

We, the graduate employees/students and the majority of faculty members of the Philosophy Department, express our profound concern over the current repression of student-led movements within campuses around the country. We would be deeply distressed and angered to see similar repressive violence unfold on our campus, but are hopeful the University of Oregon leadership will continue to avoid escalation and to protect the rights of its students, in particular international and otherwise vulnerable students. The militarized repression at nearly 50 US campuses has meant the arrest of more than 2500 students in gruesome scenes of police violence against peaceful protestors and observers (in many instances, professors), all members of academic communities like ours. We invite the administration to learn from the mistakes of institutions such as Columbia University, Emory University, New York University, UCLA, and the University of Texas who have responded with extreme militarization to peaceful, anti-war protestors to widespread institutional, national, and international condemnation. Let us see the University of Oregon portrayed all around the world as a sanctuary for free speech and justice.

**Students who are protesting should face no reprimands or suspensions, nor should they be subjected to arrest, for demanding transparency in the handling of the university finances and its divestments from military enterprises or for occupying university lawns and outdoor spaces for the purpose of political demonstration and free speech. Furthermore, their demands should be heard and taken seriously by the whole community; we call on the administration to establish a productive dialogue around the students' demands.**

Academic freedom is enshrined in the UO's culture and practices. It is defended in university policies, on the Office of the Provost website, and in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between United Academics and the University. In its Message on Academic Freedom, the Office of the Provost quotes literary scholar and historian Louis Menand: "it is the academic's job in a free society to serve the public culture by asking questions the public doesn't want to ask, investigating subjects it cannot or will not investigate, and accommodating voices it fails or refuses to accommodate." In Article 5 of the CBA, faculty are guaranteed: "The freedom to teach, both in and outside of the classroom. Faculty members must be able not only to disseminate to their students the results of research by themselves and others in their profession, but also to train students to think about these results for themselves, often in an atmosphere of controversy that, so long as it remains in a broad sense educationally relevant, actively assists students in mastering the subject and appreciating its significance."

Faculty, graduate employees and students, and staff must be free to discuss any current events freely and critically, both inside and outside the classroom. Faculty and graduate employees recognize their responsibility to make sure these conversations occur in a respectful manner. We are committed to preventing students from making generalizations about or disparagements of racial, ethnic, religious or otherwise marginalized groups of people; if such comments are made, we are committed to addressing their inappropriateness and making sure all students know they are welcome in our classrooms. We will not abdicate our responsibility, under the UO mission statement, to help students *question critically, think logically, reason effectively, communicate clearly, act creatively, and live ethically.*

As members of an often-imperfect discipline dedicated to cultivating practices of critical thinking about social and political issues (among other topics), we philosophers stand behind the rights of all our students to express and discuss their political views, to hold peaceful protests on behalf of these views, and to request dialogue with their university's leadership about the relationship of those views to the institution of which we are all essential parts. We also offer support to other like-minded departments on campus as we struggle to create a democratic university.

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