

# COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

PROVOST

September 10, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

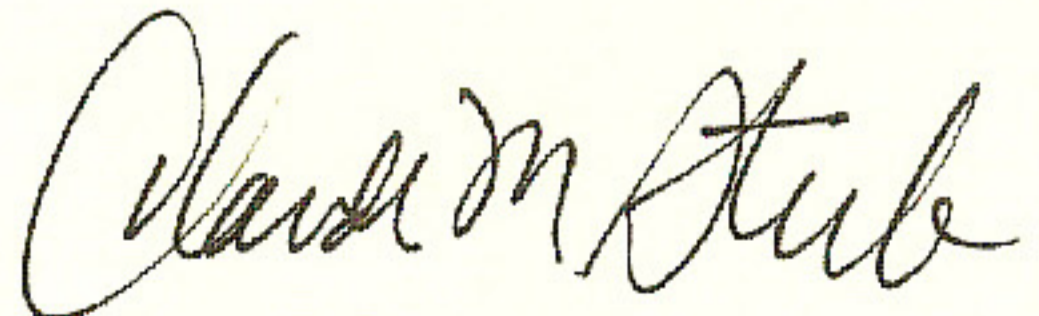
I will welcome the opportunity to meet with a delegation of you, as you have requested. The meeting will be a helpful part of my education about my new responsibilities as well as allowing you to express your concerns about how the tenure review for Joseph Massad was conducted.

I have much to learn about how we evaluate candidates for tenure at Columbia and may want to make some changes in our procedures once I am familiar with how our current system works. There are, however, some basic principles that will guide me in managing tenure reviews, regardless of how they are organized. We should seek to make the best possible decisions about who should receive tenure in the fairest and most efficient possible manner. While we should have high expectations of candidates, they should be evaluated upon the basis of academic criteria without consideration to their political opinions, nor should we allow personal preferences and biases to influence our decisions.

In addition, we must work to make sure the University's faculty have confidence that we are following these principles in choosing who will be their tenured colleagues. That goal will not always be easy to achieve since the rules of confidentiality limit the information I can share about individual reviews and some cases are bound to be controversial. Nonetheless, it is important that tenure reviews be widely perceived as rigorous and fair as well as being so in fact.

I, therefore, look forward to our meeting. It will help me understand why you feel that Professor Massad's review may have been influenced by improper considerations. I would also like to take advantage of the occasion to hear your suggestions about how we can make better decisions on tenure and how we can provide the faculty with greater assurance of the quality and fairness of the reviews we conduct. If you will send me a list of who will attend, I will ask my Executive Assistant, Caroline Stern, to find a time during the next few weeks when we can meet.

With best regards,



Claude M. Steele  
Provost