

Message from President Daniels and Provost Kumar Regarding the Conclusion of the Garland Hall Occupation, May 8, 2019

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Early this morning, we made the difficult decision to call upon local fire and police personnel to help our university bring an end to the lengthy occupation of Garland Hall by students and outside activists, a situation that had become increasingly unsafe.

Over these past five weeks, the university made every effort to accommodate the underlying protest because we hold so firmly to the belief in free expression. But what began as a demonstration against university policies in recent days took a turn, as students and outside activists chained the doors closed, blocked exits and entrances to the building, harassed and intimidated our staff, and physically prevented fellow students from receiving essential services. This was no longer a peaceful show of civil disobedience, but instead a forcible occupation of a university building in contravention of the law and university code of conduct.

In the intervening days, we worked around the clock to bring the occupation to a constructive conclusion. We made open-ended offers to meet and provide amnesty to our students. We also undertook an intensive effort to communicate with student protesters, directly and through their families, friends, and mentors. While some student protesters were receptive to these overtures, others regrettably were not.

Invoking the help of law enforcement in ending an occupation involving our students is—and must always be—a last resort, one that we took today only in the face of mounting safety concerns and untenable disruption of essential student services and university activities.

Our job now is to redouble our efforts to forge connections across even seemingly intractable divides, working together to create opportunities for genuine dialogue, and to deepen our understanding of the important issues we face as a university. We are truly grateful to everyone in our community who strives toward those ends and who worked diligently and selflessly to bring us to a safe resolution today.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Daniels
President

Sunil Kumar
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs