

62 Organizations Respond to Chancellor Syverud

May 18, 2018

Dear Chancellor Syverud,

We appreciate the prompt response of your office to our groups' letter, and we commend your commitment to the ideals of freedom of expression and a campus environment free from the harassing and discriminatory behaviors that impede it. We are concerned, however, that the steps taken to address the intolerant, harassing behavior both inside and outside of the event hall during Ambassador Dayan's talk were inadequate to preserve the right to freedom of speech and assembly of the event participants, and that the university's responses may have been mitigated by the anti-Zionist nature of the harassment.

Please understand that while your university's anti-harassment and non-discrimination policies provide essential protection from behaviors that impede expression and full participation in university life, they only afford such protection to students who fall into certain categories — race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, etc. — leaving other students unprotected in the face of the exact same intolerant, harassing behaviors, and vulnerable to the effects of those same behaviors. We have found that without protection from harassment, free speech rights are curtailed. Harassment and free speech are intrinsically linked. Students who fear they will not be protected from harassing behaviors do not feel free to express their beliefs and opinions in the classroom, in the dorm or in the quad.

Unfortunately, this is the experience of many Jewish and pro-Israel students across the country. Far too often, anti-Zionist harassment is left unaddressed and Jewish and pro-Israel students are bullied into silence. That is why we hope you will consider our letter's recommendations for ensuring that all of your students — including those who identify as Zionist — are equally protected from the harassment and discrimination that would limit their free expression and full participation in campus life. In particular, we urge you to **make a formal statement committing Syracuse University to applying the same stringent standard prescribed by your university's anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies to each and every student, regardless of identity, belief, opinion or legally protected status.** It is a simple step that will go a long way toward protecting free speech, encouraging a diverse range of views for students to learn from, and ensuring a campus free from harassment and discrimination.

We look forward to seeing such a statement guaranteeing the equitable treatment of all students on your campus.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned 62 Organizations:

Academic Council for Israel
Accuracy in Academia
Aggies for Israel
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
Alums for Campus Fairness - National
Alums for Campus Fairness - Columbia University
Alums for Campus Fairness - New York University
Alums for Campus Fairness - Swarthmore
Alums for Campus Fairness - Syracuse University

Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Davis
Alums for Campus Fairness - UC Riverside
Alums for Campus Fairness - UCLA
AMCHA Initiative
American Institute for Jewish Research
American Truth Project
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
Campus Anti-Semitism Task Force of the North Shore
Christians and Jews United for Israel
Christians United for Israel Action Fund
Club Z
Coalition for Jewish Values
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)
Communities for Israel
Davis Faculty for Israel
Eagles Wings
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Hasbara Fellowships
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Iranian Jewish Women's Organization
Israel in NYC
Israel Matters
Israel Peace Initiative (IPI)
Israel-American Coalition for Action
JAM - UCSB
Jerusalem U
Jewish Israel Cafe
Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA)
Middle East Forum
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
National Conference on Jewish Affairs
National Council of Young Israel
NCSY
NH4Israel
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Rhode Island Coalition for Israel
Russian Jewish Community Foundation
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
Stop BDS on Campus
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
Students Supporting Israel National
Students Supporting Israel at Columbia
Students Supporting Israel at UC Irvine
Students Supporting Israel at UC Santa Barbara
Students Supporting Israel at UCLA
The Israel Christian Nexus

Training and Education About the Middle East (T.E.A.M.)
Zionist Organization of America
ZOA's Fuel for Truth

Cc: Provost Michele Wheatly
Dean of Students Robert Hradsky
Dean of Hendricks Chapel The Rev. Brian E. Konkol
Bernie Jacobson, Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion & Resolution Services
Lisa Dolak, University Secretary, Office of the Board of Trustees

On May 16, 2018, at 10:58 AM, Office of the Chancellor <chancellor@syr.edu> wrote:

Dear Ms. Rossman-Benjamin:

We are in receipt of your May 15, 2018 e-mail sent on behalf of the 62 organizations you Undersigned regarding inclusivity and free expression at Syracuse University. We appreciate your concern regarding these important issues and want to use this opportunity to confirm the University's commitment to providing an environment for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors that is free from discrimination and harassment.

As reflected in the University's anti-discrimination policies, including, for example, the University's Anti-Harassment Policy and the Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy Statement, we unequivocally reject bigotry, intolerance and ignorance of any kind. There is absolutely no place at Syracuse University for behavior or language that degrades any individual or group's race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, disability or religious beliefs.

Putting our words into action, the University acted swiftly and appropriately to ensure that Ambassador Dayan was able to deliver his lecture and participate fully in a question and answer session. Two individuals (not in any way affiliated with Syracuse University) who attempted to disrupt the lecture were removed from the building by our Department of Public Safety. A small protest outside the building did not interfere with the proceedings going on inside the building.

As an academic institution committed to free expression and continuous learning, we support the robust exchange of ideas. We will always welcome lecturers who advance our community's understanding of complex and controversial issues. We very much appreciated Ambassador Dayan's willingness to come to Syracuse University to advance that understanding.

Regards,
Jill Denny

Office of the Chancellor

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Syracuse University