

Posters at UR focus on Jewish employees

Come a month after AI images depicting Gaza

Justice Marbury

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Late Sunday night, the University of Rochester campus was covered with numerous posters accusing Jewish faculty members of controversial actions related to the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

The posters targeted specific individuals, alleging that one faculty member had engaged in “ethnic cleansing” and contributed to the “displacement of Palestinians,” while another was accused of “racism,” “hate speech,” and intimidation.

“I want to be as clear as I can that the University of Rochester strongly denounces the recent display of ‘wanted’ posters targeting senior university leaders and members of our faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees,” University President Sarah Mangelsdorf said in a statement Tuesday. “This act is disturbing, divisive, and intimidating and runs counter to our values as a university.”

The posters come a month after AI-generated images depicting a Lego set of war-torn Gaza — meant to mock the destruction of the territory amid the ongoing war — were first seen in the Eastman School of Music’s Living Center on Oct. 8.

Heightened tensions on college campuses nationwide have sparked similar incidents following the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel and the subsequent escalation of the Gaza conflict.

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Posters

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Last spring, pro-Palestinian protesters constructed an encampment on campus, urging the University of Rochester to take specific actions: call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, divest from Israeli institutions, establish partnerships with Palestinian academics, and lift sanctions against students who have been suspended or arrested. The protests culminated in two brief student sit-ins at Wallis Hall, the university's main administrative building. Three days before graduation, the encampment was removed.

These incidents follow a previous episode in February when swastikas and other antisemitic messages were found on the walls of a tunnel on the University of Rochester's River Campus.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester re-

leased a statement after the incident, saying in part:

"We are deeply disturbed by these antisemitic posters on the University of Rochester campus, which have severely escalated an already tense atmosphere for Jewish students, faculty, and staff. These hateful messages are not isolated incidents but part of a troubling pattern that has created an environment where Jewish members of the university community feel both unsafe and that their civil rights have been disregarded.

The University of Rochester and President Sarah Mangelsdorf must move beyond words and take immediate, unequivocal public action to address this incident and commit to making the campus a safe, welcoming place for all, including Jewish faculty and students."

Sarah C. Mangelsdorf released a statement in response to the posters:

"Dear Members of the

University Community,

I want to be as clear as I can that the University of Rochester strongly denounces the recent display of "Wanted" posters targeting senior University leaders and members of our faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees. This act is disturbing, divisive and intimidating and runs counter to our values as a university.

Furthermore, several of those depicted appear to have been targeted because they are members of our Jewish community. We view this as antisemitism, which will not be tolerated at our University. This isn't who we are. This goes against everything we stand for and we have an obligation to reject it.

The Department of Public Safety is leading an ongoing investigation and exhausting all available resources to collect evidence and hold those involved accountable for their actions. As DPS Chief Quchee Collins said in his message yesterday, our priority as a University is to maintain a respectful and safe community for everyone."

As a Rochester native, Justice Marbury entered the world of journalism to create work where voices like hers were heard—the voices of minority communities. Marbury covers small businesses, neighborhood concerns, and the interesting people who live in Rochester's 19th Ward. As the 19th Ward reporter, she has helped implement community outreach ideas by asking what people in various communities want to read about themselves in addition to regular news. Contact her on Instagram @justice_marbury and by email at jmarbury@gannett.com.

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