January 4, 2017

President Lee Bollinger  
Provost John Coatsworth  
Columbia University in the City of New York  
New York, NY 10027  

Dear President Bollinger, Provost Coatsworth:

We, the undersigned Columbia faculty members, urge you to withdraw your challenge to the recent NLRB election.

We are well aware of the energy and funds the university expended on opposing the formation of a union among Teaching and Research assistants, and of the exemplary campaign conducted by supporters of the union. On December 7 and 8, these members of our community voted by an overwhelming majority to unionize. Provost Coatsworth then released a statement announcing that, following “open and respectful conversation that explained the arguments for and against unionization, … the research and teaching assistants who voted have chosen to be represented by the United Auto Workers.” He thanked all those who cast ballots. This statement of respect for the integrity of the election needs now to be reaffirmed. The university’s objections – for example, complaining about the alleged presence of union representatives near a polling place – are not simply frivolous; they are insulting to the Teaching and Research Assistants who voted, implying that they are incapable of weighing the relevant arguments and reaching carefully considered independent judgments.

The issue now is not whether a union is a good or bad idea, but whether the university will respect the outcome of a democratic process. In the aftermath of the presidential election, President Bollinger issued a letter pledging fidelity to Columbia’s core values. This is a moment when the university must make clear what its values actually are. It should drop its disingenuous objections and delaying tactics and move forward to constructive negotiations for a union contract.

Sincerely,

Lila Abu-Lughod  
Joseph L. Buttenwieser Professor of Social Science  
Anthropology/Arts and Sciences  
la310@columbia.edu

James Eli Adams  
Professor  
English & Comparative Literature  
jea2139@columbia.edu
Comment: As a senior professor of labor law, I can indeed attest that the University's challenge to the NLRB election raises just the kind of petty matters that high-paid anti-union consultants routinely raise and that in no way impaired the democratic choice of the graduate workers. Now for some civic editorializing: We have just experienced a presidential election the results of which threaten democracy, the rule of law, stability in the post-war world order, and planetary survival. Those results could have easily been tipped the other way, if union density were just a bit greater in the swing states. Exit polls
showed that union households voted against Trumpism by a margin of 8 to 16 percent. Some academic elites’ reflexive opposition to democratically constituted worker organizations has repercussions for civil society and democracy and is staggeringly short-sighted.

Nicholas Bartlett
Assistant Professor
Asian and Middle Eastern Colleges, Barnard College
nab2104@columbia.edu

Nico Baumbach
Assistant Professor
Film/School of the Arts
nb2428@columbia.edu

ronald bayer
professor
mailman School of Public Health
rb8@columbia.edu

Robert Beauregard
Professor
GSAPP
rab48@columbia.edu

Courtney Bender
Professor
Religion
cb337@columbia.edu

Susan Bernofsky
Associate Professor of Writing and Director, Literary Translation at Columbia School of the Arts/Writing
sb3270@columbia.edu

Elizabeth Bernstein
Associate Professor
WGSS/Sociology
ebernst@barnard.edu

Richard Billows
History/GSAS
rab4@gsas.columbia.edu

Campbell Birch
PhD candidate & Teaching fellow
English & Comparative Literature
cjb2190@columbia.edu

Elizabeth Blackmar
Columbia University
History
eb16@columbia.edu

Casey Blake
Professor
American Studies & History/A&S
cb460@columbia.edu

Brian Boyd
Director, Administration & Museum Anthropology
Anthropology
brian.boyd@columbia.edu

Ellen Chapnick
Dean of Social Justice Initiatives and Lecturer-in-Law
Columbia Law School
chapnick@law.columbia.edu

Merlin Chowkwanyun
Assistant Professor
Sociomedical Sciences
mc2028@columbia.edu

Yvette Christianse
Barnard College
English Lit. & Africana Studies
ychristi@barnard.edu

Laura Ciolkowski
Associate Director, Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Women and Gender/Columbia College
lec30@columbia.edu

Yinon Cohen
Professor
Sociology
yc2444@columbia.edu

Jean Louise Cohen
Nell and Herbert M. Singer Professor of Contemporary Civilization in the Core Curriculum
Department of Political Science
jlc5@columbia.edu

John Collins
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies
Philosophy
john.collins@columbia.edu

Francine Cournos
Professor of Clinical Psychiatry (in Epidemiology)
Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health
fc15@cumc.columbia.edu

Zoe Crossland
Associate Professor
Anthropology
zc2149@columbia.edu

Hamid Dabashi
Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies
Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies
hd14@columbia.edu

Patricia Dailey
Associate Professor, Director
English and Comparative Literature, IRWGS
pd2132@columbia.edu

Nicholas Dames
Theodore Kahan Professor of Humanities
English and Comparative Literature
nicholas.dames@columbia.edu

Victoria de Grazia
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Department of History
vd19@columbia.edu
Comment: How can we respect democracy as a principle, if we don't respect it in actual practice?

Hope Dector
Creative Director, BCRW
Barnard College
hdector@barnard.edu

Dawn Delbanco
Adjunct Assoc Prof. of Art History
Andrew Delbanco
Alexander Hamilton Professor of American Studies
American Studies/English/Arts & Sciences
andrew.delbanco@columbia.edu

Ann Douglas
Parr Professor Emerita
English and Comparative Literature
ad34@columbia.edu

Jason Earle
Alumnus, GSAS
French, GSAS
jearle@sarahlawrence.edu

Brent Edwards
Professor
English and Comparative Literature
bhe2@columbia.edu

Deborah Eisenberg
Professor of Creative Writing
School of the Arts
de2268@columbia.edu

Trey Ellis
Associate Professor
School of the Arts		
trey.ellis@gmail.com

Katherine Ewing
Professor of Religion; Director, IRCPL
Religion
ke2131@columbia.edu

Gil Eyal
Professor of sociology
Sociology
ge2027@columbia.edu

Catherine Fennell
Anthropology
Arts and Sciences
ckf2106@columbia.edu

Georgette Fleischer
Lecturer
English and Comparative Literature
gf24@columbia.edu

Eric Foner
DeWitt Clinton Professor of History
Department of History
ef17@columbia.edu

Herbert Gans
Emeritus
Sociology
hjg1@Columbia.edu

Lynn Garafola
Professor of Dance
Dance/Barnard College
lg97@columbia.edu

Lydia Goehr
Columbia
Philosophy
lg131@columbia.edu

Bette Gordon
Professor, Columbia University
School of the Arts/Film
gordon.bette@gmail.com

Erik Gray
Arts and Sciences
English and Comparative Literature
eg2155@columbia.edu

Steven Gregory
African American Studies (DGS)
Anthropology
sg820@columbia.edu

Frank Guridy
Associate Professor
History
fg2368@columbia.edu
Jack Halberstam
Department of English
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
jh3641@columbia.edu

Kim Hall
Barnard College
English & Africana Studies
khall@barnard.edu

Wael Hallaq
Columbia University
MESAAS
wh2223@columbia.edu

Markie Hancock
Independent
Independent
mh Hancock@nyc.rr.com

Elizabeth Harnarine
Student
MFA Photography
harne241@newschool.edu

Michael Harris
Professor of Mathematics
Mathematics/GSAS
mh2836@columbia.edu

Matthew Hart
Associate Professor
English & Comparative Literature
mh2968@columbia.edu

Marianne Hirsch
William Peterfield Trent Professor of English
Department of English and Comparative Literature
mh2349@columbia.edu

Ellie Hisama
Columbia University
Music/Arts and Sciences
eh2252@columbia.edu
Benjamin Hoffman
Human Rights Institute/Clinic
Columbia Law School
bhoffman@law.columbia.edu

Jean E. Howard
George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities
Department of English and Comparative Literature
jfh5@columbia.edu

Martha Howell
Miriam Champioin Professor of History
Department of History
mch4@columbia.edu

Joseph Howley
Assistant Professor
Classics
jah2220@columbia.edu

Elizabeth Hutchinson
Barnard College
Art History
Eh499@columbia.edu

Andreas Huyssen
CC, GSAS
Germanic Languages
ah26@columbia.edu

Karl Jacoby
Professor
History
kj2305@columbia.edu

Janet Jakobsen
Claire Tow Professor of Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies
Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Barnard College
jjakobsen@barnard.edu

Margo Jefferson
Professor of Professional Practice
Writing, School of the Arts
Mlj4@columbia.edu
Rebecca Jordan-Young
faculty (also GSAS alum)
Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies/Barnard
ryoung@barnard.edu

Jeremy Kessler
Associate Professor of Law
Columbia Law School
jkessler@law.columbia.edu

Jon Kessler
Professor
Visual Arts/School of the Arts
jk342@columbia.edu

Katherine Keyes
Mailman School of Public Health
Epidemiology
kmk2104@columbia.edu

Rashid Khalidi
Faculty
Department of History
rik2101@columbia.edu

Mana Kia
Assistant Professor
MESAAS
mana.kia@columbia.edu

Rob King
Director of Undergraduate Studies - Film
School of the Arts
rk2704@columbia.edu

Binnie Kirshenbaum
Professor of Writing
School of the Arts
bk185@columbia.edu

Tovah Klein
Barnard College
Psychology
tklein@barnard.edu
Adam Kosto  
Professor  
History  
ajkosto@columbia.edu

Brian Larkin  
Barnard College  
Anthropology  
bl190@columbia.edu

Victor LaValle  
Associate Professor of Professional Practice  
Writing/School of the Arts  
vdl7@columbia.edu

William Leach  
Professor of History  
Department of History  
wrl3@columbia.edu

Eugenia Lean  
Director, Weatherhead East Asian Institute; Associate Professor, EALAC  
EALAC/A&S  
eyl2006@columbia.edu

Andrew Lipman  
Assistant Professor  
History/Barnard  
alipman@barnard.edu

Lydia Liu  
Wun Tsun Tam Professor in the Humanities  
EALAC  
ll2410@columbia.edu

Claudio Lomnitz  
GSAS  
Anthropology  
cl2510@columbia.edu

Nicola Lopez  
Assistant Professor  
SOA  
ngl1@columbia.edu
Comment: I am reminded of Lord Chuchill’s comment: "Yes, trust the people. You, who are ambitious, and rightly ambitious, of being the guardians of the British Constitution, trust the people, and they will trust you—and they will follow you and join you in the defense of that Constitution against any and every foe."

Mahmood Mamdani
Herbert Lehman Professor of Government
Anthropology / MESAAS
mm1124@columbia.edu

Gregory Mann
Professor
History
gm522@columbia.edu

Reinhold Martin
Professor
Architecture
rm454@columbia.edu

Joseph Massad
Columbia University
MESAAS
jam25@columbia.edu

Malgorzata Mazurek
Associate Professor
History
mm4293@columbia.edu

Mary McLeod
Professor
Architecture, GSAPP
mcm10@columbia.edu
Tey Meadow
IRWAGS
Sociology
Tey.meadow@columbia.edu

Christia Mercer
Philosophy
Philosophy
cm50@columbia.edu

Brinkley Messick
Columbia
Anthropology
bmm23@columbia.edu

Nara Milanesas ch
Barnard
Department of History
NMilanich@barnard.edu

Janet Miller
Professor of English & Education
Arts & Humanities/Teachers College, Columbia University
jm1397@columbia.edu

Denise Milstein
Sociology
Arts and Sciences
dm531@columbia.edu

Timothy Mitchell
Professor
MESAAS/FAS
tm2421@columbia.edu

Eben Moglen
Professor of Law
Columbia Law School
moglen@columbia.edu

Rosalind Morris
Columbia University, Arts and Sciences
Anthropology
rcm24@columbia.edu
Keith Moxey
Professor
Art History
pm154@columbia.edu

Debashree Mukherjee
Assistant Professor
MESAAS
dm3154@columbia.edu

Molly Murray
Associate Professor
English, School of Arts and Sciences
mpm7@columbia.edu

Luca Naponiello
PhD student
Italian
ln2353@columbia.edu

Constance Nathanson
Professor
Sociomedical Sciences/Public Health
can2003@columbia.edu

Celia Naylor
Assoc. Professor, History & Africana Studies
Barnard College
cnaylor@barnard.edu

Mae Ngai
Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies and Professor of History
History
mn53@columbia.edu

Robert O’Meally
Zora Neale Hurston Professor and Director, Center for Jazz Studies
English
rgo1@columbia.edu

Patricia O’Toole
Professor of Writing
School of the Arts
peo4@columbia.edu
Deborah Paredez
Associate Professor of Practice
School of the Arts Writing Program
dp2783@columbia.edu

Susan Pedersen
Morris Professor of History
History / Arts and Sciences
sp2216@columbia.edu

Richard Peña
Professor
Film/School of the arts
rap4@columbia.edu
Comment: It’s time to deal in good faith with the decision of the clear majority of the grad students.

Gregory Pflugfelder
Associate Professor
EALAC / History
gmp12@columbia.edu

Pablo Piccato
Professor
History
pp143@columbia.edu

Caterina Pizzigoni
Associate Professor
Department of History
cp2313@columbia.edu

Elizabeth Povinelli
IRWGS
Anthropology
ep2122@columbia.edu

Wayne Proudfoot
Professor
Religion/Arts and Sciences
wlp2@columbia.edu

Karen Rhoads Van Dyck
Kimon A. Doukas Professor of Hellenic Studies
Department of Classics
vandyck@columbia.edu
Comment: We must respect the results of a process that was authorized and executed according to the rules.
Felicity Scott
Associate Professor
GSAPP
fs2248@columbia.edu

James Shapiro
Columbia University
English
js73@columbia.edu

Shelly Silver
Associate Professor
Visual Arts, School of the Arts
sas2256@columbia.edu

Barbara Simon
Associate Professor
School of Social Work
bls1@columbia.edu

Susan Sivard
Part-time Core Lecturer
Art History and Archaeology/GSAS
sms22@columbia.edu

Joseph Slaughter
Assoc. Prof. Columbia University
English and Comparative Literature
jrs272@columbia.edu

Seymour Spilerman
Professor
Sociology/Arts and Sciences
spilerman@columbia.edu

Jane Spinak
Edward Ross Aranow Clinical Professor of Law
Columbia Law School
spinak@law.columbia.edu

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
Columbia University
College of Arts & Sciences
gcspiv@gmail.com
Alan Stewart  
Columbia University  
English and Comparative Literature/Arts and Sciences  
ags2105@columbia.edu  

Dustin Stewart  
Assistant Professor  
English and Comparative Literature  
dds2152[at]columbia.edu  

Ezra Susser  
Professor of Epidemiology and Psychiatry  
CUMC - Department of Epidemiology  
ess8@columbia.edu  

Kathryn Tabb  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Philosophy  
kct2121@columbia.edu  

Neferti X. M. Tadiar  
Professor of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Barnard College; Director, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race (CSER) at Columbia University  
Barnard College  
nt2181@columbia.edu  

Michael Thaddeus  
Professor of Mathematics  
Mathematics  
mt324@columbia.edu  

Kendall Thomas  
Nash Professor of Law  
Law  
kthomas@law.columbia.edu  

Lisa Tiersten  
Barnard  
History  
ltiersten@barnard.edu  

Van Tran  
Columbia University  
Sociology  
vtran@columbia.edu
Blake Turner  
Columbia University  
Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons  
jbt12@cumc.columbia.edu

Deborah Valenze  
Ann Whitney Olin Professor of History  
History Dept., Barnard College  
dvalenze@barnard.edu

Karen Van Dyck  
Professor of Modern Greek Literature  
Classics  
vandyck@columbia.edu

Jacqueline van Gorkom  
Columbia University  
Astronomy/ A&S's  
jvangork@astro.columbia.edu

Carole Vance  
Anthropology  
GSAS  
csv1@columbia.edu

Diane Vaughan  
Columbia University  
Sociology  
dv2146@columbia.edu

Jesús Velasco  
Columbia U  
Latin American and Iberian Cultures  
jvelasco@columbia.edu

Gauri Viswanathan  
Columbia University  
English and Comparative Literature  
gv6@columbia.edu

Jennifer Wenzel  
Associate Professor  
English & Comp Lit/MESAAS  
jw2497@columbia.edu
Josh Whitford  
Associate Professor  
Sociology/GSAS  
jw2212@columbia.edu

David Wills  
Visiting Professor  
English and Comparative Literature  
dw2744@columbia.edu

Mabel Wilson  
Architecture  
GSAPP  
mow6@columbia.edu

Susan Witte  
Associate Professor  
Social Work  
ssw12@columbia.edu

David Yerkes  
Columbia University  
Department of English and Comparative Literature  
dmy1@columbia.edu

Madeleine Zelin  
Dean Lung Professor  
EALAC/History  
mhz1@columbia.edu

Alan Ziegler  
Professor of Practice  
Writing / School of the Arts  
az8@columbia.edu