

CALL FOR STRIKE: DEMILITARIZE EDUCATION!

While all hands have been on deck to demand for our disciplined and arrested students full amnesty and their records expunged, the entire world watched as President Shafik turned our campus into a site of police brutality. We, the faculty, staff, and graduate workers of Columbia University, Barnard College, and Teachers College, unequivocally repudiate the use of police against nonviolent student protesters. Given the use of military-grade assault weapons and surveillance technology against our students, an NYPD officer firing a gun inside university buildings in which students were present, and the announcement of the plan for police to remain on campus until May 17th, we believe no one can safely return to campus. We will not return to a campus that is extremely dangerous for Black, Palestinian, Middle Eastern, Latinx, South Asian, Arab, Muslim, trans, queer, and other communities who are disproportionately profiled by police. The administration's brutal punishment and suppression of student protest, refusal to consult with faculty, complete rejection of shared governance, abrogation of University rules, and arbitrary use of force has made our campus unsafe for the entire community. As members of the faculty, staff, and graduate workers, we will not return to campus nor engage remotely for administrative service work—we will only serve students directly—until police are removed from our campus.

FAQ

1. When does this call take effect?

Immediately! Please register your commitment by taking [our strike pledge here](#) and download [our toolkit](#) to find resources to advertise your participation. While it's optional to be public about your participation, the more people are public the stronger our message will be.

2. What work activities are covered by this call?

All work activities, whether in-person or virtual, that directly serve the administration rather than our students such as committee work, Institute and Center work, task forces, or “new/next directions”-type conversations with administrators, listening sessions, participating in campus presence, commencement activities, or other representational work for the university, and attending campus events or organizing campus events (which is currently under [boycott](#) since April 19, 2024).

We are **not** asking faculty to withhold grades, recommendation letters or other student-serving work (e.g., office hours, research consultations to students). We do, however, ask that faculty respect the labor decisions of other workers. If teaching assistants, for example, decide to withhold their labor, we strongly encourage you not to replace their labor. Sending feedback directly to students is wonderful, but if TAs decide to withhold labor from the administration, we ask that you respect that action and not submit work on their behalf.

Faculty in the sciences should be in touch with an organizer directly if they want to discuss what work activities can help further our cause without risking lab live animals or critical research activity.

3. When does this call end?

We expect this to be a two-week strike. At this time, this call addresses the May 17 end date for police presence on campus set by the Columbia University President, and demands removal of police from the vicinity by May 18. The strike will end if the police are removed from the campus and its surroundings before that date and will extend if they remain beyond that date.

4. I'm a tenured faculty member. How can I best support other workers participating in this action?

It's very important for faculty with administrative positions (chairs, directors, deans, heads of centers and institutes, and other supervisor positions) to be public about the participation to enable the participation of contingent faculty and staff members. The more our unity is visible the more impact our action will have. When you take [the strike pledge](#) we ask that you indicate your commitment to protecting others under your supervision from retaliation.

5. I'm a contingent faculty member. How can I participate?

We encourage contingent faculty to participate in the action to the best of their ability. For example, if there are duties you cannot refuse without prompting high risk, you can work to rule—i.e., deny doing things outside of your job description. Identifying other supportive people in your department and acting as a group can both protect you and increase the impact of your action. We encourage you to talk to an organizer about how you can safely participate in the action and to connect with other contingent faculty by indicating your intention [on this form](#). (Note: Barnard union contingent faculty should refer to the next question.)

6. I'm a non-union staff member. How can I participate?

Like other non-tenure non-union workers, we encourage non-union staff to participate in the action to the best of their ability. For example, if there are duties you cannot refuse without prompting high risk, you can work to rule—i.e., deny doing things outside of your job description. Identifying other supportive people in your department and acting as a group can both protect you and increase the impact of your action. We encourage you to talk to an organizer about how you can safely participate in the action and to connect with other non-union staff by indicating your intention [on this form](#). (Note: Unionized staff should refer to the next question.)

7. I'm a union member in a faculty or staff role. How can I participate?

We invite union members to find creative ways to put pressure on the university to the best they can. Here's what union members can expect:

If the university suspects you've violated the No Strike clause in your contract, they must inform both you and the union in writing. Your union will support you through a fair disciplinary process. Essentially, you can't be disciplined or fired without following a process that includes a meeting where union representation can advocate for you. Sometimes, university representatives may request an "informal discussion." If the conversation shifts towards potential discipline during these meetings, you have Weingarten rights as a union-represented worker under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). This means the university can't proceed without a union representative present. To invoke these rights, simply state, "Since this discussion now involves discipline, I'm invoking my rights to have a union representative present."

According to your union contract, you are also entitled to various forms of leave. For 2110 support staff, for example, workers should have at least one sick day for each month of

employment retroactive to the date of hire (up to 12 days a year for people in their first year of employment with the university). Check your union contract for your leave policy.

The Columbia University—UAW 2110 [contract is here](#) (this is the union of support workers). The Barnard Contingent Faculty-UAW 2110 contract [is here](#). The Columbia Postdoctoral Workers-UAW 4100 contract [is here](#).

8. What can I do if my supervisor threatens retaliation?

Please contact us immediately if you face threats due to your participation in this action: CBTstrike@proton.me.

9. How does this action relate to other groups' actions and demands?

This call for strike is in response to the escalation of University actions that resulted in the second wave of brutal arrests. It focuses on the removal of police from campus, as a first step, with the restoration of shared governance and a meaningful role for faculty in order to transform the very structures that enabled these unilateral University actions to be taken in the first place.

Other active calls for action have also been made:

- **Columbia AAUP:** AAUP [has called upon](#) the University Senate and the representative faculty bodies of individual schools to pass a vote of no confidence in President Shafik, the Co-Chairs of the Board of Trustees, and the COO.
- **Columbia/Barnard/Teachers College FSJP:** In response to the arrests of students on campus on April 18, FSJP [issued a call](#) for boycott of all events at Columbia and Barnard and boycott of commencement until the following demands are met: 1. All disciplinary proceedings and suspensions be halted. 2. University compliance with CUAD's divestment proposal. 3. Removal of NYPD on and near campus. 4. Unsuspension of SJP and JVP. FSJP's call for the boycott of campus events will remain in place until all their demands are met. FSJP will also mount its own divestment campaign and continue its advocacy and other actions, in fulfillment of our own mission.
- **Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CUAD):** CUAD [has called on](#) professors to withhold labor: "And to every professor who has expressed shock at the events of last night: if you do not take action to demand divestment and an end to police presence on campus by withholding your labor, you too are complicit. You must do more than make statements. You must strike. Do not grade exams. Do not teach classes. Our universities which put profit over life must grind to a halt until our demands are met: Divestment, disclosure, an end to campus militarization, and amnesty for all. The student revolution will help free Palestine within our lifetime."

For any further questions, please email: CBTstrike@proton.me.