

## **Statement of Principles for Teaching in the Time of a Pandemic**

As the University's response to the COVID-19 public health emergency evolves, all of us look forward to returning to the in-person teaching that forms the foundation of our shared intellectual life, when it is safe to do so. During this extraordinary time of crisis, we come together as a community—of scholars, teachers, archivists, students, and administrators—to affirm the following principles, which shall guide our response and our actions going forward:

### **Health**

First and foremost, we commit to preserving the health, safety, and well-being of all members of our community.

### **Equity**

We recognize especially the challenges faced by our students, particularly those already in difficult circumstances shaped by the inequities of wealth, race, ability, accessibility, environment, citizenship, or residency status.

### **Teaching Flexibility**

Therefore, we are committed to adapting our teaching approaches flexibly in response to the varied circumstances and the needs of our students, as well as the ongoing developments in public health, using every tool at our disposal.

### **Technology**

While technological innovation in the classroom is important, we are reluctant to burden our instructors and students with new, cumbersome, and costly tools. Instead, we propose to innovate the methods that are the core of the humanities classroom – careful reading, analysis, original thought, and student engagement -- being guided by best practices and by technology already in use widely among instructors and students. In doing so, we draw upon the rich resources and research in digital humanities pedagogy.

### **Individual Choice**

We trust in the wisdom of instructors to tailor their instruction individually and to make personal choices about how best to preserve the safety of their classes while maintaining teaching excellence.

### **Self-governance**

In making decisions we rely also on the long-standing traditions and established mechanisms of faculty self-governance at Columbia, within the Department and across the Arts and Sciences. Our decisions as a University grow stronger when we respond, with many diverse voices, after careful consideration and discussion, and with respect to the existing advisory structures.

### **Vulnerability**

Finally, we affirm the need to protect our more vulnerable colleagues from undue pressure contrary to the above principles: lecturers, staff, untenured faculty, graduate students, and adjunct faculty. We stand with them in support and with all others struggling to cope with this crisis.

Today, more than ever, our (real and virtual) doors are open for your questions, concerns, and comments. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.