

# [***6 Penn students among 19 pro-Palestinian protesters arrested during attempt to occupy building***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C28-VD31-JC5B-G1SS-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** RON TODT, Associated Press

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**Body**

PHILADELPHIA — A half-dozen University of Pennsylvania students were among 19 pro-Palestinian protesters arrested during an attempt to occupy a school building, university police said Saturday.

Their arrests came a week after authorities broke up a protest encampment on campus and arrested nine students — and as other colleges across the country, anxious to prepare for [*commencement season*](https://apnews.com/article/college-commencements-palestinian-protests-1ea0549aee05acabf0ed33d803963bf9), have either [*negotiated agreements with students*](https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinian-campus-student-protests-war-df5f7cf1547a3ca8fb959b992d6ebe1b) or called in police to dismantle protest camps.

Members of Penn Students Against the Occupation of Palestine announced the action Friday at the school’s Fisher-Bennett Hall, urging supporters to bring “flags, pots, pans, noise-makers, megaphones” and other items, the University of Pennsylvania Division of Public Safety said in a news release.

Officers could be seen closing in “within the hour,” The Philadelphia Inquirer reported. University police supported by city police then escorted the protesters out and secured the building, news outlets reported.

Police said after clearing the building that they recovered “lock-picking tools and homemade metal shields fashioned from oil drums.”

Exit doors had been secured with zip ties and barbed wire and barricaded with metal chairs and desks, while windows were covered by newspaper and cardboard, and bike racks and metal chairs blocked entrances, police said.

Seven of the students arrested on Friday remained in custody Saturday awaiting felony charges, including one person who assaulted an officer, campus police said. A dozen were issued citations for failing to disperse and follow police commands. They have been released from custody.

The attempted occupation of Fisher-Bennett Hall came a week after city and campus police broke up a two-week encampment on the campus, arresting 33 people, nine of whom were students and two dozen of whom had “no Penn affiliation,” according to university officials.

Meanwhile, a group protesting the war in Gaza and demanding that the University of Chicago divest from companies doing business with Israel temporarily took over a building on the school’s campus Friday afternoon.

Members of the group surrounded the Institute of ***Politics*** building around 5 p.m. while others made their way inside, the [*Chicago Sun-Times*](https://chicago.suntimes.com/israel-hamas-war/2024/05/17/pro-palestinian-protesters-take-over-university-of-chicago-building-institute-politics-israel-hamas) reported.

[*The Chicago protest follows the May 7 clearing*](https://apnews.com/article/columbia-commencement-protests-gaza-9bb8051253c45947509feb32ced78f8c#) of a pro-Palestinian tent encampment at the school by police. University of Chicago administrators had initially adopted a permissive approach, but said earlier this month that the protest had crossed a line and caused growing concerns about safety.

On Friday, campus police officers using riot shields gained access to the Institute of ***Politics*** building and scuffled with protesters. Some protesters climbed from a second-floor window, according to the Sun-Times.

The school said protesters attempted to bar the entrance, damaged university property and ignored directives to clear the way, and that those inside the building left when campus police officers entered.

“The University of Chicago is fundamentally committed to upholding the rights of protesters to express a wide range of views,” school spokesperson Gerald McSwiggan said in a statement. “At the same time, university policies make it clear that protests cannot jeopardize public safety, disrupt the university’s operations or involve the destruction of property.”

No arrests or injuries were reported.

Students and others have set up tent encampments on campuses around the country to protest the Israel-Hamas war, pressing colleges [*to cut financial ties*](https://apnews.com/article/college-protests-israel-divestment-palestinians-3f37f96f7be8e1124f266842d9caa627) with Israel. [*Tensions over the war*](https://apnews.com/article/campus-free-speech-young-generation-tension-b931b0dd41aacaac5c50710de9549b09) have been high on campuses since the fall but the pro-Palestinian demonstrations spread quickly following an April 18 [*police crackdown*](https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinian-campus-protests-timeline-f7cd3abe635f8afa4532b7bed9212b56) on an encampment at Columbia University.

The demonstrations reached all corners of the United States, becoming its [*largest campus protest movement in decades*](https://apnews.com/article/campus-protests-vietnam-history-ff421ce1bee8d85b0a11aa55fb088d6b), and spread to other countries, including [*many in Europe*](https://apnews.com/article/britain-antisemitism-university-protests-75183041b89ab5383098b82aabcdc76e).

Lately, some protesters have taken down their tents, as [*at Harvard*](https://apnews.com/article/harvard-protest-israel-hamas-81f83d2928beecda388f73e42903db9e), where student activists this week said the encampment had “outlasted its utility with respect to our demands.” Others packed up after striking deals with college administrators who offered amnesty for protesters, discussions around their investments, and other concessions. On many other campuses, colleges have called in police to clear demonstrations.

Nearly 3,000 people have been arrested on U.S. campuses over the past month. As summer break approaches, there have been fewer new arrests and campuses have been calmer. Still, colleges have been vigilant for disruptions to commencement ceremonies.

The latest [*Israel-Hamas war*](https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war) began when Hamas and other militants stormed into southern Israel on [*Oct. 7, killing*](https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-hostages-0c14750240138853a70e38b0c09ef157) around 1,200 people and taking an additional 250 hostage. Palestinian militants still hold about 100 captives, and Israel’s military has killed more than [*35,000 people in Gaza*](https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-news-05-11-2024-7cc8784d8c6eec017ecaef696f492b25), according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which doesn’t distinguish between civilians and combatants.

On Thursday, police began dismantling a pro-Palestinian encampment [*at DePaul University*](https://apnews.com/article/university-college-palestinian-protests-graduation-e8fd957999d69fca6f00dca0c6df7710) in Chicago, hours after the school’s president told students to leave the area or face arrest.

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