

New Dual Degree Program Puts Columbia's Academic Integrity at Risk

Prepared by Columbia University Students for Justice in Palestine and Columbia/Barnard Jewish Voice for Peace

Columbia University [premiered](#) a new dual-degree program between the School of General Studies (GS) and Tel Aviv University (TAU) in 2019. With this announcement, Columbia has chosen to tie its future and its academic integrity to an institution that is deeply complicit in Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people, in addition to ethnic discrimination and repression of political speech.

The university must recognize and address the full ramifications of such a program, and the threat it poses to the fabric of our campus community. The Columbia student body is likewise entitled to know the full extent of our university's involvement with an exclusivist and discriminatory institution. We hope that such knowledge will prompt students, faculty, and administrators to push for the suspension of this program until Israeli academic institutions end their complicity in ethno-nationalist practices and military occupation.

Since the announcement of the GS-TAU program in 2019, the program went into effect in Fall 2020, the university is in the unique position to proactively address such concerns before it is faced with the prospect of adding an ugly stain to its reputation as an institution of higher learning.

1) Columbia will import the racist policies of the Israeli State onto our campus:

How can Columbia ensure that the GS-TAU dual degree program will not violate Title VI of the Higher Education Act or the University's Non-Discrimination Policy, given Israel's track record of discrimination and harassment along national, ethnic, and religious grounds which could inhibit students' access to the dual degree program?

2) Israel limits mobility and political expression

Will the University formally challenge the relevant Israeli Ministries and compile a report on the legal limitations that will affect student participating in the GS-TAU program (e.g. what political ideologies are formally illegal to articulate, which identities are not legally protected, etc.), with regards to Columbia's institutional mandate and commitment to academic freedom?

3) Tel Aviv University and the Israeli State discriminate against Palestinians

How can Columbia ensure that Palestinian students will have full and equal access to the educational opportunities offered by a GS-TAU program?

4) Tel Aviv University is a willing accomplice of the Israeli military

How can Columbia establish an academic program with Tel Aviv University without co-signing the commissioning of war crimes and human rights violations against Palestinians?

The four questions included in the statement represent a broad range of concerns that must be addressed to ensure that students and faculty have equal educational opportunities. As it stands now,

the dual degree program risks excluding a substantial portion of prospective students and importing the racist and discriminatory policies of the Israeli State onto Columbia University's campus. Please sign this petition and join us in attempting to prevent Columbia from entangling itself further with the discriminatory policies and anti-Palestinian practices of the Israeli State.

Signed,

Columbia University Students for Justice in Palestine

Petition updated on April 5th 2023

Original Publication: December 9th, 2019