

October 1, 2019

Dear DJ,

We, the staff members of the Korean Resource Center (KRC) demand your immediate resignation as the Board President. **We request a meeting with you today, October 1, 2019 at 6 PM at the Kingsley office** to address the staff's demand.

Enclosed, you will find a collective statement from multiple staff at KRC. You will also find 11 letters from individuals. Each letter contains painful and traumatizing experiences stemming from your actions. During your 18 years as Executive Director of KRC and another 5 years as Board President, you have established a pattern and practice of abusive employment practices and harassing behavior.

We direct you to [REDACTED] resignation statement, attached, which was shared publicly in November 2013. Note, his statement is eerily similar to the statements attached. Unfortunately, none of [REDACTED] demands were met and you were not held accountable for your actions. Six years later, you have not changed. Most of us have never met [REDACTED] but we have a responsibility to hold you accountable and ensure that staff are no longer treated unfairly and abused by you.

We ask for your formal resignation to be submitted by **Thursday, October 3, 2019 at 11:00 AM PST**. Your resignation will be considered a sign of cooperation and a show of leadership. We do not seek retribution. All of us just want to work in a safe environment. We trust that you will make the right decision for yourself and for KRC.

Sincerely,

Concerned Staff of KRC

COLLECTIVE STATEMENT FROM THE CONCERNED STAFF

A. Dae Joong Yoon Actively Destroys the Sustainability, Wellbeing, and Growth that Staff Built

DJ actively destroys the sustainability, wellbeing, and growth that staff has built. Under the leadership of the Executive Team, which consists of Jonathan Paik (JP), Jenny Seon, and Yongho Kim, KRC has invested in developing mid-level managers, resulting in a leadership pipeline, has prioritized supporting and supervising staff, and have worked to create a healthy work environment at KRC. Since DJ's return from sabbatical, he has systematically undermined the staff leaders at KRC and created confusion among line staff about organization structure.

B. DJ Routinely Exhibits Inappropriate Behavior

Pressuring Staff and Volunteers to Engage in Alcohol Consumption

DJ and other first-generation Korean organizers have created a culture of heavy drinking, supposedly to build community among organizers and get volunteers and members feel at ease at KRC. We believe that this is the legacy of college campus organizing from the 1980's in South Korea, where personal relationships were deemed as the more effective means of organizing people. Such a drinking culture caters to making men in South Korea--who make up the "mainstream" in South Korean society--feel more comfortable.

However, this legacy proves to be dangerous and toxic in a U.S. immigrant organizing context. It creates excuses for sexual assault under the guise of "cultural differences." For undocumented or also documented immigrants, be it either staff or volunteers, driving home after such parties puts them in danger, creating a threat to their status in the U.S. While creating a drinking scene should never be the primary means of organizing, it is clearly the wrong choice in KRC's context.

Around the late 2000's, there was drinking almost every night at KRC with all-night karaoke parties every weekend at the office, involving most staff and dozens of volunteers. After it became clear on multiple occasions that such partying was proving harmful, the number of parties was curtailed, but DJ has continued to promote partying and drinking when he feels that (1) people are stressed or (2) there is a gathering with a large number of people who could benefit from such socializing.

1. DJ often invites staff to dinner and karaoke, which is accompanied by heavy drinking. There is immense pressure for staff, especially new staff, to attend these dinners and to drink alcohol. This is inconsiderate of staff, specially undocumented staff, who may have to drive back home

after drinking, putting them at risk. DJ emphasizes drinking to “bond” with staff. For outings, there is always an excess of alcohol involved, and pressure to drink. This creates a culture where sexual assault and harassment were more prone to happen.

2. In 2016, there was a staff and volunteer appreciation dinner at KoKo Chicken & BBQ near the old Buena Park office. There were more than 10 staff and volunteers attending the dinner, including DJ. When DJ got drunk, he wanted to play drinking games and started asking female staff who their first love was and when they had their first love experience. He also asked a male staff if he was circumcised. At the same dinner, he continued to share intimate details about his personal sex life such as, “I have car sex with my partner.” Staff attending the dinner were shocked and felt very uncomfortable. His questions and behavior was extremely inappropriate.

Failing to Properly Address Sexist and Misogynistic Behavior

1. DJ shows favoritism of men and prefers to invest in the leadership of male staff. DJ justifies this promotion of men by saying that their “heart” is in the right place. On the other hand, female staff who have demonstrated skill and expertise are not given the same grace or opportunities. He discounts female staff who show differing opinions, often resulting in female staff who work at KRC suppressing their opinions and learning how to accommodate DJ in order to be able to work with him.

2. [REDACTED] is an example of a male staff who benefited from DJ’s sexism as his position and salary at KRC elevated much more quickly than other staff, particularly female leaders. Although [REDACTED] did not yet acquired basic skills like writing an agenda or drafting a work plan, he was given managerial positions over competent female staff who did this administrative work for him. Female staff who provided this support were given no clear acknowledgement or credit for their work. Though [REDACTED] did express that he just wanted to help, he lacked the skills to provide managerial support. Still, DJ continued to push for [REDACTED] to be a manager for staff despite concerns of his inability to manage.

3. On May 25, 2017, [REDACTED] was the lead artist in KRC’s [REDACTED] opening project. At the event, [REDACTED] exhibited rude and off-putting behaviors. In August 2017, [REDACTED] attended the 22-day 24-hour Washington, D.C. vigil in which he called one of KRC’s interns a “bitch.” When the interns addressed their issue with DJ, DJ sympathized and apologized to them, but failed to take action. As a result, another staff member who the interns confided in sent a message to upper management, including DJ, who then proceeded to call and scold her. DJ was the one who invited [REDACTED] into the space and should have taken the proper steps to address [REDACTED] behavior. The interns were disappointed that although they reported to DJ (and [REDACTED]), he failed to take proper remedial actions and the interns had no choice but to continue working with [REDACTED] in the following days. Personal anecdote attached.

C. DJ Brings People Who Are Not Experienced to Take On Responsibility Without Proper Support Leading to Failure

DJ makes unilateral hiring decisions bringing people without experience to take on a significant amount of responsibility and without an appropriate supervisor, setting them up for failure.

For example, in 2017, DJ hired [REDACTED] without proper prior planning. Ms. [REDACTED] was hired with the intention to start a child care system at KRC to develop a pipeline of progressive young people. However, KRC did not have the infrastructure to support her or achieve this goal, which DJ was fully aware of. Eventually, Ms. [REDACTED] voluntarily left the organization because she was unable to do the work that DJ hired her to do.

There have been specific individuals hired or brought to KRC by DJ that had serious behavior issues. Despite complaints from staff, DJ failed to address serious and harmful behavior towards staff and community members.

1. In 2016, DJ hired [REDACTED] as Operations Director despite early signs of problematic behavior. She treated community members with disrespect and made comments like, “You should learn English,” to seniors that come to KRC for assistance. In another incident, [REDACTED] threatened to call ICE when she learned that some KRC staff were undocumented. When three interns from South Korea expressed how much they liked the U.S. and how good it would be if they could live here, [REDACTED] directly told them that they did not deserve to come to the U.S. because they did not pay taxes or contribute. Complaints were made to DJ about [REDACTED] behavior, but DJ did not address this issue, and allowed [REDACTED] to continue working at KRC.

2. In 2017, DJ hired [REDACTED] for the second time. DJ was warned that [REDACTED] may not be the best fit and it turned out he was not, but he was also insensitive to hire him to do both DACA and naturalization work. [REDACTED] would be angry all the time, cultivating a toxic work environment, spending hours during work to meet with another staff member to rant about KRC and its leadership, and would get to other staff members. He made working at KRC very hellish and was mean to clients. [REDACTED] was clearly in poor mental health as he struggled with his own immigration status and his own personal issues. Despite warnings from other staff, DJ pushed [REDACTED] to speak at rallies, travel out of state, and attend press conferences. Ultimately, [REDACTED] left on poor terms. He returned for the DAPA fight and ended bad again. He had a blowout at a retreat, and he felt KRC and NAKASEC used him as a spokesperson.

D. DJ Uses His Position as the Former Executive Director and Current Board President to Advance His Ideas and Agenda Without Considering Pre-Existing Plans or Staff Well-Being

DJ uses his position of power to impose his ideas on staff with little forward planning, overriding existing projects and disregarding the staff's well-being. Though there have been countless instances of DJ exercising his power to impose his ideas unilaterally on staff, below are two examples:

1. In June 2017, two KRC organizing staff asked DJ to come and introduce KRC by talking about its founding, the history, and the mission. DJ did not do any of these and instead went into a long introduction and asked members for their name, major, how they got here. He did not end up speaking about KRC and as a result, the two staff had to ask JP to help by re-doing the introduction, and essentially had to change their plans.
2. On November 9, 2017, DJ recklessly subject staff to possible arrest during a civil disobedience without their consent. KRC conducted a sit-in in front of Mimi Walter's local office. DJ, two staff members, and an intern arrived first and entered her office. Afterwards, legislative staff blocked any other members from entering the office. DJ escalated by saying that the KRC contingent could stay and wait in the office all day for Walters' response. As a result, the Irvine PD came and warned the folks in the room that if they did not leave, they would be arrested. DJ said he would stay and not leave, risking arrest. This was a terrifying and traumatic experience for the staff and intern who were following DJ's lead but had neither been briefed about the escalation nor prepared for arrest.

E. The Existing Board of Directors is Built to Support DJ, Not the KRC Staff

The membership of the current KRC Board of Directors is comprised of former Young Koreans United members and friends of DJ. They include Inbo Sim, Zu Kim, Angela Oh, and John Choi, making up a majority of the Board sufficient to achieve a quorum. The existing Board has been negligent in their own duties of loyalty and care to the organization of KRC. When faced with staff concerns, the Board has unequivocally sided with DJ to the detriment of the staff who spoke up. For example, when informed about the complaints made against DJ (and Inbo), Zu, the Board Secretary, rationalized DJ's problematic behavior by attributing them to "cultural differences" rather than sincerely recognizing the harm that his behavior repeatedly caused to staff.
