

Brown RISD Hillel Statement Regarding BDS

Brown RISD Hillel is a pluralistic center for Jewish engagement and student leadership. Our programs and community embody a broad expression of Jewish background, practice, and belief. We celebrate Jewish tradition and identity as sources of meaning, and we affirm **every** Jewish student's role in shaping the ever-emerging story of the Jewish future. Hillel is aligned with the core freedoms that have shaped Brown since its original Charter of 1764, including the "uninterrupted liberty of conscience" and a commitment to free discourse in the pursuit of truth.

Brown RISD Hillel encourages students to engage meaningfully with the land, people, and State of Israel. We support Israel's right to exist as a secure, Jewish, democratic state, and we provide a diverse set of educational platforms through which students can grow in understanding of and in relation to Israel's history, culture, promises, and challenges.

Brown RISD Hillel unequivocally rejects and opposes the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. We believe BDS amounts to a fundamental opposition to the existence of the State of Israel and unjustly singles out the Jewish state and advocates for its demonization and isolation. The BDS movement painfully disregards the safety and refuge that Israel has provided to Jews for more than 70 years and the continued need for this refuge in today's climate of increased global antisemitism.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is multifaceted and complex, containing within it threads of historical, national, and personal narratives. To grasp the fullness of the conflict, we must have a capacity to sit with multiple perspectives.

BDS rejects nuance, reduces the conflict to a single viewpoint, and is fundamentally at odds with academic freedom. By stifling discussion and debate in its calls for “anti-normalization,” BDS encourages an ideological purity test that alienates students from one another, disrupting the values of Brown’s campus, and unfairly isolates many Jewish students and student groups from the broader community. In the worst scenarios, BDS divestment campaigns have resulted in antisemitic harassment and intimidation of Jewish students on campus.

At the heart of its mission, Brown RISD Hillel encourages students to learn with and from one another across both commonality and difference. We hope our College Hill community can engage in productive discourse around paths forward in the Middle East, drawing on the kind of thoughtful analysis and dialogue that defines us as a university.

Brown RISD Hillel is fully supportive of President Paxson’s **March 2019 letter** stating that Brown should not embrace any of the planks of the BDS movement and opposing the university divestment campaign.