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College Presidents Decry Intimidation on Campuses

"In the current period of worldwide political turmoil that threatens to damage one of our country's greatest treasures—colleges and universities—we commit ourselves to academic integrity in two ways. We will maintain academic standards in the classroom and we will sustain an intimidation-free campus. These two concepts are at the core of our profession.

Our classrooms will be open to all students, and classroom discussions must be based on sound ideas. Our campus debates will be conducted without threats, taunts, or intimidation. We will take appropriate steps to insure these standards. In doing so, we uphold the best of American democratic principles.

We are concerned that recent examples of classroom and on-campus debate have crossed the line into intimidation and hatred, neither of which have any place on university campuses.

In the past few months, students who are Jewish or supporters of Israel's right to exist—Zionists—have received death threats and threats of violence. Property connected to Jewish organizations has been defaced or destroyed. Posters and websites displaying libelous information or images have been widely circulated, creating an atmosphere of intimidation.

These practices and others, directed against any person, group or cause, will not be tolerated on campuses. All instances will be investigated and acted upon so that the campus will remain devoted to ideas based on rational consideration.

We call on the American public and all members of the academic community to join us."

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We applaud the growing list of presidents of America's colleges and universities who have committed themselves to maintaining an intimidation-free campus and commend the leadership of James O. Freedman, President Emeritus, Dartmouth College; Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame; Jehuda Reinharz, President, Brandeis University; Frank H. T. Rhodes, President Emeritus, Cornell University; H. Patrick Swygert, President, Howard University; and Stephen J. Trachtenberg, President, George Washington University, who initiated and circulated this statement.



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