Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play major league baseball.

But earlier this week, the UCLA baseball stadium named in his memory became a Los Angeles Police Department detention center for protesters participating in the Black Lives Matter movement.

On Monday, the LAPD detained protesters in inhumane conditions for multiple hours in the stadium’s parking lot. UCLA does not have immediate jurisdiction over the grounds. However, the university’s image is still intrinsically tied to the property.
Testimony from detainees and witnesses said LAPD left dozens of protesters in cages on buses for hours, deprived of food, water and restrooms. LAPD didn’t just break its promise to protect and serve, it committed human rights violations.

Since then, the university has released a statement that it was “troubled” to hear of the situation and that LAPD used the stadium grounds to detain protesters without its permission. UCLA’s statement also said LAPD was notified further use of the stadium for detention would not be permitted.

But they shouldn’t just be troubled – they should be outraged.

Whether or not UCLA knew of the situation is beside the point. These circumstances speak to the larger environment of police brutality against Black people across LA – and about UCLA’s unwillingness to act against it.

Now, administrators’ response revolves around their own reputation, instead of condemning the heinous actions taken by the LAPD at a UCLA facility. The university has repeatedly said Black Lives Matter, but its unwillingness to stand up to injustice and brutality of the LAPD in the past week says more than a tweet from Chancellor Gene Block ever could – not that those ever said much.

To be clear, the LAPD is unequivocally to blame for its blatant disregard for the right to assembly and humane treatment in police custody.

But with seemingly no response from campus administration, students have had to take matters into their own hands by protesting, donating and organizing.

The Afrikan Student Union submitted a letter to the UCLA Academic Senate, calling to modify finals because of mental health concerns among the Black student community. FEM has pledged to donate over $750 to aid relief efforts in Minneapolis.

Meanwhile, protests are erupting in UCLA’s neighborhood and students are being arrested for peaceful demonstration – yet the most solidarity the university has shown beyond an emailed statement is some social media outreach. It has yet to provide any communication or resources for students trying to engage in protesting or otherwise contribute to the movement.
What UCLA fails to understand, beyond its insipid public relations efforts, is that its unwillingness to condemn the LAPD’s actions harms Black students. The administration’s silence favors the oppressor and delegitimizes its lone statement in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

And as UCLA fails to deliver an adequate response, students must deal with varying responses from professors.

Although some faculty denounced LAPD’s actions in a letter before the university, Gordon Klein, an accounting lecturer, mocked students’ requests for final exam accommodations and labeled such measures as special treatment. Ajax Peris, a political science lecturer, is currently under review by the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for reading aloud a racial slur within a Martin Luther King Jr. quote in a lecture – and refusing to acknowledge students who spoke out against his language.

Meanwhile, the university is toeing the line of complete silence, talking just long enough to maintain the facade of allyship. But its silence is not neutral to students who feel their university has forsaken them. And with such a powerful voice, UCLA has a responsibility to speak out.

What LAPD did was cruel and unjust. It put people at risk and showed an utter disdain for the Black Lives Matter movement.

UCLA may not have been directly behind these injustices. But it remains unwilling to actively speak out against those who were.

That makes them just as complicit.

Disclaimer: The Editorial Board does not have any Black members, which we recognize is unacceptable. In fact, Black student journalists and Black student voices have been continually underrepresented in the Daily Bruin newsroom. We recognize that this lack of inclusion is a disservice to the UCLA community, and for this, we apologize – we are working on it.

We are committed to rectifying this, not only through words, but through action, including measures that begin with, but are not limited to: making a more focused effort to recruit students of color, implementing editor diversity training and looking at how we can support staffers from low-income backgrounds.

The long process as we attempt to remedy our own lack of inclusivity and diversity, however, is no excuse for silence on our part in the present.