

2/6/2014 RUTGERS HILLEL WELCOMES CHANGES AT THE DAILY TARGUM

The following letter was sent to Rutgers Hillel by *The Daily Targum* Board of Trustees, in response to Hillel's request for action following a recent anti-Semitic commentary published in the Targum. Although the Targum has no plans to publish this letter, they have given Hillel permission to share it with the community at large. It is both an apology and an affirmation of Hillel's position and requests for change at the Targum, and it is deeply appreciated.

THE TARGUM APOLOGIZES

Mr. Getraer and Ms. Lubow,

Let me start by saying we are deeply sorry. It was antisemitic, it was inaccurate and it never should have run in the paper. The response the students published in the Targum was meant as an apology to Hillel and the Rutgers community at large, but please accept this as our personal apology. As soon as the Board of Trustees was made aware of Ms. Jolly's letter to the editor, we promptly had the students remove it from The Daily Targum's website. We asked that the comments section remain online so that the community could continue to react.

The Daily Targum is an independent, student-run publication. The board is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the paper, but serves as an advisory group the students can turn to when they need assistance. In addition to the managing editor, editor-in-chief, business manager and marketing manager, the board consists of four alumni members, our comptroller and a Rutgers faculty member, staff member and student representatives.

After removing Ms. Jolly's letter from the website, the board also instructed the editor-in-chief to issue an apology and to correct some of the inaccuracies stated in her opinions piece. After learning of Ms. Jolly's letter and because of various issues over the past year — including but not limited to the editing of letters submitted by Hillel representatives, inaccuracies in opinions pieces related to Israel and Palestine, and issues of imbalance being raised — the board has taken the unusual step of requiring the editor-in-chief to submit all letters and commentary on this topic to the board for approval before they can be published. While we do not like to insert ourselves into the editorial process, we understand that there is a long history of problems here and we want you to know that we are taking steps to address them.

In direct response to your requests, please accept our apology to Rutgers Hillel and the entire Jewish community. As stated above the board is now working directly with the student editors to regulate what does and does not appear on our opinions page. The students work very hard to produce a paper five days each week while still maintaining a full course load. But they are students and they make mistakes. They have apologized for those mistakes and are working with the board to make sure this does not happen again. The editorial board is in the process of transitioning to new leadership. The current editors will be leaving in less than two weeks and a new group will be taking over. The board is exploring professional training with media industry experts. Once we decide on a program, all editors will be required to attend. We hope that you understand we cannot allow Hillel — or any other group on campus — to be involved in crafting this training.

We hope that you will accept our apology and understand that we are working to remedy this situation.

Sincerely,

The Daily Targum Board of Trustees

RUTGERS HILLEL RESPONDS

Rutgers Hillel is gratified to receive a mature and thoughtful response from *The Daily Targum* Board of Trustees, which demonstrates that leadership of the Targum understands the seriousness of this issue and is determined to change the culture and operation of our campus paper for the better.

The Targum response clearly and directly acknowledges the anti-Semitism of the commentary by Ms. Jolly, as well as the responsibility of the Targum editorial board in publishing it. It is a personal apology to Hillel and the entire Jewish community that doesn't try to hide or deflect criticism, and that is welcome and appreciated.

We especially appreciate the candor with which the Targum Board acknowledges the Targum's pattern of bias in coverage of the Jewish community and Israel. This has been an ongoing source of pain and frustration for many students and other members of the Rutgers community.

We welcome their decision to take unprecedented action to change the culture of the Targum. We are hopeful that by providing student editors with additional training and by supervising opinion and editorial pieces that deal with the Jewish community and/or Israel, such bigotry and bias will be prevented in the future.

We do understand that the Targum editors are students, that they have an extremely demanding job, and that they are often inexperienced. But they also have an extremely powerful communications platform in their hands, one that represents our state university, and with that comes an obligation to understand and use that platform responsibly. It is gratifying that *The Daily Targum* Board of Trustees is now taking action to educate student journalists so that they can fulfill this obligation in the future, for the greater good of our entire university community.

Rutgers Hillel