

04/18/2024

## Mudders Against Murder Delegation Speech to the President

We are here today on behalf of the Mudders Against Murder Campaign to delegate specific demands to President Nembhard. This delegation is a continuation of our planned series of delegations to HMC administration, and does not serve as an escalation by MAM.

We are here to express our outrage at and disapproval of Harvey Mudd College's role in upholding the Military-Industrial Complex by fostering and normalizing professional connections between Mudders and defense companies. Mudd's mission statement claims to instill us with "a clear understanding of the impact of our work on society," yet the college indiscriminately funnels our labor towards the murder of innocent civilians. For too long, the college has avoided conversations about the defense industry, and has actively supported companies that build weapons and surveillance technology to commit war crimes, kill civilians, and commit genocide.

We have received the emails regarding actions taken by administration to address the need for changes to Clinic and the OCS, and we reject the proposed solutions as they do not meet our demands. In response, we would like to share our expanded demands: **Our campaign demands that HMC cut all ties with defense, defense product suppliers, weapons manufacturers, and weapons manufacturing-affiliated companies. A crucial step of this process is for the college to commit to no longer partnering with these companies for the clinic program. This commitment must come immediately, to take effect for the 2024-25 academic year's clinic projects. We ask that this commitment is explicitly incorporated into your strategic vision for HMC, and that these demands are prioritized in fundraising efforts for the college.** We reject the proposal to deploy a task force to address the issue, as it will only be able to make "recommendations" to a trustee board that is predominantly white and male, with explicit ties to the Military-Industrial Complex.<sup>1</sup> We also reject your administration's recent attempt to misrepresent us as violent and threatening in order to turn members of the HMC community against each other.

In the last 5 years, Clinic has had 57 contracts with weapons- and defense affiliated companies. This year, the trend continues. Amongst this year's projects are General Motors, MIT Lincoln Laboratory, Qualcomm, Sandia National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory, and Amazon; these are just some of the current projects associated with the MIC. Let's dive deeper into some of these associations: General Motors manufactures a number of next-gen army vehicles, including the US Army's Infantry Squad Vehicle, which supports mounted weaponry and can integrate mk19 automatic grenade

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hmc.edu/presidents-office/college-leadership/members-of-the-board/>

launchers<sup>2</sup>. MIT Lincoln Laboratory produces autonomous drones, enables autonomous UAS chase missions for hostile attribution, and uses radar systems for surveillance purposes<sup>3</sup>. Even more damning is Lincoln Laboratory's 2021 clinic project, in which the clinic team was tasked with adding drone capability for detecting rf signals, with clear applications for the surveillance of innocent civilians<sup>4</sup>. Amazon currently has a 1.2 billion dollar contract to provide the IDF with cloud services that are used to surveil Palestinians and expand illegal settlements in the West Bank<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, Amazon hosts databases and operations for the Department of Homeland Security that is used to surveil and criminalize millions of immigrants<sup>7</sup>.

All of this information is about this year's engineering clinic partners alone. Despite seeming innocuous on the surface, these projects subject Mudders to offering free labor to companies that create killing machines. We would not tolerate working with companies that bomb US civilians, so we cannot tolerate working with companies that bomb civilians elsewhere. To do so is an injustice to countless civilians that have lost their lives at the hands of the US empire.

A similar impact can be seen in Mudd's Office of Career Services, which is hugely influential in determining job opportunities students have access to. OCS has chosen to use their critical role to relentlessly funnel students into the defense industry. Overwhelmingly, the OCS provides options only in defense or Big Tech. Students in the physical sciences, CS or Engineering that care about ethics see sparingly few opportunities provided by OCS. Meanwhile, the large pool of defense contacts OCS regularly invites to campus helps normalize Harvey Mudd's pipeline into an industry that profits from war, death, and genocide.

Historically, the OCS has hosted defense companies such as Raytheon and Northrop Grumman, as well as defense affiliated companies like HoneyBee Robotics, HRL Laboratories, and the US Navy. Raytheon supplies Israeli F-15s and F-16s with engines, cluster bombs and bunker busters for use on Gazan civilians<sup>8</sup>. Their CEO praised the financial benefits of supplying the Palestinian genocide. Honeybee Robotics has completed hundreds of projects for the US military, specifically providing them with space and robotics technology, perception systems, operational needs, and user-experience technology for warfighters<sup>9</sup>. HRL, which is owned by

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gmdefensellc.com/site/us/en/gm-defense/home/integrated-vehicles.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ll.mit.edu/r-d/tactical-systems>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ll.mit.edu/r-d/projects/collaborative-uas-hostile-attribution-surveillance-emplacement-and-reconnaissance>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ll.mit.edu/news/laboratory-staff-support-harvey-mudd-college-students-national-security-project>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/oct/12/google-amazon-workers-condemn-project-nimbus-israeli-military-control>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.technologyreview.com/2018/10/22/139639/amazon-is-the-invisible-backbone-behind-tees-immigration-crackdown/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://investigate.info/companv/rtx>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.honeybeerobotics.com/products-services/infrastructure-systems/defense-systems/>

Boeing, works on many projects with the military such as developing military micro-electronics<sup>10</sup>.

Any company that works with the US military is actively supporting US wars, and in turn US imperialism. From the illegal occupation, division, and genocide of Korea in 1950 to the illegal occupation, division, and genocide of Palestine today, the U.S. war machine has exclusively served the imperialist project. As students, we shouldn't be forced to be complicit in the US imperialist war machine as part of a graduation requirement.

Clinic and OCS partnerships with defense- and military-affiliated companies have two major effects. First, clinic provides these companies with affordable and effective student labor. While not all clinic teams work on explicitly defense related projects, the projects we complete free up company resources to develop military technology. Furthermore, seemingly general technology we build can later be easily repurposed towards malicious ends in the hands of warmongering companies. We are falling victim to the military industrial complex's manufactured idea of apolitical innovation by ignoring how our work is directly and indirectly growing the military industrial complex. Second, OCS has normalized the presence of companies invested in imperialism and genocide, thus creating a pipeline that funnels Mudders into the war industry. This pipeline has had tangible effects: According to LinkedIn, Northrop is the most popular company for Mudd Engineering grads to work at, with Raytheon at #4 and Boeing at #6<sup>11</sup>. We demand that the Harvey Mudd administration take responsibility for addressing these effects.

We recognize that many of the companies we condemn in our petition work on some projects outside of the war industry. However, this does not absolve them of their complicity. We don't make friends with killers simply because they plant roses, too.

As president of the College in the beginning of her tenure, you are uniquely positioned to enact these changes. It is your responsibility to foster a more ethical culture at Mudd where graduates are not divorced from the impact of their work. You must have the courage to use your power as president to stand with the student body and reflect our values in the College's partnerships. Ultimately, this movement is an opportunity to invent a radically different future that truly aligns with Harvey Mudd's advertised core values. The possibilities are endless when we push our creative and talented minds beyond the boundaries of the status quo. You have the ability to establish your legacy as the driver of the changes needed to push Harvey Mudd College beyond its historical limitations as a product of the cold war, and instead provide students with

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.hrl.com/products-services/foundry>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/social/corporate>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/06/how-us-funded-abuses-led-failure-afghanistan>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/school/harvey-mudd-college/people/?facetFieldOfStudy=100331>

opportunities that will prepare them to solve the world's challenges. You must usher in a new era of Harvey Mudd College, one that has escaped the ghosts of its past.

The Mudders Against Murder petition has been signed on by over 600 students, faculty, alumni, and staff across the 5Cs, including over 33% of HMC's student body. It has never been more clear that students overwhelmingly want to see our demands met.

**We demand that the Strategic Vision, under your presidency, incorporates the commitment to cutting all ties with defense, defense product suppliers, weapons manufacturers, and weapons manufacturing-affiliated companies. This commitment should shape your fundraising and other presidential efforts going forwards. We want to emphasize the urgency of acting quickly. Creating a set of recommendations for the January 2025 BOT meeting is an unacceptable timeline. Action should be taken immediately to address our demands for the 2024-2025 academic year. Additionally, we recognize that the role of the task force as simply making a recommendation to the BOT is insufficient. We demand that you establish a commitment to cut ties through binding means. Lastly, we want to remind you that we are a nonviolent campaign. Your Cabinet's April 17th email claiming that we are a threat to the community and endorsing calling Campus Safety is absolutely unacceptable. We will never pose a threat to you, faculty, students or any of the HMC community. We expect you to show us the same respect.**

By next Thursday, April 25th, we ask that the President's Office deliver a written commitment to our demands, with a concrete plan to integrate these demands into your strategic vision. You can contact members of this campaign at [REDACTED]@gmail.com with your plan to implement our demands. If we do not hear back from you by Thursday April 25th, our campaign will escalate in the coming month and next school year until we are heard.