

December 5, 2025

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, Chancellor of the City University of New York
Derek Davis, Senior Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs and General Counsel

Dear Chancellor Matos Rodríguez and Vice Chancellor Davis:

I am writing on behalf of the [Professional Staff Congress Academic Freedom Committee](#). Our charge is to defend academic freedom as a professional and contractual right of all CUNY professional staff. Academic freedom is grounded in the faculty or staff member's qualifications for the position as reviewed by their peers. It consists of the freedom to teach, research, write, and to speak in our capacity as community members without restraint by the administration.

We write to express our deep concern regarding the [voluntary resolution agreement](#) that The City University of New York entered into with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights on June 10, 2024. As we have [noted previously](#), there are many concerning aspects of this agreement, but the most objectionable and dangerous involves CUNY management volunteering to "provide to OCR an electronic sortable spreadsheet or other file of CUNY - Central Office's and/or each Captioned College's responses to all complaints and reports alleging discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of national origin, including shared Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian, Muslim, Arab, and/or South Asian ancestry, or association with these national origins/ancestries, during the preceding academic year." In short, CUNY management agreed to provide the names of all those who have made reports or complaints, the names of those alleged to have been discriminated against, and the names of those alleged to have engaged in discrimination to the federal government.

Notably, the spreadsheet that CUNY has agreed to share with the OCR would contain names of those who have been accused of discrimination *before any investigation into the validity of the allegations naming them has been carried out*. Given CUNY management's additional step of setting up an online portal where complaints can be filed, including anonymous complaints and complaints from those who are not directly connected to CUNY, this is a series of actions that begs to be abused by those who wish to silence forms of speech and expression with which they do not agree—in particular, speech related to Palestine.

To say that such an agreement chills academic freedom and constitutionally protected free speech and expression at CUNY is a grave understatement. An [exhaustive report](#) published by the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) concludes that such agreements have been among the pretexts used to erase

the norm of academic freedom altogether, “as part of an authoritarian assault on the autonomy of higher education and on the very idea of racial and gender equity.”

While such an agreement was already unacceptable when it was signed in June 2024, attacks on academic freedom have escalated sharply since President Trump began his second term in January 2025. The Trump Administration has weaponized civil rights law, in particular Title VI, to carry out an ideological purge of campuses, engaging in what the AAUP and MESA refer to, in their [successful lawsuit against the Trump Administration](#), as an “ideological deportation campaign.” The Trump Administration has [used information provided by colleges and universities](#) to arrest, detain, and deport students and scholars throughout the country. It is unconscionable for CUNY management to collaborate in exposing members of the CUNY community to such violence by continuing its information sharing with the federal government.

Therefore, we request several immediate steps:

First, we demand a public statement from the Chancellor’s office with a full accounting of the actions taken since the signing of this agreement in June 2024. This statement should disclose whether CUNY has met all of its stated obligations under the agreement and whether OCR has closed the monitoring of this agreement as a result. In particular, this statement should make clear whether the names of members of the CUNY community have been shared with the OCR or with any other individuals or entities, including other federal government agencies, pursuant to this settlement agreement. Furthermore, individual employees and students should be encouraged to contact their college president to inquire whether their names have been shared with the OCR, and their requests should be addressed promptly, confidentially, and with full transparency.

Second, if personally identifiable information has in fact been shared with the federal government, we demand that the Chancellor’s office immediately implement harm reduction measures, including free legal support and all necessary support against doxing and other public attacks, to protect those named from unwarranted consequences.

Third, we demand that the Chancellor publicly declare that The City University of New York is no longer bound to provide personally identifiable information, in light of [recent court findings](#) in lawsuits brought by [Harvard University](#) and by the [AAUP, MESA, and the Knight First Amendment Institute](#) against the Trump administration’s pretextual use of antisemitism allegations.

Finally, we demand that the Chancellor declare that CUNY will *not* enter into any subsequent agreements with the OCR, or with the federal government more generally, that

involve providing the names or other personally identifiable information of CUNY community members.

This is a matter of the utmost urgency, and we expect an immediate and affirmative response.

Sincerely,

Anthony Alessandrini, Chair

On behalf of the PSC-CUNY Academic Freedom Committee

CC: Professor James Davis, President, PSC-CUNY and PSC-CUNY Principal Officers

Professors Stuart Davis and Emily Schnee, on behalf of the PSC Executive Committee

Professors Beth Evans and Hollis Glaser, Co-Chairs, University Faculty Senate Academic Freedom Committee

Professor Jonathan Cornick, on behalf of The CUNY Alliance to Defend Higher Education

Ari Paul, Editor of *Clarion*

Professors Lara Deeb and Darryl Li, Co-Chairs, MESA Task Force on Civil and Human Rights

Professor Todd Wolfson, President, American Association of University Professors