

Statement concerning surveillance on the University of Michigan campus

According to a [report in *The Guardian*](#), the University has (until recently) engaged a security firm called City Shield to surveil students engaged in political organizing on campus. These undercover agents showed themselves to be dangerous buffoons. By their unprofessional behavior, these agents compromised the safety and wellbeing of the students we are charged to teach.

We are pleased that, once this report came to light, President Grasso [canceled the University's contract with City Shield](#). We thank him for acting decisively and swiftly in the interests of our students, and we share with him a conviction that 'trust and security on our three campuses' are of paramount importance.

The discredit that City Shield cast upon the University highlights the need for proper oversight over surveillance activities more generally. We are informed by DPSS that, to date, as many as 1200 cameras have been installed around campus. We are unclear about the purpose to which these new surveillance cameras are being put, who is monitoring them, or whether recordings made are being shared with law enforcement. Several of these powerful cameras—which offer 40X zoom capacity—are clustered in the Diag and in the Law Quad, public spaces wherein students and faculty gather and where protestors assemble. They allow agents of the University to see what people are reading, and perhaps to hear what they are saying, a violation of [SPG 606.01](#), which states that security cameras “must not impinge on or unduly constrain the academic freedom or civil liberties of community members or their freedom of assembly and expression.” Members of the University community were given no notice that the cameras were being installed.

The University of Michigan's Faculty Senate has expressed—in an [overwhelming vote](#)—our conviction that the University ought not “share information or data that would allow ICE to identify, locate, or apprehend University of Michigan students, faculty, or staff.” In our May 2025 [report on faculty governance](#) we noted that ‘increased surveillance on campus is compromising trust’.

We [join the U-M ACLU](#) in urging the University's leadership to constitute an oversight committee—with representatives from faculty government and from civil liberties organizations—to develop policies concerning surveillance on campus. Such an oversight committee would be charged with ensuring that surveillance activities do not compromise the welfare and freedom of expression of students, faculty and staff.

We ask also for answers to the following questions:

- Who made the decision to hire outside contractors to surveil our students, who supervised their work, and why did this supervisory oversight fail? We must learn from the City Shield debacle and ensure that the institutional processes made it possible are corrected.

- How many new surveillance cameras have been installed on the Diag and the Law Quad, and at what cost? What capabilities do they possess? Are they monitored in real time? What measures has the University adopted to prevent privacy abuses? Are recordings being shared with law enforcement?

Adopted by the Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs on June 18, 2025.