

## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

1

Please find below a list of streamlined demands, categorized into “Immediately Actionable Demands” and “Long-Term Demands.” Elaborations of each demand are provided in the *Addendum* booklet.

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### IMMEDIATELY ACTIONABLE DEMANDS

- I. We ask that Cornell University’s administration begin repairing its relationship to native communities by publicly acknowledging its position as the largest single beneficiary of the 1862 Morrill Act and publicly apologizing for its role in the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples.
- II. We ask that President Pollack act on the results of the Student Assembly referendum and the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly resolution by publicly recommending, as a consequence of the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, divestment from the ten listed weapons manufacturers to the Board of Trustees.
- III. We ask that President Pollack publicly *endorse* the establishment of a Palestinian Studies program as well as a Palestinian and Arab Living Center.
- IV. We ask that Cornell University’s administration publicly recognize and protect the right to anti-Zionist speech, viewpoints, and histories across campus.
- V. We ask that Cornell University’s administration ensure full amnesty for all individuals involved with the Liberated Zone.

### LONG-TERM DEMANDS

- VI. We ask that Cornell University’s administration materially support the formation of an Indigenous Studies Department
- VII. We ask that Cornell University’s administration establish a detailed timeline for the return of mineral rights at the Blue Hills Pipestone Quarry (a sacred site listed on the National Register of Historic Places) to the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Nation.
- VIII. We ask that Cornell University’s administration materially support the establishment of a Palestinian Studies program as well as a Palestinian and Arab Living center.
- IX. We call upon Cornell University to disclose a full public report of all contracted partners, endowment resources, and land holdings.

### ADDENDUM

The following addendum details actions to be taken to achieve the aforementioned demands. This addendum includes a list of mandatory stakeholders in addition to suggested timelines for the completion of the demands. Some of the information presented serves as recommendations or suggestions while other details provided are strict requirements. The requirements assure the members of the Liberated Zone that Cornell University will meet these demands with the care and consideration required, in addition to ensuring that the appropriate stakeholders are included in the relevant processes. However, we welcome feedback and thoughts on the suggestions provided below, including but not limited to our timelines for completion.

In the spirit of fruitful and productive negotiations, we have also foregone some of our previous demands — notably the demand around campus police reform. This decision was taken in light of the information provided in previous negotiation meetings and we offer it as a demonstration of goodwill for the purposes of future negotiations.

#### DEMAND I:

*We ask that Cornell University's administration begin repairing its relationship to native communities by publicly acknowledging its position as the largest single beneficiary of the 1862 Morrill Act and publicly apologizing for its role in the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples.*

In 1862, the Morrill Act permitted land-grant universities to acquire land expropriated from native communities. As a consequence of the Morrill Act, Cornell University continues to materially benefit from this morally egregious dispossession. At this moment in time, Cornell University lags behind its peer institutions (including every other Ivy League school) in its failure to understand indigenous communities as crucial stakeholders of this institution. We are therefore asking that Cornell University take the lead of peer institutions, such as Dartmouth College, University of Minnesota, Brown University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and others by committing to a restorative justice process and begin repairing its relationship with Indigenous peoples by *minimally* agreeing to take the following steps:

Cornell must establish a formal relationship with the tribal nations of New York State, including ongoing consultation with the leadership of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Council that regularly meets with topline Cornell leadership, including the President. Should the tribal nations of New York State

## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

3

refuse such a relationship, Cornell University must report such responses publicly to the Cornell community.

Moreover, Cornell must meet with leaders from the Indigenous Dispossession Project, the Indigenous Grad Student Association (IGSA), and Native American Indigenous Students at Cornell (NAISAC) to discuss restitution and relationship-building for nations dispossessed by the Morrill Act. The initial meeting should take place by June 30th, 2024 (with subsequent meetings on a biweekly basis thereafter) until an agreement is reached.

Finally, Cornell must – in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, including members of the Indigenous Graduate Students Association (IGSA) and Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell (NAISAC) – issue a public acknowledgment and apology for its role in the national genocide of Indigenous Peoples through the Morrill Act and its sale of 977,909 acres of Indigenous land by no later than June 30th, 2024.

### DEMAND II:

*We ask that President Pollack act on the results of the Student Assembly referendum and the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly resolution by recommending, as a consequence of the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, divestment from the ten listed weapons manufacturer companies to the Board of Trustees.*

On April 22nd, 2024, President Pollack received the results of a historic Undergraduate Student Assembly in which undergraduate students voted affirmatively to the following questions:

“Question 1: Should Cornell University call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza?”

“Question 2: Cornell has investments in companies supporting the ongoing war in Gaza, which has been deemed as a “plausible genocide” by the International Court of Justice in *South Africa v. Israel*. Should Cornell University follow their 2016 Guidelines for Divestment and divest from the following weapons manufacturers: BAE Systems, Boeing, Elbit Systems, General Dynamics, L3 Harris Technologies, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, RTX, and ThyssenKrupp?”

## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

4

With nearly half of the undergraduate student body voting, students overwhelmingly voted yes to these questions. Following the undergraduate student referendum, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly similarly voted in favor of divesting from the ten weapons manufacturers listed above. With students across campus making their voices clear, we are therefore asking that President Martha Pollack publicly support divestment from the 10 weapons manufacturers listed on the Student Assembly referendum by June 30th, 2024.

Additionally, we ask that President Pollack bring a vote to divest from these companies to the upcoming Board of Trustees meeting on May 24, 2024. We are also asking that a minimum of 5 representatives of the Coalition for Mutual Liberation be permitted to attend this Board of Trustees meeting in order to present the case for divestment and participate in any future discussions relating to divestment from these weapons manufacturers.

To this end, we have drafted a suggested statement to the Cornell community, in line with the communication on divestment from Sudan in 2007, that the President may use to communicate her support of divestment from the ten companies:

Over the last few months, there has been an evident rise in tension around the world surrounding the ongoing conflict in Palestine. On our campus, we have witnessed multiple student-led protests relating to the genocide in Gaza. Last month, an undergraduate referendum passed surrounding two questions:

*Question 1: Should Cornell University call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza?*

*Question 2: Cornell has investments in companies supporting the ongoing war in Gaza, which has been deemed as a "plausible genocide" by the International Court of Justice in South Africa v. Israel. Should Cornell University follow their 2016 Guidelines for Divestment and divest from the following weapons manufacturers: BAE Systems, Boeing, Elbit Systems, General Dynamics, L3 Harris Technologies, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, RTX, and ThyssenKrupp?*

Over 45% of the undergrad student body voted. Both questions passed with just over 70% of voting yes on both questions. A supermajority of undergraduate student voters have made it clear that they believe that their

university should take actionable steps to address the current genocide. The Graduate and Professional Student Association passed a similarly worded resolution, which called for the consideration of divestment from these companies.

While the main goals of the university are research and education, in times of humanitarian crisis, direct political action is appropriate. In certain humanitarian crises, Cornell has taken political action. In 2006 for example, Cornell decided to bar investment of its endowment assets in obligations of the Sudanese government due to the Darfur genocide<sup>1</sup>. However, in other humanitarian crises, Cornell University's administration has wrongly chosen inaction, such as during the South African apartheid divestment movement where Cornell University only partially divested.

In line with the referendum outcome, the university will take the necessary first steps to divest from weapons manufacturers. I will first bring a vote to the board of trustees meeting on May 24th, 2024 on divesting from any holdings of BAE Systems, Boeing, Elbit Systems, General Dynamics, L3 Harris Technologies, Leonardo, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, RTX, or ThyssenKrupp in Cornell's endowment. I will additionally recommend the Board of Trustees vote yes to divest from the aforementioned weapon manufacturers.

### DEMAND III:

*We ask that President Pollack publicly endorse the establishment of a Palestinian Studies program as well as the establishment of a Palestinian and Arab Living Center.*

The public endorsement of both a Palestinian Studies program and a Palestinian and Arab Living Center offers a particular symbolic value that is relevantly distinct from material support. While the creation of the program will be faculty-led, the overt endorsement from administration signifies a recognition of the academic and interpersonal value of both the program and the living center. An explicit endorsement from President Pollack symbolizes a shared dedication to fostering a robust academic environment where diverse perspectives, including those of Palestinians, are not only welcomed but actively supported alongside other perspectives. By publicly endorsing the program, the administration signals a broader institutional commitment to inclusivity and academic excellence.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement on Cornell's response to the crisis in Darfur, 2007, David Skorton

The public endorsement of a Palestinian and Arab Living Center additionally solidifies Cornell University's commitment to "any person, any study" by beginning to address the racialized invisibility and hypervisibility that sits at the core of anti-Arab racism. Public support from the President would ensure a baseline level of support for Palestinian and Arab students that we have yet to see from this University.

### DEMAND IV:

*We ask that Cornell University's administration publicly recognize and protect the right to anti-Zionist speech, viewpoints, and histories across campus.*

Existing Jewish infrastructures at Cornell currently exclude the beliefs and experiences of many students and faculty, especially on questions of political governance and the state of Israel. Long-standing anti-Zionist perspectives, which have extensive academic and political history, are hindered by such institutions and infrastructures with unyielding politics and a pattern of discriminatory, exclusive behavior. Since its recent revival this past December, Jewish Voice for Peace at Cornell has seen immense interest and participation from Jewish students who have felt otherwise excluded, dismayed, or unrepresented by Jewish institutions at Cornell University. Members of JVP have also faced considerable in-person and online harassment from other Jewish students — much of which has gone unaddressed and unacknowledged by this administration. Cornell University's acknowledgment of the existence and legitimacy of anti-Zionist viewpoints will publicize the incredible diversity of Jewish perspectives and permit students the freedom to practice their faith and their politics without fear of intimidation, repression, and harassment.

We ask that President Martha Pollack release a statement through email to the Cornell community that avowedly condemns the harassment of Jewish students on the basis of their beliefs and affirms the intellectual and political legitimacy of distinguishing anti-Zionism as not equivalent to anti-semitism. A sample statement written with input from Jewish Voice for Peace members is provided below:

Recently, members of our Jewish community have been subject to in-person and online harassment due to their political beliefs. The use of the slur "kapo" is incredibly harmful and trivializes the memory of the Holocaust. We recognize that there are a range of viewpoints amongst Jewish students, faculty, and staff regarding Israel and Palestine, which all have a legitimate historical, academic, and political basis. No matter one's political beliefs,

## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

7

violence, harassment, and doxxing members of our community, particularly with rhetoric that questions the basis of someone's religious and cultural identity, are unacceptable.

We also ask that Cornell University make good on its public commitments to the Jewish community by ensuring an inclusive environment for *all* current and prospective Jewish students through holistic representation of on-campus and local Jewish organizations beyond Hillel, Chabad, and the Center for Jewish Living. This can include providing a broader representation of Jewish life in promotional materials, refraining from defaulting to specific Jewish institutions (especially those with a history of discriminatory behavior), and directly working with Cornell University's Office for Spirituality and Meaning-Making to ensure there is sufficient space and resources for the student-created Cornell Chavurah.

### DEMAND V:

*We ask that Cornell University ensure full amnesty for all individuals involved with the Liberated Zone.*

We are deeply troubled by the disproportionate disciplinary measures which this university has inflicted on students, faculty, and staff for their peaceful alleged participation in the Liberated Zone. These include but are not limited to temporary suspensions which have compromised the legal status of members of our community with due process, HR referrals for unprotected workers, and threats made by high-ranking officials of this administration. To date, no investigations have been opened into any of the alleged actions of these individuals, and no wrongdoing has been found, yet members of our community are facing life-altering penalties. These measures constitute an unacceptable and disproportionate measure to shut down peaceful actions taken by members of our community.

Moreover, multiple members of the administration—including the individual who filed the initial complaints against members of the negotiation committee— have admitted that the Liberated Zone is a productive space for learning, creativity, and community. Per the Code of Conduct, “[t]emporary Suspension is only used where immediate action is necessary to protect the University Community,” so the use of temporary suspension in these cases constitutes a blatant misuse of disciplinary procedures and abuse of administrative authority. While we understand that the administration has legitimate concerns about the current political climate and Congressional overreach, we urge the administration to

## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

8

exercise restraint and resist the urge to enact unjust discipline that incites fear, promotes self-censorship rather than free expression, and deepens community divides.

Cornell has a rich history of activism that has led to material improvements in University programming, culture, and policy. Too often, this activism is demonized in the moment but celebrated years later, once the dust has settled. We implore our administration to resist this pattern by ceasing and immediately reversing all temporary suspensions, HR referrals, and other disciplinary or retaliatory actions taken against organizations, students, and employees for their alleged involvement in peaceful pro-Palestine activism from October 2023 onward, including in the Liberated Zone from April 25, 2024, until its dissolution.

### DEMAND VI:

*We ask that Cornell University's administration materially support the formation of an Indigenous Studies Department.*

At least part of the process of rebuilding relations with native communities involves an educational commitment to the knowledge and histories of said communities. As it currently stands, the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program (AIISP) is housed within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which limits the scope and nature of the program in non-negligible ways.

We are therefore calling on Cornell University to act on the long-standing demand to transform the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program into an interdisciplinary, cross-college Indigenous Studies Department. The establishment of this department should be led by current Faculty and Staff members of the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program, in consultation with representatives from each of the Colleges, members of the Indigenous Grad Student Association (IGSA), and Native American Indigenous Students at Cornell (NAISAC).

Such a cross-college, interdisciplinary department would permit Cornell University to additionally commit to showcasing the rich academic and artistic history of indigenous scholars and artists. These elements of indigenous culture and philosophies ought to be foregrounded as the university takes steps to develop a relationship with native communities. Additionally, such a department would also require a commitment to hiring more native faculty members to ensure that Indigenous scholars and artists remain at the forefront of these developments.



## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

9

### DEMAND VII:

*We ask that Cornell University establish a detailed timeline for the return of mineral rights at the Blue Hills Pipestone Quarry (a sacred site listed on the National Register of Historic Places) to the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Nation.*

The process of rebuilding relations with native communities also involves an institutional commitment to restorative justice, including the return of lands and resources when possible. The Blue Hills Pipestone Quarry is important to the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Nation for religious and cultural reasons, and the inability to access this site contributes to immense loss of religion, language, and cultural identity– all forms of cultural genocide. As the largest beneficiary of the Morrill Act, Cornell has a responsibility to rectify past wrongs. The Blue Hills Pipestone Quarry is a sacred site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and cannot be mined or used for other activities that might generate substantial profit for Cornell, so it presents Cornell with a unique opportunity to return land and engage in restorative justice that would benefit Indigenous groups at no substantial cost to the University.

To this end, we ask that members of IGSA, NAISAC, and the Indigenous Dispossession Project meet with Cornell Senior Director of Real Estate Jeremy Thomas and Vice Provost for Engagement and Land Grant Affairs Katherine McComas to establish a timeline for the return of mineral rights at the Blue Hills Pipestone Quarry to the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Nation. The initial meeting should take place by June 30, 2024, with subsequent meetings on a monthly basis thereafter, until a formal timeline is established.

### DEMAND VIII:

*We ask that Cornell University materially support the establishment of a Palestinian Studies program as well as a Palestinian and Arab Living center.*

In order for Cornell University to maintain its longstanding commitment to academic excellence and rigorous thought, a Palestinian Studies program must be established. This program will offer immense benefit to the fractured Cornell community by providing the educational resources and expertise necessary for a proper education. In the interest of accessibility to all students, the program should additionally include an accredited minor for both undergraduate and graduate students. While we have asked that the program be publicly endorsed by June 30th, 2024, we strongly recommend that the program be established by the start of the Fall 2025 semester.

The formation of this program does not stem from student interest alone. As Deborah Starr (the current chair of the Near Eastern Studies department) has made clear, the Near Eastern Studies department, the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, and the College of Arts and Sciences have been working on a lecture series as part of what was being envisioned as a “Palestine Studies Initiative.” Moreover, the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the Department of History are submitting individual hire requests for expertise in Palestinian studies, and considering submitting a possible cluster hire. This departmental interest in cluster hiring is further bolstered by the current hiring interests of the Department of Anthropology and Comparative Literatures—two more departments that have recently expressed hiring interest in the area. As such, there is already significant departmental support for the creation of a Palestinian Studies Program. Such faculty hiring requests have already been submitted, so we encourage this administration to recognize the invaluable academic and politically restorative role that such a program would play in this community. Moreover, Cornell University’s commitment to displaced scholars could be further bolstered through the provision of an annual, one-year visiting Faculty Fellowship for a scholar of Palestinian Studies.

In addition to the Palestinian Studies Program, we call on Cornell University to materially support the establishment of a Palestinian and Arab Living Center. As with similarly situated centers across campus, this center will serve as a location for Palestinian and Arab students, staff, and faculty members to come together in community. The Living Center would require a designated building and hiring plan for administrators and staff by the start of the Fall 2024 Semester. If needed, a temporary location for this Living Center can be established, with a permanent location to be established by the start of the Fall 2025 Semester. Cornell University will furnish this center with funds to support the establishment of a permanent Palestinian and Arab Living Center.

Programming at this center can include an annual speaker series such as “*Arabs in Academia*,” with an inaugural focus on Palestine and Palestinians. Such a series would provide Palestinian and Arab representation to students across campus in addition to creating an environment to discuss specific obstacles faced by Palestinian and Arab community members. Some such examples might include the conflation of Arab ethnicity with the religion of Islam, for example, which is a problematic conflation that we have seen the university reinforce for years. The Palestinian and Arab Living Center would provide a non-academic space for community members to discuss these experiences collectively.

## FORMAL DEMANDS OF THE LIBERATED ZONE

11

Finally, we recognize that key stakeholders in the hiring staff members and the affiliation process for the Palestinian Studies program must be Palestinian or Arab community members. As such, we ask that representatives from Cornell's chapter of "Students for Justice in Palestine" and the "Cornell Collective for Justice in Palestine" serve as representatives on the committees that oversee the hiring of staff for the Palestinian and Arab Living Center. Additionally, such representatives should also be involved in the affiliation of faculty members into the Palestinian Studies Program.

**DEMAND IX:** *We call upon Cornell University to disclose a full public report of all contracted partners, endowment resources, and land holdings.*

Cornell University's contracted partners, endowment resources, and land holdings, as we have seen throughout our discussion of these demands, directly impact Cornell community members. Understanding how our university contributes to (or is complicit in) current geopolitical affairs—especially human rights violations and gross wrongdoing—is a crucial dimension of learning to be a global citizen and it can only be accomplished through a level of transparency not yet seen by our institution.

With this in mind, then, we call on Cornell University to disclose all contracted partners, endowment resources, and land holdings.