



April 25, 2024

Dear Harvard College Students,

As we enter Reading Period and a challenging academic year draws to a close, I hope you are taking time to prioritize your well-being.

As you are likely aware, universities across the country have been experiencing significant disruptions over the last few days, which has caused distress and harm in their communities and impacted their academic functions.

On our own campus, yesterday, a group of affiliates gathered in the Yard to protest and to set up tents. As posted on the gates to the Yard, erecting structures, tents, and tables without authorization is a violation of rules.

Throughout this semester, we have received questions about protests and disruptions on campus. We have been clear that the physical safety and well-being of our community is paramount, and we have taken steps to increase security. We are also committed to supporting free speech, including the right protest, as affirmed in the [FAS Free Speech Guidelines](#). The right to protest, however, exists alongside time, place, and manner restrictions that ensure the continuity of our academic program and the rights of our community to perform the activities essential to our mission of teaching, learning, and research.

Interference with the academic mission or business functions of the University will not be tolerated. Disruption or interference that hinder members of our community from performing their normal duties and activities will be regarded as an unacceptable obstruction of the essential

processes of the University and will lead to disciplinary consequences as outlined in existing policies and procedures.

As a reminder, these include:

- Handbook expectations
- The NDAB policies
- The University-Wide Statement on Rights and Responsibilities, as mentioned by University Leadership in a January 19, 2024, message

These policies are vital because they ensure the physical safety of our community, nurture open dialogue and protect freedom of speech—fundamental elements that enable us to explore diverse viewpoints, pursue truth, and contribute to a better world. These policies also remind us that, as members of an educational community, we bear a responsibility to educate ourselves about the pressing issues of our time. We remain committed to listening and engaging with you in a manner that promotes constructive dialogue and a peaceful community environment.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Dean of Students Office. You can also find ways to access support on the [Dean of Students \(DSO\) support page](#).

Sincerely,  
Tom Dunne  
Dean of Students