



President Santa Ono  
University of Michigan  
1109 Geddes Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1079

January 25, 2023

Dear President Ono,

We write to you as the leadership of the Academic Engagement Network (AEN), an independent and non-partisan academic organization which works with faculty and administrators nationwide to educate about antisemitism, Jewish identity, and Israel, and to promote free speech and academic freedom on college and university campuses. A number of faculty at the University of Michigan are also members of AEN.

We are writing to express our concern and dismay about a protest march which took place on January 12 at which members of multiple anti-Israel registered student organizations and others, some wearing keffiyehs to cover their faces, shouted slogans like “Long live the Intifada” and “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.” One protester at the front of the demonstration held aloft a poster that read “There is only one solution!” While AEN supports the principles of freedom of speech and expression, we also affirm that for many Jewish students, faculty, and other members of the University of Michigan community, such rhetoric has a profoundly harmful impact, evoking images of violence and terror against Israeli civilians and Jews around the world.

Thus, we ask that, in response to this incident, you release a public statement affirming the University of Michigan’s support for civil and respectful discourse, and for creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment for Jewish and all students.

We also believe that the concern around this disturbing incident can provide the basis for sustained education and dialogue. We support the goals of the University of Michigan Hillel in developing educational programming around antisemitism, Jewish identity, and contemporary Israel, and involving students, faculty, administrators, and other campus stakeholders in this process. We would be pleased to share our resources – including the work of AEN faculty members who are subject-matter experts – on antisemitism and Israel education at any time.

We look forward to hearing from you, and to working with you to make the University of Michigan a campus where all students can feel safe and welcomed.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark G. Yudof in black ink.

Mark G. Yudof  
Chair, Advisory Board

Handwritten signature of Miriam F. Elman in black ink.

Miriam F. Elman  
Executive Director

Handwritten signature of Raeefa Z. Shams in black ink.

Raeefa Z. Shams  
Director of Communications and Programming

Cc: Laurie McCauley, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; Tabbye M. Chavous, Chief Diversity Officer and Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion; Laura Blake Jones, Associate Vice President and Dean of Students; Tilly Shemer, Executive Director of University of Michigan Hillel