



Statement in Support of Dr. Red Washburn

The Executive Committee of the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), the preeminent professional association representing the fields of women's, gender and sexuality studies, expresses its shock and dismay about the gender harassment and retaliation that Dr. Red Washburn, Associate Professor of English and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Kingsborough Community College (CUNY), has experienced since they came out as transgender after tenure. Dr. Washburn has been a leader in the field of transgender studies and currently serves as a review chair for the National Women's Studies Association's 2020 national annual conference, a role that will enable them to shape the field of women's, gender and sexuality studies. Dr. Washburn's case is one example of a much longer pattern of discrimination and inequitable treatment at Kingsborough. Moreover, the ongoing harassment seems to contradict CUNY's mission as the "greatest urban university in the world" as well as its purported commitment to protecting the rights of transgender New Yorkers. We write in support of Dr. Washburn's lawsuit. The alleged mistreatment they have incurred violates city, state, and federal law as well as human rights for transgender people. In addition, the Women's and Gender Studies Program they direct, which was among the first programs in the country at the community college level, has been defunded. We believe it is imperative that CUNY and New York City provide necessary political and economic support for the Women's and Gender Studies Program at Kingsborough during a time of political urgency for women, queer, nonbinary and trans people, people of color, immigrants and poor and working class people. Such support is critical when WGSS programs around the world are being strangled and the field of women's and gender studies is under attack. As scholars we are well aware that knowledge is a form of critical intervention to halt the violence that targets marginalized peoples and communities. We strongly urge Kingsborough to reconsider its decision and repair the harm it has done both to Dr. Washburn and the Women's and Gender Studies Program, faculty, and students at Kingsborough.

Signed by the Executive Committee of the NWSA Governing Council with affiliations for identification purposes only:

Premilla Nadasen, President, Barnard College

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