

Case Study

- State University (SU) is a large public institution located in the heart of a major city. Recently, the campus has become the focal point of a large-scale student-led protest over tuition hikes and the university’s decision to divest from fossil fuels. In response, students set up an encampment in front of the administration building, naming it “Tent City.” The protest has drawn significant media attention and has garnered support from local activist groups, many of whom are not affiliated with the university.
- The encampment has grown over the past two weeks, with approximately 200 students and community members participating at any given time. Tensions are high, and a few isolated incidents of vandalism, including graffiti on university buildings, have been reported. Some students are skipping classes to participate, and faculty members have expressed mixed reactions—some supporting the protest, while others are concerned about the disruption to campus life.
- The protest escalates when the administration announces that it will begin removing the encampment if students do not voluntarily disband within 72 hours. In response, the protesters hold a press conference declaring that they have no intention of leaving and that their occupation is a matter of free speech and peaceful protest.
- As the 72-hour deadline approaches, tensions increase, and a small group of more radical protesters begin advocating for a sit-in within the administration building itself. Local media reports are critical of the administration’s decision to forcibly remove the encampment, and faculty members are divided about how to proceed. Meanwhile, some campus offices and classrooms near the encampment have been vandalized.
- The university’s legal counsel has reminded the administration that it must protect the First Amendment rights of the students but also ensure the safety of the broader campus community. They warn that both inaction and a heavy-handed approach could lead to legal consequences and reputational damage.