Student Assembly

Resolution 28: The Removal of Flock Cameras on Campus

Abstract: This resolution calls on Cornell University and the Cornell University Police Department to deactivate and remove all Flock Safety automated license plate reader cameras from campus, terminate the University's contract with Flock Safety immediately rather than waiting for the contract to expire, and publicly account for the data collected and shared to date. It further calls for a shared governance process before any future deployment of comparable surveillance technology.

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Endorsed by:

Reviewed by:

Type of Action: Recommendation

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Current Status: Adopted by the Assembly, Unanimous Consent, 10/22/2026

Whereas, the Cornell University Police Department (CUPD) has operated seven Flock Safety automated license plate reader (ALPR) cameras at major entry points to central campus since October 2024,

Whereas, these cameras photograph every vehicle entering central campus regardless of whether its driver is suspected of any wrongdoing, and the resulting data is retained in Flock's system for up to thirty days,

Whereas, Flock Safety's platform is designed to share license plate data across a network of thousands of law enforcement agencies, and in 2025 federal immigration agents accessed driver data from nearby Syracuse after that city's police department inadvertently enabled sharing with Flock's national network,

Whereas, research on Flock deployments at no fewer than 150 U.S. colleges and universities found that campus police departments assisted with immigration-related searches, including in sanctuary states where such cooperation is restricted,

Whereas, Cornell is home to thousands of international students and scholars whose ability to study and work in the United States depends on visas administered by federal authorities, and

members of the Cornell community have raised specific concerns that Flock data could be used to track and target visa holders,

Whereas, local immigrant advocates have reported that the presence of Flock cameras has left Ithaca's immigrant community living in fear, a concern that applies with equal force to Cornell's international students and scholars,

Whereas, surveillance technology that logs every vehicle entering campus, on a platform with a documented record of data reaching federal immigration enforcement, risks deterring international students from moving freely through campus and participating fully in University life,

Whereas, the University has an obligation to ensure that every student, regardless of citizenship or visa status, can live and learn at Cornell without fear that University systems will be used against them,

Whereas, the City of Ithaca, a sanctuary city since 2017 that reaffirmed that status in February 2025, voted unanimously on March 4, 2026, to terminate its contract with Flock Safety and remove all 22 city-operated cameras, citing privacy concerns and the technology's conflict with its sanctuary protections,

Whereas, the Tompkins County Legislature voted on April 14, 2026, to end the County's contract with Flock Safety, and the Village of Trumansburg has announced it will not renew its own contract,

Whereas, Cornell University holds an independently operated Flock contract and continues to run its cameras, leaving the University out of step with the City and County it calls home and sustaining Flock surveillance within Ithaca after the community itself has rejected it,

Whereas, University Policy 8.1, Physical Security Systems, last updated August 18, 2026, contains no provisions governing automated license plate readers, sets a fourteen-day retention period for recorded security video that Flock's reported thirty-day retention exceeds, and affirms the University's sensitivity "to the privacy and freedoms of expression and assembly" of its community,

Whereas, when asked how Flock data is used, the University pointed only to a general January 2026 statement on emergency preparedness, and has not publicly disclosed the terms of its contract, the agencies with which campus data is shared, or any record of searches conducted,

Whereas, the Faculty Senate, through Resolution 198, has already called on the administration to consult meaningfully with shared governance bodies regarding the expansion of policing and surveillance on campus,

Whereas, Flock cameras and similar Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs) have been reportedly misused by law enforcement personnel for the purposes of harassing, stalking, and tracking civilians, frequently in connection with domestic abuse and unwanted romantic pursuits,

Whereas, the presence of Flock cameras or similar surveillance technology is a direct threat to the safety of students by way of increasing their vulnerability to aforementioned obsessive relational intrusions,

Be it therefore resolved, that the Student Assembly calls on Cornell University and CUPD to immediately deactivate and remove all Flock Safety cameras and related equipment from University property and to terminate the University's contract with Flock Safety at the earliest possible opportunity, rather than just waiting for the contract to expire;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly calls on the University to permanently delete all data collected by these cameras that is not tied to an active criminal investigation, and to confirm in writing to the Student Body at large once deactivation, removal, and deletion are complete;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly calls on the University to immediately cover or otherwise visibly disable every Flock Safety camera on University property pending its full removal, so that members of the Cornell community can see for themselves that the devices are not in operation;

Be it further resolved, that the Student Assembly calls on the University to ensure that the termination of its contract with Flock Safety results in the physical removal of all Flock cameras, mounting hardware, and related equipment from University property, and that no device remains installed, whether active or inactive;

Be it further resolved, that the University publicly disclose the number and locations of all Flock devices on its property, the full terms of its contract with Flock Safety, every external agency granted access to University Flock data, and aggregate records of searches run on that data, including any requests made by or on behalf of federal immigration authorities;

Be it further resolved, that the University refrain from procuring any automated license plate reader or comparable mass vehicle surveillance technology in the future without public notice, a written use policy, and prior consultation with the Student Assembly, the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, the Faculty Senate, the Employee Assembly, and the University Assembly,

Be it further resolved that the Student Assembly requests that administration release a statement to the entire community detailing its updated security policies, so that all community members can remain well informed,

Be it finally resolved that this resolution be conveyed to President Michael Kotlikoff and David Honan.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eeshaan Chaudhuri ’27
President, *Student Assembly*