



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MIT's president adds voice against academic boycott of Israeli institutions

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE STAFF | DECEMBER 31, 2013

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MIT's president, L. Rafael Reif, has added his voice in opposition to the recent decision by a US organization of scholars [to boycott Israeli academic institutions](#).

"The concept of an academic boycott is antithetical to MIT values," Reif said in a statement. "It fundamentally violates the principles of academic freedom that are central to the excellence of MIT and American higher education."

In mid-December, the American Studies Association voted to boycott Israeli academic institutions to protest Israel's treatment of Palestinians. Days later, the American studies program at Brandeis University, a nonsectarian, Jewish-sponsored school in Waltham, announced it would cut ties with the

scholarly association. Penn State University also ended its relationship with the group.

Other college presidents have condemned the boycott, including Boston University's Robert A. Brown, Harvard's Drew Faust, Yale's Peter Salovey, Wesleyan's Michael S. Roth, and former Harvard president Lawrence H. Summers, as have leaders of other campuses; the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Universities; and the Anti-Defamation League.

The American Studies Association has said a boycott is "warranted given US military and other support for Israel; Israel's violation of international law and UN resolutions; the documented impact of the Israeli occupation on Palestinian scholars and students; the extent to which Israeli institutions of higher education are a party to state policies that violate human rights; and the support of such a resolution by many members of the ASA."



Reif, in his statement Friday, countered:

"At MIT, our mission directs us to advance knowledge and educate students in service to the world. We best serve this mission through our longstanding practice of fostering active engagement with international academic institutions and open dialogue among people from all nations."

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