

October 26, 2017

To the University of Southern California community:

As students, alumni, staff and community partners of the University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, we stand unequivocally in support of Karissa Fenwick and other survivors of sexual harassment at our University. Our action is grounded in the university's own finding that Erick Guerrero sexually harassed his academic mentee.

Unfortunately, this incident is indicative of a systemic problem at the University of Southern California. It is unacceptable that a school of social work, grounded in the values of social justice and equity, would condone the actions of one of its tenured professors in perpetuating such a negative and unsafe culture. The USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work strives to be a national leader and innovator in the social work profession. We believe the actions of the university and school thus far betray the spirit of the profession.

This is an opportunity for the University of Southern California and the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work to take concrete steps to ensure a safe environment for students and staff. The letter sent by Dean Flynn the evening of October 26, 2017 is not an adequate response to our concerns. This coalition feels that the administration's response has demonstrated that they are not committed to maintaining a culture of safety, transparency, and accountability in regards to sexual harassment and misconduct.

This is the beginning of this coalition's work to ensure that the university takes concrete action to create a safe environment for current and future students and staff. We hope that the administration reconsiders their position.

In solidarity,

Social Workers to End Rape Culture

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