

Yale Law dean: Reports that professor groomed female clerks for Kavanaugh 'of enormous concern'

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Yale Law School Dean Heather Gerken wrote that she wanted to "address the press reports today regarding allegations of faculty misconduct."



The dean of Yale Law School on Thursday responded to reports that a prominent professor at the school had advised students seeking judicial clerkships with Brett Kavanaugh on their physical looks, saying the reported allegations of faculty misconduct are "of enormous concern" and calling on anyone affected to come forward.

According to reports in [The Guardian](#), the [Huffington Post](#) and [Above the Law](#), Amy Chua, a professor at the law school, would advise students on their physical appearance if they wanted to seek a clerkship for Kavanaugh. Specifically, Chua would help potential applicants to have a "model-like" appearance.

In a letter Thursday to the law school community, Yale Law School Dean Heather Gerken wrote that she wanted to "address the press reports today regarding allegations of faculty misconduct" and that "the allegations being reported are of enormous concern to me and to the School."



A spokeswoman for Yale Law School confirmed to NBC News that the letter was written in response to the news stories published Wednesday and Thursday.

"While we cannot comment on individual complaints or investigations, the Law School and the University thoroughly investigate all complaints regarding violations of University rules and take no options off the table," Gerken wrote.

"I strongly encourage any members of our community who have been affected by misconduct to take advantage of Yale University's resources for reporting incidents and receiving support," the letter continued. "The Law School has a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which all of our students can live and learn in a community of mutual respect, free of harassment of any kind."

Yale has not specified what the misconduct might be.

Kavanaugh, currently a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, is President Donald Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court.

According to reports, Jed Rubenfeld, who is also a professor at Law School and Chua's husband, also once told a student seeking a clerkship that Kavanaugh "hires women with a certain look."

"He did not say what the look was and I did not ask," the student said, according to The Guardian.

In a statement to NBC News, the Yale Law School spokeswoman acknowledged that the statement from Gerken was a result of the reports about "faculty conduct by two members of our faculty."

[Kavanaugh has faced mounting questions in the days since](#) Christine Blasey Ford, accused him of sexually assaulting her when they were in high school. Kavanaugh has denied the accusation.

Chua, who is perhaps best known for being the author of a 2011 book "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother," wrote a July op-ed for [The Wall Street Journal titled "Kavanaugh Is a Mentor To Women."](#)

In it, she wrote that she'd helped place 10 Yale Law School students — eight of them women — as clerks with Kavanaugh, including her own daughter, whose clerkship had been set to begin in August. "I can't think of a better judge for my own daughter's clerkship," she wrote.

The White House had no immediate comment on the Yale dean's letter.

In an emailed statement to NBC News, Chua said: "For the more than 10 years I've known him, Judge Kavanaugh's first and only litmus test in hiring has been excellence. He hires only the most qualified clerks, and they have been diverse as well as exceptionally talented and capable.

"There is good reason so many of them have gone on to Supreme Court clerkships; he only hires those who are extraordinarily qualified. As I wrote in the Wall Street Journal, he has also been an exceptional mentor to his female clerks and a champion of their careers. Among my proudest moments as a parent was the day I learned our daughter would join those ranks."