

# The Daily Pennsylvanian

## Guest Column by 33 Penn Law faculty members | Open letter to the University of Pennsylvania community

By 33 Penn Law Faculty Members | 08/30/17 6:31pm

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To the University of Pennsylvania Community:

We write to condemn recent statements our colleague Amy Wax, the Robert Mundheim Professor of Law at Penn Law School, has made in popular media pieces.

In an op-ed published recently at Philly.com, Wax and a coauthor wrote that “All cultures are not equal,” going on to claim that various social problems would be “significantly reduce[d]” if “the academics, media, and Hollywood” would stop the “preening pretense of defending the downtrodden,” because that would lead to “restoring the hegemony of the bourgeois culture.” In an interview with The Daily Pennsylvanian about the op-ed, Wax was quoted as saying that “Everyone wants to go to countries ruled by white Europeans,” because, in the phrasing of the DP article’s author, “Anglo-Protestant cultural norms are superior.”

Wax has every right to express her opinions publicly free from fear of legal sanction thanks to the First Amendment, and she may do so without fear for her job due to her position as a tenured faculty member at Penn.

We do not question those rights, or the important role that principles of academic freedom play at our University. But Wax’s right to express her opinions does not make her statements right, nor insulate her from criticism.

We categorically reject Wax’s claims.

We believe the ideal of equal opportunity to succeed in education is best achieved by a combination of academic freedom, open debate and commitment by all participants to respect one another without bias or stereotype. To our students, we say the following: If your experience at Penn Law falls substantially short of this ideal, something has gone wrong, and we want to know about it.

Sincerely,

Penn Law faculty listed on following page (titles for identification purposes; names listed in alphabetical order):

1. Regina Austin, William A. Schnader Professor of Law
2. Tom Baker, William Maul Measey Professor of Law and Health Sciences
3. Shyamkrishna Balganesh, Professor of Law
4. William Wilson Bratton, Nicholas F. Gallicchio Professor of Law
5. Stephen B. Burbank, David Berger Professor for the Administration of Justice
6. William W. Burke-White, Richard Perry Professor and Professor of Law

7. Howard F. Chang, Earle Hepburn Professor of Law
8. Cynthia Laury Dahl, Practice Professor of Law
9. Jacques deLisle, Stephen A. Cozen Professor of Law & Professor of Political Science
10. Eric A. Feldman, Professor of Law
11. Kara R. Finck, Practice Professor of Law
12. Douglas Frenkel, Morris Shuster Practice Professor of Law
13. Jean Galbraith, Assistant Professor of Law
14. Jonah B. Gelbach, Professor of Law
15. Sarah Barringer Gordon, Arlin M. Adams Professor of Constitutional Law and Professor of History
16. Susanna R. Greenberg, Clinical Supervisor and Lecturer
17. Allison Hoffman, Professor of Law
18. David Hoffman, Professor of Law
19. Jonathan Klick, Professor of Law
20. Praveen Kosuri, Practice Professor of Law
21. Seth Kreimer, Kenneth W. Gemmill Professor of Law
22. Sophia Z. Lee, Professor of Law and History
23. Serena Mayeri, Professor of Law and History
24. Maggie McKinley (Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe), Assistant Professor of Law
25. Charles W. Mooney, Jr., Charles A. Heimbold, Jr. Professor of Law
26. Sarah Paoletti, Practice Professor of Law
27. Gideon Parchomovsky, Robert G. Fuller, Jr. Professor of Law
28. Dorothy E. Roberts, George A. Weiss University Professor of Law and Sociology and the Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights
29. Kermit Roosevelt, Professor of Law
30. David Rudovsky, Senior Fellow
31. Louis S. Rulli, Practice Professor of Law and Clinical Director
32. Tobias Barrington Wolff, Professor of Law
33. Christopher S. Yoo, John H. Chestnut Professor of Law, Communication, and Computer & Information Science