



The Office of the
President

President Gottfredson's statement to media regarding sexual violence

President Gottfredson made the following statement at a press conference on the University of Oregon campus called for 11:00 a.m. PDT on Friday, May 9, 2014. Full text of the president's remarks is below.

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Sexual violence, assault, and harassment have no place on our campus or anywhere in our community. None. Ever.

The type of behavior in the police report released this week is utterly unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

I understand and empathize with the outrage people feel — as a father, I was appalled at what I read. As president of this university, I am angry and disappointed over this profoundly disturbing incident.

As you know, there are many details of this case that we cannot talk about. We can not discuss the specifics of this case, or any other case involving students. I know it's frustrating, and we would like to say more, but we are not going to violate the laws that are in place to protect students' privacy or the rights of our students — *especially* the survivor.

Here is what I *can* tell you:

- When the university was made aware of the incident, we immediately began our investigation and activated our established process of support and service. *Immediately.*
- We cooperated completely with law enforcement. The Eugene Police Department requested we not do anything that might hinder their criminal investigation—including suspending players or not playing them in a game. We complied fully with that request, and appropriately so.
- That does not mean we did nothing during that time. It simply means that we refrained, at the request of Eugene Police, from doing anything that might have alerted the persons the police told us not to alert to the investigation. Throughout, we continued to follow other steps of our regular process of investigation, and to provide support services, as we do for all such matters.
- We received the police report on April 24. That enabled us to take action without jeopardizing a criminal investigation. Not all actions the university takes are disclosable. However, working with the UO Athletic Department, we took the following action: The three student-athletes were suspended. They will not be playing basketball at Oregon again.
- We have, and we will continue, to pursue all appropriate action in this case. We have clear, established policies and protocols that we follow in all such cases.
- When and if we can share additional information, I assure you we will.

In the meantime, it is my great hope that we, as a university community, will take this opportunity to address the broader issues of sexual violence and harassment directly, openly, and decisively.

As a community, we need to engage in frank, productive discussions that will help eradicate such violence from our campus. Because even one instance of sexual assault in our community is too many.

Over the past few days, I have talked with students all across campus, to hear their feelings and concerns. Yesterday, I met with faculty members of the UO Coalition to End Sexual Violence, to gain their perspective and talk about how the campus can most effectively work together to end sexual violence in our community.

We have great expertise on our faculty, and we will draw on that and turn to them to help improve our response, support, and prevention practices.

We have a student body of caring, conscientious young people who want a safe and respectful community.

We will do whatever it takes to create a safe, secure environment for all our students, and foster a culture of respect and shared values on our campus. Our university will not tolerate behavior that runs counter to these values.

I am encouraged by the attention the problem of sexual assault on college campuses has received recently on a national level, as outlined in the [recent report](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/president2.uoregon.edu/files/docs/report_0.pdf) (http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/president2.uoregon.edu/files/docs/report_0.pdf) from the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. This is an important step toward the kinds of deep cultural change that must take place to stop such violence on our campuses.

But the actions taking place nationally are not nearly enough. We must address this problem here on our *own* campus and within our own community. We must take this opportunity to rise above the fray and become leaders in the fight to eradicate sexual violence from college campuses, beginning with our own.

Last fall, we commissioned an external review of our sexual misconduct policies and protocols, and we have already implemented or are in the process of implementing all of the recommendations of that [report](http://vpsa.uoregon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Independent-Review-Sexual-Violence-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf), (<http://vpsa.uoregon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Independent-Review-Sexual-Violence-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf>) including adding staff to support students who have experienced sexual violence. We have that report available for you.

Next week, I will announce details of an additional independent review I have ordered jointly with our Athletic Director and Vice President for Student Affairs to examine our practices for preventing and responding to sexual violence. We will appoint an independent panel, whose charge will include an examination of our athletic department's recruitment practices, and a campus climate survey to learn more about the culture of our own campus community when it comes to sexual violence and harassment.

Our students' safety and security is our top priority. We have strong policies and protocols in place, and we are working to make them stronger still.

Until we have a campus where every individual feels safe, where everyone is respected, and where no instance of sexual violence is tolerated, we will not consider it good enough.

This is a difficult time for our community, *especially* for those whose lives have been directly affected by sexual violence. As a university, we will take this time as an opportunity to make our campus safer, our community stronger, and our intolerance of sexual violence in any form clear and unequivocal.



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