

If they touch one of us, they touch us all.

The teams of the research projects SeGRVUni and SeGRVUniCatMex, wrote and disseminated this statement referring to some of the results of the same, in support of the researcher Paula Martín Peláez, who collaborates with us, and Professor Carmen Romero Bachiller, both from the UCM.

[We make a public call for more researchers to sign it here.](#)

[You can consult the signatures collected so far here](#)

COMMUNICATION FOR THE ASSUMPTION OF INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE FACE OF ACTS OF GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Universities are increasingly aware that sexual and gender-based violence and LGTBI+ phobic practices are a reality that challenges them. In this sense, we are glad to have witnessed the emergence of protocols to prevent them and/or intervene in recent decades. However, these instruments can be improved and are insufficient to address the complexity of the problem, and there are many significant challenges to be met.

One of them is that the burden of managing these protocols often falls on the work, not sufficiently recognized, of professionals and activists who devote personal efforts and energies to try to limit the effects of this problem without having sufficient resources, training, tools, and/or support. In many cases, gender observatory staff (or similar) tend to carry out containment tasks without sufficient psychological training and access to supervision. In cases where teachers are the ones who provide this care, they often do not see this dedication recognized as work. Furthermore, students who engage in it tend to do so in an activist way, without recognition or institutional support. Added to all this is the frustration that, in most cases, the last word is left to the legal services of the institution which, generally lack a gender perspective, end up applying minimal sanctions, little or no protection for the survivors, and, of course, no form of reparation for the damage suffered.

If this reality is in itself unacceptable and shows an incomplete assumption of social responsibility by universities, even more severe are those cases in which these professionals end up being targets of violence, harassment, and aggression, and university institutions do not mobilize to care for them, accompany and protect them, but hide behind supposed neutrality.

WE DENOUNCE that the lack of responsibility by higher institutions in the face of the violence suffered by members of the university community committed to its eradication is, in itself, institutional gender violence.

In this sense, we want to position ourselves in support of our UCM colleagues Paula Martín Peláez and Carmen Romero Bachiller, who for more than a year and a half have been harassed for their commitment against gender violence in universities and suffer institutional violence by not receiving the support they need.

In order to make known the details of the case, we reproduce the summary of the case as described in the COMMUNICATION OF THE FACULTY BOARD OF POLITICAL SCIENCES AND SOCIOLOGY of the UCM of June 9, 2021

"1.- Since October 2019, the student representative in the Harassment Commission for two years and awardee of a predoctoral contract UCM, Paula Martín Peláez, began to receive in her e-mail inbox and in her personal social networks, messages sent from false identities, in which she was threatened with beatings, rape, and murder. Her family was also the target of these harassments. These e-mails and messages contained their names, photos with their faces, and even photos of the doorway of their home. This situation continued until March 2020 and was reported to the UCM Equality Unit from the moment it began to occur.

2.- In June 2020, anonymous e-mail messages were sent for the first time to the Rector's Delegate for Equality, Isabel Tajahuerce, and all the staff of the Department of Sociology, Methodology, and Theory of this Faculty, in which Paula Martín Peláez and Carmen Romero Bachiller, professor of the Faculty, director of Paula Martín's doctoral thesis and participant in the processes of expertise of harassment cases, under the Protocol of harassment still in force, were accused of sexually assaulting students. These messages included photos of Paula Martín Peláez's naked torso, illicitly extracted from her social networks.

3.- Around the same time, the Dean of this Faculty received an e-mail, also from a false identity, accusing her of "pucherazo" for awarding the UCM predoctoral contract to Paula Martín Commission that was entrusted with the resolution of these processes.

4.- The people responsible for the organization of academic events of other universities to which Paula Martín Peláez and Carmen Romero Bachiller were invited also received messages against them in this period, accusations of sexual assault on students who had to deny, hindering and clouding their prestige and their academic work.

5.- In December 2020, for the second time, the anonymous accusations and slander (of sexual aggression to students) have been repeated in the Faculty of Law, through mails to the Department of Administrative Law, including in them, together with Paula Martín Peláez, the director of the Equality Unit and professor of this Department.

6.- These facts were reported to the Police, the Services Inspection of the UCM, the Equality Unit, and the University Ombudsman by Carmen Romero and Paula Martín. The complaints to the Police have given rise to a criminal proceeding followed before the 48th Court of Instruction of Madrid, with the corresponding economic and personal cost to be paid by the complainants.

7.- At the Senate meeting of March 10, 2021, our Faculty representative, Professor Cristina Velázquez, asked the Rector what measures are being taken to protect and restore the damage to the image and honor of these professors and researchers of our university community.

8.- Last Saturday, June 5, for the third time, the messages via e-mail, accusing of sexual aggression to students, following the same pattern of the previous ones, have been repeated against Paula Martín and the director of the Equality Unit. Now they have been sent to all the decanal teams of the UCM Faculties and some university community members".

Aware of the facts explained in the communiqué of the FACULTY BOARD OF POLITICAL SCIENCES AND SOCIOLOGY of the UCM, given the persistence, the unpunished advance of this very serious situation, and the institutional neglect, the undersigned persons state that:

FIRST. In the specific case of the UCM, we support, endorse, and recognize without fissure the persons and the academic and professional trajectories of Paula Martín and Carmen Romero, as well as all the professors who have participated in the application of the Harassment Protocol in force and who have suffered attacks because of it.

SECOND: We call on feminist and/or gender research groups or institutes to publicly support these and other colleagues who have suffered institutional violence for their commitment against gender violence.

THIRD: We ask that the institution, through the Equality Unit or the Rector's Delegate of the UCM, or other competent bodies, intervene in direct support of the professionals in question, giving them support against the reprisals, recognizing their academic value, and covering the economic cost and appearing in the criminal proceedings in progress.

FOURTH: We urge that the observatories, institutes, and entities responsible for protecting the human right to live free of gender violence in our universities, join the explicit support to our colleagues, and request intervention by their university.

FIFTH: We ask our universities to begin a process of review of their policies to ensure that they provide sufficient mechanisms of protection, support, and redress for those who suffer gender violence or lgtbphobic harassment (as, for example, is established in Point 6 of Article 17 of the Catalan law 17/2020 of December 22, amending the law 5/2007, the right of women to eradicate violence against women).

SIXTH: We commit ourselves collectively to create inter-university support networks between PAS, PDI, STUDENTS, and EXTERNAL STAFF to support those who suffer/have suffered gender violence, whether interpersonal, community, or institutional.