

February 6, 2022

Call for the Resignation of CSU Chancellor Joseph Castro

Given the recent revelations of CSU Chancellor Joseph Castro's failure to appropriately respond to six years of sexual harassment complaints against Frank Lamas, an administrator who served under Castro when Castro was president of Fresno State; in solidarity with students, faculty, and staff across the CSU, the following faculty members of the CSULB community call publicly for his resignation, for the following reasons.

An internal investigation at CSU Fresno already determined Mr. Lamas had an extensive history -- six years long -- of staring at women's breasts, making sexist remarks, touching women inappropriately and against their will, and creating a generally hostile work environment for employees. As recent news reporting reveals, complaints against Lamas began in his *first week* on the job. His behavior was so egregious that "the university even installed a window in Lamas' office in 2016 so he would not be alone with his employees."

Instead of disciplining or firing Mr. Lamas, Chancellor Castro (who was President of CSU Fresno at the time) endorsed his behavior by offering him a golden parachute of \$260,000; retirement benefits; a glowing letter of recommendation; and a lifetime achievement award. Three weeks later, in September 2020, Castro accepted the position of Chancellor.

The CSU Board of Trustees, with the support of various State Assembly members, plans to undertake a second internal investigation of Castro's cover-up of Lamas' abusive behavior. **As faculty members, many of whom have seen our own and our colleagues' sexual harassment and gender discrimination cases covered up, dismissed, or even laughed at by our campus police and administrators; we ask: what good can another internal investigation do?** Lamas' aggressions and infractions against the bodily autonomy and mental health of his coworkers have already been proven by the original Fresno investigation. Likewise, there is no question that Castro not only failed to take action against his employee for violating university codes of conduct and state law, but instead rewarded Lamas for his reprehensible actions.

Our Chancellor's behavior speaks clearly to faculty, staff, and students -- Castro does not care about sexual harassment, gender discrimination, or the safety and well-being of those of us who are most likely to be the targets of predators like Lamas. Instead, Castro endorsed this abhorrent behavior, and later tried to apologize in a condescending open letter claiming the CSU community's "health, safety, and well-being" are his first priority. His actions do not reflect that statement in any way.

It further endangers our personal safety, mental health, and confidence in our workplace that it is Castro himself who is responsible for overseeing Title IX compliance throughout the CSU system. **How can an individual who willingly looked the other way, covered up, and did nothing to stop a predator for six years claim to uphold an environment that is free of gender discrimination and/or sexual harassment/violence by following the laws of Title IX?** We have no confidence in Chancellor Castro's ability to do so.

A system that touts diversity, equity, and inclusion as central values cannot claim to pursue those values with Castro in place. The faculty, staff, and students of the CSU system deserve an honest and upright leader who sets an example of transparency, equity, diversity, and inclusion. **We call for Chancellor Castro to resign from his position, effective immediately.**

Emily Berquist Soule, Professor, History

Sabrina Alimahomed-Wilson, Associate Professor, Sociology

Lori Baralt, Associate Professor and Department Chair, Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Kimberly Robertson (Mvskoke), Associate Professor, American Indian Studies

Jessica Russell, Associate Professor, Communication Studies

Nancy Hall, Professor and Department Chair, Linguistics
Rajbir Singh Judge, Assistant Professor, History
Kelly Sharron, Lecturer, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Vesna Terzic, Associate Professor, Engineering
Clorinda Donato, Professor, French & Italian
Raven Pfister, Lecturer, Communication Studies
Christine El Ouardani, Associate Professor, Human Development
Stacy Macias, Associate Professor, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Courtney Ahrens, Professor, Psychology
Jake Alimahomed-Wilson, Professor, Sociology
Shae Miller, Assistant Professor, Sociology
Linna Li, Associate Professor, Geography
Abraham Weil, Assistant Professor, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Neilan Barnes, Professor, Sociology
Steven Osuna, Associate Professor, Sociology
Oliver Wang, Professor, Sociology
Kerry Woodward, Professor, Sociology
Ali Igmen, Professor, History
Danah Vasquez, Lecturer, History
Hilary Kyle, Lecturer, Psychology
Azza Basarudin, Assistant Professor, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
James Deavenport, Lecturer, History
Kirstyn Chun, Counselor Faculty and Clinical Psychologist, Counseling and Psychological Services
Pedro Castro, College of the Arts, Dean's Office Scholarships & Curriculum Analyst
Dina Azzam, Lecturer, Communication Studies
Nancy Martin, Associate Professor, Sociology
Araceli Esparza, Associate Professor, English
Ronald Lowe, Anthropology
Claire Garrido-Ortega, Health Science
Dennis Lòpez, English
Hugh Wilford, History
California Faculty Association at CSU Long Beach

Sources:

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