

Take Back the Night Speech 2019

This is a space for absolute truth-- the same truth that United Feminist Movement has been working diligently to identify and to demand from the administration at Virginia Tech. In the 2017-2018 school year, the title IX office received 214 student reports and 76 employee reports of gender-based violence and harassment. Among those students was Maya Garcia, a junior in chemical engineering and member of United Feminist Movement. Of those 290 total reports, Maya's case was one of just 46 that were referred to Student Conduct or another university office for adjudication.

Virginia Tech policy states that you have the right to a prompt, adequate, reliable, and impartial title IX investigation. From the time Mia filed her complaint, to finding out her appeal had been denied, took a total of 120 days and her rapist will be able to return to Tech before she graduates. Mia Garcia, like so many other victims, has been failed by the system.

In October 2018, United Feminist Movement organized a rally on the steps of Burruss Hall, inspired by Mia's story, to demand that our administration take action on their failure to promptly and effectively investigate complaints. Since then, Virginia Tech has initiated the development of a student-led committee to provide input on the investigation process, and published the formal title IX investigation procedures just last month. But this does not mean we will dissolve our efforts. Our work is never done.

United Feminist Movement is a registered student organization focused on the promotion and empowerment of oppressed populations. We are advocates for feminist concerns across campus and in the community. We are committed to taking the ideas of inclusivity and intersectionality, and turning them into action by creating spaces of mutual respect and connection.

And so tonight, let this space be your absolute truth. We are here to take back our rights.