

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2024

Middle States Commission on Higher Education 1007
North Orange Street
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Wilmington, DE 19801

President Perfetti:

Accreditation entities play a crucial role in ensuring the quality and integrity of higher education institutions by assuring quality assurance, public accountability, and continuous improvement. The U.S. Department of Education has come to rely on accrediting agencies to help ensure that the higher education institutions that receive federal funds meet quality standards in curriculum, faculty qualifications, student services, facilities, and educational outcomes. We urge you to reevaluate Columbia University's accreditation due to its inability to adhere to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation standards- specifically Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, and Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience.¹

Since Hamas' brutal attack against the people of Israel on October 7, 2023, there has been a sharp increase in the rise of antisemitic rhetoric and support for terrorism across the United States. The number one place for this rise of antisemitism is on our college campuses, specifically Columbia University. Jewish students have been made to feel unsafe and have been subject to harassment and even physical violence by pro-Hamas student protestors and faculty.

Here are a few examples of the incidents:

1. A professor of modern Arab politics and history, Joseph Massad, referred to the Oct. 7 attack inflicted by Hamas terrorists as "awesome" and a "stunning victory of the Palestinian resistance." Massad penned in a 1,800-word essay published 24 hours after the bloodshed, "The sight of the Palestinian resistance fighters storming Israeli checkpoints separating Gaza from Israel was astounding." Students at Columbia University led a petition calling for him to be fired over those remarks, and it has received more than 78,000 signatures.
2. A pro-Palestine group illegally took over the Hamilton Hall academic building, which led to President Shafik issuing a statement saying the on-campus violence had "pushed the university to the brink."
3. Just days after the Oct. 7 attack, Mohamed Abdou, a visiting Professor in Modern Arab Studies, declared on social media, "Yes, I'm with Hamas and Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad." Abdou's bio on Columbia's website describes him as "a North African-Egyptian Muslim anarchist interdisciplinary

¹ *Accreditation - Office of the Provost - Columbia University*, provost.columbia.edu/content/accreditation. Accessed 8 May 2024.

activist-scholar of Indigenous, Black, critical race and Islamic studies, as well as gender, sexuality, abolition, and decolonization.”

4. Kayum Ahmed, an assistant professor at the School of Public Health, has been previously accused of indoctrinating his students to hate Israel via his lectures. Ahmed labeled Israel a “colonial settler state” that has “oppressed indigenous populations” and “displaced” Palestinians.²
5. In anticipation of the beginning of the Jewish holiday Passover, President Shafik announced that all classes would be moved online and instructed faculty to work remotely due to “too many examples of intimidating and harassing behavior on campus.”

Antisemitic vitriol is so ingrained in this Ivy League university that Rabbi Elie Buechler, director of the Orthodox Union-Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus at Columbia/Barnard, wrote in a group chat with over 290 students that “The events of the past few days, especially last night, have made it clear that Columbia University’s Public Safety and the NYPD cannot guarantee Jewish students’ safety in the face of extreme antisemitism and anarchy.”³ In addition, Columbia’s university-wide commencement ceremony has been canceled due to its inability to ensure its students’ safety. Many of these same graduates had to forgo their high school commencement ceremonies just four years ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Columbia University has failed to fulfill its responsibility of providing a safe environment for all students, regardless of background. This is unacceptable.

Columbia University no longer upholds the accreditation standards outlined by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. We urge you to reevaluate Columbia Universities’ accreditation based on their incompliance with Standard II: Ethics and Integrity, Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience, and Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience. Quality standards are a defining hallmark of effective higher education institutions, and we must ensure American tax dollars are not being sent to institutions incapable of upholding them.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,



Rich McCormick M.D., MBA
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress

² Crane, Emily. “Here Are the Columbia University Professors Ripped for Anti-Israel Remarks, pro-Palestinian Indoctrination.” *New York Post*, New York Post, 22 Apr. 2024, nypost.com/2024/04/17/us-news/the-columbia-university-professors-ripped-for-allegedly-antisemitism-pro-palestine-indoctrination/.


³ Massel, Rebecca. “Rabbi Advises Jewish Students to ‘Return Home as Soon as Possible’ Following Reports of ‘Extreme Antisemitism’ on and around Campus.” *Columbia Daily Spectator*, www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2024/04/21/rabbi-advises-jewish-students-to-return-home-as-soon-as-possible-following-reports-of-extreme-antisemitism-on-and-around-campus/. Accessed 8 May 2024.



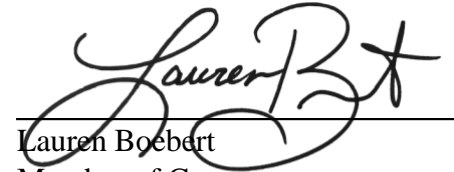
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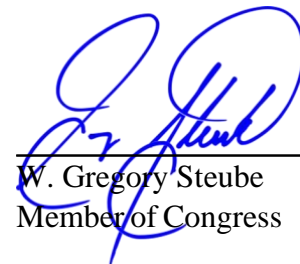
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