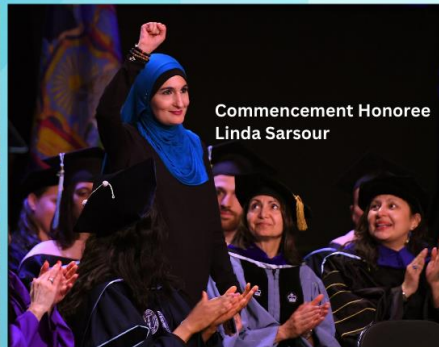




How CUNY Became the Most Systemically Antisemitic U.S. University in Just Two Years



Compiled by:
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S.A.F.E. CUNY is a non-partisan group that advocates for systemically discriminated and excluded Zionist, observant, outward, and other Jews and for all protected classes and those historically underrepresented at CUNY.

Introduction

With its rich history of Jewish students and faculty members alike, the City University of New York (CUNY) was, for many years, a proud choice and a safe haven for the many communities of New York City's 1.7 million Jews. Jewish students, faculty, and administrators once packed CUNY's hallways, offices, and classrooms. Through the end of the 20th century—and into the early 2000s-- Jewish students at Yeshivas were regularly recruited for admission and Jewish faculty and administrators were hired subject to the same criteria as any other applicant. Jewish representation at CUNY was almost everywhere and nearly always proportionate with the surrounding, dense Jewish populations across New York City.

Roughly a decade ago, the landscape at CUNY began to dramatically change. Campuses started to sharply cut recruiting visits to New York City's Jewish schools, and some eventually eliminated visits to these schools entirely—even those adjacent to their campuses. Advertising in Jewish media outlets was reduced or eliminated even on campuses with extremely dense surrounding Jewish populations.

Many experienced CUNY faculty members and administrators noticed the troubling trend: CUNY had begun a seemingly deliberate campaign of systemically curtailing recruitment of both Jewish students and employees.

The scheme was revealed due to its sheer effectiveness. Through the early 2000s, CUNY regularly boasted of close to, or above, double digit numbers of campus presidents who were Jewish and well into double digits of senior leadership administrators who were Jewish. By the late 2010s, in a city that has remained ~20% Jewish, CUNY had a near-complete elimination of Jews both among its campus presidents and among its 45 other senior leadership positions.¹ In a bombshell 2022 report, the non-profit Jewish advocacy group, StopAntisemitism.org, found evidence that CUNY did not include Jews as part of its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

By March 2023, the total elimination of all Jews from the 80 campus president and senior leadership positions was complete.

¹ In examining and defining "senior leadership positions," we considered the chancellor, vice chancellors, chief diversity officers, deans, associate deans, assistant deans, and senior level management administrators.



With the announced retirements of Hunter College President Jennifer Raab and Senior Vice Chancellor Pamela Silverblatt, the number of Jewish college presidents and senior leadership executives had fallen to 0 out of 80 leaders. In a city with a 20% Jewish population, it is unfathomable that the largest urban U.S. university located in that city failed to employ *any* Jewish administrative leaders by happenstance.

Indeed, this report has uncovered evidence demonstrating that the chilling expungement of all Jews from CUNY leadership positions was part of a broader, contemplated, and deliberate plan that also affected Jewish students and Jewish applicants for all types of positions across CUNY.

Few would dispute that CUNY has been home to a pervasive, steadily rising, well-documented and relentless barrage of antisemitic incidents since at least 2015 (See [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#)). Our charge was not to investigate (or create re-investigations of) any of the countless individual underlying events, but to instead determine whether any or all of these incidents, combined with other factors, revealed a problem at CUNY that was greater than the sum total of all of them. In other words, does CUNY have a problem that isn't merely rampant, but is also *systemic*.² To that end, we examined whether CUNY has –either purposefully or unintentionally-- created a systemized atmosphere that endangers, discriminates against, or breeds hate for Jewish people.

After examining CUNY's senior leadership, its formal and informal policies, and the university's ethos and culture, we have determined that all of these areas were deeply infected with discriminatory animus towards Jewish people or, in some cases, towards identifiable subsets of Jewish people (i.e. and most often, "Zionist Jews" and "observant" or "outward" Jews).

We detail our findings below.

² We note that, in conducting the analysis behind this report, we have carefully reviewed details of many of the alarming and rapidly increasing number of antisemitic incidents that have plagued the university's campuses since 2015. However, this report will not address finer details of most of these individual (even blatantly) antisemitic incidents across CUNY's campuses. Instead, we discuss only those incidents that revealed a *systemic* antisemitism problem at the university level.



I. At CUNY, the highest levels of leadership on both sides of management and labor are infected with Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS), antizionism, and support for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

A. CUNY chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez proudly champions the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), has hired a former CAIR director and BDS activist as CUNY’s top discrimination officer, and has worked to include the widely rejected CAIR-endorsed “Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism” into CUNY’s discrimination process

“[CAIR MN director’s work] is consistent with our university’s commitment to foster an environment of inclusion and respect for each other.”

**--Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez
(Private e-mail obtained by S.A.F.E. CUNY)**

Chancellor Rodriguez’s support for CAIR

In the spring of 2022, at the very height of CUNY’s Jewish communities demanding that the university address its pervasive antisemitism problem, Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez hired former CAIR Minnesota (CAIR MN) Civil Rights Director and BDS activist, Saly Abd Alla, as the Chief Diversity Officer at the university, in charge of overseeing discrimination across the university’s 25 campuses.

Under immediate and widespread criticism for the hire, Chancellor Rodriguez has since steadfastly defended and supported the work of CAIR, even falsely denying the connection between CAIR, its former director Abd Alla, and the BDS campaign her chapter organized while she was its director. S.A.F.E. CUNY has obtained private emails revealing that Chancellor Rodriguez has proudly lauded CAIR MN’s agenda under Abd Alla’s leadership. In one email, Chancellor Rodriguez falsely asserts that Abd Alla worked **only** on helping people “overcome stereotypes about Muslim-Americans.” Chancellor Rodriguez declared CAIR MN’s work under Abd Alla as “consistent with our university’s commitment to foster an environment of inclusion and respect for each other.” The Chancellor also falsely claimed that “Ms. Abd Alla’s work has not been involved with BDS at CAIR-Minnesota or anywhere else.” S.A.F.E. CUNY spoke to an individual who was familiar with Abd Alla’s BDS work and is in possession of documents and other evidence that wholly refute these claims and confirm that CAIR MN’s BDS initiative was under Abd Alla’s directorship.

The BDS movement

The BDS movement has been widely recognized as an antisemitic endeavor. It operates as a coordinated and sophisticated effort to disrupt the economic and financial stability of the State of Israel, and to directly harm not only Israel, but also the economic interests of persons conducting business in and with Israel, or with people deemed too closely affiliated with the country.

There is clear evidence that the discrimination in the BDS movement disparately impacts Jewish people, and/or people that the movement feels are too closely affiliated with Israel. In practice, and especially in its accompanying “cultural and academic boycotts,” the BDS movement also targets people who are



Jewish or who do business with persons who are Jewish. There is clear evidence that the discrimination in the BDS movement disparately impacts Jewish people, and/or people that the movement feels are too closely affiliated with Israel. In practice, this amounts to clear discrimination on the basis of real or perceived ethnicity or nationality.

Non-profit and non-partisan education organization, StandWithUs [explains](#) that “BDS is discriminatory. BDS singles out Israel alone for boycotts while ignoring the world’s worst human rights violators, including Arab states that discriminate against and abuse Palestinians.” It further [clarifies](#) that “[t]he true aim of BDS is not to protest Israeli policies as some claim, but to isolate and pressure Israel until it collapses as a Jewish and democratic state.”³

Chancellor Rodriguez refused to attend two City Council hearings probing antisemitism at CUNY

In June 2022, Chancellor Rodriguez infuriated City Council members and Jewish people across New York City by failing to appear not once, [but twice](#) for City Council hearings scheduled to probe allegations of widespread antisemitism across CUNY. After initially agreeing to attend the first scheduled hearing, Chancellor Rodriguez at the last minute declined, citing a scheduling conflict. Without the chancellor, the probe had to be cancelled. Council members then worked with the chancellor’s team, specifically catering to his calendar in rescheduling a new hearing date. Again at the last minute, the chancellor informed Council members that he would yet again not attend the hearing, even though it had already been cancelled once to accommodate him and was then rescheduled to the date and time of his choosing.

Chancellor Rodriguez incorporates the CAIR-endorsed definition of antisemitism into CUNY’s discrimination process

In early February 2023, Chancellor Rodriguez [touted](#) the launch of an online discrimination portal purportedly designed to combat the widespread antisemitism problem across its campuses.

In reality, the new system was a farcical smokescreen that did nothing more than convert the same previously manual process to an online mechanical incarnation instead. CUNY did not in any way substantively change the process or procedure by which it collects and processes complaints. Moreover, the new mechanical portal in no way focused on antisemitic claims. It collects *all* discrimination complaints for *all* protected classes in the same way it had always previously done. Despite many platitudes and CUNY’s repeated attempt to gaslight its Jewish communities, the online portal does *nothing* to in any way combat any form of antisemitism.

There is evidence that the new mechanical system was designed not merely as a feckless platitude, but as a concerted effort to systemically *enable* antisemitism by [publishing and linking](#) to the CAIR-endorsed

³ StandWithUs references the important history of BDS: “BDS is not new. Extremists have been calling for anti-Jewish, anti-Israel boycotts since the 1920s. The Palestinian Arab Executive Committee, led by Nazi collaborator Haj Amin al-Husseini, called for a boycott against Jews in the British-controlled Palestine Mandate in 1933. Arab nations imposed boycotts against pre-state Israel in 1945, and expanded them when Israel was established in 1948. Arab officials clearly stated that the goal of those boycotts was the “liquidation of Israel.” [Today’s] BDS is a continuation of that destructive agenda.”



Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism (JDA) on its home page.

The JDA defends "opposing Zionism as a form of nationalism" and declares boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel as "not, in and of themselves, antisemitic." JDA's nefarious "definition of antisemitism" has been almost universally rejected, having been adopted by *zero* entities. StandWithUs [calls](#) various sections of the JDA "**deeply harmful**," "**intended to cause confusion**," and even refers to one section as an effort to "**further the spread of antisemitism**." StandWithUs explains that "[t]he JDA does not have consensus from those affected by antisemitism. When it comes to defining antisemitism, there is a much stronger consensus in the Jewish community supporting the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism."

Chancellor Rodriguez has repeatedly rejected adopting the widely accepted IHRA definition of antisemitism

In contrast, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism is widely accepted and has been adopted by over 1,100 entities. The JDA seeks to reinterpret and define IHRA by people and organizations with an insidious and antisemitic agenda. By including the JDA on its discrimination portal page, CUNY has legitimized their nefarious agenda.

Below the JDA link, the portal page prominently reminds victims that former CAIR Director and BDS Activist Abd Alla is the top discrimination officer overseeing the portal, the definition(s) of antisemitism used by CUNY, and the entire discrimination process across CUNY.

To date, CUNY has repeatedly rejected [demands](#) from its Jewish communities to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism under its EEO policy. Instead, the Chancellor and CUNY have sought to proactively *undermine* IHRA by proffering the JDA as part of its antisemitic discrimination complaint materials.

B. Former CAIR director and BDS activist Saly Abd Alla is CUNY's top discrimination officer

Chief Diversity Officer Saly Abd Alla was a CAIR director with a history of BDS activism

As CUNY's [Chief Diversity Officer](#), Saly Abd Alla oversees discrimination across CUNY's 25 campuses, which serve over 230,000 students. In September 2022, Abd Alla was assigned to [investigate](#) antisemitism and antizionism discrimination complaints at CUNY. Only after receiving public backlash and objection from the Zionist Jewish complainant was Abd Alla removed from the investigation. However, Abd Alla has retained her role overseeing discrimination across the university, and still oversees investigations, diversity events, and all other discrimination matters related to antisemitism/antizionism at CUNY.

Abd Alla operated as the civil rights director for CAIR MN from 2013 to 2014. S.A.F.E. CUNY has obtained evidence that demonstrates that under Abd Alla's directorship, CAIR MN publicly pursued BDS campaigns and initiatives.

Mainstream Jewish organizations have repeatedly and consistently found CAIR to be an antisemitic and anti-Zionist inciting organization. CAIR was designated as an [unindicted co-conspirator](#) in the Holy Land



Case, the largest terror-financing case in U.S. history. The FBI has connected the organization to activities funneling money to Hamas, a [U.S. designated terror group](#). A federal judge substantiated those ties.

CAIR has advocated for the elimination of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), publicly supports BDS, has defended antisemitic tropes from Ilhan Omar and Linda Sarsour, and [works with antizionist and antisemitic groups](#) such as Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP). The FBI no longer works with CAIR because of its ties to terrorism and the United Arab Emirates has [designated](#) CAIR as a terrorist organization.

CAIR MN, in particular, is so extreme that even CAIR's national organization has [distanced itself](#) from the chapter. CAIR MN has regularly invited anti-Jewish speakers to its events, including Hussam Ayloush, Harem Bazian, and Ilhan Omar. Ayloush has made antisemitic and genocidal calls for the state of Israel to be "[terminated](#)," [defended Hamas](#), referred to those who support Israel as "heartless hateful bloodthirsty humans" and [compared American Jews](#) to Nazis and Isis.

Bazian tweeted two images accusing "Ashke-Nazis" of [engaging in rape, murder, and organ-trafficking](#). In April 2019, it was uncovered that Abubakar Osman, a.k.a. Saddiqq Abu Osman, who described himself on social media as "CAIR Minnesota's Government Affairs Coordinator," [wrote](#) back in 2008 "fuc* isreal!! (sic) stupid Jewish motherfuc*ers!!! man I wish hider was alive to fuc* up the jewish ppl and add more jewish casualties to the 6 million he killed in the holocaust." CAIR-MN shared a statement [apologizing](#) for what "one of our former employees [said]...when he was a teenager."

In spite of clear evidence regarding Abd Alla's antisemitic activities, CUNY has [repeatedly defended](#) her, both publicly and privately. Publicly, CUNY has called the CAIR BDS activist a "highly qualified chief diversity officer" and has even falsely labeled criticism of her well-documented ties to CAIR and BDS as "misinformation." S.A.F.E. CUNY is in possession of documents that confirm Abd Alla's connection to CAIR and to its 2014 BDS campaign.

CDO Abd Alla leads CUNY's antisemitism diversity initiative

On February 25, 2023, in what the New York Post called "[a master class in 'gaslighting'](#)," CUNY Chancellor Rodriguez and Vice Chancellor Doriane Gloria tapped Abd Alla to lead a series of discrimination symposiums, including discussions about antisemitism. Chancellor Rodriguez and Gloria touted Abd Alla's qualifications to oversee antisemitism initiatives at CUNY less than 3 months after antisemitism StopAntisemitism.org gave CUNY a [failing grade](#) in its 2022 report on campus antisemitism, partially because it did "not include Jews in its DEI initiatives."

After swift and widespread condemnation and after a number of Jewish professors signed up to attend Abd Alla's event, CUNY cancelled the in-person event and converted it to an online-only information session. The university then [refused to publicize the link](#) to the new online-only event, even to its own employees who were all previously invited or even confirmed to attend. Notably, the university declined to contact CUNY employees who had already registered for the event, failing to provide them with the link. A number of already-enrolled Jewish CUNY professors, including some Jewish members of S.A.F.E. CUNY, were forced to ["sneak in"](#) in order to attend the event. Those employees have shared with



S.A.F.E. CUNY that no antisemitism-related questions were permitted to be asked of Abd Alla at the event.

C. James Davis, president of CUNY's 23,000 member faculty union, is a BDS activist

Faculty Union President James Davis lied about being a BDS advocate in City Council hearings

James Davis, a [publicly avowed](#) BDS activist, is the President of CUNY's 23,000+ member faculty and staff labor union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC-CUNY).

During the New York City Council's June 2022 CUNY/antisemitism hearings, Davis not only invoked classically [antisemitic Israel dual allegiance tropes](#), but also repeatedly perjured himself on a variety of topics, including staunch denials of his own public history of supporting BDS. In June 2022, S.A.F.E. CUNY [shared fully discrediting video](#) from only [months earlier](#), in which Davis had boasted of having voted to adopt BDS as a member of the American Studies Association. During his perjured City Council testimony, Davis specifically denied any knowledge of this video or of ever publicly having supported BDS.

President Davis repeatedly lied in City Council testimony to conceal pervasive union antisemitism

Davis also falsely testified that: 1) the PSC-CUNY had passed a resolution condemning not only Israel [but also Russia](#); 2) the PSC-CUNY received [fewer than 100](#) resignations since its June 2021 resolution; 3) every PSC-CUNY member asking to resign from the union was contacted by the union to discuss their concerns; and 4) he was unaware of the "Zionism out of CUNY" mantra employed by his own delegates.

All of this testimony was false. Contrary to Davis's claims, PSC-CUNY delegate leaders have [verifiably](#) and very publicly perpetuated a "Zionism out of CUNY" campaign and have displayed and/or posted and chanted ["Zionism out of CUNY"](#) cries on social media and at rallies. Additionally, publicly-available documents show that the PSC-CUNY has [never](#) passed a resolution against Russia, and S.A.F.E. CUNY is in possession of evidence contradicting Davis's claims [that fewer than 100 union members resigned](#) after its June 2021 resolution and that every member who wished to resign was contacted by the union to discuss their concerns.

Davis's PSC-CUNY union adopts a pro-BDS, antisemitic resolution resulting in hundreds of Jewish union members resignations

In June 2021, James Davis's PSC-CUNY faculty union delegates trafficked in classic antisemitic tropes while overwhelmingly adopting a [resolution](#) that called for BDS in direct violation of New York State Law. The resolution condemned *only* Palestinian civilian lives lost while purposefully refusing to condemn the loss of Jewish civilian lives. The resolution perfidiously accused Israel of being a "settler colonial" state and of engaging in "apartheid." Within months of the PSC-CUNY's adoption of this resolution, [hundreds](#) of mostly Jewish faculty members resigned from the union in protest. By the end of 2022, total PSC-CUNY membership had plummeted by [over 5,000 members](#) since the beginning of 2021.

Davis blamed the university's antisemitism problem on "white Christian nationalism"

Davis also [bizarrely testified](#), without evidence, that the widespread antisemitism problem at CUNY (and, by definition, among PSC-CUNY leaders) was due to ["White Christian Nationalism."](#) He declined to



provide any basis, citation, or even anecdotal reference to support his claim.

Despite President Davis's repeated perjured testimony which exposed his deep-rooted antisemitic beliefs, he remains president of the PSC-CUNY and a professor at Brooklyn College, a campus located in a borough with a 22% Jewish population.

II. CUNY routinely honors renowned antisemites

Nerdeen Kiswani delivers CUNY Law commencement address

In May 2022, [renowned Jew-hater](#) Nerdeen Kiswani was honored by the university by being chosen to deliver its Law School's [commencement address](#).

The previous month, CUNY faculty union leaders marched alongside Kiswani, demanding that their *own* Zionist faculty colleagues be ousted from CUNY by promoting a [#ZionismOutOfCUNY](#) rally on the steps of the CUNY Graduate Center.

Kiswani is the founder and director of Within Our Lifetime (WOL), a group that demands the complete destruction of Israel. The group was [banned from Instagram](#) for violence-inciting hate. At the WOL-organized antizionist rally in New York City on April 20, 2022, violence against Jews erupted when Saadah Masoud, who was attending the rally and is connected to WOL, planned to and then did [brutally attacked and beat](#) a Jewish man. In March 2023, Masoud was [sentenced to 18 months](#) in federal prison for planning and committing a series of violent attacks against Jews in New York.

Kiswani was named "[Antisemite of the Year](#)" by StopAntisemitism.org for a series of frightening and antisemitic behavior. In September 2020, Kiswani ignited a cigarette lighter and held it within inches of a man wearing a sweatshirt with an Israel Defense Forces logo on a subway, threatening: "I'm gonna set it on fire... I'm serious." In July 2021, Kiswani virulently called for the [death of Zionists](#). Kiswani advocates for *Intifada* (a call to murder Israeli Jews) and [expressed solidarity](#) with University of Southern California (USC) graduate student [Yasmeen Mashayekh](#), who Tweeted her desire to "kill every mother***king Zionist."

Linda Sarsour delivers commencement address at CUNY's School of Public Health

Kiswani was not the first antisemite to deliver a commencement address at CUNY. In 2017, CUNY [invited](#) Linda Sarsour to deliver a commencement address despite [nearly 9,000 petition signatures](#) imploring the university not to honor Sarsour's long and ugly history of antisemitic comments and her virulent bigotry towards/against Jews. Sarsour has sympathized with terror against Israeli Jews, is a [supporter](#) of Louis Farrakhan, and has [stated](#) that "Israel was built on the idea that Jews are supreme to everybody else."



III. CUNY's only law school has adopted BDS as campus policy

CUNY School of Law's faculty unanimously adopts BDS as campus policy

Days after Kiswani's commencement address, CUNY School of Law's faculty unanimously [adopted](#) the antisemitic Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement guidelines as campus policy. These policies declared a ban on Zionist and Israeli Jews—effectively meaning that they were no longer welcome to work at, with, or to attend CUNY School of Law. The policies even call for a ban on *Hillel*, the most popular Jewish cultural club in higher education. Indeed, CUNY School of Law has no Hillel Club. In addition, S.A.F.E. CUNY is in possession of information that suggests an active discrimination campaign against Jews at the school who are Israeli and/or Zionist.

As of the date of this report, BDS is still the adopted campus policy at the CUNY School of Law and Chancellor Rodriguez has done nothing about it, even while [conceding](#) in public statements that CUNY “cannot participate in BDS activities” and that it is required by New York State executive order “to divest public funds from entities that do.”

New York State has opened an investigation into CUNY Law

In response to a complaint filed by S.A.F.E. CUNY, on February 23, 2023, it was reported that the New York State Division of Human Rights (NYS DHR) had [opened an investigation](#) into the law school for violating state [Discriminatory Boycott laws](#) by implementing BDS as institutional policy.

IV. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has determined that CUNY's Kingsborough campus and the PSC faculty union pervasively discriminate against Orthodox and Zionist Jews

The EEOC has substantiated widespread discrimination against Zionist and observant Jews at Kingsborough's campus

A stunning February 2021 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) [final determination](#) found that observant and Zionist Jews at CUNY's Kingsborough Community College were pervasively discriminated against, banned from faculty groups, harassed, and retaliated against on its campus. The EEOC also determined that events were purposefully scheduled on Friday night in order to block observant Jews from attending. CUNY Kingsborough President Claudia Schrader and Chancellor Rodriguez have done nothing in response to the findings, except to [viciously retaliate](#) against its very victims. For over two years, President Schrader has refused to meet or even speak with the observant and Zionist Jewish victims of the 2021 EEOC findings, including one victim who reports directly to her.

KCC President Claudia Schrader refused to condemn a KCC student who beat an orthodox Jew with a baseball bat and yelled “kill all the Jews!”

In late May 2021, one of President Schrader's EEOC substantiated discrimination victims informed her of a horrifying news story describing a Kingsborough student [brutally beating and taunting](#) an Orthodox Jew only blocks away from campus with a baseball bat. The Kingsborough student yelled, “We'll kill all the Jews! Free Palestine.” While other local campus leaders spoke out about the attack and the spate of antisemitic attacks in the area, President Schrader appallingly [refused to do so](#), even after repeatedly



making statements in support of the Asian American Community and the Black Community when those communities suffered despicable and brutal attacks. The contemptible refusal to address brutal attacks only when they are against Jews – even when the attack was perpetrated near Kingsborough’s campus and *at the hand of a Kingsborough student*-- shines an ugly light on the bigoted belief system of President Schrader. It also explains her tolerance and support for the long and widespread Jew-hate that has infected her campus.

V. CUNY BMCC’s campus is funding, endorsing, and giving co-curricular student credit for participating in antisemitism

An antisemitic display and program were created and funded by BMCC

In March 2023, Borough of Manhattan Community College’s (BMCC) Women’s Resource Center, in conjunction with BMCC’s Social Justice and Equity Center, [constructed](#) a vile, antisemitic [public display](#) in a central, highly-trafficked area adjacent to the office of student affairs. The multi-poster display described itself as a “visual timeline of occupied Palestinian land” but trafficked in widely recognized antisemitic tropes, falsely referring to Israel as a “settler colonial” state that is committing “ethnic cleansing.” The display vulgarly expressed support for *Intifada* (a call to murder Israeli Jews), referring to murderers of Jewish Israelis –including civilians-- as people who “rose up to defend Jerusalem.”

The display, part of BMCC’s “Palestinian Solidarity Series,” was replete with grammatic and typographical [errors](#). It misspelled antisemitism and was so poorly written that it even inadvertently admitted that antisemitism and antizionism are equivalent, conceding, “[t]o be anti-Xenophobe is to be anti-Zionist & anti-Semetic (sic).”

Co-curricular credit was given to students who attended a college-sponsored, antisemitic event

Most disturbing of all was BMCC providing students “co-curricular transcript credit” for participating in one of the antisemitic events associated with the display described above.

VI. CUNY has begun to investigate Jewish victims who file complaints about antisemitism

Two professors complaining about antisemitism were immediately placed under investigation by CUNY

On February 20, 2023, it was reported that CUNY had [launched retaliatory investigations](#) against two Jewish professors with already-substantiated antisemitism claims when they filed additional claims of antisemitism against the university. According to the report, the University has refused to even provide these professors with a copy of the complaint filed against them.

Egregious retaliatory behavior like this is one of the many factors that currently makes CUNY an unsafe place for Jews. Over a dozen [legal actions](#), including several under Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and under City or State law, have been filed by Jewish students and faculty members against the university over the past few years. Despite countless internal complaints also having been filed, the



university has, to date, declined to provide any information or data about these claims. It has even refused to provide the number of antisemitic claims filed within the university.

VII. Conclusion and recommendation

Our investigation reveals alarming levels of deep-rooted, systemic antisemitism at CUNY, perpetuated through lies, coverups, retaliation campaigns, intimidation against whistleblowers, and corruption that has penetrated the deepest corners and the highest levels of the university and within its PSC-CUNY faculty union.

University ethos reveal an outright rejection of mainstream definitions of antisemitism. This report even uncovers aggressive attempts to undermine these long held definitions and student/faculty members' lived experiences of antisemitism by senior leadership calls and actions to fund, promote, and embrace conflicting and universally rejected definitions of antisemitism that most Jews and mainstream Jewish groups view as "*furthering* the spread of antisemitism."

In defending antisemitic actions taken by CAIR and BDS activists and in hiring senior leaders from those groups and causes, for example, the university has imported cultural ethos that are themselves borne of antisemitic views and beliefs. There is evidence that such antisemitic views and tropes aren't merely tolerated by the university, but rewarded. Given the antisemitic agendas endorsed by the most powerful senior leaders at the university, it is easy to understand why CUNY has addressed its yearslong antisemitism problem by offering nothing more than countless platitudes, boilerplate statements, and a feckless discrimination complaint collection portal. The leadership that has transformed the university's culture flatly rejects the very notion that what most Jews view as antisemitic, is actually antisemitic.

At the highest levels, we have found that the university doesn't merely *misunderstand* antisemitism, its leaders actively work to reject and detract from the very meaning of antisemitism as it is defined by the overwhelming majority of Jews. We find this to be at least one of the direct causes of much of the antisemitism that has infected campuses across the university.

The problem is so severe, deep-rooted, and at direct odds with the lived experiences of CUNY's Jewish constituency, that this report declines to offer the multiple layers of remedial recommendations that will most certainly be necessary to, in the long-term, return the university back to its inclusive roots that do not ostracize Jewish people. Targeted recommendations, however, will only fail until CUNY can remedy the most foundational obstacle of all: its refusal to acknowledge and define the true nature and roots of antisemitism.

A university that hires a CAIR director and BDS activist to investigate antisemitism and antizionism on its campuses and to head its antisemitism initiatives, and which then publicly boasts about it, is not yet in a position to address pervasive antisemitism across its campuses.

A university that fails to employ a single Jewish individual among its 25 campus presidents and top-80 senior leadership group in a city of 1.7M (20%) Jews is not yet in a position to address pervasive



antisemitism across its campuses.

A university that purports to be combatting antisemitism by incorporating into its discrimination complaint process the CAIR-endorsed Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism that StandWithUs describes as “deeply harmful,” “intended to cause confusion,” and “further[ing] the spread of antisemitism,” is not yet in a position to address pervasive antisemitism across its campuses.

As a first step in protecting Jewish students, staff, and faculty members, S.A.F.E. CUNY urges CUNY and the PSC-CUNY faculty union to formally adopt the widely accepted [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) Definition of Antisemitism](#) as the university’s and the union’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) definition of antisemitism, and to incorporate the definition within CUNY’s discrimination policies and procedures.

Over 1,100 entities [have adopted](#) the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The IHRA definition has been adopted or endorsed by over 50 nations, more than 340 educational institutions, the UN Secretary General, over 30 U.S. states, U.S. Presidents from both political parties, and by both the U.S. State Department and the Department of Education. It is the accepted definition of antisemitism for the vast majority of Jewish organizations and scholars, and the movement is growing. In 2022 alone, over 200 entities adopted or endorsed the definition.

Only by first adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism can the university then *begin* to understand and endeavor to address the pervasive, deep-rooted, and systemic antisemitism that has infected its campuses and the highest levels of the university.

After this first critical step is taken, S.A.F.E. CUNY intends on making further recommendations in future reports.