

March 11, 2019

### **A Message from President Lenton Against Anti-Semitism**

**Office of the President**

1050 KANEFF TOWER  
4700 KEELE ST.  
TORONTO ON  
CANADA M3J 1P3  
T 416 736 5200  
[www.yorku.ca/president](http://www.yorku.ca/president)

York University is one of the most diverse institutions in Canada. That diversity is a great strength and one of our core values as a community.

As a university, York is committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of humankind. Encouraging free and open debate, even on controversial subjects, is an integral part of what we do as an institution of higher learning.

However, free and open debate is never a license to engage in speech that is hateful, discriminatory, or incites violence against an individual or a group. We expect all members of our community to protect the dignity and human rights of every person. Our shared responsibility is to ensure that students who come to learn can do so in a safe, respectful environment free of hate or discrimination of any kind.

We have zero tolerance for hate – and there is no place for it here at York University.

Over the past few weeks, I have been made aware of several disturbing examples of anti-semitic statements being made on social media and on campus. Let me be absolutely clear: Anti-semitism is not tolerated on our campuses.

We take all incidents of hate within our community seriously. They are investigated thoroughly, and community members found to have made hateful statements will face disciplinary action by the university or even criminal consequences under hate speech laws. I urge every member of the York community to review [Hate Propaganda: A Guide for Students, Faculty and Staff](#) published by our Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion. I also find the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Working Definition of Antisemitism](#) to be a useful guideline.

We encourage members of the York community to come forward and report incidents to us whenever and wherever they occur. When we become aware of a potentially hateful statement, we first collect evidence and verify the details of the incident. If appropriate, we then initiate disciplinary action. Where possible, we remove related materials (such as graffiti or social media posts) from public view, to prevent further harm. We also reach out to impacted individuals and community groups to offer support.

Let us be critical. Let us be challenging and provocative as we seek to further human understanding of complex issues. But let us never, as individuals and as a community, sink to the level of hatred and discrimination.

Sincerely,



Rhonda L. Lenton,  
President & Vice Chancellor

