

Press Release: Brandeis Center Fights White Supremacy and Neo-Nazism at Virginia Tech

Washington, D.C., November 6: Today, the [Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law \(LDB\)](#) urged Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University President Timothy Sands to take bold actions to address intolerable neo-Nazi activity on his campus. In a letter issued today, the Center admonished President Sands that he must do more to protect his students, especially one whom the instructor (or his spouse) allegedly called a “fat ugly turd clown” while urging associates to “f*** her up” and “destroy her).

LDB Senior Staff Attorney Jennifer Gross explained, “We are horrified by the reports that we are hearing from Virginia Tech students. The problem is not just that Virginia Tech employs an avowed white supremacist as a graduate student instructor and that many undergraduate students are required to take his course. Worse, he has allegedly urged his associates to violently attack a Virginia Tech student who has stood up to him.”

“I am a white supremacist,” the graduate student allegedly announced on social media. Multiple sources note that he has posted numerous offensive on comments social media including this example of Nazi propaganda: “I agree with pretty much every word. 1 million might be a tad too many dead Jews but that’s just splitting hairs,” while sharing a link to an article with a photo of Hitler titled, “If Hitler Had Won World War II, We’d Have A Better, More Just World Today.”

This summer, LDB admonished Virginia Tech to honor Virginia House Majority Leader-Designee Delegate C. Todd Gilbert’s request that Virginia public universities address this issue [of anti-Semitism] on their own initiative through effective policies, education, orientation, and training. . . with clarity and detail.” Virginia Tech did not respond. LDB is now concerned that the administration is failing to address problems on their campus that LDB had urged, and are experiencing the problems about which LDB had warned.

“The university’s response to a self-proclaimed white supremacist teaching assistant fails to address the impact on the students that take his course and rely on him for a grade,” Gross commented. “This TA’s commentary ranges from a clearly racist and falsely intellectual defense of white supremacy to regurgitation of long-debunked Holocaust denial propaganda and anti-Semitic tropes. And this TA also teaches freshman composition, a required class for freshman. The students who take his class do not necessarily get to choose their teacher, and while other TAs also teach this class, the fact remains that some freshman students will find themselves in his classroom, and will need to complete the required class. And these students may be black or brown, Jewish or Muslim, and they will find themselves required to sit in a classroom with a teacher who considers them unequal to him because of their ethnicity, and they will rely on that teacher for a grade in a required course.”

“Putting aside questions of morality and justice, one has to wonder what Virginia Tech thinks its students will learn when they are required to take freshman composition with an instructor whose best-known words allegedly include ‘fat ugly turd clown’ (to describe a

Virginia Tech student) and ‘Fuck her up/Destroy her’ (to describe what should be done to her),” Gross concluded.

In late August, when a Virginia Tech undergraduate student whose anonymity we will preserve found out about a series of these postings, she shared her concern in what she believed to be a private Facebook group. “Jane Doe” then began suffering from harassment, including:

The following message was posted on Facebook:

My wife found the phone number of the bitch
behind this:
571-XXX-XXXX*

Fuck her up
Destroy her

[Jane] ((([Doe])))*

She’s on the left

(*Name and phone number redacted.) The post included a picture identifying the undergraduate student, and put her last name in three closed parentheses (“Jane ((([Doe]))”)), a white supremacist symbol indicating “Jew.” The poster incorrectly assumed that Jane Doe was Jewish based on her Jewish-sounding last name. Following this posting, Doe has received threatening voice messages and upwards of 70 phone calls from blocked numbers. Other harassment included the posting of Doe’s private cell phone number on an online sex chat forum under the username, “FatAntifaBabyGurl4U.” The post read: “Hey hit me up if you like fat cuties! Ill b e waiting :),” and then listed her number. Doe has received numerous text messages with inappropriate sexually harassing content from numbers she does not recognize. Jane Doe has also been harassed with phone calls, text messages, and other messages on Facebook, Reddit and email listservs.

“I have spent my last semester at Virginia Tech fighting with university administrators and officials about a clear-cut issue and direct threat of white supremacy on campus,” says Doe. “I have now had to fight them about a direct threat to my safety. I remain tangled in university red tape that has offered me no protection and continues to hide behind vague non-answers to my concerns and my inability to feel safe on campus. I remain tangled in university bureaucracy and unclear statutes, handbooks and codes of conduct that do not seem to offer me any form of protection. I continue to have to fight that for any action to be taken.

Jane Doe continued, “I predicted that the situation involving [M] would escalate if preventative action was not taken, and there is no reason why I should be sitting here dealing with the fallout of a death threat and doxxing campaign against me had the university taken my concerns seriously when I first brought them to light in August. Student safety was put into jeopardy when a white supremacist was given authority and

control over students in the classroom. The threat to my safety is just one instance in a pattern of intimidating and threatening behavior by [M].”

Doe added, “Even if I hadn’t been personally targeted, [M] still poses a threat to campus because he believes certain people to be inferior and professes an ideology that inherently requires violence in order to secure a white state.”

The graduate student, “M,” and his wife now reportedly claim that his wife was responsible for much of the threatening and retaliatory behavior. His wife is unaffiliated with Virginia Tech, meaning she would suffer no disciplinary consequences. LDB has urged the university to question and investigate this admission. Such harassing and threatening messages violate numerous university policies, including the *Student Code of Conduct* and the *Policy and Procedures on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Assault*. If M is found to have been involved in these postings, either directly or as an accomplice, the Brandeis Center has urged that he be fully disciplined in line with Virginia Tech policies.

LDB has notified Virginia Tech that they should thoroughly investigate the posting of Jane Doe’s phone number on an online sex forum under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which includes unwanted online sexual behavior that interferes with a student’s education. LDB has urged Virginia Tech to adhere to [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal funds. OCR announced in guidance that Title VI applies to discrimination on the basis of perceived Jewish ethnicity or ancestry. Certain retaliatory actions are prohibited under both statutes.

Though M has reportedly stepped down from teaching in the upcoming Spring semester, he is still teaching on campus this semester, and Virginia Tech has taken little responsive action. In LDB’s letter, LDB urged the Virginia Tech administration to take steps to remedy the current situation, including: 1) ensure safety – take necessary steps to ensure that Jane Doe as well as all students of any race, religion, or background, are safe on campus; 2) fully investigate the graduate student to determine if he was involved in the retaliatory harassment, and if wrongdoing is found under Virginia Tech policies for both students and employees, discipline fully, consistent with applicable constitutional protections; 3) issue a stronger statement specifically addressing and condemning M’s hateful rhetoric, in line with the guidelines laid out in [LDB’s Best Practice Guide](#); 4) provide training and education, on an annual basis, to all instructional staff, including students, faculty, teaching assistants, and administrators, on what anti-Semitism is - [in its contemporary as well as historical manifestations](#) - and how it should not be tolerated on campus, just like all other forms of discrimination should not be tolerated; and 5) create more academic and extracurricular programming to raise community awareness about global and campus anti-Semitism.

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About The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law: The Louis D. Brandeis Center, Inc., or LDB, is an independent, nonprofit organization established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. The Brandeis Center conducts research, education, and advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses. It is not affiliated with the Massachusetts university, the Kentucky law school, or any of the other institutions that share the name and honor the memory of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice.