

November 5, 2018

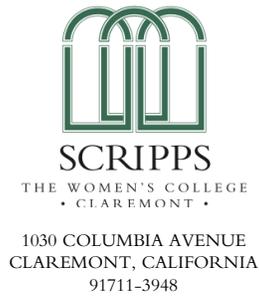
A Letter from the Department of Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies (FGSS) at Scripps College in Support of our Intersex, Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Nonconforming Community Members.

Dear Scripps College and 5C Communities:

Recent statements from the White House have suggested that policies designed to protect people from discrimination based on gender identity—protections that result from years of advocacy, decades of research, and a powerful civil rights movement—may be dismantled in the coming days. According to an internal memo to the Department of Health and Human Services, released by the *New York Times*, the Trump administration plans to revise the Title IX policy to narrowly define gender as a biological, immutable condition determined by genitalia at birth. All those who wish to contest their assigned gender must submit to genetic testing. The Trump administration has even begun to erase mentions of trans lives and livelihood across its websites. While this most immediately and violently targets the most vulnerable communities among us—particularly intersex, trans, non-binary, and gender nonconforming (GNC) peoples—the impact will include the severe rollbacks of freedoms for all peoples. We condemn these measures, their assaults on our intersex, trans, non-binary, and GNC community members, and continue our stance and commitment to protecting and supporting these community members.

For instance, the Trump administration will potentially genetically test students and will require this documentation as part of college applications and Federal Student Aid. This initiative targets intersex, trans, non-binary, and GNC peoples, but has broad and violent implications to all peoples and their claims to identities, kinships, and belonging that cannot be supported by genetic science alone. To endorse this will lead to systemic discrimination against all peoples across a range of institutions and sites, including healthcare, housing, immigration, and more. Furthermore, given the Trump administration's selective endorsements of science, and always tending towards radically conservative ends, we must understand this attack as one that undermines the foundations of academia, research, and education.

Scripps College recently expanded their trans-inclusion policies, such as admissions, largely due to student advocacy. There is still more to do—especially in a 'women's college'—to make our college a more hospitable place for intersex, transgender, non-binary, and GNC students and other community members who are historically underrepresented and remain the most vulnerable to the attacks launched by the Trump administration. This includes members of our community who have and will continue to face verbal, physical, and sexual assaults that preceded the Trump administration, but have been further galvanized by his racist, sexist, xenophobic, transphobic, homophobic, and able-ist rhetoric and initiatives. We have already reached out to President Lara Tiedens and her administration to seek a public statement of support.



A few days ago, two students from Pitzer College, Victor Ultra Omni and Aleo Pugh, wrote a powerful op-ed about what this will mean to them collectively, and why they are so angered by institutional silence from their college. We lift up their brilliant words and call to reflection and action about the importance of supporting some of our community members most susceptible to systemic discrimination.

In their words, “the internal memo was drafted and circulated in the White House in Spring 2018 in consultation with the Department of Health Services and the Department of Education. As such, the latest attack against intersex and trans people cannot simply be thought of as another impulsive Trump tweet. The magnitude of this policy cannot be overstated, but here are just a few of its possible implications:

- Partnering with the Department of Education, the Trump administration seeks to genetically test trans students and will require this documentation as part of college applications and Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- The redefinition of gender will open the flood gates for legal discrimination and violence against trans and intersex people in terms of employment, housing, health care, education, and access to public services writ large. The only state that currently protects against discrimination on the basis of gender identity is Massachusetts & if you are a constituent, we urge you to vote “yes” on Prop 3.
- Partnering with the Department of Health and Public Services, insurance companies will no longer have to cover our life saving medical procedures. Given that medical professionals will not be trained in trans competency, intersex and trans people will face increased violence in medical care.
- Trans and intersex people will no longer be allowed to change their gender markers to those that best represent our chosen presentation and truth. Those who have already changed their federal documents will see their documents revoked.
- In May the Trump administration rescinded protections for trans prisoners. However this most recent assault will further impact the incarceration of trans individuals, and our trans siblings already behind bars. Poor trans people who have interactions with the government in order to survive will face more harassment as these policies reverberate.”
- After the internal memo was released, the trans lifeline has received four times the number of calls than usual. According to UCLA, the transgender suicide rate prior to the memo was an epidemic 40%. This can only be expected to increase if this memo takes hold.”

The Department of Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Scripps College stands by all members of our community, and supports the rights of intersex, transgender, and/or GNC persons to live free from discrimination and free from structural barriers to all institutions, including education. We must increase our support and resources for our community members. Thus, we publicly offer our words of respect and solidarity with our intersex, transgender, non-



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THE WOMEN'S COLLEGE  
• CLAREMONT •

1030 COLUMBIA AVENUE  
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA  
91711-3948

binary and GNC community members. We refuse to enact any policies that would endanger their livelihood. If you need to reach out and get support from us, please don't hesitate to do so.

Sincerely,

Piya Chatterjee, Professor and Chair of FGSS  
Jih-Fei Cheng, Assistant Professor of FGSS