

August 20, 2018

VIA E-MAIL ([andrew.hamilton@nyu.edu](mailto:andrew.hamilton@nyu.edu))

Andrew Hamilton  
President  
New York University  
Office of the President  
70 Washington Square South  
New York, New York 10012

**RE: Awaiting Response from Your Administration to the Discrimination Against Pro-Israel Organizations Occurring at New York University**

Dear President Hamilton,

We write to follow up on the attached letters our organizations sent to your administration on April 24, 2018, May 14, 2018, and June 8, 2018, regarding the joint statement signed by 53 NYU student organizations. We appreciate that you have condemned the anti-Semitic Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (“BDS”) movement, but we are greatly concerned that as we enter a new school semester, your administration still has not satisfactorily addressed either (1) the discriminatory statement itself or (2) the effect that its rhetoric has had on your campus community. Unless you condemn the statement and clarify to students that they are expected to maintain a tolerant, inclusive campus environment during the coming year, we fear that the bigoted, hateful environment initiated at NYU in 2017-2018 will continue to fester and grow, and put your university at risk of violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

By signing the joint statement, 53 NYU student organizations clearly declared that they will boycott pro-Israel students and will refuse to engage with them unless and until the pro-Israel students shed a key component of their Jewish identity. Demanding that a Jewish student abandon his/her support for Israel in order to be accepted as a full member of the student body is akin to demanding that a Jewish student stop maintaining a kosher diet or stop observing the Sabbath in order to gain admission to a club.

Throughout Jewish history, the Jewish people have yearned for a return to Israel/Zion, their ancient Jewish homeland. More than half of the commandments in the Pentateuch

relate to the Land of Israel. Even when Jews were exiled from the Land of Israel, they continued to face Jerusalem when they prayed. Each year at the Passover Seder and at the conclusion of Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement), Jews proclaim “Next Year in Jerusalem.” At Jewish wedding ceremonies it is customary for the groom to break a glass and recite “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning.” These are merely a few examples that demonstrate how integral Zionism is to Jewish identity.

Demanding that Jewish students renounce their support for Israel in order to participate fully in the university community is tantamount to requiring the majority of Jewish students to disavow their Jewish identity. This demand is flagrantly discriminatory in effect and intent, and it must be forcefully condemned as anti-Semitic. It discriminates against Israeli students at NYU on the basis of their national origin, and it discriminates against Jewish students of all nationalities by requiring them to discard their Jewish identity.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 obligates you to protect Jewish and Israeli students on your campus. Failure of your administration to act could create a hostile environment on campus. Release of the joint statement has already exacerbated the situation on your campus for Jewish and Israeli students. For example, as part of “Israel Peace Week,” two pro-Israel NYU organizations hosted their annual “Rave in the [Washington Square] Park.” Anti-Israel NYU students mounted a counter-protest, and two NYU students were arrested for reportedly setting fire to an Israeli flag, and grabbing the arm of one of the pro-Israel students and forcibly taking her microphone.

As the school year is fast approaching, we urge your administration to protect Jewish and Israeli students as you pledge to protect all other students on your campus. The following steps would be a good start:

- Reject the discriminatory statement firmly, specifically, and unequivocally to the entire campus community by issuing a university-wide statement at the start of the school year. Declare unequivocally that conduct undertaken by student groups to boycott, marginalize, stigmatize, or otherwise harass other NYU students based on their group identities is unacceptable. Emphasize in your public statement that the rights of all members of the campus community will be protected and that the university condemns anti-Semitism. A useful model is the statement made by Portland State University (“PSU”) [President Wim Wiewel](#) in 2016:

We are responsible for respecting the rights of all members of our campus community. The tone and tenor of the BDS movement has made members of our community feel unsafe and unwelcome at PSU, and it is not acceptable to marginalize or scapegoat them. Anti-Semitism cannot and will not be tolerated on our campus.

Anti-Semitism today often masks itself as anti-Zionism. The statement could note, as the [University of California Board of Regents](#) did in 2016, that “[a]nti-Semitism and anti-Semitic forms of anti-Zionism are forms of discrimination and

will not be tolerated at” NYU;

- Thoroughly investigate the origin and dissemination of the joint statement and the student organizations involved. If NYU Policies are found to have been violated, discipline the responsible student organizations as warranted, consistent with applicable constitutional protections;
- Provide mandatory training and education, on an annual basis and beginning this Fall, to all student organizations, as well as to all students, faculty, and administrators, on bias and intolerance, including how anti-Semitism is often manifested as anti-Zionism. Hold a required dialogue session in the beginning of the school year for all student group leaders during which you explain how anti-Semitism is ethnic hatred towards Jews, and how boycotts against Jewish student groups are discriminatory and in violation of university policy. Make clear to the university community that such anti-Jewish hate will not be tolerated on campus just like other forms of racial and religious hate have no place at the university.

Although we have sent you three letters on this subject, our organizations have yet to receive a response. We hope that this time you will thoughtfully address our concerns and answer our letter. We look forward to your prompt reply.

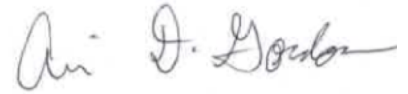
Sincerely,



Alyza D. Lewin  
President & General Counsel  
The Louis D. Brandeis Center  
for Human Rights Under Law  
[alewin@brandeiscenter.com](mailto:alewin@brandeiscenter.com)



Yael Lerman  
Director  
StandWithUs Legal Department  
[legal@standwithus.com](mailto:legal@standwithus.com)



Avi Gordon  
Executive Director  
Alums for Campus Fairness  
[info@campusfairness.org](mailto:info@campusfairness.org)



Aviva Vogelstein  
Director of Legal Initiatives  
The Louis D. Brandeis Center  
for Human Rights Under Law  
[alewin@brandeiscenter.com](mailto:alewin@brandeiscenter.com)