

University of Missouri Chancellor Loftin Response to 16 Organizations Re: Swastikas

From: "Loftin, R. Bowen"

To: Tammi Rossman-Benjamin

Subject: Re: concern about antisemitic graffiti at University of Missouri

Date: April 16, 2015 at 2:27:25 PM PDT

April 16, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter of concern, received today via email.

As I have said many times and in many contexts, the safety and security of all University of Missouri students is our top priority.

The MU Police Department is actively investigating the incidents of anti-Semitic graffiti that you reference. At their request, I delayed making a statement so that my remarks would not compromise the investigation. It is, in fact, MUPD's recognition that this graffiti constitutes a hate crime and the high degree of care that they apply to the investigation of any bias crime that delayed my public denunciation.

As you know, in the State of Missouri, if certain criminal activity is "knowingly motivated because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation [including gender identity], or disability of the victim or victims," the crime is considered more serious and the criminal penalties may be increased. I can assure you that I take this issue very seriously and that my priority is identifying and imposing sanctions and pursuing criminal prosecution of the perpetrator or perpetrators.

We have multiple, ongoing anti-hate and anti-bias programs at the University of Missouri, including training faculty and staff in the foundations of diversity and providing educational information on religious discrimination and hate crimes. A partial list of resources can be found [here](#). The Chancellor's Diversity Initiative has focused a Difficult Dialogues series on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, where faculty are trained to discuss these issues in the classroom. Many courses on campus such as cross-cultural psychology and cross-cultural journalism cover anti-Semitism in history and in current events. Among other recommendations, we strongly encourage all faculty and staff involved in classroom instruction to include the University of Missouri's non-discrimination statement in their syllabus and to take religious holidays and numerous other factors into account in

course planning. We also have vibrant student life and residence life programming focused on diversity and multiculturalism, including diversity peer education.

Beginning this evening and throughout this week, students and members of our community are joining with Mizzou Hillel for the Reading of Names, Holocaust Memorial Shabbat, a Screening of “Night Will Fall” with discussions by Mizzou faculty member Dr. Brad Prager, and an appearance by Holocaust survivor Jerry Koenig. Our universitycommunications team will be attending and providing coverage of all of these events (except religious services) in order to raise awareness in our community of the dangers of anti-Semitism and to recognize the significance of Yom HaShoah to our Jewish students, faculty and staff.

We will not tolerate bigotry or hatred of any kind on our campus and will protect all members of the campus community. I regret that my need to delay a statement to facilitate the police investigation called into question my commitment to our Jewish students, who have my full and wholehearted support at all times.

Sincerely,

R. Bowen Loftin
Chancellor
University of Missouri

Cc:

Board of Curators
Garnett S. Stokes, Provost
Mizzou Hillel Staff