

English Department Statement about Arrests and Suspensions of Students and Faculty

The English Department strongly condemns the arrests of twenty-four members of the Stony Brook community – twenty-two students and two faculty members – on the night of May 1-2, for what appears from all available evidence to have been a peaceful protest.

The twenty-two students were also put on interim suspension. The English Department does not see these suspensions as either fair or appropriate, and commits itself to allowing all students involved to complete and submit their coursework, take their final exams, and receive credit for their work.

We also call for these suspensions to be immediately revoked and all investigations into the protesters immediately stopped. Students should not be made to go through an appeals process in order to finish the semester. Every student and faculty member swept up in these arrests must be granted complete amnesty, and any personal property still in police custody must immediately be returned to its owners.

We are shocked, saddened, and disappointed by the University Administration's apparent inability to address a campus protest without relying on police intervention. We do not believe that this police action taken against our community was warranted by the conditions on the ground. We call for a formal investigation into the agencies and actors involved in the arrests and suspensions as well as the decisions that led to them. And we call for a formal investigation of Enterprise Risk Management, which seems to operate on our campus with little transparency or oversight from the University community.

We are proud of our Stony Brook students for having the courage of their convictions, and we are proud of those faculty who stood up to bear witness for them, and to protect them.

We make this statement to reconfirm our commitment to the flourishing of our students, the openness of our campus, the freedom of speech, and the right to peaceful protest.

This statement was adopted by vote, with 20 in favor, 2 abstentions, and 1 against.