



**American Jewish
Committee**

Dean Gillian Lester
Columbia University law school
435 W. 116th St.,
New York, NYAD WITH
Cc: President Minouche Shafik

Dear Dean Lester,

We at American Jewish Committee (AJC) were greatly dismayed to learn of recent events at the admitted student luncheon at Columbia Law in which unauthorized protesters barged uninvited into a program for newly admitted law students and confronted attendees with virulently anti-Israel messaging and abusive rhetoric that communicated the unvarnished message that Zionists are not welcome at Columbia Law School. We understand that school administrators present did not object and did not call campus security. Ironically, this event occurred almost simultaneously with a meeting AJC had with President Shafik, who assured us that Jewish students should feel safe on campus.

While some interruptions cannot be foreseen, it is the administration's job to exercise its authority when they do. Once again, Columbia Law Administrators as well as the university's central administration have done nothing whatsoever in the weeks since this unauthorized interruption occurred to counter the threatening message it communicated to potential Columbia Law students or hold to account the students who participated in it.

It is the university's legal and moral responsibility to maintain a non-discriminatory atmosphere that allows students from all backgrounds and identities to be part of the campus community and take full advantage of its educational and extra-curricular programming. These unauthorized protesters loudly broadcast that these commitments do not apply to anyone that avows a connection to the State of Israel. What has Columbia Law done to counter this toxic message, which was disseminated to the current law student community as well as newly admitted students who may now be reconsidering whether to attend Columbia Law at all next Fall? The administration's silence and failure to take action in the days since these events unfolded, has been deafening. We have heard from current students at the Law School that some of the admittees said subsequently that they no longer felt safe attending Columbia.

Columbia Law must immediately and unequivocally condemn this unauthorized protest and its exclusionary and hateful messaging. But words are not enough. The university must discipline the students who participated in the protest, according to the rules and regulations that govern student conduct. Students have the right to protest, including Israel's policies and actions, and have been given clear pathways to do so within designated time, place, and manner parameters. Disrupting a university-sponsored event is not one of those designated ways. It is not freedom of speech; it is anarchy. We expect a law school to know the difference.

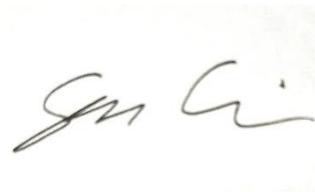
It is past time for Columbia's administrators to exercise their authority and mete out appropriate consequences for those who disrupt lawful campus activities. We also urge you in the strongest possible terms to issue an apology to all those who attended the luncheon, which makes clear these protesters' messaging violated Columbia's core values. We urge you to articulate the university's plan to ensure all admitted students are welcome.

In anticipation of other admitted student programming at Columbia this Spring, know that we will be paying close attention to the university's handling of other, similar disruptions, and that we expect far better from a university that has clear pathways to remedy disruptive, rule-breaking, hateful campus activity. Absent measures along the lines we have outlined, it will be necessary for us to have recourse to outside regulators. We hope that the university polices itself.

Sincerely,



Marc Stern
Chief Legal Officer and Columbia Law '76



Dr. Sara Coodin
Director of Academic Affairs