

## Assessing & OnBoarding PTON-students

### Contacting trusted individuals:

Best to have the convo over the phone or in person in a safe place; messaging is also fine, don't share any tactical or timing information or names.

- Not good places for conversation:
  - Inside campus buildings
  - Zoom or Jitsi

### Opening/Intro:

Hey, a group of students who are working on a disruptive action for the next 2 weeks in response to what's been happening at Columbia with the Gaza solidarity encampment. we want to take advantage of the momentum; i'm reaching to see if you'd want to get involved?

### Give them a vision of our goals.

We'll be setting up an encampment with at least 20 people (don't mention time or place); our goals

- Divestment
- Bringing new people into Palestine
- Sustaining our organizing and developing a long-term divestment strategy
- Display of the better world we are building
  - Inviting people into a space of solidarity
  - Teach-ins, community events, recruitment, dancing, music, community, etc.

### Make the ask

- We will be setting up an encampment. **Would you be willing to camp?**
  - Be non-specific about location and timing.
- Commitment means being in a red role for at least 3 days (potentially missing class, might not have access to bathrooms).
- Ask if there are any dates they would not be available and take note for yourself. Ask why they're unavailable if they give you any dates.

### **IF YES:**

#### Understanding the Risk

#### **for people who are camping: risking an arrest and academic discipline**

- Student Discipline
  - Sanctions can include minor things like apologizing or probation or more serious penalties like loss of university housing or suspension
  - **Understanding Suspension:** Length of suspension can vary between a semester and year; financial aid for the repeated semester is revoked. (See also [link](#))
  - **(Bring it up as reassurance ; not as a risk);** We think expulsion is highly unlikely; only students who have been expelled in the movement at Vanderbilt were expelled for touching ("assaulted") a police officer. Expulsion is **highly** unlikely; at Princeton it requires committee and we know that at least 2 faculty members who are part of the committee are in the Faculty for Justice in Palestine.
- Legal Charges
  - Unlikely to be more than trespassing. We will get a warning before we are told we are trespassing, so there would be an opportunity to leave.
- Safeguards

- We will have infrastructure, food, water, funds, etc.
- Minimum 20 people camping overnight
- We have pro bono legal support.
- We have a trained security team.
- We will have faculty members on our side to negotiate with administration.

**Inoculation and follow up.**

- If they are on board:
  - Yay!
  - Ask them if they know any other people they think might be willing to take on a red role.
- **If they are a maybe:**
  - Make them feel heard and emphasize that they are not alone in fearing retaliation. Many organizers feel the same.
  - Remind them that we are only moving forward if we feel comfortable with our number of hard commits.
  - Emphasize that we have each others' backs and we keep us safe.
  - See if they have any specific fears you can address.
- If they are a no:
  - That's okay!
  - **Ask if they'd consider learning more about a yellow or green role.**
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  - - **Reds**--only people who are in the encampment, who assuming the academic and legal risks
    - **Yellows**--people who run supplies food (who go in and out the encampment); marshalls; liasons with admin and police; will help folks vacate when warnings are given;
    - **Greens**--picketing; speeches (do not enter the encampment); surrounding rallies; out reach and general support
- No matter what:
  - ask them for 5+ names of comrades they think will be down for party (especially red roles) and for the contact info for those comrades
    - you can even offer to do a 2-1 convo with their friend if you think that would make it a stronger ask!

**FAQs (BELOW IS COLUMBIA...still editing)**

**Legal & Disciplinary Risks:**

- **What specific university rules does this break?**

This action violates the [demonstration policy](#), the [filming policy](#), and the [outdoor space policy](#).

- **What is the likelihood of revocation of diplomas for graduating students?**
- **I am already under investigation/have been disciplined in the past. How does this affect my risk level?**
- **I am on a student visa. What are the risks for me?**

Since international students' visas rely on their student status to ensure their continued visa status, any suspensions or expulsions could lead to deportation. This is a very high risk level, so it is understandable that many international students may not feel comfortable committing to a

red role.

- **I have a green card. What are the risks for me?**

Academic discipline from Columbia would not impact green card status. There are three categories of criminal conviction that could impact green card status: aggravated felonies, crimes involving drugs, and crimes of "moral turpitude." The first two types of criminal conviction would definitely not apply to this action. The third type of criminal conviction likely would not. Crimes of moral turpitude usually include things like fraud, rape, and abuse, so it is unlikely that a trespassing arrest, charge, or conviction would threaten green card status.

- **Do suspensions end health insurance for student workers, or will PhD students who are suspended keep their health insurance during the suspension period?**

Suspension would not interrupt health insurance for student workers/PhD students. However, suspended students might be barred from utilizing the campus health center due to restrictions regarding not being allowed on campus during the suspension.

- **How long would reversing a suspension/expulsion take? What does that mean practically for suspended/expelled students (classes, housing)?**

There is no clear timeline for when suspensions/expulsions would be issued or when they might be reversed. Suspended or expelled student would not be able to attend classes, and if they reside in Columbia Housing or Columbia Residential, Columbia may attempt to initiate eviction proceedings against them (as recently demonstrated), but reference the answer above re: eviction process timeline. Based on the experience of currently suspended students, you are not allowed to attend class for the duration of your suspension, but you are able to receive grades, complete missed work, and/or receive credits for your courses once the suspension is lifted.

- **I am relying on Princeton for housing/employment for the summer. What are the risks for me?**

There is a chance that any of these things could be at risk. Given that they are all likely contingent on your being a student, if you were subject to discipline that removed your student status temporarily or permanently, your housing/employment could be at risk. The numbers we have planned would mean any disciplinary action has a good chance of being reversed, although the timeline of the reversal might be too short to ensure you'd be in the clear by the summer. That being said, one of the demands of the action will be amnesty and expunging previous disciplinary charges, so if we are successful, it would hopefully not be a concern. For students who signed a lease for their Princeton housing, you have tenant protection and cannot be simply evicted - eviction proceedings in NYC typically take, at minimum, 4 months, and often last up to a year so there is no way CU can legally remove you from a rental without this process. For undergrad students/students in dorms, you have more limited protections, but loss of housing is only a sanction used in "severe" cases according to Columbia, and we have only seen it weaponized in select cases where CU has claimed that those students pose a physical danger to the community or themselves, as far as we know this has been weaponized against 4 students in the 2023-24 school year (2 grad students & 2 undergrads).

- **Is there a risk that I will lose my campus job as a result of this action?**

If you were suspended, you are likely to lose your on campus job for the duration of the suspension. If you were expelled you will lose your campus job all together.

- **What will result from a trespassing charge? How long would the process of fighting a misdemeanor charge like trespassing take?**

Trespassing is considered a misdemeanor and the penalty is almost always a fine, sometimes community service, and rarely jail time. The legal guidance we have gotten so far suggests that our charges would be likely to be met with a fine. The timeline for fighting this type of charge would hopefully be shortened given the number of people being charged with the same thing,

but it is unclear how long it might take. Initial legal feedback received is that they expect trespassing charges dropped from misdemeanors to civil violations (not on your record) and would include a fine.

In the case of the 1968 building occupiers, those arrested during the police bust were charged with trespass, but all who had only been involved in one occupation had charges withdrawn at the request of the university, which sought to save face and conduct discipline internally. The initial bail was paid through a national bail fund for the students.

- **Assuming that I, as an F-1 or J-1 student, were arrested for the misdemeanor of trespass, what might the immigration consequences involve? Under what circumstances would it "go on my record"? Will I be able to cross the border for the duration of the trial? Will it affect my future applications for visas, permanent residence, or naturalization? Can the consulate revoke my visa for this arrest?**
- **How might employees of the university, as opposed to students, be disciplined for this action?**

### Logistical Questions

- **What about food, bathrooms, sleeping quarters, etc.?**

All of this will be taken care of! We have the funds and people to make sure that all of these items will be prepared by the time we begin taking up space. There will be food and camping toilets/porta potties/something similar available for people during the first three days. We are anticipating that after the first three days, people will be able to leave to use the bathroom/shower and we will be able to replenish our food supply with people in yellow/green roles to procure food for us!

- **I have a presentation/test/class commitment. Can I leave for it?**

The initial three day commitment needed for a red role means that you cannot leave the space, even if it is for a presentation/test/class commitment. Tell someone involved in planning the dates that you have these types of conflicts and they can make an internal determination about whether you can commit to a red role.

- **What happens after the three days? Can I leave then?**

We are planning that the space we are taking up will be more established by the third day. At that point, we are planning to move to a shift model where people will be able to leave the space in order to shower, attend classes, attend to off-campus matters, etc.

- **Will we have a meeting with all red/yellow roles and the lawyers before the action?**

We are in the process of connecting/contacting all of the people who are committed to roles. We are happy to connect people with lawyers on an individual basis as questions arise that are specific to them. We also aim to have a meeting with all members committed to red/yellow roles to check in, share logistical updates, and answer any questions/address any concerns before the action.

- **Will this be open to community members, especially those a part of community orgs' escalation committees?**

The numbers we are counting for red roles only include Columbia students. This is because students are the only people who can face academic consequences, so 250 was chosen as a number to mitigate against/reverse those risks. Community members who are interested in participating will be able to play a role, but we don't have an expectation of people outside of the Columbia community to take on risks for us.

### Safety Questions

- **How will we stay safe? Is there a security plan around counter protests/skunking/violence/attack?**

We will have a team at the action working on security and safety, including marshals, police liaisons, medics, legal observers, and jail support. Most of the organizers planning this action are security and deescalation trained and we will have people monitoring our space to ensure our collective safety at all hours. We also have a team working on contingency plans for things like counterprotests/skunking/violence/attack, so there will be a procedure in place for all of these potentialities. We also believe that we always derive our safety from our numbers and from building our mass movement, that is why we set a goal of launching with 250 committed red roles, and we anticipate potentially hundreds more students will join us once we have launched. We also will be encouraging certain tactics to mitigate targeting by the university such as similar clothing, face covering, disconnecting from Columbia wifi, etc.,

- **How are we making sure that we stay organized/have structure and purpose while we are there? Will anything reckless happen that will reflect badly on Palestinians?**

We have several internal planning committees to keep us organized/make sure we are there with a purpose. We will have an internal governance structure and are planning ways that we can ensure we make decisions democratically between the people participating in the action. We also have people planning events, programming, dance lessons, teach-ins, and more so we can ensure we are using our time productively! With this in mind, we are undertaking this action as a group of people centering Palestinian liberation. We, as a collective, will be responsible for ensuring that all of our actions are done in service of Palestine and nothing that happens will reflect badly on Palestinians, this is also why we are drafting community guidelines in coordination with the Palestinian students committee of CUAD to ensure that we are all committed to shared values that respect Palestine as our compass.

- **Can I be in a red role if I don't want to be touched?**

If you do not want to be touched, the other individuals involved in the action will definitely respect this boundary. That being said, once public safety or the NYPD get involved, it is hard to say whether or not you would be touched. There is precedent for an excessive use of force/physical touching on behalf of both Columbia personnel and the NYPD, so if this is a boundary for you, it may be best to consider a yellow or green role.

### **Future Consequence Questions**

- **Will any participants' graduation be blocked if they participate in this action? Could a participants' degree be rescinded?**
- **Will licensure, accreditation, either existing or future, be blocked or revoked for teachers, counselors or dietitians? Will this go on our record for NY state employment?**
- **Is TC/Barnard/UTS/JTS discipline separate from Columbia discipline? If so, would that make TC/Barnard/UTS/JTS students vulnerable if they are few in number?**
- **How do arrest, suspension, and expulsion affect and impact existing or future grad school acceptances, fellowships, or funding?**
- **How do these charges affect security clearance and background checks (education, state level, federal government, etc.)?**

- **Have we looked into the reactions & repercussions other schools have had against the students who are doing something similar (ex: Pomona, Smith, Dartmouth?)**

### **Pal Legal Meeting**

#### Legal support:

- Makes sense to reach out to a criminal defense attorney to get a better idea about how arrests, charges, and potential prosecution works. Not a priority until there have been arrests. Christian and Rasha are reaching out to local contacts.
- Employment lawyer may be able to provide insight into legal protections and help navigate employment issue. Christian is reaching out.

#### Community support:

- Other schools have benefitted from faculty and staff support / mobilization.
- Also helpful to mobilize community surrounding university.

#### Best practices:

#### Immigration considerations:

- Arrests and charges pose risks for immigration status. For green card holders, status is unlikely to be impacted by charges like trespassing. Avoid charges related to violent behavior or fraud/misrepresentation.
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#### Misc risk considerations: