Resolution on Police Violence and CUNY's Relationship with the NYPD

WHEREAS, the Doctoral Students’ Council represents and advocates for over 4,000 students of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in their roles as students, teachers, workers, family members, New Yorkers, activists, and academics; and

WHEREAS, the DSC recognizes the efforts of Public Safety Officers at the Graduate Center to maintain a safe environment while respecting the rights of the students to exercise free speech; and

WHEREAS, from 2003 to 2006, the NYPD secretly monitored Muslim groups and organizations, as well as faculty, on at least 6 CUNY campuses, including Brooklyn College, Queens College, Hunter College, City College, and LaGuardia Community College, and reports indicate that these investigations may have been in collaboration with campus security officers without the knowledge of the targets of these investigations1; and

WHEREAS, on November 21 2011, NYPD officers and CUNY Public Safety Officers (made up of many retired NYPD officers) arrested and used violence against CUNY students and faculty protesting a planned tuition hike by the CUNY Board of Trustees at Baruch College2; and

WHEREAS, on September 17th 2013, NYPD officers brutally assaulted CUNY students during an organized protest against the appointment of David Petraeus as a CUNY professor3; and

WHEREAS, on October 20th 2013, NYPD officers and CUNY Public Safety Officers raided and took over the Morales-Shakur Community and Student Center at the City College of New York, and arrested at least one student-protester4, and

WHEREAS, CUNY administrators are increasingly using the threat of police power and arrests to suppress peaceful student protests that create an environment of fear and intimidation, while undermining a free and critical academic environment; and

WHEREAS, the presence of the NYPD appears to violate the NYPD-CUNY Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Police Response to Incidents and Events Occurring at the City University of New York; and

WHEREAS, in response to the NYPD’s spying on CUNY students and faculty, the Doctoral Students’ Council passed a resolution calling upon CUNY’s central administration to condemn the violation of the NYPD-CUNY Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Police Response to Incidents and Events Occurring at the City University of New York on October 28 2011; and

WHEREAS, many CUNY undergraduate and graduate students come from communities that are threatened by police violence on a daily basis, which has a direct impact on their academic work; and

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2 http://chronicle.com/article/At-Baruch-College-Tuition/129871/
3 http://rt.com/usa/nypd-brutality-students-petraeus-173/
4 http://defendmorales-shakur.org/about/fact-sheet/
WHEREAS, the recruitment of people of color to police forces in the U.S., following the social movements of the 1960s, represents a cynical effort to legitimize the continuing impoverishment and over-policing of poor and working class communities of color, without addressing the underlying social and economic conditions faced by these communities; and

WHEREAS, the DSC recognizes that the current system of work, education and opportunity in the U.S., and in New York City, limits the avenues of secure, unionized work for many poor students and students of color to violent institutions like the police force, and that these limited opportunities are not a solution in a structurally unequal and racist society; and

WHEREAS, the anti-racist opinions of individual officers have no effect on the racist outcomes of policing institutions, which work to defend the causes and consequences of structural inequality and racism, and whose policies (some of which are highlighted below) are informed by the inherently biased process through which "crime" is formulated in law, rendered in reports and statistics, and responded to with punitive enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the NYPD, up until June 2014, used possession of condoms as evidence of sex work to disproportionately target queer and gender non-conforming people of color; and

WHEREAS, the NYPD, from 2002 to 2014, engaged in spying on various NYC Muslim communities using a so-called "Demographics Unit" to infiltrate Muslim students groups, mosques and businesses, stigmatizing and traumatizing New York’s Muslim communities, and further chilling freedom of speech and expression in these communities; and

WHEREAS, the NYPD has, to date, shown no evidence of reforming its racist practices stemming from policies like broken-windows policing, specifically stop-and-frisk and unlawful searches and discriminatory marijuana arrests, which endanger the lives of poor people, people of color, and queer and gender non-conforming people of color; and

WHEREAS, excessive physical force continues to be the highest force-related complaint against NYPD officers made to the Civilian Complaint Review Board, making up 70% (3,695) of the total of force allegations brought against the NYPD; and

WHEREAS, the NYPD’s internal culture, and particularly, its so-called “blue wall of silence” and reported retaliation against internal whistle-blowers, protects officers who engage in abuse, deflects accountability and stops any type of reform from occurring within the NYPD; and

WHEREAS, the NYPD is one of the least transparent agencies in New York City, often preventing public access to its policies, practices, data and records, and received an ‘F’ for failure to obey the Freedom of Information Law; and

5 http://www.nocondomsasevidence.org/
6 https://www.aclu.org/national-security/factsheet-nypd-muslim-surveillance-program
8 http://www.newseek.com/did-bill-de-blasio-keep-his-promise-reform-stop-and-frisk-266310
11 http://changethenypd.org/releases/campaign-pushed-nypd-inspector-general-calls-investigations-long-standing-continuing
WHEREAS, because of the aforementioned policies and culture of the NYPD, at least 179 New Yorkers have died at the hands of active NYPD officers in between 1999 and 2014; and

WHEREAS, countless New Yorkers have suffered violent and non-violent injury, abuse and humiliation at the hands of the NYPD; and

WHEREAS, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice provides a full scholarship that covers tuition, technology fees and textbook costs for four college courses for active NYPD Uniformed Members of the Service (UMOS) police officers through the NYPD Leadership Program; and

WHEREAS, the NYPD Leadership Program at John Jay continues to perpetuate the cycle of limited opportunities for poor students and students of color at CUNY by encouraging them to join a police force that continues to persist in violent, racist, sexist, homophobic and trans-phobic policies and practices, in order to get a low-cost education.

Therefore let it be RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council condemns the widespread use of violence, intimidation, harassment, and unlawful surveillance that the NYPD engages in against students, people of color and poor people.

Let it be further RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council stands in solidarity with the students, faculty and staff of the City University, and any New Yorker who has been a victim of violence, intimidation and unlawful surveillance at the hands of the NYPD and CUNY Public Safety.

Let it be further RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council calls upon John Jay College of Criminal Justice to discontinue the NYPD Leadership Program.

Let it be further RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council calls upon all CUNY colleges and CUNY’s central administration to condemn police violence and sever their relationship with the NYPD in all forms, including any special programs and benefits for NYPD officers, and the utilization of NYPD officers on CUNY campuses.

Let it be further RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council reiterates its call for CUNY’s central administration to condemn the violation of the NYPD-CUNY Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Police Response to Incidents and Events Occurring at the City University of New York.

Let it be further RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council calls upon the CUNY administration to ensure that CUNY Public Safety Officers do not violate the right to free speech and expression by CUNY students, faculty or staff.

Let it be further RESOLVED that, the Doctoral Students’ Council supports the unencumbered free speech and expression of CUNY students, faculty and staff.

Let it be FINALLY RESOLVED that the Doctoral Students’ Council condemns state violence wherever it occurs in the United States and the world, and stands in solidarity with victims of state violence everywhere.

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14 http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/nypd