

**RESOLUTION: University Membership in the IIE Syria Consortium for
Higher Education in Crisis and Support for Displaced Students, Including
Syrians**

Whereas, the number of Syrian refugees now exceeds four million individuals, of which 450,000 individuals are between the ages of 18 and 22;[1]

Whereas, based on prewar enrollment rates, 90,000 to 110,000 Syrian students were qualified for university admission;[2]

Whereas, Syrians face an “academic emergency” due to a breakdown of higher education within their country, resulting from frequent attacks on university campuses, destroyed facilities, closed campuses, and dangerous roads leading to campuses;[3]

Whereas, the maintenance of a population of educated students and the prevention of a “lost generation” is necessary for the post-conflict development of Syria;

Whereas, the Institute of International Education (IIE) is addressing this emergency by creating the Syria Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis, which includes universities and colleges worldwide who offer scholarships to assist Syrian students;[4]

Whereas, dozens of institutions in the United States, including the University of Southern California, Tufts University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Bryn Mawr College, and others have joined the consortium and are offering scholarships to Syrian students;[5]

Whereas, students and scholars of all backgrounds—including refugee scholars and students—have contributed to making America’s universities the best in the world.

Whereas, American universities have a long tradition of opening their doors to refugee scholars and students, dating back to World War II, when dozens of colleges and universities offered refuge to German Jewish scholars and students.

Whereas, given the past contribution of refugee students and scholars, American universities bear a responsibility to act as a force for internationalism and human dignity and to offer continuing support to refugee students and scholars.

Let it be resolved that the University of California, Los Angeles will join the IIE’s Consortium for Higher Education in Crisis to commit to offering increased academic seats and funding to students displaced by conflict, notably Syrian students, in the form of partial or full scholarships, by no later than the end of the 2016-17 academic year; and

What is the IIE Syria Consortium?

The IIE Syria Consortium is a group of universities around the world that have committed to providing scholarships for Syrian students - both in Syria and those who have been externally displaced. These scholarships range from partial funding to full tuition waivers and are offered to both undergraduate and graduate students.

The IIE was launched in 2012 at the Clinton Global Initiative. In 2013, IIE and the original partners of Jusoor (an NGO), the Illinois Institute of Technology, and the US Department of State joined with new partners, including the Portugal-led Global Platform for Syrian students and Kaplan Test Prep International, to expand the IIE Syria Consortium worldwide.

Dozens of US institutions are part of the consortium including private universities such as the University of Southern California, and public universities such as the State University of New York at Cortland.

Why should the UC system join the consortium?

With the crisis in Syria showing no-signs of abating, it is clear that ongoing support is needed for Syrian students and scholars to continue their education and academic work. While the world struggles to meet the basic needs of millions of Syrian refugees, and often times primary education can be provided in refugee camps, it is important to make sure that higher education is not neglected.

Higher education will be extremely important when considering the post-conflict development of Syria. Syria will need its next generation of doctors, scientists, engineers, architects and lawyers to help rebuild their country. Often times we wonder how we can help as this crisis worsens - many are comparing it to the Holocaust, as it is the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II. While we can't change the political situation, we can at the very least ask our university to join a consortium of universities to make sure Syrians can pursue higher education.

As of now, it is very difficult for Syrians in Syria to continue higher education. Universities are closed, classes are cancelled and roads are dangerous making it difficult to get to universities and, in some cases, universities have been targeted and students have been killed as the war ensues.

How will we get the UC system to join the consortium?

Several UCs are working with a campaign called Books Not Bombs, which essentially consists of online petitions calling on universities to join the consortium. Each UC is collecting signatures on its petition. One of the Books Not Bombs organizers contacted Marcela Ramirez, the UC Student Regent, on how we can go about presenting the campaign to the Regents. Ramirez said we need to present student support in the form of resolutions on all 9 UC campuses. Thus, in addition to signatures that we are gathering from students and faculty members, we intend to present a resolution as well.

In the past year, the Associated Students at UC Irvine, UC Berkeley and UC Davis have passed resolutions. The UCSA has passed a resolution as well.

At this time, we think that offering dedicated seats and funding to these students makes sense, given the difficulties that they face in terms of applying, securing a visa, traveling to the United States, accessing financial aid, etc. In the future (and especially whenever the Syrian conflict ends), the university may wish to open scholarships to other students fleeing from war.