



To whom it may concern,

This letter is from the Presidents of the Armenian Students Association, Alpha Gamma Alpha (the Armenian Sorority), and Alpha Epsilon Omega (the Armenian Fraternity) at Cal State University, Northridge. We would like to express our deepest disappointment regarding The Association of Turkish Americans of Southern California (ATASC) scheduled event at CSUN this Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The event entails bringing in a guest speaker, Professor George G. Gawrych, to discuss and celebrate Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who served as a soldier in the Ottoman Empire and later Prime Minister and President of Turkey from 1920 until 1938. Upon initially hearing about this event and seeing the flyer, we were baffled. As executive members of our respective Armenian organizations, we were confused as to how it was deemed acceptable or appropriate.

Please do not dismiss our concerns as hyperemotional. This issue is about intolerance – both the ATASC and, historically, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk are well-known deniers of the Armenian Genocide and misanthropes towards the Armenian community. If you were not aware, the Armenian Genocide was the systematic killings of 1915 ordered by the Ottoman Empire (present-day Republic of Turkey) towards the Armenian community for the purpose of ethnic cleansing. Men, women, children, and elderly were all either murdered, raped, tortured or starved to death to carry out these actions. Currently, the government of Turkey denies that such an order was ever established and continues to carry an agenda to falsely educate others regarding the historical occurrences during that time.

It is quite bizarre that an event revolving around the ignorance and injustices against humanity is being allowed to take place on campus. This is for two reasons: 1) CSUN is a large proponent of the inclusion and respect of all individuals, regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity, with a zero tolerance policy regarding hatred and 2) Our campus is a well known supporter of the Armenian Community and its cause. It is reported that 10% of the CSUN student body and 125 members of full- and part-time faculty and staff are Armenian. Our university is currently in the process of establishing a study abroad program with the American University of Armenia. The president of CSUN's Associated Students, Sevag Alexanian, is also Armenian. The Associated Students has passed a resolution to recognize the Armenian Genocide every year on April 24 by honoring the victims with a tradition of the rose ceremony and educating members of AS with the historical events during that time. Our campus also has an Armenian Studies department, where students can minor in Armenian Studies. Around this time last year, it was announced that the Armenian Studies program was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the TF Educational Foundation, the family foundation established by philanthropist Jerry Turpanjian. The funds will provide scholarships for students who have both enrolled in CSUN's Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) and declared a minor in Armenian Studies.

We would like to add that we are in no way denying ATASC's right to the freedom of speech. However, for CSUN to give a platform to an organization that glorifies a government killing its own people is not only an atrocious act within itself, but also degrading to this university's reputation as a world-class public institution. For CSUN, with its large population of Armenian students, faculty members, and donors— not to mention its expanding Armenian Studies Department— this is an embarrassment.

Our wish is that the situation is rectified and that this event is cancelled, to further prevent the spreading of false information and hatred toward our community. On behalf of the Armenian student body, we are deeply offended that an event such as this was over sought by the CSUN administration and we hope that it will never happen again.

We would be more than happy to address any questions or concerns you may have, and can be available at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,  
Biayna Ayvazian  
President, CSUN Armenian Students Association

Maryann Fitolchyan  
President, Alpha Gamma Alpha Beta Chapter

Taron Tonoyan  
President, Alpha Epsilon Omega Alpha Chapter