



## Statement on Violent Repression of Student-Led Protests at the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University

*Monday, May 6th, 2024*

United Campus Workers AZ, CWA Local 7065, once again strongly condemns the violent repression of student-led protests, this time from the University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University. The UA and NAU administrations chose to harm students and community members engaged in peaceful protest by authorizing the militarized use of riot gear, chemical weapons, and rubber bullets from campus police, county sheriffs, and state troopers. We stand, once again, resolutely in full support of the students, staff, alumni, and community protestors, many of whom are members of our union, who were arrested, assaulted, or otherwise harmed by the administrations' choices. **We continue to demand that all charges be dropped immediately.**

Just like their peer institution, Arizona State University, UA and NAU are public universities established for the working class Arizonans, and it is those working class people who were harmed the most by onlooking university administrators. At UA, the very same police department and the very same university administration that failed to prevent the shooting and murder of a faculty member on their own campus called in sheriffs and state troopers to tear gas their community and students as they watched in amusement. At NAU, administrators and police in riot gear laughed and joked with counter-protesters who encouraged the use of rubber bullets and live ammunition before advancing on peaceful student protesters. Students were violently thrown to the ground or onto tents and crushed prior to arrest, as administrators intimidated students, faculty, and staff who had gathered to bear witness and record the police response. This violent escalation by university administration and their continuing failure to protect students, staff, and faculty is only made more egregious by the context of the recent gun violence shattering these communities.

President Robbins and President Cruz Rivera both unnecessarily escalated what was a safe and peaceful protest into a dangerous, armed confrontation. Violence became all but inevitable when the presidents invited Pima County and Coconino County Sheriff deputies, UA Police, NAU Police, Tucson Police, and Flagstaff Police, armed with riot gear and chemical weapons, to descend on peaceful protestors and community members, some of whom are members of our union.





While President Robbins and President Cruz Rivera caused significant harm to their campuses and communities, they did not act alone. Jon Dudas, the Chief of Staff of UA, Chris Olson, the UAPD police chief, and Steve Patterson, the Vice President of Campus Safety, all apparently endorsed the violence perpetuated on protestors and campus community members. At NAU, Missy Freshour, Chief of NAUPD, Megan Gavin, Dean of Students, Kimberly Ott, Associate Vice President of Communications, Brian Register, Chief of Staff, and Justin Mallet, Vice President of Inclusive Excellence, were all involved in the suppression of students and their rights. These administrators failed in their most fundamental duty to protect students, staff, and faculty.

We call on the **University of Arizona** to acknowledge the failures of their administration and to start a dialogue with the campus community by:

1. Officially articulating their support of the First Amendment rights of all students, staff and faculty who engage in peaceful assembly,
2. Firing or overseeing the resignation of Steve Patterson, who has failed in his duties as the Chief Safety Office Chair and actively put students in danger, and similarly oversee the removal of Eric Kamierczak, Deputy Chief Safety Officer, and Chris Olson, Chief of Police at UAPD,
3. Ensuring that the enrollment and employment status of all students and workers involved remain unaffected,
4. Dropping of all legal charges against all protesters.

We likewise call on **Northern Arizona University** to acknowledge the suppression of student voices by administrators and to center inclusion and healing in their response, by:

1. Support First Amendment rights of all students to engage in peaceful assembly that are not limited to business hours,
2. Reinstate NAU SJP and give amnesty to all student protestors,
3. Prioritize student, staff, and faculty voices by entering into a dialogue with NAU SJP's demands and using co-governance mechanisms, such as the Faculty Senate, prior to major changes to policy,
4. Oversee the resignation of Missy Freshour, NAUPD Chief of Police, due to her violent suppression of students and blatant disregard for community safety,
5. Ensure that all enrollment and employment status of those involved remains unaffected and all legal charges are dropped.





We also call on the administration of all of our represented universities, Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University, to release to the public how much the universities spent on the violent responses to protests on their campuses, and all involved police departments shall release to the public the total costs, the money for which comes directly from taxpayers, associated with these responses.

In solidarity,

The United Campus Workers of Arizona, CWA Local 7065

