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## Rutgers commencement controversy continues; Brandeis joins in

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## Quad 136

Continues; Brandeis Joins In

### Rutgers Commencement Controversy Continues; Brandeis Joins In



There is **continuing debate** about commencement speakers, academic freedom and the meaning of liberal arts at Rutgers.

Similar debates arise at Brandeis University over **Ayaan Hirsi Ali**.

The issues at Brandeis are less about politics and more about religion than at Rutgers. Critics of Hirsi Ali are upset over her views on Islam. In addition, Brandeis was planning to give Ali an honorary degree, which arguably implies more acceptance of her public views. Brandeis does acknowledge the importance of academic freedom and the free

expression of ideas in their **public statement** on the controversy:

*In the spirit of free expression that has defined Brandeis University throughout its history, Ms. Hirsi Ali is welcome to join us on campus in the future to engage in a dialogue about these important issues.*

Just FYI, the Saint John's University Commencement speaker this year is retired Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice **Kathleen Blatz**.

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By **Michael Hemesath** | April 10th, 2014 | Categories: **Higher Education** | **0 Comments**

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#### About the Author: **Michael Hemesath**

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] **PrezHemesath**.