

Students for a Democratic Society kicks off the semester with on-campus rally

The group rallied to express their frustration with the planned review of university police, and instead called for oversight to be handed to the campus community.



Evan Berg

Students for a Democratic Society kicked off the new semester with a rally in front of Coffman Union on Friday, Sept. 18. They continued their summer-long calls for community oversight of university police.

Evan Berg, Campus Administration Reporter
September 19, 2020



Around 40 University of Minnesota students gathered outside of Coffman Union Friday evening as part of a rally held by Students for a Democratic Society.

One of the event organizers, Olivia Crull, said the goal of the rally was to kick off the semester with a call to action designed to attract the attention of both new students and returning students.

Speakers from several local organizations spoke at the event to reject the University’s current approach to police review, which includes the [ongoing review](#) being conducted by Cedric Alexander, a former police chief and expert on police reform.

Representatives from White Coats for Black Lives and Twin Cities Coalition for Justice 4 Jamar along with other members of the campus community called for the University to allow for community oversight of the University Police Department.

Speakers expressed distrust in the University’s ability to adequately review the actions of UMPD.

“We can’t expect Joan Gabel and those in charge to just give us community control because she doesn’t live here,” said Jae Yates, a speaker at the rally representing Justice 4 Jamar.

Highlighting student distrust of police following the police killing of George Floyd, the organizers called for the establishment of a Civilian Police Accountability Council, or CPAC for short.

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“If we model what it looks like to have community at the table, then we can see that in other aspects of our lives,” said Dominique Earland, president of White Coats for Black Lives. “You’re in school for four years. I’m in school for eight to 10, but eventually we leave. But the community will be here to uplift the movement and the work that we’re doing.”

According to Crull, the proposed CPAC would be made up of students, campus workers and community members who would have the authority to weigh in on police procedure and review police misconduct complaints.

Following several other speakers, the rally transitioned into a march as part of the group’s effort to draw the attention of incoming first-year students and others who may have been moving in on campus.

The march began along Washington Avenue and continued around Superblock, before eventually making its way to Northrop Mall.

One of the attendees, first-year Dominique Drake, said he was glad that the demonstrators had taken the time to show that they cared about these issues.

When closing out her speech at the rally, Earland told participants to “consider ways to bring community into your lives, into your institutions, into your departments, and the fight continues together.”

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