FSJP-GA (Faculty & Staff for Justice in Palestine),
Emory University Chapter
Statement on Webinar Discussion with President Fenves of Emory University

This Monday 05/06/2024 and Tuesday 05/07/2024, President Fenves spoke in two webinars to Emory faculty and staff about the events on April 25th, Emory's Shameful Thursday. These webinars were advertised as "important for [the Emory] community to heal" in the wake of the police brutality the Emory administration used against students, faculty and guests.

President Fenves' responses to the questions of faculty and staff revealed a lack of critical self-reflection on the events of Shameful Thursday. He said that he decided to call the APD (Atlanta Police Department) without the required consultation of the University Senate. He claimed Emory did not call the GSP (Georgia State Patrol), which evidence shows is a false statement. He confirmed that he would have called the police even if he had known that the encampment protesters were, in fact, Emory students. He stated that an encampment is forbidden because he says so, even though this is not listed as prohibited in the Open Expression policy. He confirmed that his rhetoric comes from a legacy of racist repression. It was stunning how more than 10 days after the events of 04/25, President Fenves remained at a loss for information about most aspects of the day's events. When asked, he couldn't even recall the time he left campus on 4/25. He continued to spread misinformation, such as his untrue statement that students pushed past EPD to create the encampment.

Fenves' behavior in these webinars exhibits a continued pattern of ignoring staff and faculty voices. The webinar moderator silenced probing queries such as, "What would you do if you yourself witness a university student being brutalized by police?", posed by a faculty member who was arrested for proclaiming her objection to such brutality on the quad. It became clear during the webinar that the event was staged. The University Senate solicited questions from faculty and staff ahead of time for President Fenves to address during the webinars. However, It was not explained how questions were selected and which were excluded. There was also a short window of time for questions to be submitted. Fenves has had a year to listen to Emory students, faculty, and staff as we've demanded a humane response to peaceful protests. Yet even after the contentious events of April 2023, when Emory administrators first called the APD on students protesting Cop City, President Fenves did not hold discussions with the students or with university faculty/staff who are experts on police brutality and incarceration. It was disturbing to hear President Fenves declare that the university is not pursuing dropping charges against students and faculty.

Fenves appears committed to alienating the Atlanta community. He claims that Atlanta community members are welcome on campus, but with limits only he seems capable of enumerating. These limits ignore the reality that the Atlanta community continues to be negatively affected by Emory's harmful investments.

Adding insult to injury, President Fenves made the decision to move the university commencement events to the Gas South Arena and Convention Center in Duluth, GA. The Gas

South District is owned by Southern Company which contributes to the Atlanta Police Foundation, which the brutalized students were protesting.

The Emory Chapter of FSJP-GA is a coalition of faculty and staff across Emory University's schools and departments. We deplore the way the webinar was organized and moderated. We denounce the positions revealed by President Fenves' responses, and declare our lack of confidence in his leadership for his persistent lack of transparency and evasion of questions about process; his insistence on subjecting students, faculty, and staff to police brutality in the future; his continued neglect to talk to disaffected students about the issues they raise; and his disrespect for the Atlanta community.

We also declare our continued solidarity with Emory University students and arrestees in their protests against the genocide in Gaza and against Cop City.

You can help us in this work.

- Learn more about Israel's invasion of Rafah.
- Donate to families in Gaza through Operation Olive Branch
- Contact your representatives to demand their support for Palestinians and student protesters.

And keep an eye out for future communications about Emory's decision to pursue charges against the protesters arrested on Shameful Thursday.

FSJP-GA, Emory University Chapter