

STATEMENT

OCTOBER 12, 2023

To the Oakland University community,

As the crisis in the Middle East continues, we keep in our hearts the families and friends of all people who are tragically impacted by the senseless and atrocious acts of cruelty and violence.

We must do all that we can to make sure Oakland University remains a model of civility whereby everyone respects the First Amendment right of all people to peacefully express their views. In that regard, we also must be vigilant and responsible that rhetoric does not descend into advocating for targeted aggression, inciting violence or promoting hatred.

Unfortunately, the ongoing crisis may lead to feelings and acts based on Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. As a university, we will not tolerate discrimination or demeaning acts motivated by prejudice. If you are a victim or witness any harassment or bullying, please report the incident to the Dean of Students Office (<https://www.oakland.edu/deanofstudents/>).

For decades, our campus has distinguished itself by advancing an understanding of people from diverse cultures, ethnicities, religions, and races. Today, we must pull together to make sure that we remain an open and welcoming campus where all students, faculty, and staff feel safe and secure in a learning environment.

In these difficult times, we extend our compassion and support to anyone who might be struggling with the devastating news coming from the Middle East. If you need help coping, please contact the OU Counseling Center (<https://www.oakland.edu/oucc/>) or the SEHS Counseling Center (<https://www.oakland.edu/counseling/sehs-cc/>). These no-cost services are designed to help students, faculty and staff manage stress, anxiety, depression, and other related issues.

As an institution of higher learning, our position is clear: There is no justification for perpetuating hatred, violence, and terrorist acts on innocent people – anywhere or at any time. We renew our support and stand with those who grieve and are outraged at the immoral transgressions and unspeakably inhumane acts of the past week.

With the lessons of history firmly in mind, we must recommit to the values that unite people, honor a pluralistic society, and create a peaceful world. May we work together in our mission to become a model campus of diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

Let us stand united,

Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, M.D., President
Oakland University