

## JFAS-Rutgers Response to the Rutgers AAUP-AFT's 17 Demands

The Rutgers AAUP-AFT faculty unions recently issued [17 demands to the Rutgers administration](#) outlining how it should respond to the current Administration's expressed intentions toward American universities. We recognize why these policies are of concern to many Rutgers faculty, including many of our own members, and why the unions have engaged in this issue. However, several of the unions' demands are worded in ways harmful to the Rutgers Jewish community. We describe these problems below.

Demand #2 calls on the Rutgers Administration to delete "...any videos and footage from drones of the encampments, demonstrations, protests, and rallies (for Palestine and other causes), unless they are currently under litigation" However, some of these recorded activities may have violated the rights of Rutgers Jewish community, thereby violating campus policy or state or federal law. The university might require recordings to determine accountability and to use as evidence for policy violations.

Demand #8 states that the "Rutgers administration must clearly reject the weaponization of antisemitism accusations used to justify the Palestine exception." This language ignores and erases the real antisemitism that has targeted Jewish students most especially on many American campuses, including Rutgers, since October 7, 2023. The link between extreme anti-Israel rhetoric and antisemitism has firmly established by empirical research; this is not weaponization but reality. Also, the phrase "the Palestine exception" carries connotations unfairly suggesting that some faculty are insufficiently concerned with Palestinian rights.

Demand #8 also needlessly takes a position on the complicated debate about the precise relationship between antisemitism and some expressions of anti-Zionism, a debate that includes competing views of the IHRA guidelines on antisemitism. The unions should not dictate to the Rutgers administration the appropriate definition of antisemitism, which requires an in-depth, careful discussion of the scholarly literature, empirical evidence, and input from people of different perspectives.

Demand #9 states that Rutgers University should reinstate, re-enroll, and un-expel students who seriously violated the university's reasonable rules during last year's anti-Israel encampments and disturbances. While we leave it to the university to reconsider disciplinary decisions in individual cases, this demand is too sweeping and potentially harmful. Note, for example, that in at least one case, a student threatened to kill a Jewish fellow student.

Demand #17 states that "Rutgers must not revoke current tenure/tenure track procedure/promotions for faculty and staff based on federal investigations for participation in protests or actions." The university allows for protests that abide by time, place, and manner regulations. However, the word "actions" in Demand 17 is not well-specified, leaving much room for interpretation and therefore, concern. Specifically, we would strenuously object to the promotion of individuals whose actively assist and abet any U.S. designated terrorist organization.

In sum, we believe that these elements in the unions' 17 demands threaten Jewish faculty, staff, and their allies who identify with and support Jews and Israel. They are not essential to the purpose of the proposed document but instead insert polarizing and alienating language to it. We request that they be deleted so that more of us can join in endorsing the AAUP-AFT demands.