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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
30 MAY 2024

RESPONSE TO THE STUDENT ENCAMPMENT AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Dear campus community,

As representatives of Wayne State's diverse student body, we are responsible for representing their voices on matters that impact our community. Per our mission statement, we are committed to serving as a liaison between the student body and campus administration.

On May 23rd, 2024, students at Wayne State University exercised their First Amendment rights, including freedom of speech, assembly, and petition, by establishing an encampment on Wayne State University's public campus, endeavoring to meet with Wayne State administrators regarding four demands:

1. Wayne State University's full divestment from companies that engage war profiteering.
2. Public disclosure of Wayne State University's investment portfolio.
3. The cessation of Wayne State police collaboration with Israel.
4. The publication of a university ceasefire statement.

The Student Senate passed resolutions [2324-03](#) and [2324-24](#) on November 2nd, 2023, and April 18th, 2024, respectively, aligned with the protest's goals. The Student Senate is reaffirming its commitment to ensure that these resolutions are carried out.

Since the start of the encampment, there has been an increase in the presence of on-campus police, negatively affecting the student body and community members. The categorization of this protest as a threat to public safety is discriminatory language against those protesting, especially Muslim and Arab students.

To negotiate their demands, participating students asked to have "an open meeting on [student's] terms" with the administration. Accordingly, the Student Senate now calls on

Wayne State University Student Senate

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President Espy and the Wayne State Board of Governors to engage in honest and transparent negotiations with their student body.

On Tuesday, May 28th, the university moved to fully remote operations due to an “ongoing public safety issue” and has continued to remain remote. The Senate recognizes that the choice made by the administration to suspend in-person operations has had a profoundly negative impact on the lives of students and employees. This action forced professors to suspend and delay examinations, adversely affecting students’ academic performance and investment. Student employees who are dependent on their campus jobs have had their hours and income cut.

This morning at approximately 5:30 AM, May 30th, Wayne State Police raided and dismantled the encampment and arrested several students. WSUPD arrived wearing riot gear and used physical force against student protestors. These actions included the forceful removal of hijabs. The Student Senate condemns the administration's choice to use force against student protestors instead of holding open discourse. These actions made by campus leadership do *not* reflect the principles outlined in Wayne State’s mission of inclusivity and collaboration.

The Student Senate recognizes the encampment’s compliance to maintain public safety and inclusivity standards as presented by Vice President Lindsey. This is clear from the proactive steps that were taken to ensure the area remained accommodating by clearing the sidewalks and other pedestrian-only zones.

In short, the Senate stands by the goals of the encampment, the desire for clear and transparent communication, and the resumption of normal campus activities. We implore the larger university community, especially President Espy and the Board of Governors, to strongly consider the standpoint of this letter. The resumption of normal campus operations should not begin with overwhelming police presence, student removals, and arrests.

In solidarity,



Hayden Johnson
Student Senate President