

**Letter from Jewish UW Faculty, Staff, and Students in Support of Protesters for
Divestment & Ceasefire
1 May 2024**

We are Jewish faculty, staff, and students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who stand with the peaceful and righteous coalition of student activists calling for the university to divest from Israel. We join our Muslim and Muslim-allied colleagues, Jewish Voice for Peace–Madison, and the over 2000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and donors who signed the “Statement in Solidarity with Student Protest from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Community,” in demanding that the university allow student activists to express their freedom of speech for Palestinian rights. In a climate in which “Jewish safety” is being used to justify repression of student activists fighting against genocide, we refuse to have our identity as Jews weaponized against our own values. We also refuse the conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism. We will not be silenced or intimidated by specious claims that to stand against war, genocide, occupation, and ethnonationalism is to discriminate against ourselves.

The national student movement for divestment and ceasefire is deeply aligned with Jewish values of peace and justice for oppressed peoples everywhere. At encampments on university campuses across the US, Jewish activists have held Passover seders—an ancient celebration of liberation from oppression—with their Muslim and Christian peers. Our support of the encampment is an expression both of our pride in being openly Jewish and our condemnation of Israel's brutal occupation of Palestinians. We feel the presence of our ancestors when we say: “Never again.”

We also care about the safety of Jewish people in our community. That is why we insist that any conversation about Jewish safety on campus must take into account the safety of Jewish protesters for divestment and ceasefire, who, along with all protesters, the University has placed at risk of violence by inviting the police onto campus to make arrests. We urge university administrators to consider that when anti-Zionist discourse is presented as a violent suppression of the free speech of others, it contributes to a chilling political climate that targets faculty, staff, and students—especially those who are Muslim, BIPOC, and Jewish—for doxxing and undermines the flourishing of free expression on campus. We insist that Jewish safety is impossible without the safety of all others, on our campus and beyond.

This is why we condemn in the strongest possible terms the University's choice to call in the police to forcibly arrest and assault our students and colleagues. Instead of supporting our rights to peacefully protest, the University leadership has turned to police violence against students, faculty, and staff. We refuse to allow our identity as Jews to be used as an excuse for such violence. We implore the administration to choose peace and justice over entrenching cycles of violence on our campus community and across the world.

Antisemitism is real; we know because we have experienced it here in Wisconsin. We have not forgotten that neo-Nazis marched through downtown Madison just last year. We expect UW-Madison to protect its Jewish community from antisemitic violence, hate speech, and

harassment. But we also expect the university to distinguish between antisemitism and criticism of Israel, between Jews and Zionists, between an identity and a political stance. Our safety and our freedom of expression--as well as those of our colleagues and students--depends on it.

In solidarity with the students,

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1. Dr. Michael M. Bell, Philip David Lowe and Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor of Community and Environmental Sociology
2. Dr. Jill H. Casid, Professor, Departments of Art History and Gender and Women's Studies
3. Dr. Alex Dressler, Professor, Department of Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
4. Dr. Lisa H. Cooper, Professor, Department of English
5. Dr. David Zimmerman, Professor, Department of English
6. Dr. Leema Berland, Professor, Curriculum & Instruction
7. Dr. Nancy Kendall, Professor, Educational Policy Studies
8. Dr. Noah Weeth-Feinstein, Professor, Curriculum & Instruction
9. Dr. Paula Gottlieb, Professor, Philosophy
10. Dr. Giuliana Chamedes, Associate Professor, Department of History
11. Dr. Walter C. Stern, Vilas Associate Professor, Department of Educational Studies & Department of History
12. Dr. Max Besbris, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
13. Dr. Sunny Yudkoff, Associate Professor, Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic, and Jewish Studies
14. Dr. Ronni Hayon, Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Community Health
15. Dr. Leah S. Horowitz, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies
16. Dr. Sarah Ensor, Assistant Professor, Department of English
17. Dr. Adam Y. Stern, Assistant Professor, German and Jewish Studies
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20. Dr. Samantha Bosco, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology
21. Anika Rice, MS, Phd Student, Department of Geography
22. Tsela Barr, Assistant Director of the Middle East Studies Program
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27. Alyssa Rooks, Student
28. Hannah Francis, MS, PhD Student Department of Soil Science
29. Courtney Parker West, PhD Student, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
30. Jamie Goldin, Undergraduate Student

31. Dr. Sharon Lezberg, Community Development Educator, UW-Madison Extension Dane County
32. Diane Mayerfeld, Outreach Specialist, Division of Extension
33. Stepha Velednitsky, Academic Staff
34. Hannah Kass, Joint PhD student in the Department of Geography and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
35. Dr. Elizabeth Feder, UW Population Health Institute, Academic Staff
36. Dr. Ruth Goldstein, Assistant Professor, Department of Gender & Women's Studies
37. Dr. Lola Loustaunau, Assistant Professor, School for Workers
38. Dr. Leigh Senderowicz, Assistant Professor, Departments of Gender & Women's Studies and Obstetrics & Gynecology
39. Daniel Levitin, PhD Student, Department of Mathematics
40. Beth Wendt, Academic Staff
41. Anonymous, Graduate Student
42. Becca Owen, Graduate Student
43. Abra Vigna, UWPHI
44. Anonymous, Graduate Student, Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies
45. Sara Gia Trongone, Graduate Student/TA, Sociology
46. Gabriel Shapiro, Graduate Student
47. Tavia Levenson, Undergraduate Student
48. Mia Kurzer, undergrad student
49. Meghann Norden-Bright, PhD Student, Sociology
50. Isaac, undergraduate student
51. Olivia Onek
52. Sydney Widell, BS '20
53. Chloe Rosenstock, PhD Student/Sociology TA
54. Anonymous, Sociology PhD Student
55. Emma-Claire LaSaine, PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology
56. Lily Katz, Population Health Specialist
57. Gabo R Ochoa Samoff
58. Arielle Link, Graduate Student
59. Micah, graduate student
60. Adrianna Gorsky, Graduate Student
61. Bianca Barredo, BS '24
62. Cathy Loeb, emerita academic staff (WI Center for Education Research)
63. Abby Widell, UW Madison Alum
64. Ila Schrecker, alum '23
65. Anonymous, undergraduate student
66. Becca, UW-Madison Student
67. Lily Z. Shell, Ph.D. Candidate and Lecturer
68. Everett Tretcher, UW Population Health, Academic Staff
69. Kaylae Allison, undergraduate student
70. Emma, undergraduate student
71. Esty Dinur, UW-Madison Emerita

72. Carolyn Holan, student
73. Anonymous, Undergraduate Student
74. Anonymous PhD Student
75. Gabriel Kahan, PhD Student, Department of Sociology
76. Soleil Young, Graduate Student, Department of Bacteriology
77. Lesley Wolf, Outreach Program Manager
78. Sarah Skinner, Academic Staff, Institute on Aging
79. Shira Hand, Academic Staff
80. Anonymous, Undergraduate Student
81. Anonymous, Graduate Fellow
82. Sydney David, undergraduate student
83. Eliot Hughes, undergraduate student
84. Anonymous, UW Madison
85. Roberta Candela, Graduate Research Assistant
86. Josie Anderson, alumna
87. Ethan Root, lab technologist & alum
88. Anonymous student
89. Olivia R. Silverman Dregne, undergraduate student
90. Benjamin Ostrow, UW Madison PhD Student, UCLA MA '21
91. Isidora Finkelstein, BA 2013
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103. UW Alum
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105. Alexa Tonkins, undergraduate student
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110. Rebecca Rose, PhD student and instructor
111. Jennie Mauer, Lecturer, La Follette School of Public Affairs
112. Jess Mankewitz, PhD Student
113. Abhinay Reddy