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Accessed: 5/20/24

WWU Faculty Call on Administration to Meet Student Demands

Dear President Randhawa, Provost Johnson, and WWU Board of Trustees,

Students on college campuses across the country are demanding that their institutions live up to the values they claim to uphold. On May 3, 2024, a diverse coalition of Western Washington University (WWU) student organizations, led by WWU's Jewish Voice for Peace and Arab Student Association, presented you with a [list of demands](#). Students are calling on WWU to financially divest from genocide, invest in decolonial education, and actively address the harm that the university has inflicted upon Arab and Arab American students on campus. **As faculty, we write in support of our students and urge you to meet their demands.**

Divestment is not a new phenomenon. In response to student-led movements in the 1980s, universities across the country cut ties with companies that supported South Africa's apartheid regime. Many universities, including Harvard, Michigan, and the University of California system, have also committed to divesting their endowment from the fossil fuel industry. Most recently, Washington's [Evergreen State College](#) became the first U.S. university to commit to divesting from "companies that profit from gross human rights violations and/or the occupation of Palestinian territories." This comes on the heels of Brown and Northwestern University agreeing to disclose their financial investments.

At WWU, students have a long history of effecting change. It was student activism that led to, among other things, the creation of the Multicultural Center, the Ethnic Student Center, the WWU House of Healing, and the Department of Ethnic Studies. Now, students are demanding "an education that does not fund genocide, apartheid, or war." We stand with them in unwavering solidarity as they join a nationwide movement on college campuses and a global movement for Palestinian liberation. We therefore ask you to set into motion a speedy process to meet student demands, while upholding [academic freedom and free speech](#) on campus, and protecting all students from violence or retaliation.

As WWU faculty, we have the great privilege of working with students on a daily basis. We have witnessed their commitment to education and community, their ethic of care, and their steadfast dedication to ending the Israeli genocide on Palestinians. As an institution,

WWU encourages students to “make waves” and prides itself on fostering a “commitment to equity and justice, and respect for the rights and dignity of others.” Indeed, [WWU’s Strategic Plan](#), approved by the Board of Trustees, envisions WWU as an institution that will “support and strengthen curricula and other programming that engage issues of access, equity, power, and privilege.” We call on WWU administrators to honor these values by meeting students’ demands.

Signed,

1. Verónica Vélez, Professor, Secondary Education
2. Anna Ciao, Associate Professor of Psychology, Director of the Center for Cross-Cultural Research
3. Melissa Osborne, Associate Professor, Sociology
4. A Longoria, Associate Professor and Chair, Secondary Education
5. Bidisha Biswas, Professor of Political Science
6. Yanara Friedland, Fairhaven College
7. Kevin Delucio, Associate Professor, Fairhaven College
8. Shirin Deylami, Professor, Political Science
9. John Bower, Professor, Fairhaven
10. Kate Darby, Associate Professor, Environmental Studies
11. Cynthia Camlin, Professor, Department of Art and Art History
12. Jane Wong, Associate Professor, English
13. Tamara Lea Spira, Associate Professor of Queer Studies and American Cultural Studies
14. Sondra Cuban, Woodring College of Education
15. Theresa Warburton, Associate Professor, Department of English
16. Mark Neff, Associate Professor, Environmental Studies
17. Jae Fisher, Professor of Anthropology
18. Josh Cerretti, Associate Professor, History and WGSS
19. Ely Shipley, Associate Professor, English
20. Clayton Pierce Associate Professor
21. Zaidi Batool, Assistant Professor, Sociology
22. Froylan Sifuentes, Assistant Professor, Environmental Science
23. Mary Hunt, Associate Professor, Department of Health and Human Development
24. Christopher Loar, Professor, English
25. Jenny Marie Forsythe, Assistant Professor, English
26. Katherine Judith Anderson, Associate Professor, English
27. Catherine Wineinger, Assistant Professor of Political Science
28. Lisa Beard, Assistant Professor of Political Science
29. Robyn Mieke Dahl, Assistant Professor, Geology & SMATE
30. Vicki Hsueh, Professor, Political Science
31. Katie Rupe, Assistant Professor of Math Education, Mathematics & SMATE
32. Adrian J. Villicana, Associate Professor, Psychology
33. Barbara Lehman, Professor, Psychology
34. Kristi Lemm, Professor, Psychology
35. Larry Symons, Associate Professor, Psychology

36. Ceci Lopez, Associate Professor & Director Law, Diversity & Justice
37. Cameron Whitley, Assistant Professor, Sociology
38. Ruby Ben, Assistant Professor, Sociology
39. Glenn Tsunokai, Professor, Sociology
40. Francisco Laso, Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies
41. Liz Mogford, Professor, Sociology
42. Kristin Anderson, Professor, Sociology
43. Dolores Calderón, Professor
44. Dharitri Bhattacharjee, Associate Professor, History
45. Greg Youmans, Associate Professor of English and Film and Media Studies
46. Nada Elia, Visiting Scholar, Fairhaven College
47. Caroline Hardin, Assistant Professor, Computer Science /Science , Math and Technology Education
48. Melina Juarez, Assistant Professor Political Science
49. Chris E. Vargas, Associate Professor, Art and Art History
50. Amir Abedi, Professor, Political Science
51. José Roach Orduña, Assistant Professor, English
52. Melanie Bowers, Assistant Professor, Political Science
53. Charles Anderson, Associate Professor of History
54. Allison Giffen, Professor, English/WGSS
55. Mariangela Mihai, Assistant Professor, Anthropology & WGSS
56. Lourdes Gutierrez Najera
57. Christine Espina, Associate Professor, Nursing Program, Health & Community Studies Department
58. Robert Yerachmiel Sniderman, Assistant Professor in Socially Engaged Art, Fairhaven College
59. Emily Spracklin, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Western Libraries
60. Jean Lee, Assistant Professor, English
61. Mo Wells, Visiting Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies
62. Natalie Baloy, Assistant Professor, Anthropology
63. Neah Ingram-Monteiro, Teaching & Learning Librarian, Western Libraries
64. Gabe Gossett, Head of the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio at Western Libraries
65. Mary Tuti Baker, Assistant Professor, Comparative Indigenous Politics, Canadian American Studies
66. Casey Mullin, Head of Cataloging and Metadata Services, Western Libraries
67. Ricardo López-Pedrerros, History
68. Blanca Aranda Gómez García, Associate Professor, Modern and Classical Languages
69. Brian J. Bowe, Professor, Journalism
70. Daniel Picus, Assistant Professor, Global Humanities and Religions
71. N. Hayes, Associate Professor in the Huxley College of the Environment
72. Xi Wang, Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies
73. Kathleen Young, Associate Professor, Anthropology
74. Judith M. S. Pine, Professor, Anthropology
75. Stefania Heim, Associate Professor, English
76. James Miller, UEPP
77. Angela Bell, Assistant Professor, Psychology

78. Daniel Chard, Assistant Professor, History
79. Steve Bennett, Associate Professor, Department of Health and Human Development
80. Jennifer Green, Professor, ECEM (Early Childhood, Elementary, Multilingual Education)
81. Phil Pendergast, Assistant Professor, Sociology
82. Daisy Padilla, Director of Access and Inclusion, Secondary
83. JOHN KORSMO, Prof of Human Services. Health and Community Studies
84. Phoebe Wahl, Design Faculty, Illustration Certificate Program
85. Gabriela Martinez, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Western Libraries
86. Anna Lees, Associate Professor, Elementary Education
87. Christopher O'Dell, TA, math
88. Liam Watts, Instructor, Mathematics
89. Mark Y. Miyake, Associate Professor of Music and Society, Fairhaven College
90. Amites Sarkar, Professor, Mathematics
91. Mary Tuti Baker, Assistant Professor, Comparative Indigenous Politics, Canadian American Studies
92. Jill MacIntyre Witt, Sr. Instructor, UEPP
93. Christina Gutierrez-Dennehy, Assistant Professor of Theatre History and Theatre Education
94. Shea Ani Tipes, TA, English
95. Dawn Dietrich, Professor of English
96. Tesla Monson, Associate Professor, Anthropology
97. Sylvia Hadnot, NTT Instructor, Environmental Studies
98. Jackie Sennett, Professor, HS/HCS/WCE
99. Nick Stanger, Associate Professor, Environmental Studies
100. Lysa Rivera, Professor, English
101. David Leaf, Professor Emeritus, Biology
102. Rae Lynn Schwartz-DuPre, WGSS/Communication Studies
103. Christina Byrne, Professor, Psychology
104. Kristen Chmielewski, Associate Professor, Health and Human Development
105. Milica Jelaca Jovanovic, Professor, Music
106. Christina Gutierrez-Dennehy, Assistant Professor of Theatre History and Theatre Education
107. Jeremy Cushman, Associate Professor, English
108. Aquila Flower, Professor of Geography, Environmental Studies
109. Kamarie Chapman, Senior Lecturer
110. Gigi Berardi, Professor, UEPP
111. Darren W. McCroom Associate Professor of Lighting Design and Stage Management
112. Zoë Fejeran, Museum Educator, Western Gallery
113. Sarah E. Watkins, Visiting Assistant Professor of History
114. Cara Jaye, Professor, Chair, Department of Art and Art History
115. Adam Nyman, Professor, Mathematics
116. Tyler Walker, Assistant Professor, Modern and Classical Languages
117. Marianne Brasil, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
118. Kiik Araki-Kawaguchi, Assistant Professor, English

119. Amber Hixson, Senior Instructor, Mathematics
 120. Tracy Coskie, Professor, (Early Childhood, Elementary, Multilingual Education)
 121. Andrew Richardson, Sr. Instructor, Mathematics
 122. Zoe Redwoman, Assistant Director of Composition, English
 123. Ezra Anisman, Instructor, Fairhaven
 124. Andrew Weitz, Assistant Professor, Anthropology
 125. Kathleen Brian, Faculty
 126. Thomas Hummel, Honors College
 127. Sylvia Tag, Librarian, Western Libraries
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Dear,
President Dr. Sabah Randhawa,
Western Washington University's Board of Trustees,
Students, Faculty, Staff,
and Bellingham community

We write this letter as a diverse and rapidly growing coalition of student organizations, led by Western Washington University's Jewish Voice for Peace and Arab Student Association. We are united in our unshakeable demand for a free and liberated Palestine. Thus, we invoke the power of our position as students to demand Western Washington University to cut ties with and divest from Israel's genocidal, settler-colonial occupation of Palestine, and all institutions implicated in supporting the apartheid regime.

As we make these demands for the decolonization of Palestine and an end to the genocide of the Palestinian people, we recognize that we live and study on stolen land. We stand in solidarity with the struggles of the Indigenous peoples of these lands and waters, the Nooksack Tribe, Lummi Nation, and other Coast Salish peoples, and their decolonization movement. These movements for liberation and decolonization are intertwined and require attention as we fight for the liberation of all peoples.

These are our demands:

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE HARM AND CORRECT WRONGS** - Publicly acknowledge the harm that the University has inflicted upon Arab and Arab-American students on campus through lack of support, silence during the genocide of Palestinian people, and demonization of the Arab and Arab-American students. The administration has continually failed to protect Arab and Arab-American students from harassment and has actively spread misinformation about the word *Intifada* and other protest chants, endangering Arab and Arab-American students. This is unacceptable and must be acknowledged publicly. ULTIMATELY, Western must collaborate with students and faculty to adopt an institutional definition of antisemitism that clearly distinguishes antisemitism and anti-Zionism, protects the right to condemn Zionism as a racist endeavor, and the right to condemn the existence of the apartheid, settler-colonial state that is Israel.
- 2.
3. **FULL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE** - Disclose all direct and indirect investments, agreements, and contracts with companies and institutions complicit in Israel's illegal settler-colonial occupation of Palestine. This includes but is not limited to all weapons manufacturing companies and all companies on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) list^[1].
- 4.
3. **COMPLETE DIVESTMENT FROM ISRAEL** - End All direct and indirect investments, agreements, and contracts with companies and institutions complicit in Israel's illegal settler-colonial occupation of Palestine. This includes all direct and indirect investments in weapons manufacturing companies and companies on the BDS list. This requires the termination of all academic and financial relationships with Boeing. Remove Sabra Hummus from the dining halls and campus markets. Cut all ties with The Hewlett-Packard (HP) Company. Immediately and permanently cancel the study abroad program at Haifa University and cancel all current and future forms of cooperation with Israeli academic institutions.
5. **INVEST IN COMMUNITY** - Ensure the success of the Ethnic Studies department launch in Fall 2024 by creating three additional visiting positions for the 2024-2025 academic year with the possibility of renewal (in the areas of decolonial studies, global liberation struggles, postcolonial studies, post-imperial studies, and transnational feminisms). Create a permanent line item in the university budget to fund an annual faculty teach-in that centers a decolonialist approach to academia. This must include material that centers on the racist history of the United States' academic institutions through the perpetuation of colonization on Turtle Island and abroad. Finally, provide funding for a quarterly workshop focused on movement building and solidarity amongst various student groups, facilitated by an individual approved by the Ethnic Studies Department.
- 6.
5. **SCHEDULE AN EMERGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING** to discuss our demands. ASA and JVP representatives and elected allies must be allowed to attend.

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Western Washington University's Endowment is managed by an investment company called Russell Investments, in Seattle. WWU provides no transparency to where our money is invested.

...

We draw strength and resolve from the long history of anti-Zionist organizing and solidarity work, and we make these demands with the knowledge that the dignity and liberation of Palestinian people and Jewish people are irrevocably intertwined. We believe in the necessity of critiquing and holding the State of Israel accountable for its egregious crimes against humanity and willful violations of international law. We vehemently reject the narrative that Judaism and Zionism are one and the same, and we stand firm in our commitment to the Palestinian liberation movement and to Judaism beyond Zionism.

We deserve an education that does not fund genocide, apartheid, or war. We deserve an education that does not rely on the exploitation and destruction of others. We deserve an education that does not fan the flames of hate and spread divisive lies and destructive historical omissions.

People in Palestine deserve to live. We demand that our tuition dollars be divested from the genocide of Palestinian people. None of us are free until all of us are free.

...

A version of this letter was originally presented to Western Washington University's administration on Friday May 3rd, 2024.

This letter represents the most updated version, which did not undergo any significant changes.

This letter is officially dated Tuesday May 7th, 2024.

Signed,

WWU ASA and JVP

[\[1\] https://bdsmovement.net/get-involved/what-to-boycott](https://bdsmovement.net/get-involved/what-to-boycott)