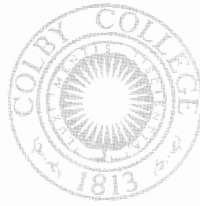


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To whom it may concern,

These were some of my spontaneous reactions to the following question I was asked recently: "Do you ever hug your colleagues?"

Yes, and without thinking much about it, I have hugged female and male colleagues in public, that is, on my University or College campuses as well as in social situations, that is, mainly as a friendly greeting in connection with a social gathering like, for example, a dinner party.

I have just returned from two months in Europe. Seeing my full-time colleagues with whom I work on a daily basis for the first time after such a long stretch, we have, of course, hugged each other. This is a gesture of warmth and a sign of connectedness. This kind of embrace is absolutely spontaneous. There is nothing premeditated about it. I hope that we will be able to continue to show some spontaneous emotions in our age of "political correctness".

Another circumstance in which it is most common to embrace a colleague, is after a performance. Here the gesture is one of congratulations on a good performance and of thanks to the performer for his/her hard work and the possibly resulting stimulation one may have been left with.

Just before Christmas I received the good news of having been promoted to tenure. The full-time academic faculty, five males, showed up with champagne and embraces to celebrate the happy event. (I am expecting a similar celebration this year for one of my male colleagues who, without doubt, should be given tenure.)

As of this academic year I will be chairing the music department at Colby College. In my role as administrator I firmly intend to continue previous behavioral patterns and expect not to adjust or change my personality.

I might also mention that on special occasions, usually for a fine performance, I have hugged students regardless of their sex.

In concluding my personal reactions, I may add that during my years as a student and instructor at Wellesley College and Brandeis University, and my subsequent full-time teaching career at S.U.N.Y./Stony Brook (4 years), Yale University (7 years), and Colby College (2 years) I have never felt any discomfort when hugging a male colleague or, vice versa, when being hugged. The behavior I have described above should not be misconstrued for any kind of sexual advances; instead, it reflects friendly gestures of collegiality.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eva Linfield".

Eva Linfield  
(associate professor of music and  
department chair)