



**Oregon State
University**

May 21, 2024

To the OSU community:

We shared last week that an overnight encampment consisting of OSU and non-OSU community members began on the Memorial Union quad on the Corvallis campus on Wednesday, May 15. This encampment is associated with a national pro-Palestinian protest movement demanding colleges and universities take positions on foreign policy related to violence in Gaza, Israel and the region.

[For more than six months](#), OSU leaders have been in ongoing dialogue with encampment demonstrators about their concerns and desires to make their voices heard. While at times difficult, these conversations were respectful, and progress was made.

Despite these efforts, OSU and non-OSU community members elected to follow the example of other universities in Oregon and around the country by establishing an overnight encampment. The overnight encampment violates the university's free expression and ground use policies by draining limited public safety resources, raising safety concerns, and forcing the cancelation of other student-sponsored events, impacting thousands of other community members.

OSU has made significant good faith efforts to address the demonstrators' concerns, and in turn has made clear to encampment participants the university's expectation that the encampment disband by yesterday, Monday, May 20. Those who remain in the encampment now face investigation and potential sanction under the Code of Student Conduct, other university policies, or criminal statutes.

Ongoing engagement with encampment organizers

OSU leaders have engaged with student organizers [over twenty-five times](#) beginning in October 2023 and continuing through last week to seek resolution to the students' concerns. These conversations, often initiated by OSU, have been characterized by mutual respect and, according to the students involved, resulted in progress. While these conversations have shifted fundamentally as a result of the overnight encampment, the door to engagement remains open.

Response to demonstrators' concerns

On Wednesday, May 15, encampment organizers shared with university leaders a list of demands nearly identical to demands shared with universities around the country. While we understand the passion reflected in these demands, in many cases the demands ask the

university to take positions contrary to our commitment to free expression, academic freedom and role as a public institution.

On Thursday, May 16, the university shared its response in detail to these demands. In this message, OSU recognized the grief, pain and suffering resulting from violence in Gaza, Israel and the region that began on October 7, 2023. The university acknowledged the direct negative impact these events have had on OSU community members and expressed our desire for a lasting peace.

OSU's message spelled out a series of actions the university has and will continue to take to support community members impacted by violence in the region and OSU's commitment to advance its values and mission. Today, we have further refined these actions as a result of ongoing dialogue. We encourage all OSU community members to [review these actions](#).

These actions are similar to and exceed commitments made by many peer institutions where encampments have voluntarily disbanded. These commitments also represent opportunities for ongoing, collaborative engagement between OSU and student demonstrators to continue making progress on topics important to both OSU and the organizers.

Next steps

Prior to this point, no one has been sanctioned for their participation in the overnight encampment, despite their ongoing violation of university policies. Those who remain in the encampment now face investigation and potential sanctions under the Code of Student Conduct, other university policies or criminal statutes.

This does not mean that students' activism or our engagement with student organizers about their concerns should end. We hope it does not. What it does mean is this activism must transition to forms that align with the university's broad free expression policies and that do not strain limited public safety resources or negatively impact university operations serving students and employees on the Corvallis campus.

It is our desire to continue making forward progress with encampment organizers. We hope very much for a resolution to this difficult situation and to moving forward as a university community committed to actions mutually important to encampment demonstrators and OSU. I encourage you to visit OSU's [encampment demonstration website](#) for further information and updates.

Sincerely,

Rob Odom
University Spokesperson

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