



Further Reflection on Last Week's Antisemitic Incident

Dear Member of the Drexel Community,

In the wake of an incident last week in which a Drexel student was targeted in a residence hall with a symbol of hate, I wrote to you about our fundamental responsibility to cultivate inclusiveness and respect in our community. This deplorable incident has continued to resonate on our campus and beyond, and I want to address it directly.

The symbol in question was a swastika. A Drexel student placed it along with the word "Jew" next to an Israeli flag displayed in another student's room. The perpetrator was identified soon afterwards; the two students knew each other. Drexel Police investigated immediately, and the administration worked with the victim and his family to provide support and accommodation so that the student felt safe and valued.

The incident is now the subject of an investigation by the Office of Equality and Diversity, and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards will determine what sanctions are appropriate. Both the victim and the perpetrator deserve anonymity during that process. But I want to make one thing clear: Drexel has zero tolerance for any acts or symbols of hate.

The swastika is not a symbol of protest or provocation. It is a symbol of antisemitism. There is no circumstance in which its use in response to an expression of Jewish identity can be construed as anything but a reference to historical attempts to threaten and even destroy the Jewish people. There is no place in our Drexel community for any person who would make use of this antisemitic symbol, knowing its historical and cultural significance.

The responsibility for achieving the goals of tolerance, inclusion and cultural competency lies with us all — the University's administration, faculty, professional staff and students. The issues raised by this incident will be part of the expanded formal and informal conversations on diversity already announced for the coming year.

Any member of our community who is witness to an act of intolerance

or hate also has a responsibility. We know that two students witnessed the perpetrator's actions and did not stop him or remove the offensive display before the victim saw it. The role of the bystander will be an important topic of our upcoming discussions. Bystanders can take powerful action to mitigate the effects of even the most hateful act, just by overtly rejecting it and protecting those to whom it is directed. We must all keep this in mind, even as we work diligently to build a culture in which an incident like that which occurred last week is unimaginable.

Sincerely,

John A. Fry

President



This message to Drexel Official Mail was approved under the authority of John A. Fry, President