

March 31, 2025

Dear President Kumar and Provost Genco:

We are Tufts faculty and staff who are among the more than three thousand signatories to the [Not In Our Name](#) letter, an effort organized by [Concerned Jewish Faculty & Staff - Boston Area](#), which emerged in part to counteract the false and dangerous premise that criticism of Israel constitutes antisemitism or creates a hostile environment for Jewish students.

The detention of Tufts PhD student Rûmeysa Öztürk by Federal immigration authorities offers a terrifying reminder that criminalizing disagreement—whether with Israeli or U.S. policy—threatens the freedom of all students and faculty, and must be forcefully rejected by university leaders.

To that end, we are writing as faculty with diverse points of view and backgrounds, but who all identify as Jewish, to offer our advice and support and to urge you to commit to the following actions and principles:

- Defend our students. We are heartened by President Kumar's message indicating that Tufts did not assist in any way with this student's detention. We urge you to continue to provide legal support and other resources to attain her freedom.
- Condemn the actions of groups like Canary Mission and Betar USA and their disturbing use as the surveillance arm of the Trump administration's authoritarian crackdown on free expression. We note that in June 2023 the Dean of Berkeley School of Law [published a letter](#) warning of the site's dangers to student's employment prospects; only two years later we are now in a situation where being profiled by this site and others like it may lead to a student's immediate detention and potential deportation.
- Listen to the [over 1300 Jewish academics](#) who have urged Congress not to codify the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism precisely because it erroneously conflates criticism of Israel (and anti-Zionism) with antisemitism. Make a commitment that Tufts will not follow Harvard's dangerous precedent of basing university policy on the offensive and insulting suggestion that criticism of Israel is anti-Jewish – a suggestion that presumes our loyalty to a foreign nation.
- As you know, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has given [Tufts a "C" on its "antisemitism report card."](#) We urge you to ignore this piece of cynical and dangerous theatrics. While it is a given that Tufts should take antisemitism seriously, this is another transparent move by the Trump administration to concentrate power and erode university independence under the offensive pretext of "protect[ing] Jewish students." The ADL has discredited its own once-valuable data gathering work by [conflating anti-Israel political speech with antisemitic hate crimes](#), [smearing Jews](#) who make common-sense appeals for peace in the Middle East, refusing to censure right-wing antisemitism, and even [defending billionaire Elon Musk's recent Nazi-style salute](#). Please understand that the ADL has now aligned itself with those who pose the greatest threat to Jewish safety and does not speak for us.
- We applaud the University's participation in litigation to fight the Trump administration's cuts to NIH funding and urge you to similarly join and support other universities and the AAUP in using every available legal mechanism to fight these assaults on international students and freedom of academic speech and inquiry.

The Trump administration does not represent us. We hope you will. To do so, you'll need to reject dangerous narratives coming from the Trump administration and allied organizations like the ADL. You'll need to listen to the broad range of perspectives that animate your own campus, including Jewish colleagues who criticize Israel. **We accordingly request a meeting with you at your earliest**

convenience. We are eager to provide support and help you strategize about Tufts' response to these unprecedented attacks.

Sincerely,

Rachel Applebaum, Associate Professor of History

Ian Blaustein, Lecturer in Philosophy

Sean B. Cash, Chair, Division of Agriculture, Food, and Environment, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

Steve Cohen, Senior Lecturer in Education

Lee Edelman, Fletcher Professor of English Literature

Larry Feig, Professor of Developmental, Molecular and Chemical Biology

Gary Goldstein, Professor, Physics & Astronomy

Judith Haber, Professor of English

Sonia Hofkosh, Associate Professor & Chair, English

Joshua Kritzer, Professor, Dept. of Chemistry

Peter Levine, Lincoln Filene Professor

Joseph Litvak, Harriet H. Fay Professor of Literature

Beatrice Manz, Professor Emerita of History

William A. Masters, Professor, Friedman School of Nutrition and Department of Economics

Heather S. Nathans, Professor, Theatre, Dance, & Performance Studies; Nathan & Alice Gantcher Professor in Judaic Studies

Beatrice Lorge Rogers, Professor of Economics and Food Policy, Friedman Nutrition School

Joel Rosenberg, Lee S. McCollester Assoc. Prof. of Biblical Literature, Assoc. Prof. of Judaic Studies, Director, Program in Judaic Studies

Emily Quigley, Assistant Director

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Nathan Wolff, Associate Professor of English

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