

The Honorable Virginia Foxx and the Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott  
Committee on Education & the Workforce  
United States House of Representatives  
2176 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx and Ranking Member Scott:

Attached you will find the Columbia Task Force on Antisemitism’s initial report, released on March 4, 2024: [“Report #1: Columbia University’s Rules on Demonstrations.”](#)

This first report emphasizes three goals of the University’s rules on demonstrations: first, safeguarding the rights of all Columbia students, faculty, and staff to protest; second, ensuring that protests do not interfere with the rights of other Columbia affiliates to speak, teach, research, and learn; and, third, combating discrimination and harassment.

To implement these foundational principles, the task force supports a “speaker’s corner” approach that permits protests in designated areas, but not in academic buildings. This is the approach of the new [Interim University Policy for Safe Demonstrations](#) announced last month and the task force strongly endorses it.

The task force also highlights the need for more effective enforcement, recommending nonconfrontational ways to stop unauthorized protests as they occur, a simpler process for filing complaints, more flexible deadlines for adjudicating them, more effective use of informal processes, and aggregate reporting on the results. The task force also recommends various ways to combat discrimination while also protecting free speech and academic freedom.

As we submit this report for the record, we would also like to add, as the co-chairs of the Task Force, some thoughts. We are a diverse group of faculty from across the University equipped to assess where policies, practices and other tools and programs can be enhanced to improve the ability of Jewish students to learn and thrive on campus free from bias and harassment. We have worked with the Deans of every school to schedule listening sessions for our students, so we can hear about their experiences. These students have come forward to share their pain and their expectations. We are dedicated to holding our university accountable for ensuring that, as President Shafik has pledged, antisemitism is not tolerated and that rules are enforced.

Columbia is a large, decentralized, and extraordinarily diverse institution. Universities like ours are among the few private organizations in the country that encourage the free expression of ideas as a part of their ordinary operations, along with their central purpose of teaching, learning, and research. In addition, we aim to make the university an environment in which all of our students feel they truly belong. This is an extraordinarily challenging mission, and also an inspiring one.

Higher education is essential to progress in any society, and we at Columbia are determined to lead the way in developing the engaged citizens, big ideas, and scientific breakthroughs to the benefit of our country and the world.

Sincerely,

**Ester R. Fuchs**, Professor of International and Public Affairs and Political Science and Director of the Urban and Social Policy Program at SIPA

**Nicholas Lemann**, Joseph Pulitzer II and Edith Pulitzer Moore Professor of Journalism and Dean Emeritus of Columbia Journalism School

**David M. Schizer**, Harvey R. Miller Professor of Law and Economics and Dean Emeritus of Columbia Law School