

June 2, 2017

To:

Donald Dudley, Director of Student Judicial Affairs

Wendy Delmendo, Title IX Chief Compliance Officer

Ralph Hexter, Acting Chancellor of UC Davis

Janet Napolitano, UC President

Gary May, Chancellor of UC Davis

Adela De La Torre, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

and Other Administrative Staff to Whom this May Concern:

We are writing to you today as a collection of students concerned and frightened by the handling of sexual assault by the UC Davis justice process. In this open letter, we will highlight major problems with the system currently in place to handle sexual assault cases brought to the school. We will discuss the ways women and femmes of color and other marginalized groups are pushed out and ultimately failed by the current system. Included in this letter is a list of demands that call for immediate sexual assault reform. This letter is the first step in a reform process for all entities that oversee cases of sexual assaults that occur on campus. We hope you meet our demands and that you take this crucial step in ending sexual violence by creating a collective model of accountability and ultimately, making this campus safer for all students.

This concern is precipitated by information brought to light in the article "An Unofficial Trial for Hush-Hush Crime" written by Sophie McGuinness and Ruby Fisher-Smith published in the Aggie in May, 2017. This piece continues an ongoing conversation about the dysfunction in the school's handling of sexual assault cases.

Sexual assault prevention and systemic reform should not just be the work of survivors, but entire communities. Gendered violence cannot be treated as a secondary issue. Everyone must take part in dialogues about community accountability, what we want our communities to look like and how we can ensure our spaces are safe for all. To create a culture in which we essentially teach women and femmes that there are ways to prevent being sexually assaulted is unacceptable and shameful. Administrators have contributed to a culture in which survivors of sexual assault are genuinely afraid to come forth and report. We must create a culture in which we teach people how to hold themselves and their peers accountable for their violent actions.

Our demands are as follows:

1. All administrators, counselors, police officers, law professionals, medical professionals, and advocates associated with the process around sexual assault cases in the university must be trained in implicit bias and the different needs of historically and structurally oppressed communities. We refer here to people of color, physically and intellectually disabled students, people with mental illness, transgender students, nonbinary students, queer students, and femme

identified individuals. The overall white and masculine composition of school administrative staff, as well as the history of violence against Black, Brown, and disabled bodies by police and medical professionals, makes these students less likely to report sexual assaults. When they do report, individuals from these groups are also less likely to be believed and given justice or the resources that are crucial to recovery. Trainings should cover implicit bias, different cultural symptoms of trauma, and the history of violence of black, brown, disabled, transgender students, and nonbinary survivors. A diverse staff well trained in these intersections is a demand of the student body and one small first step to remedy this injustice.

2. The process of reporting sex crimes must be changed drastically to put the survivor in the least possible discomfort and retraumatization. Janet Napolitano's 2014 victim centered interviewing reform made some progress in this field, but this work continues to fall short. It is unacceptable that survivors should ever be made to feel attacked and uncomfortable when they are brave enough to come forward. As a reminder: a sex crime is the fault of no one but the person who chooses to commit a sex crime.

3. The UC and Title IX must track and document the organizations associated with sexual assaults and sex criminals. Numbers should be tracked on all reported crimes, even those without enough evidence to substantiate an investigation. This data should be reported to the public and remain accessible at all times. The fact that this data is currently untracked keeps organizations from being held accountable and prevents people from making informed decisions about associating with organizations with high levels of sexual misconduct and assault. Because patterns behind sexual assault are already ambiguous, administrators must gather data to help gain a better understanding of assaults on campus and to identify organizations with repeat offenders.

4. The university and student organizations must provide intervention without needing an investigation or requiring a survivor to identify themselves. Often times, survivors will share their experiences with other members of their organizations creating real and powerful knowledge of dangerous groups or people. They should not have to collect this information or act on it alone. They should be able to seek intervention from professionals at Title IX in the form of non-punitive trainings, mediated conversations, or one-on-one counseling for alleged perpetrators. A trial would not be necessary in these cases because even if someone were falsely accused, the worst that would happen is that they would receive more training.

5. Organizations facing multiple sexual assault accusations must be faced with consequences and held accountable for creating a culture in which sex crimes can occur. Data must be collected and be used to create tiered consequences and systems of accountability for organizations whose members have perpetrated sexual assault. These should include mandatory re-trainings,

interventions, loss of privileges, and shutting down the organization. Some groups, including but not limited to fraternities, sports teams, and clubs, enable a culture in which sex crimes occur in their domain through misogynistic behavior and community culture. By doing nothing to prevent these organizations from perpetuating misogyny, UC Davis is complicit with the continuous and repetitive crimes that occur within these spaces.

6. Consequences for sex crimes must match the severity of the crime. The use of minimum sentences for sex crimes that the university agrees occurred is unacceptable. A two year suspension is not remotely adequate consequence for a sex crime that will affect the survivor for the rest of their life. Expulsions should be a common and accepted consequence for perpetrating sexual assault. The ridiculousness of the current punishments in place for sex crimes is highlighted by the fact that plagiarism is currently punishable by expulsion, but rape is not necessarily. This disconnect shows that the university values its intellectual property over its human assets in the students.

7. The training for sex crime prevention that all students receive must be improved and campus organizations should be required to do continuous training. Greek life organizations, sports teams, and social clubs must be mandated to have multiple members trained as CARE counselors. CARE should be given the financial resources and explicit authority by the university to provide quarter long trainings for people to act as peer educators within their own Greek communities. As long as there is funding for research and unlimited funds to renovate rooms in the chancellor's nearby mansion, there should too be adequate funding for organizations that protect students, provide resources for sexual assault survivors, and make safe space for structurally disadvantaged groups to operate at their fullest potential.

These demands and concerns only begin to address the problems with UC Davis' handling of sexual assault crimes. It is a disgrace that the school has such an inadequate, inefficient, and underfunded system in place, and change must move swiftly and comprehensively. Dialogues regarding sexual violence prevention are constantly happening here on campus, and yet those of you addressed in this letter continue to choose not take part in them. Again, we would like to stress that advocating for sexual assault prevention programs and education should not just be the work of survivors, but entire communities.

We want to make it clear that our fight for institutional reform will not end with this letter or our rally. Just as survivors are denied justice at the hands of administrative dysfunction, we will deny your right to be silent in the face of sex crimes and the rape culture you are complicit in. Let us be very clear: Sexual assaults do not occur because of alcohol. They do not occur because we walk in the dark streets alone. They do not occur when women and femmes wear revealing clothes. They occur because of a culture that perpetuates the idea that one is entitled to the body of another. They occur because sexual violence prevention programs and

education are almost non-existent. They occur because of inherently broken systems that do not punish sexual violence with severity; because of systems that benefit perpetrators and in turn, paint those who report as dishonest and deceitful. We will no longer allow you to be ambivalent in the face of sexual violence. We call on you to be allies to the survivors that have been denied justice at the hands of the institution and to make this crucial step in ending sexual violence.

This letter will be shared with various media sources and be made publically viewable on the web. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions, concerns, or would like to meet in person.

Thank you for your time,

