

Advancing Our Work to Combat Discrimination, Harassment, and Antisemitism at Columbia

Columbia University has, throughout its storied history, faced many challenges and obstacles. We have worked hard to address the legitimate concerns raised both from within and without our Columbia community, including by our regulators, with respect to the discrimination, harassment, and antisemitic acts our Jewish community has faced in the wake of October 7, 2023. We are proud to share key parts of our comprehensive strategy to make our campus safer, more welcoming, and respectful of the rights of all. Columbia is announcing several additional actions as part of that effort. They include:

Implementing Our Rules and Policies

- **Application of consistent, rigorous, and effective disciplinary actions for violations of University Rules.** Students who violated our rules during Columbia’s first encampment or at Hamilton Hall have been suspended, expelled, or had their degrees temporarily revoked. Disciplinary proceedings against other encampment participants are ongoing. Columbia is committed to rigorous and impartial enforcement of its rules and antidiscrimination policies to ensure a safe campus environment and continuation of all academic functions.
- **Improvements to our disciplinary processes, including the University Judicial Board (“UJB”).** The University understands the critical importance of the effectiveness and impartiality of our disciplinary processes. To achieve that goal, the UJB will be situated within and overseen by the Office of the Provost, who reports to the President of Columbia. Given the risk faced by participants in this process, each UJB five-member panel will be restricted to faculty and administrators only. All panel members will undergo a rigorous vetting and conflict review process to ensure objectivity, impartiality, and commitment to following and enforcing our community’s rules and policies. The Provost will have final approval of all panel members and appellate Deans. Final determination of appeals of disciplinary decisions will remain with the President.
- **Clarification of time, place, and manner restrictions.** We support free speech. Freedom of expression is what enables the rigorous debate and free inquiry on which our academic mission depends. But demonstrations and other protest activities that occur inside academic buildings and places where academic activities take place present a direct impediment to maintaining our core academic mission. Based upon the experience of peer schools, Columbia is clarifying that such protests in academic buildings, and other places necessary for the conduct of University activities, are generally not acceptable under the Rules of University Conduct because of the likelihood of disrupting academic activities. All demonstration activity is subject to the University’s anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.
- **Identification of individuals participating in demonstrations.** All individuals who engage in protests or demonstrations, including those who wear face masks or face coverings, must, when asked, present their University identification to the satisfaction of a University Delegate or Public Safety officer. Individuals who fail to comply with these policies will be subject to discipline, being escorted off campus, and detention for trespass where appropriate.

- **Addressing risk of masked individuals creating disruption.** Public safety has determined that face masks or face coverings are not allowed for the purpose of concealing one’s identity in the commission of violations of University policies or state, municipal, or federal laws. We have had important instances in the recent past where individuals unaffiliated with the University have caused significant disruptions on our campus. Face masks or face coverings are always allowed for religious or medical reasons.
- **Expansion of public safety personnel with new training and staff.** The University has hired 36 special officers who will have the ability to remove individuals from campus and/or arrest them when appropriate. Those individuals are near completion of their training and credentialing under New York law to work on our campus. We will continue to assess the necessary size of this force to achieve our goals. The University has a longstanding relationship with the NYPD. While we train and credential our internal security force, we will continue to rely on our relationship with the NYPD to provide additional security assistance when needed.
- **Oversight and support of student groups.** Columbia’s Office of Institutional Equity (“OIE”) has promulgated a policy and processes for discipline of all student groups that stems from discriminatory conduct. OIE has the ability to sanction these groups, including to defund, suspend, or derecognize. In addition, in the next few weeks, the Office for University Life will announce a sanction policy for violations of University policy unrelated to claims of discrimination with sanctions for registered student groups. Both the existing OIE policy and the new policy will permit sanctions from defunding, suspension, to derecognition.
- **Continued compliance with legal obligations.** As a global leader in research and education, Columbia is subject to a variety of legal regulations governing our activities. These range from Education Department anti-discrimination rules, to student-visa and immigration laws, to HHS rules of our medical school and hospital services, and countless others. In all that we do, we are committed to full compliance with these other federal and state laws that govern Columbia, while safeguarding constitutional protections.

Addressing Discrimination and Harassment

- **Implementation of effective antidiscrimination policies.** The new Office of Institutional Equity substantially revised the University’s antidiscrimination and discriminatory harassment policy for students and groups, including the ability to sanction groups, (i.e. defund, suspend, or derecognize). The University’s approach and relevant policies will incorporate the definition of antisemitism recommended by Columbia’s Antisemitism Taskforce in August 2024.
- **Requirement of University-wide Title VI training.** The University will continue to require its community to complete training on Title VI, including Columbia’s commitment to protecting fairness and equal opportunity for all on campus. To date, 32,243 faculty/staff, contractors and other affiliates have completed this mandatory Title VI training. On February 13, 2025, all students were assigned a mandatory training module on the Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment Policy and Procedures for Students and Student Groups. To date, 5,232 students have completed the mandatory training, which is due by March 24, 2025.

Advancing Knowledge and Understanding

- **Appointment of new Senior Vice Provost.** As part of our ongoing efforts, we are appointing a new Senior Vice Provost this week with a focus on promoting excellence in Regional Studies. As part of this portfolio, the Senior Vice Provost, acting with the authority of the Provost Office, will conduct a thorough review of the portfolio of programs in regional areas across the University, starting immediately with the Middle East. This review will include the Center for Palestine Studies; the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies; Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies; the Middle East Institute; the Tel Aviv and Amman global hubs; the School of International and Public Affairs Middle East Policy major; and other University programs focused on the Middle East (together, the “Middle East Programs”). In this role, the Senior Vice Provost will: (1) review the educational programs to ensure the educational offerings are comprehensive and balanced; (2) review all aspects of leadership and curriculum; (3) steward the creation of new programs to address the full range of fields; (4) create a standard review process for the hiring of non-tenured faculty across the University, partnering with the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the schools; (5) review the processes for approving curricular changes; (6) following academic procedures, make recommendations to the President and Provost about any necessary changes, academic restructuring, or investments that will ensure academic excellence and complementarity across all programs in the given academic areas.
- **Expansion of intellectual diversity among faculty.** Faculty searches have begun and will be expanded to ensure intellectual diversity across our course offerings and scholarship. As part of this effort the University will appoint new faculty members with joint positions in both the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies and the departments of Economics, Political Science, and School for International and Public Affairs (“SIPA”). These faculty members will contribute to a robust and intellectually diverse academic environment, reinforcing the University’s commitment to excellence and fairness in Middle East studies.

Engaging Our Community and Advancing Our Mission

- **Review our admissions procedures to ensure they reflect best practices.** Our current admission processes comply with existing law. Columbia has and will continue to engage outside academic experts to review our admissions practices across all of our many schools for students from the United States and around the world, and make recommendations to the President and Provost about how to improve them and ensure unbiased admission processes. As consistent with our practice when faced with concerns over discrimination against a particular group, we have established an advisory group to analyze recent trends in enrollment and report to the President. For example, we have identified a recent downturn in both Jewish and African American enrollment, and we will closely examine those issues.
- **Commitment to greater institutional neutrality.** Columbia’s President has adopted a position of institutional neutrality. The Provost’s Office is working with a faculty committee to establish an institution-wide policy implementing this stance.

- **Advance Columbia’s Tel Aviv Center.** Columbia has many ongoing activities and collaborations through its global efforts, including in Tel Aviv. Programing for the Columbia Tel Aviv Global Hub will launch in Q2 2025.
- **Creation of additional opportunities for constructive dialogue programing.** Columbia has and will continue to introduce numerous programs to improve dialogue among those with differences of opinion, and engaging with others with different and distinct viewpoints.
- **Development of K-12 Curriculum.** Columbia will develop and make widely available to K-12 schools at no cost online products focused on topics such as how to have difficult conversations, create classrooms that foster open inquiry, dialogue across difference and topics related to antisemitism.

All of these steps have been underway and are intended to further Columbia’s basic mission: to provide a safe and thriving environment for research and education, while preserving our commitment to academic freedom and institutional integrity.