

WE ARE OUR OWN SAFETY
AND WE ARE EACH OTHER'S SAFETY

ANCESTRAL HEALING

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

MUTUAL AID

FREEDOM CAMPUS
NATIONAL DAY OF
ACTION

APRIL 10, 2019

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Letter of Introduction

Hello fellow student organizer,

Welcome to the #FreedomCampus network! We're so glad that you're digging into our Joint Action toolkit, and that you'll be joining dozens of students across the country for our National Day of Action on April 10th.

Freedom Campus is a network of students from various public and private universities across the nation demanding that our universities divest from the prison industrial complex (PIC) and reinvest into communities.

Universities preserve and support the PIC through many mechanisms. This includes [endowments and pension funds](#) that are invested in [prison companies](#) as well as [vendors](#) who profit off of incarcerated individuals. This also includes Universities' participation in [racialized policing](#), the gentrification of surrounding communities, and investment into research that expands the surveillance state. Universities profit off of human misery while driving the expansion of mass incarceration and immigration enforcement.

We believe that by taking on university investments in the PIC, we can advance a narrative that moves resources into the hands of directly impacted people, towards building healthy, thriving campuses and communities. We also acknowledge that divestment is one of many tactics towards abolition, and we are eager to create spaces where students can explore Transformative Justice principles that contribute to a new status quo.

In our efforts to redefine safety beyond policing and prisons, we aim to embody each of the following principles:

- Be Pro-Black
- Follow leadership of directly impacted communities
- Use narratives that leave no marginalized community behind
- Shift control of resources and political power to impacted communities
- Deepen relationships across oppressed communities

We call for our universities to adopt policies that create real safety for *all people*, which includes workers and neighbors, alongside students and faculty.

This network emerged from a convening in the Fall of 2018 organized by Freedom Cities, a coalition that includes such organizations as Million Hoodies and Freedom to Thrive (formerly Enlace), which support the organizing capacity of Black and brown youth. Since then, we've been working towards a joint action that can uplift and connect the individual campaigns on each of our campuses while launching our broader message of redefining safety onto the national stage.

This toolkit was created so that campaigns at various stages of the work could easily plug in and feed off the energy and support of their fellow students. We know our Universities are trying to erase our narratives, as is the media. We are stronger when we stand together.

As we plan for an April 10th action, we remember the prison riot at the Lee Correctional Facility almost one year ago, which catalyzed the [National Prison Strike of 2018](#). We also want to uplift the recently-ended hunger strike initiated by eight inmates at Holman Facility in Alabama, who were put into solitary confinement as a “preventative measure” earlier this month.

Finally, we want to elaborate on what’s included in this toolkit and how you can best use each tool:

1. [Live List of Participating Schools](#): Please add the information on your Day of Action plans so we can keep track of the activity happening across the country
2. [Types of Actions](#) your group may consider: All of our campaigns look different, and our actions will too!
3. [Media Advisory & Press Release](#): A template so we can amplify and ensure national and local attention for our actions; customize yours and send the media advisory three days before the action, and press release the day of.
4. [Sample Tweets](#): Amplify our shared messaging on twitter, facebook and Instagram with #FreedomCities. Add in tweets that uplift your own work on campus.
5. [A Transformative Justice Resource Guide](#): We must experiment and find solutions to hold each other accountable that don’t perpetuate further harm. Let’s learn together from those who have been putting our values into practice.
6. [Student Prison Divestment Resources](#): Tools from past Prison divest/reinvest campaigns, including lessons from wins at Columbia University and the UC/Cal systems.

If you have any questions or would like to connect further, feel free to contact us at info@freedomtothrive.org.

With love and solidarity,

Freedom Campus Student Organizers
Freedom to Thrive

Live list of Participating Schools

For more information on each campaign, check [here](#). Add yourself [there](#) and also here!

#CareNotCops / University of Chicago

Michelle Yang, michellemuyang@gmail.com

Divest UF / University of Florida

Juan Zapata, juanesz0519@gmail.com

Harvard Prison Divest Campaign / Harvard University

Anneke Dunbar-Gronke, onnieg@gmail.com

Students for Prison Education and Reform (SPEAR) / Princeton

Amanda Eisenhour, amandae@princeton.edu

Possible Types of Actions

We stand in solidarity with each of your campuses. At the same time, we recognize that we do not all have the same campaign ask (some of us are opposing prison labor contracts, some of us are tackling endowment investments in prisons, while others are organizing against campus law enforcement). We are also positioned differently relative to our campus administrations, and this work takes on different levels of risk based on our identities.

As your organization prepares to participate in this coordinated Day of Action, we look forward to learning how you curate an action that accounts for the particular type of capacity you currently have, and that takes into account your timeline and campaign demands.

Relatively newer campaigns might take an approach that focuses on political education and moving more people to understand their Universities' role in the Prison Industrial Complex.

Longer-running campaigns may use this day to escalate tension and public pressure through demonstrations.

We are here to be a sounding board if helpful.

Our [live spreadsheet](#) will keep track of what students organizers decide to push forward across the country. We look forward to maintaining a bridge to unify our framing of these actions.

Below is our list of suggestions and a short summary for each one. Feel free to add your own. Can't wait to collaborate with y'all.

Letter writing night

Letter writing connects us with directly impacted communities currently on the inside. In light of the recent hunger strikes at Holman Facility, your organization might write letters of support to the strikers. If Holman were to not deliver your letters, they may be in violation of the federal policies connected to the Postal Service. Below is the list of the eight strikers and the address of the Holman facility. Your letter should probably be written on loose leaf, all-white paper. Do be mindful about the language you use as prisons are known to reject mail.

Holman "Correctional" Facility
1240 Ross Rd.
Atmore, AL 36502

- Koton Tellis (AIS# 223155)
- Marcus Lee (AIS# 175056)
- Mario Avila (AIS# 259514)
- Corey Burroughs (AIS# 207639)

- Earl Taylor 3rd (AIS# 168616)
- Tyree Cochran (AIS# 172306)
- Earl Manassa (AIS# 175099)
- Antonio Jackson (AIS# 246560)

Teach-in

You can host your own teach-in or collaborate with other organizations around an intersectional theme (for example: race, labor, and the PIC or the disproportionate number of LGBTQ people who are incarcerated) to build the language needed to gain critical mass. This is a great opportunity introduce people to new concepts.

Letter Drop Off

You can coordinate a group of students to gather and drop off petition signatures, the campaign demands, public testimonies, and more. These are often delivered to the main target who has decision-making power over your campaign, such as the President.

Faculty/Student Government Resolution - Faculty and Student governments often vote on resolutions that, at the very least, symbolically show overall campus support for your demands. While these government bodies may not the ultimate power to shift material outcomes, they may validate your asks through a successful resolution. Work with a student representative to sponsor and draft the formal resolution with you, to be voted on by the larger governing body. **Take a look at sample [Prison Divestment](#) resolution written by the Afrikan Black Coalition and successfully passed at the University of California schools.**

Mock elections

You can host a mock election to demonstrate that the campus community no longer will show support for power brokers on campus who refuse to budge on demands. Suggest a candidate of your own, often a satirical or fictional character, have students cast fake ballots, and tally up numbers to demonstrate opposition.

Tabling/Flyering

Information based, engaging with people who may not be aware of the cause, and in very trafficked areas. Most effective when coordinated with an upcoming action or opportunity for passersbys to plug into the movement.

Sit-in/Blockade

Physical barrier to display consensus on issues. Often takes place at a public meeting or event, and obstructs the regular operation of the said event. Takes a good amount of people typically

and may have heightened punitive response depending on how far you are willing to obstruct the event.

Rally/March

This would be a large public demonstration and can be used to demonstrate dwindling patience around your campaign. Should host a variety of speeches and could lead directly up to an ultimate action, like a letter drop off or sit-in.

Releasing Mass Petition

Through tabling, utilizing listservs, and organizations who stand in solidarity, you can start sharing a mass petition and accrue signatures to broadcast campus voices. This can be enabled through websites like ActionNetwork and could then be printed and delivered to your campaign target.

Creating a Campaign Video - While being mindful of possible legal actions (be careful around slander, or making the content look like its coming officially from the University.) You can create a video that critiques the University and brings voice to your campaign or multiple campaigns. This should be shared digitally and meant to apply both pressure and awareness.

Self-exposure to the elements (safely)

Particularly if your school is in a snowy or rainy season, you can coordinate one of the other actions around the elements and use it to strengthen your framing and commitment. An example of this recently done was organizers outside of the I.C.E. detention facility where 21 Savage was being detained; they stood in the rain to protest which may have strengthened their messaging for some.

Literature Release

Similar to other multimedia actions, but possibly more strongly enabled through tabling or a teach-in, the goal of a newsletter or zine would be political education and call to actions.

Mock Mutiny

Mutinies are historically an abandonment of a leader/captain to express unrest and a shift in power. One can host a mock mutiny by creating a banner or flag and replacing the school flag out of the president's office for a temporary demonstration. Most effective against an admin that doesn't concede and you want to show the distaste students have for the present leadership. Ideally, the flag poles would have an external mechanism to lower and raise the flag, but this may not be achievable if the flag pole is internal and has a lock.

Providing Breakfast

Corporations that are tied to the prison industry also have dining service contracts with educational institutions. Examples include Aramark, Sodexo, and Trinity. The work conditions of these companies are often scrutinized for their irresponsibility when managing workers' rights, wages, and their protection from sexual harassment. Show support as you try to create dining services on campus that aren't tied to the prison industrial complex by offering an alternative meal option.

Banner Drop

To create dialogue, awareness, and to be paired with tabling nearby, you can drop and leave a banner somewhere on campus with a lot of foot traffic. Typically using strong slogans and or directly targeting campus officials. For cost effectiveness, your org can host an art build, use an old sheet from a thrift shop, and a projector on campus to trace a design onto it and then paint it with the help of new and old members. You can leave it in a space that's difficult to reach so campus officials have to remove it, or drop it somewhere accessible so you can retrieve it to make this a repeat tool in your kit.

Publish Opinion piece in school newspaper

Using media to heighten awareness, particularly sparking controversy and creating a call to action.

Wearing of symbols

Either at an event or across campus, coordinate a day of unity where students wear a specific color, shirt, button, etc. Combine this action with a media campaign and an ask, to provoke conversation.

Vigil

Whether the vigil is framed around exploited laborers, incarcerated individuals in general, or for the victims of Lee Correctional, you can host a vigil that stands in solidarity with the sacrifices made by those inside.

Art demonstration

Using large symbolic displays in trafficked areas brings a new dimension to awareness and tabling. A great example is UF Students for Justice in Palestine building a mock apartheid wall to represent Israeli Occupation.

Walk out/Turning one's back at a meeting

This is a refusal of participation within certain conditions, often in response to a decision or statement made by the University. While this move should be reserved after a consistent lack of concession from the admin, it is really strong when applied in numbers at important administrative events.

Churches/Pray in

If you are connected with circles of faith in your area, it typically should not be difficult to find which church your school president or other target attends regularly. Planning to be there during mass, and possibly asking to speak about your campaign has been a successful strategy implemented. Moving with faith further, you could coordinate a pray in to create a moment of sympathy and symbolism as an action. For example, hosting a communal prayer for those in Holman Facility could be powerful.

Interrupting a sports game

This action has high visibility and would be done by like a banner drop or coordinated t-shirts that create a statement in letters, during the game.

For more possible inspiration, see: <https://www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action/>

Media Advisory & Press Release

NATIONAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- April 10, 2019

Media Contact:

Over 20 Campuses Across Nation Protest on April 10th to Demand Universities Invest in Community Resources, Divest from Prisons

On Apr. 10, student organizers from [#] public and private universities across the nation participated in a joint Day of Action to demand that their Universities invest in resources to create healthy communities and divest from the prison industrial complex (PIC). These students are part of #FreedomCampus, a network of Universities, which includes Harvard, University of Florida, University of Chicago, and Grinnell College, that are redefining safety beyond policing and prisons by exposing Universities' complicity in these systems.

Students are calling attention to how Universities preserve and support the PIC through endowments that are invested in prisons and corporations that profit off of incarcerated individuals. This is the case for institutions like Harvard University, where [insert quote]

Universities' participation in the PIC also includes their use of prison labor, their participation in racialized policing, gentrification of surrounding communities, and investment in research and technology that expands the surveillance state. From the University of Florida, Juan Zapata is a founding student of Divest UF, a community collective pushing for UF to sever its ties with the PIC and the fossil fuel industry. "Our Agricultural Science department contracts prison labor in farms all over Florida. Free labor devalues all labor and the second best AG department in the country shouldn't grow and profit off of the backs of those inside".

Michelle Yang, a third year student at University of Chicago is part of the student campaign #CareNotCops, which is pushing administration to defund campus security, and move that money towards mental health initiatives for students. "As students, we have the right to know how our tuition dollars are used, and also how our university is contributing to mass incarceration and racialized policing. Through their investments, universities profit off of human misery while driving the expansion of mass incarceration and immigration enforcement.

Divestment is one strategy in shrinking these structures. By selling one's assets in a company for political or social reasons, investors can admonish an unethical corporation by withdrawing financial assets. The overall goals of divestment are to reduce a corporation's financial capacity to engage in business-as-usual (building and running prisons) and to publicize and injustice that a company is furthering.

This would not be the first time students have successfully pushed their universities to divest from private prisons. In 2015, Columbia University became the very first university in the country to divest its endowment from the private prison industry due to the work of student group Columbia Divest. Likewise, in 2017, University of California terminated \$475 million worth of contracts with Wells Fargo because of organizing by Afrikan Black Coalition, supported by Enlace.

#FreedomCampus emerged from a convening in Fall 2018 organized by #FreedomCities, which includes organizations such as Million Hoodies and Freedom to Thrive that support the organizing capacity of Black and brown youth.

“When we reduce the ability of the entire private prison industry to lobby for mass incarceration and immigration enforcement, we will be much closer to living in a world where people of color and immigrants are decriminalized, a world free of cages, a world of collective liberation,” said _____.

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#FreedomCampus

Freedom Campus is a network of student organizers from various public and private universities across the nation demanding that their universities divest from the prison industrial complex (PIC) and reinvest into communities.

Follow the action on Twitter: #FreedomCampus

LOCAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- April 10, 2019 OR when your action will be

Media Contact: [Name, Email, Phone #]

[City, State] -- [University] Joins Over 20 Campuses on April 10th to Demand Universities Divestment from Private Prisons, Investment in Community Resources

On [date of action], [Organization Name] [action description, include what, when, where] to demand [ex. their university invest in resources to create healthy communities and divest from the prison industrial complex (PIC)]. In doing so, [Organization Name] will be participating in a joint day of action along with [#] students organizations from universities across the nation. #FreedomCampus, this network of universities, which include Harvard, University of Florida, University of Chicago, and Grinnell College, are working to redefine safety beyond policing and prisons — starting with the very institutions that they are attending.

#FreedomCampus emerged from a convening in Fall 2018 organized by #FreedomCities, which includes organizations such as Million Hoodies and Freedom to Thrive that support the organizing capacity of Black and brown youth.

Universities preserve and support the PIC through various mechanisms, such as endowments and pension funds that are invested in private prisons and corporations that profit off of incarcerated individuals.

[Situation at your university].

Points from other universities that you can include to make connections:

- Harvard University, where

[some more information about Harvard's cse; quote from Anneke? perhaps about why it's important that universities divest]

- Universities' participation in the PIC also includes their use of private prison labor, their participation in racialized policing, gentrification of surrounding communities, and investment in research and technology that expands the surveillance state. At University of Florida [some more information about UF's case; quote from Juan? maybe about how a lot of students don't know that UF is using prison labor, or why students care about their school using prison labor]
- More often than not, uncovering the specifics about university investments is a fight in itself, which is why students of #FreedomCampus are also demanding greater transparency from their universities. "It is difficult to find details on UChicago's investments and budgets, especially because it is a private university," said Michelle Yang, a third year at University of Chicago who is part of the #CareNotCops campaign there. "But as students, we have a right to know towards what ends our tuition dollars are being used, and also how our university is contributing to mass incarceration and racialized policing. After all, we are then complicit as students."

Through their investments, universities essentially profit off of human misery while driving the expansion of mass incarceration and immigration enforcement.

Divestment is one strategy in shrinking these structures. By selling one's assets in a company for political or social reasons, investors can admonish an unethical corporation by withdrawing financial assets. The overall goals of divestment are to reduce a corporation's financial capacity to engage in business-as-usual (building and running prisons) and to publicize and injustice that a company is furthering.

In demanding that their universities divest from the PIC, #FreedomCampus is advancing a narrative that to build healthy thriving campuses and communities, resources must be provided for *everyone* part of the campus community, which includes workers and community neighbors, alongside students and faculty. At the same time students are pushing for their universities to

change their investment focus, students are also exploring how a new status quo may be created where justice is transformative instead of punitive.

This would not be the first time students have successfully pushed their universities to divest from private prisons. In 2015, Columbia University became the very first university in the country to divest its endowment from the private prison industry due to the work of student group Columbia Divest. Likewise, in 2017, University of California terminated \$475 million worth of contracts with Wells Fargo because of organizing by Afrikan Black Coalition, supported by Enlace.

“When we reduce the ability of the entire private prison industry to lobby for mass incarceration and immigration enforcement, we will be much closer to living in a world where people of color and immigrants are decriminalized, a world free of cages, a world of collective liberation,” said _____.

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[Organization Name]

[Organization info]

#FreedomCampus

#FreedomCampus is a network of student organizing groups from various universities working as part of a national effort to redefine safety beyond policing and prisons -- beginning with the schools we are attending. Students within #FreedomCampus are calling for their universities to divest from the prison-industrial complex and reinvest in resources to build healthy, thriving communities.

Follow the action via: #FreedomCampus, [your own organization social media info or hashtag]

Sample Social Media Posts

1. Students across the country are demanding their Universities divest from prisons, end labor contracts with prisoners, and defund campus policing, instead building a world that re-defines safety in terms of how we care for each other #FreedomCampus
2. Abolition means creating completely new systems of human connection, care, and support, and our students are demanding that their universities invest in those systems now, for the health of our people, our communities, and the planet #FreedomCampus
3. [insert a shoutout tweet naming your campus demands here!] We uplift the work of @UChiUnited and SWAP for demanding that @UChicago defunds an increasingly militarized campus police force, and reinvests in mental health care for students #CareNotCops #FreedomCampus
4. We stand in solidarity with #DivestUF at @UF for demanding their university end the prison labor contracts that show how slavery persists in the USA #FreedomCampus
5. We stand with @HarvardPDC and their demands that Harvard disclose the endowment, divest from the prison industrial complex and reinvest in the communities most impacted by criminalization and policing.

Transformative Justice Resources

How do we address harm through responses that don't lead to more harm?

1. Freedom Cities and Reinvest In Our Power hosted a conversation that brought together thought leaders and practitioners who have worked to answer this question in its many iterations over the last twenty plus years, including Mariame Kaba of Project NIA, Nathan Shara of Generation 5, Mia Mingus of the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective, and Xochitl Bervera of the Racial Justice Action Center. [A full recording of the webinar is available here.](#) The live notes from the webinar are [available here.](#)
2. Mariame Kaba of Project NIA has put together a resource hub on ending violence called [Transform Harm.](#)
3. Mia Mingus shares her insights and experiences supporting Transformative Justice work on her blog, [Leaving Evidence.](#)
4. Follow Xochitl Bervera and the Racial Justice Action Center's campaign, [Close the Jail ATL](#), on moving resources away from prisons and towards community wellness.
5. A report on Implementing community accountability strategies by [CARA.](#)

(Student) Prison Divestment Resources

1. This [toolkit](#) by Freedom to Thrive that breaks down the how-to's of starting and winning a University Prison Divestment campaign, with case studies from Columbia University and the UC system
2. This [factsheet](#) by Million Hoodies on Campus militarization.
3. [Demand letter](#) by the Afrikan Black Coalition on the UC system's investment in the private prison industry
4. [Documentary](#) by the Laura Flanders Show on Columbia University's prison divestment victory
5. These worksheets on [Divestment 101](#) and [Endowment 101](#)
6. [Little Sis](#) is an organization that maps who-knows-who at the height of business and government, that also has tutorials on powermapping on their site.
7. [Wellstone](#) has a wealth of campaign and organizing resources for strategy, tactics, power mapping and more.