

Statement by Emory University Libraries & Museum Workers Regarding Last Week's Events

April 27th, 2024

Emory University Libraries and Museum workers recognize the critical role of libraries, archives, and museums as democratic sites of information exchange. Emory University should be held accountable for misinformation that has contributed to escalating violence this past week.

The official narrative communicated by Emory University President Gregory Fennes and Vice President for Public Safety Cheryl Elliott asserts that the protests on April 25, 2024, were organized and carried out by “outside agitators”¹ who threatened Emory police officers, thereby justifying the university’s opaque decision to call in the Atlanta Police Department and Georgia State Patrol to help disperse the crowd.²

Most eyewitness accounts do not corroborate the official narrative. The encampment set up on the main quad was a small, peaceful demonstration violently disrupted by police, leading to the arrest of 28 community members, 20 of whom were affiliated with Emory. These numbers contradict the official University narrative that the protests were organized by outsiders. Countless other community members, including ones unaffiliated with the protest, were exposed to chemical irritants, tased, and physically assaulted by police.³

This reframing of the narrative is counter to our mission and values as a profession. We condemn the University administration’s dishonest and misleading response, which, in spite of the school’s Respect for Open Expression Policy, serves to suppress the free speech of Emory community members. As such, the undersigned faculty and staff of Emory University Libraries and Museum declare the following:

- We support Emory and Atlanta community members’ right to protest without fear of violent repression.
- We refuse to stay silent as our students and colleagues are brutalized on a campus that aspires to embrace social justice and progress.⁴
- While this statement is not a declaration of intent to strike, we support any faculty, staff, and students who choose to do so until all charges are dropped against protesters.
- We affirm our support for the College Faculty Senate,⁵ which has moved to approve a vote of no confidence for President Fennes.

We will continue to advocate for and support the use of information and archival literacy tools to combat misinformation, facilitate crucial memory work, and address critical problems facing our University and Atlanta communities.⁶

¹ Harmeen Kaur, “Examining the long history of the ‘outside agitator’ narrative,” *CNN*, April 27, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/27/us/campus-protests-palestine-outside-agitator-cec/index.html>.

² Gregory Fennes, “This Morning’s Events,” Emory University, Office of the President, April 27, 2024, <https://president.emory.edu/communications/2024/04/april-25-this-mornings-events.html>; Gregory Fennes, “Yesterday’s Protests,” Emory University, Office of the President, April 26, 2024, <https://president.emory.edu/communications/2024/04/april-26-yesterdays-protests.html>.

³ Timothy Pratt, Maya Yang, and Erum Salam, “Police allegedly use rubber bullets and teargas at university protest in Georgia,” *The Guardian*, April 26, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/apr/25/emory-university-protest-arrests>; Nell Gluckman, “At Emory, Protesters Face Gas and Police Force After Setting Up Encampment,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 25, 2024, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/at-emory-protesters-face-gas-and-police-force-after-setting-up-encampment>.

⁴ “One Emory: Ambition and Heart,” Emory University, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://one.emory.edu/#anchor-emory--atlanta-rich-history-shared-future>.

⁵ Ty Tagami and Josh Reyes, “Faculty senate of Emory college calls for no-confidence vote for president,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 26, 2024, <https://www.ajc.com/news/faculty-senate-of-emory-college-calls-for-no-confidence-vote-for-president/JFKZ3NJSYNCCTEHAD34JQ3UQU/>.

⁶ “SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics,” Society of American Archivists, Core Values and Code of Ethics, February 2005, revised January 2012 and August 2020, <https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>; “Professional Ethics,” American Library Association, May 19, 2017, <http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>.

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Signatures

(Updated daily, last update: 5/1/24, 10:12am EST)

Note: Any individuals who sign under their own name are doing so on their own behalf. They are not representing the opinion of their division, department, library, or museum.

1. Saira Raza, Business Librarian, Goizueta Business Library
2. Paige Crowl, Head of Teaching, Oxford College Library
3. Sage Theune, Stacks Shifting Supervisor, Access and Resource Services
4. Anonymous, Emory Center for Digital Scholarship
5. Karen Garrabrant, Library Specialist, Content and Resource Description
6. Natalie Heimerle, Access and Resource Services
7. Jenny Vitti, Interlibrary Borrowing Coordinator, Access and Resource Services
8. Dhy Edwardsberry, Goizueta Business Librarian, Goizueta Business Library
9. Rebecca Sherman, Senior Collections Processing Archivist, Rose Library
10. Gaby Hale, Outreach Archivist, Rose Library
11. Jacob Lackner, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Oxford College Library
12. Laura Starratt, Head of Processing, Rose Library
13. Kayla Annan; Collection Development Archivist, African American Collections; Rose Library
14. Katherine Fisher, Rose Library
15. Hannah Rogers, MLS; Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
16. Amber Prentiss; Associate Librarian; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
17. Ryan Nock, Library Specialist, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
18. Erin Reardon, Public Health Informationist, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
19. Jay Varner, Software Engineer, Emory Center for Digital Scholarship
20. Alvinette Patterson, Library Specialist, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
21. John Klinger, Emory Libraries Exhibition Team
22. Anonymous, Oxford College Library
23. Jamie Barnas, Oxford College Library
24. Russ Peterson; Head of Instruction and Engagement; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
25. Sofia Slutskaya; Head, Resource Description; Access and Resource Services
26. Sara Fuchs, Visiting Librarian, Rose Library
27. Anicka Austin, Collections Processing Archivist, Rose Library
28. John Nemeth, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
29. Anonymous, Access and Resource Services

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30. Peter Shirts; Humanities Librarian; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
31. Anonymous, ECR Specialist Sr., Electronic & Continuing Resources
32. Ginny Hudgins, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Oxford College
33. Jacqueline Reed, Instruction Coordinator, Rose Library
34. Jennifer Townes; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
35. Sharon Leslie, Informationist, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
36. Cisco Lopez, Graduate Fellow, Rose Library
37. Jody Bailey; Head of Scholarly Communications; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
38. Kyle Fenton; Still Image Digitization Manager; Media Preservation Team, Access and Resource Services
39. Max Mayhew, Front End Developer III, Library Technology and Digital Strategies
40. Tara Kunesh, Library Specialist Sr., Resource Description
41. Erica Bruchko; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
42. Miranda Kyle; Curator, Indigenous Arts of the Americas; Michael C. Carlos Museum
43. Melinda Hartwig, Curator, Michael C. Carlos Museum
44. Ella Andrews, Andrew W. Mellon Advanced Fellow in Objects Conservation, Michael C. Carlos Museum
45. Brittany Dinneen, Assistant Museum Objects Conservator, Michael C. Carlos Museum
46. Ruth Allen, Curator, Michael C. Carlos Museum
47. Dee Roberts, Reference and Outreach Librarian, Pitts Theology Library
48. John D. Morgenstern; Copyright and Scholarly Communications Librarian; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
49. Ashley D. Stevens, Archivist, Woodruff Health Sciences Center Library
50. Dave Armistead, Senior Preparator, Michael C. Carlos Museum
51. Clare Barton, Library Technology and Digital Strategies
52. Anonymous, Department Head, Access and Resource Services
53. Kathy Britt-Rogers, Interlibrary Loan Lending Coordinator, Access and Resource Services
54. Francis Ittenbach, Graduate Research Assistant, Rose Library
55. Rachel Detzler, Reading Room Manager, Rose Library
56. Temi Alao, Graduate Student Staff, Rose Library
57. Ryan Beresch, Program Manager, Michael C. Carlos Museum
58. Allison Stickley-Miner, Collections Processing Assistant, Rose Library
59. Kelly Kautt, Resource Management Specialist, Acquisitions/Access and Resource Services
60. Andi McKenzie, Curator of Works on Paper, Michael C. Carlos Museum
61. Molly Faust, Oxford College Library

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62. Anonymous; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
63. Alexander Cooper, Application Support Analyst, Library Technology and Digital Strategies
64. Collin Brittle, Library Technology and Digital Strategies
65. Anonymous; Research, Engagement, & Scholarly Communications
66. Crystal Lee, Access Services, Hugh F. MacMillan Law Library
67. Sarah Rodgers-Miller, Law Librarian for Outreach and Programming, Hugh F. MacMillan Law Library
68. Alexandra Kord, Oxford College Library
69. Emory Libraries Asian American Collective