



OCAAUP Statement on OSU Protests and Arrests

The Ohio Conference AAUP strongly condemns The Ohio State University for the arrests that took place on its campus on April 25, 2024. As a faculty organization, we are alarmed by the violation of basic standards of care and respect for students demonstrated in this overreaction to peaceful protest. In particular, we condemn the massive use of force on this night, which included dozens of OSUPD officers and state troopers, as well as helicopters, drones, and long-range firearms aimed at protesters from rooftop positions. This response was both unnecessary and intimidating to further expressions of opinion by students and faculty. These actions also defied the basic goals of Ohio higher education: establishing communities of respect, encouraging the open exchange of ideas, and enabling students to learn from others' perspectives.

As national AAUP leaders have emphasized, a troubling pattern has recently emerged on U.S. campuses in which universities—pressured by donors and politicians—label pro-Palestine speech as inherently injurious and disrespectful. As we are seeing nationwide, administrators have used these arguments to curtail student action, with violent results. This excessive response flies in the face of academic values of open dialogue and threatens universities' vital role in maintaining democracy. Here in Ohio, we are especially aware of political pressures on colleges and universities, as state legislators press on with Ohio Senate Bill 83. This bill purports to protect "intellectual diversity," but actually seeks to limit freedom of thought and to roll back democratic rights and protections. We reject any and all attempts, by Ohio State or any other Ohio college or university, to appeal to principles of safety or respect as a means to quash diverse viewpoints on world and cultural events. We urge President Ted Carter to end practices of repression on campus and to instruct all offices to restore a full commitment to The Ohio State University's values of inclusion and freedom.