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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: TRUSTEES CLEAR CORNELL PRESIDENT
OF WRONGDOING IN CAR INCIDENT; STUDENTS DEMAND INDEPENDENT
INVESTIGATION**

ITHACA, NY — At 10:05 AM, the Cornell University Board of Trustees [announced](#) that it had concluded its investigation into a [recent incident](#) where Cornell President Michael Kotlikoff hit two students with his car. The Committee's statement does not acknowledge that Kotlikoff backed into the students, or that Kotlikoff's initial statement responding to the incident accused students of conduct [unsupported by video footage](#) later released by the University.

The Committee's statement does, however, state that the students' conduct was "inconsistent with university policies governing expressive activity and our standards for respectful conduct, safety, and the prohibition of intimidation." It later states that Kotlikoff does not intend to pursue disciplinary action against the students he hit with his car, and criticizes students for not providing the Cornell University Police Department with statements on the incident.

The students involved shared the following statement in response:

The Board of Trustees, who hired President Kotlikoff and pay his salary, and the Cornell University Police Department (CUPD), who report directly to Kotlikoff, cannot "independently" investigate his conduct. The Trustees' statement, unsurprisingly, clears Kotlikoff of any wrongdoing and furthers Kotlikoff's campaign to disparage the students he hit with his car.

On May 1st, we contacted the Ithaca Police Department to request an independent police investigation into the incident, and were told that IPD was unable to initiate an investigation unless CUPD ceded its jurisdiction. We had no faith in CUPD's ability to conduct an independent investigation as an arm of the administration which has actively engaged in the repression of student protest, and were concerned that information provided to CUPD could be used against us by the University in disciplinary proceedings.

We were never contacted by the Board's Committee or any independent investigator. While both investigations were still in process, Kotlikoff released a public statement falsely accusing students of "banging on [his] windows," an allegation unsupported by the University's own video footage of the incident. We had no reason to expect independence or impartiality from University leadership.

The Trustees' statement also claims that we "refused medical treatment from the EMS team," which is false. After Kotlikoff ran over Aiden Vallecillo's foot, he was fully evaluated by a Cornell University EMS team who determined that he did not require additional treatment. The Trustees released this false information without Vallecillo's consent, and he has never publicly indicated that he "refused medical treatment." It is unclear how the Trustees obtained this information.

The Trustees' representation that CUPD's investigation was "without any bias or undue influence" ignores the conflicts of interest inherent in the University's decision to investigate itself. We reiterate our demands for a truly independent investigation into the incident, reform to Cornell's repressive Code of Conduct which allows University leadership to suspend and silence nonviolent student protestors, and a public meeting with Kotlikoff to discuss campus speech issues.

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ABOUT SDC: *Students for a Democratic Cornell is an independent, student-run organization that fights for free speech on Cornell University's campus. It fights for an end to unjust interim suspensions of nonviolent student protestors and reform to Cornell's repressive Code of Conduct. SDC has faced harassment from administration and campus police, despite following Cornell's stringent Expressive Activity Policy.*