

January 11, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your January 7th letter. I hope you were able to take some time to rest and be with loved ones over the holiday break.

I read the national survey by ADL-Hillel that you attached and I too am extremely troubled that one-third of Jewish college students have reported personally experiencing antisemitism on their campuses. Antisemitism is a national scourge, and at USC, we will not be blind to this injustice.

USC has a long history as a campus with a vibrant Jewish community. Throughout my tenure as President, I have witnessed firsthand the incredible contributions Jewish students, faculty, staff and alumni have made to our university, and the warmth and interest with which Jewish culture, history and traditions are supported in so many ways on our campuses. I have also had the opportunity to personally meet with hundreds of Jewish students at Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations, and have heard the passion they - and even their non-Jewish friends and peers - have for this community.

It is for these reasons and many more that combating antisemitism in all its forms is of utmost importance to me, and to our leadership team. Many offices across both campuses, including our Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, have been working hard for years to identify and address ways in which we can better support our Jewish community.

Since I last wrote you on December 15th, I have listened to and consulted with leaders and members of the Jewish community, and there have been several additional developments to share:

- Soon, I will represent USC at a national presidents' summit on antisemitism in higher education hosted by Hillel International, the American Jewish Committee and the American Council on Education. University leaders will come together to collaborate on strategies to address this and other serious concerns about the safety and well-being of our Jewish students. I look forward to working with my counterparts across the country to find ways to combat antisemitism on college campuses.
- We are exploring ways to integrate Jewish representation across our university-wide Diversity and Inclusion efforts, including as part of anti-bias training.

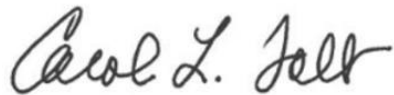
- Finally, we launched a new Advisory Committee on Jewish Life, made up of students, faculty, staff, and community members. The Advisory Committee will review a number of proposed actions, including launching a campus climate survey to gather additional data on religious identification and discrimination within our campus community, and identify additional ways we can tangibly support Jewish and Zionist students, faculty and staff. We were privileged to receive enthusiastic responses from organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federation, and the American Jewish Committee, who are excited to partner with us in this important endeavor.

A critical responsibility of this new Advisory Committee will be to help us identify a university-wide position that demonstrates our commitment to fighting antisemitism in all its forms. As you can appreciate, the University is asked to sign numerous statements, definitions, petitions and declarations that, in your words, “span a range of political views.” I am asking the Advisory Committee – along with the Academic Senate – to review these requests, develop criteria for evaluating them, and propose recommendations for next steps. This process will be essential not only to our work combating antisemitism, but also to helping us be more thoughtful as we fight for diversity and inclusion across USC.

I know you may have more questions about our efforts, and I am looking forward to further engaging with you. On Thursday, I will be sharing a letter with our larger Jewish community detailing these and other systemic actions we are taking. I am committed to continuing to work with all of our students, faculty, staff, and partners to move forward positively.

Thank you again for writing to me. I appreciate having you as partners as we strengthen our support for our Jewish students. Antisemitism has no place at USC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol L. Folt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol L. Folt
President