

March 8, 2017 (\*\*Date supplied to AMCHA Initiative)

# Unity Best Response to Recent Bias Incidents

Dear Member of the Drexel Community:

The recent rash of bomb threats and vandalism against the Jewish community in the region and across the nation, as well as other incidents motivated by Islamophobia, transphobia, racism, and other forms of bias, reminds us of the need to be vigilant about upholding our values of community, inclusion, citizenship and learning. Drexel's success depends on creating an environment in which people can champion, share and test their ideas in an atmosphere of respect and safety. Now is a particularly important time to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to inclusiveness, in light of a disturbing rise in bias incidents, including but not limited to the deplorable acts of antisemitism that have forced evacuations from community centers and schools and acts of xenophobic violence.

In our own community, our condolences also go out to the families of those interred at the Mount Carmel Cemetery in the city's Frankford neighborhood, where more than 100 tombstones were discovered vandalized last month. It has been encouraging to see the outpouring of community support—both volunteers offering to upright the damaged memorials, as well as the many generous donors to the restoration effort. Rallying around those affected by acts of hate and bias is the best antidote.

We have to realize that no campus is immune from broader social forces, and our current climate is one in which related incidents may well impact Drexel. Indeed, there were two separate bias incidents in the last week during which swastikas were drawn in public areas of Race Hall. Once the graffiti was discovered and removed, our Residential Living staff contacted each of the residents of Race Hall to assure them that such hateful acts have no place in our halls. They also reminded them that resident assistants and the resident director can help students address any concerns, and provide resources and support. And they encouraged all Drexel students to be active bystanders and [report](#) what they see, hear, and learn about any bias incident, in order to ensure that our campus remains welcoming for all.

The posting of any hate symbol, whether as a malicious act or done out of blatant ignorance, is unacceptable and incompatible with the ethos of our University. Across campus, all Drexel students, faculty and professional staff should feel safe and welcome.

Drexel has a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment of any kind. That is even more important to stress during this spike in bias incidents nationally. While we continue to

find ways to strengthen the core value of inclusion, I encourage all members of our campus community to do their part to support diversity of all kinds and foster respect for others. In doing so, we will protect and preserve Drexel as a community that seeks the best from all of us.

Sincerely,

John A. Fry  
President