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Events at Gould Plaza

Linda G. Mills, President, and Fountain Walker, Vice President for Global Campus Safety
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Reply-To: office.president@nyu.edu
To: li457@nyu.edu

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NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

Date: April 22, 2024
To: The NYU Community
From: Linda G. Mills, President
Fountain Walker, Vice President for Global Campus Safety
Re: Events at Gould Plaza

Early this morning, some 50 protesters began a demonstration on the plaza in front of the business school, known as Gould Plaza. This occurred without notice to the University, and without authorization. In response, the University immediately closed access to the plaza to maintain safety; we put barriers in place, and made clear that we were not going to allow additional protesters to join because the protests were already considerably disruptive of classes and other operations in schools around the plaza.

Nonetheless, we made no move to clear the plaza at that point because high among the University's aims was to avoid any escalation or violence. So, the University was deeply disturbed when, early this afternoon, additional protesters — many of whom we believe are not affiliated with the University — suddenly breached the barriers that had been put in place at the north side of the plaza and joined the others already on the plaza. The breach was in violation of directions from Campus Safety Officers and in violation of multiple University rules.

This development dramatically changed the situation. We witnessed disorderly,

disruptive, and antagonizing behavior that interfered with the safety and security of our community, and that illustrated how quickly a demonstration can get out of control, raising the possibility of people getting hurt. At one point, we explained to the protesters that they needed to disband in an hour, and there would be no adverse consequences.

Nevertheless, many refused to leave. We also learned that there were intimidating chants and several antisemitic incidents reported. Given the foregoing and the safety issues raised by the breach, we asked for assistance from the NYPD. The police urged those on the plaza to leave peacefully, but ultimately made a number of arrests.

While academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas are and always will be bedrock principles on NYU's campus, hate, disruption and intimidation can never be countenanced.