



January 23, 2015

Police Response to Campus Celebrations

Columbus- Students flooded campus grounds following the championship win on late Monday, January 12th. Police took action in the form of chemical agents, S.W.A.T. teams, and mounted officers to disperse the students. Undergraduate Student Government was alarmed by and disappointed in the chosen tactics, and will work to prevent this type of response by police in the future.

Ohio State is part of a densely populated city. In addition to daily traffic of >100,000 people, thousands more traverse campus and High Street on a weekly basis during football season. The police departments of Ohio State and the City of Columbus have been trained to deal with large, concentrated crowds numerous times over the years.

While arson and vandalism occurred the night of the National Championship win, many of these activities did not occur on High Street, where thousands of students, [many legally walking along the sidewalks](#), were gassed. Irrefutable video evidence shows that the use of mace and tear gas were not justified against those whom it was used directly. Furthermore, its use affected other innocent bystanders not intended as targets for the weapons. The Columbus Police Directives for Chemical Agents, [Part II Section A, points 3, 5 \(and 5a\), and 7](#), outline specific protocol for use. According to footage and countless eyewitness accounts, protective rules weren't followed.

CPD should have taken advanced preparation for the events that followed the game. Though pedestrian traffic blocked vehicular traffic that night, more peaceful solutions-- like redirecting traffic from a portion of High St., a common practice many times per year-- could have averted crisis.

We regret crimes-- arson and vandalism-- committed by a riotous minority of students that night. More importantly, we regret the collective punishment, manifest in the indiscriminate, high-volume, highly potent use of chemical agents, to which the majority of innocent, celebrating students fell victim. We regret this blemish on the moral record of our city's police department and the subsequent inflammatory portrayal of student behavior in CPD's response to media and the public.

USG will be working with CPD and OSUPD to gain a better understanding of the events and to improve this response in the future. As always, one of our top priorities is student safety.

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