

Loomis Chaffee

January 10, 2017

Dear Members of the Loomis Chaffee Community,

Over the past century, Loomis has educated generations of students to be their best selves and to serve the common good. We are proud of our history and our commitment to the education of young people. Unfortunately, we have not always reflected the high ideals that motivated our Founders. Last May we wrote to let you know that the school had hired an independent law firm to conduct an investigation into sexual misconduct at the school. That firm, Cowdery & Murphy, has now concluded its investigation, and we write today to summarize the findings.

First, thank you to everyone who participated in this process and in particular to those who came forward with information. We know that reporting incidents took great personal courage as well as a commitment to help make a difference for current and future generations of students. The reports reflected painful experiences that were often difficult to talk about. We, along with the entire Board of Trustees and the school community, apologize unreservedly to those affected. We know that no action that we take today will erase the deep pain caused, but we do hope that our commitment to confront all such behavior now and in the future may bring some healing.

The Findings

Cowdery & Murphy received reports of employee sexual misconduct dating as far back as the 1940s through to the early 2000s. The nature of misconduct ranged from sexual advances to sexual abuse. While each of the reporting individuals proved credible, Cowdery & Murphy could not fully investigate some of these reports for a variety of reasons. In some instances, no other individual came forward; in others, the investigators could not find additional information; and in still others, the alleged perpetrator had died. None of the reports investigated involved incidents of misconduct toward today's current students. Based on the nature and extent of allegations made about the following former faculty members, we determined that we should publish their names and provide more information regarding the reports about them.

1. Robert Ward worked at the school from 1960 to 1965 in the Admissions Office, as a guidance counselor, and as a teacher of English. The investigators received credible reports that Mr. Ward sexually assaulted and made advances toward students in the 1960s. The school was not aware of the abuse at the time and consequently provided him with reference letters. He subsequently worked at Amherst College and the Williston School. He died in 1986.
2. Harold Sullivan taught English and worked as a counselor at the school between 1962 and 1984. Cowdery & Murphy received multiple credible reports that Mr. Sullivan sexually abused students while he was a faculty member. After he left the school, he set up a counseling practice. The school was not aware of the abuse at the time and provided Mr. Sullivan with references while he was employed at the school. Mr. Sullivan declined to talk to the investigators and is barred from campus and from having any contact with our students.
3. Robert Andrian taught history and coached soccer from 1975 to 2010. Following a complaint in 2010 and an internal investigation, the school dismissed Mr. Andrian after determining that he had engaged in inappropriate behaviors with students. The school reported the matter at the time to the Windsor Police Department. Cowdery & Murphy investigated and found credible additional reports that Mr. Andrian made unwelcome sexual advances and engaged in sexual misconduct with students and young alumni. Mr. Andrian declined to speak with Cowdery & Murphy. We have not provided him with letters of reference, and he is barred from campus and from having contact with our students.

In addition to the aforementioned, Cowdery & Murphy reviewed past cases the school had already investigated—cases that resulted in the dismissal of employees for inappropriate relations with students, including Robert Blood, who was dismissed from the school in 2003 for sexual misconduct. We reported that incident to the police and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, and Mr. Blood eventually pleaded guilty to a crime related to that incident.

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As we considered the report and its findings, it is clear that the school should have handled some situations better. We did not report every instance of misconduct; we provided references for a small number of employees who had violated boundaries with students; and when we became aware of past abuse, we did not always follow up with an investigation. Finally, our reporting mechanisms and training for students and faculty around these issues were minimal.

Protecting Our Students

We acknowledge and apologize for all instances of sexual misconduct that occurred at the school, and we are committed to protecting our students from any potential future sexual misconduct. With employees, faculty, administrators, and staff, we have regular meetings and training sessions on boundary issues, sexual misconduct, and mandatory reporting. We bring in outside experts, and we underline the responsibilities that every adult has to report and act on suspicious behavior. We now conduct background checks on all employees every two years and on all adult family members living in school housing. With prospective employees, we have a reference checking process to ensure that we ask questions regarding any past sexual misconduct or boundary violations. We also have a centralized procedure for providing references for employees who leave the school.

Thank you for your support and cooperation with this process. While the topic is not an easy one, it is important that we address it openly and honestly. If you have additional information or comments that you would like to share, please feel free to communicate with Sheila at sculbert@loomis.org. We would like to thank Cowdery & Murphy for its thorough and careful investigation as well as our own legal counsel James Sconzo of Carlton Fields and the many people who spoke with them about their experiences at the school. We bear in mind the school motto—*ne cede malis*—as we seek always to be our best self.

Christopher K. Norton '76
Chair, Board of Trustees

Sheila Culbert
Head of School