

October 1, 2018

Contact: Marty Sharkey
VP, Marketing & Communications
msharkey@oxy.edu
818-259-2934

STATEMENT FROM OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE REGARDING PENDING LEGAL ACTION BY JAIME HOFFMAN.

As some of you may know, former Athletic Director Jaime Hoffman filed a lawsuit against the College on Monday, September 24, alleging discrimination and harassment on the basis of her gender, sexual orientation, and disability, among other related claims.

As a community, we appropriately expect a high standard of behavior from this institution and that is why we share this message with you today. Respect together with equity, fairness, compassion and an adherence to process are key principles that guide the College and have been paramount in our actions involving Jaime. While we respect Jaime's right to tell her story, the actions taken by the College are mischaracterized, and we would like to provide pertinent aspects of this matter for the community's understanding.

The College responded promptly and fairly when Jaime first raised her concerns. In October 2017, following Jaime's report to the College about concerns of conduct directed at her by the football community, the College hired an external investigator to undertake a thorough, independent investigation. This investigation involved interviews with Jaime as well as ten additional witnesses and a review of numerous documents, and concluded that the conduct did not constitute gender or sexual orientation harassment and that the College appropriately responded to the conduct identified.

The College has publicly and privately supported Jaime in numerous ways before, during and subsequent to the issues involving the football program. President Veitch made it clear in person and in emails to football players, parents and alumni that the state of the football program was not the fault of any one factor or person, but a result of an accumulation of decisions made by the College. In those same emails, President Veitch backed Jaime fully, saying, "Let me be clear: Jaime Hoffman has my full support. I believe she has the skills, vision and commitment needed to move us forward." In addition, at her request, the College provided Jaime with increased security measures such as regular patrols by Campus Safety and the installation of a security camera at her home.

We tried to bring Jaime back to work. The College engaged in multiple conversations with Jaime about her return since she went on leave in September 2017, and reasonably accommodated her during her time away. After nearly ten months of leave, Jaime informed the College that she required specific accommodations to return to work. The College then engaged in what is known by law as an "interactive process" to fully understand what Jaime could and could not do. Unfortunately, through that process, it became clear that Jaime's limitations could not reasonably be accommodated in a manner that would enable her to perform the essential functions of the Athletic Director position. Jaime was not terminated by the College; she remains on leave.

Oxy remains committed to sustaining a campus environment free of discrimination and harassment. We continue to encourage members of our community to come forward and report any conduct inconsistent with these principles. The College will respond to all reports of discrimination and harassment and take appropriate action.