

**Subject:** [STUDENT\_INFORMATION] On Recent Events in Claremont  
**Date:** Friday, April 28, 2017 at 7:53:18 AM Pacific Daylight Time  
**From:** ASPC Senate  
**To:** Student Information Mailing List

Dear Pomona College community,

We are writing with regards to recent campus events, including the student-led protest at Claremont McKenna;

dialogue surrounding mental health and the release of the Wabash report at Harvey Mudd; ongoing conversations around the role of RAs through the demands of the Scripps RAs and Pomona RHS; the recent decision of the Pomona College Sociology Department to hire Alice Goffman; and dining hall workers' demands in response to unprofessional labor conditions.

These events have disproportionately affected individuals from the most marginalized backgrounds in our community:

people of color, working class individuals, and immigrants. We call on the Claremont Colleges to do better in the pursuit of equity. We are in solidarity with students and Claremont Colleges community members fighting for institutional accountability, nuanced

discussions, and increased support for students. We urge administrators, faculty, students, staff, and others across the 5Cs to listen earlier and more seriously to voices asking for increased support.

ASPC recognizes that Pomona students, much like members of ASPC Senate, may not all agree on how to respond

to the aforementioned events. We affirm the value of open community dialogue and the responsibility of student government to listen and seriously consider students' voices. We encourage you to tell us your thoughts

[here](#)

or to attend office hours this Sunday (4/30) 8:30pm-10pm in SCC 208.

### **Regarding the Actions at Claremont McKenna**

On April 6th, a student-led protest occurred at the Claremont McKenna Athenaeum in response to Heather Mac

Donald's planned speech. Protesters blocked entrance and exit to the event. Following the protest, President Oxtoby released a letter to the Pomona community, in which he discussed academic freedom and free speech, and took a disappointed stance in addressing

the events that had taken place on CMC's campus. In response to President Oxtoby's statement, Black students at Pomona and across the Consortium wrote a letter to President Oxtoby demanding he "revise [the] email sent to the entire student body, faculty, and

staff by Thursday, April 20th", apologize for his previous patronizing statement, and affirm that Pomona College does not tolerate speech that projects violence onto its marginalized and oppressed communities, especially Black students.

ASPC is in solidarity with Black students at Pomona and at the 5Cs in their continuous fight for better conditions

on this campus. On a broader level, ASPC supports the rights to protest, to free speech, and to engage in uncomfortable dialogue. We do not support the presence of hate speech, in any of its forms, on our campuses.

## **Regarding the Actions at Harvey Mudd**

On April 12th, a large number of Harvey Mudd students and allies from the 5Cs participated in a sit-in to call attention to the inadequate mental health services and resources on-campus. While focused on mental health resources, this protest was also fueled by the forced “paid leave” of Associate Dean for Student Health and Wellness Qutayba Abdullatif, also known as Dean Q. A timeline of this semester’s events at Harvey Mudd, shared with permission, can be found [here](#).

ASPC is troubled by the lack of transparency that informed the administration’s decision not to release news of Dean Q’s dismissal until the Monday after the end of Admitted Students weekend. We also are also disappointed by President Klawe’s dismissal of protesting students, culminating in the President’s walking away—twice—from the sit-in while discussing concerns with students. We affirm the right of Harvey Mudd students to organize on these topics and urge that their calls to action be met with appropriate administrative backing, including recognition of and support for affinity groups on campus.

## **Regarding the RAs at Scripps and Pomona**

On April 13th, Scripps RAs went on strike over the lack of support from the administration, which was compounded by the passing of a fellow RA. The strike was officially declared in a [letter](#) to Scripps President Lara Tiedens. The letter demands the resignation of Charlotte Johnson as the Dean of Students and Vice President of Student Affairs, improvements to financial aid policies, changes to the Residential Advisor role, and increased mental health support, among other policy changes. The Scripps administration responded by hiring external security to fulfill the duties RAs would normally perform, thus further brushing aside the demands of the RAs. We are in solidarity with the RAs’ asks surrounding policy changes.

## **Regarding the Pomona RA Resignation Letter**

On April 9th, an anonymous [letter](#) by a former RA announcing their resignation was shared through social media. In the letter, the former RA denounces the lack of transparency and insufficient communication received from the Dean of Students Office and the Office of Housing and Residence Life. A change in the employment status of RAs resulted in unforeseen tax implications that were not properly communicated to the students in these important positions. Additionally, the letter refers to the long process needed for RAs to receive an increase in their compensation, despite a constant increase in responsibilities over the last few years.

Given the critical work that RAs perform for our communities, it is imperative to advocate for more accountability and transparency from OHRL. ASPC is committed to working closely with RAs, head sponsors, sponsors,

and OHRL professional staff to keep the college accountable and improve residential life for all students. In addition to RA compensation, we look forward to continuing conversations surrounding lack of transparency, framing of substance conversations, improvements to sponsor training, and increased in-service support to sponsors. We would like to share our appreciation and respect for RAs, Head Sponsors, and sponsors for their valuable contributions to our community and for the time they put into keeping the administration accountable while also nourishing and caring for the student body.

### **Regarding the Pomona College Sociology Department**

Sociology students are currently protesting the hire of Alice Goffman as a visiting professor in the sociology department. The protests are situated in complaints that department does not support students of color and that Alice Goffman's scholarship is anti-black and lacks positionality. The students' original open letter to the department, the Department's response, and the student's letter in response can be found here: <http://bit.ly/WeStillReject>.

We urge the formalization of student voices in all hiring processes, including for visiting professors. We call upon the faculty and administration to listen to take the demands of sociology students seriously, and to consider that such escalation to direct actions is the culmination of previous frustrations with the department.

### **Regarding Workers' Demands**

On April 20th, a group of dining hall workers presented a list of grievances and demands to President Oxtoby.

Recently, the number of dining hall workers has been cut down despite upcoming campus-wide events that require and demand increased labor (1).

Dining Hall workers are not allowed to work overtime and are not allowed to take extra breaks beyond the bare minimum required by law without a physician's note. Although there is a constant demand for their labor, there are no permanent dining hall workers available to serve as substitutes in case of an emergency.

Within days, nine dining hall workers who attended this meeting were given final warnings for "causing work stoppage" (2). On April 25th, dining hall workers presented their grievances to Oxtoby again. The President expressed support towards management's decision.

We express our solidarity with dining hall workers and affirm their right to dissent poor working conditions.

Pomona cannot champion equity within its student body while actively contributing to the exploitation of its own workers. Pomona cannot provide a welcoming atmosphere to low-income, immigrant, and/or students of color if it cannot provide appropriate working conditions for workers from these same backgrounds. The Associated Students of Pomona College supports worker organizing and their demands for humane and professional working environments.

### **On the Remaining of the Semester**

Even during this extremely busy time of the semester, we encourage students to learn more about the individual

issues highlighted in this statement by looking at the public letters, responses, and demands all groups mentioned have released. We invite you to think critically of yourselves and your positionalities. If it lies within your capacity, consider supporting your peers and those whose labor serves and benefits you during your time at Pomona.

We want to remind you that you are valued and supported by your student representatives. We invite all feedback, including those in disagreement with the stances set forth in this letter, [here](#) or at our office hours on Sunday (4/30) 8:30pm-10pm in SCC 208.

Sincerely,

ASPC Senates 2016-17 and 2017-18

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1. Some of these events include, but are not limited to: Admitted Student Day(s), Alumni Weekend, Oxtoby's Farewell, and Commencement-related festivities
  2. Final warnings given in this specific case reportedly violated six step protocol outlined in the workers' contracts.

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