



October 10, 2023

Dear SMU Community,

Although the war in Israel and Gaza is thousands of miles away from North Texas, for many of our students, faculty and staff, the pain of this conflict is personal. SMU abhors the ongoing violence, which is causing sorrow, anger, and anxiety for many who are worried about their family and the future. We all grieve for the innocent, for those who have experienced terror, for the families of the victims and for those – both Israeli and Palestinian – who can find no safe haven from the violence. On behalf of SMU’s leadership, I want to express our deep concern and support for those affected by this war and our commitment to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of our campus community.

In these trying times, it is more important than ever to come together and be compassionate and understanding. We recognize that some of our community members have families in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank, and we want to assure you that we are here to assist you. Our Student Affairs team has been reaching out directly to those who may have been impacted on campus.

- Counseling resources are available for students by calling 214-768-2277. Faculty and staff can contact the

**Employee Assistance Program** through Magellan Health Services at 877-704-5696.

- Pastoral support can be found by contacting the **Office of the Chaplain**.
- Confidential reports of anyone who may need assistance can be made through SMU's **Caring Community Connections Program**.
- Students struggling to keep up with academic responsibilities due to this situation should reach out to their professors and academic advisors. Similarly, for faculty and staff, please engage your supervisors.
- **Report bias incidents** to the **Bias Education Response Team**.

The atrocities of war can overwhelm some with emotion. Our response should be to seek and offer support in ways that live out the **core values** of our University. As we mourn the lives lost and share our thoughts in class, with friends, or on social media, I am grateful that SMU is a welcoming and inclusive campus. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have no place in our community or in debate with one another. It is important to accept and embrace our differences, approaching difficult dialogue in a respectful and thoughtful manner.

In times that seek to divide us, let us instead come together and find solace within our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. Gerald Turner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

R. Gerald Turner

SMU President