

Central Phoenix Inez Casiano NOW
P0 Box 32336
Phoenix, Az 85064
Dianne Post, Secretary
Postdlpost@aol.com
602 271 9019

July 9, 2018

In the 1980s, Women Take Back the Night was a very active and activist feminist group. Fighting the rape culture on the ASU campus was one of its activities. We held marches and rallies, participated in sit-ins, and made public the violence toward women so many of our members had faced. There was no rape crisis center, no rape hotline, abusers were not held accountable, and women who reported sexual assault were shamed and often run out of the university, their dreams shattered forever.

Fast forward to 2018. ASU still has no rape crisis center, no rape hotline, abusers are still not held accountable whether students or faculty, and women who report sexual assault are still shamed, not believed, and often leave the campus with their dreams shattered. So where have we come in thirty years? And more important, why has ASU not made more progress in dealing with violence toward women?

ASU paid out big settlements of taxpayer money in six cases in five years. Taxpayers paid out settlements for ASU in 2008 and 2010 that dwarf what the other two universities have paid. ASU has been under federal investigation and scrutiny for their rape culture since 2007. Over 57 complaints have been filed by women, men, and LGBT students.

Title IX was passed in 1972 and requires unbiased, timely investigations; mental health, housing, and academic accommodation; that victims be protected from retaliation; and that effective measures be taken to prevent sexual violence. ASU has yet – 46 years later – been unable to meet a single one of those requirements.

The Clery Act passed in 1992 requires universities to report the number of rapes and sexual violence on campus. The Dean of Student Rights and Responsibilities said that ASU investigated 3,660 reports of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence for the 2015-16 school year. Yet the ASU police department Clery Report only lists about 100 reports. Source: <http://www.statepress.com/article/2017/09/sppolitics-asu-keeps-current-sexual-assault-investigation-procedures> and <https://www.asu.edu/police/PDFs/ASU-Clery-Report.pdf> ASU has yet – 26 years later – to meet the requirement or honestly reporting the number of assaults. ASU's own police officers sued in 2016 because they were being forced to lie about the sexual assault numbers.

The #metoo movement has made it clear that sexual assault is prevalent in every walk of life. Priests, coaches, and professors are commonly found guilty today. The culture of fraternities and athletics has supported violence against women for decades.

The ongoing scandal at Barrett Honors college and the suspension of Lawrence Kraus are the tip of the iceberg.

Yet over half of those who file complaints at ASU say they have been retaliated against and the perpetrators were never held accountable. Indeed in a recent case, administrators seemed to think that a persons GPA insulates them from accountability for their violent actions. Ask the thousands of #metoo victims whether that is true. ASU thinks expelling the perpetrator is too harsh. But often the victim is forced to leave not only this campus but higher education forever. That is what is too harsh – blaming and punishing the victim. Her future is on the line.

We are #metoo. We are fed up. ASU must seriously address its rape culture among the faculty and students. It must include the voices of women from the campus itself, not just some selected tokens who mouth the party line. Time's up. Cut the funding to ASU until it protects its female students; change the administration until they follow the law; turn over enforcement to an off-campus, feminist group to ensure that victims are protected; hold the perpetrators accountable by criminal charges and termination for staff and employees and expulsion for students. Fifty years is far too long to wait for justice.

* * *