

March 23, 2026

Dear Colleague,

[The Columbia Academic Freedom Council](#) (CAFC) is an organization of faculty and research officers dedicated to promoting open inquiry, intellectual diversity, and civil discourse at Columbia University. This semester, we are excited to invite you to **a series of dinners** that feature prominent speakers from within and outside of Columbia who will present diverse views on academic freedom, open debate, and protest on campus.

All dinners start at 7 pm at *Serafina West*, on 2727 Broadway between 104th and 105th streets. Admission is free of charge, but **RSVP is required** on [our website](#).

The dinners start with a brief presentation followed by a moderated discussion with the audience. Confirmed speakers are as follows:

April 16: Prof. David Schizer and **Prof. Magda Schaler-Haynes**, Columbia Antisemitism Task Force. Prof. Schizer is Dean Emeritus and Harvey R. Miller Professor of Law and Economics at Columbia Law School. Magda Schaler-Haynes is Professor of Health Policy and Management and Professor of Population and Family Health at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center, Mailman School of Public Health.

May 5: Musa al-Gharbi, Assistant Professor in the School of Communication and Journalism at Stony Brook University, and author of *We Have Never Been Woke*.

May 28: Prof. Oliver Hobert and **Prof. David Pozen**, co-chairs of the Provost's Advisory Committee on Academic Freedom (PACAF). Oliver Hobert is Professor of Biological Sciences and **David Pozen** is Charles Keller Beekman Professor of Law at Columbia University.

September (date TBD): Jenin Younes, U.S. civil-liberties attorney and National Legal Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

The first and last dinners will offer rival answers to the vital question, is there a conflict between vibrant academic freedom on one hand, and the use of civil rights laws to protect Jewish and Israeli students from harm and harassment on the other. On **April 16, David Schizer** and **Magda Schaler-Haynes**, members of the Antisemitism Task Force, will offer the rival perspective that civil rights law is compatible with academic freedom and criticism of Israel, and is a useful tool to protect Jewish and Israeli students from harassment, with emphasis on the findings of the Task Force. The following semester, in **September, Jenin Younes** will discuss what she sees as “the weaponization of civil rights laws” and charges of antisemitism to quash criticism of Israel and limit pro-Palestinian protest.

In between these events, on **May 5** we will host Professor **Musa al-Gharbi**, whose powerful book *We Have Never Been Woke* challenges the conventional left and right wisdom about DEI. Instead, the book offers a sociologically complex view of “wokeness” as the expression of the worldview of a new class of “symbolic capitalists” whose social justice ideology punishes those who voice incorrect views about race, gender, and much more.

On **May 28**, **Oliver Hobert** and **David Pozen** will discuss the recommendations of The Provost's Advisory Committee on Academic Freedom and ongoing efforts to implement them at Columbia.

We urge you to participate and help shape the faculty voices on these complex topics.

Faculty have a special role and responsibility to uphold the values of civil discourse and debate in the service of scholarship and intellectual inquiry. This is particularly important as we anticipate the arrival of our new President, Jennifer Mnookin, and changes in policies and culture that she is likely to bring.

We hope to see you there and urge you to forward this invitation to any interested Columbia colleague.

Warmly,

Columbia Academic Freedom Council co-chairs

Jacqueline Gottlieb

Professor of Neuroscience

Faculty of Health Sciences (Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute)

Jonathan Rieder

Professor of Sociology

Faculty of Barnard College

James Applegate

Professor of Astronomy

Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Science)

Eli Noam

Paul Garrett Professor Emeritus of Public Policy and Business Responsibility

Faculty of Business

Philip Hamburger

Maurice and Hilda Friedman Professor of Law

Faculty of Law