



April 14, 2021

*Via email to Peter W. Wood at [pwood@nas.org](mailto:pwood@nas.org)*

Peter Wood  
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Dr. Wood,

I appreciate the National Association of Scholars' interest in protecting academic freedom and excellence in higher education.

As I am sure you understand, we respect the privacy of students and faculty through our investigation and grievance processes and accordingly will limit the information we will share at this juncture. We have also taken great care to protect Dr. Paxton's reputation in limiting the amount of information the university shared about him. Dr. Paxton and his attorney, Ms. DesCamp, have not taken the same approach.

Dr. Paxton and his attorney have sought to litigate the matter in the media by providing inaccurate information to various news outlets and organizations. For example, the statement in your letter that an adjunct music professor was accused of rape is not true.

You also reference an anecdote that has been shared in the media about Dr. Paxton's comments during classes. This anecdote does not represent the full scope of the complaints made against him.

Pacific also does not agree with Dr. Paxton or his attorney's characterization of conversations and communications with him about the matter. The university has continually provided information about its Title IX investigation and grievance processes to Dr. Paxton and his attorney. It has also provided Dr. Paxton the opportunity to participate in the process and access to evidence as it is allowed to do so under Title IX and FERPA.

I will not go into specifics about the complaints in this case but think it is important to communicate that Pacific takes complaints made by its faculty, employees, and students that implicate bias and harassment very seriously. Additionally, Pacific is following established federal regulations and internal governance processes to investigate and, if necessary based on the outcome of any applicable grievance process, address the conduct reported to it about Dr. Paxton. Pacific does not view responding to complaints made by its students via its conduct processes as, in your words, "acceding to the demands of the mob" nor find itself in a situation of "moral panic."

Without getting into the specifics of Dr. Paxton, I would also like to address administrative leave, generally. As you may be aware, parties are often separated during the course of a grievance process. In some cases, separation may mean moving a student to a different class section or implementing mutual no-contact orders. It also can include administrative leave for employees, which is consistent with the Administrative Leave *34*

*CFR 106.44(2)(d)* and Supportive Measures *34 CFR 106.30(a)* sections of Title IX regulations, which you also cite.

A number of factors are considered in determining how best to separate parties in a given case. These considerations can include safety, but also can be based on the breadth or number of complaints, as well as previous misconduct reports that might indicate a pattern of behavior.

Administrative leave is not punitive.

Title IX regulations and Pacific's Title IX Sexual Misconduct Process allow each party — along with their designated advisor in the Title IX Sexual Misconduct Process — to receive access to evidence that is directly related to the allegation before the close of the investigation phase of the process. This is consistent with the limited exception to FERPA that is provided by Title IX regulations. Dr. Paxton has received access to evidence directly related to the allegations.

The investigation process is, however, still underway. Dr. Paxton has been offered the opportunity to meet with the investigator for an interview. It is his choice to participate or not. After a reasonable period of time, the investigator will move forward with the initial report.

This case has received scrutiny from a number of external sources, from the NAS to various bloggers and news sites, with incomplete and one-sided information. We, however, remain committed to following established processes, including federal regulations, university policy, and our Faculty Handbook, in completing the investigation into the allegations of misconduct appropriately and without the influence of these external parties.

Dr. Lesley M. Hallick  
President, Pacific University