

May 2, 2024

Dear Comets,

Yesterday, on Wednesday May 1st, students and faculty were in the midst of engaging in a peaceful protest for Palestine by setting up an encampment and engaging in poetry workshops, food distribution, and prayer at the Chess Plaza when state troopers unexpectedly swarmed in. State troopers then employed militarized tactics, donning riot gear and deploying a tank to destroy the encampment, arrest over twenty students and faculty, and seize their belongings.

UTD Student Government is horrified and outraged at this violent and disproportionate response, and we condemn the use of force to silence our community. We believe that all Comets have the right to free speech and to express their opinions through peaceful protests. Furthermore, we are appalled at the continued lack of transparency that has been set as a disturbing precedent from this and previous critical incidents regarding SB 17 and the removal of the Spirit Rocks.

We are committed to representing and protecting our students in the face of the uncertainty and trauma that has been inflicted on our school. At this time, we are trying to get into contact with administration and other university leaders to investigate how the law enforcement response escalated out of control and what repercussions, whether through academic disciplinary hearings and/or criminal charges, that the students and faculty who were arrested currently face.

Lastly, we stand in solidarity with students, staff, and faculty exercising their right to assemble and protest injustices. Moreover, we stand in solidarity with the demands of Students for Justice in Palestine. We, as representatives of the student body, have supported calls for divestment and a ceasefire in Gaza, reflected in S.R. 2022-40 and S.R. 2023-12, which reaffirms that “the Student Government Senate of UT Dallas unequivocally rejects investments in any company that contributes directly, knowingly, and continuously to militarism, human rights violations, and violations of international law.”

In the coming days, we will have resources available on both the Student Government website and Instagram about rights to assembly and free speech on college campuses.

The Student Government Executive Officers, along with the signatories below, firmly ask that criminal charges be dropped and the UT Dallas administration not take any disciplinary action against students who were peacefully protesting. Furthermore, we ask professors to extend grace to student protesters by being flexible with finals and deadlines.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any more concerns. You can reach SG President ([devin@utdallas.edu](mailto:devin@utdallas.edu)), SG Vice President ([debopreeta@utdallas.edu](mailto:debopreeta@utdallas.edu)), or [SG@utdallas.edu](mailto:SG@utdallas.edu). Your voices do not go unheard, and we proudly represent student voices and demands during difficult times like these.

Sincerely,



Devin Schwartz, Student Government President



Debopreeta Bhattacharya, Student Government Vice President



Srivani Edupuganti, Student Government President '23-'24



Kruthi Kanduri, Student Government President '22-'23



Margaret Belford, Student Government Vice President '22-'23



Imaan Razak Macchiwalla, Student Government Vice President '21-'22



Sara Brennan, Student Government President '20-'21

*Rutendo Chando*

Rutendo Chando, Student Government Vice President '20-'21

*Ayoub Mohammed*

Ayoub Mohammed, Student Government President '19-'20

*Eric Chen*

Eric Chen, Student Government President '18-'19

*Carla Ramazan*

Carla Ramazan, Student Government Vice President '18-'19

'23-'24 Student Government Executive Committee

- Nandita Kumar, Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Chair
- Zainab Olaniyan, Legislative Affairs Chair
- Alisa Model, Green Initiative Chair
- Giana Abraham, Communications Chair
- Alison Spadaro, Secretary

'24-'25 Student Government Executive Committee

- David Baker, Legislative Affairs Chair
- Abbad Hoda, Residential Student Affairs Chair
- Farhan Iqbal, Communications Chair
- Avery Bainbridge, Secretary