



It seems that we have done more than simply fail these students. It looks very much as if we deliberately allowed the biggest portion of the responsibility and consequences to fall squarely on the shoulders of the people with the least amount of agency or means to improve the situation. This situation was preventable. It was our duty to ensure that it was prevented. Not only did we fail to prevent it; we compounded that failure by shifting the blame to those least equipped to deal with it.

In our mission statement, we at Gavilan commit to cultivating “learning and personal growth in students of all backgrounds and abilities” and to helping “prepare students for success in a dynamic and multicultural world.” As English teachers, we have always stood behind this commitment. This situation, however, reveals the stark contrast between the claims we make and the reality of what happens to students like these. This is not an indictment of the entire Athletic Department; we know that there are many staff and faculty in that department doing phenomenal work with our student athletes, often with little recognition and community support. However, this incident does reveal something troubling about our campus culture as a whole.

What happened to these students implicates the entire Gavilan community. Many of us in the English department have heard stories about the poverty, hunger, and isolation our out-of-state athletes face. We have been hearing these stories for years. Some of us have brought food to share; many have expressed sympathy or even anger that such stories are common. We trusted, however, that there were mechanisms in place that would address the problems on an institutional level, so our advocacy rarely extended beyond individuals in our own classrooms. We are realizing now that these problems have not been addressed and perhaps have even been ignored. It took a situation like this to reveal practices that too often seem to result in vulnerable students becoming even more marginalized. We no longer trust that anyone is addressing the problem on an institutional level. We acknowledge that when we see vulnerable students vilified and punished for the failure of leadership on our campus, to remain silent is to remain complicit.

We look to you, the leaders of our community, to guide us in some necessary introspection, and to confront what the treatment of these young men suggests about Gavilan’s campus culture and the sincerity of its mission. We ask to be informed about what actions are being taken to address the conditions that led to this situation. Additionally, we ask that you openly share the results of any ongoing inquiries or investigations as part of a transparent effort to help the entire community understand what happened and what steps will be taken to prevent it from happening again. We as a department pledge our efforts to do whatever is necessary to bring our actions in line with our ideals (our e)-T Qg 0.2

