**Statement from New York City Faculty Groups on Antisemitism in Higher Education and the City's Strategy to Combat Antisemitism**

We, the undersigned New York City-based faculty groups, representing hundreds of academics across institutions, disciplines, and ranks, are deeply concerned that New York City's recently released *Strategy to Combat Antisemitism* largely overlooks higher education and does not adequately address some of the serious forms of antisemitism confronting Jewish and Zionist members of academic communities. In a city that is home to one of the world's greatest concentrations of public and private universities and colleges, the near absence of higher education from the Strategy is a significant omission.

The Strategy declares "zero tolerance" for antisemitism in New York's workplaces and articulates the goal of a city in which Jewish New Yorkers can "belong completely." Those commitments should extend meaningfully to New York City's colleges and universities.

Antisemitism in higher education cannot be understood solely through the lenses of hate crimes, physical insecurity, or incident reporting. It can also manifest through the ordinary structures of academic and professional life: departments, faculty governance, academic associations, professional networks, labor unions, graduate-worker organizations, and other arenas that shape who participates, who belongs, and whose scholarship and viewpoints are treated as legitimate topics for discussion and debate.

Contemporary campus antisemitism also requires attention to the ways hostility toward Israel or Zionism can sometimes be directed at Jews, Israelis, or Zionists themselves. Anti-Zionist rhetoric or advocacy crosses into antisemitism when Jewish, Israeli, or Zionist members of academic communities are subjected to exclusion, harassment, intimidation, ideological litmus tests, professional retaliation, calls for violence, or unequal treatment because of their identities, affiliations, or views.

Recent research illustrates the problem. In a 2025 survey of 209 Jewish-identifying U.S. faculty conducted by the Academic Engagement Network and Anti-Defamation League, 73.2% of respondents reported observing anti-Jewish activity or statements by faculty, administrators, or staff; 43.5% reported feeling unwelcome in a faculty committee or at faculty events because they were Jewish or perceived as Zionist; and 37.8% reported feeling a need to conceal their Jewish and/or Zionist identity on campus. Among respondents who reported negative experiences related to being Jewish or Zionist, 38.8% had considered leaving academia, compared with 5.1% of those who did not report such experiences.

These findings raise an important question for New York City's institutions of higher education: Can Jewish members participate fully in university life while openly expressing their identities, affiliations, and views?

An effective City strategy for combating antisemitism should address that question directly. We believe the following steps merit serious consideration:

1. **Make higher education an explicit priority.** New York City's colleges and universities are major workplaces, intellectual communities, and civic institutions. The challenges facing Jewish and Zionist faculty, students, and staff warrant sustained and specific attention.
2. **Recognize the forms that contemporary antisemitism can take in academic settings.** Efforts to combat antisemitism should be capable of recognizing when conduct framed in the language of anti-Zionism or opposition to Israel results in exclusion, harassment, intimidation, threats, retaliation, or discriminatory treatment of Jewish, Israeli, or Zionist members of campus communities.
3. **Recognize antisemitism as an academic workplace issue.** Faculty and staff should be protected against professional exclusion, discriminatory treatment, retaliation, academic boycotts, and ideological litmus tests that interfere with equal participation in academic life.
4. **Address antisemitism within academic institutions and organizations, including labor unions and professional associations.** These organizations can exercise substantial influence over workplace culture and professional life. Jewish members should be able to participate fully, disagree with organizational positions, and raise concerns about antisemitism without fear of exclusion or retaliation. The experiences of rank-and-file Jewish and Zionist members deserve serious attention.
5. **Listen directly to faculty and campus groups confronting antisemitism.** Faculty groups across New York City have spent years documenting and responding to antisemitism on their campuses. Their firsthand experience should help inform the City's understanding of both the problem and the effectiveness of proposed responses.
6. **Protect both academic freedom and equal participation.** Colleges and universities must protect political and academic expression, including speech with which members of their communities strongly disagree. At the same time, academic freedom and political advocacy do not justify exclusion, harassment, retaliation, intimidation, or discriminatory treatment of members of the academic community because they are Jewish, Israeli, or Zionist.

Addressing these concerns does not require government officials or university leaders to police scholarship or adjudicate political disagreements. It requires recognizing how antisemitism can manifest in contemporary academic life and ensuring that Jewish and Zionist members of campus communities receive the same protections against discrimination, exclusion, and harassment as others.

The promise that Jewish New Yorkers can belong "fully and openly" should extend to the professor in a department meeting, the graduate worker in a union, the researcher seeking collaborators, the staff member at work, and the student in a classroom.

Higher education should be an explicit and meaningful part of New York City's response to antisemitism.

**CUNY Alliance for Inclusion (CAFI)**
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