



## ROHR CENTER *for* JEWISH LIFE

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May 6, 2025

Chairman Michael Kim  
Board of Managers  
Haverford College

### Letter to the Haverford Board of Managers Concerning Antisemitism at Haverford

Dear Chairman Kim  
& Members of the Haverford Board of Managers:

Since we opened the Rohr Center for Jewish Life at Haverford in 2006, we have worked every day to create a home away from home for Jewish students—a place where everyone is welcome to explore, celebrate, and live their Jewish identity. Over the past 19 years, thousands of students have gathered in our Chabad House for Shabbat dinners, holiday celebrations, Talmud study, social action and service programs, and simply to find belonging and community.

Under six Haverford administrations, we've been proud to stand alongside the College in its mission to build an inclusive campus that honors the dignity and worth of every individual. We've never spoken out against the College. We've never publicly criticized its leadership. We've simply tried to serve—to support Haverford and its students in every way we could.

**But today, we can no longer remain silent.**

Over the past 18 months, we have become a shoulder for students to cry on. In the past, students primarily sought solace on our couch after personal loss or tragedy. Now, it's students, faculty, and staff grieving something harder to name—the feeling of being invisible, ignored, excluded and attacked by the very community they love.

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Even before October 7—but especially in its aftermath—we’ve seen students feeling ostracized and shunned because of their Jewish identities. Many are afraid that simply mentioning they’re Jewish, without making it clear that they’re anti-Zionist, will lead to immediate social backlash. Too many are afraid to share with friends that they went to a Shabbat dinner at the Chabad House, worried it will get them pushed out of friend groups or campus spaces. This climate has left students feeling unsafe, isolated, and unsure of where they belong on campus—and this pervasive environment has been allowed to fester for far too long.

For more than a year, we’ve pleaded with Haverford’s administration to acknowledge this issue and take responsibility for addressing it. Yet even that basic recognition has not come. When our students were mocked, harassed, and excluded, our posters were repeatedly torn down—and finally, one perpetrator was caught—we expected urgency, a meeting to acknowledge what we’d endured, and a commitment that it would be taken seriously. But none of that came. In fact, we haven’t heard from this administration once this entire academic year. Not a single call or message: “How are your students doing?” “Have there been other incidents we should know about?”

We’ve pleaded again and again for meaningful action, for concrete policy changes. And when the few meetings did occur, we left feeling even more distraught—faced with an administration unwilling, or unable, to take concerns of antisemitism seriously. It has felt not only like a failure to manage this crisis, but a profound unwillingness to confront the reality.

**And with every ignored plea, every moment when our students’ pain was met with a shrug, trust has eroded.** When a classic antisemitic blood libel is promoted on campus and the administration’s solution is simply to change the name, it sends a message: your dignity is negotiable. When students ask for a plan to keep them safe and are told instead to “be brave,” it tells them their safety doesn’t matter. These aren’t isolated incidents. They are signals—over and over again—that the administration will not take their fears seriously. **And after so many signals, that trust hasn’t just worn thin—it has broken.**

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We cannot ignore what's happening. The rise in antisemitism at Haverford is real. It's deep. It's painful. And it's tearing at the very fabric of inclusion and respect that Haverford claims to stand for. Under this administration, Jewish students have been marginalized, ostracized, and at times outright attacked. Meanwhile, their pain has been met with indifference. Their voices have been silenced. Their safety has been compromised.

For too long, the administration has turned a blind eye to antisemitic harassment, vandalism, and smear campaigns targeting Jewish students—especially those who express a connection to Israel. We've watched concern after concern brushed aside. We've watched warnings met with denial. We've watched as almost 19 long months since October 7 pass without meaningful action.

Now, as President Raymond prepares to testify before the House Committee on Education and Workforce on May 7, we ask the Board of Managers to meet this moment with honesty. This is an opportunity—not to defend Haverford, but to take responsibility, to acknowledge past failures, and to commit, boldly and sincerely, to making things right.

When we first learned of this hearing, we hoped—truly hoped—it would spark urgent conversation. We hoped to be partners in charting a path forward, alongside our students, Club Chai, the Jewish Faculty and Staff Association, and Hillel. Instead, we were *all* left out. And now, as we see Jewish leaders from other campuses standing publicly in support of their presidents at this very hearing—because they were invited into honest dialogue and real collaboration—we are truly saddened that we cannot, in good conscience, do the same for Haverford.

The truth is clear: Haverford has a serious antisemitism problem. And until the College fully acknowledges and addresses it, we cannot pretend otherwise.

(We know there are those who will deny this problem or insist it's being exaggerated. Some of these anonymous voices even claim the mantle of Jewish identity. But just because *some* Jewish community members report feeling safe doesn't mean *other* members aren't genuinely afraid. Safety cannot be decided by a comfortable few who

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marginalize the experiences of the rest; the true barometer of tolerance is when *everyone* can feel safe. Moreover, the groups claiming that all is well have lost credibility by excusing Hamas terrorism, bullying Jewish peers, branding Israel as an illegitimate genocidal terror state, and offering cover for ugly antisemitism on campus.)

We've attached an addendum summarizing our past attempts to bring this issue to the attention of President Raymond and her administration. This timeline is critical to understanding why we remain skeptical of last-minute pledges of new policies and changed hearts. While we sincerely hope for a turning point, real transformation cannot be a performance driven by outside pressure. It must be genuine, deep, and lasting.

**We urge the Board to promptly take the following steps, announcing a commitment to action that shows the College's recent statements are not just empty words, but a genuine pledge to turn the page and make meaningful changes:**

1. **Hire a new, independent staff member before the Fall semester begins**, chosen in consultation with affected parties, who reports directly to the College's general counsel, and who is solely responsible for reviewing, investigating, and responding to antisemitism on campus, past and present.
2. **Establish a Commission on Antisemitism within 45 days** to investigate the history, causes, and impact of antisemitism at Haverford; review College policies and practices; document administrative responses; gather testimony from affected students and stakeholders; and propose governance and admissions changes to prevent future harm and ensure Jewish students feel welcome.
3. **Commit to implementing mandatory antisemitism training for faculty and students starting Fall 2025** and conduct a full review of the Customs orientation program, ensure student-directed content complies with Haverford policies, and incorporate a dedicated session on antisemitism so every new student arrives with a clear understanding of what antisemitism looks like, how it manifests, and why it must be prevented.

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Please know: it brings us no joy to write this letter. Nothing pains us more than to have to speak publicly about the breakdown of trust between Haverford and its Jewish community. We want nothing more than to rebuild that trust, to deepen the relationship, to be able to tell Jewish students and their parents—with sincerity—that Haverford is a place where they are safe, valued, and protected from discrimination. But until that day comes, we feel a moral obligation to speak the truth.

We share this letter in the deep hope that better days lie ahead. Through it all, we remain committed to supporting Jewish students and working toward a stronger, more inclusive Haverford for everyone. We urge you to take the difficult but necessary steps to set things right.

We remain confident that the College will not only turn the page and overcome the current crisis, but will once again become a source of immense pride and beacon of light and hope for its student and alumni communities and beyond.

Sincerely,

**Rabbi Eli Gurevitz & Blumie Gurevitz**

Directors, Rohr Center for Jewish Life – Chabad House at Haverford

*Addendum Follows on next page*

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### Addendum: Timeline of Reports to Haverford Administration Regarding Antisemitism Concerns

#### *Introduction*

Over the past 19 months, we raised urgent concerns over and over again with the administration about rising antisemitism on campus. What began as isolated antisemitic incidents before October 2023 quickly escalated into a sustained pattern of harassment, exclusion, and lawlessness. ***This timeline does not list the many disturbing incidents of antisemitic harassment and discrimination that have taken place at Haverford during this period.*** Instead, it summarizes our repeated outreach and Haverford's missed opportunities in responding to this crisis, documenting a troubling pattern of warnings dismissed, bias reports ignored, and leadership absent until external pressure forced acknowledgement.

#### *October 2023 – Aftermath of October 7*

Jewish students were devastated by both the Hamas massacre in Israel and by Haverford peers celebrating or justifying the attack. In the months that followed, Jewish students increasingly became the target of bullying and harassment. We expressed concern to President Raymond and her senior staff on multiple occasions, warning that the environment was becoming intolerable.

#### *November 2023 – Senior Staff Fuel Campus Divisions*

After the tragic shooting of a Palestinian student in Vermont, we issued a message of unity:

The Jewish and Muslim communities must be supported and protected. The pain of one community is no excuse for a hateful attack on the other.

We condemned efforts to weaponize the shooting to isolate Jewish students and called out vilification of a Haverford student based on her pro-Israel views. In an email to President Raymond, we warned:

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Validating the direct vilification of a Haverford student is beyond the pale... [and] will ultimately minimize antisemitism, empower those targeting Jewish students, and silence pro-Israel voices on campus.

President Raymond never responded to our concerns, and other senior staff cast inflammatory accusations against Israel during a campus-wide event, further isolating the Jewish community. Those tasked with fostering unity and addressing incidents of antisemitic bias and discrimination were, in fact, the ones fueling division.

### *December 2023 – Meeting Request Ignored*

In an email to President Raymond dated December 2023, we wrote:

We would really like to meet with you over break or before students return in January to brainstorm and find ways together to affect change.

We followed up in January 2024, but President Raymond declined to meet. Instead, she referred us to Dean McKnight and Vice President Young. In response, we wrote:

New policies and specific changes are the only way to make Haverford a warm place for Jews. We also know that changes start at the top—this is why we specifically asked to meet with you.

In a second follow-up email that month, we explained that we wanted to be able to assure students, parents, and alumni that Haverford leadership understood the crisis and was taking action, but made clear that “a meeting with you is necessary before we can make those assurances.”

All these entreaties were ignored.

### *January–February 2024 – Leadership Absence Continues*

Despite repeated follow-ups, President Raymond remained unresponsive. After Bryn Mawr convened its senior leadership to engage Jewish leaders, we again pleaded with Haverford to follow suit, writing:

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We would love to reassure students, parents and alumni that Haverford is also taking the antisemitism on campus seriously.

A meeting eventually took place between concerned Jewish leadership and senior staff, but President Raymond did not attend. Rather than assuaging our concerns, the deans in attendance denied that there was a problem, putting the onus on our students to embrace “bravery” rather than expect “safety.”

We left the meetings feeling hurt and unheard. There was not an ounce of support for our community in pain.

The one consensus of the meeting was that we had to communicate more often and have another meeting within 2 or 3 weeks. But Haverford administrators never followed up to make that happen.

*March 2024 – Despite New Policy, Haverford Continues to Tolerate Antisemitism*

President Raymond announced a new anti-bias policy that was supposed to demonstrate “a commitment to the free and open exchange of ideas, while making clear the distinction between protected speech, on the one hand, and discrimination, harassment, and/or bias on the other.” In practice, this policy failed because reports of discrimination went ignored.

For example, we reported to President Raymond and Dean McKnight that an event titled “Israel’s Weaponization of COVID Against Palestinians” was spreading antisemitic blood libels. We wrote:

This event spreads actual blood libels against the Jewish people and further isolates our community... immediate intervention and a strong voice of leadership condemning these antisemitic tropes [is needed].

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But the administration only required the group to change the event's name, not its content. So we followed up:

Students are leaving campus or hiding in their rooms... going to bed with tears rolling down their cheeks... they feel isolated and lonely and find themselves in a horrible situation.

We warned that "until the admin takes a clear stance against antisemitism by acknowledging that it exists and naming the mass intimidation for what it is... this will continue to be a harmful place for Jews."

President Raymond responded only with vague statements about "expressive freedom" and "learning opportunities."

### *April 2024 – President Raymond Shrugs Off Concerns with Bias Reporting System*

We finally met with President Raymond to express our concerns directly. We discussed issues with the lack of oversight for Haverford's bias reporting system and the staff members responsible for addressing reports of antisemitism. President Raymond provided no meaningful assurances or commitments.

### *May 2024 – Failure to Address Reported Antisemitic Incidents*

Social media posts labeled an Israeli vendor's products as "blood donuts." Despite bias reports, the posts remained online. We raised concerns in an email to Vice President Young, who replied:

We take seriously the harm and negative impact the blood imagery has on members of our community and will continue to do what we can to foster a more inclusive environment.

However, no actions were taken to hold the responsible parties accountable.

### *June 2024 – President Raymond Declines to Reach Out After Lawsuit Filed*

Following the news of the lawsuit, we wrote to President Raymond and reiterated our commitment to Jewish life at Haverford:

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This is a sad turn of events in an already difficult chapter... Nonetheless, the Chabad House is not a party to this litigation... We intend to continue working with you and in particular hope to make much-needed progress on addressing the issues immediately affecting Jewish students.

Once again, we invited dialogue:

Please feel free to reach out at any time. We look forward to working together to make Haverford the learning community of friends it aspires to be.

President Raymond declined, citing "demands on [her] time."

### *August 2024 – Voicing Our Concerns*

In August 2024, we wrote to President Raymond and her senior staff regarding their plans to address antisemitism on campus before the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. We noted that "many other campuses are actively reviewing their policies and working to ensure that the administration has tools to respond effectively when those policies are violated and Jewish students experience harm." But "with the Fall semester now less than a month away," we were "profoundly concerned by Haverford's passive stance in the face of a rising tide of hatred and intolerance on our campus." We underscored that "Haverford needs to be prepared to address these incidents before they spill over into harassment, bullying, and outright violence." As we reminded President Raymond:

Despite our persistent urging, Haverford has not incorporated mandatory antisemitism training in first year orientation or at any other stage. Given the blatant antisemitism repeatedly displayed by students and faculty last year, mandatory training on antisemitism for all community members (among other required training) should be a no-brainer. Yet no such training sessions have been planned for the upcoming year, nor have any new policies been presented defining the parameters of unacceptable antisemitic speech or conduct and setting forth the consequences for such violations.

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We pleaded for Haverford to “initiate mandatory training on antisemitism for faculty and student leaders, add a dedicated one-hour session on antisemitism during customs, and clarify the bounds of antisemitic speech and conduct...” We urged President Raymond to “make it your utmost priority to restore an inclusive community for all students at Haverford, including students who proudly identify as Jewish and pro-Israel.”

### *Fall 2024 – No Change in Policy*

During the Fall 2024 semester, Haverford made none of the policy changes we recommended. There was no mandatory antisemitism training, no clear definition of antisemitic speech or conduct, and no outlined sanctions for violations—even after the disruption of the ADL Antisemitism 101 event in September. Unlike other colleges, Haverford did not form a committee to study antisemitism; instead, it deferred entirely to its “Ad Hoc Committee on Freedom of Expression, Learning, and Community,” which only released interim recommendations in late April 2025, after the Committee had already summoned President Raymond.

Then Haverford’s own bias policy was turned against us. In the midst of the High Holidays in September 2024, Vice President Young summoned us to meet on an emergency basis, citing bias reports about “communications from and access to Chabad.” When we asked for clarity and transparency on what the complaints entailed or how the policy was being applied, the urgency disappeared—and we never received a follow-up. In the Jews at Haverford litigation, the College later claimed that this bias policy never existed.

### *April 2025 – Change of Tone Under Congressional Scrutiny*

On April 10, the Committee announced that President Raymond had been invited to testify as part of an investigation into “the rise of antisemitism on college campuses, including Haverford College.” Under pressure, President Raymond finally labeled poster vandalism as “antisemitic acts”—a year after dismissing the same actions as the result of “benign mechanisms.”

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### *May 2, 2025 – President Raymond's Claim of Engagement*

As the May 7 hearing date approached, President Raymond publicly claimed on May 2 to be in “ongoing dialogue” with Jewish campus partners. We are not aware of any Jewish campus leadership being engaged in conversation. (After sending her message, President Raymond reached out to us on May 2 to schedule a meeting after commencement. We plan to attend the meeting with open hearts as we hope for real change.)

We therefore cannot agree with President Raymond's claim that she has ‘listened to your stories and learned from those directly impacted by antisemitism.’ Sadly, the experience of many Jewish community members has been quite the opposite.

### *Conclusion*

Over the past 19 months, we have made repeated efforts urging Haverford to take the worsening crisis of antisemitism seriously. Time and again, those appeals were met with silence, defensiveness, or outright denial. Only now, under the spotlight of a congressional investigation, has the College begun to respond. We call on the Board to recognize this moment as a turning point and to act on our three recommendations to build a safer, more inclusive future for all members of the Haverford community.

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