

From: "IU President Pamela Whitten" <pres@e.iu.edu>
Subject: An update for the IU Bloomington community
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Dear Members of the IUB Community,

Over the last several days, our campus community has faced considerable challenges and wrestled with complex questions. Put simply, the events of recent days have been difficult, disturbing and emotional.

Against that backdrop, we write today to provide you with an enhanced understanding of the university's actions and to outline the beginning of what we believe can be a path forward.

First, our campus—like so many others—has experienced the escalation of a national movement on numerous college campuses to erect encampments and occupy universities indefinitely. Such un-regulated encampments raise concerns for us as stewards of the campus because they tax limited public safety resources and become magnets for those making threats of violence or who may not have the best interest of Indiana University in mind. Additionally, this movement also coincides with a troubling rise in antisemitism nationally and on college campuses. Specifically, antisemitic episodes have been linked to this national encampment campaign. It was in this unique context that we appointed the ad hoc committee and charged them to modernize our protocols for the presence of overnight structures in Dunn Meadow to address this contemporary issue.

Second, at the same time, our commitment to free speech is—and must continue to be—unwavering. Everyone has the right to peacefully rally or protest on our campus, and we will do our best to ensure that everyone can exercise these rights in a safe environment. Free speech on our campus will never be impeded. There have been no changes to the opportunities and rights for free expression on campus.

Third, in our decision to engage the IU Police Department and the Indiana State Police, we aimed to balance each of these concerns: legitimate safety concerns related to un-regulated encampments and our commitment to free speech. After standing down for 24 hours, we sought to give the protestors the opportunity to comply with policy, particularly the 1969 prohibition of tents after 11 p.m. They chose to expand the encampment after 11 p.m. Therefore, on Saturday we again made the decision to enforce university policy and remove tents and other temporary structures. The Indiana State Police provided the additional manpower needed to address heightened levels of potential threats.

This was not a decision we made lightly. Protestors were encouraged before and during the process of dismantling the tents to step aside to avoid arrest, and most did. They were also encouraged to remain in Dunn Meadow after the dismantling of the encampments to continue their protest, which most did.

Importantly, we encourage those members of our community detained for trespass to engage in the appeals process by contacting the IUPD. In nearly all cases, trespass ban orders preventing students or faculty from visiting campus will be halted during the appeals process. This will allow these students and faculty to complete the semester.

Fourth, we recognize that this is not the kind of action that any of us want to see on this campus moving forward. We will always prioritize safety for everyone on our campus. Yet, we are moving quickly to partner with faculty, staff, and students to look for long-term solutions. We are already in dialogue with members of the IUB community and are grateful to many who have offered their insights, counsel, and constructive criticism. Just this afternoon, Provost Shrivastav met with student leaders from Union Board and IU Student Government, as well as the President-Elect of the Bloomington Faculty Council, among others. With their insight, we are in the process of appointing a taskforce of student leaders and representatives of the Bloomington Faculty Council to review our event protocols and make recommendations to guide activities on campus, particularly in Dunn Meadow, moving forward.

In compliance with the existing policy, we have already received—and are in the process of approving—a formal request from a student organization to setup temporary structures in Dunn Meadow. This request will be contingent on a set of mutually agreed parameters. We anticipate the request to be approved—with the possibility of renewal—in 48-hour increments.

In closing, we offer our thanks to countless faculty, staff and students who have worked tirelessly to support free speech and ensure the safety of the IUB community. We look forward to and appreciate your continued engagement. It is our belief that conversations this weekend have laid an important foundation for ongoing and productive dialogue on our campus.

It is our hope that we can come together with our common desire to create solutions that will continue to strengthen the safety of our campus while protecting the rights of free speech.

Sincerely,

Pamela Whitten, President

Rahul Shrivastav, Executive Vice President and Provost, IU Bloomington