

## Louise Hainline

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**From:** President Karen L. Gould <bcpresident@brooklyn.cuny.edu@mail169.atl21.rsgsv.net> on behalf of President Karen L. Gould <bcpresident@brooklyn.cuny.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2015 11:33 AM  
**To:** Louise Hainline  
**Subject:** An Important Message from the President

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2900 Bedford Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11210  
Tel 718.951.5671 • Fax 718.951.4872  
[www.brooklyn.cuny.edu](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu)

**From President Karen L. Gould**

Dear campus community members,

Recently, hateful anti-Semitic graffiti was found on a men's restroom wall in the Library, and a second graffiti message was seen on the third floor of Ingersoll Hall and is being investigated.

On this first day of Passover and Good Friday, I am writing to you to restate our collective commitment to a cooperative and respectful learning environment and to denounce these hateful acts in the strongest possible terms.

We are a dynamic campus made stronger by the broad range of backgrounds and experiences of our students, faculty, and staff. While we may not always agree with one another on particular issues, hateful messages towards any ethnic, cultural, religious or racial group have no place on our campus and will not be tolerated.

I hope you will join me in ensuring that our diverse community remains firmly committed to fostering respectful interaction and civil dialogue.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Gould

President

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## Louise Hainline

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**From:** President Karen L. Gould  
<communications=brooklyn.cuny.edu@mail47.atl161.mcsv.net> on behalf of President Karen L. Gould <communications@brooklyn.cuny.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 22, 2016 1:47 PM  
**To:** Louise Hainline  
**Subject:** An Important Message From The President

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[www.brooklyn.cuny.edu](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu)

**From President Karen L. Gould**

Dear campus community members,

Recently, the photograph of one of our Muslim students featured on a study abroad poster was defaced in an ugly, disrespectful manner. This was a deplorable act.

A year ago, I wrote to you about the troubling anti-Semitic graffiti found in two locations on campus. At that time, I emphasized the importance of upholding our collective commitment to a respectful learning environment in which hateful messages towards any ethnic, cultural, religious or racial group are not tolerated.

I reiterate today that intolerance in any form is deeply contrary to our vision and values. We know that we are made stronger by our diversity. It is up to each one of us to ensure that all are treated with respect and dignity.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Gould

President

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## Louise Hainline

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**From:** Karen L. Gould, President <bcpresident@brooklyn.cuny.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 28, 2013 10:50 AM  
**To:** Staff E-Mail  
**Subject:** Upholding the principles of academic freedom with respect and civility

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Each semester, student clubs, academic departments, and other groups on our campus host events and invite speakers on a broad range of topics. At times, the issues discussed may be challenging and the points of view expressed may be controversial.

Next week, Students for Justice in Palestine is hosting two speakers who will discuss their views on the BDS movement, which calls for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. The event is co-sponsored by several campus and community organizations, including the political science department.

As an institution of higher education, it is incumbent upon us to uphold the tenets of academic freedom and allow our students and faculty to engage in dialogue and debate on topics they may choose, even those with which members of our campus and broader community may vehemently disagree. As your president, I consistently have demonstrated my commitment to these principles so that our college community may consider complex issues and points of view across the political and cultural spectrum.

Unfortunately, some may believe that our steadfast commitment to free speech signals an institutional endorsement of a particular point of view. Nothing could be further from the truth. Brooklyn College does not endorse the views of the speakers visiting our campus next week, just as it has not endorsed those of previous visitors to our campus with opposing views. We do, however, uphold their right to speak, and the rights of our students and faculty to attend, listen, and fully debate. We also encourage our students and faculty to explore these issues from multiple viewpoints and in a variety of forums so that no single perspective serves as the sole source of information or basis for consideration.

In addition, as I have said on several occasions, our college community values mutual respect and civil discourse. We ask all students, faculty, staff, and guests on our campus to conduct themselves accordingly so that Brooklyn College continues to be a learning environment where all may discuss and debate issues of importance to our world.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Gould  
President

## Louise Hainline

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**From:** Karen L. Gould, President <bcpresident@brooklyn.cuny.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 04, 2013 10:50 AM  
**To:** Staff E-Mail  
**Subject:** A steadfast commitment to academic freedom with a commitment to ongoing dialogue and debate

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

During the past week, due to an upcoming event about the BDS movement, our campus has been wrestling with issues of tremendous importance to our college and our community. There are passionate views on many sides. While we appreciate the many voices of support for our stand on academic freedom, we cannot disregard the concerns raised by some of our students and alumni.

First, however, let me be clear: Our commitment to the principles of academic freedom remains steadfast. Students and faculty, including academic departments, programs, and centers, have the right to invite speakers, engage in discussion, and present ideas to further educational discussion and debate. The mere invitation to speak does not indicate an endorsement of any particular point of view, and there is no obligation, as some have suggested, to present multiple perspectives at any one event. In this case, the department's co-sponsorship of the event is an invitation to participate; it does not indicate an endorsement of the speakers' positions. Providing an open forum to discuss important topics, even those many find highly objectionable, is a centuries-old practice on university campuses around the country. Indeed, this spirit of inquiry and critical debate is a hallmark of the American education system.

At the same time, it is essential that Brooklyn College remain an engaged and civil learning environment where all views may be expressed without fear of intimidation or reprisal. As I stated last week, we encourage debate, discussion, and more debate. Students and faculty should explore these and other issues from multiple viewpoints and in a variety of forums so that no single perspective serves as the only basis for consideration. Contrary to some reports, the Department of Political Science fully agrees and has reaffirmed its longstanding policy to give equal consideration to co-sponsoring speakers who represent any and all points of view.

Over the next two months, with the support of the Wolfe Institute for the Humanities and other campus units and community groups, we will provide multiple opportunities for discussion about the topics and related subject matter at the heart of this controversy. In addition to Thursday evening's event, at which I encourage those with opposing views to participate in the discussion and ask tough questions, other forums will present alternative perspectives for consideration. The college welcomes participation from any groups on our campus that may wish to help broaden the dialogue. At each of these events, please keep in mind that students, faculty, staff, and guests are expected to treat one another with respect at all times, even when they strongly disagree.

Finally, to those who have voiced concern that our decision to uphold the rights of our students and faculty signals an endorsement of the speakers' views, I say again that nothing could be further from the truth. Moreover, I assure you that our college does not endorse the BDS movement nor support its call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel. As the official host of the CUNY center for study abroad in Israel, our college has a proud history of engagement with Israel and Israeli universities. In fact, over the past two years we have renewed our efforts to reconnect with existing institutional partners and to develop new relationships as well for faculty and student exchanges with Israeli institutions. We deeply value our Israeli partners and would not endorse any action that would imperil the State of Israel or its citizens, many of whom are family members and friends of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and neighbors.

As one of the most diverse colleges in the country, it is particularly important that Brooklyn College foster an inclusive environment where all may voice their points of view across the full spectrum of social, political, and cultural issues of our time. As Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wisely stated nearly a century ago, when one finds another's speech offensive, "...the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence." Together, we must work to ensure that on our campus more and more speech continues to occur so that our students can be broadened in their knowledge, challenged in their thinking, and encouraged to bring their own analysis and values to bear on a wide range of topics of local, national, and global interest.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Gould  
President

## Louise Hainline

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**From:** Karen L. Gould, President <bcpresident@brooklyn.cuny.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 31, 2011 8:50 PM  
**To:** Staff E-Mail  
**Subject:** Appointment of Kristofer Petersen-Overton

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Over the past several days, as a result of a provostial decision about an adjunct appointment, Brooklyn College has been thrust into a debate about academic freedom. This debate has been fueled at times by inflammatory rhetoric and mischaracterization of the facts. It is unfortunate that matters of utmost importance to our college community can be so rapidly co-opted by those with a political agenda and distorted by the media.

I stand united with you: We must never allow decisions about our students' education to be swayed by outside influence. In the matter at hand, this certainly has not been the case. On behalf of every member of this institution, I reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the principles of academic freedom, faculty governance, and standards of excellence.

Today, the Department of Political Science and its appointments committee voted unanimously to recommend Kristofer Petersen-Overton to teach a graduate course on the Middle East. Based on information that has come to light, they are confident he has sufficient depth of knowledge and the intellectual capacity to successfully lead a graduate seminar. The provost now supports their recommendation, and I am in full agreement.

Brooklyn College continues to have a strong commitment to academic freedom. As one of the most diverse campuses in the United States, we value civil discourse on even the most difficult topics. We believe that open, substantive dialogue between those with different points of view is an essential component of a 21st-century education.

Equally essential are academic standards that ensure an excellent education for all students at all levels. During this calendar year, we will work together as faculty and administrators to ensure that our graduate programs are of the highest caliber.

It is now time for us to come together as a community and welcome Mr. Petersen-Overton to Brooklyn College. We wish him and his students a productive, rewarding semester of graduate study.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Gould  
President