



## **AEN Announces Launch of New Educational Video About Antisemitism**

Washington, DC/ Berkeley, CA—April 2, 2021: The Academic Engagement Network (AEN) is excited to announce the launch of a new video, [“Antisemitism in Our Midst,”](#) which charts the history of antisemitism, from its ancient origins to its contemporary manifestations.

The video was created as part of the Antisemitism Education Initiative at the University of California, Berkeley, which brings together multiple campus stakeholders to inform about, discuss, and develop the resources to respond to antisemitism. AEN is supporting the Antisemitism Education Initiative with a multi-year grant.

The Antisemitism Education Initiative is among a number of programs and projects that AEN is supporting through its Improving the Campus Climate Initiative (ICCI), which engages senior officials in Student and Academic Affairs, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), and related offices on campuses throughout the country, providing expert, customized guidance on understanding, identifying, and countering antisemitism on campus.

AEN Executive Director Miriam F. Elman is enthusiastic about the video’s potential to reach and inform new audiences. “AEN is delighted to support UC-Berkeley’s Antisemitism Education Initiative and its new video ‘Antisemitism in Our Midst.’ With heightened anxiety about antisemitism around the country and the disturbing trend of rising antisemitic incidents on college campuses, this educational resource couldn’t be better timed. We are certain that university leaders, and especially diversity officials and staff, will find the film incredibly helpful in their efforts to promote the values of tolerance, inclusion and respect for Jewish and all students on their campuses.”

AEN faculty member Ethan Katz, Professor of History and Jewish Studies, and one of the initiators of the Antisemitism Education Initiative, emphasized that ensuring the video was relevant, informative, and nuanced required incorporating perspectives from multiple stakeholder groups. "This film is the product of more than a year of work to think through the most effective and fair-minded approaches to presenting antisemitism on college campuses, testing and re-testing our ideas with administrators, distinguished colleagues, and finally diverse groups of students. As debates rage over how to define and combat antisemitism, ‘Antisemitism in Our Midst’ at once offers clarity about historical and contemporary meanings of antisemitism, and a sophisticated, balanced approach to highly charged matters like Jews and race in America today, and the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism. Based on the tremendous

enthusiasm that has greeted initial screenings, we are hopeful that this will be an invaluable and powerful tool in antisemitism education on many campuses around the country.”

Elman had further praise for the way in which the video distilled complex ideas and concepts into an engaging format. “It's a tall order to create a short film that will capture the enormous diversity of the Jewish experience, as well as the history of antisemitism and its many contemporary manifestations. But this film manages to do it! Particularly useful is how it helps viewers to understand that antisemitism comes from many sources and ideologies and how classical antisemitic imagery, tropes, and canards are being applied today.”

Elman also hopes that the nuanced, informative way in which the video approaches complex contemporary issues will lead to a deeper understanding of antisemitism among senior campus officials, especially those tasked with promoting diversity and inclusion. “On campus, it's critically important for administrators and faculty to teach students how to better distinguish between a robust and rigorous criticism of Israel and harassment, intimidation, and discriminatory actions targeting Jews for their support of Israel and their Zionist beliefs and identities. ‘Antisemitism in Our Midst’ can definitely serve as a useful educational tool for this purpose.”

This video will become part of AEN's toolbox of resources as the organization furthers its mission to improve campus officials' understanding of the complex, intersecting forms of contemporary antisemitism, according to Naomi Mayor, Director of the AEN's Improving the Campus Climate Initiative. “ ‘Antisemitism in Our Midst’ takes a nuanced and complex topic and breaks it down into understandable components so that members of the campus community can build greater awareness of the diversity of Jewish identity, historical and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, and the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. It is an important tool for campus administrators, faculty, and staff to educate about antisemitism, and we look forward to sharing additional educational resources to accompany the video.”

AEN will soon have available on its webpage discussion questions to accompany the video as well as a student activity to process its key themes.

For more information, please contact Naomi Mayor, Director of AEN's Improving the Campus Climate Initiative ([naomi.mayor@academicengagement.org](mailto:naomi.mayor@academicengagement.org)) and/or Professor Ethan Katz ([ebkatz@berkeley.edu](mailto:ebkatz@berkeley.edu)).