Dear Rector Bacdayan, Washington and Lee University Board of Trustees, Law Council, Interim President Dr. Kenneth Ruscio, Dean Melanie Wilson, Dean Maria Saez Tatman, Dean Lisa Rodocker, and Ms. Lauren Kozak,

This letter is written on behalf of concerned student organizations and leaders**.** We all chose to attend Washington and Lee University School of Law seeking a community small enough that each student would be taken care of and looked after. We chose a school that purportedly prides itself on accountability, honesty, and a tradition of honor.[1] We feel compelled to write about the University's decision to admit Tate Weston and allow him to be a member of our community. We also want to address the failure of our Law School's administrators to protect and inform the student body.

On Sunday, November 15, the Washington Post reported that Washington and Lee University School of Law admitted Tate Weston in April of 2024.[2] Throughout the admissions process, administrators were aware that in May of 2023, Tulane University found him responsible for sexually assaulting his fellow student, Cameron Lewis, and expelled him. In fact, Weston submitted a two-page document in addition to his Washington and Lee application acknowledging the Tulane determination.[3] Further, Peter Jetton, the Associate Dean of Communications and Marketing Strategy, stated that the Law School admissions office was aware of Weston's misconduct finding at Tulane University when he applied to Washington and Lee and conducted no additional inquiry. According to Weston's own attorney, his application disclosed the sexual assault accusations and his expulsion after being found responsible. In fact, "[a]s the criminal investigation and later charges developed, he promptly and repeatedly updated law school leadership."[4]

In November of 2024, during Weston's first semester of law school, Ms. Lewis, Tate's victim, emailed Dean Melanie Wilson; Washington and Lee University Title IX Coordinator, Lauren Kozak; and other school officials. She attached Tulane University's findings and warned that Weston could pose a threat to the safety of other students. Instead of taking action to ensure the safety of our students and community, Dean Maria Saez Tatman met with Weston and notified him that Ms. Lewis had contacted the school. As the Associate Dean of Law Student Affairs, Community, and Belonging, Dean Saez Tatman has the responsibility to "develop

[1] "The students of Washington and Lee reserve to themselves alone the authority to hold their fellow students accountable for failures of their duty of honor. Any breach of the community's trust is considered an Honor Violation, punishable by a single sanction: removal from the University." EXEC. COMM., THE WHITE BOOK (revised 2024).

[2] Amazingly, the University thought Weston would become "[a] broad-minded . . . and honorable practitioner[] of law." *Our Mission*, WASH. & LEE UNIV. SCH. OF L., https://perma.cc/U3RJ-ZNW8 (last visited Nov. 16, 2026). Per the University's own mission statement, it intended his admission to promote a "collaborative intellectual community exemplifying rigor, *trust*, and *civility*." *Id.* (emphasis added).

[3] Amy Brittain, *Tulane Granted Him a Diploma While Investigating Him for Rape*, WASH. POST (Nov. 15, 2026), https://perma.cc/F6R3-ESH7.

[4] *Id.*

and implement programs to enrich the law school experience and to help law students succeed in school, personally, and professionally."[5] Her actions in overlooking Weston's misconduct represent an ultimate failure of her duties to the student body, who trust her to safeguard their best interests.

Dean Saez Tatman told Weston that "even if he were arrested, he would be presumed innocent and permitted to continue as a student."[6] He was arrested in December 2025 and later indicted for felonious, second-degree rape. Nonetheless, he was allowed to remain in our community, allowed to attend classes beside our students, and allowed to attend late-night events where students sometimes reach their most vulnerable states. Students deserve transparency, especially regarding those we share classes, our drinks, and our homes with.

It was not until October of this year that the Washington and Lee University Board of Trustees were informed about Weston's misconduct and placed him on leave. On November 12, he pleaded guilty to felony second-degree battery and misdemeanor sexual battery.

As students of Washington and Lee University School of Law, we are horrified by the decisions and processes that led to this outcome. The leaders responsible for the integrity and safety of our community admitted Weston despite his expulsion from Tulane for sexual assault and permitted him to remain here as a student throughout his arrest, indictment, and criminal conviction.

Weston's membership in the class of 2027 demeans the mission of Washington and Lee to cultivate "honorable practitioners of the law."[7] At every juncture, the administrators responsible chose to put the reputation of our law school and community at risk to shield Weston from the consequences of his criminal conduct. The actions of these administrators not only put the safety of students at imminent risk but also degrade Washington and Lee University as an institution and the degrees earned by thousands of affiliated alumni.

Washington and Lee is a university that prides itself on its honor system founded on the community's trust. Our honor system imposes a single sanction for conduct that the current student body deems dishonorable. Dishonorable conduct is not codified—rather it is based on the principle that any action which breaches the community's trust is an honor violation. The actions of both Tate Weston and the implicated administrators *violated our community's trust*. We do not condone this and will not stand for it.

We demand accountability.

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[5] *Maria Saez Tatman*, WASH. & LEE UNIV. SCH. OF L., https://perma.cc/YB5W-RXQE (last visited Nov. 16, 2026).
[6] Brittain, *supra* note 3.
[7] *Our Mission*, *supra* note 2.

**Our Demands:**
**1. Resignations**

We call for the resignation of Dean Melanie Wilson, Dean Maria Saez Tatman, Dean Lisa Rodocker, Ms. Lauren Kozak, and all other responsible administrators who have mishandled issues of campus assault and accountability. These individuals admitted Tate Weston and allowed him to remain at Washington and Lee University School of Law despite his expulsion from Tulane University and subsequent criminal convictions.

**2. Removal From Leadership Positions**

We call for the immediate removal of Dean Melanie Wilson, Dean Saez Tatman, Dean Lisa Rodocker, and Ms. Lauren Kozak from leadership positions at Washington and Lee University.

**3. Audit and Reform of Current Admission Process**

We call for a public audit of the admission processes of Washington and Lee University School of Law with the aim to implement more transparency and to promote the honor and integrity of our community.

**4. Expulsion of Tate Weston**

We call for the immediate retroactive expulsion of Tate Weston, permanently dismissing him from Washington and Lee University School of Law with no right to return, reapply, or complete his degree. We call for his credits to be stripped so they may not be used at any other institution.

**5. Assurance that Tate Weston Will Not Be Allowed Back on Washington and Lee University Campus**

We ask for assurance that Tate Weston will not be allowed back on Washington and Lee University Campus.

**Signed by the following student organizations:**

**W&L Chapter of American Constitution Society (ACS)**

**Women Law Students Organization (WLSO)**

**W&L Chapter of National Lawyers Guild (NLG)**

**Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA)**

**Black Law Students Association (BLSA)**

**First Generation Student Union (FGSU)**

**Jewish Law Student Association (JLSA)**

**Latin American Law Students Association (LALSA)**

**OUTLaw**

**Middle Eastern and South Asian Law Students Association (MESALSA)**

**Student Leadership of the W&L Chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society**

**Law Families**

**Student Bar Association (SBA)**

***Washington & Lee Law Review***

**Student Leadership of the *German Law Journal***

**The *Journal of Civil Rights and Social Justice (*JCRSJ*)***

**Kirgis & Head Kirgis Fellows**

**Kirgis Fellows 2025–26 Cohort**

**Moot Court Executive Board (MCEB)**

**Lewis F. Powell, Jr. Distinguished Lecture Series (Powell Board)**

**Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity (PAD)**

**The Law News**

**The Pro Bono Board**

**Sports Czars**

**Jessup Moot Court**

**Antitrust & Consumer Law Society (ACLS)**

**Business Law Society**

**Environmental Law Society (ELS)**

**International Law Society (ILS)**

**Law Students of California**

**W&L Chapter of the Plaintiffs' Law Association (PLA)**

**Professionalism & Networking in the Law**

**Public Defense Group**

**Public Interest Law Students Association (PILSA)**

**Space and Telecommunications Law Society**

**Sports, Entertainment, and Intellectual Property Law Society (SEIPLS)**

**Tax Law Society**

**Bankruptcy Law Society**