# UMass Amherst Faculty Senate to Consider No-Confidence Vote in Chancellor Over Campus Protests



The UMass Amherst Faculty Senate will meet on Monday to consider a vote of no confidence in Chancellor Javier A. Reyes following the arrest of approximately 130 demonstrators at a pro-Palestinian encampment on campus earlier this month. This meeting is scheduled to commence at 1 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom. The no-confidence proposal claims Reyes created an unsafe environment by involving a militarized police force to clear the encampment on May 7.

The UMass Student Government Association had already voted no confidence in Reyes on May 8. Despite this, UMass President Marty Meehan expressed full support for Reyes, citing his commitment to students' education, well-being, and safety. Reyes, inaugurated as Chancellor in April after starting in July 2023, addressed the community, noting 132 arrests, including 70 students and six faculty members, and called for dialogue on May 8.

Protests similar to the one at UMass have taken place on campuses nationwide, prompting discussions on free speech and university policies. The arrests have generated significant controversy, with the university maintaining that the police action was necessary for campus safety and did not infringe on First Amendment rights. Conversely, demonstrators described the encampment as peaceful and criticized the police response.

Elsewhere, pro-Palestinian demonstrations have prompted widespread campus protests against the Israeli government. At the University of California Santa Cruz, academic workers began a strike on Monday to protest crackdowns on such demonstrations across the state. This strike, organized by UAW Local 4811, could disrupt classes and research activities. The union demands the dropping of all disciplinary and criminal charges against members, citing their right to free speech and peaceful protest.

Additionally, pro-Palestinian protesters remain undeterred at Drexel University despite the president's call to disband, as arrests related to campus protests across the country surpass 3,000. Drexel's campus has been on lockdown, with virtual classes and heightened security. The Drexel Palestine Coalition denies allegations of hateful conduct, while the university highlighted concerns about disruption and antisemitic behavior. This protest follows similar demonstrations and police crackdowns, including incidents at Columbia University, UCLA, and the University of Pennsylvania.

More than 3,000 arrests have been recorded nationwide in relation to these campus protests since mid-April. The conflict, originating from a Hamas attack on Israel on October 7 and subsequent Israeli military actions in Gaza, continues to drive these demonstrations.