

May 6, 2015

Dear Friends:

We are pleased to be able to share with you positive news from Bowdoin College. Recently, student activists from Bowdoin who support the global movement to boycott, divest, and sanction Israel collected enough signatures from the student body to hold a referendum on whether to participate in the academic and cultural boycott of Israel on campus. The voting period was from Saturday, May 2nd until noon on Wednesday, May 6th. After the polls had closed and the votes were tallied, the boycott referendum failed.

The Bowdoin student body clearly voiced their opposition to a cultural and academic boycott of Israel and Israelis. I know you join us in feeling immense pride that Bowdoin students were able to protect the moral and intellectual integrity of their campus.

A total of 85% of the student body voted in the referendum, which is a uniquely high rate of participation. The referendum failed by a wide margin. 71% of students opposed the boycott and 15% abstained. Only 14% of students voted for the boycott.

During the intensity of finals week, passionate pro-Israel student leaders dedicated their time to combat this campaign. With the support of Hillel International, the Israel Action Network, the Israel on Campus Coalition, AIPAC and StandWithUs as well as the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, the students were able to organize to defeat this discriminatory boycott effort. They educated their peers by tabling in the student union every day, speaking at college houses, articulating the issue at a well-attended campus debate, authoring op-eds in the student newspaper, The Bowdoin Orient, and plastering the campus with posters. They set up a website opposing the measures ([www.nobowdoinboycott.com](http://www.nobowdoinboycott.com)), created effective networks on campus and mobilized the student body to return an overwhelming vote of "no."

We are grateful for the unwavering support of Bowdoin College President, Barry Mills, who issued the following statement on the front page of the Bowdoin website today, "There was never any question about Bowdoin College joining this movement," said Bowdoin President Barry Mills, who issued [a public statement in December 2013 strongly opposing any boycott of Israeli institutions](#). "That said, it is gratifying to see this resounding and unambiguous statement by our students who clearly understand the vital importance of open discourse between scholars and educational institutions and the free exchange of ideas and knowledge."

For additional information about the campaign, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

We are extremely proud of the Bowdoin College students for their efforts and success. *Yeshar Kochachem!*

Ellie Miller, Interim Executive Director  
Steve Brinn, Board President  
Ethan Strimling, Chair of the Community Relations Council  
Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine