

April 19, 2016

To the Stanford Administration, Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate:

As alumni of Stanford University, we write to express our serious concerns about the Stanford Campus Climate Survey on sexual assault.

Both faculty and current students have criticized the Campus Climate Survey. We agree with the concerns they have expressed. One problem is that Stanford did not use the methodology that was adopted by the Association of American Universities (AAU) and used to conduct surveys at many of our peer schools, including Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Brown, and two dozen others. Moreover, Stanford's chosen methodology and presentation of data produces misleading results. For example, Stanford has made much of the finding that just 1.9% of its students experienced sexual assault, but the 1.9% figure averaged together the experiences of men, women, and gender-diverse students. Similarly, the 1.9% figure—as well as other statistics—is derived from a considerably narrower definition of sexual assault than the definition used by the AAU survey and most of our peer institutions. Under Stanford's definition, some behavior that would constitute a felony would be classified as “sexual misconduct,” rather than as assault. These and other problems seriously undermine the value of the survey in addressing sexual assault at Stanford.

In a student body referendum on April 11, 90.6% of voters wanted to re-administer the Campus Climate Survey to correct its various flaws. This is an overwhelming expression of preference. Yet Stanford has already stated that it will not administer an improved survey that adopts the AAU methodology or otherwise responds to the many concerns that critics have raised.

As alumni of Stanford, we are deeply troubled by the administration's efforts to trivialize the concerns of so many current students and faculty. We believe that it is of paramount importance to collect accurate information about sexual assault. A methodologically sound survey is a necessary prerequisite to creating and administering policies relating to sexual assault—an issue that profoundly affects the health and well-being of so many members of the Stanford community. This issue is particularly important given the recent high-profile incidents of sexual assault that have occurred at Stanford.

We hope that Stanford will reconsider its disappointing refusal to administer an improved survey. If it does not, we and many other alumni will be forced to reconsider our voluntary financial support of the university.

Yours very truly,

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18. Shelley Correll, MA '96, PhD '01
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23. Laurie Edelman, PhD '86
24. John Eden, JD '07
25. Joelle Emerson, JD '11

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29. Christy Ferioli, JD '12
30. Autumn Francois, JD '05
31. Lindsay Funk, JD '14
32. Jason Glick, BA '05
33. Danielle Goldstein, JD '06
34. Paul Gowder, PhD '12
35. Azadeh Gowharrizi, JD '05
36. Seth Graham, JD '07
37. Karen Grove, MS '91
38. Alex Han, JD '06
39. Ben Hernandez-Stern, JD '06
40. Kevin Hsu, BA '08, MS '11
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43. Baine P. Kerr, BA '68
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45. Amy Knight, JD '12
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52. Matthew Liebman, JD '06
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56. Ray Maldonado, JD '07
57. Miranda Mammen, BA '14
58. Shoshannah Metz, BA '03, MA '06
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60. Katrina Monet, BA '11
61. Peter Morgan, JD '06, MS '07
62. Mario A. Moya, JD '06
63. Beth Neitzel, JD '13
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67. Sierra Patterson, BA '02
68. Justin Pidot, JD '06
69. Graham Provost, BS '13, MS '14
70. Holly Ragan, JD '12
71. Kimberley Roberts, BA '00

72. Nina Robertson, BS '02, JD '10
73. Emily Ryo, PhD '11
74. Hilda Saffari, BA '97
75. Daisy Sanchez, JD '12
76. Craig Segall, JD '07
77. Camille Seitz-Cherner, JD '15
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79. Jill Shenker, BA '99
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