



## INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR  
FACULTY AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Bloomington

December 15, 2023

Professor Abdulkader Sinno  
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Professor Sinno:

Pursuant to Indiana University's Academic Appointee Responsibilities and Conduct (Policy ACA-33, [Academic Appointee Responsibilities and Conduct: Policies: University Policies: Indiana University \(iu.edu\) \("ACA-33"\)](#)), an investigation into allegations concerning your conduct was initiated on November 17, 2023. The investigation was in response to a complaint submitted by Benjamin Hunter, Associate Vice President for Public Safety and Institutional Assurance and Superintendent for Public Safety, on November 16, 2023. The investigation is now concluded.

As part of the investigation, I interviewed individuals affiliated with Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, Public Safety, Events and Conferences, Registrar's Office, Office of Student Life, and the Palestine Solidarity Committee (the "PSC"). I found these witnesses to be credible based on their knowledge of and experience with the speaker event planned for November 16, 2023 (the "Event"). The credibility of several witnesses was further established by their extensive knowledge of university event management policies and processes.

I received your written response and conducted a virtual interview with you via Zoom on November 12, 2023. Your inability to recall salient facts surrounding your activities leading up to and during the Event questions your credibility, given that less than a month had passed since the time of events we were discussing. In addition, during the interview, your continued use of "I do not recall" further eroded your credibility and dramatically limited my ability to triangulate information received from the other interviewees. Based on our conversation, it also was apparent that you were intentionally not cooperating or only minimally cooperating with the investigation.

Specific information from the investigation pertinent to my findings is summarized below:

1. When you submitted the initial room reservation and the University Event Registration Committee (UERC) form, you failed to adhere to the policy that this information should be submitted "no later than 10 business days (2 weeks) before the event". This is clearly stated on the University Event Registration website ([Event Guidance and Registration: Events: University Events: Indiana University \(iu.edu\)](#)). To meet this submission deadline the request should have been submitted no later than November 2, 2023. Your submission occurred on November 6, 2023.
2. When submitting the UERC form, you listed the description of the event as "Academic talk about Middle Eastern Politics". However during our interview, you stated that this was a student organization event. Guidelines around student organizations hosting an event is clearly documented on the Student life webpages ([Policies & Accountability: Manage a Student Organization: Student Organizations: Get Involved: Office of Student Life: Indiana University Bloomington](#)). During your interview you stated that an event could be both an academic event and a student organization event, and while this may be true, your role in reserving the space for this Event omitted key processes that would have been put in

motion if submitted by the student organization. IU requires additional information about an event when the requests are submitted by student organizations. As the faculty advisor for PSC, you should have been well aware of these policies.

3. When submitting the room reservation and answering the question on the online form, “Are you filling this out for someone else”, you indicated “no”. During our interview you clearly stated that this was an event that was conceived and originated by the PSC, and that you agreed to sponsor the Event by securing the room reservation. Therefore, by responding “no” to this question on the form you were at best misrepresenting the event, and at worst circumventing the process required of a student organization in gaining all the necessary approvals for an event. Again, your interview statements to me were inconsistent with your representations about the nature and sponsorship of the event in submitting the online room reservation request. This causes me significant concerns about your credibility during the interview.
4. When submitting the UERC form, in the section that requires information regarding Emergency Preparedness you list “Standard. Consult GISB Plan”. During my interviews of witnesses in the investigation, I learned that the Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures Department and the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies would often arrange security when hosting events. You also said that you have requested security for at least one other event that you have sponsored. Additionally, when the PSC submitted the UERC for the same event on November 14, 2023, they thought it was appropriate to request security for this event. They also thought it appropriate to provide a detailed description of IUPD and non-IUPD security being requested and asked that the Demonstration Response and Safety Team (DRST) be present for the Event. Your judgement in determining that security was not needed for the Event forces me to question your ability to meet your obligation as a member of the University Community to prioritize the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, or visitors who might attend the event.
5. At 8:22 a.m. on November 15, 2023, you received an email stating that the “NELC - Talk by Miko Peled has been denied or cancelled”—yet you still attended the Event. During our interview you stated that you did not know that a second room reservation was made until you received my notice of this ACA-33 investigation. You also stated you assumed that the students would make a reservation and it would be approved but you did not know. As the faculty advisor for PSC (with your most recent formal faculty advisor agreement signed on March 8, 2023), I have significant concerns on whether you are fulfilling all the duties that are expected of a student organization faculty advisor as outlined in that agreement. If you had committed to reserving a room for the Event and you were unable to do so, I would expect you would follow up with PSC leaders and work with them to find an alternate arrangement that follows all university policies and procedures.
6. In your responses to my interview, you would share only that you added [REDACTED] (PSC President) as a BCC: on your email to the Registrar’s office on November 14, 2023, asking them to adjust the room reservation. Your lack of candor in describing your interactions and actions with respect to the PSC after the November 15, 2023, “denied or cancelled” email is startling and undermines your credibility. Based on the extremely limited information you shared, I can only come to one of two conclusions: either you did not report the November 15, 2023, notification that the Event was cancelled to the leadership of PSC and subsequently left the group unaware that they were planning an event without an approved reservation, or you did communicate this to the leadership of PSC and did not honestly report these details to me. Your failure to cooperate in providing credible details in this portion of my investigation was not only disappointing, but also suggests a violation of your obligation under the Indiana University [Principles of Ethical Conduct](#) (the “Principles”) to speak candidly and truthfully.
7. Your credibility was further challenged based on your responses to my questions in our interview about your actions on the night of the Event. You indicated you recalled little detail about that evening other

than that you attended the Event. When I asked if you had spoken with anyone at the Event, you declined to provide any information. However, during my interview of Benjamin Hunter, he indicated that he arrived at Woodburn Hall shortly before the Event began and was standing with university facilities employees. Hunter stated that you motioned to him to approach and you used your phone to record this interaction. Hunter stated he told you he understood the Event had been cancelled and that you responded by assuring him the Event was not cancelled. I find Hunter's evidence to be credible, but your failure to mention this interaction in response to a direct question in our interview is very troubling. Your actions that evening, as described by Hunter, make your assertion that you had no involvement in the Event after your online submission on November 6, 2023, not credible.

I have determined, based on a preponderance of the evidence, that you have engaged in behavior that violates the following University policies: ACA-33, the Principles, and Student Organizations ([STU-01](#)). This determination is further based on your conduct during our interview.

The investigation revealed that you did not fulfill your roles and responsibilities of a faculty advisor to the PSC. I am not suggesting you failed to supervise the PSC's activities, as this task is not one delegated to advisors per STU-01. However, in failing to uphold the Principles, you neglected your responsibilities as a faculty advisor to the PSC and failed to set an appropriate example for PSC leadership. You failed to maintain regular contact with the PSC, failed to help them locate and utilize available resources, and failed to provide necessary support and guidance. I find your conduct as a faculty advisor to the PSC impaired the PSC's ability to comply with STU-01 for the Event.

I would remind you that in the Student Organization policy an advisor is defined as "...Advisors provide support, consistency, and advice to student organizations, but do not act as supervisors of the organization's activities. The process of recruiting or replacing an advisor is the responsibility of the SGSO. The Dean of Students reserves the right to remove an advisor in cases of misconduct."

During our interview, you repeatedly said that either "you did not recall" or that you did not communicate with the members of the PSC regarding the cancellation of the event and room reservation. The reason we require a faculty or staff advisor for all student organizations is so they can provide support to these students in navigating the policies and guidelines related to the university. It appears that from the initial planning of this Event, you did not guide the organization in the proper way to successfully execute an event. Because appropriate policies and procedures for event planning were not followed, IUPD had to divert resources at the last minute from two large, preplanned campus events involving thousands of attendees to provide a safety presence at the Event at Woodburn Hall. Shifting resources negatively impacted IUPD's ability to keep our campus community safe. We are fortunate there was not a major incident on campus that night, but that is not justification for insufficient planning by the PSC and the lack of support you should have provided in your role as faculty advisor. The PSC was clearly informed that they needed to cancel the event and work to reschedule it for another time. As their faculty advisor, I would expect you to assist these students in navigating this complex situation.

As the result of your conduct during the interview, your credibility deficiencies, my concerns regarding your judgment in advising the student organization, your failures to follow relevant policies and procedures, and evidence obtained during the investigation, I have serious concerns about the effect your behavior may have on members of the campus community. These concerns are enhanced by the potential impact that your inattention to university compliance requirements has on the students you influence in the classroom and

in your role as a student organization faculty advisor. Additionally, I note that the investigation revealed examples of your threatening and intimidating behavior to a colleague in your school, and I understand that a number of bias reports have been submitted against you by students this semester.

Based on the information gathered in this investigation and my overwhelming concern about the impact of your interactions with students, I have decided to impose the following sanctions:

1. You are formally prohibited from engaging in any and all teaching responsibilities for the Spring 2024 and Summer 2024 semesters. This prohibition means that you may not engage in any teaching activities whatsoever, including but not limited to formal and informal teaching, graduate student advising, or student organization faculty advising. You are also prohibited from engaging in any and all student-related activities. This will be re-considered for the Fall 2024 semester.
2. During the Spring 2024 semester your Dean and/or Department Chair expressly reserves the right to assign additional duties to you to complete your assigned load.
3. I have requested that the Dean of Students immediately remove you from the role of faculty advisor for all university student organizations for one calendar year. After at least one year has passed, you must successfully complete all required university training regarding the roles of a faculty advisor to a student organization before you are permitted to serve in this capacity in the future.
4. A copy of this letter, which includes my findings and expectations concerning your ongoing obligations to follow university policies, procedures, and guidelines, will be retained in your personnel file.

This sanction reflects my grave concerns about your lack of credibility in participating in the investigation, the potential consequences of diverting police resources for an event that did not have proper approval, as well as the impact of your conduct on our students. Your past and most recent behavior constitutes an emerging pattern of unethical and unprofessional conduct.

I expect that this misconduct and disregard for required university policies will not be repeated by you in the future. Further allegations related to your conduct will be investigated and may include sanctions up to and including separation of employment.

Please be advised that academic appointees adversely affected by administrative action taken against them for violating ACA-33, or whose rights under ACA-33 have been denied, have the right to a campus Faculty Board of Review.

Sincerely,

Carrie Docherty  
Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs

cc: Rick Van Kooten, Executive Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
Nick Cullather, Interim Dean, Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies  
Andrea B. Newsom, Senior Associate General Counsel