Twitter Thread by Ashton Pittman



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NEW: @OleMiss is trying to compel its ombudsman to turn over confidential communications in order to unmask the #UMemails whistleblowers who exposed a web of racism among UM officials and donors.

The effort has "terrified" faculty members.

“We’re all worried the university is going to get a hold of his communications & that our names will be revealed,” said one faculty member (not a whistleblower) who shared concerns with the ombudsman, fearing retaliation if they raised them elsewhere. 2/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

Two faculty members said they worry the university could be laying groundwork to eliminate the Ombudsman Office altogether.

“If they took that Ombuds office away, there would be nowhere for faculty to go. ... That’s the only place we have on campus." 3/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

"People would be terrified of speaking up because people who speak up get hammered at this university. There is no place to go except the Ombuds office to be treated fairly & with respect. Paul Caffera as the ombudsman is the only place women can go.” 4/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

The University of Mississippi EORC, which is charged with enforcing Title IX, is leading the investigatory effort to unmask the #UMEmails whistleblowers on "hostile work environment" allegations" after they exposed a web of racism and sexism on campus. 5/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

Ombudsman Caffera filed a lawsuit on Nov. 19 to block the EORC’s efforts to compel him to disclose information or to access his emails and private communications. He says he is not affiliated with and does not know the identities of the whistleblowers. 6/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

There is no indication UM officials involved in the racist #UMemails were punished. Instead, the EORC is probing vague claims that the whistleblowers are creating a “hostile work environment…on the basis of race & national origin & just in general.” 7/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

"The purpose of a university ombuds is to provide a safe & confidential place for members of a university community to bring forward issues of concern in a manner that protects them from retribution or retaliation for (speaking) about their concerns." 8/ https://t.co/bqr2Dvxhc2

For background, read our read our initial 3-part #UMemails investigation, starting here.

‘The Fabric Is Torn In Oxford’: UM Officials Decried Racism Publicly, Coddled It Privately
https://t.co/K2yGQqYsgj

When I first investigated the #UMemails, multiple sources told me they & others feared retaliation if they spoke out publicly.

Some claimed a "witch hunt" ensued in 2018 after a tape leaked to a reporter that almost revealed the story sooner.
https://t.co/bhW3yfH2MO

Multiple sources spoke to us who asked to be anonymous out of fear of retaliation, saying that they had to speak out because a "culture of secrecy" & fear among faculty enabled the continued status quo. Here's Part 3:
https://t.co/5zO5Y8gsEg

We first broke news that UM was investigating whistleblowers last month—and that ex-journalism dean Will Norton, who resigned when a public records request brought the racist emails to light, continues to earn almost $20k a month—despite not teaching. https://t.co/ZiOqq9XLhp

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