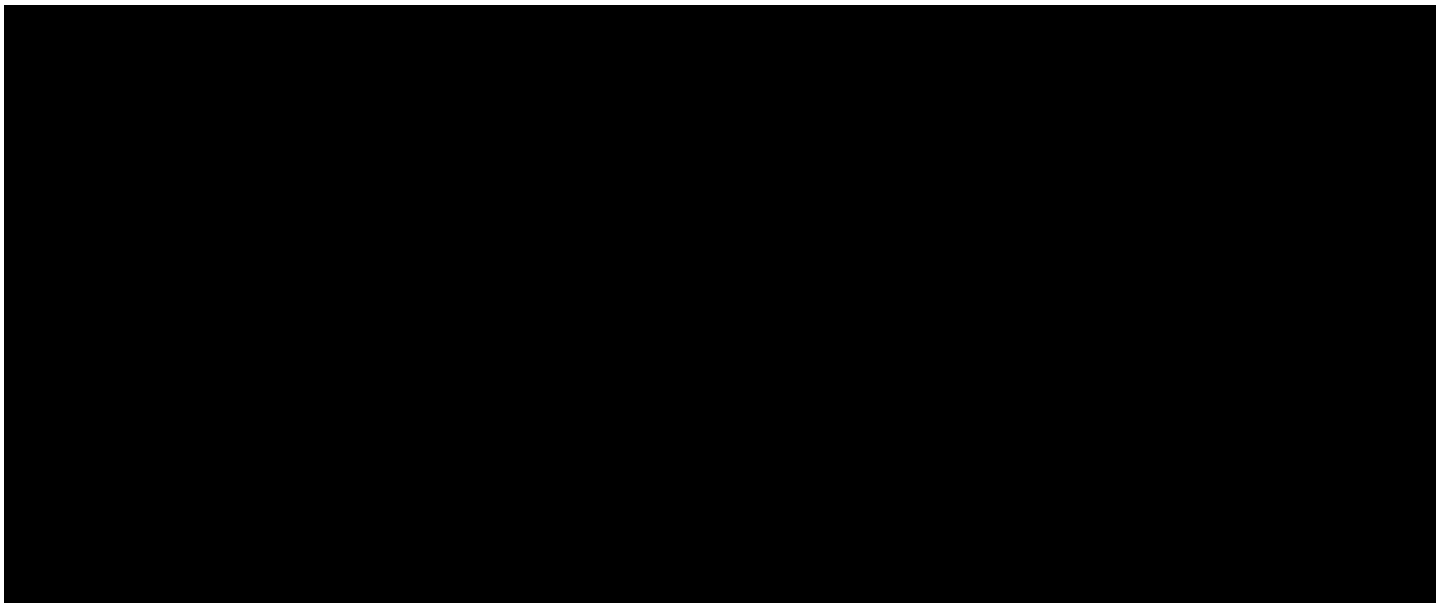
Based on conversations over the past week with community members, campus partners and public safety officials, our assessment is that holding the event on campus this week raises safety and security concerns that cannot be sufficiently mitigated. Therefore, the university has determined it will not provide meeting space for the Miller Lecture Series event on October 26.

You should know that we did not cancel the event as it is not ours to cancel, we are just not able to provide an on-campus location. An off-campus location for the lecture can be pursued by the organizers.

Hope this helps, Patty

--

Patricia A. Prelock, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-CL, FNAP-SLP
Provost and Senior Vice President
University of Vermont
304 Waterman Building
85 South Prospect Street
Burlington, VT. 05405
802-656-4400
Patricia.prelock@uvm.edu



From: [Peter D'Auria](#)
To: [Adam White \(he/him\)](#)
Subject: Re: Inquiry from VTDigger
Date: Monday, October 23, 2023 11:02:47 AM

Thank you Adam. I wanted to ask a couple quick follow ups:

Can you explain this part of the Safety & Compliance email? " The university has attempted to work with you to reschedule the event for a later date but you were unable or unwilling to reschedule."

Also, did UVM receive any threats over/regarding this event?

thank you!

Peter

On Mon, Oct 23, 2023 at 10:52 AM Adam White (he/him) <Adam.White@uvm.edu> wrote:

Hello, Peter.

Discussions of safety and security measures are internal. The following will stand as the University's statement:

The October 26 lecture was organized by the Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series, an independent not-for-profit organization, and supported by various sponsors, including two UVM academic departments. The event was planned many months ago, prior to this month's escalation of conflicts in Israel and Gaza that have had profound impacts around the world and within our community.

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Thank you,

Adam

Adam White (he/him/his)

Executive Director of University Communications

The University of Vermont

353A Waterman Building
85 South Prospect Street, Third Floor
Burlington, VT 05404
Mobile: (802) 557-4554
Office: (802) 656-4125
Adam.White@uvm.edu



The University of Vermont

From: Peter D'Auria <pdauria@vtdigger.org>
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 10:27 AM
To: Adam White (he/him) <Adam.White@uvm.edu>
Subject: Inquiry from VTDigger

Hello Adam,

This is Peter D'Auria with VTDigger. I hope you're doing well.

I understand that UVM recently canceled a planned event that was set to feature the Palestinian writer Mohammed el-Kurd. Someone forwarded us a Saturday email from Safety and Compliance saying that the division could not "adequately provide safety and security for this event as it is currently planned."

I wanted to reach out to see if someone there might be able to speak about this decision and the reasons behind it. Please feel free to call or text me at [REDACTED] at any point. My deadline is this afternoon at 3 pm.

(btw - I tried to leave a message but it seems like your voicemail inbox is full.)

thanks very much!

Peter

--

Peter D'Auria

Education Reporter, [VTDigger](http://vtdigger.org)



| 26 State Street, Suite 8 | Montpelier, VT 05602

From: [Hirsch, Jason](#)
To: [Suresh V. Garimella](#)
Subject: Will Miller Lecture
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023 10:52:26 AM

Dear Dr. Garimella,

I'm writing in support of plans to bring Mohammed El-Kurd to UVM for this year's Will Miller lecture. I've been made aware that there is pressure on the University to cancel the lecture or move it off-site. I believe this would be the wrong course.

As a faculty member at Saint Michael's College, I want my students to have access to a diversity of opinions. It is imperative, in this moment of deadly conflict in Israel/Palestine, for them to have access to voices from all sides. As a Jewish Vermonter, I want to be able to hear El-Kurd's voice as well. Many in my community make the mistake of equating criticism of Israel with anti-semitism, and this is a mistake. At this moment especially, the University must serve its role as a platform for sharing hard truths. El-Kurd's criticism of Israel is not hate speech.

I sincerely hope to be able to come to UVM this week to hear Mohammed El-Kurd speak. Please know that the Jewish community in Vermont is not united in opposition to his presence here. Many Vermont Jews know that his message must be heard.

Kindly,

Jason Hirsch
Lecturer, Sociology and Anthropology
Saint Michael's College

From: [Adlai Ostrer](#)
To: president@uvm.edu
Subject: Let Mohammed El-Kurd Speak
Date: Sunday, October 22, 2023 1:04:43 AM

I'm sure this inbox is inundated with emails of all sorts, likely this one will go unread or receive an automatic reply.

I am a vermont resident and a jew. What I love about vermont is the progressive attitudes of our people. And that means letting people speak and not bullying others, no matter where they come from, their religion ect.

Please do not cancel the event where Mohammed El-Kurd will speak about how his people are misrepresented.

Thank you.

-Adlai Rosenblum Ostrer

From: [Debra Stoleroff](mailto:Debra.Stoleroff@uvm.edu)
To: president@uvm.edu
Subject: Upcoming Will Miller Lecture
Date: Saturday, October 21, 2023 6:03:36 PM

Dear Mr. Garimella,

I am writing to you as an alumni (Environmental Studies Department ('77)) and a Jewish Vermonter. I have heard UVM is pressuring Mohhamed EI-Kurd to either cancel his lecture at the Will Miller Lecture Series or to have the lecture at an off-campus venue. The lectures are esteemed and have brought a diversity of speakers to UVM for years.. All the lectures have been informative and highly praised. It is deeply concerning that your administration would allow a faction of people to prevent another to speak. As a public institution UVM is mandated to accept people regardless of race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Cancelling the lecture gives UVMs Palestinian students and the Vermont community that Palestinians are not welcome at UVM. This is absolutely the wrong message. I find it embarrassing that members of my religous community are pressuring you and that you are even considering bowing to their pressure. I urge you to allow this lecture to take place on campus as planned.

Sincerely,
Debra Stoleroff
Plainfield, Vermont