



Academic
Engagement
NETWORK

February 19, 2019

Anthony Monaco
Office of the President
Tufts University
Ballou Hall, 2nd Floor
Medford, MA 02155

Dear President Monaco,

We write as chair of the advisory board, executive director, and incoming executive director, respectively, of the *Academic Engagement Network*, a national organization comprised of faculty working to counter BDS-generated intolerance on campus and to respond to antisemitism when and where it appears.

We wish to express our concern regarding the more than two dozen offensive flyers, which reproduced anti-imperialist militarized pig cartoons, discovered last Tuesday around the Granoff Family Hillel Center on the Tufts campus.

Initially disseminated by the Black Panther Party in the 1960s, at least one of these distressing posters also reportedly called for ‘a Free Palestine’ and the destruction of ‘Israeli apartheid forces’ and the ‘Amerikkkan pigs’ (sic) that support them. As was reported in *The Tufts Daily*, these flyers were affixed to the exterior of Tufts Hillel. In addition, it was reported that the posters tacked to the glass windows of the Hillel building faced inward, as if to send an ominous message to the building’s occupants.

We appreciate your swift condemnation of the derogatory images in a campus-wide emailed statement, and we also appreciate your immediate expression of support for Jewish faculty, students, and staff along with “all those who participate in Hillel programs”. This was timely, quick action.

We are disappointed, however, that your [initial statement](#) characterized the posters in general terms (as “act[s] of intolerance”) and not specifically as antisemitic forms of anti-Israel expression. Your initial statement also failed to explicitly address the antisemitic nature of the flyers and did not address the anti-Jewish animus reflected in the singling out of Hillel. We were pleased to see that on February 14, 2019, though, you released a [second statement](#) explicitly labeling the posters as antisemitic.

An investigation of this incident is now underway. We call on you to initiate necessary and appropriate bias training as well as follow-up educational programming at Tufts on antisemitism. We believe action must be embraced to change the culture at Tufts.

Finally, we think it possible that Hillel was targeted because it has been outspoken in the past regarding controversies at Tufts over BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) and Israel. Last summer, Hillel condemned a class titled ‘Colonizing Palestine’ as ‘unnecessarily provocative’ and advancing anti-Zionist propaganda. Earlier in 2017, Hillel also denounced the Tufts student government for scheduling a vote on a BDS resolution on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Passover.” In that same year, an unauthorized Tufts Disorientation Guide was posted on the Tufts class of 2020 and 2021 Facebook pages that condemned Hillel as an organization supporting Israel, that defined Israel with despicable intent as a ‘white supremacist state’ in the document, and accused it of exploiting ‘black voices’ for a pro-Israel agenda.

More recently, several student groups have launched a campaign to raise awareness of US-Israel police exchanges and, specifically, to call for senior officials in the Tufts University Police Department (TUPD) to cease traveling to Israel for trainings. An event to discuss the “US-Israeli Police Exchange Program & Tufts Involvement”, hosted by Tufts Students for Justice in Palestine, took place on January 24, 2019. A number of articles promoting this campaign, known as “Deadly Exchange”, have been featured in *The Tufts Daily* (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

Given the record at Tufts and also the appearance of antisemitic flyers linking Israel to alleged US police brutality on your campus, we think serious action against this hate and intolerance must be undertaken. The social and racial divisions are already manifest. Indeed, our research shows a rise in anti-Jewish hate speech and hate crimes on campuses where active, virulently anti-Israel campaigns are left unchecked and unaddressed by campus administrators.

We will be happy to consult with your office on advice about the kinds of constructive intervention that now are warranted. The “Deadly Exchange” campaign is particularly obnoxious and has been [widely condemned](#) for disseminating misinformation about Israel while trafficking in bigoted tropes and canards about Jewish power and money fomenting societal discord. The [antisemitic campaign](#) exploits US racial tensions to falsely accuse American-Jewish organizations of organizing and financing alleged racist and militarized policing in America via longstanding US-Israel counterterrorism trainings. It sets up Israel and its American-Jewish supporters as enemies that “directly threaten black and brown bodies on campus”, as [noted](#) in a recent *Tufts Daily* op-ed. This campaign is already alienating and marginalizing Jewish students and faculty.

In moving forward, we urge you to engage with your faculty and your diversity and equity office personnel to devise appropriate educational opportunities for students to be exposed to diverse perspectives on Israel, Zionism, the Israeli-Arab conflict, and the US-Israel relationship. In the coming months, we look forward to assisting a number of your concerned faculty, who are AEN members and have reached out to us in recent days. If we can help you in your efforts, please call on us.

Sincerely yours,



Mark G. Yudof
Chair, Advisory Board



Michael Atkins
Interim Executive Director



Miriam F. Elman
Incoming Executive Director