

Dear President Cowley, Provost Brown, Dean Newman, Faculty of Political Science,

When I was hired as Chair of Political Science, I expressed a commitment to public universities as places of open discussion among scholars and students. I believe Political Science faculty play a key role in those conversations when public events are troubling and difficult for students to discuss freely on campus. This is especially the case when student protesters are attempting to intimidate and silence other students.

After the Hamas attacks on 7 October, the Political Science Department held a faculty/student discussion to allow students to pose questions and have an opportunity to discuss the events with experts. The discussion was advertised as scholarly and not a debate between opposing camps. Several students emailed demands that a pro-Palestinian speaker be included in the event, and I refused.

I introduced the event by explaining its purpose. I described the recent events the same way President Biden has described them. Quoting him, I explained that Hamas is a terrorist organization committed to the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people. In the attacks on the 7<sup>th</sup> they slaughtered young people at a concert, families in their homes, and took hostages. I concluded by saying that this raises profound moral questions for students about why this happened, what it will cause, and what responses are required or allowable, especially considering the many civilians in Gaza who are also subjugated by Hamas. I was advised by others at the university to not say these things. But they are true, and I believe universities must not cower away from the truth in order to pacify protesters.

The Political Science event was protested by pro-Palestinian students inside and outside the event. Protesters yelled, interrupted, cursed at faculty, and disrupted most of the discussion.

In response, the College of Liberal Arts has banned all talks by the Political Science Department without prior approval and vetting. The Dean has informed me in writing that

“No events should be scheduled without prior approval. For each such event, please provide the following at least 7 working days in advance: a written management plan, including a risk assessment, risk mitigation plan, and a copy of any comments you plan to give by way of introduction to the event.”

These policies are transparent attempts to halt public talks by Political Science faculty, curtail the academic freedom of scholars, and quash discussion if it might lead to criticism.

I will not follow these policies. I will not be a part of the end of academic liberty in the Political Science profession. I will not agree to end scholarly discussion on campus.

I resign as Chair of Political Science. I will return as soon as possible to being teaching faculty as a tenured member of the Department pursuing my profession as a teacher and writer, but I will not supervise the decline of the profession.

As someone committed to American universities as truth-seeking institutions, I can do no other.

Sincerely,

Morgan Marietta

Morgan Marietta  
Professor & Chair of Political Science

