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**UC BERKELEY GRADUATE STUDENTS FILE DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS  
WITH CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING  
Demand Changes in Sexual Harassment Policy at UC Berkeley**

Despite student complaints that have been pending for more than a year, UC Berkeley has not taken any disciplinary action against a professor, Blake Wentworth, who has been accused of harassing multiple students. Two graduate students are filing DFEH complaints today, and are presenting demands for policy changes to Carla Hesse, Interim Lead for the sexual harassment response on campus, in a meeting today.

In March 2015, Berkeley graduate students and instructors, Kathleen Gutierrez and Erin Bennett reported being sexually harassed by Dr. Wentworth, an assistant professor in the South and Southeast Asian Studies Department (SSEAS), to the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination (OPHD). Gutierrez and Bennett presented evidence of repeated inappropriate comments and unwanted touching dating back to the fall of 2014, and at least five other students have complained about Dr. Wentworth, however, UC Berkeley has yet to take any disciplinary action against him.

OPHD has the specific responsibility to provide prompt and effective responses to all complaints of sex discrimination or harassment for faculty, staff and students. OPHD's gross delay in processing the complaints about Dr. Wentworth forced Erin Bennett to take medical leave from her graduate studies for the 2015-2016 school year, and has caused ongoing stress and anxiety for Kathleen Gutierrez, who still works and studies in SSEAS.

The university's inaction left Ms. Bennett and Ms. Gutierrez with no choice but to retain counsel, and file complaints with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) against Wentworth and the U.C. Regents for sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

Sexual harassment by male professors is a widespread problem at UC Berkeley that harms undergraduate and graduate students alike.

"Graduate students' funding packages, work hours, teaching hours, summer breaks, coursework, letters of recommendation, and future careers are all on the line with the professors we work with," Ms. Gutierrez noted.

"I was terrified that if I said anything about his [Wentworth's] conduct, it would impact my academic future and career," Ms. Bennett said.

The UC Berkeley Faculty Code of Conduct recognizes the potential for abuse within the university hierarchy. "[T]he unequal institutional power inherent in the relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and potential for coercion." The Code of Conduct requires that faculty avoid "any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students."

“Under the California Education Code, UC Berkeley has the legal obligation to ensure that its students can participate fully in the educational process, free from discrimination and harassment”, explained Arabelle Malinis, one of the Oakland Law Collaborative attorneys representing the two graduate students. “Ms. Bennett and Ms. Gutierrez have done all they can to expose Dr. Wentworth’s misconduct by reporting it to OPHD, and later testifying at the Vice Provost’s ad hoc committee, but the university has failed to take meaningful action.”

In a March 24, 2016, letter to SSEAS department chair Jacob Dalton, SSEAS faculty condemned the “inadequacy of [the] campus infrastructure to handle the [complaints] of faculty misconduct either promptly or effectively,” recounting that at least seven students had given testimonials about misconduct by Dr. Wentworth and that four of the graduate complainants had departed UC Berkeley, with six of the seven complaints dismissed or closed by OPHD. The faculty requested that the chair take immediate action.

Ms. Gutierrez, Ms. Bennett and their supporters demand the following changes:

- (1) UC Berkeley must hold accountable the perpetrators of sexual harassment on campus with consistent and proportional penalties.**
- (2) Any professor or staff with repeated sexual harassment complaints should not be on campus.**
- (3) There should be expeditious, transparent, consistent procedures for investigating complaints and holding harassers accountable.**
- (4) U.C. Berkeley should support students, provide for representation, and form a Peer Advocacy Organization for students who have endured misconduct and who are considering filing a grievance through OPHD.**
- (5) Graduate Student Instructors should not be mandated reporters of sexual harassment and assault.**
- (6) A cultural shift is needed to recognize and avoid the perpetuation of male dominated spaces.**

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