

## School of Dentistry School-wide Email

Subject: Joint message regarding Middle East Conflict

Dear School of Dentistry Community,

The continued conflict in the Middle East makes it important to reiterate the School of Dentistry's collective commitment to ensuring a safe space for learning, teaching, research and patient care as oral healthcare providers. Most importantly, we want to say that our thoughts are with each and every Palestinian and Israeli member of our community, and anyone indirectly affected. We extend our sincerest condolences and support to all individuals negatively affected by the ongoing conflict. All of us share a responsibility of creating an environment that embraces our core values of inclusion, respect, compassion, and teamwork.

While we cannot control the tragic events taking place in Israel and Palestine, we should acknowledge the profound impact these events are having on many members of our school. During these difficult times, we are reminded of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr's words, "We are tied in a web of mutuality, connected by a common thread of destiny. What affects one directly, affects us all indirectly."

We encourage the members of our dental community to do their best in coming together in support and respect during these difficult times. Mutual respect and understanding is needed to further a productive learning environment for all. The facilitation of respectful and productive collaboration is encouraged to advance understanding of the conflict at large and to ensure all parties are heard and validated in both the Palestinian and Israeli experiences. As a healthcare facility, we commit to being a welcoming and inclusive community for people from all walks of life, to provide the best care to our patients regardless of their background.

The leadership here at the dental school is committed to the safety and protection of our learning environment, irrespective of personal beliefs and stances, for all students. This priority includes providing the best care to our patients. Additionally, our school's deans have an open-door policy and are ready to meet with anyone who wishes to discuss their experience at our school. Dean Nör has announced a schedule of office hours dedicated to students and we encourage you to visit him during these times and/or separately by appointment.

As a diverse and inclusive community, we have the opportunity to be thoughtful and respectful to each other. We are thankful to all who have expressed their thoughts and concerns. Your thoughtfulness reminds us of the power of intergroup dialogue to help reach greater levels of understanding and growth. We will continue to look for ways to be supportive of each other as we navigate these challenging times. Let's continue to be considerate and respectful of each other inside and outside our dental school community. On behalf of the Deans, the Jewish Student Dental Association, and the Muslim Student Dental Association, thank you for your support and understanding as we move forward together.

Sincerely,

Jacques Nör, DDS, MS, PhD  
Dean

Mohamed Kazbour (D3)  
President, Muslim Student Dental Association

Ben Makhani (D3)  
Co-President, Jewish Student Dental  
Association

Renée E. Duff, DDS, MS  
Associate Dean for Students

Todd Ester, DDS, MA  
Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity  
& Inclusion