**Student and faculty reaction and response to the “Statement from KCC chapter leadership”**

Students and faculty read the “Statement from KCC chapter leadership” together. The student eyewitness conclusion is that the statement has its key facts either incorrect, misleading, and is speculative. As the statement admits “the surveillance video did not have audio,” it is missing vital information. KCC students and faculty have previously demanded the surveillance video be released but were told this would require a subpoena, which we are working on.

This collective response will show that our colleagues, the KCC PSC chapter leadership, lack objectivity of this situation. Intentionally or not, in practice the KCC PSC chapter leadership sides with: the administration’s refusal to acknowledge basic facts; Public Safety Officer Pierre’s appalling tackle of “Student 3,” hereafter called Adrian; and with the administration and Public Safety’s indefensible and ongoing student and faculty harassment in an attempt to whitewash this racist incident and absolve themselves of guilt.

We want to hold the KCC administration and their Public Safety accountable. We are eager to assist the KCC PSC chapter leadership’s investigation by helping them paint a full picture for all PSC members in the interests of justice, fighting racism, and fighting for a CUNY free of racism and free from the fear of police assault.

**The following account is from the students who were there. Here are the facts:**

—The incident occurred on **November 3, 2022**, **and not on November 4**, as per the statement.

—“Student 2,” hereafter called The Racist Student, had a history of trolling and attempting to provoke members of an antiracist student club on campus called Common Ground. That day, The Racist Student was shouting the n-word (with the hard “r,” as the students noted) in the cafeteria toward the Common Ground club’s members and friends.

—17 year-old “Student 3,” Adrian, who wishes that his name be used, attempted to mediate the conflict and was repeatedly called the n-word during his attempts to do so. Adrian left the cafeteria “to cool off” and walked toward the West Academic Center (via the breezeway connecting the U Building to the academic clusters).

—Around this time, the Racist Student left the cafeteria through the opposite hallway and left out of the U/ P buildings’ front entrance.

—After cooling off for some minutes and returning to the cafeteria to collect his bag and belongings to go home, Adrian saw the Public Safety campus police officers now surrounding the cafeteria. He put his hands up to show he posed no threat, repeating “don’t touch me bro.” As the officers approached him, he quickened his pace to avoid them. At this point, Officer Pierre tackled Adrian to the floor from behind and placed his knee in his back. Three additional officers joined while he was handcuffed.

—At this time, Common Ground’s two faculty advisors ran into the U/ P buildings minutes after being told something happened, and they passed by the Racist Student standing near the U/P buildings’ front entrance.

**Our Questions**

—What evidence does Public Safety, the administration or the PSC leadership have of Adrian’s intentions, let alone that he reentered the cafeteria with any intention of assaulting the Racist Student? Especially considering the Racist Student had already left, and the cafeteria was now filled with campus police?

— Since the Racist Student had left the building down an opposite hallway, EVEN IF Adrian had the intention of assaulting the Racist Student, as Public Safety, the KCC administration and now the KCC PSC chapter leadership claim (in saying he walked “toward” the Racist), how could Adrian have seen where the Racist Student was?

—We pasted a campus map from the KCC website below for reference, and especially to help the administration and Public Safety get their locations straight.

—For his part, Adrian had his personal iPad on him and was more concerned with protecting that than anything, especially when he was tackled by campus police. He also stated he felt intimidated by the number of police in the cafeteria and was trying to remove himself from the situation by collecting his things and going home.

**Response To Their Conclusions**

1. No one ever claimed the NYPD officers arrived in riot gear.

—NYPD arrived and surrounded the peacefully protesting students and faculty.

—Some wore nitrile gloves and some wore tactical gloves with reinforced knuckles, which students and faculty noted.

—Speaking of intentions, these actions revealed everything about the NYPD’s intentions.

2. Contrary to the PSC chapter leadership’s claim there is “no evidence Public Safety’s actions were based on race,” there are multiple layers of racism and examples of police intimidation to these attacks.

—Campus police attacked a student of, in their own words “indeterminate BIPOC ethnicity.” Campus police were *immediately* informed upon arrival that a white Racist Student was shouting the the n-word at other students. That is a hate crime and the Racist Student was the aggressor. Not only has the Racist Student gone unpunished, the Racist Student *has his own security when he’s on campus.*

—In the days and weeks that followed campus police then attempted to suppress information about this racist attack by assaulting, questioning, following and harassing students and faculty who either distributed or received leaflets about the incident. When called out, they lied about ever doing so. We have videos of many of these interactions.

—An officer in student government (SGA) was assaulted by officers attempting to grab Common Ground leaflets from their arms. Students who received leaflets were told to give them to Public Safety officers.

—On November 11, 2022, Common Ground students and faculty led a peaceful march through campus that had been announced the previous week. The morning of the march, NYPD officers and uniformed NYPD cadets alongside Public Safety filled the campus and the cafeteria. Uniformed and plainclothes officers patrolled the campus in groups. NYPD vans sat outside the campus gates, and non-KCC students and faculty were barred from entering campus.

—Campus police routinely follow student Common Ground members and faculty to their class and around campus. We have multiple videos of this.

—Campus police have repeatedly told students and faculty that if they do not have class, they must leave the cafeteria and leave campus. We have multiple videos of campus police officers giving these orders.

—Campus police, through the rest of the fall semester, gathered in groups in the cafeteria whenever Common Ground students enter to eat. They stare at them while they eat. When their friends come to sit, the officers take out note pads and take notes. We have multiple videos of these interactions.

—Antiracist students were charged with Henderson violations as President Claudia V. Schrader defended Public Safety, by claiming students and faculty of Common Ground were spreading “misinformation.”

According to the students:

—Common Ground student leaders met with KCC President Claudia V. Schrader and discussed Adrian’s arrest. Even though multiple students informed her that they don’t feel protected by Public Safety, Schrader’s responses were:

—to warn them the Common Ground faculty advisors are not acting in the students’ interests but with a political agenda that is interfering with the students’ college education by spreading false stories about Public Safety while forcing black-and-white political views on the students.

—That Public Safety officers arrested Adrian because sometimes students don’t listen and are a threat to other students.

—Not everything is about racism.

—But at the same time racists are everywhere and we can’t control them.

—Everyone has biases, actually.

—Common Ground students should build bridges with racists instead of fighting them. If the racists attack us, refer all complaints to the campus Chief Diversity Officer and Public Safety.

—At the end of the semester, the administration also announced and held a special “campus-wide” SGA election on 12/3/22, within the mandatory five-day announcement window. An SGA officer opposed to administration attacks on the club, *despite having never announced they were stepping down from their position, was the only officer whose office was contested; they lost, with thirteen students voting* out of an approximately eligible 7,259 students (estimated based on Fall ’22 enrollment).

3. While the KCC PSC chapter leadership took the administration’s word that no charges were made against any students, the reality is:

—On November 3 at the 61 precinct, after being detained for a total of four hours, Adrian was told he could not return to campus until he was contacted by KCC. The next day he received an email for a November 7 meeting with KCC’s ‘Director of Community Standards and Student Engagement,’ and on that day upon arrival he was escorted to their office by Public Safety. With Public Safety officers guarding the office doors, the Director claimed she “doesn’t know what happened” and so “cannot talk about the incident” itself, yet nonetheless warned him because she knows “you guys [Adrian and the faculty member] are part of a group, there will be no forms of retaliation.” She also stated she’s waiting to view Public Safety’s CCTV footage.

—Adrian was also given a summons for disorderly conduct. Students and faculty accompanied him to his court appearance on 12/7/22. The charge was dismissed when the officer failed to appear at the Brooklyn Summons Court at 1 Centre St, Manhattan.

—Four students have received CUNY academic charges, so far, allegedly violating the CUNY Henderson Rules. All four students had their spring registration put on hold. Two students met with the ‘Director of Community Standards and Student Engagement,’ and because at the last minute they were denied a faculty or student witness “from anyone involved in this situation,” this meeting was one-on-one.

—The charges against the other two students included charges based on the very CCTV footage that Public Safety refuses to release without a subpoena. The punishments for Henderson Rules violations include suspension and expulsion, and in the meantime, these two students still cannot register for the spring semester (which, since KCC is on a different academic calendar, begins March 7).

—We can provide the documentation and the KCC PSC leadership is welcome to review the evidence for themselves.

4. If there was any doubt that the KCC administration has a pattern of protecting racists: in the final week of this past January, HR announced an investigation into the two faculty co-advisors of Common Ground for alleged “improper leafleting” and alleged “harassment” of a racist administrator at some point prior. As of this writing, the PSC has been contacted the Weingarten hearings are being scheduled.

—This administrator’s public profile featured hundreds of racist anti-Black, anti-immigrant and specifically anti-Muslim Facebook posts.

—This profile was linked to the official KCC Facebook page, which they also maintained.

—This administrator is still employed, has claimed themselves a victim of political persecution, and has a security escort provided for him.

**Our Conclusions**

1. Public Safety officers are lying and the KCC administration is protecting them.

2. The KCC PSC chapter leadership’s statement seems to support Public Safety and the administration’s narrative. Their conclusions are from a video missing key audio and information that point to a very different interpretation of the events of November 3, 2022.

3. This fight is far from over. Students and faculty are connecting the KCC administration’s pattern of protecting racists and establishing a legal defense fund and campaign to expose the ongoing lies of the KCC administration and their “Public Safety.” Our committee is getting off the ground. If you support this fight please sign this form, and a PayPal link to donate to our legal defense committee will be up on our website soon.

**Our demands**

**—We demand that the KCC administration and Public Safety withdraw their allegations that the students violated the Henderson Rules and lift all holds for spring semester registration.**

**—We demand the KCC administration terminate and charge the four officers who laid hands on Adrian.**

**—We request the KCC PSC leadership retract their statement and conduct a complete investigation.**

**—In the interests of justice, fighting racism, and fighting for a CUNY free of racism and free from the fear of police assault, we ask all students and faculty inside and outside of CUNY to join this struggle. Contact information is available at our website linked below.**

**The struggle continues.**

**Signed,**

**Ryan Schiavone, Lecturer, Common Ground faculty co-advisor**

**Patrick Lloyd, Associate Professor, Common Ground faculty co-advisor**

**The students of KCC Common Ground**

**Links:**

**Common Ground’s student-created, student-run website:**

[**www.commongroundkcc.org**](http://www.commongroundkcc.org)

Students and faculty were guests on WBAI-NY Pacifica Radio 99.5 FM radio host King Downing’s “Good Morning Nueva York” on 2/6/23. The interview starts about halfway:

[**https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=38214**](https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=38214)

Review the compiled footage of 11/3 on YouTube:

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veeVzkMAI5w**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veeVzkMAI5w)

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