

RESOLUTION TO Support the UB Faculty Statement on Police Action on Campus

To: Faculty Senate

From: Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility

Date proposed to FSEC: May 7, 2024

Date approved by the FSEC for transmittal to Faculty Senate: May 7, 2024

Date approved by Faculty Senate: May 14, 2024 (vote 35-17-1)

RATIONALE:

Whereas, there are reliable reports that the University responded dangerously and disproportionately to the peaceful protests held on UB's North Campus on May 1, 2024, and

Whereas, as of May 6, 2024, over 175 UB faculty across decanal units have signed a letter to the UB President condemning this response and calling for charges against demonstrators to be dropped,

RESOLUTION:

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Senate calls on the University to request that all charges against the demonstrators be dropped and that UB discontinue any process in relation to the UB code of conduct against the student protestors,

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate opposes the University calling in outside law enforcement to campus for peaceful protests,

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate calls for a public review of the policies and protocols of UB police, including the protocol for calling in outside law enforcement to campus,

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate calls for an investigation of the ad hoc changes to the campus picketing and assembly policy,

Be it further resolved that the reports on the public review and investigation called for in this resolution be presented to the Faculty Senate at its first meeting in fall 2024, and

Be it further resolved that the Faculty Senate shares the concerns expressed in the UB Faculty Statement on Police Action on Campus.

Appendix: UB Faculty Statement on Police Action on Campus

May 3, 2024.

Dear President Tripathi:

As faculty at UB, we are deeply disturbed by the University's decision to violently escalate the peaceful protest that students organized on May 1st. Around fifty protestors assembled to protest the war in Gaza and support divestment on the lawn outside Hochstetter Hall on UB's North campus. The gathering was entirely peaceful and students were well organized. When told that erecting tents for an encampment would lead to their arrest, students reorganized the gathering immediately to comply with the policy. Furthermore, the order that students disperse after sundown – cited as 8:22 pm by law enforcement officers at the protest – was ad hoc, dangerous and discriminatory. The [official university policy barring overnight picketing and assembly](#) does not mention sundown. The sundown deadline for arrest coincided with Maghrib, Muslim evening prayer, which police seemed unaware of until informed by the protestors. The rules about student protests were being updated in real time on the day of the protest, appearing discriminatory and making it difficult for even the most informed students to comply.

For a small crowd of fifty protestors, the University called in law enforcement from State, County, and multiple local jurisdictions. Police cars lined the Flint loop and officers nearly outnumbered protestors. In making this decision, the University demonstrated its intolerance towards free expression and flagrant disregard for student safety. A non-UPD officer [pushed and insulted an editor of the Spectrum](#). A male police officer forcibly restrained a hijab-wearing female student, resulting in the unraveling of her hijab. Touching or dislodging a woman's hijab is a deep violation of privacy, and exhibits an absolute lack of cultural understanding in contradiction to UB's DEI principles. The University used Stampede shuttle buses to remove arrested protestors. And as police confronted the small crowd, they continually pushed students across a road and towards the parking lot, where cars were circulating, putting these protestors in danger. Hyper surveillance, fear, and physical and psychological harm caused by violent policing is a well-documented structural determinant of health inequity, and on May 1st our University's decision undermined our own students' health and wellbeing.

On May 2nd, in a letter to the University community, you wrote, "We are an educational institution that believes in challenging convention. We cherish civil discourse. We embrace multiple perspectives and multiple worldviews." The University sent precisely the opposite message on May 1st: far from cherished, civil discourse was met with intimidation. Multiple perspectives and worldviews were met with violent escalation. This disproportionate response made our campus community not safer, but rather more threatening and alienating. The [American Civil Liberties Union has recently provided guidance to College and University Presidents on student protests](#). The ACLU emphasizes that "Schools must recognize that armed police on campus can endanger students and are a measure of last resort," particularly given "the history of law enforcement using inappropriate and excessive force on communities of color, including Black, Brown, and immigrant students." Our students were unnecessarily put in danger.

UB has a cherished history of students and faculty mobilizing for social change. We teach our students these values, and to act on them using critical thinking, evidence and integrity. Our campus – inside and outside of classrooms – is a learning space. The severe police response to the May 1st protest sets a dangerous precedent and negates this history. We call on the University to drop all charges against the demonstrators. We strongly urge a public review of the policies and protocols of UB police, including the protocol for calling in outside law enforcement to campus, and to investigate the ad hoc changes to the campus picketing and assembly policy. The University's response is detrimental to the campus climate, the health and safety of students, and their ability to engage in peaceful protest.

Signatories: <https://forms.gle/YPFTh47HUDJnASYn8>