

# Keck School of Medicine of USC

## GEMS

### Center for Gender Equity in Medicine & Science

November 8, 2021

Dear President Folt,

The Keck School of Medicine's Center for Gender Equity in Medicine and Science (GEMS) is horrified at the acts of sexual violence that occurred at the Sigma Nu fraternity house. We recognize the many individuals and organizations are committed to improving culture at USC. However, if these types of events can still occur on our campus, quite simply, what we are collectively doing is just not enough.

The 2019 AAU survey showed that over one third of our undergraduates had experienced sexual assault since entering USC. The 2019 AAU survey also found that as many as 70% of sexual assaults were never reported to any USC authority. It saddens us to think of the many survivors on our campus who continue to suffer in silence. We still exist in a culture where survivors fear being shamed, retaliated against, or ostracized should they seek justice.

We stand with the Undergraduate Student Government and other student advocates in their call for broad changes. Specifically, we call for full accountability for those convicted of crimes, including expulsion. We call for transparency in understanding the timing and breadth of sexual assault and harassment reports associated with this incident, and with fraternities and other campus organizations more broadly. We call for serious consideration of whether institutions associated with repeated reports of sexual assault have any role on our campus moving forward. At a minimum, USC should conduct an evaluation to determine which components of Greek culture may facilitate sexual assault, so that these can be immediately addressed.

We call for increased support and funding for offices to ensure **prevention** of sexual assault and harassment and support for survivors of these horrific events. Trainings on sexual harassment and assault are not enough. Students should be equipped with resources for "just in time" intervention or reporting if they are in a situation which they perceive puts them or others at risk. RSVP's resources in collaboration with EEO-TIX and other relevant agencies should be expanded to facilitate this as well as improved support of survivors. Groups of faculty, staff and students working together to combat sexual harassment and assault (similar to GEMS) should be developed and funded in schools and units across our campus.

*We call for the timely, regular, public sharing of data on sexual assault and harassment incidents on our campus, including data on the time frame in which these reports were addressed and what type of consequences resulted. This is critical to help move towards increased trust and transparency. Several academic institutions (Yale, Stanford) publicly release this data on a regular basis—and this can be done sensitively and effectively. Accountability is essential if we*

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are serious about changing our culture. When reports suggest additional students may be at risk, timely action should be taken to ensure student safety.

We call upon the University to act swiftly, transparently, and broadly to ensure that our students, faculty, and staff across the University of Southern California are safe and protected.

As leaders in these efforts at KSOM, we here at GEMS stand ready to support you and the University's broader work on this issue however we can. We look forward to hearing from you and supporting your plan to keep our campuses safe.

All best,

Center for GEMS Leadership Team



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