

Dear Student Government Association,

After the Dec. 2 impeachment hearing of President David Rhode, I decided I can no longer align myself with an organization that chooses to ignore, and neglect victims of verbal and emotional abuse caused by President Rhode. We saw and heard testimonies from almost all members on the executive cabinet that all spoke about different instances in which they had personal dilemmas and troubles with the president and how the president would react.

I firmly believe Chief of Staff, Patrick Clemons, was telling the truth when he spoke about his allegation of verbal sexual harassment on behalf of the president. The fact that Senate didn't think this was enough to remove the president from office is disgusting, grotesque and not what the student body deserves to be representing them. As a victim of sexual assault, my greatest fear was speaking out and not being believed. And that is exactly what happened with Mr. Clemons and his allegations.

We witnessed President Rhode admitting to attending the conference hosted by Turning Point USA and how WCU's legal counsel is trying to amend his wrongdoings. This also in itself should've been enough for Senate to remove this president from office. My peers caved into an emotional response that was fabricated to make the president the victim. Senators discussed that the allegations made against the president were fueled by a bias and were filled with emotions – and that is exactly how they voted when it came to deliberation.

After an article that I co-authored was published in the Western Carolina Journalist, the response from members of SGA were nothing short of cruel, mean and hateful. I experienced bullying from my peers over an article that explained the allegations that were being brought up against the president. We represent the student body and the student body has **EVERY SINGLE RIGHT** to know who they elected, whose salary they are paying for, and whose managing their percentage of tuition money paid to us. I am in disbelief that members from the executive cabinet that were mentioned twice in the article have begun to angrily parade hatred towards my article and towards my integrity, even though *they* declined to comment. Members of Senate dragged and trashed me for writing the article, people who I thought were friends and colleagues. I am completely disappointed in this organization for all the bullying I have endured.

I have always strongly and firmly defended SGA, but I was not given the same courtesy and Senate did not give the same courtesy to those that felt victims of David Rhode. I hope you are content with the results, but I can no longer be a member of an organization that truly doesn't care about the best interest for the student body. Therefore, this is my official letter of resignation from SGA Senate.

With no regrets,

BENNY GARCIA (an important asset to this organization)