Open Resignation Letter to Pomona College as a Residential Advisor

Dean Jubert, Dean Waugh, Dean Feldblum, and RLCs,

This is my official resignation letter for the position of Residential Advisor. I am resigning not because I do not love my job or have the capacity to perform it, but rather because throughout this year, and in the past, you all have shown that you do not value us or acknowledge our intersectional identities and struggles when making decisions and responding to our needs or your mistakes. I doubt this will get through to anyone because it won't be the first time someone says this, but this is the only way I know to advocate for myself and to hold you all accountable as well as hold the institution accountable for their violence.

This year we, as an RHS team, rallied to demand adequate pay to reflect the increase in room and board, minimum wage, cost of living, and responsibilities. While we were advocating for ourselves we were told that this had come to their attention a few years back, but the pay had not been changed to respond to those concerns yet. So basically they were knowingly underpaying RAs and increasing responsibilities at the same time. According to the Pomona College website "Resident advisors (RAs) at Pomona College are students who are **salaried employees** on the Student Affairs staff", and according to our contract and next year's contract we are "members of the Dean of Students **Staff**". Once we got our pay increase, after three weeks of intense emotional labor, there was a change to our employment status, which they failed to inform us of. As a result of this vague change and its lack of transparency, some students ended up owing enough in taxes that the raise was essentially nullified and therefore being underpaid for their labor. In lesser words, Pomona College failed to withhold federal taxes for RAs and claim they are doing so legally.

When the issue came to light, because I brought it to light, it took from February 19th to April 7th to resolve, even though Dean Feldblum and Steven Jubert claim to have verbally informed us of our change of employment status. How exactly does it take a month and a half for you to resolve an issue you are claiming you had foresight to? The extent of the financial damage is at around owing 1,000 dollars and not receiving any returns for students who depend on them. The resolution from the college was to offer us the ability to "file an emergency grant/**loan** request", but they claim to have a commitment for students to graduate without debt. Their inability to respond to the matter promptly or to come up with a solution in which they take full responsibility for failure to withhold our taxes is harmful.

Back in September when I was speaking to Chris Waugh about the pay raise and the fact that it was unjust for us to be underpaid I told him that I was tired of having to choose between being able to take care of myself and assert my worth and being financially stable or being able to take part in things that I need financial assistance for. This is institutional violence. This is disregarding the people who are most negatively affected by these situations, namely people of color, low-income folks, undocu/DACAmented folks, and other marginalized identities. The same people who do all the work that the college can't do to support their diverse student body that their institutional systems aren't ready for, but have no problem using to achieve their #1 ranks. This is institutional violence. So now I find myself financially in a bind because staying in that position under the supervision of an institution and those in power that reflect the institution, who are unable to hold the institution accountable, would come at the detriment of my wellbeing and the wellbeing of so many marginalized communities.

I want to apologize to the one RLC who supported me, I want to apologize to my peer RAs who will bear the burden of making up for my work, and I want to apologize to my residents who will probably not receive a new RA. I want to ask that the incoming RAs hold the institution accountable and don't let them take advantage of their labor. As of now OHRL has informed me informally that nothing will change in terms of paying RAs next year. The inability to have a conversation about how to rectify this is not only astounding, but also violent.

I could write a whole thesis on how RHS has been problematic, from their unpaid emotional labor of sponsors, to their hiring process, to their inability to deal with mental health, to their inability to deal with sexual assault, to their war on substances, to their lack of transparency, to their lack of accountability, but you know that would just be more free emotional labor. Get it together OHRL/Pomona College. Actually listen to students telling you why things are happening and how they can be helped instead of coming up with backwards "solutions" that usually end up enacting violence onto those that are supposed to benefit from them.

This is an act of resistance for myself, for my family, for my communities, and for the communities for which I strive to be an ally to.

This is a call to action, for y'all to find the ability to not only comply with federal law, but also to morally rectify this and do right by your 2017-2018 Resident Advisors with transparency with regards to pay and all other aspects of the position.

A marginalized student.