

Dear StandWithUs:

Thank you for your recent letter. Ohio State strongly condemns all terrorist groups and terrorist attacks, including those perpetrated by Hamas the weekend of October 7, 2023.

Ohio State has been committed to combatting antisemitism long before October 7. For example: in 2022 in accordance with [Ohio Executive Order 2022-06D](#), Ohio State adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” As such, experiences of antisemitism could fall within protected class harassment or discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or national origin. The university’s Office of Institutional Equity responds to all such reports, and Ohio State has continued to remind and urge members of the university community of their obligations to report incidents they witness or of which they have knowledge. The university’s hate-crime working group has also remained active to allow for further real-time assessments of any concerns.

When the Hamas terrorist attacks occurred, Ohio State mobilized its leadership and staff to address health, safety and well-being concerns beginning that same weekend, and these efforts continue daily. Since Ohio State first condemned the Hamas terrorist attacks, we have been focused on supporting members of our university community. Through both our words and, importantly, our actions, we continually reaffirm and communicate messaging focused on our expectations regarding an environment of respect and compassion during this extraordinarily difficult time for many on our campuses. It is very disappointing that your letter to us does not accurately represent what has occurred at Ohio State or the university’s strong and ongoing response, which is outlined below. Please be assured the university has both acted and spoken. Our many communications to various members of our community have focused on sharing these actions and resources to directly address the safety and security of our students, which will always be our top priority.

University leaders and staff continue to reach out to potentially impacted students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community organizations to provide direct support and connect them with resources. We are engaging with student leaders and community organizations that support our students — and attending a variety of events and meetings — to listen and offer support. The university has also arranged to have counselors from our Counseling and Consultation Service on hand at events or available as needed to provide immediate support to potentially impacted students.

Both on campus and off, police and security have worked together to add a visible presence. This includes joint patrol, a combination of university police and the Columbus Division of Police, as well as Buckeye Block Watch security. The university’s Department of Public Safety also utilizes mobile cameras and other technology which is deployed in accordance with crime or safety concerns. Public Safety has conducted proactive security assessments, and leadership has held numerous meetings with Hillel and Chabad staff and leaders to discuss security enhancements. Feedback from leaders of these groups has been positive. We are also in regular contact with the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) as OSUPD has a detective assigned full-time to the task force. Ohio State will continue to adjust all safety enhancements as needed.

Most recently, President Walter “Ted” Carter Jr. addressed safety, security and his expectations for civil discourse at Ohio State in his first letter to the university community on Jan. 8, 2024, stating: “I also understand that my tenure at Ohio State begins at a time of great challenge and uncertainty around the world, across our nation and throughout the higher-education landscape. Let me be clear: Our university is a place at which safety will not be compromised. I am committed to continually exploring ways in which we can enhance the safety and security of our community. We also will remain focused on creating an environment in which respect, civility and compassion are forefront while continuing Ohio State’s long-standing commitment to the First Amendment and upholding the laws of our state and country. This has been my expectation over the course of my 40 years in higher education and military service, and it will be my expectation as your president.” In his second week on campus, he prioritized and met with leaders of student and community organizations, including Ohio State University Hillel and the Schottenstein Chabad House. A summation of Ohio State’s response is available publicly on the university’s Key Issues website, a link to which has been posted on the university’s homepage at [OSU.EDU](https://www.osu.edu).

Furthermore, Ohio State has stated unequivocally on numerous occasions that the university has no tolerance for violations of the law or university policy. Ohio State has not and will not tolerate hatred, intimidation or harassment of anyone based on their religious beliefs, nationality or identity. The university also has clearly articulated rules and standards that address the usage of the university and our spaces, and they are applied uniformly for all groups. Student organizations are required to follow the university’s code of student conduct and all university policies and laws, and there is a process for removing a student organization’s status should they be found in violation. When a student organization is hosting an event on campus, the student organization is responsible for any speech, behavior or conduct that occurs at the event, including when the student organization is sponsoring outside speakers or organizations. Additionally, if the university believes that the event cannot be held safely, or the outside entities the group is hosting present a safety risk, the university has the right to not allow the event to be held on campus. Ohio State is required to follow the First Amendment, and Ohio law, which protects these rights. Students, faculty and staff members are protected by these laws and their opinions are their own and do not constitute the views of the university. If a student believes that they have been treated improperly, including by a faculty member, the university provides several options for filing complaints and grievances, depending upon the context of the situation and if the student is at the undergraduate, graduate or professional level. These options are outlined by the Office of Academic Affairs [here](#).

The First Amendment is not unlimited, however, and the university is fully prepared to address speech and expression that do not receive protection or incites violence if engaged in on campus or by members of our community. As with all conduct that potentially violates university policies, rules and/or law, Ohio State considers the full extent of the conduct to determine if a violation has occurred. The safety of our community is our most important priority, and we will continue to actively monitor student events and demonstrations and take appropriate action to address conduct and other behavior that violates university policy or the law.

Your letter provides multiple and disturbing examples of incidents which have not been reported to the university (known events, which were reported through university channels, have been and will continue to be addressed by Ohio State as well as law enforcement partners where appropriate – see below for examples). If you can share the names of those Ohio State students or employees who have shared these incidents with your organization, the university will promptly follow up with them and will follow our comprehensive response process. Reporting is essential to our safety efforts.

We are, of course, aware of and responded promptly and comprehensively to several of the events you have raised – as we would with any matter reported to the university. For example, your timeline is inaccurate, and your description mischaracterizes the university’s response to the incident in which a student reported being spit upon. All appropriate university processes and reports were made related to this incident and the university’s public response is available [here](#).

When two students were assaulted after leaving a campus area bar and an incident of vandalism occurred at Hillel in a similar timeframe, the university again responded immediately and forcefully. The message sent to all Ohio State students, faculty and staff is available [here](#). The university also issued a [Public Safety Notice](#) in response to the assault.

To further expand on the university’s response, as we stated we would publicly, Ohio State provided the Columbus Division of Police (CPD) with all available resources to investigate these cases, which included confirming that none of the suspects in either case were Ohio State students. Related to the Hillel vandalism case, on December 12, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced multiple misdemeanor criminal charges against the two individuals who allegedly vandalized Hillel in November. The defendants were charged with misdemeanor ethnic intimidation, theft, criminal trespass and criminal mischief, penalties that could result in up to 180 days in jail and \$2,000 in fines.

The victims of the assault case continue to work with CPD and the FBI on appropriate charges. The university has not publicly spoken on this matter as the victims wish to keep this process as confidential as possible. Additionally, we have received information from parents and other external stakeholders indicating they heard the victims in this case were assaulted on their way home from the Chabad house near campus. This information is not accurate. The assault occurred when the victims left a bar near campus where the altercation is believed to have begun before it escalated outside of the bar.

Immediately in response to the above incidents, Acting President Mohler and other senior leaders at the university attended a community meeting co-hosted by Chabad and Hillel to listen to concerns and discuss the university’s support. The university has continually been in touch with leaders of these organizations to discuss long and short-term concerns, as well as assisted Hillel in conducting additional security assessments. In January, Ohio State University Police Division Chief Kimberly Spears-McNatt was one of six panelists at a [law enforcement town hall hosted by JewishColumbus](#).

As we have repeatedly shared through numerous communications channels, students who need assistance or emotional support should reach out to the Office of Student Life’s [Counseling and Consultation Service](#). Students can also access the support and resources provided by the [Student Wellness Center](#), the [Student Advocacy Center](#), the [Center for Belonging and Social Change](#) and the [Office of International Affairs](#). Faculty or staff in need of assistance can contact Ohio State’s [Employee Assistance Program](#). The [Office of Institutional Equity](#) is also available to students, faculty and staff who have experienced protected class discrimination, harassment or sexual misconduct, and the Wexner Medical Center offers the [Stress, Trauma and Resilience](#) (STAR) program.

Finally, I will again reiterate that Ohio State has stated unequivocally on numerous occasions that the university has no tolerance for violations of the law or university policy. Ohio State has not and will not tolerate intimidation or harassment of anyone based on their religious beliefs, nationality or identity. The university also has clearly articulated rules and standards that address the usage of the university and our spaces, and they are applied uniformly for all groups. Ohio State will continue to work every day

to create an environment in which respect, civility and compassion are forefront. These are the baseline principles in the university's [Shared Values](#) on which we work to integrate into all facets of our operations.

Sincerely,

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