



October 1, 2024

Kathleen E. Harring  
Muhlenberg College

[president@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:president@muhlenberg.edu)

Dear President Harring:

FIRE<sup>1</sup> is gravely concerned by Muhlenberg's firing of tenured professor Maura Finkelstein for her pro-Palestinian social media advocacy. As explained in our linked analysis, this termination breaches Muhlenberg's public pledge to safeguard academic freedom and tenure.<sup>2</sup>

When faculty are punished for their speech, "they cannot properly fulfill their core responsibilities to advance and transmit knowledge."<sup>3</sup> Tenure and academic freedom, accordingly, exist to protect faculty members who make controversial arguments or whose speech draws public criticism. By firing Finkelstein, Muhlenberg violates its own policies, abandons its principles, and diminishes the rights of all Muhlenberg faculty.

We urge the college to recommit to its core value of academic freedom by promptly restoring Finkelstein to the classroom.

Sincerely,

Graham Piro  
Faculty Legal Defense Fund Fellow

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<sup>1</sup> For more than 20 years, FIRE has defended freedom of expression, conscience, and religion, and other individual rights on America's college campuses. You can learn more about our mission and activities at [thefire.org](http://thefire.org).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., *Overview*, Muhlenberg Coll. <https://www.muhlenberg.edu/academics/provost/committees/institutionalreviewboard/overview/> [<https://perma.cc/Y5F2-ADA2>] ("This policy affirms Muhlenberg College's commitment to academic freedom.").

<sup>3</sup> *Tenure*, Why is tenure important? What purpose does it serve?, AMER. ASSN. OF UNIV. PROFS. <https://www.aaup.org/issues/tenure> [<https://perma.cc/4TJF-XS2J>].