

**Resolution Endorsing the Statement in Support of Palestine Studies and Academic Freedom at
Hunter College**

Committee on Academic Freedom, Bronx Community College

Approved by unanimous vote, March 13, 2025

Whereas New York Governor Kathy Hochul's February 2025 order to remove job postings for teaching positions in Palestinian studies at Hunter College presents a clear violation of academic freedom, and,

Whereas CUNY's Chancellor has failed to uphold the right to academic freedom from this violation,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Committee on Academic Freedom at Bronx Community College unreservedly endorses the following statement.

Statement in Support of Palestine Studies and Academic Freedom at Hunter College

We write as CUNY scholars concerned with academic freedom to express our outrage at Governor Kathy Hochul's [interference in an academic job search at Hunter College](#), and our Chancellor's capitulation to the Governor's call to remove previously approved and publicly shared advertisements of two positions in Palestine Studies at Hunter from CUNY's website.

The idea that any government official can tell a public university who it can and cannot hire, what it can and cannot teach, violates the most basic principles of academic freedom. The fact that CUNY's Chancellor is unwilling to uphold this very simple value of public higher education is unacceptable. At a moment when so many fields of study—from critical race studies, to gender and transgender studies, to the most fundamental scientific and social scientific research on climate change, social inequality, and reproductive health—are under attack, the words and actions of Governor Hochul, Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez, and Board of Trustees Chairperson William Thompson are incredibly dangerous. We demand that Chancellor Matos Rodríguez affirm the right of Hunter College to conduct these searches without further interference, and reaffirm the principles of academic freedom that are the basis of all the work we do as public scholars and educators.

We also want to affirm three important points, as scholars and educators concerned with academic freedom.

1) There is absolutely no relationship or connection between the field of Palestine Studies and antisemitism. Any attempts to draw such a connection are false, pernicious, and disingenuous forms of propaganda and intimidation. Such claims also show a deep disrespect for—and, indeed, a deep ignorance of—the work done by scholars in the field for many decades (to cite just one example, the [Journal of Palestine Studies](#), a respected peer-reviewed scholarly journal, was founded over fifty years ago). We reject the notion that this field should be regarded differently than any other academic field. That includes the right of experts to carry out job searches free from external interference.

2) Although this should go without saying, the particular terms in the job search description to which Governor Hochul objects—“settler colonialism,” “genocide,” and “apartheid”—are legitimate scholarly and pedagogical topics. Indeed, scholars in fields ranging from anthropology to environmental sciences to history to literary studies to sociology and beyond address these topics in their work every day. Scholars working in the field of Palestine Studies have every right to do so as well. To suggest, as Chancellor Matos Rodríguez and Board Chairperson Thompson do, that scholarly work on such topics is “divisive, polarizing and inappropriate” is simply absurd. Certainly such terms are not uncontested, but that is precisely why we study them. By failing to affirm this simple idea, our Chancellor and Board Chairperson reveal a willful ignorance of the work we do every day as public scholars and educators, and are abdicating their responsibility to protect the basis of public education at CUNY.

3) Furthermore, academic inquiry has no responsibility to be “balanced” or “non-divisive.” The whole point of academic freedom is to allow scholars and students to freely analyze, discuss, and debate contested topics and issues. At its heart, academic freedom is based on the idea that a society benefits from this form of free intellectual inquiry—including (especially) around contested areas of study. After all, desegregated schools, women’s suffrage, and indeed universal public education itself were once “divisive, polarizing” topics. At this moment more than ever, the failure of CUNY’s leadership to affirm academic freedom endangers us

all—especially our students who rely on us to foster the robust discussion of ideas in the classroom.

We reiterate our complete and unequivocal support for this cluster hire, and for our colleagues at Hunter College doing the crucial work of selecting future colleagues to carry out this important work in Palestine Studies. We insist that the Chancellor stop acquiescing to political pressure and allow this search to go forward without further interference. We urge the Chancellor to join us, his fellow public scholars and educators, in opposing such egregious attacks on the principles of academic freedom.