



CCC Women's Caucus Statement regarding Sexual Assault

The California Community Colleges' Women's Caucus is shocked by recent revelations about Cesar Chavez and his sexual abuse of women and girls.

Sexual abuse is far too prevalent and deeply painful. Nearly every minute, someone in the United States is sexually assaulted, and every nine minutes that someone is a child. Approximately 20% of women in the United States have experienced rape or attempted rape and one third of the victims are between 11- 17 years old.¹

The pattern is pervasive. Sexual assault defies race, class and time. Sexual assault permeates history. Perpetrators are often men wielding power over victims who trusted and admired them. The trauma of sexual abuse has enduring consequences and must never be suppressed.

The Farmworkers movement is rooted in a commitment to justice, community empowerment, non-violence and Christian faith. The recent revelations about Chavez are even more shocking in that light. For those whose lives have been shaped by the farmworker movement, so deeply embedded in the fabric of California, these revelations are deeply painful. However, the work of so many, past and present, who have fought to expand opportunity, dignity, and equity for communities across California and the nation remains as a beacon for all of us.

The California Community Colleges' Women's Caucus agrees with the Cesar Chavez Foundation that, "The Movement was never about one man – it belonged to the people who built it, and it belongs to the communities we continue to serve today. The Movement was built by thousands of ordinary women, men, and families from all walks of life who sacrificed for justice they believed in. Their contributions and the communities they transformed, belong to all of them. They cannot and will not be erased."²

To the survivors, including Dolores Huerta,³ Ana Murguia and Debra Rojas: we applaud your courage to step forward, raise your voice and shine a light on these instances of denegation. We believe you. We honor your courage, and we are heartbroken for the harm you have carried in the shadows for over 60 years.

The Women's Caucus is committed to restorative justice and healing for those who have been harmed. We encourage mental health support for students at our respective institutions and for classified professionals, faculty and administrators. We recommend Employee Assistance Programs offered through Human Resources throughout the California Community Colleges.

The CCCWC goal of equity rests on the implementation of Justice. We uphold our mission, "to advocate for change and policies that will advance opportunities and achieve equity for women across California Community Colleges."

We denounce the abuse of women and children. We demand the law and justice systems protect survivors. We demand the full weight of justice be brought to bear against all

perpetrators including those in social movements, academia, and politics all the way to the highest office in our country.

We raise our voice on behalf of the 2.2 million students across 116 campuses, 70% of diverse ethnic backgrounds and 53% women whom we serve.

For more information about the California Community Colleges' Women's Caucus go to www.cccwomenscaucus.org.

¹ [National Sexual Violence Resource Center; RAINN](#)

² [Cesar Chavez Foundation](#)

³ New York Times statement by [Dolores Huerta](#)