

PEA Alumni for Truth & Healing (PATH) stands with current students and alumni to reiterate that Exeter is ethically and morally letting down survivors of abuse at Exeter and the broader Exeter community.

In her recent Vanity Fair article, Mr. Weber's Confession, alumna Nancy Jo Sales writes about her experience of disregard and dismissal by those representing Exeter as she tried to assert her voice in the extraordinary mishandling of her own experiences by Exeter's administration and legal counsel. Presently current student leaders are petitioning for Exeter to retain an expert consultant with a background of sexual violence prevention and advocacy. These student leaders are bearing the weight of supporting the student body in processing these events without professional guidance or support from the school administration.

PATH shares the concerns of the Exeter community that the campus may be no safer for students today than it was in decades past. Our calls for sensitivity, transparency, and accountability in handling reports of sexual misconduct remain sadly relevant in light of recurring stories of the mishandling of abuse allegations—including those involving Nancy Jo Sales and the arrest of Mr. Kaminski last year. PATH is dismayed to hear that the current students feel they have been tasked with supporting their peers without adequate support themselves. This underlines, once again, the need for robust training at all levels in responding to sexual harm.

It is clear from Nancy Jo's article that Principal Bill Rawson's words to PATH from February 2019 expressing "deep regret for harm that has been caused to survivors by past incidents of sexual misconduct and past mishandling of incidents of misconduct," accepting "full responsibility and the commitment to support those harmed," and promising to "engage in principled decision-making with a commitment to act with compassion, understanding and fundamental fairness" remains as empty today as it was three years ago. Five years after the disclosures about Rick Schubart, Exeter has still not developed credible strategies to achieve these promises and objectives.

PATH reiterates the need for:

Transparent and full disclosure of the scope of sexual misconduct at Exeter with acknowledgment that the H&K investigation was incomplete and mismanaged by Exeter;

A survivor centered and trauma-informed reporting process with truly independent investigations;

A survivor centered and trauma-informed mediation process for survivors to process claims against the school that is not retraumatizing and raises the bar from meeting only legal responsibilities to satisfying Exeter's moral and ethical responsibilities to its students and alumni; and

Transparency in the steps the school is taking to increase training and hold adults accountable when failing to report or respond appropriately and sensitively to reports of sexual misconduct.

A representative on the board of trustees with expertise in sexual violence advocacy and prevention

Nancy Jo's painful reporting, and the activism of current Exeter students, create a new opportunity for Exeter to reconcile its commitment to knowledge and goodness with humility and responsive leadership. Exeter can – and must – do better.

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