To the Assyrian Community:

On behalf of The Near Eastern Studies Department, and Professor Simon Brelaud, I wish to express our sincerest regrets and apologies for the unfortunate and inaccurate language used in the original description of the course offered in our Assyrian Studies Program. We understand the pain and hurt the original course description has caused for members of the Assyrian community. It was members of that community who drew our attention to problematic elements of our course description, and based on their feedback we will quickly correct these errors. This course was made possible by the generous gift of a donor, and we will also be contacting her to apologize and describe the steps we are taking to correct the errors and begin to repair the damage that has been done.

We see this course as an essential part of our department because of the importance and intrinsic value of Assyrian history, culture, language, and arts. Through the program honoring Avimaleck Betyousef we wish to preserve, honor, and further the scholarly investigation of the rich history of the Assyrian people from antiquity to the present day. We stand by UC Berkeley’s Principles of Community that seek to foster a true sense of belonging and inclusion for every member of our community. We believe deeply in the right of every people to self-sovereignty and self-identity. We have complete confidence that Professor Brelaud believes in and shares these essential values, goals, and commitments.

We hoped---and still hope---that the Avimaleck Betyousef professorship will foster engagement and communication with the Assyrian community. We regret that this has gotten off to a very painful start, but we are also confident that the misunderstanding can be remedied and that our ties will grow firmer going forward. We pledge to improve the communication of our events, courses, and mission in a manner that conveys our sincere intention to show respect for all, while carrying out our academic goals of research and publication.

Sincerely,

Francesca Rochberg
Catherine and William L. Magistretti Distinguished Professor of Near Eastern Studies
Chair, Department of Near Eastern Studies