

Vassar student body REJECTS Israel boycott



Posted by [William A. Jacobson](#) Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 12:27pm

Refuse to endorse BDS movement or restrict student government spending.



The Vassar student body voted the past two days on two anti-Israel referenda sponsored by Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace.

For background on anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activism at Vassar, see Tuesday's post, [Vassar students start voting on anti-Israel referenda](#).

The results were just announced by email, and both referenda were rejected.

The vote was close. The BDS resolution was rejected 573 Against, 503 For. The spending resolution was defeated 601 Against, 475 For.

Under the circumstances, with a years-long anti-Israel propaganda campaign supported by vocal faculty members, this must be considered a huge victory for the voices of reason on campus.

From: VSA Elections <xxxxxx@vassar.edu>

Date: Thu, Apr 28, 2016 at 12:15 PM

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Subject: [Class2019] BDS Referenda

To: Class2019 List <xxxxxx@vassar.edu>, Class2017 List <xxxxxx@vassar.edu>, Class2018 List <xxxxxx@vassar.edu>, Class2016 List <xxxxxx@vassar.edu>

Hi All-

Thank you to everyone who participated in this referendum vote. The BDS Resolution has failed to pass with 573 No votes and 503 Yes votes. The BDS Amendment has failed to pass with 601 No votes and 475 Yes votes. A full report will be posted on the VSA website later this afternoon.

Please let me know if you have any further questions about the referenda.

Best,

Board of Elections and Appointments

This was a perfect storm for anti-Israel groups who hoped to pass the anti-Israel resolutions.

The most vocal members of the Vassar faculty support BDS and help the cause by bringing anti-Israel speakers, [like Jasbir Puar](#), to campus; they also create a [climate of fear](#) such that not only students but [other faculty](#) are afraid to speak out. The Vassar faculty, including the Jewish Studies Department, is a core source of the problem.

Vassar also has aggressive SJP and JVP chapters which openly mock and jeer Jewish students who defend Israel. These hostile student groups are not matched by any equivalent on the “pro-Israel” or neutral side. Vassar J Street U deserves credit for organizing the opposition to the resolutions, but there is an inherent weakness in J Street’s approach; it accepts virtually all of the anti-Israel historical and political propaganda, yet argues over remedy. Vassar J Street U originally had proposed its own counter-resolution condemning Israel but opposing BDS. If all you are arguing over is the remedy, you are losing the argument.

Vassar desperately needs diversity of opinion on Israel particularly at the faculty level. The one-side narrative failed this time, but barely. Vassar administration is to blame for this situation; recent attempts to deal with alumni outrage by bringing a greater diversity of speakers to campus are too little, too late.

The current Vassar president is retiring, and a presidential search is just starting. This is a perfect opportunity for students, staff, faculty, parents and alumni who care about the reputation of Vassar and the quality of campus life to make fairness to Israel part of the presidential search criteria.

[This post was updated after initial publication to add analysis.]

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