



[Asoc-announcements-l] CTSJ Department Endorses Student Letter for Academic Equity

2 messages

Nina Srdić Hadži-Nešić <nsrdichadzin@oxy.edu>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 6:51 PM

To: asoc-announcements-l@oxy.edu

Cc: Mary Christianakis <mary@oxy.edu>, Malek Moazzam-Doulat <mdoulat@oxy.edu>

Dear all,

Please read below the message from the CTSJ Department to Occidental College Students (sent earlier through other listservs but is still pending approval by the list admin).

A huge thank you to Professor Christianakis, Professor Moazzam-Doulat, and the entire CTSJ Department which will hopefully serve as a model for others.

All the best,
Nina

Nina Srdić Hadži-Nešić
President, Associated Students of Occidental College

Diplomacy and World Affairs, and Theater Double Major

Career Peer Advisor, Hameetman Career Center

Occidental College Class of '21

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Begin forwarded message:

From: Mary Christianakis <mary@oxy.edu>

Subject: Fwd: CTSJ and Student Letter for Academic Equity

Date: April 26, 2020 at 3:49:16 PM PDT

To: frosh-l@oxy.edu, sophomores-l@oxy.edu, juniors-l@oxy.edu, seniors-l@oxy.edu

Cc: Marisol León <mleon@oxy.edu>, Kai Small <smallk@oxy.edu>, Malek Moazzam-Doulat <mdoulat@oxy.edu>, Elmer Griffin <elmer@oxy.edu>, Viviana MacManus <vmacmanus@oxy.edu>, asilvestrelo@oxy.edu, Caroline Heldman <heldman@oxy.edu>

Dear Occidental College Students,

In the letter below, the 2020/2021 CTSJ Department unanimously endorsed your letter presented to Board of Trustees and Dean Sternberg's office. As CTSJ faculty we will be working with you to adjust our assessment, evaluation, and grading. If you are a student in our courses, please anticipate for an email from your course instructor. We stand in support and solidarity with you as manage one of the most difficult moments of our time. Feel free to reach out to me for any support and guidance.

Wishing all of you health and healing.

Kindest Regards,

Mary Christianakis on behalf of the 2020/21 CTSJ Faculty

Mary Christianakis, Ph.D.

Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture

Department Chair, Critical Theory & Social Justice

Office Hrs. T & R 11:45-12:45

Occidental College

Weingart 102

1600 Campus Rd.
Los Angeles, CA 90041

Phone Number: 323-259-2580

To book an appointment: <https://christianakis.youcanbook.me>
Webpage: <http://www.oxy.edu/faculty/mary-christianakis>
Blog: <http://www.immigrationtalk.org>
Podcast: <http://www.voiceofliteracy.org/posts/41950>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mary Christianakis** <mary@oxy.edu>
Date: Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 3:25 PM
Subject: CTSJ and Student Letter for Academic Equity
To: Oxy Faculty <oxy-faculty-l@oxy.edu>

Dear Occidental College Colleagues:

The 2020/2021 CTSJ Department unanimously endorses the students' Letter for Academic Equity presented to Board of Trustees and Dean Sternberg's office.

We appreciate the thoughtfulness Dean Sternberg has shown in recognizing and protecting faculty authority with regard to pedagogy and grading and in seeking not to impinge on faculty autonomy and academic freedom (1 see endnotes). We also appreciate her recognition of the work faculty have done to adapt to the complex and difficult shift to online teaching this semester (2 see endnotes).

With that in mind, the 2020/2021 CTSJ faculty believe that it is in the best interest of students to enact pedagogy and assessment practices that recognize the traumatic and unequal experiences of our students during the entire second semester, including the deaths of Ilah Richardson and Jaden Burris that were quickly followed by the ensuing pandemic and remote instruction.

For the reasons below we will endorse, accept, and honor the students' request that faculty **"only count assignments submitted after Spring Break toward students' grades if they positively impact students' final grades and make final exams, papers, and lab reports optional."**

1. Some graduate schools/programs (medical schools) may not accept CR/NC if it was the students' choice.
2. Unstable/unsafe living arrangements.
3. Increased domestic and childcare labor, likely disproportionately affecting low-income families, immigrant families, and families of color.
4. Mourning of deceased family members (we have several students who have lost multiple family members);
5. Unstable internet connections/no access to printers;
6. Exacerbated mental health challenges precipitated by isolation and anxiety and lack of access to care.

As a department, we have heard many personal stories that indicate that several of our students face harrowingly difficult situations, even as they try to maintain communication and high-quality work. While we have made adjustments in our own curriculum, the students' astute assessment and evaluation of the situation and their precise and thoughtful articulation of their demands inspires us to follow their lead.

Furthermore, some of our colleagues in social media groups at other institutions have pointed out the relevance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs for self-actualization. See below:

image.png

While we realize that making these accommodations and adjustments may mean different things for different students, particularly those who have been struggling from the beginning of the semester, we are committed to working in the best interest of the students collectively and with the prioritized interest of those who are most vulnerable individually by acknowledging that part of learning is to be generous with love, understanding and compassion. As a department whose founding premise centers equity and justice in order to dismantle interlocking structures of power, we feel it is politically, ethically, and pedagogically necessary to acknowledge how this crisis is coming to bear on the actual lives of our students.

(1) "We are stopping short of instituting a College-wide policy that would remove faculty authority over their classroom operations, as we believe that faculty autonomy is a critical component of academic freedom." Dean Wendy Sternberg. Email to faculty, "End of Semester" on 4/24/20. Also at *The Occidental* <https://www.theoccidentalnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Oxy-Mail-Oxy-students-announcements-l-End-of-semester-message-to-faculty-1.pdf> (accessed 4/26/2020).

(2) "As I conveyed to the students who brought this matter to my attention during yesterday's Board of Trustees meeting, I do not feel that I can support the remedy proposed, because, among other things, it has the potential to devalue the efforts that faculty have put into shifting the academic program to remote instruction [...]" *ibid*.

Kind Regards and Wishing you all Health,

Mary Christianakis, on behalf of the 2020/2021 Department of Critical Theory and Social Justice.

Mary Christianakis, Ph.D.
Professor of Language, Literacy, and Culture
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Asoc-announcements-l mailing list

Asoc-announcements-l@oxy.edu

<http://mailman.oxy.edu/mailman/listinfo/asoc-announcements-l>

Nina Srdić Hadži-Nešić <nsrdichadzin@oxy.edu>

Sun, Apr 26, 2020 at 7:40 PM

To: asoc-announcements-l@oxy.edu

Cc: Mary Christianakis <mary@oxy.edu>, Malek Moazzam-Doulat <mdoulat@oxy.edu>

The image got cut while forwarding; here's the Maslow's hierarchy of needs CTSJ Department used above:



- Nina

[Quoted text hidden]

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