

## Carly Mee's Statement

The weekend after my first week of classes as a freshman at Occidental College, I was raped by a male student.

I did not report the rape because I heard from other survivors that the sexual assault reporting process at my school had proven to be extremely alienating and victim-blaming.

I spent the following two years feeling unsafe, anxious, and depressed. I would frequently run into my rapist on campus and at parties. Finally, during my third year, I decided that I could not take it anymore- I would either have to report him, or transfer to another school. I began the reporting process towards the beginning of fall of my junior year. At that time my rapist was already on probation for sexually assaulting another woman at Oxy, and I was told that if he was found responsible in my case, he would be expelled.

The process continued for months. When I told an administrator that I did not feel safe, I was told that I had nothing to worry about, that she had met with my rapist, and that he didn't seem like the type of person who would do something like that.

Finally, just before finals week, my hearing occurred. A few days later the administration told me that he had been found responsible for two counts against me, both rape and sexual assault. I was incredibly relieved to hear that he would be expelled. But, within a couple of weeks, I received a notice that my rapist had appealed the decision.

Although it was questionable whether his appeal fit the criteria listed in Oxy's policy, it was -accepted nonetheless and I was told that the panel would have to re-convene. It did and he was again found responsible for raping and sexually assaulting me.

Yet for reasons that were not revealed to me, the administration changed his sanctions- he would now be suspended until I graduated, and then would be allowed to come back and make up the credits he didn't complete when they initially expelled him.

When I asked why the punishment was changed all I was told was that it was due to an "extraordinary circumstance".

The person who raped me had been found responsible for raping three women, yet he will be allowed to come back to Oxy in the fall. I can never come back to visit the school that I paid a great deal of money to attend for fear of seeing my rapist.

## Kenda Woolfson's Statement

Hello, my name is Kenda Woolfson.

I was raped during my freshmen year at Occidental by a male student. I suffered for three long years in silence, dealing with PTSD from the rape and severe anorexia. I fell critically ill during my junior year and was forced to seek full-time treatment.

When I returned to Occidental at the beginning of my senior year, I finally felt strong enough to report my case. All I wanted was to have one year without the rapist at my school. I went to a Dean and told her what had happened to me, but she told me that reporting my rape would be a 'long and grueling' process, that it would 'take a toll on my mental health', that I 'wouldn't have a strong case,' and that 'reporting would lose me a lot of friends,' so I might as well 'just enjoy' my senior year. She never even asked who he was, or if his presence on campus made me feel unsafe. I listened to her, and I did not make a formal report.

For the entirety of my last year in college I continued to live every day in fear. In May I watched as my rapist shook the hands of our College's President and received his diploma and I wished that I had not been discouraged by a Dean from reporting the rape.

I am coming forward now because I want to break the silence for the Occidental women who will come after me. I want women at my college to not spend four years in fear and shame, but instead to feel that if something happens to them that they will be taken seriously and that they will receive support and help from the college and that they will be safe and protected.

## Leah Capranica's Statement

My name is Leah Capranica. I was sexually assaulted by another student at Occidental College just weeks before I started my sophomore year. I met with the Director of Student Advocacy and Accountability to discuss the reporting process. During my first meeting, she told me that the assault "wasn't that serious" and that there would be consequences for me and my friends if I reported. She also told me that even if the school found him responsible for assaulting me, I would have to change dorms if I felt unsafe living a few floors away from the perpetrator.

Because of what that administrator told me during our meeting, I was too intimidated to file a report of the assault. I was silenced. The next semester, I learned that the administration had misinformed me of my rights when another girl assaulted by the same student spoke out. I decided then to report despite the administration's prior discouragement.

The semester after I reported was the worst three months of my life. The school handled the process with no respect or compassion. I felt like I was being punished and shamed for speaking out.

Even with Occidental's disregard for the survivors, the student was found responsible in both cases and the school expelled him. Although he appealed and was again found responsible for the sexual assaults, the Dean of Students reduced his expulsion to a suspension. The school is allowing a serial offender back on campus next December. I will never feel safe walking on campus again.

When I first came to Occidental, I thought I found a small, supportive college that I could trust and that the administration cared about the safety of its students. But when I reported a sexual assault, I realized I was wrong. The administration is more concerned with silencing survivors and shielding the perpetrators than protecting its students and supporting the victims.

I am here today because I hope that by speaking out I might help make Occidental a more compassionate place for survivors and a little safer for the rest my peers.

## Rachel Greenstein's Statement

For three and a half years, I loved Occidental College. I participated in many activities, worked for the Office of Admission, and took on leadership roles across the campus. I volunteered for prospective student events, new student orientations, and various committees. Then, at the beginning of my final semester, a fellow student raped me in my own bedroom.

That one night altered my entire college experience. I no longer felt safe on the college campus that had once felt like home. I didn't want my rapist to hurt anyone else, so I asked the Assistant Dean of Students about reporting the rape. Though the process she described sounded daunting, I felt it was my responsibility to report a violent crime. The Dean told me that if my rapist was found guilty, his minimum punishment would be a suspension. I wanted to make the campus a safer place for other students, so I decided to report.

Unfortunately, over the next few months the administration broke their own policies several times, creating additional trauma for me during my final semester of school. I met with investigators and told my story multiple times. I sat through a three-hour hearing and described the rape to a panel of faculty members and administrators. They found him guilty of rape and gave him a one-semester suspension.

He filed an appeal, and an administrator who had never once spoken to me about the case decided to change his punishment to a book report and community service. The administration allowed him to stay on campus, where he spread lies about me and shared confidential details of my case. When I asked the administrator one week later why she had changed his punishment, she told me that she couldn't remember the details. I devoted much of my time in college to helping the school, but when I needed them most, the administration failed me.

I'm speaking today because I hope that someday, every student at Occidental will be allowed a safe and supportive college education.

## Statement

I'm a first year student at Occidental College.

I was so excited to go to a school like Oxy because it seemed like a great school but I quickly learned that there was a problem with sexual assault on campus. I honestly never thought that I would be a victim.

Two months ago I was raped.

I reported it to the police and also to the administration at the college expecting support and compassion. I received neither.

Occidental's failure to issue a campus wide alert led to hundreds of students and faculty protesting. In response the President wrote an open letter attacking and shaming me for speaking up.

I have faced a long and miserable process trying to bring my rapist to a hearing that they are still dragging out. I feel that the administration has tried to dissuade me from continuing with the process or talking to the press about what happened to me. I have had to pressure the administration every step of the way and have been kept in the dark about what is going on in my case. They have offered me very little support.

Occidental has created a culture where victims are afraid to come forward and where the perpetrators know they can get away with it. If Occidental had taken their job of protecting and educating me as seriously as they should, I don't think I would be standing here right now.