



## **NCA Statement Upholding Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression at Temple University**

On November 28, 2018, Temple University Professor Marc Lamont Hill delivered a speech at the United Nations in honor of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Among many points, Professor Hill said the following: “We have an opportunity to not just offer solidarity in words but to commit to political action, grassroots action, local action and international action that will give us what justice requires and that is a free Palestine from the river to the sea.”

Widely interpreted as an anti-Semitic remark, Professor Hill’s call for a “free Palestine from the river to the sea” has been roundly condemned. CNN released Professor Hill from his commentator contract with the network. [Temple University President Richard Englert](#) suggested that Professor Hill’s remarks were not representative of Temple University even as he reaffirmed Hill’s rights to academic freedom and freedom of expression. In response, Professor Hill penned an [op-ed](#) apologizing for any offense the remark may have occasioned.

On Friday, November 30, the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) reported on remarks by the chair of Temple’s Board of Trustees, Patrick J. O’Connor. O’Connor condemned Professor Hill’s speech, saying “I’m not happy. The board’s not happy. The administration’s not happy. People wanted to fire him right away. We’re going to look at what remedies we have.” O’Connor also revealed that he had instructed Temple’s legal office to explore the university’s “options” in response to Professor Hill’s speech.

In keeping with its [Statement on the Protection and Defense of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression for Communication Scholars](#), the National Communication Association (NCA) condemns Patrick O’Connor’s remarks as inconsistent with the values of academic freedom and freedom of expression. With their references to “remedies” and “options,” O’Connor’s comments are threatening and chilling, coming as they do from the chair of Temple’s Board of Trustees—they threaten Professor Hill’s rights to academic freedom and freedom of expression and they potentially chill and silence others at Temple who may seek to express controversial viewpoints. In response (and in solidarity with a [commentary](#) from Temple University faculty members), NCA reaffirms its belief that administrators and governing boards ought to “speak out clearly and forcefully to defend academic freedom, to protect freedom of expression, and to condemn targeted harassment and intimidation of faculty members, students, and staff.”