

**UCSB Feminist Studies Graduate Students
in Support of Trans, Non-Binary and Sex Working Students**

June 12, 2019

This letter is a collaborative effort by the undersigned Feminist Studies graduate students in support of trans, non-binary and sex working students at UC Santa Barbara. As part of Feminist Studies, we are committed to cultivating intersectional, student-centered learning and community environments. To the students who have been harmed by transphobia and anti-sex worker rhetoric in our department, we are so sorry. Transphobia and anti-sex work ideology does not belong in our classrooms or communities, and as graduate students, teaching assistants, and teaching associates, we unequivocally state our support of trans, non-binary, and sex working students on UCSB's campus. We believe feminist studies should be rooted in ideologies of liberation and care, and trans-exclusionary "radical feminist" (TERF) and sex-work exclusionary (SWERF) ideologies are incompatible with these values.

We acknowledge that the gender binary, as it is commonly understood in the US, is rooted in the logics of colonialism, racism, and gendered domination, and that fighting transphobia is integral to resisting and healing from the harms that these systems create. The violence of transphobia, particularly transmisogyny, falls especially hard on communities of color and contributes to the exploitation, criminalization, and incarceration disproportionately experienced by black, brown, immigrant, and working class people. As queer students, students of color, and/or allies, our visions of feminist futures include and affirm people made invisible by and marginalized by the gender binary. In our classrooms, we are committed to holding space for trans students, including taking seriously trans students' experiences, standpoints, and intellectual contributions.

Anti-sex work policies have existed to control, surveil and punish marginalized people, specifically trans sex workers of color. As graduate students of Feminist Studies, we are committed to critically engage students with the issues that sex workers face around the world such as stigma in the workplace, harassment, and incarceration. We are committed to learning, teaching, writing and making space for sex workers and sex working students and their contributions to the academic field of Feminist Studies as well as feminist politics around agency, labor, and consent. Our visions of feminist futures maintain that sex workers are entitled to safety from stigma, violence, and criminalization. Sex work is work!

In light of a Feminist Studies graduate student's transphobic and anti-sex work rhetoric and reported conduct as an instructor, we understand that trans and sex working students as well as those in solidarity may feel unable to, unwilling to, or unsure if they want to participate in Feminist Studies classes, minors, or majors. We support you all in doing what is best for you. We also want to affirm that in our classrooms, curricula, and professional interactions, we are committed to supporting trans and sex working students. Feminist Studies is a field rooted in traditions of protest and political action. To the students who are troubled by all of this, we support your freedom of speech as it may manifest in awareness-raising, protest, etc and offer our collaboration in efforts to address transphobia and anti-sex worker sentiments on this campus.

To the faculty in our department, we appreciate that you recognize our concerns and share a commitment to fighting transphobia. Our demands are as follows: (1) We ask for transparency in how this issue is being addressed; we are aware that the Feminist Studies Curriculum committee has taken steps this Spring 2019 quarter to address concerns raised by students regarding transphobia, anti-sex work rhetoric and environments of safety for trans students—please provide a summary of that meeting. (2) We demand that specific steps be taken to ensure that those espousing openly racist, anti-sex work and transphobic beliefs do not continue to teach or TA for the department. (3) We ask that the department explore and begin developing resources for trans, non-binary and sex working undergraduate and graduate students. (4) While we appreciate being referred to Title IX, EthicsPoint, and other institutional entities and resources, we also recognize that these insitutional entities often further marginalize vulnerable students and we ask that the Feminist Studies department respond publicly to the concerns being raised by undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Isabella C. Restrepo

Ph.D. Candidate, Feminist Studies

Allison Pierce

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

@AllisonM_Pierce

J. Victorian

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

@postvictorian

Kimberly M. Soriano

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

@spacegeminis

Megan Spencer

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Nancy Morales

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Mariah Webber

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Anna Wald

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Sandibel Borges, PhD

Graduated 2017, Feminist Studies

Sarah Jane Pinkerton

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Emma Schuster

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Stephanie Kaylor

Ph.D student, Feminist Studies

Chelsea Jones

Ph.D. Candidate, Feminist Studies

Lauren Clark

Ph.D. Candidate, Feminist Studies

Amoni Thompson

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Emily J. O'Brien

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Alex Mireles

Ph.D. Student, Feminist Studies

Karen Buenavista Hanna, PhD

Graduated 2018, Feminist Studies

Rachel Rys, PhD

Graduating 2019, Feminist Studies

Shannon Weber, Ph.D

Graduated 2014, Feminist Studies