



April 3, 2020

President Lee C. Bollinger
Office of the President
Columbia University
202 Low Library, 535 W. 116 Street, MC 4309
New York, NY 10027

Via email: officeofthepresident@columbia.edu

Dear President Bollinger,

We write as chair of the advisory board, executive director, and deputy executive director, respectively, of the [Academic Engagement Network \(AEN\)](#), an independent and non-partisan national organization comprised of nearly 750 faculty members on more than 240 campuses across the United States. AEN seeks to counter the delegitimization of Israel on campus, helps to defend campus free speech and academic freedom, promotes robust discussion of Israel in the academy, and responds to antisemitism on campus when it occurs.

We write to share with you the [Columbia University Faculty Open Letter](#) in support of the [powerful statement condemning antisemitism](#) which you delivered to the Senate Plenary on March 6. The letter is signed by nearly 140 Columbia faculty members across all ranks and disciplines. The letter can be found on the website [Columbia Faculty Against Hate](#), which we created for the purpose of collecting signatures. We are happy to share with you the [full signatory list](#) (also attached) and have permission from the signatories to do so and to make their names visible to the Columbia University community and to the public. The letter campaign was widely covered in the media (see, for example, [here](#) and [here](#)).

AEN organized this Open Letter, which applauds you for repudiating antisemitism in its many forms and for your principled opposition to the rhetoric and activism of the BDS movement, which as you correctly noted in your March 6 statement, singles out and applies a double standard to Israel and often manifests itself as an attack on Jewish identity. The Open Letter was spearheaded by 12 distinguished faculty members at Columbia—all of them members of AEN—who were the letter's initial signatories. We are delighted that as of this writing, more than 125 additional Columbia faculty members have joined the initial signatories and signed the Open Letter.

Like the dozens of Columbia faculty who signed the Open Letter, we too wish to express our gratitude for your constructive March 6 statement. You stated clearly what needed to be said in the wake of "instances and episodes of anti-Semitism" on your campus. What is required, and

what you understand so well, is leadership—a willingness to provide a moral compass in denouncing these acts and expressions of hatred and discrimination that are so hurtful to Jewish students and which are antithetical to Columbia’s values. Your statement was a compelling and forceful message of tolerance and inclusivity, and you have our organization’s full and unequivocal support.

At AEN, we have considerable experience in assisting campuses to develop policies, programs and trainings that are essential for combating antisemitism and for addressing pernicious forms of anti-Israel activism. We stand ready to share with you our expertise, and the best practices that we have developed. You may also be interested to know that we have recently launched an initiative for the training and education of mid-level administrators and staff in student affairs and diversity, equity and inclusion offices. It is our hope that this specialized training will help to ensure that university administrators and staff members who are charged with protecting the rights of all students have the support, resources, and skill sets needed to affectively address the issues and concerns that directly affect Jewish student life on campus.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely yours,



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