

16 Organizations Respond to Chancellor Loftin's Email

April 17, 2015

Dear Chancellor Loftin,

Thank you so much for your prompt reply to our letter. We commend you for your commitment to protecting MU students, including Jewish students, and we are pleased to hear about the educational initiatives that you have in place for addressing ethnic and racial bigotry. We are pleased, too, at the thoroughness of the investigation into these incidents of antisemitic graffiti, and that the MUPD recognizes that such graffiti is a hate crime.

As you may know, the incidents of antisemitic graffiti on your campus are among the latest in a [rash](#) of similar incidents across the country, with antisemitic graffiti appearing on 14 campuses just since the beginning of 2015 alone. While we appreciate the considerations that went into your delaying making a public statement about the graffiti, our research and experience indicate that an immediate statement is key to preventing future antisemitic incidents and ensuring student safety.

Our experience also demonstrates a strong correlation between the types of anti-Israel activism that crosses the line from acceptable criticism into antisemitism -- particularly the promotion of anti-Israel boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) campaigns — and antisemitic behavior such as defacing campus buildings with swastikas and other antisemitic symbols and language. In this regard, we are aware that late last semester a [public lecture](#) by well-known BDS advocate Saree Makdisi took place at your university, sponsored by the MU Peace Studies Program and 7 other administrative offices and academic departments (University Lectures Committee, Chancellor's Diversity Initiative, Department of History, Department of Political Science, Department of Sociology, Department of Religious Studies and Department of English). His [talk](#) was filled with rhetoric that demonized and delegitimized the Jewish state and called for its elimination - language clearly considered antisemitic by the U.S. State Department.

Campus lectures and campaigns which themselves engage in antisemitic activity when they demonize and delegitimize Israel and its supporters and seek to dismantle the Jewish state, can create a toxic campus environment that allows further acts of anti-Jewish bigotry to flourish. We therefore urge you to familiarize yourself with, and then formally adopt, the U.S. State Department's [definition](#) of antisemitism, which recognizes that specific forms of anti-Israel expression cross the line into antisemitism. We urge you to use this definition to identify and address campus antisemitism with the same promptness and vigor as you do all other forms of racial, ethnic, and gender bigotry and discrimination.

Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to fighting all forms of bigotry on your campus.

We look forward to continuing to work together to protect Jewish students. Please be in touch if we can assist you at any time.

Sincerely,

Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
AMCHA Initiative
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
CUFI on Campus

Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Israeli-American Council (IAC)
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
Students Supporting Israel
The Israel Group
The Lawfare Project
Training and Education About the Middle East (T.E.A.M.)
Zionist Organization of America