

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

A letter from alumni of Columbia's 19 schools

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We write in what we believe to be the first-ever Columbia Spectator op-ed co-authored by alumni from Columbia University's 19 schools. We do not purport to speak for all alumni—or anyone other than ourselves—but believe we represent a broad cross section of our diverse family of over 400,000 Columbia alumni.

Over the past few months, we've watched our beloved University erupt in turmoil; incidents marred by violence, destruction, and a growing sense of division have cast a shadow over our alma mater. It is against this backdrop of disarray that we find ourselves called to voice what we stand for.

First and foremost, our Jewish and Israeli brothers, sisters, and friends are an important part of our community. While many of our co-authors are not Jewish or Israeli themselves, we are united in our support of their valuable place within both Columbia and our wider alumni family.

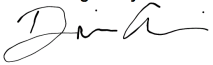
We are alarmed by the impression that Israeli students are no longer welcome at Columbia and burgeoning calls to sever ties with Israeli academic institutions. This is antithetical to the pursuit of knowledge and the advancement of the human condition. Our engagement with scholars and institutions around the world is driven by their contributions to the body of knowledge, not because we agree with their political leadership—otherwise, we may as well have severed ties with the entire U.S. higher education landscape at various points in our history. To allow political disagreement to serve as a rationale for collective exclusion would melt our vibrant community into an echo chamber, stifling the very diversity of thought many students come here to experience.

Moreover, we are deeply concerned by the level to which activism has increasingly subsumed our academic mission. We cannot deny that protest plays a crucial role in campus life—and has a storied tradition at Columbia in which several of us have proudly participated. However, protests are not a substitute for the deliberative discussion and debate at the heart of a Columbia education. Students attend the University to learn, grow, and prepare for their future roles in society. And while protests can add to the learning experience, it is unacceptable to jeopardize students' experiences with relentless disruptions that can hold the potential for becoming violent.

In these difficult times, we believe that venerable institutions like our own possess an extraordinary power to galvanize our community to begin repairing our broken world. We empathize with the profound pain and suffering that have led to these protests. Yet, this important mission cannot be accomplished against a backdrop of vitriolic student-against-student division. This binary framing only further hurts our community, our institution, and our collective reputations.


Our message comes not only to defend the legacy of our alma mater but also to reinvigorate it. We want to ensure that Columbia remains a liberal beacon of hope, opportunity, knowledge, and progress in an increasingly complex world. As we continue to navigate this tumult, we hope that Columbia will continue admitting students who will benefit from and contribute to our institution's remarkable ability to do good, rather than those inclined toward its destruction.


Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Dr. Dina Abiri

BC '12, SPS '14
DocuSigned by:


D7E38B1ADC7147F...
Dr. Michael van Bemmelen

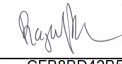
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Dr. Steve Brozak

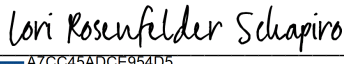
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Robert Damast


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Dr. Aaron Fay

VP&S '93
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Samuel Lavine

Climate '23
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Dr. Raquel Plotka

TC '08
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Lori Rosenfelder Schapiro

LCSW-C, SSW '10
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Tao Tan

CC '07, Business '11
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Paula Tomisaki
GSAPP '06

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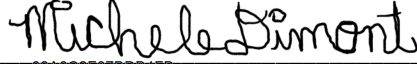
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Zila Acosta-Grimes

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Mary Blumenthal-Lane


Nursing '83
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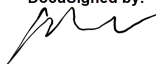
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Carlos Cuevas


CC '05, SIPA '12, Public Health '12
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Michele Berman Dimont

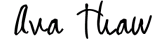
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Steven Glazer

SoA '98
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Ashutosh Poddar

Business '23
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Raj Roy

SEAS '10, SEAS '11
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Visanu "Vikey" Suwanprutsachati

SPS '11
DocuSigned by:

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Dr. Ava S. Thaw
Dental '84