

Motion to Suspend the Alumni Privileges of Dame Baroness Minouche Shafik

This GCR notes:

- Minouche Shafik, the current President of Columbia University, is an alumna of our college, having matriculated in 1986.
- That our college currently offers a number of privileges to alumni, such as a free high table dinner once a year.
- In the months since October 2023, significant protests have taken place on the Columbia University campus against Israeli occupation of Palestine and the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli state, demanding that Columbia University divests from Israel and ends all institutional ties with Israeli state institution, among other related demands.
- The reaction of Minouche Shafik to these peaceful protests has been widely criticized as appalling and lacking in support for free expression and the rights of protesters^{1 2}. Shafik called in the New York Police Department on her own students, leading to these students suffering physical violence from law enforcement and being arrested in large numbers³. In one video, the NYPD can be seen throwing the body of a student down a flight of stone steps⁴. The Columbia University administration led by Shafik suspended students⁵ attempting to engage in dialogue and negotiations with university officials, including foreign students who have formerly suffering forced displacement and have precarious diplomatic status in the US.
- Such is the strength of feeling regarding the violence with which Shafik and her administration responded to the student protests, that Columbia University faculty have recently passed a motion of no-confidence in Shafik's leadership, but she remains in post as this motion was not binding⁶. Many other academics around the world have condemned the actions taken by Shafik and her administration and over 3,000 such academics have signed onto an "academic and cultural boycott of Columbia University"⁷.

This GCR believes:

- The actions and reactions of prominent alumni reflect on the reputation and values of our college.
- Minouche Shafik's handling of the student protests is contrary to the values of free speech, human rights, and ethical leadership that our university upholds.

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/may/04/columbia-university-student-protest-gaza>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/26/pro-palestinian-protests-college-campuses>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/may/01/columbia-university-student-protesters-arrested-faculty-reacts>

⁴ <https://en.as.com/videos/shocking-scenes-from-columbia-show-panicked-protesters-tumbling-down-stairs-v/>

⁵ <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2024/04/19/columbia-begins-formally-notifying-students-of-suspension-for-participation-in-wednesdays-gaza-solidarity-encampment/>

⁶ <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2024/05/16/faculty-of-arts-and-sciences-passes-vote-of-no-confidence-in-shafik/>

⁷ <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v46/n10/amia-srinivasan/if-we-say-yes>

- Our college community has a responsibility to take a stand against actions by alumni that undermine these fundamental principles.

This GCR resolves:

- To formally request that our college suspends the alumni privileges of Minouche Shafik and bars her from visiting the college site, speaking at college events, and attending alumni events.
- To publicise this suspension publicly along with its rationale.