

May 8, 2024

Dear President Scholz,

As members of the University of Oregon Senate, we support faculty, staff, and students' right to protest peacefully. In fact, the Senate just updated and passed the University's **Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech** policy on March 13, 2024. The policy begins with an important statement: "1.1 WHEREAS the essential values of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech are bedrock principles of the University of Oregon." The updated policy improves and clarifies our university's stance on the importance of these critical principles. These principles are pillars of our university's core academic mission, both to our students and our public mission to the State of Oregon and the world. You can find the policy here: <https://senate.uoregon.edu/senate-motions/us2324-07-academic-freedom-and-freedom-speech-policy>

We are troubled by the actions taken across the country to forcefully remove and arrest students who peacefully gathered in non-disruptive ways to exercise their freedom of speech. Such actions undermine the fundamental principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom and the value of critical expression in our community at the University of Oregon. We advocate for respectful dialogue and constructive engagement to address the issues being raised by the Gaza Solidarity Camp.

We urgently call upon the University of Oregon administration to not just acknowledge but actively uphold the rights of **all members** of our academic community to express themselves peacefully. Furthermore, we strongly urge the administration to engage proactively with the Gaza Solidarity Camp members, seeking collaborative and peaceful solutions to pave the way forward. **No member of our university community** should feel intimidated while on our university grounds. Acts of antisemitism and Islamophobia will not be tolerated.

Senate leadership and Senate members will continue working with President Scholz and Interim Provost Ford to express this fundamental point and to seek ways that our Senate's mission of maintaining the University's academic integrity is protected while also seeking means of supporting the rights of free speech and the safety of **all our students, faculty, and staff**.

Let's unite as a Senate and university community in an authentic dialogue to seek ways to move forward positively and productively.

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