



USC University of Southern California

November 15, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with us. We, too, stand with our students who are survivors of sexual violence and those who have reported allegations of sexual misconduct and drugging. We deeply appreciate the care and compassion that we are seeing by members of our community as we work together to seek an end to sexual assault on campus.

In your October 30 letter, you called for an independent investigation into the administrative and communication processes surrounding the alerts to our community and information on the investigation. As we discussed with you at the Executive Board meeting on Wednesday, November 10, we are currently under an independent audit by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). Put simply, you cannot get more independent than an audit by the Department of Education.

We reached out to the DOE, in fact, to alert them to our recent issues. They have been clear with us that they will be addressing this matter and the recent reports and community notices as part of that audit.

In addition, the university is currently under a Clery audit that is looking into operational areas, including fraternity and sorority affairs and intercollegiate athletics, as well as the Tyndall matter. Accordingly, our senior leaders are in regular communication with the DOE.

We have been proactive in sharing information and responding to events. We posted a lengthy [FAQ](#) on October 29 that addresses the delay in communication in detail. We also established a [Working Group on Interfraternity Council \(IFC\) Culture, Prevention and Accountability](#) that is being chaired by Monique S. Allard, Acting Vice President for Student Affairs, and Christopher Manning, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer. That group is bringing together members of our community to address the initial issues around IFC social activities, prevention, and education strategies and tackle the broader issues of sexual assault and excessive drinking and drugs across campus. **We will provide updates as work gets underway, and we expect a report with initial recommendations by December 17.**

Additional sexual harassment and prevention education is being implemented for students, faculty, and staff, and Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) is requiring a mandatory three-part workshop for students addressing bystander intervention, affirmative consent, and healthy relationships.

EEO-TIX is currently reviewing and investigating reports of sexual misconduct and drugging, and we are considering actions we will take with regard to the organizations involved in these allegations. We have permanently banned and delisted fraternities in the past and will do so again, if warranted. As you are aware, all social activities within the IFC are banned by the university until further notice – this is equivalent to interim suspension of all fraternities. The university is also cooperating with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) on its investigation into the allegations at Sigma Nu.

Your letter referenced other matters that occurred under a previous administration. In May, we discussed with you [the root causes of previous problems](#) that have led to some of the issues we are experiencing today, including inadequate governance structures, and lack of investment in critical infrastructure, such as EEO-TIX and student mental health. In addition, we have posted detailed FAQs on our change.usc.edu website on [Varsity Blues](#) and the [Tyndall settlements](#), as well as information about the [Office of Civil Rights resolution agreement](#).

We will continue to share information with you in a timely manner. We attend your meetings – both Executive Board and full Senate – on a regular basis. We provide updates and answer any and all questions as we can, and we will continue to do so. Establishing trust with our community is our main goal, and communicating with candor is the way to get there. We look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,



Carol L. Folt
President



Charles F. Zukoski
Provost and Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs