

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Issued: Non-Protesting Students at UW-Madison

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Urgent Call for Balance: Non-Protesting Students Request Action from University Leadership

Madison, WI: At 12 p.m. on Monday, May 6, students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison met with Chancellor Mnookin and other members of administration to present requests to resolve a week of campus unrest related to the pro-Palestinian encampment on Library Mall. In the meeting, students shared personal experiences of intimidation, harassment and antisemitism they experienced from encampment protestors and outside agitators.

Students presented formal requests to promote equal application and enforcement of campus practices and policies. With the looming threat of protestors disrupting graduation and the untenable rise of antisemitism on college campuses, students ask that the University take a stand against hate and promote the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea.

The student leaders shared, "We are concerned that the administration's inaction has caused the University to stray from The Wisconsin Idea. The Wisconsin Idea teaches that true change comes from civil dialogue, democratic engagement, and respect for law. It does not say that the end justifies the means as protestors have suggested and as the administration has tolerated."

The Students' Requests

1. **Adopt the IHRA definition of Antisemitism:** We respectfully request that the University adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism so there is a common understanding of what constitutes religious and racial discrimination, intimidation or threats.
2. **Equal Condemnation of Antisemitism:** We respectfully request equal, vociferous and multichannel condemnation of antisemitic phrases meant to intimidate Jewish and Israeli students, just as the University has done for other protected groups. The University must use its bully platform and moral standing to condemn, not condone.
3. **Equal Representation in Negotiations:** We respectfully request representatives from the community of Jewish and Israeli students as well as unaligned parties in any negotiation. The University cannot establish itself as a representative for counter-protesters or unaligned parties and it is unacceptable to move forward in negotiations without those voices.
4. **Approval from the Board of Regents:** We respectfully request that any agreements between the University and any other party regarding the protestors and Israeli-Hamas conflict have the affirmative approval of the Board of Regents. It should not be an executive decision.
5. **Waive Chapter 18 or Enforce the Law:** We respectfully request that the University either make a statement affirmatively waiving Chapter 18 or enforce the law. It is unjust to ignore the law for

pro-Palestinian protesters while making it unclear that the same terms would apply for protests with different content. By providing amnesty, you have emboldened leaders of the encampment to believe that they have a right to appropriate the space for their interests only.

6. **No Right to Privacy in Public Places:** We respectfully request that the University update policies to acknowledge that protesters in breach of University policies or acting in contravention of law may not conceal their identities so as to purposefully evade accountability for such breaches or illegal acts.
7. **Make it Clear that Exams Go On:** We respectfully request that the University make it clear that professors or teaching faculty cannot cancel exams due to the protests, and that students will not be able to make up exams or assignments because of participation in the encampment. This request applies to participation in any protest regardless of its content, if said waiver would only be granted to students who support one side of a conflict.
8. **Create a Graduation Free From Politics:** We respectfully request that the University not only ensures commencement will go on as planned, but make it clear that it will be free of disruption by banning flags, banners and bullhorns. Furthermore, the University must publish and enforce that if any student disrupts graduation using a banner, flag and/or bullhorn so as to impair the quiet enjoyment of those other than them, the student will be subject to discipline up to and to the denial of a diploma.
9. **Listen Carefully to Our Voices:** We respectfully request that the UW administration listen carefully to the voices of Jewish, Israeli and unaligned students: Our pain and graphic experiences detail a hostile and unwelcome environment on campus that is a direct result from the illegal encampment. Our treatment violates the University's professed dedication to diversity and inclusion.
10. **Stand Against Discriminatory, Arbitrary Boycotts:** We respectfully request that the University take a moral stand against measures that discriminate against Israeli students or seek to cut ties with Israeli institutions. Such discrimination is not only unlawful but also deprives the community of the unique academic strengths and perspectives of Israeli individuals and institutions that are by far the most diverse and inclusive in the Middle East in terms of race, religion, sex, and gender identity. Few other universities in the Middle East have such a rich history tolerating the degree of academic freedom to dissent from official government positions as do Israeli universities.
11. **Open a Dialogue on Activism in the Classroom:** We respectfully request that the University open a forum for dialogue on how professors and students can best work toward creating welcoming classroom climates for all students and viewpoints in times of polarizing activism.
12. **Institute a First Year Civics Requirement:** We respectfully request that the University expand its freshman compulsory curriculum to include a civics requirement that helps students understand the importance of civil discourse, the boundaries of free speech and assembly, the means to petition for the redress of grievances and the nature of responsible protest.

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Student press representatives are available to discuss this with the media. To schedule a call, email renewthewisconsinidea@gmail.com