



Dear NYU,

Unlike you, we have prepared a thorough response to your letter. Please find below in-line responses to the response letter we received from Sr. Vice President for Public Affairs John Beckman regarding our petition and demands.

We take very seriously the sexual harassment of students and workers, especially by faculty members, and the resources and options available to us. Our thoroughly researched demands reflect this. The more than 750 people who have signed the petition agree.

First, we wish to note that we find your responses regarding the return of Avital Ronell unsatisfying, and with the backing of the many community members who support this demand, we will continue to call for her termination. Second, we note that in addition to the aspects of our petition mentioned in your response, there are many you did not address. These are all reasonable demands that many peer institutions already offer; we have noted where these can be used as models for NYU's implementation.

We expect a thorough and thoughtful response to our petition and demands by the end of October. We would be glad to work with the university to discuss the implementation of our demands. We ask that the university also consult with the greater student body and other relevant members of the community, in particular the staff at the Wellness Center.

We look forward to hearing your response and for NYU to become a place that supports its students and workers and protects us against sexual misconduct.

Sincerely,  
NYUtoo and GSOC-UAW Local 2110

**#NYUtoo**

We are glad you take the issues we've raised seriously. However, this response does not show this and inadequately addresses them. We ask that you name and comprehensively address the specific issues raised in the petition by October 31.

We acknowledge and appreciate the steps NYU has taken so far, but know that the institution has the resources and power to be much more proactive.

\*after two mandatory reporters under Title IX and NYU's own policies allegedly failed to report Reitman's complaints to the university—one being the vice provost at the time.

Is a one-year suspension during which Ronell taught in Europe really "substantial"?

We demand to know the standards by which NYU determined its sanctions against Prof. Ronell, as per demands 1A and 2A, and how they will be determined in future cases.

How will this be ensured? Has Prof. Ronell undergone any training as part of her return? Has she taken responsibility for the sexual harassment for which she was found guilty?

Does the class she is teaching this semester indicate the absorption of these lessons to you? Prof. Ronell describes her course, "Unsettled Scores," with the following questions: "How are we confined within a grievance culture--by whom, to what purpose? [...] Are growing accounts of ethical failure and mounting injustice at all survivable? [...] To what extent do boundaries protect or limit the possibility of experience? How have we secretly internalized penitentiary structures?" These questions are a transparent response to her being found guilty of sexual harassment, framing herself as the victim. This class gaslights the survivor, as well as anyone who thinks that professors shouldn't harass their students.

We appreciate this and ask that it is properly distributed. Further, will the guidelines in this handbook be enforced? Will they complement in-person training on these issues? Will they change the power structures between doctoral students and professors that allow inappropriate behavior to proliferate?

Online sexual harassment training isn't enough; see demand 7B. Mere compliance with laws or policies does not protect students and workers from actual harassment. We ask for in-person trainings in consultation with graduate students at the department level.

Dear GSOC,

Like you, the University believes that the learning environment should be free from harassment, discrimination, and abuse. And we take seriously the issues that you have raised in your letter.

That said, your letter overlooks a number of important steps taken by NYU. For reasons of privacy, it is the University's practice not to discuss the details of personnel matters (this is true in the case of those represented by GSOC, too). Speaking generally, though, the University responded promptly after hearing from the complainant; investigated the matter thoroughly; and the outcome included a substantial sanction and ongoing supervision, all of which has been reported publicly.

Following the completion of her year's suspension, Professor Ronell will be returning to her faculty duties, including teaching, in fall 2019. If we believed that she – or any other faculty member – could not conduct her classroom duties professionally, we would not permit him or her to be in a classroom. In this case, Professor Ronell's interactions with students will be monitored to ensure that she has absorbed the lessons of her misconduct and to ensure that she has rectified her behavior and that her interactions with students are in line with NYU's professional expectations.

This matter has raised broader questions, as you note, about the appropriate, professional conduct that should exist between faculty and doctoral advisees. The dean of GSAS, Phil Harper, has been reviewing this topic, and this past spring GSAS finalized guidelines for faculty on mentoring doctoral students.

These will serve as the basis for a handbook on the mentoring of doctoral students across the entire University that will be developed during the coming academic year.

We have read your letter carefully, and will take your proposals under advisement. With respect to those proposals, we do want to note the following:

- All University employees are required by law to complete online sexual harassment training annually, in compliance with NYS law

It is nowhere stated that anonymous reports are possible, either on the Bias Response Line website or the OEO complaint form. Many of our demands seek for NYU to clarify its policies and resources; the online resources are difficult to navigate, unclear, and do not provide adequate information. Our demand also goes beyond anonymity; resources and avenues for follow-up should also be provided. See [demand 5](#) for examples of peer institutions who offer comprehensive anonymous reporting options, often with the help of EthicsPoint, a confidential reporting platform.

On the [website](#), it explicitly says complaints through this form cannot be made anonymously "The Office of Equal Opportunity is limited in its ability to investigate anonymous complaints. Therefore, online submissions cannot be accepted without valid contact information from the submitter."

S.P.A.C.E. could be a valuable resource, but it is not well-advertised or clear about the purpose it serves. Very few students even know S.P.A.C.E. exists<sup>1,2</sup>. The website is confusing and difficult to navigate. We want the most comprehensive and accessible resources for the NYU community; see [demands 6A-6D](#). We recommend that the S.P.A.C.E. and Wellness Center websites be redesigned for clarity and accessibility, in consultation with staff; a factsheet and flowchart be distributed with the available resources; a peer-education training program be implemented; and this information be distributed to the NYU community. These demands are standard practice at other universities. See [Princeton's S.H.A.R.E. office](#) for a good model.

We applaud the valuable work offered by the Wellness Center counselors. We wish that all students would have sufficient access to their services; the ratio of counselors to students is insufficient for the needs of the community. We reiterate our demand to hire more highly trained counselors and care managers; see [demand 6A](#). This should be done in consultation with [Counseling and Wellness Services](#).

We acknowledge the work so far and ask that you take our recommendations for how to further this commitment and provide the necessary support for the diverse community at NYU. This includes prioritizing equity work in hiring and admissions and increasing need-based scholarships for low-income and first-generation students; see [demands 8 and 9](#).

CMEP is a great resource that provides in-person trainings! Can NYU utilize CMEP to establish regular in-person trainings for faculty? See [demand 7A](#).

Great! This is exactly why we need improved services. From a [report](#) from the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine, for example: "Women of color and sexual- and gender-minority women experience certain kinds of harassment at greater rates than other women."

- While we do encourage callers to the Bias Response Line to share their identities, anonymous reports are also followed up. In addition, complaints can be made anonymously through the [OEO complaint form](#) and through NYU's Compliance Hotline (though, again, we encourage people to submit identifying information so that we can follow up).

- NYU has made substantial investments in establishing the [S.P.A.C.E](#) resource, and it has proven to be a successful and valuable resource for those in the NYU community who have experienced sexual misconduct. In addition, NYU has extensive [counseling resources](#) with counselors specially trained to deal with trauma.

- Diversity, inclusion, and equity have been a priority for the University and remain so. In recent years, NYU appointed its first Chief Diversity Officer, reporting directly to the president, established her office, and expanded and provided additional funding for [CMEP](#). These efforts have included focusing on diversity in hiring, which has significantly improved, and in student recruitment (this year's incoming freshman class is the most diverse in NYU's history)

We take this case, like all cases of sexual misconduct, seriously, and respond accordingly.

Thank you for sharing your concerns with us.

Sincerely,

John Beckman  
Sr. Vice President for Public Affairs

We reiterate that the case of Avital Ronell, and all cases of sexual harassment and sexual assault, alter the learning and working environments of students and workers at the university. We have the right to a safe education and a workplace; NYU must do everything in its power to protect this right. Our demands are a starting point for this change.