

Resolution: The SWC Local 2710 calls for the permanent removal of the NYPD and all related agencies from Columbia University campuses

Proposal Date: 5/15/24

Whereas, on April 30th, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) launched a brutal and unforgivable attack on its graduate and undergraduate student workers at the invitation of Columbia University President, Minouche Shafik with the express support only of the Trustees of Columbia University;

Whereas, the NYPD raid was the second police sweep on campus in less than two weeks, bringing the number of arrested community members to over 200, and came after the administration threatened to call the national guard on its own students and workers, and was conducted after the purposeful removal of all press from campus, and ended with a gun fired, a student being pushed down the stairs by NYPD officers, many more injured, and the large-scale destruction of our office and work space by the NYPD;

Whereas, police and private security have occupied Columbia University's main campus at the behest of the Trustees since April 30th and restricted access without due notice, making the campus an untenable workplace and residence for workers;

Whereas, the escalating militarization of campus since October 2023, including the excessive presence of police, increased surveillance, and public safety restrictions have created impossible living and working conditions on and around the Morningside campus for us and the workers in our neighboring community of Harlem;

Whereas, since October 2023, the University has collaborated with the FBI, NYPD, and private investigators, divulging workers' private information without their consent, and surveilling peaceful protests;

Whereas, all of the above were unilaterally decided by the Columbia Administration and the Trustees of Columbia and allegedly by business leaders ignoring and violating the decisions of union locals and the University Senate;

Whereas, collaboration with local and national police forces come with the admission from both the University and the police of no credible threat to the safety of the University community;

Whereas, the Student Workers of Columbia have previously experienced harassment and intimidation by the NYPD during the disruption of our General Body Meeting on November 21, 2022;

Whereas, Columbia University's Board of Trustees maintains financial ties with the NYPD with at least two of its board members deeply invested in the functioning of the NYPD;

Whereas, the NYPD are known to have used extreme measures to clampdown on peaceful protests across the city and carry out racialized surveillance programs such as running an illegal “Demographics Unit” between 2012 and 2014 to surveil Muslim communities across the city in neighborhoods, homes, places of worship, and schools, and the surveillance of organizers and protesters involved with the Black Lives Matter movement from 2016-2022;

Whereas, the routine interactions of students and workers with police officers in riot gear and engaging in show-of-force tactics, the subjection of surveillance of New York City residents and the well-documented and infamous racist violence meted out by the police across the country serve primarily to threaten and intimidate students and create a fearful environment that has no place within a site of learning and community such as a college campus;

Whereas, many workers in our unit are from communities routinely targeted by the NYPD and ICE, including but not limited to immigrants, racial, and gender minorities and several have personally experienced discriminatory violence and harassment by police officials;

Whereas the presence of police and immigration officers is a health and safety issue that union locals across the country have rightfully claimed bargaining rights over; and

Whereas, 106 organizations, including unions such as locals of UAW and 1199SEIU, National Domestic Workers Alliance, and New York Taxi Workers Alliance have publicly urged Mayor de Blasio and the City Council to defund the NYPD;

Whereas, New York legislators like Julia Salzar, Corey Johnson, Danny Dromm, Scott Stringer, Jumaane Williams, Carlina Rivera, Antonio Reynoso, Ben Kallos, Carlos Menchaca, Brad Lander, and Mark Levine have called for cuts to the NYPD budget; therefore, be it

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 condemns the presence of police and immigration officers on university premises;

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 condemns the Columbia Administration and Board of Trustees for its close ties with the NYPD, and their repeated choices to unleash police after its community members especially following October 2023, but also many times in the past;

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 calls on Columbia to immediately sever its ties with the NYPD, which has a documented history of violence, discrimination, and harassment;

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 calls on the Board of Trustees at Columbia University to dismiss Abigail Elbaum and Fermi Wang from the Board.

Resolved that SWC Local 2710 calls on Mayor Adams and the City Council to defund the NYPD by reducing the NYPD budget by at least one billion dollars and reallocating the funds to resources that have been proven to support poor communities of color like public health, housing, education and youth employment programs;

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 calls on Mayor Adams and the City Council to make the redirection of NYPD funds a first step in reimaging public safety in New York City and re-creating systems of public safety that would keep all New Yorkers safe;

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 calls on the AFL-CIO to end its affiliation with the International Union of Police Associations and that our representatives to the AFL-CIO will initiate the proper procedures for such a discussion in the AFL-CIO as soon as possible; and

Resolved, that SWC Local 2710 commits to making the health and safety of our members a bargaining priority in our next contract negotiations, by introducing and securing a robust "Cops off Campus" contract article addressing both the access to campus of NYPD and representatives of governmental agencies.