



July 3, 2024

To All Pacifica Alumna and Alumni,

Desire, rage, fear and shame are echoes of the world's soul, presentations of qualities in the world informing our bodies and spirits how to be, what stand to take, what to have and what to hate, which way to turn on the path . . .

Rage in particular is important here. Remember: Zeus and his brothers and sisters overcame the Titans and Giants in battle! Under the sign of Mars/Ares, the God of battle rage, intensity, fury . . . Let us recognize that outrage has a social intention. It leads us into the fray, into community engagement with our sisters and brothers. It notices moral insults and aesthetic injuries. It roars in protest.

FROM: JAMES HILLMAN, "THE YELLOWING OF THE WORK,"
ALCHEMICAL PSYCHOLOGY: THE UNIFORM EDITION OF JAMES HILLMAN, V. 5, PUTNAM, CONN: SPRING PUBLICATIONS, 2010.

The "Call to Attention" Purpose of this Letter:

The **Alumni Association** had indicated that more information was going to be posted on July 3, 2024, but in deference to separate letters sent before this date by the faculty, and then by the students, to Pacifica, and to allow Pacifica a reasonable opportunity to act, it was decided to postpone the letter now before you. We apologize for any confusion that this has caused.

The **Alumni Association** was informed of a letter sent on or about June 21, 2024, from Dr. Leonnie Mattison to the **Counseling Program** faculty and students. It was announced that the chair, Dr. Matthew Bennett, and co-chair Dr. Jemma Elliot were demoted and removed from their positions and that there were other changes to the Counseling Psychology program. The letter was a "public relations" announcement that had unforeseen consequences. This was just the tip of the iceberg. This created an emotional and traumatic weekend for the students as well as for the faculty. We learned of this incident and its effect and were called in order to support the faculty and students who told us they "felt alone and abandoned." The letter from Dr. Mattison has actually worked in reverse by being instrumental in uniting faculty and students to speak out against her actions and her plans for the institute. The issues you are reading about were not caused by the Alumni Association. The root causes of the current situation lie directly with the **Office of the President** and the **Pacifica Board of Trustees**. In psychotherapeutic parlance, the **Alumni Association** saw significant "red flags" issues.

A very strongly worded **Private and Confidential** letter was emailed and sent via Certified



Mail to the **Pacifica Board of Trustees** on June 26, 2024. We requested the resignation of Dr. Leonie Mattison or her dismissal by the **Pacifica Board of Trustees** for cause listing various reasons. We supplemented the letter by posting on the Alumni Association’s social media platforms. While a minority have labeled our intent hostile, a majority have felt that it was long overdue and appropriate. We prefer to describe it as justifiable and overdue “rage.” Our outrage has a social intention, and what’s more, a loving intention in support of faculty and students, as well as for the integrity and continuance of the Institute as we all have known it.

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Intentions:

1. To inform all alumni of the detrimental and concerning actions underway at Pacifica.
2. To inform all alumni of the Alumni Association’s support in addressing the serious concerns of the faculty, students, and staff.
3. To inform all alumni of the detrimental issues (see Issues below) that have been exacted on faculty, staff, and students by the current **Office of the President** and possibly with the support and knowledge, if not tacit complicit approval, of the **Pacifica Board of Trustees**.
4. To ask for the resignation of Dr. Leonie Mattison, or her dismissal for cause by the **Pacifica Board of Trustees**.

5. To inform all alumni that the **PGI Board of Trustees** when appraised of the incident by the Alumni Association, initially failed to support the faculty, staff, and students regarding the changes imposed by the current president. While they responded via a posting on the pacifica.edu website July 1, 2024, their response was typical of an out-of-touch Board of Trustees who continue a faculty-distant and student-distant leadership stance. The Pacifica Board failed to take ethical and moral action, instead suggesting one week later, that it will begin an “independent investigation.” Pacifica questioned the veracity of the **Alumni Association’s** letter and website postings until a letter signed by 35 faculty of the **Counseling Psychology** Program faculty indicating their joint concerns was sent to the **Pacifica Board of Trustees** on July 1, 2024.
6. To share with all alumni the letter from the **Counseling Psychology** program faculty to Pacifica, and the first public response by the **Pacifica Board of Directors**.
7. To share with all alumni the letter sent by Pacifica students (95% plus of all tracts of the Counseling Psychology Program)

Justification for Alumni Association response:

The Alumni Association made an immediate response which we are told helped inspire, emotionally support and provide time for faculty and students to form their individual responses. The faculty, in their letter to the **Pacifica Board of Trustees** dated July 1, 2024, allude to what is becoming obvious which is the deliberate shifting away from the founding and perduring mission of the Institute. The faculty is acutely aware of the administration’s dismantling and rebranding of the Institute and their attempts to modify the **Counseling Psychology Program** with minimal consultation and inclusion with the **Counseling Program** Faculty. The effect of the **Office of the President’s** announcement on the students and Counseling program was traumatic and devastating. Reports were received by the **Alumni Association** of the effect on the students and faculty and raised appropriate alarms on the **Alumni Association’s** part to act immediately on their behalf. A decision was made by the new Alumni Association president after consulting past board presidents to make a strong response in lieu of input from the board. This was because it was discovered that a board member and potential new members had been added or invited to be on the board in error, through no fault of these individuals, but that they represented a conflict of interest. According to the **Alumni Association** By-Laws (06-01-2013), Section 4.2.3 of the By-Laws (copied below), you can read these requirements. In addition to this section, another includes anyone receiving compensatory benefits from Pacifica in any way.



4.2.3 To ensure that the Association shall not be subject to the Institute's control at any time, shareholders, directors, officers, employees, agents, or other individuals directly associated with the Institute or otherwise subject to the Institute's control shall not be eligible to serve as a Director of the Association.

The **Counseling Psychology** Program is:

1. the foundational and original program of the Institute for licensure,
2. the primary income-producing program of the school,
3. the program with the largest supporting faculty, and
4. a program well-known for its graduated students having the highest licensing pass rates of any other in the state of California.

We ask why any institution would want to change this proven and successful program that Dr. Matthew Bennett, Dr. Jemma Elliot, and their adjunct and support faculty have so successfully created and maintained?

It is clear that **the administrative leadership of the school is not ensouled.**

The Pacifica Board of Trustees [posted a response](#) on Monday, July 1, 2024, on the Pacifica website as follows. Their response is typical of an out-of-touch leadership:

"A Statement from Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Trustees"

The Pacifica Graduate Institute (PGI) Board of Trustees operates as a cohesive body to protect, maintain, and proactively pursue the mission and vision of our Institute. It recently came to our attention that the PGI Alumni Association (PGIAA) has made certain inaccurate and unsubstantiated claims, both publicly and by direct outreach to our student body, faculty, and affiliates against Dr. Leonie H. Mattison, PGI President & CEO and is aggressively calling for her immediate termination.

The Board takes all concerns seriously; however, we will not be influenced by unreasonable demands and threats. By way of due process, we will be investigating the merits as well as the origin of these claims and will, in due course, determine what if any action is warranted.

In the meantime, the Board unanimously and wholeheartedly endorses President Mattison and the exemplary work she has done for PGI, including such initiatives as:

- Executing our first Shared Governance Structure;
- Administering significant campus-wide advancements with our 2030 Strategic Plan, "Onward Together;"
- Completing the first ever, Faculty and Staff Compensation and Workload Study;
- Implementing our first Faculty Rank Structure; and,



- In the beginning of 2024, providing \$100,000 grant funding to the OPUS Archives and Research Center.

Additionally, under Dr. Mattison's leadership, faculty remain the core of developing and executing our curriculum which strengthens our work in depth psychology. Further, our core faculty have remained intact under Dr. Mattison's leadership. To this end, PGI's mission and curriculum has never been stronger or more relevant.

We recognize that change can be difficult and there are those who are resistant to any change. It is disheartening that what appears to be at most a small few, have chosen to publicly and, in our view inappropriately, attack the work of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), led by President Mattison, and our Institution.

We ask for your patience and continued support during this pivotal time for our community. We are certain that the outcome will be in the best interest of PGI and that our commitment to our exceptional, diverse, and innovative programming will not waiver.

Respectfully,

Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Trustees

What is clear is that the [pedagogy is the ensouled part of the institution.](#)

Please read the Counseling Department's letter as signed by 35 members and sent to the Pacifica Board of Trustees (faculty names redacted for confidentiality) as found on the following pages.

Counseling Program Faculty Letter to Administration:



PACIFICA
GRADUATE INSTITUTE

July 1, 2024

Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Trustees:

Thyonne Gordon, Ph.D., Chair
Nancy Swift Furlotti, Ph.D., Trustee
Kate Baumgart Hogenson, Trustee
Frank N. McMillan III, Trustee
Dick Osborn, Ph.D., Trustee
Thomas L Steding, Ph.D., Trustee
Simeon R. Stewart II, Trustee
Ada Yeh, Trustee

Office of the President

Leonie H. Mattison, EdD, MBA, President & CEO

Office of the Provost

Dr. Loraine Devos-Comby, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Dear Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team,

The recent communications from the Alumni Association have been troubling. As faculty, we see distress in our students, worry and confusion from adjuncts, and a pressing sense of alarm from long-time core faculty and staff. We have felt that many of our concerns have not been addressed by the current executive team for quite some time. In the continual spirit of upholding a respectful, sustainable, and collaborative Institute, the undersigned faculty would like to convey some of these concerns here. These concerns come from a care for our work, for our students, and for the broad and diverse Pacifica Community. They are as follows:

- **In our view, Pacifica is shifting away from our mission “to foster creative learning and research in the fields of psychology and mythological studies, framed in the traditions of depth psychology.” It appears that a process of rebranding the Institute is taking place that does not convey an emphasis on, or interest in, depth psychology, and the related disciplines, which our mission statement specifies.**
- **We are concerned about what we perceive as poor communication and disregard for loyal and long-tenured employees of the institute. This perception has led to demonstrable gaps in the efficacy of services provided to students and alumni. Communications around departures have seemed misleading, and the turnover of long-term employees appears destabilizing to individual departments as well as to the institution as a whole. Additionally, recent departures and role changes seem to**



have deepened instability and substantially broken down communications between faculty and executive leadership. This situation represents a barrier to faculty serving in leadership positions, compounded by widespread reports of a perceived lack of interest from executive leadership in the aims, goals, and responsibilities of some individual programs.

- We are deeply invested in the important goal of increasing diversity in the student body and the faculty, and making the education we provide more accessible. This is why it is so unfortunate that many of the ideas put forth from the ELT to achieve these goals appear to be short-sighted and more about marketing than substance. For example, the proposed social work school has been put forth without faculty input in areas of subject area expertise, and without community strategic planning and shared governance.
- Without providing justification to faculty, the administration appears to have halted the recruiting of students nationally for licensure-based programs, admitting only California residents. This limits the scope, breadth, and diversity of students.
- There has been a stated interest in moving away from a cohort-based model of education, which has been an indelible aspect of both the student and faculty experience for generations of cohorts. While we understand the possibilities of alternate educational delivery, the process toward this change has not felt collaborative.
- There appears to be no advancement toward the resolution of remaining items contained within the Omnibus Resolution, a document that was approved as a unified expression of faculty grievances in August 2022. This appears to be in opposition to the request of WASC, the school's accreditation body, which viewed this process as an integral aspect of institutional citizenship and the health of the faculty.
- We have observed a lack of sensitivity or inclusivity toward all faiths and spiritualities, and the promotion of one specific faith above others in Pacifica's communications and activities—externally on social media and internally within the institute (through prayer, attempts to reframe Pacifica's motto and values into faith-based language, and campus decorations and celebrations).

The aggregate of these concerns represents an insecurity about the long-term fiscal and philosophical future of the Institute. While we recognize that coming to the board directly is an unusual step, we feel as if normal channels of communication have deteriorated to the point that continuity of education for current students is in jeopardy. The undersigned wish to uphold the reputation of the school in a way that will continue to foster solid admissions, recruitment, and academic integrity, all of which we fear are at risk at this moment. We are deeply hopeful that Pacifica will continue to be aligned with its founding mission—to tend soul in and of the world.

Signed,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted signature]



Counseling Psychology Program Students Letter to Pacifica Board of Trustees:

Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Trustees:

Thyonne Gordon, Ph.D., Chair
Nancy Swift Furlotti, Ph.D., Trustee
Frank N. McMillan III, Trustee
Dick Osborn, Ph.D., Trustee
Thomas L. Steding, Ph.D., Trustee
Simeon R. Stewart II, Trustee
Ada Yeh, Trustee

Cc: Pacifica Graduate Institute Alumni Association

July 11, 2024

Dear Pacifica Board of Trustees,

This letter is being sent by the class representatives on behalf of the following Masters of Counseling Psychology current cohorts at Pacifica Graduate Institute: Track C (Year 2), Track D (Year 1), Track D (Year 2), Track V (Year 1), Track V (Year 2), and Track W (Year 1), Track W (Year 2) and 15 students from Track C (Year 1). As you are aware, this represents over 95% of the current student body.

A copy of the letter sent to you on July 1, 2024 by concerned faculty members has circulated among the student body, and we wish to express our collective support for the faculty and add our voices to their concerns.

Your statement in the email from July 3, 2024, that "These transitions are being handled thoughtfully and will not lead to a disruption in your education, nor the mission or business of the Institute" is not reflective of the realities being experienced by the student body.

The lack of a well-thought-out and articulated transition plan and vision has already disrupted our education.

Consider the following:

- Our program currently lacks a chair and a co-chair for the school year 2024-2025.
- A large number of concerned faculty members have been forced to take the unusual step of going directly to the Board of our school to express their concerns about the future of our program.
- The entire student body is now aware of and shares the faculty's concerns and questions.
- Students with questions are being referred to conversations with the school's General Counsel.
- By your own admission, "general rumors and innuendos" are running rampant.

All of the above are already impacting the experience of current Pacifica students and creating concerns for incoming students.

Chalking up what is happening at Pacifica as "natural discomfort in change" feels highly reductive. Each student called to this institution has come here as a result of tremendous personal change and sacrifice.

We are not afraid of change. We acknowledge that, as with any organization, Pacifica has room for improvement. We are ready to support and embrace positive change and will fully support an administration that can concretely demonstrate its commitment to upholding and expanding Pacifica's core foundational values.

The board has pledged transparency. We ask that transparency start by publicly addressing each of the concerns raised in the faculty letter so that current and future students can make an informed decision about whether they wish to support the new administration's vision.

Please hear our voices.

Sincerely,

Class representatives for Track C (Year 2), Track D (Year 1), Track D (Year 2), Track V (Year 1), Track V (Year 2), Track W (Year 1) Track W (Year 2) and 15 students from Track C (Year 1)

Other Contributing Issues:

Issue 1:

The **Office of the President** is reported to be abusing their authority and creating a hostile work environment. We are being told that Faculty leadership and staff members in various programs are being pressured for absolute compliance to the Presidents direction, or to suffer demotion, reduction in pay, their teaching hours and classes reduced, and appears to be continuing an agenda to replace many faculty. All her efforts are clearly to support her agenda, which is the antithesis of the long-held values of the institute. Our opinion is that this creates a toxic and hostile environment and workplace. While being a master in “public relations” Dr. Mattison’s administrative treatment of a number of personnel are performed with little if any emotional intelligence or compassion. These types of abuse of authority by the administration continue as experienced by current faculty and staff and are one of the major detriments and risks that she presents to the Pacifica Graduate Institute.

Issue 2:

The number of resignations during the tenure of the current president indicates a faculty in turmoil with leadership. The loss of faculty at the current rate reveals the risk of depth psychology being no longer taught in the programs of the institution. The Alumni Association has been told that more resignations can be expected from many of the programs. It can only be assumed that such loss is occurring with the **PGI Board of Trustees’** knowledge and approval. It reflects a detrimental systematic removal of the central tenets of the school that has historically promoted depth psychological, mythological, and other important scholarship at **Pacifica**. This is evident from marketing material over the past year which neither focuses on academic programs nor the major figures from within the Jungian and depth psychology world, mythic studies, and other disciplines, even though its marketing claim “Soul Promise” is hollow public relations rhetoric. This coincides with a plethora of faith-based material from the President’s own posts and public addresses which is her right to do personally. There is concern about its influence at Pacifica as witnessed by the faculty and the appearance of an ideological takeover, to transform the school into a faith-based institution. We are concerned that the disrespect toward Pacifica’s scholars, the insult to the diversity of their backgrounds, and the disappearance of their work will continue under the current leadership.

Issue 3:

The current crisis seems to be sanctioned by the **Pacifica Board of Trustees**, perhaps not by all, but by a majority of members. We believe that the **Board** is tacitly and complicitly aware of her actions and supports them. If the **Board** claims otherwise, this would indicate a failure of their oversight and stewardship responsibilities while serving as Trustees on behalf of the school. There is also a possibility that the entire board is being provided no information, limited, and incomplete information, or erroneous information. If the Board claims ignorance regarding her directions, actions, and purpose, it may also show their indifference to what is taking place from the **Office of the President**. The bottom line is that the **PGI Board of Trustees**, knowingly or not, has allowed these issues to occur and continue, fostering a hostile workplace, constant micromanagement, and emotional harassment. While we hope this is not the case, and that not all members of the **PGI Board of Trustees** support this direction, our conclusions, based on what has happened and is happening, seem well-founded. Regardless, our opinion of what we have learned regarding Dr. Mattison’s leadership appears to be an appalling sanctioned killing of the spirit and soul

of Pacifica.

Timeline:

- **June 21, 2024:** On or about this date, a communication was sent from the Institute President/CEO to the Counseling Program faculty and students, announcing the demotion of Dr. Matthew Bennett, as Chair, and Dr. Jemma Elliot, as Co-Chairs of the Counseling Program. The letter sent by the administration appears to be solely a “**public relations**” attempt to justify its unethical and unwarranted demotions. We are told that these unethical actions are being applied not only to the Counseling Program but to other programs as well. It appears to be the continuance of plans to gut and alter many of the institute’s **programs, faculty, and staff**. We have learned that other department Chairs, Co-Chairs, and faculty are considering resigning. The faculty and students on campus this past weekend were demoralized, angry, traumatized, in tears, and hurt. The actions of the current president, in our opinion, were unnecessary, irresponsible, inhumane, and without merit. The programs and direction of the current president that are being implemented are a complete rebuke of the purpose and direction of our sacred institute. WE have heard the student and faculties lament. We ask for you to hear their lament and respond in kind.

(Please see below for [Recommended Responses You Can Make:](#))

- **June 25, 2024:** An email was sent from **PGIAA**, with an attached detailed “Private and Confidential” letter, to the **PGI Board of Trustees** with a printed letter sent via USPS Mail and sent that same day by Certified Mail and with Return Receipt Service. Important elements of our letter to the **PGI Board of Trustees** are included below providing a clear picture of our heartfelt concern. The **PGI Board of Trustees** was provided a limited, yet courteous length of time to demand the resignation of the current President, or to terminate her employment contract. The date asked was **July 1, 2024**. **The Board of Trustees** were notified that their failure to do so would necessitate this action of informing and engaging the full **PGIAA** community.
- **June 26, 2024:** On this date, limited information was provided in a post on the **PGIAA** website and Social Media platforms.
- **July 1, 2024:** At approximately 9:30 am, we learned that 35 faculty members of the **Counseling Program** sent a letter to the **Pacifica Board of Trustees**, the **Office of the President**, and **Office of the Provost**.
- **July 1, 2024:** Later in the morning, The Pacifica Board of Trustees posted “[A Statement from Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Trustees](#)” on the pacifica.edu website.
- **July 2, 2024:** The **Alumni Association** respond to the **Pacifica Board of Trustees** statement by posting an update on the PGI website and social media pages.



- **July 3, 2024:** Alumni are sent this letter that you are reading.
- **July 11, 2024:** Counseling Psychology student's letter to the **Pacifica Board of Trustees**.

The Solution PGIAA requested from the *PGI Board of Trustees*

We request that you, the Board of Trustees, demand the immediate resignation of Dr. Mattison and the termination of her contract. Should she not resign, the board should then terminate Dr. Mattison forthwith. We recommend that the Pacifica Graduate Institute Board of Directors unanimously approve the removal of Dr. Mattison and make this decision by the end of day July 1, 2024, if not sooner.

Why this is important:

The faculty and students were traumatized. They felt that PGIAA did not care. They felt alone and abandoned. They were hoping for a lifeline to help them. The **Alumni Association** did so. WE are and will continue to provide it. Some of you have voiced disagreement and that is your right to do so. Gratefully many more have responded in support and we ask those of you who care, to help and stop the mistreatment and injustice toward faculty, students, and staff and to stop the redirection of the institute from its founding principles.

A More Collective "Call to Action:"

The original plan was to request that you answer a **call to action** beginning on July 3, 2024 and suggest how you could take action. We await the results of the investigation that we understand has been started by the Pacifica Board of Trustees. We have great concerns that they are not "independent" investigations and that some of the investigators have conflicts of interest. We support the decision of the faculty and students regarding accepting the integrity of the findings or not.

In all sincerity, WE, who love Pacifica.

Representative of the **Pacifica Graduate Institute Alumni Association**