



Council of Graduate Students  
The Ohio State University

## Statement on the injustices against the Black Community and Columbus Protestors by the Columbus Police Department

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President Michael V. Drake, Senior Vice President Jay Kasey, Vice President Dr. Melissa Shivers,  
Chief Kimberley Spears-McNatt, and Director of Public Safety Monica Moll,

June 1, 2020

Today, we write to you with extreme pain, disappointment, and anger. On May 25, 2020, an unarmed Black man by the name of George Floyd was violently killed under police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His death, along with those of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade to name only a few, sparked nationwide protests in solidarity with the calls for justice on behalf of Black deaths in the hands of law enforcement. We, first and foremost, extend our solidarity to the people of Minneapolis and the communities mourning and fighting for justice across the nation. As student leaders, we also extend this solidarity to the students of the University of Minnesota and to their student body president, Jael Kerandi, for her [leadership](#)<sup>1</sup> in her community during this time.

On May 26, 2020, peaceful protests began in Columbus, Ohio to extend solidarity to those demanding justice, which consisted of Ohio State students, university community members, and Columbus citizens alike. The Columbus Police Department (CPD) responded to peaceful protestors and large crowds with wooden bullets, teargas, pepper spray, and other chemical agents and military-grade forces. We *witnessed* our peers and Columbus neighbors endure unwarranted physical and verbal aggression for *peacefully* demanding justice and exercising their right to protest. On [May 30, 2020](#)<sup>2</sup>, our Congresswoman Joyce Beatty, Columbus City Council President Shannon Hardin, and Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce were among those attacked with pepper-spray. Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther publicly acknowledged the CPD's actions on Saturday as [aggressive](#)<sup>3</sup>. These protests are not a one-off incident of unprovoked violence committed by the CPD. The Columbus Police Department has had one of the highest records in the nation for killings of unarmed Black individuals, at a rate of [91.9 per every million black people](#)<sup>4</sup>. With that, we must never forget the killings of Julius Tate Jr., Henry Green, Tyre King and so many more who have yet to find justice. We must not forget those who are alive and still experiencing injustice in our city, like [Christopher Radden](#)<sup>5</sup>, who was brutally assaulted and arrested by Columbus Police in the earlier protests. We, the student representatives of The Ohio State University, firmly and without hesitation, condemn the violent and inexcusable actions of the Columbus Police Department during these protests and the harm the department has caused Black and marginalized communities for decades.

As our university leaders, your priorities, commitments, and *duties* are to the safety of your students and the footprint our university leaves on the City of Columbus. We can no longer accept bias trainings, reactionary meetings, or community dialogue. Community dialogue does not work when you *kill* the community. Our city is burning, our students are hurting, the safety and wellbeing of the Black community is at inherent risk and there is no other time to act than *now*. On Saturday, President Drake [asked](#)<sup>6</sup> of the university community to reflect on what we must do to prevent crimes like this from happening and what we can do to make things different. We reflected, we listened, and we collaborated. The following actions are only the *beginning* of affirming our collective commitment to Black student safety, overall student wellbeing, and community safety in Columbus:

We, without hesitation, demand that...

1. The Ohio State University Police Department (OSUPD) immediately cease contractual agreements with Columbus Police Department for any and all on-campus investigations, services, and events.
2. The OSUPD immediately cease Mutual Aid service contracts with the Columbus Police Department and strongly reevaluate Joint Patrol operations to restrict the presence of and limit the frequency of calls to CPD officers and resources in the off-campus living areas.
3. The Ohio State University no longer accept federal, military-grade resources and reduce OSUPD's budget for expenditures that may be used for further militarization. Instead, reallocate the funds to further invest in student support units, such as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Student Life Multicultural Center, Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services, or the Student Life Student Wellness Center.

4. The OSU Department of Public Safety release an action plan, devised with student input, that affirms the commitment to Black student safety and overall university safety through disarmed, anti-force, and culturally competent practices.

5. The Ohio State University acknowledge and condemn the anti-Black violence the Columbus Police Department committed against Ohio State students and the greater Columbus community.

We ask that you provide a public and private response within 48 hours of receipt.

In grief and solidarity,



Roaya Higazi (she/her)  
Undergraduate Student Body President



Stephen Post (he/him)  
President of the Council of Graduate Students



Jordan Vajda (he/him)  
President of the Inter-Professional Council,  
Chair of the Council of Student Affairs

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- 1 [https://twitter.com/UMN\\_SBP/status/1265473326404775937](https://twitter.com/UMN_SBP/status/1265473326404775937)
  - 2 <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20200530/joyce-beatty-shannon-hardin-kevin-boyce-pepper-sprayed-at-protest>
  - 3 <https://www.thelantern.com/2020/05/columbus-mayor-addresses-police-interaction-with-protesters/>
  - 4 <https://columbusfreepress.com/article/columbus-number-one-police-killing-black-people>
  - 5 <https://urge.org/press-release/urge-condemns-police-violence-against-protesters-in-ohio/>
  - 6 <https://news.osu.edu/president-drake-calls-for-renewed-effort-to-address-racial-injustice/>