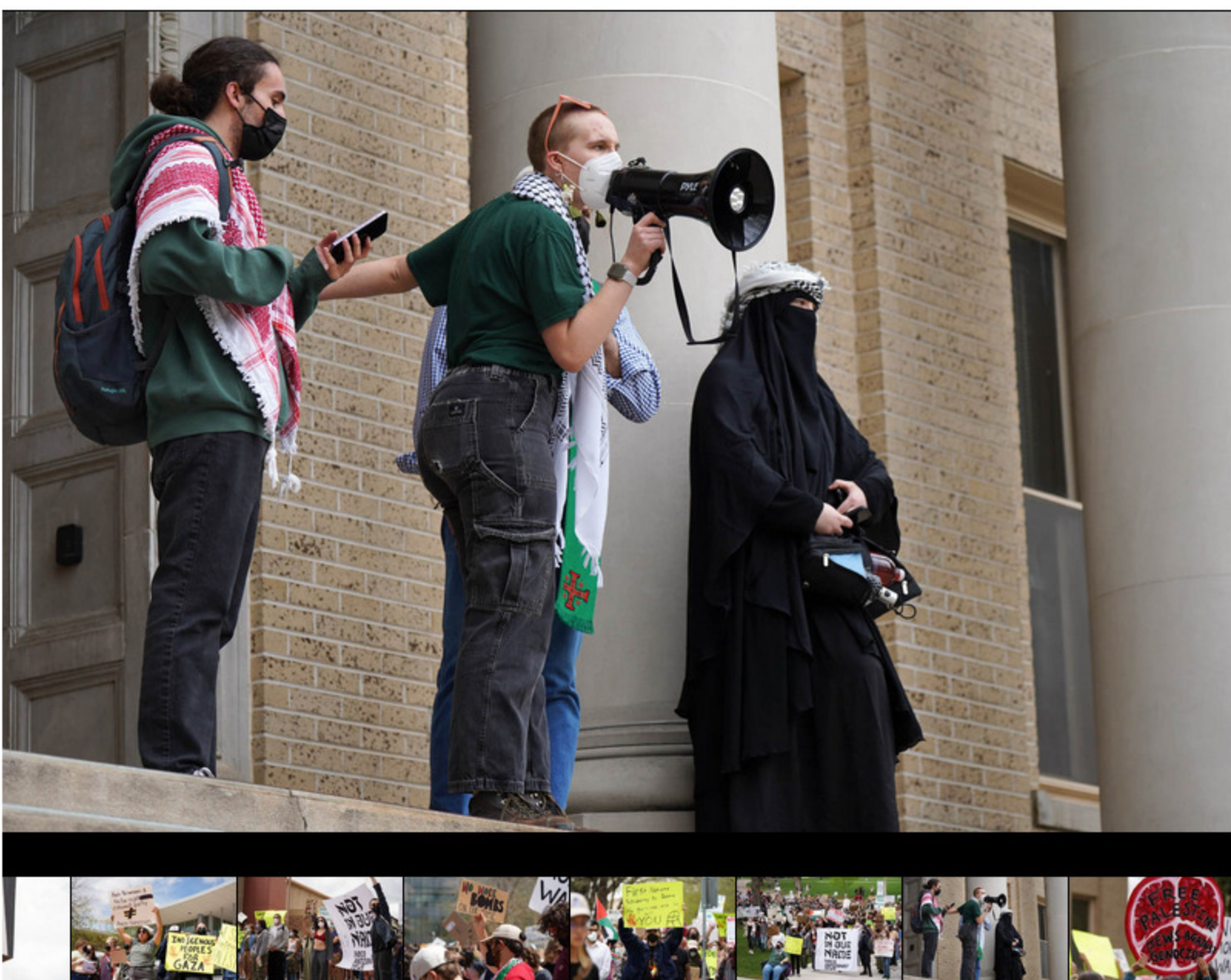


THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGIAN

Campus Homepage News Politics

Campus protest demands administration speak out on Palestine

Aubree Miller, Staff Reporter
April 30, 2024



A crowd of students, faculty and community members showed up 1 p.m. April 29 in The Plaza for a protest calling for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war along with other demands detailed in a letter hand delivered to Amy Parson's office and sent electronically April 28.

The Colorado State University chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine organized the demonstration and collectively wrote the letter of demands. The letter was posted on social media prior to the protest, detailing the SJP's demands: "financial divestment," "academic boycott," "end the silence" and "support of students' First Amendment rights."

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The letter also included a deadline for a response: 9 a.m. Wednesday, May 1, and stated, "Failure to respond to or acknowledge this letter will be understood as a dismissal of all these demands."

CSU student and SJP member Ella Smith led the protesters as they marched on campus and was also identified as the media liaison for the event. Smith spoke at the initial Plaza gathering and discussed how they are Jewish and how the phrase, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," is not antisemitic.

In addition to Smith, a veterinary medicine doctoral student who was identified only as Shaffer spoke.

"I'm honored to be speaking as a student, as a Jew, as part of NoCo Anti-Zionist Jews and as a member of Jewish Voice for Peace," Shaffer said. "As Jews, we know what genocide looks like and thus are responsible for speaking up and saying, 'Never again,' when we see it. Now is one of those moments."

They highlighted the developing health crisis in the Gaza Strip and focused on the lack of access to health care currently faced by Palestinian individuals.

"As I provide top-notch care to the pets and animals of Fort Collins, there are children and men and women who are dying ... because Israel has bombed or attacked the vast majority of hospitals and clinics in Gaza," Shaffer said. "Our dogs get better health care than Palestinian people do."

An unknown speaker called on the university to follow its student government in supporting the issue, discussing the recent Humanity and Community Act, a piece of legislation passed by the Associated Students of CSU senate in a majority vote.

After the speeches, the group began marching down University Avenue to the Administration Building.

Throughout the walk, chants were prompted by those leading, such as, "Israel, Israel what do you say? How many kids have you killed today?" and, "There is only one solution, intifada revolution." More joined the crowd as it made its way to The Oval.

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Upon arriving at the Administration Building, leaders read the demands aloud once more and sent three representatives to deliver the letter to the administration while chants continued outside.

There were CSU Police Department officers present, but none approached the group. After delivering the letter, the group's walk back to The Plaza began.

Once back in front of the Lory Student Center, other speakers were invited up, and closing remarks were made. After the closing remarks, Smith spoke further about their own stance on the issue and their motivation for aiding in organizing the protest.

"It is absolutely atrocious that CSU is being actively complacent in a genocide, refusing to speak on it, refusing to comment on the fact that there is not only a genocide, but a scholasticide, which is the destruction of all universities, all schools in Gaza," Smith said. "Not only is that a war crime, but that's also just an awful, awful thing, and the university not commenting on that makes them complicit. ... We all believe that there needs to be a free Palestine."

A statement from SJP focused specifically on the educational situation in Gaza and CSU's role as a public university.

"Colorado State University's Principles of Community vows it to 'uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects,'" the statement read. "This cannot happen while partnering with entities that enable a large-scale assault on higher education in Gaza."

The protest on CSU's campus comes after several encampments have been set up on college campuses across the country. Organizers specifically referenced the encampments and related arrests of students at Columbia University and the colleges associated with the Auraria Campus in Denver.

Following the protest, a statement was released on the official CSU Instagram and President Parsons' Instagram that referenced the protests that have taken place on campus throughout the academic year.

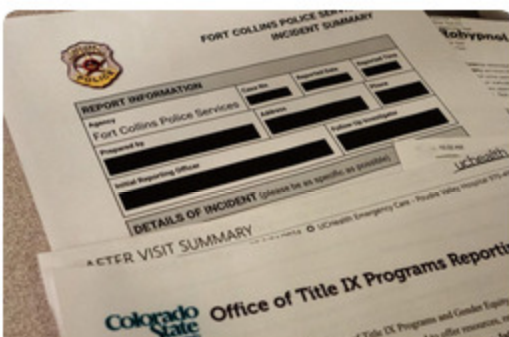
Though the statement did not make any specific references to SPJ or this most recent protest, it did state that Parsons has "met with and (is) meeting this week with various student groups to hear their concerns and to encourage respectful dialogue on a wide range of complex and challenging issues."

SJP promised more peaceful protests if administration does not meet their demands, and as of publishing, there has been no official statement from the administration about the letter of demands delivered during the march.

Reach Aubree Miller at news@collegian.com or on Twitter @CSUCollegian.

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About the Contributor



Aubree Miller, News Editor

Aubree Miller is a news editor for The Rocky Mountain Collegian and could not be more thrilled to take on the role. Miller started as a reporter for the news; arts and entertainment; and life and culture desks in fall 2023 and has nurtured a love for news and keeping up with what is going on in the community, no matter how small or large the occasion. Going into their sophomore year, Miller is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in journalism along with two minors in women's studies and ethnic studies. They are incredibly excited to keep the CSU and Fort Collins community up to date on news while keeping a focus on ethical and fair journalism and social justice, giving a voice to each and every person The Collegian interacts with. Miller is originally from rural northern Wisconsin and has lived in Aurora, Colorado, for the past eight years. Passions for reading, writing and music have flourished during their time at CSU thus far. That passion for writing translated into journalism, where writing is combined with being able to help others and to tell the stories that may not always be told. When not working at The Collegian, Miller can be found attempting to bring back '80s fashion trends, crocheting, listening to Taylor Swift and hanging out with their cat. Miller is immensely proud of their work with The Collegian thus far and is thrilled to continue learning and growing as an editor.

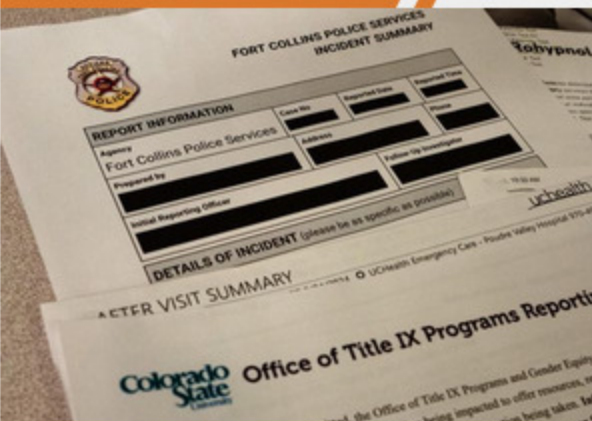
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