

Dear Franklin & Marshall Community,

We write this message in solidarity with the queer and trans members of our community at a time when [LGBTQ+ rights are threatened from many sides](#), and at a time when [trans lives are especially under attack](#).

We write to affirm the value and dignity of these members of our community. Trans lives matter.

Consequently, the undersigned faculty and staff at Franklin & Marshall College unequivocally denounce the choice to invite transphobic speaker Paula Scanlan to our campus on March 27, in close proximity to Transgender Day of Visibility.

Scanlan is currently on a college speaking tour and is working with a well-funded, far-right “culture war” machine that seeks to sow division, provoke backlash, generate publicity, and weaken public confidence in higher education.¹ In videos of her campus visits available online, we have seen Scanlan disrespect, [misgender](#), and mock trans people. Scanlan also has a history of (a) invoking the [unsubstantiated idea that the presence of transgender women creates a threat of sexual violence to cisgender women](#), and (b) making direct reference to the physical appearance of Lia Thomas's genitalia. The latter would, of course, never be considered an appropriate thing to do in reference to anyone but a transgender person; unfortunately, trans people are not afforded the same dignities that everyone else can take for granted.

Scanlan refuses to acknowledge the identity of the trans community; indeed, the title of her talk, “Biological Men Should Not Compete in Women’s Sports,” [attempts to erase the existence of trans women, the purported subject of her speech](#). We believe, based on this evidence, that the goal of her college tour is not the civil, academic discussion of ideas. We maintain that its content is dehumanizing and cruel. Accordingly, we are deeply concerned about this talk's impact on our community, and in particular on our trans and non-binary students.

Our community has lost many cherished LGBTQ+ members over the years, and in recent weeks we have lost a beloved trans student, writer, and activist. We mourn alongside the family members, friends, and allies most affected during this painful time. We also recognize the large and growing body of evidence² that shows a direct correlation between the anti-trans rhetoric

¹ <https://yaf.org/financials/>,
<https://yaf.org/news/paula-scanlan-former-teammate-of-lia-thomas-joins-yafs-campus-lecture-lineup/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/22/transgender-deaths-remembrance-report>,
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/invisible-bruises/202402/a-teens-death-sparks-conversation-about-anti-trans-laws>,
<https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/deadly-violence-against-transgender-people-rise>,
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2024/03/12/school-lgbtq-hate-crimes-incidents/>,
<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/member-features/gay-trans-panic-defense/>,

promulgated by Scanlan and others and the violence perpetrated against trans people. There is a causal relationship between casual and institutional transphobia and trans death.

In light of these recent and ongoing tragedies, members of our community have called for greater care and common decency toward each other. Some have suggested that Scanlan's talk be postponed or canceled; that is not the purpose of this letter, however. We maintain that a liberal arts college should be a space for the free exchange of ideas, but we also maintain that such exchanges should be conducted in a manner that is civil and that respects all members of our community.

Part of our work as an institution of higher education is to study ideas, even when those ideas are troubling and sad. However, we should never agree with the choice to invite speakers to campus whose demonstrated aim is to demean, devalue, and threaten the lives of our friends, family, and community members. We believe that our role as a college community *must* include speaking out against such dehumanization.

To the queer, trans, and nonbinary members of our community: you have allies on this campus who value and support you. We are committed to fighting alongside you.

To President Altmann and the F&M administration: we call on you to make a strong, unequivocal statement of care and support on behalf of all of our LGBTQ+ students, colleagues, and community members.

Sincerely,

M. Elena Aldea Agudo, Senior Teaching Professor and Director of Spanish Language Center

Linda Aleci, Associate Professor of Art History

Quincy Amoah, Assistant Professor, Anthropology & Africana Studies

Erik Anderson, Associate Professor of English

Rachel Anderson-Rabern, Associate Professor of Theatre

Zohra Ansari-Thomas, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Public Health

Matt Arant, Assistant Director of Regional Admission

Samantha Armstrong, Assistant Director Of Admission Visits

Carol Auster, Emerita Professor of Sociology

Nic Auwaerter '11, Director of the Center for the Sustainable Environment

Kathy Babb, Interim Associate Director of Sorority & Fraternity Life, Mindfulness Committee

Wendy Baker Davis, Technology Support Specialist, ITS

Tim Bechtel, Senior Teaching Professor of Geosciences

https://lancasteronline.com/opinion/columnists/state-laws-targeting-transgender-individuals-are-doing-real-harm-column/article_3d6a8efe-fb17-11ed-ac3d-cbc98e779d56.html

Meredith Bielaska, Assistant Coach - Rowing
Jaime Blair, Professor of Biology
Bec Blimline, Advancement Operations Coordinator
Madelaine Breimhurst '13, Associate Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations
Lydia Brubaker, Director of Legal Affairs
Christine Chalifoux, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Africana Studies
Chad Chaney, Preparator and Exhibitions Specialist Phillips Museum of Art
Malinda Harnish Clatterbuck, Associate Director at the Center for the Sustainable Environment
Tim Coleman, Museum Assistant Phillips Museum of Art
Jennifer Conley, Associate Professor of Dance
Jessica Cox, Associate Professor of Spanish and Linguistics
Ben Crisman, Adjunct Instructor of Government
Elena Cuffari, Assistant Professor of Psychology & Scientific Philosophical Studies of Mind
Todd DeKay, Senior Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology
Lucy Deren, Assistant Director of the Ware Institute
Susan Dicklitch-Nelson, Professor of Government
Nimesha Ekanayake, Staff Coordinator, College Advancement
Carey Faulkner, Associate Professor of Sociology
Amy Faust, Learning Support Specialist
Peter Fields, Professor of Biology
John Flavin, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Sociology
Marah Foltz, Associate Director of Alumni Engagement
Lisa Garrett, Laboratory Support Supervisor, Biology
Lisa Gasbarrone, Professor of French
Shari Goldberg, Associate Professor of English
Van Gosse, Professor of History
Bridget Guarasci, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Julia Haigh, Office Administrator, Center for Opinion Research
Jessica Haile, Assistant Dean for Int'l Student Services
Erin Hallenbeck '17, Project Manager/Research Assistant for the F&M Global Barometers
Thomas Hart, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Nadra Hebouche, Associate Professor of Francophone Studies and French
Bennett Helm, Professor of Philosophy and Scientific & Philosophical Studies of Mind
Angelina Horst, International Student Adviser
Aaron Howard, Teaching Professor of Biology
Lauren Howard, Associate Professor of Psychology
Emily Huber, Associate Professor of English
Zeshan Ismat, Professor of Geoscience, Director IST
Peter Jaros, Associate Professor of English
Pablo Jenik, Associate Professor of Biology

James Jolles, Adjunct Assistant Professor Earth & Environment
Jared Julius, Science Library Supervisor, Martin Library of the Sciences
Megan Keller, Academic Department Coordinator for Visual Arts and Theatre and Dance
Richard K. Kent, Professor, Art, Art History, and Film
Danish Khan, Assistant Professor of Economics & Co-Director of Inequality, Poverty, Power & Social Justice Initiative
Lauren Kieffer, Technology Support Specialist
Hannah Kim, Associate Director of International Admission
Megan Knowles, Associate Professor of Psychology
Nicky Kroll, Associate Professor of Philosophy
Nancy Kurland, Professor of Business, Organizations & Society
Carrie Landfried, Associate Professor of French & Francophone Studies, Chair of the Language Studies Council
Magnolia Laurie, Associate Professor of Art
Karen Leistra-Jones, Associate Professor of Music
Giovanna Faleschini Lerner, Professor of Italian
Mary Ann Levine, Professor of Anthropology
Davide Lionetti, Assistant Professor of Chemistry
Jialing Liu, Senior Teaching Professor of Spanish
Louise LoBello, Digital & Special Collections Librarian, College Library
Nadia Mann, Assistant Dean for International & Multilingual Student Success
Emily Marshall, Associate Professor of Sociology and Public Health
Katherine McClelland, Professor of Sociology
Stephanie McConnell, Director of Employer & Community Partnerships
Stephanie McNulty, Professor of Government
Lisa Mertzman, Stockroom Manager
Jennifer Meyer, Associate Professor of Government and Public Health
John Lardas Modern, Arthur & Katherine Shadek Professor of Humanities and Religious Studies
Nicholas Montemarano, Alumni Professor of Creative Writing & Belles Lettres
Clara Schissler Moore, Professor of Biology
Jennifer Morford, Professor of Chemistry
Jeremy Moss, Associate Professor of Film
Jen Nell, Associate Director of the Ware Institute
Barbara Nimershiem, Professor of Mathematics
Kristin Oberholtzer, E-Resources and Discovery Specialist, College Library
Lucia Parry, Visiting Professor of Psychology
Ted Pearson, Associate Professor of History
Cristina Pérez, Assistant Professor of American Studies
Christine Phillips-Piro, Associate Professor of Chemistry
Donna Prinz, Interviewer, Center for Opinion Research

Joseph Pritchett, Director for Faith and Meaning
Wendell Ressler, Professor of Mathematics
Diosanny Rivera-Placido, Director of the Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Resource Center
Leanne Roncolato, Associate Professor of Economics
Ashley Rondini, Associate Professor of Sociology
Alex Roomets, Associate Professor of Economics
Joshua Rottman, Associate Professor of Psychology
Kelly Schenke '95, Academic Department Coordinator, Philosophy, Physics, SPM Program
Abby Schrader, Professor of History
Susan Schultheis, Student Wellness Center
Marissa Sheaf, Director of Health Professions Advising
Laura Shelton, Associate Professor of History
Brian Silberman, Professor of Theatre
Tom Simpson, Sustainability Coordinator
Amy Singer, Associate Professor of Sociology
Scott Smith, Associate Professor of Anthropology
Jon Stone, Professor of Russian
James Strick, Professor of Science, Technology and Society
Calvin Stubbins, Professor of Physics & Astronomy
Adeem Suhail, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Sam Thiry, Director of Care Coordination & Violence Prevention
Carmen Tisnado, Professor of Spanish
Ryan Trainor, Associate Professor of Physics
Hollie Tripp, Assistant Professor of Government and Public Health
Meagan Tripp, Assistant Professor of German
Joanna Underhill, Assistant Director of the Philadelphia Alumni Writers House
Eric Usner, Senior Adjunct Assistant Professor of American Studies
Pamela Vail, Professor of Dance
Firuzeh Shokooh Valle, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Shari Vegso, Academic Coordinator, Modern Languages
Mark Villegas, Associate Professor of American Studies
Kelsey Voigt, Assistant Athletic Trainer
Carla Willard, Associate Professor of American Studies
Elspeth Wilson, Assistant Professor of Government
Lisa Wolfe, Director, The Ware Institute for Civic Engagement
Wei-Ting Yen, Assistant Professor of Government
Cindy Yetter-Vassot, Associate Professor of French