

**Council of the City of New York
Higher Education Committee
Oversight Hearing: CUNY's Response to the Lippman Report
Nov. 25, 2024**

**Testimony of The City University of New York
Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Chancellor**

Good morning, Honorable Chair Dinowitz and members of the Committee on Higher Education. Thank you for the invitation to speak about the Lippman report and the City University of New York's ongoing work to address hate and antisemitism.

My name is Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, and I, and my colleagues Derek Davis, the University's general counsel and senior vice chancellor for legal affairs, and Sascha Owen, senior vice chancellor for strategy and policy implementation, are proud to represent the CUNY system here today.

For five and a half years, I have had the honor of serving as the chancellor of CUNY. In this capacity, I oversee a diverse University system that has a longstanding legacy of facilitating socioeconomic mobility for New Yorkers, no matter their background or means. This mission is something I have been deeply committed to throughout my over two decades of involvement with CUNY as a faculty member, center director, college president and now as Chancellor.

I want to reaffirm our deep commitment and critical obligation to keep our 25 campuses, 240,000 students and 40,000 employees free from discrimination of any kind and to ensure our students feel welcome and can learn safely and free of harassment: This is core to our mission.

The fight against hate and intolerance is particularly important as our nation, our city and some of our campuses face a disturbing uptick in antisemitism. While we know there is more work to do, over the last few years we have built a multi-pronged approach to address this growing problem.

First, I want to thank the Council, as you have been a great partner with CUNY in this work.

- Back in 2019, early on in my tenure, the Council awarded us a \$500,000 grant and, a year later, \$425,000, to expand the work of our Center for Ethnic, Religious and Racial Understanding (CERRU) at Queens College to a University-wide level. CERRU grew from a program developed by the college's Center for Jewish Studies, and in my previous role as Queens College president, I saw first-hand how successful CERRU was at educating our community and addressing the issues of racial and ethnic stereotyping on campus.
- Additionally, over the past two years, CUNY has invested \$1.3 million in campus programs to combat hate, including \$550,000 provided by the City Council. With

this support, we have built on the work of the Kupferberg Holocaust Center at Queensborough Community College and a range of activities on campuses, including, to cite just one, the “I am a Jew” exhibition at the New York City College of Technology, which celebrated the diversity of the Jewish population.

- Finally, last month, CUNY launched constructive dialogue training and workshops for all our presidents, deans and members of my cabinet. In addition, 50 staff members will be trained and certified as constructive dialogue facilitators, and 100 faculty and 50 students will attend workshops on navigating difficult conversations. The Jeffrey H. and Shari L. Aronson Family Foundation and the Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, generous supporters of CUNY, are funding the start of this program, which is being facilitated by the Constructive Dialogue Institute. Thanks to a generous \$500,000 investment from this City Council for FY 2025, we will be scaling this effort up substantially to reach even more members of the CUNY community.

Besides the great work we have been able to build or expand thanks to the support of the Council, I want to share some of the key efforts we have been focused on for the past couple of years to battle antisemitism and other forms of hate.

- In 2022, the University announced a partnership with Hillel International's Campus Climate Initiative, where leaders across 7 CUNY colleges have been immersed in learning best practices to make sure our Jewish students feel comfortable and safe in expressing their identity and beliefs.
- In 2023, I created the Advisory Council on Jewish Life, bringing together Jewish leaders in our city to advise me on ways to elevate Jewish life and foster better communication between people of all religions on our campuses.
- This summer, we resolved cases pending with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights through a voluntary resolution agreement that includes numerous initiatives already in planning, like the system-wide campus climate survey we launched two weeks ago, and extensive training and resources related to Title VI. I am proud to report that one semester into the agreement, we have completed roughly 50% of the Title VI requirements that are part of the agreement, and, in addition, we have created valuable Title VI resources such as a webpage, educational video, and a handbook.

As you may know, I welcomed the review of the system's policies related to antisemitism and other forms of discrimination conducted by former Chief Judge Lippman and we are making progress on many of the recommendations.

This year, besides key areas I mentioned above, we announced the following actions, many of which are included in the Lippman recommendations:

- This past summer, we announced the creation of the Center for Inclusive Excellence and Belonging (CIEB), which will centralize efforts to combat discrimination systemwide. The Center will be responsible for centralizing the policies, training and complaint process for all 25 campuses in the CUNY system. This will ensure that discrimination, harassment, Title VI, Title VII and Title IX issues are managed uniformly and consistently across CUNY. The Center will also develop programming and events to promote education and dialogue and be responsible for implementing campus climate surveys and additional systemwide evaluations as needed. (*The Center addresses recommendation #1 in the Lippman report: "Increase centralization of resources for dealing with antisemitism and discrimination by establishing a University-wide center, including an internal monitor;" #3 "Provide additional resources to victims of antisemitism and discrimination through establishment of a victims advocate program" and #5 "Provide more guidance to those conducting investigations into antisemitism and discrimination."*)
- We have strengthened safety by deploying additional private officers to campuses to provide increased support. CUNY leadership met with Hillel and UJA-Federation of New York representatives over the summer to discuss and implement additional safety measures for Jewish students this fall. CUNY has had a longstanding relationship and regularly works with local law enforcement. (*This ongoing work addresses recommendation #4 in the Lippman report: "Coordinate at all times with law enforcement to protect everyone at CUNY."*)
- We also provided guidance to campus leaders on rules and procedures to be followed regarding protests and demonstrations so we can sustain the University's mandate to ensure an environment free of harassment and hostility. Guidance and support were also provided to specifically address the potential of unrest during the week of October 7th and the Jewish High Holidays.
- CUNY is purchasing a case management system (CMS) for the portal we created two years ago to enable members of our community to report incidents of discrimination or retaliation. The new system will allow individuals to monitor the status of their complaints, and it will also help the University improve the way it tracks complaints in the portal and issues reports and notifications. In the meantime, the portal has been updated to confirm receipt of an individual's initial report and notify them of an outcome. The portal was always designed to be a first step. Until it was launched in fall 2022, CUNY had no centralized way to gather information about discrimination claims systemwide. (*The new CMS addresses recommendation #2 in Lippman's report: "Overhaul CUNY's current system for lodging complaints regarding discrimination and harassment."*)
- This month, we are surveying all of CUNY's students to learn about their experiences with discrimination and their perceptions of issues surrounding inclusivity. This information will be used to inform additional initiatives and

programs to help us continue to make progress, an important step to capture the sentiment of our students and provide a baseline for our work ahead. *(The creation of our campus climate survey was part of the voluntary resolution agreement with the USDOE Office for Civil Rights and is referenced in Lippman's report.)*

- Last week I announced that we will be convening a Freedom of Expression Working Group tasked with developing a University-wide policy that reflects the purpose and nature of higher education and considers the appropriate balance of interests recognized by the First Amendment and the principles of academic freedom. This affirmation of the primacy of free expression at our University is something that many members of our community, including the leadership of the University Faculty Senate, have wanted to see for some time. *(The working group addresses recommendation #10 in the Lippman report: "Draft and adopt a comprehensive policy on freedom of speech and expressive conduct.")*
- We launched a student-driven unity campaign, "Our CUNY: Hate Divides Us, Diversity Defines Us." to provide information and resources for combating all forms of hate and creating campus environments that embrace the full breadth of CUNY diversity.
- We will use the policy recommendations from both the Hillel Campus Climate Initiative and the Lippman report to review our discrimination and harassment policies and make final recommendations to the CUNY Board of Trustees. *(This addresses recommendation #8 in the Lippman report: "Update CUNY's existing policies and procedures and remove ambiguities.")*

We are a large system. As I mentioned, almost 300,000 students and employees. Tensions and challenges do arise, but we have rules and regulations in place to investigate and do not hesitate to enforce them. Our north star is to make our campuses places of respectful expression in which ideas are exchanged with openness, curiosity and empathy. That is how real learning happens.

I want to end by quoting two passages from the Lippman report that reaffirm something we know to be true of our great university:

- "The vast majority of students and members of the CUNY community do not engage in antisemitism or discrimination of any kind and instead want only to access the quality education CUNY affords."
- And also, that "CUNY leadership, both at the central University level and at the individual school level, are properly concerned with student, faculty, and staff safety" and that leaders in the CUNY system "uniformly take safety on their campuses very seriously."

I am extremely optimistic about the future of this great University, especially considering the challenges we have overcome and the lessons we have learned in the last few years. Thanks to you for your continued support of CUNY, which is helping to create a stronger, more vibrant New York – one that is inclusive and benefits all New Yorkers regardless of race, socioeconomic status or immigrant status.

That concludes my testimony.



**Testimony of Dr. Sara Fredman-Aeder
Vice-President, Israel & Jewish Affairs
Jewish Community Relations Council of New York
NYC Council Committee on Higher Education**

11/25/24

Re: CUNY's Response to the Lippman Report

Good morning Chair Dinowitz and members of the Higher Education Committee. I am Dr. Sara Fredman-Aeder, Vice-President of Israel and Jewish Affairs for the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. On behalf of JCRC-NY, which is the primary community relations entity for the Jewish people in the metropolitan NY area, we thank you for the opportunity to testify concerning Judge Lippman's Report and the City University of New York's response.

Judge Lippman's report identifies CUNY's decentralized approach to the handling of antisemitism and discrimination as an issue that requires immediate remedy.

While we commend CUNY's plan to establish the Center for Inclusive Excellence and Belonging, centralizing oversight and procedures cannot wait for this center to become operational. The current system, where each campus independently investigates and judges similar incidents, severely undermines equal protection, fairness, and confidence in CUNY's response to adequately handle these types of occurrences.

In light of Judge Lippman's report, JCRC-NY recommends that CUNY needs immediate resources to implement uniform, centralized:

- Investigation protocols
- Training standards

- Complaint reporting systems and
- Oversight mechanisms

We urge the City Council to provide CUNY the resources to establish these centralized systems now. CUNY's 25 institutions must operate under one coherent framework when addressing hate and bias. Justice demands equal treatment, regardless of which campus a student attends.

JCRC-NY stands ready to support CUNY and the City Council in this vital work of creating one coherent framework for addressing hate and bias across its entire system.

We want to thank the Committee and Chair Dinowitz again for convening this hearing today.

Thank you.

NYC Council Public Hearing Committee on Higher Education

Testimony of Michael D. Cohen

Eastern Director

Simon Wiesenthal Center

November 25th 2024

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Chair Dinowitz, members of the committee, My name is Michael Cohen and I serve as the Eastern Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. The Center is a premier Jewish human rights organization that confronts antisemitism, and promotes an understanding the Holocaust in both a historic and contemporary context. In that role, I also was appointed to serve as a founding board member of the CUNY Chancellors Jewish Advisory Board and have served on that body since its establishment in July of 2023.

In these dual roles, I have had a unique vantage point to observe both the experiences and emotions from Jewish students attending CUNY as well as the administration's efforts to meet the challenges at hand.

Governor Hochul's actions in establishing the Lippman Commission was welcomed as a positive step in demonstrating that our government officials need to take anti- Semitism seriously on our public college campuses, and we thank her for that leadership. We also do want to recognize both that anti- Semitism on CUNY's college campuses did not begin on October 7th, as demonstrated by the repeated incidents at

consecutive law school graduations, However, we must at the same time acknowledge Chancellor Rodriguez's recognition of that stark reality and his subsequent development of the Chancellor's Jewish Advisory Board to ensure that both he and his administration can garner a real time understanding of the issues at play, and be advised on substantive actions that are necessary to make CUNY's Jewish students feel safe again.

As in my testimony on the hearings held on anti -Semitism at CUNY approximately a year and a half ago, I want to restate that I myself am a CUNY graduate, as is my father, sister, wife, mother in law, and brother in law – we are a CUNY family. My testimony today should not be viewed as wanting to attack CUNY, but rather to make certain that my children and their generation, can have the same opportunities I had, and that at a time of unprecedented antisemitism on our college campuses nationally, that CUNY once again rises to become a safe haven for all, including its Jewish students.

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While CUNY's administration has made concerted efforts in this area, it is equally of little doubt that Jewish students and faculty continue to both feel threatened and be threatened. We understand that CUNY is a large bureaucracy and that institutional change takes time, but when the first student is made to feel unsafe or unwelcome at our public colleges – we are out of time.

Today, we will hear Jewish CUNY students bravely speaking about their experiences and how the recommendations of the Lippman report need to be implemented. We must have the deepest regard for these students as by testifying here, they understand the increased challenges that will be facing them on campus – and we applaud each and every one of them.

The Lippman report is critical not merely because it officially documents what we already know all too well about what Jewish students on campus are telling us, but that it lists concrete recommendations to start to alter the realities on the ground.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center believes that the enactment of the recommendations needs a hard and fast timeline. Our children cannot wait in fear any longer while we deliberate, the Lippman Commission was that deliberation, it is time for rapid implementation.

I do believe that Chancellor Rodriguez has demonstrated that he very much cares about the welfare of Jewish students on his campuses and we thank him for that. What we need now however is for this report to directly result in clear, decisive and prompt action. The Simon Wiesenthal Center stands ready willing and able to help all involved in any way possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

My name is Anna Clements and I am a 2L student at CUNY Law. I come from a partially Jewish family and grew up hearing the stories of great grandparents who came to New York seeking refuge from antisemitism and the persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe. As a child I learned about the Holocaust in great detail, probably more so than any other historic event. In my elementary school classrooms we talked in great depth about how such a horrific thing could happen with civilians standing by and watching it. I know how real and how harmful antisemitism is, and it is for that reason that seeing it used as a political ploy to stiffen and censor any criticism of the ongoing genocide in Gaza is incredibly offensive. It is so clear to me and so many members of the CUNY community that the lessons learned from the Holocaust teach us to stand up any time any group of people is persecuted and systemically extinguished. The Lippman report falls in line with a trend of CUNY using accusations of antisemitism to bar speech in support of Palestine and against the genocide of Palestinians. The irony that calling out the genocide of the Palestinian people is, both on CUNY campuses and across this country, labeled as antisemitic, is a cruel and painful hypocrisy. Antisemitism cannot and should not mean that Israel cannot be criticized or held accountable for its actions.

I speak as a Jewish student at the CUNY School of Law who has maintained Jewish practice throughout my life and has spent over a year living and learning in Israel/Palestine.

I have never once experienced an antisemitic incident as a CUNY student, nor have I heard of or witnessed any incidents of Jewish students being targeted and harassed for being Jewish in my time here. The Lippman probe and broader effort to implement the IHRA definition at CUNY is a targeted attack on bold student organizing for Palestinian freedom and for CUNY's divestment from companies that profit from the genocide in Gaza and ethnic cleansing throughout the West Bank. It is not a good faith effort to protect Jewish students. It is about increasing the power of Zionist interests to silence and criminalize the movement for Palestinian freedom.

The IHRA definition categorizes Jewish individuals' feelings of discomfort with the mass shaming of Israel's abhorrent actions as a hate crime. It is a matter for serious self-reflection and reckoning with the reality of Israel's actions and interests, and with who actually threatens Jews – including Zionist white nationalists. Shame on councilmember Vernikov for threatening students at Brooklyn College with a firearm. Shame on councilmember Yeger for calling student activists terrorists.

My time spent living in Israel as a teenager revealed to me how fundamental and core its apartheid system of governance is, and that Jewish supremacy and democracy cannot be reconciled. Israel's outright denial of the Palestinian existence through genocide, ethnic cleansing and occupation – to the glee and support of white nationalist, xenophobic, evangelical Zionists republicans (who are indeed antisemitic), and to the distress of much of the rest of the world -- is the most tragic irony that I have ever known.

- Thank you for holding this important hearing

My name is Azriel Genack, I am the chair of the CUNY Alliance for Inclusion.

+ a Distinguished Professor of Physics at CC + The GC
We work to ensure that all groups are included and respected at CUNY, and that discussion is based on fact and not on plugging in wistful ideological certainties that place Israel at the epicenter of evil in the world.

CUNY is the people's university and should elevate students to achieve great things within the fabric of American democracy, not to tear it apart using the tool of antisemitism.

We oppose the oxymoronic view that academic freedom means boycotting Israel and that bringing hatred of Israel into the classroom in any course in the humanities and social sciences is a faculty prerogative. Academic freedom is built upon academic responsibility. A way needs to be found by which antipathy for Israel is not a litmus test for being hired in the humanities and social sciences at CUNY. CUNY needs to teach students how to engage in open discussions in which arguments are supported by facts. This can be part of a Freshman Year Initiative.

We seek to work with the CUNY administration, and hope the Chancellor will respond to our letters. We therefore look to you to keep CUNY a vital and open university.

Thank you efforts

City Council
Higher Ed Committee
Anti-Semitism

11/25/24

Dear Higher Ed Committee

I have been teaching at Hunter College (CUNY) since 2005, and have been actively advocating for Palestinian rights for most of that time. In all of that time I have not heard or seen a single act or statement of anti-semitism. In fact, many of the students and faculty with whom I have worked with over the years on this issue identify as Jewish.

There has been an effort in recent years to equate anti-semitism with anti-Zionism. This is a dangerous trend meant to quash opposition to the actions of the Israeli government, which is now carrying out ethnic cleansing (at best) and genocide (at worst) in Gaza. Many Jews, as I have observed and as polling over the years has confirmed, do not believe that Israel stands for Judaism OR that Israel makes Jews worldwide safer.

I believe that Israeli groups and their supporters are cynically conflating discomfort and safety. Hearing criticism and protests centered around a country that you identify with can be uncomfortable. That discomfort does not equal danger.

Anti-semitism is a real, dangerous, and pernicious phenomenon and should be fought where it exists (often on the Christian right). Anti-Zionism is not anti-Semitism.

Best,

Christopher Stone
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<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/classics/arabic>

Dear City Council,

I am a CUNY Alumni, former professor, nurse, and mother. I am also a Jew, and am raising Jewish children here in New York City. To say that I am horrified by the Lippman report and both the proposed as well as past actions of CUNY and NYPD regarding those students and faculty righteously protesting against genocide is a severe understatement. As the great grand-daughter or survivors of the anti-Jewish Pogroms, I never hoped my children would see other children ruthlessly murdered, with that murder supported by our country. Children who look just like mine. Children shot in the head by snipers, children blown to bits by bombs, children crushed, children starved to death. And yet in the last year, we have seen tens of thousands of Palestinian children meet this fate, at the hands of the Israeli government, and with the use of US money, weapons and troops. As a nurse, I never imagined reading, in 2024, the types of medical reports I've seen from colleagues. The disease, starvation, and bullet wounds. And as an alumnus of CUNY and a former teacher (and likely the parent of a future CUNY student), I would have hoped to see so much more than submission to a cynical witch hunt that mobilizes state violence and negates the very nature of an institution of learning.

I refuse to engage with the claims that there is increased antisemitism in the form of anti-Zionism, because as someone who has seen far right, white supremacist anti-Semitism at work, including thriving in the Zionist movement, I know that claims made accusing those of us who believe in an end to the genocide as anti-semitic are not made in good faith. Instead, I will provide testimony that historically, the NYPD has been the arbiter of racist attacks on multiracial communities, and this threatens Jews. The NYPD has arrested and assaulted Jews protesting for Black Lives, Jews fighting for economic equality, queer Jews, and yes, Jews fighting for Palestinian freedom. To state that CUNY intends to protect Jewish students by increasing police presence is a farce.

In order to protect CUNY students and faculty, CUNY needs to commit to keeping police off campus. CUNY needs to commit to providing *free education to all New Yorkers*. CUNY needs to commit to living wages for all faculty and staff.

I understand that CUNY's pockets are lined by those who wish to keep any resistance muted. And I understand that those in power have decided to run full speed with the IHRA definition¹ of anti-semitism so that they can avoid addressing white supremacy and actual present and violent anti-semitism, and instead vilify those fighting for liberation for Palestinians. I understand that CUNY does not and has not cared for its students, but instead that the existence of CUNY as an institution of freedom and resistance to oppression is *in spite of* its administration and the city and state governments. I will not stop supporting those who fight for freedom, and I will not allow my identity to be used by racist individuals whose main goal is to see those bravely standing up against evil in prison due to their righteous action.

¹ Scholars of antisemitism warn against use of IHRA definition of antisemitism.
<https://media.euobserver.com/9e86df02ddf67c6046d190b65e4380df.pdf>

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My name is Danny Katch. I am an alumni of Hunter College, a graduate student at the City College of New York, and an adjunct professor at City College. I am the grandson of Holocaust survivors and have attended protests against many forms of religious, racial, and ethnic discrimination. I am extremely concerned about the rise of antisemitism in American society, a threat that I see manifested in the recent re-election of Donald Trump, who has openly praised and embraced Jew haters in this country and around the world.

I have not experienced any antisemitism as a student or professor on CUNY campuses. What I have experienced over the past year is an attempt by CUNY administrators and some of the members of this committee to erase the existence of many Jews like myself, who are deeply opposed to Israel's disgraceful actions and see our opposition as a part of the values that we learned from our Jewish upbringings.

The majority of ardent Israel supporters in the US are Christian Zionists; many supporters of Palestinian freedom are Jewish. I am deeply concerned that the narrative that members of this committee have perpetrated –that protests in solidarity with Palestine are somehow antisemitic– will itself increase antisemitism, by making people associate opposition to war crimes with opposition to Jews and Judaism. If you are truly concerned about antisemitism at CUNY, I suggest that some of you start by looking in the mirror.

Dear City Council,

My name is Fariduddin Ahmad, I'm a first year student at the CUNY School of Law. The Lippman Report which purports that there has been a growing and unchecked atmosphere of anti-semitism across CUNY campuses is nothing but an attempt to stifle and silence pro-Palestinian student organizing. It's been over a year since the Israeli genocide in Gaza began. Contrary to many beliefs, October 7th was not the beginning of violence. Israel's founding was predicated on the mass slaughter and displacement of indigenous Palestinians from their homes. Gaza specifically has been under a brutal land, water, and aerial siege for over a decade where goods coming in out of the Strip have been controlled by the Israeli regime, Palestinians have been detained, injured, and killed for fishing because they are not allowed to go too far out on the water, the Israeli regime has purposefully controlled the amount of food that gets into the strip so that Gazans' food intake is slightly above starvation levels, Gaza has been hit with aerial strikes on multiple occasions, and this is all before October 7th. Not to mention the continuous settler-colonial expansion into the West Bank which is illegal under international law, and the incessant settler violence perpetrated on the Palestinians in the West Bank supported by the Zionist forces. Anti-Zionism is not anti-semitism. To call out the Israeli regime for what it is, an occupying force that has entrenched apartheid, and speak out against Israel for not just refusing to recognize the rights of Palestinians but refusing to recognize Palestinians as human beings, is not anti-semitic.

CUNY School of Law and other CUNY schools have a great number of students who are on the right side of history, urging the CUNY administration, and local and federal governments to divest from apartheid and genocide and end long-established and unconditional diplomatic support for the Israeli settler-colonial regime. To demonize the students and call out anti-Zionism efforts as anti-semitism is to conflate two things that are not the same. It is anti-semitic to conflate Judaism with Zionism as Zionism is a political ideology undergirded by the displacement and slaughter of Palestinians and the apartheid imposed on them, whereas Judaism does not advocate for violence and the treatment of others as subhuman.

Speech for NYC City Council Committee on Higher Education

Good morning. Thank you, Chairperson Dinowitz and members of the committee. My name is Gabrielle Tierney. I am a senior at John Jay and the President of Hillel. Thank you for allowing me to address the urgent need to significantly modernize the City University of New York's policies and procedures, as online presence impacts our society's environment.

Judge Lippman's recent report underscores the critical importance of revamping CUNY's policies to align with current legal standards and better address modern issues, including harmful behavior perpetuated on social media. This recommendation could not be more timely, as recent events have highlighted significant failures in enforcing appropriate standards for campus organizations. There are claims that it can be hard to address as it does not happen on campus and cannot identify individuals involved in these incidents.

At John Jay College, several student clubs have repeatedly used their social media platforms to spread inflammatory content. Over the summer, these accounts posted and shared images and videos of their members participating in protests where flags of recognized terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas were prominently displayed. They also have a history of glorifying figures like Leila Khaled, a known terrorist.

These posts, which normalize violence and incite hostility, have created a hostile environment for Jewish students. The Anti-Defamation League identified John Jay's SJP's social media account as particularly dangerous. While it was briefly suspended by Meta earlier this year, the account returned and has since escalated its rhetoric. Since October 8, 2023, SJP's posts have grown more radical, all while hiding behind the label of "youth resistance" while continuing to promote divisive and harmful content. Regarding earlier testimony, it is unclear how many CUNY students were **actually** at the CCNY encampment, but I attest that there was at least one student from my class who was arrested. They proudly claimed that their family was happy they got arrested and said how it is in their culture of being Palestinian at a young age that anything surrounding the Palestinian cause is worth it that it is nothing if someone loses their job and even going to jail.

CUNY must act on Judge Lippman's recommendation to modernize its policies and procedures to address this. These updates must include:

1. **Explicit Social Media Guidelines:** Prohibit content that glorifies violence, supports terrorism, or fosters hostility against any group.
2. **Uniform Standards and Accountability:** Apply consistent enforcement across all campuses to ensure that clubs and organizations are held responsible for violating these policies.
3. **Transparency and Action:** Empower administrators and the DEI office to intervene decisively when violations occur, ensuring visible enforcement to restore student trust.

By implementing these changes, CUNY can ensure that its campuses remain spaces of safety, respect, and inclusion for ALL students. It is not enough to condemn such behavior; we must act decisively to prevent it. Thank you.

Good evening,

My name is Gav Meiri. I am a graduate student at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, as well as an alum of CUNY Queens College. I graduated from Queens College in the Spring of 2023 and have been enrolled at the School of Labor and Urban Studies since the fall of that same year.

I am a proud, visible Jew. I wear a *kippah* on my head as a symbol of my connection to the Jewish community and to my Jewish identity. My name, Gav Meiri, is a recognizably Jewish name. I share these details in hopes that they will lend greater weight to and a greater appreciation for what I am about to share.

The accusations of “pervasive antisemitism” at CUNY are nothing more than a politically motivated, cynical attempt to silence constitutionally protected speech criticizing the political, nationalist ideology that is Zionism.

As a Jew, it is easy for me to recognize the distinction between Zionism and Judaism and the distinction between antizionism and antisemitism. Zionism is a political, nationalist ideology and is, as such, a legitimate subject of criticism. It is irresponsible to act as though criticisms of Zionism or criticisms of the state of Israel are in any way synonymous with antisemitism. It is irresponsible to treat students and faculty who speak for the liberation of the Palestinian people as though we are anti-Jewish.

I am deeply concerned by CUNY’s silencing of constitutionally protected pro-Palestine speech, especially as CUNY claims that it is in my best interests as a Jew to do so. It is not in my best interests to silence pro-Palestine speech nor to silence criticisms of Zionism. In bending to the pressure of cynical, politically motivated actors seeking to silence speech with which they disagree, CUNY is setting a dangerous precedent for the future of free speech and academic freedom. It is crucial to reject such ploys as the disingenuous power-grabs that they are.

Thank you.

My name is Henry Burg, and I am a Jewish student at CUNY School of Law. While I have not experienced antisemitism during my time here, I cannot stay silent about how the university is using the issue of antisemitism to attack and suppress students advocating for Palestinian liberation.

As a Jewish person, I know that true solidarity means standing against all forms of oppression, including antisemitism, while also fighting for the rights of all marginalized people. It is deeply upsetting to see my Jewish identity weaponized by the administration to silence those who are organizing against the genocide in Gaza and for Palestinian self-determination. This is not about protecting Jewish students—it's about protecting systems of power and injustice.

The struggle for Palestinian liberation is part of a broader fight for justice. Supporting Palestinian rights and standing against antisemitism are one in the same. To equate criticism of Israel's policies and practices with antisemitism not only stifles human rights activism but also trivializes real acts of hatred against Jewish people, fueled by narratives that were created by the same empires that seek to erase the Palestinian people. This tactic divides oppressed groups and distracts from the shared struggle against imperialism, settler-colonialism, and capitalism.

I stand with those advocating for Palestinian rights and demand that the university stop using antisemitism as a tool to suppress student activism. Our fight is not against each other—it is against the systems that perpetuate inequality and oppression for all of us.

November 25th, 2024

Esteemed Councilmembers: My name is Irene Siegel. I've been an educator in SWANA (South West Asian/North African) and Jewish Studies for decades, and I currently have the great honor and pleasure of teaching in the Arabic Program at Hunter College.

As a Jewish-American who is very active in my synagogue, in Jewish youth-education, in organizing with progressive Jewish organizations, and specifically in trainings against antisemitism, I am appalled by the problematic framing of this hearing. The title is itself an accusation, even a defamation, that falsely implies "widespread antisemitism" at CUNY. Like all forms of bigotry and discrimination, I take antisemitism very seriously, and find the use of the term here to be reckless and dangerously misleading. What I have observed in my time at CUNY is not widespread antisemitism, but rather a widespread abuse of antisemitism-accusations directed at anyone who dares to criticize the state of Israel or raise their voice against what an expert international consensus and our own eyes have recognized as a genocidal campaign against Palestinians in Gaza; a campaign of violent displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank; and the mass killing of civilians in Lebanon. In my observation, these false accusations have been focused most intensely at Arab, Muslim, black and brown students, who have found themselves harassed, threatened, surveilled and attacked for their principled and courageous defense of Palestinian human rights and liberation. I anxiously await the hearings focused on the *widespread targeting of these students*, and on the entrenched Islamophobia and racism underlying these accusations.

While antisemitism at CUNY is hardly widespread, the weaponization of antisemitism-accusations is, and it has functioned to intimidate and silence critical debate or even discussion around Palestine/Israel in or out of the classroom. It has also led to the cancellation, curtailing or surveillance of related educational events. This included former Hunter president Ann Kirshner's abrupt cancellation of a screening of the acclaimed film *Israelism* last fall, a film by Jewish filmmakers about young Jewish Americans wrestling with their views on Israel/Palestine. (A showing was subsequently "allowed" but under tight restrictions). It has led to repression of student protests, including administration calling the police on its own students and sanctioning their aggressive prosecution. It has led to onerous requirements for students who want to hold peaceful protests on campus, or even post about events. It has also fostered a climate of fear and self-censorship, where students and faculty alike are afraid of being punished, suspended, fired or blacklisted for even speaking about anything related to the subjects of Palestine, Zionism or Israel. This climate of fear is itself a pernicious attack on CUNY's educational mandate to prepare our student body with the critical thinking skills and historical grounding they need to succeed in the world.

I'll add that last Fall, nearly 25 CUNY staff and faculty including myself were the targets of a vicious smear campaign falsely accusing us of antisemitism, purveyed by a shadowy Zionist propaganda outfit misleadingly called Accuracy in Media (AIM). Funded by ultra-conservative billionaires, including the Scaife Foundation, AIM's goal is to spread misinformation to justify and excuse Israeli human rights atrocities by defaming anyone who defends Palestinians. For the sin of signing a petition speaking out against the mass slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza, we found our names and faces splashed on massive light-up mobile billboards and websites accusing us of being "CUNY's Leading Antisemites." CUNY did nothing to defend any of us who were targeted with these vicious smears; and nor were hearings held by the City Council to address the spread of right wing intimidation campaigns such as this one. It should be noted that the Scaife Foundation is part of a larger, well-organized and well-funded right-wing attack on higher education and public education at large in the US. By pushing the false narrative that CUNY - one of the country's premiere public university systems - is rife with "widespread antisemitism," you are participating in this larger campaign to weaken and ultimately dismantle public education itself.

The university setting is a place for discomfort, for encountering challenging ideas. Many college students may experience challenges to their received understandings of many issues – ranging from race to gender to foreign policy. Discomfort is not discrimination, and nor is it antisemitism. Discrimination is a structural phenomenon with material repercussions. While biases certainly may arise in any setting, be it on or off campus, as CUNY faculty we are best situated to address them through discussion and education. By contrast, outside actors like AIM and others who have no interest in students' education or well-being aggressively exploit, amplify and misdirect student discomfort for their own right-wing political gain. At the other end of the spectrum, I know of many progressive, anti-zionist or simply intellectually curious Jewish students on CUNY campuses who have themselves been barred from institutional Jewish spaces like Hillel, which explicitly prohibits anti-zionists or even voices critical of Israel from its programming. For all of these Jewish students, the threat is not antisemitism but rather threats and intimidation by legacy Jewish institutions like the ADL, by their own Israel-identified professors and administrators, or by other right-wing outside groups.

Antisemitism is not rife at CUNY, but it is rife amongst those who are attacking it – including the Christian Zionist movement that is targeting public education in this country. This movement's eschatology posits that to hasten the second coming of Christ, the Jews must be gathered in the "Holy Land of Israel" where we will face the choice of either accepting Christ or being consumed in a fiery holocaust. The false antisemitism allegations these and other zionist adocates circulate serve to instrumentalize Jewish fear as a weapon against vulnerable communities, diverting attention from the very real impacts of racism, Islamophobia, anti-LGBTQ and anti-immigrant policy that they face. The conflation of Judaism, Israel and Zionism puts Jews in danger by falsely implying that Israel's genocide and human rights atrocities are intrinsic to Judaism. But above all, these allegations endanger Palestinians by deflecting attention from – or worse, holding them responsible for – the actual, ongoing genocide that Israel is subjecting them to as we speak. Rather than wasting taxpayer dollars to hold hearings on nonexistent antisemitism scourges, I suggest the City Council turn its attention to addressing the real needs of CUNY's vibrant and brilliant student body. This might begin by holding hearings focusing on the actual experiences of students facing harassment, silencing and attacks for their 1st amendment-protected rights to defend Palestinians; on the need to address crumbling infrastructure, classroom materials, fair pay for faculty and staff, and student aid. These are the real needs and priorities that our government should be addressing at CUNY.

Good Morning,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Jack Schlossberg, and I am a Jewish student at CCNY who was born and raised in this city. I am writing to request with utmost urgency that you block this attack on our right to protest. I have never felt threatened, and in fact have been welcomed by pro Palestinian protesters. We stand together in solidarity against the atrocities committed against Palestinians. Instead, I feel unsafe that council members are able to walk up to my peers with a firearm, and face no consequence. Vernikov and her ideas pose a very real and direct threat to the safety of me and my fellow students. I write to you begging that you reject her dangerous ideas.

Best,

Jack Dylan Schlossberg

False charges of antisemitism are politically motivated

Testimony of Jane Guskin

Adjunct Lecturer, Queens College

PhD Candidate, CUNY Graduate Center

I am a CUNY alum (CUNY BA 2017), a current doctoral student at the CUNY Graduate Center, an adjunct lecturer at Queens College. My father graduated from Brooklyn College in 1953.

I am a member and supporter of the Not In Our Name CUNY Jewish Antizionist Collective. For me, my Jewish heritage requires a commitment to fight against genocide—never again means never again to anyone, never again to genocide anywhere. That means standing firmly in support of Palestinian liberation from settler colonial occupation, apartheid, and genocide, and taking strong action against all forms of structural racism.

This farcical “hearing” led by racist pro-genocide council members is a clumsy smear attempt against CUNY workers and students who share a commitment to action against genocide. Why attack us? Because we refuse to be silent when a genocide is being carried out. Ironically this hearing accuses the CUNY administration of not doing enough to attack us for it—when in fact the CUNY administration is doing plenty to attack us. These pro-genocide council members have called this hearing at the bidding of the Zionist state of Israel in order to bring further pressure on the CUNY administration to attack us *more*, to spread fear and to attempt to intimidate us into silence. But the more you try to silence us, the louder we will be, and we will not stop, we will not rest.

Thank you to Council Member Dinowitz for hosting this hearing.

Thank the Governor for commissioning this report and Judge Lippman for writing it.

I applaud the Chancellor and his office, as well as the Baruch administration for taking initial steps to look out for Jewish students and suspend certain clubs on campus, however has proven to not be enough.

My name is Kayla Aaron, I am a delegate in the CUNY University Student Senate representing Baruch and over 230,000 CUNY students. I am the only student on the Chancellor's Advisory Council on Jewish Life, and I have worked tirelessly over the past four years to make the campus environment more welcoming to Jewish students.

Believe me when I say that this report was overdue.

Antisemitism has been an issue on campus for many years. Before the atrocities of October 7th, and the increased hatred that we as Jewish students faced after, I had a professor say to me in front of the whole class "I knew you people controlled the world" after I helped him put the projector screen back into place.

The current discrimination filing systems were not even in place at the time of this incident. Still, complaints submitted on October 8th of 2023 still have not been answered by the appropriate Baruch campus office.

I have seen many instagram accounts for different school clubs, even sanctioned ones that received student activity fee money, post antisemitic flyers and praises for Hamas. The university system's digital space is a dangerous no-man's land without responsibility or punishment.

It is abhorrent to me that I am forced to fund through my tuition the very organizations that are calling for the murder of my Jewish brothers and sisters.

This attitude directly impacts our campus environment where students led a protest against Hillel and Jewish students on the Baruch Plaza. Blocking doors to the Newman Vertical Campus and Library Building, these students called for violence against Jewish students.

Students have hung banners in front of the club suite reading "escalate for gaza" and "free CUNY, free Gaza"

The front of Baruch's main campus was vandalized this year on the anniversary of Oct. 7th with the words "Oct. 7th is forever" spray painted in red over the entrance.

These signs are eventually removed by public safety but the damage to the social environment and sense of communal safety is damaged and almost beyond repair.

This behavior accomplishes the goal of the perpetrators really well. Campus has become a terrifying place to publicly be a Jewish person.

It is for these reasons that I support **all** of the recommendations of the Lippman report, especially:

1. "Coordinating at All Times with Law Enforcement to Protect Everyone at CUNY"
2. "Provide More Guidance to Those Conducting Investigations Into Antisemitism and Discrimination"
3. "Hold Faculty and Others Accountable for Violative Conduct"
4. "Encourage More Dialogue Aimed at Bringing People Together"

If the recommendations of the Lippman Report are implemented, I believe that the next generation of students will never have to experience the terror and loneliness that I experienced on campus.

November 25th, 2024

Esteemed Councilmembers: My name is Laura Tanenbaum. I have taught at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City Queens since 2007. LaGuardia proudly serves a diverse student body of primarily working class and first-generation college students. We serve students from 136 countries who speak 43 native languages. I am honored to be able to work with them every day.

This hearing was called to discuss what is being termed “widespread antisemitism” at CUNY. As a Jewish person deeply active in my synagogue and other Jewish organizations, I can say that this does not describe my experience at all. Instead, what I have observed, especially in the last year, is the widespread but incorrect conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism in order to silence criticisms of what numerous international bodies have called a genocide in Gaza.

Throughout CUNY and on my own campus, events discussing Gaza and Palestine have been blocked by administrators and surveilled. Those of us who have organized them – many of us ourselves Jewish – have received hateful emails just for daring to speak about, let alone protest or try to stop these horrors. Most troubling, there is a kind of self-censorship in which numerous colleagues and students have said that they believed they aren’t allowed to discuss Palestine at all, a fear which undermines everything universities are supposed to stand for. It also does an incredible disservice to CUNY’s Palestinian faculty, students and staff who are made to fear even expressing grief for their own family and community members who have been killed by Israel in this past year. And yet we have no hearings here or in Washington about the problem of anti-Palestinian biases on our campuses.

No institution is perfect or immune to the prejudices or bigotries of the society in which it operates. As CUNY faculty, we are uniquely suited to help address biases as they arise in our classrooms through education and discussion. Antidiscrimination laws are necessary but they must be used to address real discrimination in which people are actively penalized for their identities, not to shut down discussion, debate, or protest.

That someone is exposed to a new idea that makes them uncomfortable – whether about the history of racism in this country, about gender or sexuality, or about the conduct of a government that happens to be allied with powerful forces in this country – does not mean they have faced bigotry. As a Jewish person, I find the claim that criticism of Israel or anti-Zionism are antisemitic offensive and believe it will in fact make Jews less safe by asserting that Judaism depends on war crimes. I ask members of the council to look critically at how antisemitism is being weaponized by those who wish to stifle both democratic debate and public education and devote itself to CUNY’s real needs: proper funding to repair our old facilities, hire new faculty and better serve our incredible students.

Laura Tanenbaum

[REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY 11218

[REDACTED]

Good evening,

My name is Maddan Eisenberg, and I am an undergraduate student at Hunter College. As my name suggests, I am a Jewish student, making the subject of the recent NYC Council hearing on antisemitism in schools one I'm both heavily invested in and extremely careful about the handling of.

During this hearing, I was upset to hear the repeated conflation of my faith and cultural heritage with the colonial project of Zionism. As a Jew in diaspora, the constant relation of a part of myself to a land I am unwelcome in immediately dispelled any remaining doubts that the councilmembers had anything but their own interests at heart.

The antisemitism my friends in the Jewish community and I have faced cannot be reduced to our connection to Israel. As someone who grew up being repeatedly reminded of my distance from what was marketed to me as my "homeland," the insistence that criticism of the Zionist project would be more harmful to students like me than the repeated aggression we've faced from political and educational leaders, as well as their uncritical supporters, is in no way grounded in reality. The constant assaults I face when showing my support for Palestine from Zionists (a group that I cannot stress enough is in no way related to Jewish students) in the form of physical and verbal violence (from punches and ripped clothes to antisemitic slurs and insults like "kike" and "kapo") far outweigh the threat I feel from the pro-Palestine protesters centered in this discussion. If this hearing was meant to discuss genuine threats to Jewish students, it would have involved criticism of those who commit acts of antisemitism to support their interpretation of Jewishness and its connection to Zionism, and not just those who push for necessary change during the immense escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip and West Bank by our side. I am happy to call those who fight for a better world my friends, an interpretation of the current position of Jewish students completely left out of this hearing.

To consider our allies as our enemies and those who attack us as our friends is to dismiss the genuine threat Jewish students face during this time of heightened tension. Attempting to create a homogeneous group of Jews with a single enemy is dismissing alternative interpretations of Jewish living we and our ancestors have enduringly fought for. In short, the perspectives displayed at this hearing place Jewish students at higher risk while masquerading as a form of protection. Anyone – especially our representatives in elected positions – who truly cares about Jewish students and the threats we face from antisemitism would recognize and reject this framing.

The reproduction of false narratives of Jewishness under the pretense of protecting Jewish students diminishes the active threat antisemitism plays in Jewish students' lives while using us as pawns in a political game. This extremely unbalanced approach to an issue with material

consequences for the lives of Jewish students can only reproduce false conclusions meant to dismiss the necessary action of protest, a right under the First Amendment we depend upon to make meaningful change. As students, ignoring our voices to project a false image of the pro-Palestine movement on campus puts us at extreme risk and only serves those who have shown us their willingness to commit real acts of antisemitism. An approach to antisemitism that does not effectively take all of this into account is incomplete and will only hurt the students it pretends to protect.

Thank you.

Mary O'Riordan
247 East 235 Street
Bronx, NY 10470

Re: Antisemitism in the classroom and the Union

November 18, 2024

Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez
City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Chancellor Matos Rodriguez:

In two recent emails, you tacitly acknowledge that there is antisemitism at the University (10/1) and that faculty need to focus more on coursework (11/6). From discussions with students and faculty at several colleges, I know myself that CUNY faculty have used their classrooms to promote partisan views and that this has been encouraged by our union, the Professional Staff Congress. I would like to bring to your attention an anti-Zionist, and arguably antisemitic, classroom activity that I learned of last year, where ESL matriculants were deprived of class time and class assignments which otherwise could have helped them prepare for academic success to instead collect signatures for a ceasefire in Gaza. This activity probably also served to reinforce negative images of Jews which ESL students unfortunately often bring with them from their countries of origin, when we at CUNY should instead be trying to help our students understand and accept people of different cultural and religious backgrounds. The teacher responsible for the activity had also been for many years an Executive Officer in the PSC.

I taught ESL at CUNY from 1989-2019. Before becoming a teacher, I was a Human Rights Specialist in the NYC Commission on Human Rights. I eventually decided, however, that I would prefer to teach. I knew of CUNY from taking a course at Lehman as a high school senior and then through my mother who in her 50s began attending college at Bronx Community College. I was a tutor at BCC in the early 80s. In 1989, I started teaching ESL at Lehman College part-time, first for Continuing Ed and eventually for the Department of English, while I worked on my doctorate in Applied Linguistics at Teachers College. Upon graduation, I was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at New York City College of Technology, where I taught mostly ESL for the next eight years, eventually earning tenure and promotion. I sat on the CUNY ESL Discipline Council for four years, two as Co-Chair. My scholarship centered on admissions and ethnolinguistic minorities and on how to teach ESL students better at CUNY. In 2006, I resigned my position in order to address family needs. However, I continued to teach part-time through 2019, mainly at Bronx Community College.

While I was at City Tech, one of my responsibilities was to evaluate the teaching of other faculty. If the opportunity presented itself, I would comment on the degree to which subject areas were covered in a non-partisan manner. This is most important when teaching immigrants, who are often unfamiliar with American hot button topics. And it is even MORE important when dealing with topics related to race or ethnicity, and MOST important as it may relate to Jews, as many ESL students in New York might be meeting Jews for the first time and come from countries in which antisemitism is prevalent. I must admit that at times I myself even hesitated to assign novels featuring Jewish protagonists, as I was nervous that they might somehow present or reinforce antisemitism.

Inappropriate Classroom Assignment

This is why I was shocked when last year, former colleague Susan DiRaimo, an Adjunct Lecturer in Lehman College's English Department, told me that she was having her ESL students collect signatures petitioning President Biden to call for a ceasefire in Gaza. Ms. DiRaimo quickly added that she gave students a choice regarding whether or not they would petition for a ceasefire or something else, as if that made a difference. In my experience, students will do what is easiest and what they think the teacher wants, which makes "giving them a choice" a non-starter usually, particularly for ESL students. What discussion led up to this assignment I wondered? I doubt she explained why Golda Meir once said, "If the Arabs put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence. If the Jews put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel".

In any case, why would Ms. DiRaimo think collecting signatures for a petition would improve the academic English of her students, the great majority of whom live in neighborhoods where they mostly speak a language other than English?

Israel had just mounted an offensive to recover the hostages and disable the enemy, who continued to shoot rockets and vowed to return to continue the carnage. How could teaching our immigrant students that Israel, our ally, should not respond in a manner it saw fit to protect its sovereign state help our students succeed academically? And what would be the fallout of such an indoctrination in years to come, among a population which is less likely to have had any personal contact not only with Israelis nor with any Jews at all?

Upset, I called a colleague teaching ESL students in the English Department at BCC to describe to her what had just happened. I was further shocked when she said she did not agree that the assignment was inappropriate and that she understood the frustration of the Palestinian people given "how jealous they must be of the success of Israel." She also said that Jews, like my son who goes to school near Hunter College, where students were regularly marching and ripping off hostage posters, would just have to learn to be quiet amid any racist rants on the subway "like the Chinese during Covid". I was left speechless.

More Inappropriate Behavior

I did not write to you at that time because my son was sick but I knew I had to say something when I saw that CUNY faculty were also joining students protesting at City College (the other college where Ms. DiRaimo regularly taught). This was just as inappropriate. Should students wish to protest, it should be THEIR protest. I certainly believed this in 1991 when students across the University took over buildings on a number of campuses, including Lehman, to protest tuition hikes and budget cuts. At the time an Adjunct Lecturer, I supported the students completely and entered a padlocked building at one point to distribute to students copies of "Letter from Birmingham Jail." However, I did not personally participate in the protest by staying in the building for example. Nor would I have supported any protest that would have pitted one group of students against another, particularly one that might have been related to race or ethnicity.

Union Connection

I believe that this unprofessional behavior has been promoted by the PSC, which in June 2021, through a stealth vote passed a "Resolution in Support of the Palestinian People" (Adler, "Scholars for Peace in the Middle East", 6/21/21). In this divisive resolution, the union labels Israel a "settler colonial state" and reiterates false assertions of "apartheid". The resolution also calls for "political education" and "chapter level discussions" that "encourage support for the antisemitic and anti-Israel BDS movement among rank and file members of PSC" (Bandler, "Jewish Journal", 1/17/22).

The PSC has already been found guilty by the EEOC of discrimination against Jewish faculty (Lax et. Al v. CUNY et al.) However, the effort to inculcate anti-Zionist sentiment among faculty is arguably worse as I believe it is meant to trickle down to students.

Ms. DiRaimo as well as the faculty member at BCC who supported her decision to use class time to organize students to petition others for a “ceasefire” have been very active in the Union. Ms. DiRaimo had been VP for Part-Time Personnel for several years, the professor at BCC the Grievance Counselor there. I know these things partially because as Chapter Secretary at City Tech, I was also very active in the PSC back when it was more focused on issues related to labor and students.

A faculty lawsuit against the PSC expresses concern about its “increasing radicalization” (Bandler, “Jewish Journal” 1/17/22). I believe that the PSC, which donates large sums to the Working Families Party, has become a vehicle for the promulgation of fringe political ideologies.

I told Ms. DiRaimo in November that I could not understand how the PSC had been willing to divide the faculty for the sake of the anti-Israel resolution, which, I added, I thought was antisemitic. Ms. DiRaimo “explained” that it could not be antisemitic because the faculty who had pushed it through, I believe mostly adjunct English lecturers, were Jewish.

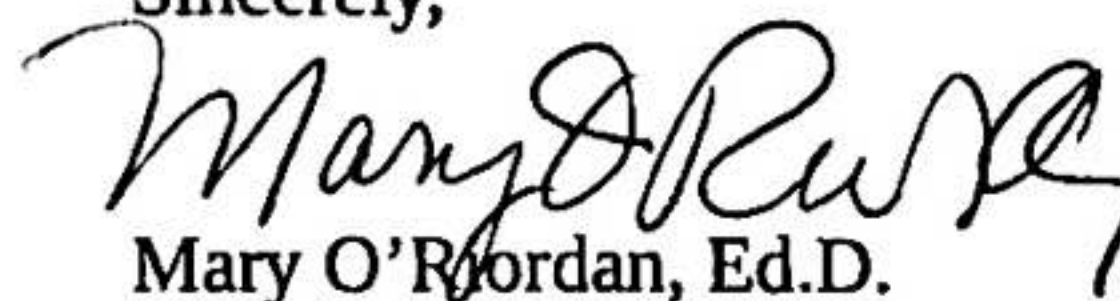
This is not a valid argument. It makes me think of the Jewish son of a friend who this semester found himself in a class (ironically on racism) in John Jay College taught by a Jewish man who told his students that he is one of the “good” Jews. Afraid of being penalized if he spoke out, the student could only sit in class horrified.

You can check for yourself to see how many faculty stayed home the day after the election.

I wonder how the University can negotiate with the PSC in good faith if it is undermining the education of students. As an American and as a taxpayer I am further concerned as I understand that many labor unions despite their partisan politicking have been the recipient of federal funds.

I did not write before because, as you probably know, for all the talk about “academic freedom,” diversity of political opinion is taboo among college faculty. As Adler observes, “The internally felt pressure to stay quiet and keep one’s head down is always great.” However, as faculty increasingly neglect their mission in exchange for the promotion of personal opinions, not even well-informed, it is finally time for me as an educator to speak out despite fear of backlash for me or my family.

Sincerely,



Mary O'Riordan, Ed.D.

Adjunct Associate Professor, 2009 -2019
Department of English
Bronx Community College/CUNY

Associate Professor, 2005- 2006
Assistant Professor, 1998- 2005
Department of English
New York City College of Technology/CUNY

Assistant Professor, 1999
Adjunct Lecturer, 1990 – 1998
Department of English
Lehman College/CUNY

c.
President Fernando Delgado, Lehman College/CUNY
Professor David Hyman, Chair, Department of English, Lehman College/CUNY
President Milton Santiago, Bronx Community College/CUNY
Councilmember Eric Dinowitz, Chair/Jewish Caucus, Chair/Committee on Higher Education
Governor Kathy Hochul, NY
Rep. Frederica S. Wilson, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Mark Takano, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment, US Congress
Rep. Pramila Jayapal, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment, US Congress
Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Kathy E. Manning, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Lucy McBath, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Raul M. Grijalva, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Joe Courtney, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Gregorio Killili Camacho Sablan, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Suzanna Bonamici, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Alma S. Adams, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Robert C. Scott, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Burgess Owens, Chair, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Glenn Thompson, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Elise M. Stefanik, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Jim Banks, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Lloyd Smucker, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Bob Good, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Nathaniel Morann, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Erin Houchin, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Brandon Williams, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Virginia Foxx, Subcommittee on Higher Education, US Congress
Rep. Ritchie Torres, US Congress
The Fairness Center

Dear Higher Education Committee,

My name is Nadiya Sivin-Kachala and I am a psychology master's student at CCNY. I got my bachelor's degree in public health from Hunter College in 2023, where I was in the Macaulay Honors College. I was a student leader in the Macaulay Queer Alliance in undergrad, meeting with CUNY administrators fairly frequently. I am also Ashkenazi Jewish

In all that time, I never experienced anti-Semitism from anyone: administration, faculty, or students. I have felt more unsafe on campus in the past year because of the militarized policing of student activism; a friend of mine got a concussion after being knocked to the ground by NYPD. I have participated in protests with SJP in the past year, where I was very welcome as a Jew. I even participated in a seder with Not In Our Name, comparing the Jews' historical troubles with the Palestinian struggle. Everyone I encountered at the encampment and other SJP events has welcomed my Judaism and is able to recognize that Judaism, a religion, is not synonymous with Zionism, a political ideology. As a Jewish CUNY student, I can assure you that from what I see, anti-Semitism is not on the rise, but a dangerous repression of dissent is.

Regards,

Nadiya Sivin-Kachala

Esteemed Councilmembers: My Name is Naomi Schiller. I have taught Anthropology at Brooklyn College, CUNY for ten years. I am a full-time faculty member with tenure and a Jewish New Yorker. Teaching at CUNY is my dream job. I feel a profound sense of belonging at CUNY and commitment to our mission to teach all the people of New York City. In my ten years at Brooklyn College, I have never experienced antisemitism personally, nor have I witnessed antisemitic behavior in my classrooms or at campus events. It is clear to me that some CUNY community members confuse criticism of Israel with animus against Jewish people. To equate Zionism with Judaism is grossly inaccurate and deeply offensive to me. The City Council should not make this mistake. Many of my students care deeply about human rights and cannot understand how their outrage at the murder of thousands of Palestinian children is mistaken as bias against Jews. They cannot understand why the United States is devoting billions of dollars to fund war rather than public education. I hope that New York City elected leadership will not mistake critical debate about a horrific war with antisemitism.

Naomi Schiller

[REDACTED]

NY NY 10002

[REDACTED]

Testimony on Antisemitism at CUNY

My name is Dr. Renee Bell, and I proudly teach at Lehman College in the Bronx, an institution which provides a transformative education for many working-class, first-generation students.

Regarding antisemitism at CUNY, I have brought and continue to bring several Jewish and Israeli scholars to our campus for academic events without incident; indeed, they are happy to return to campus. I have Israeli family members and have witnessed firsthand that many Israelis themselves are willing to engage in debate and protest and critique their own government; we have that right in the United States as well. A university campus is a natural place to discuss these ideas, to discuss world events and politics, and the very real and devastating impacts on the lives of our own faculty and students, many of which come from or have family in Palestine. Being able to engage with these ideas is part of a complete university education that prepares students for the reality of the world they live in. I have attended events and discussions led by Jewish academics on our campus about anti-war efforts, and histories and perspectives on Israel/Palestine, and they were thoughtful and intellectually stimulating, as all good university events should be. I understand the concern for student safety at CUNY, and the most alarming threats to student safety I have witnessed have been against students who are protesting the war. For example, an armed police officer at College of Staten Island's commencement told a student "I support killing all you guys." Our community is aware of incidents like this and the incessant doxing of students for exercising their right to protest. This is dangerous, and it is also dangerous that incidents like these are omitted in discussions of student safety.

The most vicious attacks on our students, which are only ramping up, are the attacks on poor and working people and the services they need and deserve, and the attacks on immigrants, who comprise a large part of our student body. CUNY is already understaffed due to underfunding; students can't even get the advising services they need, and essential classes are often cut to save money, and class sizes are creeping upwards. This degrades the quality of education for all students, Jewish or not, and they deserve better. I urge that the council support our university system and thus all of the students we serve, and resist the attacks on free speech and other democratic rights that aim to silence our already marginalized students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Renee Bell

Assistant Professor

Lehman College, City University New York

Nov 25, 2024

Esteemed Councilmembers. My name is Ruth Wangerin. I am a resident of Eric Dinowitz' district and happy to have benefited from his efforts on behalf of our Bronx community. I am also a member of the faculty of a key institution in the Bronx, Lehman College, as well as an alum of the highly rated CUNY Graduate School program in Anthropology.

We are called here to talk about what some have asserted is widespread antisemitism at CUNY. In my experience, antisemitism in America is an ugliness that can pop up in some of the most unexpected places, and people need to be ready to quickly confront it, as I've endeavored to do all my life. However, my experience at the City University of New York is that antisemitism is no more, and probably less, a problem than it is anywhere else in America.

The real problem at CUNY is accusations of antisemitism, which are truly wreaking havoc. The widespread fear of being accused of antisemitism is chilling campus climate and frightening faculty and students, and administration, too. The political pressure to find and denounce antisemitism is causing administrators to create and try to enforce new rules that violate the First Amendment. Just this last month, I witnessed this on my own campus in a situation that is still not resolved, though faculty governance will be taking up the issue.

Instead of talking with each other, debating, reading, discussing, and sharing our ideas and experiences, which is what university students and faculty do and what higher education requires, we are all forced to deal with the fear that someone -- often an outsider, perhaps a politician -- will accuse somebody of antisemitism. Perhaps a student will be suspended. Perhaps an employee will be investigated, intimidated, even dismissed. Perhaps a college president will be called before Congress and questioned by someone who hasn't a clue about education or the First Amendment. Perhaps the college's funding will be cut and our venerable institution will become second- or third-rate, hurting the young people of the City in ways that won't be repaired for another generation, if ever.

If you're not working at a college, you might think I'm exaggerating. But I'm not. I have spoken to quite a few faculty who are afraid to even mention Palestine or Israel in class or at a meeting, much less teach about any aspect of the history or the conflict, for fear of being investigated. It's clearly a taboo topic! People have had difficulty planning events or film showings to do our job of helping to educate the community about the history and issues involved. I have heard that some students believe they are not allowed to talk about Gaza. And I have heard from students who are made to jump through hoops to hold a protest, when that is supposed to be their First Amendment right with minimal restrictions on a public university campus.

So if you ask me about antisemitism, I will answer that the onslaught of accusations of antisemitism against scholars and students who want to talk about Palestine is threatening to destroy the purpose and quality of higher education in the name of one particular political agenda.

Ruth Wangerin

[REDACTED]
Bronx NY 10463
[REDACTED]

My name is Sarah Southey and I'm a proud member of CUNY for Palestine and CUNY Law SJP.

The Lippman report is the culmination of a politically-motivated inquiry initiated by Governor Hochul in response to the growing movement of students across CUNY standing in solidarity with Palestine liberation and against the Israeli genocide.

The Lippman Report must be understood in the context of a nationwide effort by state and federal politicians nationwide to pressure university administrators to label Palestine solidarity speech and activism as antisemitic. It is part of a broader trend of repression against student organizing for Palestinian liberation which has only intensified as the ongoing genocide in Gaza has deepened.

The report's recommendations are designed to repress the movement for Palestinian liberation at CUNY through increased policing of our campuses, the imposition of stricter "time, place, and manner restrictions" on protests, and the continued conflation of antisemitism and anti-Zionism. This report will provide CUNY with justification to further militarize our campuses and undermine our ability to protest against the ongoing genocide in Palestine and to demand that CUNY divest from Israel. That this is happening at a time when the urgency of such protest cannot be overstated is condemnable.

Despite finding that "there have been few incidents of violence related to antisemitism and discrimination on CUNY campuses," the report recommends a complete overhaul and centralization of its antisemitism and hate crime reporting apparatus, increased surveillance of students, and encourages deference to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism in incident investigations.

The IHRA definition was created to criminalize criticism of Israel by equating it with antisemitism. I am outraged by the report's suggestion that CUNY use the IHRA definition of antisemitism as a 'useful tool.' This harmful definition is deliberately employed to criminalize criticism of Israel and is the legal backbone of numerous anti-BDS laws throughout the country.

In other places where the IHRA definition has been implemented - such as the UK - it has resulted in witch-hunts against faculty and students critical of Israel and supportive of Palestine. Its implementation at CUNY will result in increased repression of student protest activity and surveillance of working class Muslim, Arab and other students of color. That this is being suggested at a time when these students are already facing high levels of doxxing, harassment, repression and violence at CUNY is unconscionable and dangerous. It is no accident, then, that the report fails to mention the Title VI complaints documenting several incidents of anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian racism filed by CUNY students.

From the outset, CUNY for Palestine raised concerns about the motivation behind, and impartiality of, the inquest as initiated by Kathy Hochul. Latham & Watkins, the law firm tasked with running the investigation, is known for its strong ties to Zionist organizations and its anti-Palestinian orientation. It made clear its position against student activism for Palestinian liberation clear when, on November 1st, 2023, it signed onto a baleful letter addressed to the deans of top law schools threatening to halt hiring if protests continued.

Given the political orientation of its authors, it is unsurprising that the report deliberately obfuscates the fact that Jewish anti-Zionist students are active members of the Palestine solidarity movement; instead, it cynically uses Jewish students as a wedge to divide the

movement by justifying repression under the pretense of protecting their feelings. This report essentially gives a green light for CUNY to formally label the anti-Zionist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist principles that are core to Jewish identities as antisemitic.

The report focuses on CUNY's Manhattan campuses, declaring that these "are more easily targeted as locations to interfere with students' ability to attend class and are, therefore, more vulnerable to disruption by people who are not affiliated with CUNY participating in protests in close proximity to academic life." In doing so, the report feeds into the false "outside agitator narrative," which CUNY for Palestine has consistently refuted. CUNY for Palestine has consistently pointed out that this narrative undermines our understanding of CUNY as rooted in the diverse communities in which our universities are located. It serves to attack a shared vision of a people's university and a New York City that prioritizes the wellbeing of its people, especially the most vulnerable.

In 2016, an earlier wave of pro-Palestine student agitation resulted in the CUNY Chancellor being pressured to launch an outside investigation into allegations of 'antisemitism' at CUNY. Significantly, this report - conducted by independent and well-respected investigators who spent a much longer time and went into greater depth on the matter - absolved CUNY organizers of all the charges. It also, significantly, revealed heightened levels of anti-Muslim racism at CUNY. Predictably, this report was buried. Nothing has changed in terms of the campus solidarity movement's approach to expressing solidarity with Palestine liberation since 2016. What has changed is the increase in repression and harassment faced by students from the administration. State repression that is going to increase with the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

I want to call out this report for what it is: a shameful and blatant attempt to weaponize - and thereby trivialize - the serious issue of anti-Jewish racism and use it to justify the further silencing of our movement in solidarity with Palestine liberation.

My name is Spencer Everett; I've been an adjunct lecturer in the English department at Baruch College, CUNY, for a number of years. In recent times in particular, I have seen heinous and bone-chilling antisemitic statements written on campus on multiple occasions. That "ALL Zionists must die" or, more audaciously, "Oct. 7 is forever" scrolled on the entrance to the school on the anniversary of the Oct. 7 attacks. While some of this slander stays up on the walls for a very long time--and that's disturbing in its own right-- this latter example of highly visible graffiti was very quickly taken down by the administration, which on one hand is certainly appropriate, but within the broader context of antisemitism on campus it also felt like the denial of a pervasive problem-- especially considering that I've heard nothing at all about this incident; I just happened to walk by. I have to say that if a comparable inflammatory statement were written implicating a different minority group, the administration and the students would've been up in arms calling for solidarity and support of the group being denigrated! It's these double standards, and this pervasiveness and general sense of undermining that makes antisemitism on Baruch's campus feel like a cultural problem-- sure there are "bad apples" who write these things, but they're enabled by broader campus attitudes that implicitly or explicitly support violence against Jews. I personally overheard a young student proudly tell his friend, *from a social justice context*, that he supports Hamas. It seems that such support, ironically, is meant to communicate liberal bonafides. In writing, I've seen CUNY professors refer to "antisemitism" on campus in scare quotes, as though it couldn't possibly exist, as though surely it's an idea cooked-up by their opponents. Such denial is classic antisemitism. And as you know from other testimony, many professors cite a *technical* problem in conflating Zionism and antisemitism, conveniently denying the *practical* problem at hand-- aggressive sentiments against "Zionists," a word that's become slander, most certainly implicates Jews.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Spencer

Nov. 25, 2024

Antisemitism, zionism, racism, violence, hate, attacks on free speech/academic freedom on and off CUNY campuses

CUNY has a racism/zionism problem. At Lehman College (and elsewhere in CUNY), where I have been a professor for 26 years, students/staff/faculty who are intimidated and attacked are anti-zionist and anti-racist regardless of their religious or personal belief systems.

4 recent examples:

1. Student affairs administrators filmed and photographed students gathering to have a conversation about Oct. 7 events in Palestine and what led up to them for 75 years. Students were threatened with discipline simply for leaving classes, having signs, and joining a citywide commemorative event. There is no place for administrators threatening and attacking free speech on a college campus that in no way violated the Henderson rules.
2. Rep Ritchie Torres, on Oct. 7 doxxed a woman of color Queens College faculty member who was teaching about genocide and accused her of being anti-semitic. Teaching about genocide is not anti-semitic. But politicians calling out women professors of color for doing their job is zionist.
3. Lehman hosted an anti-semitism workshop run by the director of Baruch's Hillel, who has taken groups of CUNY students to Israel to support the IOF committing genocide toward Palestinians. When confronted in the workshop that he was only using the IHRA definition of anti-semitism, and when read aloud the Jerusalem Declaration by an audience participant, he said they were the same and refused to entertain the idea that they are not. IHRA definition conflates zionism and anti-semitism, which is why scholars wrote the Jerusalem Declaration definition.
4. When 3 CUNY students, including one doctoral student adjunct at Lehman tried to submit an anti-racism, anti-zionism proposal to the Writing Across the Curriculum they used the word intifada, which means uprising. The program director, supervised by the former Lehman provost cancelled the conference when the panelists did not back down on their right to free speech and academic freedom to use any term of their choosing. The program director's public statement was that the conference was about love. As if Palestinians and West Asians aren't equally deserving of love. The participants wrote an excellent article in Mondoweiss challenging the zionist exclusion of their work and cancellation of the conference.

The governor; the hateful, violent, anti-democratic recommendations of the Lippman report, the privileging the IHRA definition; the mayor using violent NYPD to break up the peaceful CUNY Gaza Encampment with 28 arrested on felony charges at CCNY; and all too many politicians

nationwide have created a toxic climate on CUNY campuses by trying to stop freedom of speech, academic freedom, diverse definitions of anti-semitism, and enabled zionism and racism toward West Asians/Muslims/Arabs and anti-zionists to flourish while the USA government & CUNY funds military investments into the US and Israel aid, abet & pay for the genocide of Palestinians and Lebanese and attacks on Yemenis, Syrians & Iranians after decades of murdering millions of Iraqis & Afghans in endless settler-colonialist, racist wars. CUNY has a zionism & racism problem.

-Dr. Stuart Chen-Hayes
Professor, CUNY Lehman College
Resident of N. Riverdale, Bronx, NY

As a Jewish CUNY faculty member for over 20 years, I feel the need to challenge the that antisemitism is rampant on CUNY campuses. I can testify that CUNY is not immune to the growing tide of antisemitism in the United States. However, attempts to heal the deep and enduring legacies of antisemitism through defunding and the targeted firings of faculty for their political views will add to the current troubling climate of hate and end up doing far more harm than good. While I applaud genuine efforts to stem this growth, as I do all efforts to resist deep-seeded hatreds and the oppressive acts that such hatred serves to justify. I implore the committee to consider that this goal will be hindered by punitive actions.

As you know, antisemitism takes many forms, some of the most pervasive of which are rooted in the following assumptions:

1. That Jews are collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel;
2. That non-Israeli Jews like myself are more loyal to Israel than the US;
3. That Jews monolithically support Israeli state policy.

If this committee acts to reinforce rather than challenge the above errors by implying that all criticism of Israel as a political entity constitutes antisemitism, it risks reinvigorating the ugliness of antisemitism by teaching a new generation to view Jews as a people with dual loyalties. I would add that foregrounding antisemitism as a greater problem on CUNY campuses than other forms of racism and bias adds fuel to perhaps the most dangerous of antisemitic tropes, that Jews exert a special control over institutions of power. At a time when solidarity and community is most needed, this type of error serves to divide rather than unify us from achieving goals common to a society that values freedom.

In closing, I sincerely hope for a time when ignorance is replaced by empathy and the tone of discourse concerning antisemitism becomes more conducive to dialog than vitriol. I challenge this committee to recognize that ending the enduring blight of antisemitism is best achieved through dialog and education, not repression and punishment. History shows that punitive measures rarely facilitate meaningful change. We cannot win a fight against hate by giving into our own.

CUNY is an affordable institution, and most of their students are working-class, people of color and first-generation. In my experience, those in powerful administrative positions at the university don't support, but rather prey on this vulnerable population that deserves proper direction when it comes to what would set them up for the rest of their lives. I am shocked by the rampant corruption that exists in CUNY's current rigged system of higher education and ask that NYC council members individually and as a body join US Presidential candidates and NYC Mayoral candidates running in this cycle to ask for a public meeting between Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez and Hunter College President Nancy Cantor with myself and Edward Lee to discuss specifics related to our issues.

The pay of administrators at CUNY is exorbitant. According to govsalaries.com, in 2023, former President of Hunter College, Jennifer Rabb, J.D., whose reign I was under when I had my issue, had an annual wage of nearly one-million dollars, higher than that of anyone in the entire institution, including Chancellor Felix Matos. Reportedly, Felix Matos receives over 750K in total compensation which adds up to about 2K a day including holidays and weekends. To put this into further perspective, the salary of the President of the United States is 400K a year. Clearly, the salaries of these Higher Education administrators are exorbitant and excessive and lead to prioritization of the wrong incentives.

An example of where the institution has gone wrong was when the U.S. Attorney announced the settlement of a civil fraud lawsuit against both Hunter College and their professor Jeffrey Parsons, who they were fraudulently signing off on NIH federal research funds for from 2010-2018 resulting in an over half a million-dollar repayment. Also, in 2021, the bursar at City College was charged with stealing nearly half a million dollars in student funds. These cases are just a few of the examples of the corruption present at Hunter and within the CUNY system.

Hunter's administrators in charge of students are not experts in dealing with students but rather have legal backgrounds. Jennifer Rabb's right-hand, Vice President Eija Ayravainen oversees the department of student affairs at Hunter College and was responsible for coming to an unfair decision without ever speaking to me over an issue I had with the advising I received. Eija's daughter Katri Stanley is an attorney at Morvillo Abramowitz, a firm that specializes in white collar defense and regulatory enforcement. Ironically, or maybe not so, Jennifer Rabb also has a history with these same types of white-shoe law firms, having worked for Cravath, Swaine & Moore and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison

Colleen Barry JD is a licensed attorney and is the director of student conduct at Hunter College. Please view my YouTube channel @koriedens to view how she has treated me as well as disabled veteran Ian Blackstone. Her role at the institution is essentially to

intimidate, bully and harass students to get them caught up legally, as part of Hunter's setup to take advantage of them.

I am a victim of poor academic advising and PSC CUNY, the institution's teacher's union, is currently protesting the meager pay, lack of proper training and student overloading of its advisors and adjunct professors. I had an attorney send a request on a technicality as it relates to part of my issue and was informed that Hunter College says they can waive course requirements as they see fit by student. This is unfair and unjust to students who must adhere to the stated requirements for graduation and serves as a testament to the manipulated system that is CUNY-Hunter College.

Hunter College and CUNY never respond to pending issues when it is to their benefit and set up scenarios to personally antagonize students to illicit angry responses from them to be used as legal evidence, a tactic often used among corporate attorneys. Additionally, the institution attacks students' mental sanity as a means of justifying their abusive responses towards students. I and every other used and abused student I have been able to track down, despite their attempts to block my FOIA requests to find more, have been victims of this scandalous behavior. I have submitted a complaint to the New York Office of Civil Rights and was told that while I had a valid claim, it was not timely and thus no action can be taken because of the institution's tactic of not responding to students in a timely manner.

Hunter College hires an outside compliance agency King Compliance Services LLC, directed by Maura King who, as an attorney, has over two decades of working in the financial and investment industries. How can the same body responsible for hiring such a compliance agency be trusted not to influence a process designed to bring about accountability?

I have sent FOIA requests asking for information that should be open to the public and they have repeatedly found ways to deny them. Most recently, the New York Civil Liberties Union sued them for their refusal to release FOIA records related to information regarding their ties to investment funds, bonds, and private equity holdings as well as contracts they might have with companies such as Dell, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Northrup Grumman.

Upon reaching out to Eric Dinowitz's office, assistant Jenna Klaus apologized profusely to me for not being able to assist with my issue and stated that although Eric has jurisdiction over CUNY, he could not do anything and recommended that I reach out to individuals at the state level. Since, I have reached out to the office of New York State Senator and Chair of the Committee on Higher Education, Toby Ann Stavinsky, whose assistant, David Trose I spoke with and there too I was told that they could not help me despite their oversight jurisdiction, but they were willing to direct me to additional evidently corrupt New York State career and psychological services.

Most recently, we have approached Linda McMahon, Trump's pick to head the US Department of Education and former Senior executive in the federal department of education Holly Ham to get aid in addressing this situation.

This is a David and Goliath situation in which odds are severely stacked against students. All of the attorneys CUNY hires are ivy league educated, CUNY Chancellor, Felix Matos, is an independent director at AMG Funds, a financial services investment firm and the institution is being investigated for having close ties to contracts with major global security, defense and aerospace contractors. How could any CUNY student successfully stand up to such an enterprise?

If anyone hearing this testimony has any more information about why such affiliates have ties to the institution, I would appreciate speaking with you so we can hold these white-collar abusers of a blue-collar student body accountable. This is the way that Private equity firms operate and this type of behavior in our public institutions, especially overseeing the population it does, is unacceptable and frankly dangerous to the future of New York City.

Esteemed Councilmembers,

As an adjunct faculty member serving at various CUNY colleges since 2010, I assure you that, though not non-existent, anti-Semitism is not “rampant” at CUNY. The incidents that have occurred, such as the creation of a swastika on a lavatory floor at Baruch College last fall, have been isolated and thoroughly investigated.

Far more worrying has been administrative response to student protests, most in support of a ceasefire and peace in Gaza. Most of these actions have been peaceful and non-disruptive, yet police have been called in unnecessarily, protesters have been arrested, and others have endured harassment and intimidation.

In both respects, CUNY’s climate is far better than many other institutions’, where, for example, fliers depicting Jewish faculty with the word, “Wanted,” printed across them were posted, or Jewish students were not allowed to access buildings and other parts of campus unless they denounced their faith. The diversity and unity of our community, despite differences in ideology, serve to maintain a civil, collegial atmosphere – so actions like demanding that protesters don’t wear masks, much less following around and attempting to intimidate student protesters, are unwarranted, as well as potentially dangerous.

Committee on Higher Education,

I am a Jewish student at CUNY Brooklyn College who visited the solidarity encampment at CCNY last semester, set up by various CUNY SJP chapters. What I experienced at that encampment was the same thing Jewish students experienced at all the encampments in the country; an interfaith coalition of student groups united in their principled opposition to the genocide of Palestinians. I've never experienced any antisemitism at a Palestine solidarity event, and I have been to protests from the heart of Little Palestine in Bay Ridge, to Wall Street, to Astoria. The only violence I have experienced at these protests as a Jewish person (aside from Christian fascists calling me a Nazi) has come from the police, who brutalize, bully, and sexually assault protesters before, while, and after arresting them. Antisemitism is not a personal belief system held by individuals. Like every form of racism and discrimination, antisemitism is part of a system of power that protects capitalist interests. The NYPD doesn't have to be full of fascists or antisemites. It is, but it doesn't have to be. When they beat, mace, zip tie, and sexually assault protesters, they are just following orders.

The Lippman Report was commissioned by a Governor who wants to ban COVID masks in the subways. It defines any action that opposes Zionist occupation of Palestinian land as antisemitic. It recommends increased surveillance of people who submit discrimination reports, and, of course, recommends that campus police be encouraged to profile any student wearing a face covering on campus. The report is very explicit in its extremist belief that the Zionist settler colony currently occupying Palestine is somehow a stand-in for all Jewish people, and anyone attacking its legitimacy should be swiftly dealt with.

This context, these recommendations, and these beliefs are obviously an attack on principled academics and students who oppose American imperialism. The purpose of the Zionist state is the maintenance of American global hegemony and imperial control over the resources of the Global South. The United States has backed the genocide in Palestine for the same reason it backed the genocide in Guatemala, or the countless dictatorships in Latin America, or the genocides and dictatorships in Africa, including

the genocide currently underway in the Congo. These genocides, dirty wars, and dictatorships are committed for the purpose of extracting natural resources from resource-rich areas, such as cobalt and copper to make lithium ion batteries, oil for fossil fuel consumption, or land for real estate and tourism. The weapons used against student protesters are developed in occupied Palestine, and tested out against the Palestinian people.

This report, and the hearing following it, are political attacks against a principled liberatory movement, and an attempt at suppressing anti-imperial academics. Importantly, they do not target antisemitism, which is at the core of the alt-right movement against trans people, and the push to privatize schools. In fact, this directly plays into the hands of modern American fascists who don't want CUNY to be funded, because it is one of the largest avenues of social mobility for working class New Yorkers. Inna Vernikov, leader of the Lippman hearing, threatened working class Brooklyn College students by illegally bringing a gun to a protest, and was not charged. The real threats to Jewish students are the same as the threats to all other students and to CUNY itself.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SAMUEL P. PANUCCIO

Address: _____ NY NY 10016

I represent: ACTIVED NYPD

Address: _____

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kayla Bellin

Address: _____ NY, NY 11033

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Azriel Genack

Address: _____ New York, NY 10025

I represent: CUNY Alliance for Inclusion

Address: CUNY-cunyallianceforinclusion.org

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Name: Kristopher Kelso

Address: _____

I represent: Hillal Student

Address: _____

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Date: 11/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gabrielle Tierney

Address: [Redacted] Floral Park, NY 11004

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Date: 11/25/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Evelyn Stalk

Address: [Redacted] 111 East 117th St N.Y.C. 10029

I represent: myself A Teen

Address: _____

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Date: Nov 25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JULIA BRATMAN

Address: _____

I represent: Hillel

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Date: 11/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adela Cojoc

Address: 140 W. 58th, NY 10019

I represent: National Jewish Advocacy Center

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sascha Owen - CUNY

Address: Senior Vice Chancellor

I represent: For Strategy & Policy

Address: Implementation

11/25/24
CUNY

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Davis

Address: Senior Vice Chancellor

I represent: For legal affairs

Address: 205 East 42nd Street NYC

11/25/24

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chance Felix Mateo Packer

Address: CUNY

I represent: _____

Address: 205 East 47th Street NYC

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Bawn Jeter

Address: 130-10 140 Street Suite 1

I represent: Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street 3F

Brooklyn NY 11238

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

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Name: _____

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I represent: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

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I represent: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: 11/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Avi Posnick

Address: [redacted] E 54th Street

I represent: Stand With Us

Address: _____



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 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cree Atkins Griffin

Address: [redacted] Street

I represent: Brotherhood Sisterhood

Address: 512 West 143rd Street

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Erin Kristen Kiernan

Address: [redacted] St IFL

I represent: SELF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jocelyn Bayen

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jeffrey Lax

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____



Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Jeffrey Lay (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: ~~NYC~~ SAFE Campus

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Von DeValle (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____ 117th

I represent: VORNYC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julius [unclear]

Address: Brooklyn NY

I represent: Board of CUPNY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julius

Address: Brooklyn NY

I represent: Board of CUPNY

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wideoon Astrow

Address: [Redacted] Rd White Plains NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: [Redacted]

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _____

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/25/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Audrey Rogers

Address: [redacted] E 34th Street

I represent: Standwithus

Address: 165 E 56th Street

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sara Aeder

Address: _____

I represent: SCR-NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nasirah Fair

Address: [redacted]

I represent: The Brotherhood Sister Sol

Address: 512 W 143rd St

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Aidan Herzlinger

Address: 15 Willow Pt

I represent: CUVY Baruch Hillel

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Esther Blum

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/21/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eli Moran

Address: _____ Robert Hirsch NY 11107

I represent: Baruch College

Address: 55 Lex Ave NYC

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 11/25/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Keira Kepets

Address: [redacted] Teaneck NJ

I represent: CUNY Hiller Student

Address: [redacted]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ernest Ruffalo

Address: [redacted]

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Warner

Address: [redacted]

I represent: _____

Address: _____