



August 17, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader, President
Kingsborough Community College
2001 Oriental Boulevard
Brooklyn, NY 11235-2398

Dear Dr. Schrader:

We write on behalf of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), the oldest pro-Israel organization in the U.S. and a leader in the fight against campus antisemitism, including at the City University of New York (CUNY). We were horrified to learn that despite a very troubling history of antisemitism at Kingsborough Community College (KCC) – including last year’s [finding](#) by the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission that KCC’s Progressive Faculty Caucus and its staff union discriminated against observant Jews and Israel supporters – KCC has nevertheless commissioned a search committee for a new diversity officer position that does not include a Jewish member, but does include someone openly hostile to the Jewish state of Israel.

In your [message to the campus community on June 1, 2021](#), you acknowledged that “[t]oo many of us have been on the receiving end of the rhetoric of hate because of who we are and what we believe.” You told the community that “[a]t KCC we must be better and do better,” and you announced that KCC would be seeking to fill a new position: Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, to address antisemitism, among other issues and problems. The [job posting](#) for this position likewise makes it clear that this new assistant dean would be tasked with addressing antisemitism, among other concerns.

Given KCC’s expectations for this prospective diversity officer, it is impossible to fathom how KCC could constitute a search committee for the diversity officer that includes an open supporter of the anti-Israel, antisemitic boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement. We understand that KCC has refused to divulge the names of the members of the search committee, even though the search process should be open and transparent from beginning to end. But according to a [news report](#), the search committee disturbingly includes Lili Shi who signed a [pro-BDS statement](#) last year. The statement falsely accused Israel of, among other things, “apartheid” and “war crimes,” and it denied the Jewish people’s right to a nation-state in their religious and ancestral homeland by categorizing them as “colonialists” rather than indigenous to this land for thousands of years.

To our knowledge, Ms. Shi has not supported BDS against China, Russia, or any other truly human rights abusing country. Only Israel, the one Jewish state in the world, has been targeted for condemnation and punishment. That is antisemitism, plain and simple. Given her hostility to Israel, Ms. Shi is the wrong person to have any say in who is selected to ensure that Jews and Israel supporters are afforded the safe, welcoming and respectful environment that every student at KCC deserves.

Furthermore, while the search committee [reportedly](#) includes representatives of groups that have historically faced harassment and discrimination, not a single member of the committee is Jewish. It is

impossible to think that the committee, lacking a Jewish presence, will be equipped to search for, interview and recommend a prospective diversity officer who will be qualified to understand and effectively address antisemitism in all its forms, including when it is masked as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism.

This situation at KCC unfortunately is more evidence of CUNY's insensitivity and indifference to Jewish concerns, and its long history of tolerating antisemitism. CUNY's Brooklyn College was the subject of a legal action filed by the ZOA in 2013 under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, alleging that the college failed to effectively address antisemitism. In 2016, CUNY's Chancellor commissioned an independent investigation of antisemitism on four CUNY campuses, triggered by the ZOA's letter to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees, which described in detail the antisemitic hostility that Jewish students were enduring. The investigation confirmed that CUNY had been plagued by numerous antisemitic incidents and that Jewish students felt threatened, harassed and unsafe, some even fearing to identify openly as Jewish on campus. CUNY is presently the subject of at least three Title VI complaints; the ZOA's Title VI complaint is currently being investigated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. On June 30, 2022, the New York City Council's Committee on Higher Education held a hearing to examine antisemitism at CUNY and committed itself to holding CUNY accountable for failing to address this serious and longstanding problem.

We urge you to rectify this particular problem right away. To ensure that the search committee is truly prepared to select candidates for a diversity officer who is qualified to address antisemitism (among other issues), please replace the BDS supporter on the committee (and anyone else with a record of hostility toward Jews and Israel), and include a Jewish member who fully understands and is sensitive to the very pressing needs and concerns of the Jewish members of the KCC community.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,



Morton A. Klein
National President



Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.
Director, Center for Law and Justice

cc: The Honorable Lee Zeldin (via email)
The Honorable Kathy Hochul (via fax)
New York City Councilwoman Inna Vernikov (via email)
Mr. Dov Hikind, Founder, Americans Against Antisemitism (via email)
Rabbi Yaakov Menken, Managing Director, Coalition for Jewish Values (via email)