

Dear Leticia Bustamante,

My name is Tom Wilde and I am a former student of the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. I work in the field of education and I've been developing what I think is a necessary research project at UCLA. To continue this project, I need to enlist the help of the students, faculty members, staff, and administrators at "the most popular campus in the nation," as UCLA currently markets itself around the world. So, I'm sending this e-mail to you and others studying and/or working at UCLA.

But first I must tell you that I know I am not supposed to be sending this e-mail to you now. When UCLA kicked me out of a Ph.D. program almost twenty-three (23!) years ago, I was supposed to walk away quietly with the two official documents UCLA gave me: a brief letter stating that my status as a graduate student had been terminated solely because my GPA was below the 3.0 minimum required by UCLA Graduate Division policy; and an official UCLA Graduate Academic Record (my grade transcript) showing my GPA was (and still is) above 3.0.

Thereafter, I often wondered how many other former students were given these same two documents when UCLA kicked them out. I thought, is this a normal, codified (ethical) student expulsion operation for UCLA's administrators, or am I really the only UCLA student ever expelled with these two clearly irreconcilable UCLA documents in hand?

So, some ten years after UCLA kicked me out, I returned to campus to meet with UCLA professor, Dr. Val Rust, who was my Division Chair at the time of my expulsion. At my instigation, he met with UCLA professor, Dr. Robert Brenner, to discuss the facts and circumstances of my expulsion. At one point during their discussions, Dr. Rust said to Dr. Brenner, "This is a wrong to right." Dr. Brenner then wrote to me:

"The case is clear-cut: they had no basis for dismissing you, as you met the formal qualifications. Moreover, they gave you no other reasons, so any further reasons they give now are beside the point. All this is obvious. I have no difficulty saying it forcefully to anyone. *The difficulty will be to force them [UCLA administrators] to reverse themselves due to their unjust decision.*" (my italics)

Some months later, in my efforts to bring more UCLA faculty members into the case, I met with UCLA Distinguished Professor, Dr. Edward Keenan. After looking into it, he ended his involvement and ended his letter to me with the following:

“[T]o be clear, I am not willing to form a committee with you and some other faculty you might round up in order to launch a move to reinstate you. I regard this as hopeless, because *a random collection of faculty (however distinguished) has no status within the university power structure. No one would be obliged to pay any attention to us.*” (my italics)

But in his letter, this UCLA Distinguished Professor did offer to help by giving me this suggestion: “If you apply for admission, the dept [UCLA Graduate School of Education] has to consider your case, so the faculty member you mentioned might be able to push for readmission *without the dept having to acknowledge any wrongdoing.*” (my italics)

When UCLA’s own faculty members are making these damning statements on how UCLA is throwing out students, and are allowing this operation to continue with their silence, we are given a much deeper understanding of how UCLA operates on its students *and* its faculty members. And with their silence, we are given a much deeper understanding of what academic freedom and freedom of speech actually mean at UCLA.

In other words, something is now profoundly wrong at UCLA. How else could a UCLA faculty member know that the difficulty is found not in the facts of this student termination, but in forcing UCLA administrators to reverse a student termination decision that he knows is unjust?—and how else could he never say this forcefully to anyone (except me)? How else could a UCLA Division Chair tell his colleague, “This is a wrong to right,” but then never right this wrong? How else could a UCLA Distinguished Professor make the statement of fact that UCLA faculty have no status within UCLA’s power structure and that, therefore, UCLA’s administrators are not obliged to pay any attention to UCLA faculty members? How else could a UCLA Distinguished Professor suggest that another UCLA faculty member push for my readmission in a way that would shield department administrators from having to acknowledge any wrongdoing? And lastly, how are this UCLA Distinguished Professor’s words here any different from those that came from Catholic Church high priests when they were shielding their fellow priests from having to acknowledge any wrongdoing?

So this is why I’m sending this e-mail to you. But I realize, too, that there is also immense pressure on you to feel that I am not supposed to be doing this, and that therefore you are not supposed to be moved in any way by UCLA’s manner of expulsion of a UCLA student. You will not feel this as immense pressure, of course. Rather, when you’re

educated to UCLA's specifications, you'll blithely feel that this is not something that concerns you and that it has no impact whatsoever on your position within UCLA, and especially so since this happened over two decades ago—i.e., you'll ask yourself (or others), "Why is this person even sending this e-mail to me?" Or when you're even more highly educated to meet UCLA's highest specifications, you'll even contemptuously dismiss a person who has shown himself (by this e-mail) to be so shamefully incapable of forgetting this decades-old event—i.e., you'll say to yourself (or others), "Get over it and get on with your life, man!" Simply put, as a loyal member of UCLA's "Bruin family," you'll understand that you are to be silent in this case.

And this is how the grotesque abuse of power perpetuated itself within other prestigious and revered institutions across the U.S. That is, we know it took the silence of many people within these institutions when they knew people at the top were abusing individuals at the bottom. We know this from our Catholic Church scandals, our prep school scandals and our university scandals, and we know this from our #MeToo movement. But in fact, the determination and perseverance of the victims, many of whom have only recently—and courageously—come forward to expose these abuses, often after decades of remaining silent out of tragically misplaced shame and a constant fear of severe retaliation, have pushed me to continue my efforts here and attempt to move you now.

(Intermission)

As a branch campus of "the world's leading public research university system," UCLA is first and foremost a corporate junior of the University of California. And like other corporations with a global reach, The Regents of the University of California uses its immense power to ruthlessly protect its multibillion-dollar assets.

But UCLA must always use its highest degree of ruthlessness for the protection of its "most popular campus in the nation" reputation, because this is at the very center of its power. Therefore, the university also charges you, implicitly, with protecting the reputation of the "UCLA brand," most often (and most vulgarly) through its interminable flood of "Bruin family" marketing propaganda (though this is certainly no different from how Stanford, Yale, USC, and other so-called elite universities operate).

So with these facts and these UCLA faculty statements UCLA has now given to you, the university itself is testing its entire population; i.e., UCLA is testing you to determine the

true meaning and value of its “branding” you a member of the “Bruin family” and a “True Bruin”—because UCLA needs to know that it can always rely on you to remain silent when UCLA’s administrators are abusing UCLA students.

So do you protect the UCLA brand by remaining silent along with UCLA’s administrators in order to forcefully say, “Let there be no light” on these facts and these UCLA faculty statements? Or do you take UCLA’s exalted motto away from its marketing & propaganda department and forcefully say, “Let there be light” on these facts and these UCLA faculty statements?

Certainly, this is a tough choice to make at this time when the elite university has ascended to such heights of power and reverence in our society that it can be likened to a quasi-religious institution, where those administering this higher education can be likened to our society’s secular priesthood—and where falling out of the good graces of this priesthood will often severely harm one’s economic livelihood. But as these facts and these UCLA faculty statements currently stand for UCLA, the “True Bruin” is now an obedient and conformist member of the “Bruin family” who is trusted to remain silent when UCLA’s high priests are abusing UCLA students.

And as UCLA now finds itself in the middle of another admissions scandal, another obvious question arises: Since getting in through UCLA’s front gate (or “side door”) is always a topic of intense media interest, why is there no media scrutiny of how UCLA kicks its students out? After all, student expulsions are as necessary in the operation of this public university as student admissions. And given the abuses of power occurring when UCLA is admitting students, is it really that UCLA’s administrators never abuse their power in order to kick students back out? Or like the victims of abuse who were ignored over decades past, is it that an expelled student who reveals this abuse now is simply ignored?

In fact, if we do not remember why we ignored the victims in the past, we’ll continue to ignore facts and UCLA faculty statements showing that UCLA’s administrators are abusing UCLA students now—only because we believe these distinguished leaders and scholars at the most popular campus in the nation would never act unethically and immorally in order to get rid of those they proudly profess only to nurture, educate, and enlighten. But if this is really so, we have also forgotten that victims of abuse have long

been blamed and shamed for “tarnishing” the reputations of honored institutions and their honorable leaders.

So for those who think we should simply continue to ignore the expelled UCLA student, the logic is clear: In their erudition and wisdom (and in their unwavering commitment to the highest moral and ethical standards found in UCLA’s marketing propaganda), UCLA’s administrators could only ever kick out students who are too dumb to meet UCLA’s “elite” educational standards, and this expelled student’s refusal to walk away quietly and instead fight for almost 23 years(!) to reverse this termination decision comes as their final proof that UCLA’s administrators were perfectly just in their decision to kick him out in the first place. (Besides, his low GPA was “close enough” to make the sound decision to expel this hapless dunce for only a too-low GPA.)

But these facts and these UCLA faculty members’ statements will remain to show you how UCLA abuses UCLA students.

So to close here, I sent this e-mail to you because I know you understand that if I remain silent and “just forget about all this,” I am complicit in UCLA’s abuse of UCLA students. So I am doing what I was educated to know that I am not supposed to do—and here it’s done.

Now it will only be through your collective silence in this case—your being obedient and conformist and doing only what you’re supposed to do—that UCLA’s administrators will continue to conceal their abuse of UCLA students beneath the caps and gowns of higher education at the most popular campus in the nation.

(The End)

The web address for this research project is: [www \(dot\) uclastudentabuse \(dot\) info](http://www.uclastudentabuse.info). You can also type “uclastudentabuse” (one word) into a browser search window to quickly find it. The website does not gather any information and viewers remain anonymous. The website contains important documentation, and its content can be read in less than 30 minutes. And of course, I’d be happy to reply to your questions or comments on this research project or any of the content on the website.

Sincerely,

Tom Wilde

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Ps. Please feel free to forward this e-mail. And on the (small) chance that you received more than one of this e-mail (because you have joint appointments across several departments at UCLA), my apologies for adding still more clutter to your mailbox.