

An Open Letter to the Administration and Board of Visitors of
The College of William & Mary

From

WILLIAM & MARY WOMEN'S TRACK and FIELD

On Thursday, September 3rd, 2020, the College of William & Mary made the uninformed decision, cloaked in secrecy, to remove the proud tradition of Men's Track & Field, as well as five other sports, from its past, present, and future. On Monday, October 19th, 2020, whilst in negotiation with the various programs, the College made the decision to reinstate three of our sister teams while eliminating the path to return for our Men's programs.

With the callous removal of Men's Track & Field, we have lost our training partners, our teammates, and our friends. For the past decades, we have shared facilities, travel, equipment, coaches, and memories with our Men's team. We lost OUR dance partner. We lost them to a process based not on fact but hidden from view, violating at times both the spirit and intent of our Honor Code. A process that to this day has not been revealed merely covered by different phrasing, while intent remains the same.

We watched an Administration, led by President Rowe and Rector Littel, first blame Covid-19 economics for our issues. We watched their narrative shift as the facts were revealed. We watched the leadership of the College retreat into hiding while the emotions were raw. We waited for the level of honesty that we've come to expect from our faculty, just not our leadership. And now, seven weeks into the process, we are told that Title IX is to blame for these decisions.

As the number one Title IX offset in the William & Mary Athletic department, we strongly resent and resist the idea that our participation is being taken for granted and that our bodies are being used to bolster other Men's sports without our consent. WE KNOW who our dance partner is and it is the same one that we share the track with every day. It is understood that Women's Programs in our sport suffer without their partner program. How is this the achievement of Title IX? We believe the Department's execution of Title IX to be uninformed and uneducated. Their approach is a manipulation of the law, not its intended usage. In this matter, we expect our College to always operate at the highest standards of behavior and choice instead of caving to the path of least resistance. We demand nothing less than the reinstatement of ALL the programs and a faculty-partnered approach to a long-term solution.

To that end, we will begin a campaign of passive resistance to the unfair practices and policies of the College's administration, including the dishonest manner in which these decisions were arrived at. As such, you can expect to see us front and center voicing our concerns about these issues; you can expect us to take our argument to our student body, to our faculty, and to our alumni; what you should not expect is for us to show up in uniform, representing this institution, until this matter is resolved. A College that does not share these core values is not a College to be valued.

Amaya Johnson

Anna Cestari

Claire Bailey

Elizabeth Upright

Emily Graves

Emily Morris

Emily Sell

Emma Rogers

Gabby Runge

Hannah Holland

Hope Stephens

Josie Landis

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Kaycee Cox-Philyaw

Kyra Holland

Lauren Finikiotis

Lauren Kroepfl

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