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Via Email

March 15, 2022

Dr. Anthony P. Monaco

419 Boston Ave.

Medford, MA 02155

Dear President Monaco:

We write to express our grave and urgent concern over the escalating threats to the full expression of Jewish life on the Tufts campus in the wake of the most recent Students for Justice in Palestine (“SJP”) call for [“strategic boycott”](#). The tactics advocated by SJP – under the banner of “justice and liberation” – go well beyond the conventional norms of boycotts. While the proposed boycott of Israeli product is troubling alone as it singles out and demonizes the Jewish State, the demands that students **sign a pledge** indicating their refusal to engage in or associate with a range of educational, social, or advocacy initiatives elevates our concerns dramatically.

The creation of such a list is designed to isolate and exclude students who wish to study abroad in Israel, participate in a dialogue designed to foster learning and understanding through Visions of Peace or J-Street, join in a consulting club working with Israeli business or even be a summer intern at ADL under the guise of “normalizing” Israel. This list is one of the most abhorrent consequences of these “demands” as it effectively creates a litmus test that could be used to restrict Jewish students from full participation in the many facets of student life at Tufts and is likely to be used to target and harass them. Creating lists of names of students who either support or, through omission, don’t support the anti-Israel SJP agenda divides the campus and effectively shuns Jewish students who will be forced to either hide their personal views or risk being ostracized and excluded from campus life.

We believe that it is critical for you to proactively and publicly reassure Jewish students on campus that they will not be targeted or ostracized from full participation in all aspects of campus life.

Less than two months ago, you announced the results of a courageous study of how antisemitism was manifesting on the Tufts campus, noting that the work was “guided by our collective belief that antisemitism, discrimination, and harassment of any form should not be tolerated at Tufts and our commitment to ensure that all members of our community can express their religious and cultural identity free from fear, discrimination, or prejudice”. One of the many troubling findings was that some Jewish students felt that “in order to be welcome in student organizations supporting social justice, they had to hide their Jewish identities”. SJP’s

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“strategic boycott” will surely increase and intensify that sentiment and undermine the implementation of the Task Force’s recommendations.

As indicated by your statement today, many of the Task Force’s recommendations are negated by the SJP demands. For example, the Task Force noted the importance of implementing “conversation, dialogue, and discussion forums on understanding better the geopolitical situation in the Middle East, which often influences how antisemitism manifests itself on our campus”. Yet, the very premise and foundation of SJP’s “strategic boycott” would silence such conversation and dialogue, under the guise that it would “normalize” Israel. Similarly, Tufts’ participation in the Hillel International’s Campus Climate Initiative, will be similarly dismissed as Hillel International promotes and supports the very activities, associations and educational opportunities that are being called out by SJP’s “strategic boycott”. The disingenuous objectives of SJP’s demands, where they call for a boycott and simultaneously shut down the discussion, education and learning expected on a college campus.

The Tufts campus community needs to hear clearly from you that these efforts to diminish or taint full and open participation in Jewish life are an affront to Tufts’ values and will not be tolerated.

We have had an open dialogue with you and your team over many years about the campus climate for expression of Jewish life and remain committed to working with you. Yet we are alarmed by this situation and call for your immediate intervention.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert O. Trestan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent horizontal stroke at the top.

Robert O. Trestan
Regional Director

Cc: Marty Ray
Mary Jeka
Naftali Brawer
Michael Rodman