



Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Dear colleagues,

Yesterday I tendered my resignation from my role as the Faculty of Arts' Associate Dean, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the University of Alberta.

On Saturday, I witnessed the violent and forcible removal of peacefully protesting students, faculty, alums, and community members. While I did not witness the eviction of the camp, I did witness the protesters being forced off campus and the unnecessary use of non-lethal but very frightening weapons and batons. I witnessed violence instigated by the police, not the protesters. Student leadership was 100% clear on the nonviolence of their movement and it is a testament to *them* that so few people were physically injured.

When I got home and saw the [Update to Community](#) from President Flanagan, I was struck by the difference between his account and what I witnessed. President Flanagan's next [Update](#), on Sunday, as I was attempting to process my experience of violence against *our students* on *our campus*, continued to – distressingly – advance a description of events at odds with what I personally witnessed.

The encampment was peaceful, and modeled solidarity between Palestinian, Jewish, and Indigenous communities and allies. None of the supposed threats to safety outlined in President Flanagan's letters corresponds to my personal observations or the testimonies of many others who visited the camp. As a faculty member who witnessed the stark contrast between the camp in peaceful action and the violence of its removal, I ask university leadership to:

1. Acknowledge that Saturday's employment of police against protesters was a mistake, and do whatever it takes to ensure that this kind of disproportionate response never happens again on University of Alberta property.
2. Immediately stop making unsubstantiated or spurious claims that the camp was a danger and protesters were potentially violent. Mischaracterization of the camp's leadership and participants plays on harmful stereotypes, evades responsibility, and further harms peaceful students, faculty, alumni, and community members.
3. Rescind the year-long ban on community members who were part of the encampment and publicly commit to no disciplinary action against UAlberta students, staff, or faculty for their roles in the encampment.
4. Meaningfully engage with students' core demands that UAlberta disclose and divest from investments linked to Israeli occupation, apartheid, and genocide.



I also want to state clearly that the unnecessary use of force that I witnessed against our students, after they were already off campus and on the north side of Saskatchewan Drive, is something that I will never forget. The sound of nonlethal weapons being fired and the sight of batons wielded by militarized police against unarmed students on an apparently public sidewalk *after* they had been complying with the demand to slowly and peacefully protest their way off campus, is still with me. \*I\* feel traumatized as an observer and can only imagine what the students, faculty, and community members are experiencing. Indeed, I remain extremely shaken, and am still haunted by the sound of guns and the echo of the menacing chant of “Move! Move! Move!” from heavily-armed militarized police marching with an intent to do violence to peaceful protestors. Not only was this police action unjust and at odds with the university’s mission and values: it caused real and deep harm to all it targeted.

Given the above, I can no longer fulfil the job I was hired to do as the inaugural Associate Dean of EDI in the Faculty of Arts. With police marching on our students, on our campus, I can neither protect students nor facilitate the difficult conversations that are needed to advance equity and justice for our community. I therefore resign from my position.

Please join the U of A community for a peaceful protest at noon today, Tuesday May 14, in front of SAB. This protest is to affirm the right to peacefully protest on university grounds without threat of violence, and to insist that the University engage seriously with the students’ demands to Disclose, Divest, Defend, and Declare. Protest is a form of expression and a way of participating in democratic civil life. Students and community members protesting peacefully should never be censured or imperiled. This past weekend’s protest action could and should have ended differently.

With genuine sadness,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Loveless", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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