



Report on Allegation of Harassment

To: Gender Justice League board of directors

From: Sarah Abshire, Board Secretary; Maayan Kline, Board Treasurer, Danni Askini, Executive Director

Allegations:

Gender Justice League received a call and then an email from our colleagues at the Tacoma Rainbow Center on 10/31/2017. This email forwarded a message from an anonymous source that alleged sexual harassment. In following with our employee handbook we conducted an investigation of this allegation.

The email (attached below) contained specific allegations about the conduct of a board member. We are assuming for the purpose of this investigation that the accuser that was a former board member that is known to the accused and the investigators based on evidence provided by the accused. Based on the content of the emails, the conversations, and evidence turned over by the accused.

The email we received by third parties alleges:

Allegation 1: sexual harassment by Sophia Lee of a board member

Allegation 2: Blackmail and abuse of power by Sophia Lee to force the board member to step down.

Investigations Methods:

Gender Justice League's Secretary - Sarah Abshire, Treasurer - Maayan Kline, and Executive Director - Danni Askini conducted a thorough investigation of these allegations including conversations with all staff, board members, several board members, and several volunteers who had contact with both the accuser and accused. We received technical advice from an outside attorney on the process of conducting an investigation.

Together we evaluated more than 50 email between the accuser and accused - the entirety of emails exchanged. We had full access to the accused's emails and evaluated all communications between the accused and the accuser of any known addresses. Additionally we evaluated board meeting minutes, all Facebook messages dating back more than 2 years between the accuser and accused. We also examined text messages between the accuser and the accused. All of this information was furnished without hesitation by the accused. All staff and several volunteers were asked non-leading questions about the conduct, boundaries, and behavior of the board chair as respective to inappropriate behavior, advances, or harassment. Additionally we evaluated emails with staff and board members for signs of a pattern of harassment. We have not included the names of volunteers interviewed to protect anonymity, but we questioned 9 volunteers who have worked closely with the accused.



We were not able to take a statement or contact the accuser despite numerous attempts. Numerous attempts were made, including text messages to the phone number of record, emails to multiple email addresses, and phone calls. The accuser continued to contact third parties through fake Facebook accounts and emails - while refusing to cooperate with the investigation. Without an official complaint, opportunity to question the accuser, or additional information that was not significantly edited - we were forced to rely on statements, evidence, and reports made available to us by the accused, board members, staff, and volunteers.

Findings:

Timeline of Events:

April 29th & May 23rd - Volunteer who presented to board of directors receives “anonymous” emails attacking them based on disability and jewish status for the creation of Gender Justice League’s scent free / fragrance free / smoke free policy after presented at the board of directors. The email is sent through Gorilla Mail but contains IP information in the header of the email which GJL staff are able to discern with help from volunteer. **(See Exhibit A)**

June 18th - Board member who has made allegations is promoted to co-chair of board of directors as the link has not yet been made to the April 29th and May 23rd emails. Staff express concerns about this board members communications and hostility towards some volunteers/staff over the course of trans pride and unwillingness to coordinate with staff. The accused remains non-officer board member subordinate to the accuser.

July 25th - After Executive Director and Co-Chair discuss meeting regularly in Everett, accused board chair begins Facebook conversations with accuser about arranging meetings. A photo from the beach is exchanged with accuser and includes a line that could easily be seen as flirtatious or in violation of policy “Or we could meet all romantic like, just the two of us.” No report is made to staff or other board members expressing discomfort, when reply includes statement about monogamy implying discomfort - accused immediately ceases any similar communication.

August 1st - Staff member receives email from accusers partner which includes anti-cis threats and epithets related to volunteer management and perceived slighting of board chair **(See Attached Exhibit C)**. Staff member reports harassment to the Executive Director who immediately opens investigation into possible harassment violation. ED immediately begins conversation with board member about appropriate lines of communication between board members and staff and removes power of board co-chair or partner from contacting volunteers and staff while investigation continues. Investigation includes examining board members emails and other communications to GJL volunteers. Deputy Director discovers “Anonymous” emails sent



through GJL website that include anti-semitic and racist epithets that are brought to the attention of the Executive Director. Executive Director engages the accused to discuss mediating the situation with accuser as co-chair and request their resignation from board of directors for significant violations of anti-harassment policy including against staff and volunteers.

August 3rd - Accused begins conversation with accuser about inappropriate emails and conflict with staff, volunteers, and board members including harassing emails and intimidation during conflicts. This also includes failing to complete assigned tasks and obligations, failure to attend meetings, failure to address conflict, and violation of anti-harassment policy by accuser's partner.

August 3rd - Accuser raises "sexual harassment" in conversation following the disclosure of evidence of ongoing pattern of anti-semitic, racist, and anti-cis harassment of volunteers, board, and staff members and the accuser requests a resignation. This is directed exclusively to the accused and is not mentioned in a parallel conversation with the Executive Director who also asks the board member to resign given the discovery of harassing emails. It is also paired with a demand for compensation for mileage reimbursement for attending all past events/meetings as a volunteer. No official complaint, production of images or text demonstrating harassment is produced for Executive Director. No official complaint is made to other board members or staff (including board members who were extremely close to the accused).

August 3rd - Accuser demands that Gender Justice League retroactively pay for mileage reimbursement since their first volunteering. Executive Director and Board Chair clearly state that this is a violation of Gender Justice League's policies, and is not offered to other board members and would fail to meet equity principles established by the organization. This request is discussed with board members and staff who see it as completely inappropriate given the history of harassment and discrimination against volunteers and staff. The request is denied by Executive Director and Accused.

August 3rd - Accuser who expresses anger and "fears being sued" by the organization demands that we no longer contact or communicate with her or her partner following disclosure of harassment. Gender Justice League agrees to a mutual separation.

August 3rd - Accused sends a resignation email to the board of directors (See Exhibit D)

August 16th - Gender Justice League holds its regular board meeting where the resignation of the accuser is discussed at length. The Accused and the Executive Director recount for the board the above sequence of events that lead to the resignation. The Accused raise the claim of sexual harassment and disclosed to the board and the Executive Director the image that was exchanged in the Facebook conversation with the accused



by the accuser. The accused made no attempts to conceal the exchange, and did not attempt to discredit the accuser. The accused admitted that the photo was inappropriate and “thoughtless” but was sent to numerous other friends and “wasn’t taken in the same context”. The accused apologized to the board. The board reiterated that given the ongoing form of anti-semitic and racist harassment, that the decision to ask for a resignation was the most appropriate course of action given the circumstances.

October 30th - Gender Justice League receives an email from community partners from the accuser claiming they have been sexually harassed by the accused. This email contains claims of sexual harassment, a demand that the accused resign, and the language including the term “predator” and making claims at outlined above. Gender Justice League opens an investigation into these claims.



Narrative Findings:

Staff reported no incidents of inappropriate behavior, touching, or unwanted advances by the accused. One volunteer did report that they felt accused had “poor boundaries, including touching my shoulder numerous times after I requested that she not touch me.” This volunteer described accused as “kind and harmless, but sometimes oblivious to other people’s boundaries.” I asked them specifically to comment on if they felt accused had acted in a “predatory, harassing, or sexual way” to which they replied, “Absolutely not, this had more to do with not liking to be touched by other people and that not being respected.”

The allegations also included screen captures cut together including photos from social media and facebook conversations of low enough quality as to obstruct the dates, sequence of conversations and combined with other photos from Facebook that attempts to paint a picture of ongoing harassment. We used these along with full texts provided by Accused to evaluate the claims made in the email. **We did find that there was one minor instance of unprofessional conduct that violated our anti-harassment code.** However we did not find an ongoing pattern of harassment, sexual advances, or retaliation against the accuser by the accused.

In one instance accused did send to the accuser and other friends a photo from the beach that included cleavage and lip biting which may be perceived as sexually suggestive, along with a single line that could be interpreted as inappropriate. **We did not find that this was a pervasive or severe pattern of behavior, however this one incident did violate our professional conduct guidelines.** While this conduct was inappropriate - it did not persist, was not recurrent, and ceased as soon as the other board member expressed disinterest or concern. We found no other examples in any communications by the accused towards any other board members, staff, or volunteers to suggest a pattern or practice of harassment. Additionally, to date the organization has received no additional complaints from volunteers, board members, or staff of predation, harassment, or assault.

Gender Justice League takes accusations such as these extremely seriously - more than 50 hours have been dedicated to interviewing and investigating these claims. We have retained outside legal assistance to assist us in this investigation to ensure as thorough and complete a process as possible. While we have found that there was one violation of our policy - it was not severe (including no unwanted touching, request for sex, quid pro quo behavior), persistent (it occurred only once and ceased immediately upon a disclosure of apprehension) - the incident also included an immediate acknowledgement of inappropriateness.

Additional facts in dispute:

A significant claim made in the accusations includes abuse of power, threats, and intimidation resulting in the removal from the board of directors of the accuser by the accused. This would be consistent with a form of



illegal retaliation for the disclosure of sexual harassment. Our investigation spent a significant amount of time reconstructing the sequence of events that lead to the accuser leaving our board of directors and the accused's role in that process.

Reasons for resignation:

A significant portion of the allegations against Sophia was that she abused her power as co-chair and forced the board member to resign after she confronted her about sexual harassment. This investigation found these claims to be patently untrue. The request to resign from the board of directors came after staff uncovered that the board member, their partner, or someone from their residence had sent numerous emails that included anti-semitic, racist, or sexist comments about staff and volunteers through Gender Justice League's website's volunteer form (comments attached). This followed a series of harassing emails to a volunteer who had been requested by the staff and board to develop a scent-free policy. These emails included anti-semitic and ableist accusations. Additionally, the accuser's partner had sent a harassing email to a staff member and included an epithet about their gender identity. The Executive Director approached both the accuser and their partner about the inappropriate nature of these comments, emails, and messages and insisted that they cease immediately.

Since the time that accused has resigned, there has been continued targeted racist harassment including the filling out of a GJL volunteer form as "Blacky McBlackface" and creating a fake facebook account named Danni Cho-Kim (a racist joke "Choak Him" and using our Executive Director's first name).

All of this behavior was ample reason to request that board member step down from the board of directors - and the accused was the most appropriate individual to initiate this conversation. This was requested by multiple staff to the accused who executed that request. We find no merit in the assertion that the accused was acting in retaliation for being confronted about sexual harassment, or that it was done in any way to deny, silence, or avoid accountability for the one incident in violation of our policy. Quite to the contrary, the accused has completely and fully participated in our investigation including producing and providing any and all information requested by our board officers and staff conducting the investigation. We have not found the accuser to be similarly willing to participate. Accusations were never made through any other official channels - to staff or other board members - despite numerous attempts by staff and board officers to reach out through multiple channels. Without an opportunity to ask questions, request evidence, or ascertain the nature of additional behavior or actions that we cannot account for with current information it is difficult to fully understand the extent of possible harassment. Additionally, the accuser or other parties have continued to contact third parties in an attempt to shame or harm the accused - while simultaneously refusing to communicate directly with our investigation. No official report or contact has been made to board or staff members about these allegations.



Recommendation to board of directors:

Given the nature of these complaints we are recommending the following:

1. All board and staff undergo mandatory sexual harassment training in the next 90 days.
2. The board of directors adopt a code of conduct for board members to clarify what the organization considers professional conduct.
3. The board members undergo an anti-harassment training annually, and any new members undergo an anti-harassment training within 90 days

**Gender Justice League's Sexual Harassment Policy:
Prohibition of Sexual Harassment**



Gender Justice League's policy against sexual harassment prohibits sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- 1) Submission to such conduct is made an express or implicit condition of employment or participation;
- 2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual who submits to or rejects such conduct; or
- 3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee or board members work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive working environment.

While it is not possible to list all of the circumstances which would constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples:

- 1) Unwelcome sexual advances -- whether they involve physical touching or not;
- 2) Requests for sexual favors in exchange for actual or for promised job benefits such as:
 - a) Favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or
 - b) Continued employment; or
 - c) Coerced sexual acts.

Depending on the circumstances, the following conduct may also constitute sexual harassment:

- (1) use of sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life;
- (2) sexually oriented comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- (3) displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;
- (4) unwelcome leering, whistling, deliberate brushing against the body in a suggestive manner;
- (5) sexual gestures or sexually suggestive comments;
- (6) inquiries into one's sexual experiences; or
- (7) discussion of one's sexual activities.

While such behavior, depending on the circumstances, may not be severe or pervasive enough to create a sexually hostile work environment, it can nonetheless make coworkers uncomfortable. Accordingly, such behavior is inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action regardless of whether it is unlawful.



It is also unlawful and expressly against Gender Justice League policy to retaliate against an employee for filing a complaint of sexual harassment or for cooperating with an investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment.



COMPLAINT RECEIVED

Email Complaint:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Predator Lee Truth** <predatorleetruth@protonmail.ch>

Date: Tue, Oct 31, 2017 at 6:13 PM

Subject: URGENT COMMUNITY ALERT: Regarding Gender Justice League/Sophia Lee Board Chair, It's time to take a stand!

To: "info@gaycity.org" <info@gaycity.org>, "info@ingersollgendercenter.org" <info@ingersollgendercenter.org>, "info@rainbowcntr.org" <info@rainbowcntr.org>

(Full Attached Image Link: <https://i.imgur.com/8CpOIVM.jpg>)

We are a coalition of people demanding truth and pleading for help.

We are reaching out to you today from members of the community to the media to ask for help to ask for sense, to ask for a victim to not be silenced by an elitist community with lawyers and money, we are not looking for a lawsuit, we are not looking for extended conflict just justice, and that Justice is the Resignation of Gender Justice League's Board Chair Sophia Lee, an employee of Microsoft as well as a large donor to the organization.

We cannot allow the organization who claims that they are on the victim's side to allow this predator to stay in charge of their governing body, it is your time to act Gender Justice League.

The point of this email is for us to speak out for the the victim who used to be a very high ranking official in Gender Justice League from Spring 2016 until August of 2017 who fears writing this and has feared speaking out for months due to potential retaliation.

No Longer.

As shown in the enclosed/attached images there was an incident of sexual harassment and likely a form of blackmail to force the victim to resign and the victim had no choice, when the victim told her assaulter that she wanted the sexual harassment addressed Sophia Lee said coldly "I do not care" and "you have nothing to stand on" For full disclosure the victim had received an email through Gender Justice League's Trans Pride Seattle website via the volunteer application from a visiting friend as a joke which by modern PC standards was not acceptable and very offensive which the victim had nothing to do with. She was however forced to resign without evidence, without a session of the board to vote and discuss the issue all within a period of 24 hours.

The victim was threatened with making the offensive email public if she did not resign and was told "I am giving you a way out of this clean", being poor and losing her apartment along with having a partner with disabilities she had no choice for their well being to resign and had to leave Seattle to recover and find a new home.

Sexual Assault is any unwanted sexual advance and this was a frequent occurrence as witnessed by the victim and her partner, as evidenced in facebook conversations and as seen among many who interact with her and dismiss Sophia's actions as "Sophia being Sophia" or just being "flirty" and "playful". Sophia also refused to pay for about



\$3300.00 of the victim's retroactive mileage reimbursements during this time and said there was no agreement to do so, it was a verbal agreement between Danni Askini and the victim.

The victim was never given an opportunity to speak to the Executive Director about the sexual harassment as the Executive Director and the victim were not speaking due to the ED Danni Askini making threats to sue the victim's partner for creating a hostile work environment after speaking up against an employee of Gender Justice League who was in her mind taking her loved one's role while it may not be appropriate to do so threatening someone with disabilities de-stabilized the problem so badly that no dialogue was had about the harassment and all contact had ceased.

Again we are not looking for any legal battles, just the resignation of Sophia Lee NOW, she IS a PREDATOR, the victim will likely have to take a loss for the mileage reimbursements given the climate and no formal agreement.

Gender Justice League while extremely flawed occasionally does good things for the transgender community of Washington State but has lost focus this year and has lost their "soul" they were most effective and empowering when they were a group of people operating from a basement making change happen, that organization is gone.

#PredatorLee
#SophiaMustResign

Inquiries about contacting the victim from Media ONLY can be made to: predatorleetruth@protonmail.ch due to fear of retaliation we will only make available the victims contact info to media interested in taking on the story.



GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE

EXHIBITS:

Email sent to volunteer:

EXHIBIT A

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <7iwoah+15veefojdl57s@guerrillamail.com>

Date: Sat, Apr 29, 2017 at 10:35 PM

Subject: Accessibility.

To: **VOLUNTEER EMAIL ADDRESS**

Help out the community, cool, but how fucking much do you need to talk about scents? Seriously? In an open air event with thousands of people, expecting them all to follow those strict rules. No nail polish? Overblown.

Is ranting about scents really that much of an issue? If you're a disability coordinator how about you focus more on disability accessibility and less nitpicking others?

Sent using Guerrillamail.com

Block or report abuse:

<https://www.guerrillamail.com//abuse/?a=YFh7CC0HRroRjRy%2B5W0LexfCQc%2BR1cJViatQew%3D%3D>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **VOLUNTEER EMAIL ADDRESS**

Date: Mon, May 29, 2017 at 9:34 PM

Subject: Re: accessibility

To: 7pohqt+4e3z7a9qi3ck8@guerrillamail.com

On Wed, May 10, 2017 at 12:30 PM, <7pohqt+4e3z7a9qi3ck8@guerrillamail.com> wrote:

stop shoving your scent nonsense down peoples throats it makes you look aggressive and obnoxious people want to work toward compromise not having a scent cop you are triggering dysphoria in the community as a whole by denying people who wear cologne like myself or those in the feminine spectrum who wear perfume to feel complete i understand that you have issues but find a more productive way than trying to police people when i attend the event this year i will proudly wear scent but stay far away from those who need space from it compromise is the way to go not bumrushing people to submit to your will i hope that group finds someone less aggressive to take the role after you leave it you do not make anyone feel comfortable and just make the entire process feel forced and awkward

take care of yourself live your life and be great to others know that the community does love you but those of us are out of control oppressive is when Reynaldo says something!



Sent using Guerrillamail.com

Block or report abuse:

<https://www.guerrillamail.com//abuse/?a=QFh7CC0HRoRjRy%2B5W0LexfCQc%2BR1cJViatQew%3D%3D>

EXHIBIT C

Email from board co-chair's partner to staff member following harassing conversations.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Eva Ross** <evaheatherross@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Aug 1, 2017 at 2:19 PM

Subject: Trans folk aren't going to accept being bossed around by a cis person. Just saying.

To: justis@genderjusticeleague.org



EMAILS SENT THROUGH GJL WEBSITE

(Note IP Address 73.221.12.236 - linked to accusers home address & Comcast account):

8/1/2017

Feedback > Trans Pride Seattle — WordPress

- Dashboard
- Jetpack
- Posts
- Media
- Pages
- Comments 3
- Feedback
- Appearance
- Plugins 5
- Users
- Tools
- Settings
- Collapse menu

Feedback

Search results for "73.221.12.236"

Screen Options ▾

All (737)

73.221.12.236

Search Feedback

Bulk Actions ▾

Apply

All dates ▾

Filter

8 items



<input type="checkbox"/>	From	Message	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Bitchy Perkytits hitler@lol.fu ckyou 73.221.12.236 http://www.transprideseattle.org/volunteer/	Trans* Pride 2017 Volunteer Application lol <hr/> Phone Number buttfarts Pronouns never County Spam Trash Edit Quick Edit Trash	July 11, 2017 at 7:31 pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Gunlover Freedomhawk hitler@lol.fu ckyou 73.221.12.236 http://www.transprideseattle.org/volunteer/	Trans* Pride 2017 Volunteer Application fghjk <hr/> Phone Number buttfarts Pronouns never County	June 16, 2017 at 6:47 pm



GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE

8/1/2017

Feedback < Trans Pride Seattle — WordPress

<input type="checkbox"/>	From	Message	Date
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<input type="checkbox"/>	 Radi que er Skylar Satanborne hitler@lol.fu ckyou 73.221.12.2 36 http://www.transprides eattle.org/volunteer/	Trans* Pride 2017 Volunteer Application ... <hr/> Phone Number buttfarts Pronouns never County	June 14, 2017 at 10:51 pm



GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE

8/1/2017



Feedback < Trans Pride Seattle — WordPress

<input type="checkbox"/>	From	Message	Date
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<input type="checkbox"/>	 Anar chov egan Aycin Triggerfing er hitler@lol.fu ckyou 73.221.12.2 36 http://www. transprides eattle.org/v olunteer/	Trans* Pride 2017 Volunteer Application lol <hr/> Phone Number buttfarts Pronouns never County earthling	June 13, 2017 at 9:09 pm



8/1/2017

Feedback < Trans Pride Seattle — WordPress

<input type="checkbox"/>	From	Message	Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	 @genderjusticeleague.org 73.221.12.236 http://www.transprideseattle.org/volunteer/	Trans* Pride 2017 Volunteer Application TEsssssssssst <hr/> Phone Number 4125551212 Pronouns Zim Zir Zeer County Snohomish	January 11, 2017 at 4:09 am
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Test hi@hi.com 73.221.12.236 http://www.transprideseattle.org/volunteer/	Trans Pride Seattle Volunteer Form Test <hr/> Phone Number Test Anything Else you want us to know?	May 13, 2016 at 9:05 pm
<input type="checkbox"/>	From	Message	Date

Bulk Actions ▾

Apply

8 items

Export feedback as CSV

Select feedback to download

Thank you for creating with [WordPress](#).

Version 4.8



Volunteer Form Completed by the board member -



GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE

11/19/2017

GJL October Volunteer Training

GJL October Volunteer Training

Tuesdays in October from 5:30-7PM. Location will be disclosed day-of to confirmed participants.

October 17: Database Training 101

Nosh on some snacks and become acquainted with NationBuilder, a platform used by movements, nonprofits, unions, and political candidates alike! Grow an understanding of membership engagement, and the integral role volunteers play. Bring your laptop if you have one!

October 24: Phone Bank Training

Phone banking is a great strategy to gauge support, inform the community, and solicit donations. Learn what successful phone banking looks like and gain confidence to talk about Gender Justice League's mission and work with like-minded strangers! Bring a list of 4 friends to practice call. We will provide scripts, and snacks.

October 31: Card Painting Party

Some people donate their time, some their money, and GJL couldn't survive without both. Join us for a fun evening of expressing our creativity and gratitude for the universe of radical folx who keep us going.

Contact: justis@genderjusticeleague.org

The respondent's email address (sophialeeisapredator@genderjusticeleague.org) was recorded on submission of this form.

What's your name? *

Blacky McBlackface

What are your pronouns? *

SCHMEE AND POC, QTTUPAC

What's your phone number? *

206\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$



11/19/2017

GJL October Volunteer Training

I can attend the following GJL Volunteer Trainings: *

- October 17: Database Training 101
- October 24: Phone Banking 101
- October 31: Development 101
- I can't make it this time, but I'm interested in hearing about future trainings!

How did you hear about this event? *

- Email Blast
- Friend
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)

This form was created inside of Gender Justice League.

Google Forms



GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE