

Swastikas at Emory

Emory University President James Wagner

October 6, 2014

To the Emory Community:

It saddens me to report that the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity house, an historically Jewish fraternity here at Emory, was the target of crude, offensive graffiti, including swastikas, early Sunday morning, October 5, shortly after the end of the observance of Yom Kippur.

On behalf of our community, I denounce this abhorrent act. It is an offense against a Jewish fraternity and the Jewish members of our community, and it is a repugnant, flagrant emblem of anti-Semitism. It is also an offense against the entire university. Among the many pernicious things the swastika symbolizes, in the last century it represented the most egregious and determined undermining of intellectual freedom and truth-seeking. In short, its appearance on our campus is an attack against everything for which Emory stands.

Emory University will not tolerate such acts. Instead we must together pledge Emory University's continuing commitment to raise awareness and prevent all forms of violence and discrimination; to foster openness and diversity of thought, experience, spirituality, and culture; and to seek positive transformation in our community and the world. We all have a responsibility to uphold the principles we hold dear as an academic community, and to create a community that is inclusive, open, respectful, and welcoming to all.

Emory Police officers are actively investigating the incident and have increased patrols to the area. If you have any information about the individuals who may have perpetrated these acts, please contact the Emory Police.

Why We're Wearing Blue on Monday [Oct. 6]

The [Emory University] Student Government Association Executive Board condemns the reprehensible act of bigotry carried out against the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, the Jewish community, and the entire Emory community. The individuals responsible have sickened us.

Emory students engage in conversations about our differences. In our classrooms, social clubs, athletic teams, and student organizations, we affirm each others' identities. In everything we do, we strive for courageous inquiry. Used in this way, the swastika represents the systematic silencing and murder of human beings because of their identities. In this context, there is nothing courageous about a swastika.

We are committed to making sure that this moment of anger is a springboard for action, and that all people and all communities at Emory feel supported and safe on our campus.

We invite you to wear blue on Monday in support of Emory's Jewish community and the rights of all people to live freely and safely.