

Summary of Trustee Mosallam Town Hall

February 3, 2018

Dear MSU Community:

I write as a member of the MSU community, as a violence prevention researcher working to change climate across our campus and all of society, and as the designated transcriber at Trustee Brian Mosallam's Town Hall on February 1, 2018.

I thank all who attended the Town Hall, those who attempted to attend, and those who shared their stories. I also thank Trustee Mosallam for providing the forum to open communication and for listening. And I thank Stephanie Nawyn from the Center for Gender in a Global Context for holding space to begin to excavate and process the pain and frustration our community feels, along with Tana Fedewa and her team from the MSU Sexual Assault Program for providing supportive services for survivors during and after the Town Hall.

As a transcriber at the Town Hall, it was my privilege and honor to listen and transcribe. As a member of the MSU community and as a violence prevention researcher who cares deeply about our climate, I share a synthesis of what I heard and invite you to comment on areas I may have missed and/or those that need further augmentation.

What I heard throughout your stories shared at the Town Hall is that we have a great big problem with power on our campus.

More specifically, we have a problem with how power is unevenly distributed. Our problems of power are related to gender. To race and ethnicity. To sexuality. To the tenure system. To the university's Greek Fraternity system. To the administration. To the institution's control of communications, decisions and resource allocations.

To be more candid, the Town Hall dialogue underscored an undervaluing and exploitation of women on our campus. An undervaluing and exploitation of survivors. An undervaluing and exploitation of brown and black people. An undervaluing and exploitation of those with international identity. And those who are sexual minorities.

It also underscored the administration's disregard for students.

What is more, the Town Hall dialogue underscored the privilege, power and permissions unduly credited to men on our campus, to perpetrators of sexual assault, to those without brown or black skin, to faculty with tenure, to senior administrators, to those within the Greek Fraternity system, and to those who control communications, decisions and resource allocations.

Our campus power problem includes a lack of transparency and lack of accountability.

Our power problem has eroded our campus climate, identity and spirit. It has caused some to regret their decision to come to MSU, to stop giving money to MSU, to distrust the university's communications and actions.

Our problem of power has caused survivors great distress, has limited their access to resources, and has caused them to continue to feel unsafe.

Our power problem has restricted the ability of the campus community, including its talented student leaders, to adequately respond to the needs of survivors and those with other exploited status.

Our power problem is cause for grave concern about the past, present and future. For women on campus. For survivors. For black and brown people on campus. For those with international identity. For those with sexual minority identity.

In our crisis, I heard you call for an examination and redistribution of the problematic power structure across MSU. You are calling for an increase in transparency and accountability. You are calling for more equitable communications, decisions and resource allocations-those that involve the equitable consultation and input of all faculty, staff and students, including those reflecting all genders, race and ethnicities, sexual orientations, and other identities.

You are calling for widespread change. You are calling for MSU to do things differently, to do things better, to involve you in the change and in charting the course forward, to involve you as leaders and experts. You are also calling for MSU to use its campus violence experts to provide guidance in best practices moving forward.

What is more, in your call for widespread change, you are calling for the resignation of the university's senior leaders and Board, for a bolstering of our offices on campus that investigate and provide counseling services for sexual assault, and for fundamental changes in how we treat those with disadvantaged statuses including training opportunities to help us be more skilled and equitable in our actions.

As a member of the MSU community, I hear you. In closing, I thank you again and ask that you let me know if the synthesis here reflects your concerns about unequitable power on our campus and your call for change, and whether additions are needed.

Thank you again.

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