# Drexel University President Calls for Disbandment of Pro-Palestinian Encampment Amid Growing Tensions



On May 20, 2024, Drexel University President John Fry issued a statement demanding the immediate disbandment of a pro-Palestinian encampment on the Korman Family Quad that had grown to around 50 tents and 100 protesters since it began on Saturday night. The encampment coincided with a march marking the 74th anniversary of the Nakba, or “catastrophe,” referring to the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948.

Fry cited safety concerns and disruption of normal campus operations as reasons for the call to disband. He stated that the encampment had created what he described as a "hostile, confrontational environment" and alleged instances of antisemitic speech by the protesters. The university shifted to virtual classes for students and remote work for nonessential staff due to the encampment's disruption.

The protesters, comprising students and community members, demand that Drexel denounce Israel's actions in Gaza, provide amnesty for student activists, and divest from entities benefitting from the Israel-Hamas conflict. The protests at Drexel are part of a broader wave of similar actions on U.S. college campuses. Last spring, a pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Pennsylvania resulted in 33 arrests.

Drexel plans to return to normal operations in phases, starting from Tuesday, while the protest organizers have accused both campus and city police of harassment.