

To President Fithian, the Clark Administration, and the entire Clark community:

We are writing to address concerns regarding some inaccuracies and omissions in both the [email](#) sent out by President Fithian on April 16th, and the Wall Street Journal opinion [article](#) written by a former staff member at Clark. We also want to express our concern regarding Clark University's ability to protect their students from the backlash and consequences of these pieces. Therefore, we want to address the factual inaccuracies that were stated in the email. At the end of the day, President Fithian states that his intention is to make sure that "no member of our community should ever feel that they do not have a voice or that they do not belong at Clark," but by stating that the University "would have intervened and enforced our Student Code of Conduct," if the event occurred on campus, the email does the opposite—it validates and increases the threats to the safety of *all* Clark students from doxing, harassment, discrimination, and death threats, while also hindering students' freedom of speech. Clark University is responsible for keeping all students safe and in ensuring their freedom of speech, yet the Administration is failing to do both.

To start, we want to highlight a few key details that were left out about the specific event referenced. First, the event was held at Worcester State University, where an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldier was invited to speak on their experience. The organizers of the event and the speaker used incendiary, dehumanizing, racist, Islamophobic, and language inciting genocide. For example, the speaker called all civilians of Gaza "human shields," and that "[Israel] is the last line of defense for Western civilization". Given the incendiary language, audience members responded in protest. Several Worcester State police removed audience members for their disruptions in response to the provocations by the language used by the organizers and the speaker. Worcester State police also removed participants who were silently holding Palestinian flags, stating that this was "an impartial event." Despite this, other audience members who disrupted the event with racist, dehumanizing, and Islamophobic language (such as yelling "savages" at those protesting the event, many of whom were people of color), were not removed for their actions. The rhetoric seen at the event would be a violation of Clark University's Code of Conduct, but also has larger implications in the incitement and justification of continued genocidal violence in Gaza.

We also note that while we do not condemn the protesting of the event, the Clark students targeted in the WSJ article were there as genocide scholars to critically engage with the speaker, did not participate in the protests, and were not removed by the police at any moment. The only so-called disruption made by a Clark student was to clarify when an organizer was introduced as a Strassler Center administrator, that she did not represent the views of the Strassler Center— as Fithian's email also notes. The students only engaged with the speaker

during the Q&A and with the organizer after the event had ended. Therefore, we want to make it clear that the multiple references to the students' actions as being "disruptive" in both the article and email are a complete mischaracterization of the Clark students who attended the event.

Concerns about the event were shared with Clark University administrators beforehand through formal systems set up to report incidences of bias, and further details were provided afterwards through the same channels. Additionally, an alum who attended the event sent an email to Clark's Leadership Team, including the President's Office, detailing the highly problematic nature of the event. The administration received this information approximately 24 hours afterwards and a full 33 days before the President's email addressing the WSJ piece to the community. Yet, the April 16th email sent out by President Fithian does not condemn the hate speech and rhetoric of the speaker and organizers of the event, presenting instead only an organizer's portrayal of the occurrences. The email also suggested that the Clark students who were at the event would have been disciplined if it happened on campus. President Fithian condemns these students for their actions being "absolutely unacceptable". These statements are not neutral, they side with the narrative of an individual who organized this concerning event. It is not practicing restraint, as is being discussed by Clark's Committee on the Question of Institutional Neutrality (COMQUIN). Additionally, this statement has only fueled the growing public demand for explicitly naming and punishing these Clark students, who have received threats, including death threats, endangering all students on campus. [Here](#), we include screenshots of public comments from the WSJ article and other articles related to this event that show the increase of violent rhetoric post President Fithian's April 16 email.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time when Clark students were at risk of, or experienced, doxing. A [Scarlet article](#) investigated a social media page, operated by a Clark alum, who engaged in racist, Islamophobic speech, and doxed students and other members of the Clark community. Doxing endangers the lives of our students, faculty, and staff who are of color, Muslim, Arab, Jewish and anyone outspoken against the ongoing genocide of Palestinians. The Clark administration has put out several emails condemning the actions of community members in solidarity with Palestine as breaks of the Code of Conduct, but the University has yet to condemn the actions of doxing of our own community members. Does doxing not go against the community standards the University claims to want to maintain? Furthermore, these emails sent out over these last six months can be understood as concerns for Clark University's image, rather than concerns of student safety.

We also see a pattern in these emails where anti-Zionism is equated with antisemitism. Not only is this a disservice to anti-Zionist Jewish students and to the vibrant Jewish community here at

Clark by addressing their experiences as singular, it is also strategic rhetoric that is used on campuses to shut down and punish any speech or action that criticizes the Israeli state. President Fithian's email fails to foster constructive, multi-sided dialogue and a safe campus for all students. Additionally, to condemn antisemitism without condemning Islamophobia, in response to an event where Islamophobia and not antisemitism was expressed, is disheartening.

Therefore, we write to you all to do what President Fithian's email did not do. First, we condemn the dehumanizing and Islamophobic rhetoric explicitly stated at this event. Second, we write to defend the Clark students who bravely challenged the speaker and organizer's incendiary rhetoric that would not have abided by Clark University's Code of Conduct. Third, we call on the Clark administration to reconsider their general handling of this situation and the language they used in the April 16 email to describe the event as it further encourages the intimidation and silencing of not only the Clark students involved, but of all students, faculty, staff, and community members who protest speech that uses discriminatory and dehumanizing language to perpetuate genocide and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. While "disruptions" did occur at the event, they pale in comparison to genocides, and in light of the urgency of the suffering in Palestine, we cannot discount the necessity of disruptive tactics against speech used to justify the killing of over [34,000](#) Palestinians.

What the Clark students in question did was embody the ethos and motto of Clark University. *Fiat Lux*, or "let there be light", embodies a principle of knowledge and discovery for the purpose of making positive change in the world. Despite the appalling dehumanizing and discriminatory rhetoric used during the event, the Clark students fulfilled this motto by attending the event as scholars, and engaging and discussing critically with the speaker and with the organizers in this matter. The call to *challenge convention, change the world* is intended to create space for students to be creative and politically engaged. Now, the Clark students in question and hence, *all* Clark students are being dismissed with intimidation, repression, and ultimately threats of harassment, doxing, and death when trying to challenge hate speech and genocidal language. This is who we have *always* been- a community that supports and defends Clark students, faculty, and community members in our shared journey to make the world a better place.

We call on President Fithian and all of Clark's administration to take action to protect students from doxing and to protect students' freedom of speech. No one should be facing death threats for asking a question at a public event. Clark University has a responsibility to keep its students safe and by condemning these students' actions publicly, it stands with those who are threatening them, rather than the students themselves.

In order to protect our signatories from doxing, we will only include the total counts of students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents/family, community members, and others who have signed with our link in this public facing letter. The letter can be signed anonymously. Names are optional. Given the current climate, we will not share names to anyone including the Clark Administration of those who signed the letter.

[Click here to sign the letter.](#)

Signatures (as of May 8 at 2pm):

686 total

234 undergraduate students

74 graduate students

268 alumni

21 faculty

43 parent/family members

8 community member

37 not affiliated with Clark