

#PresidentsClubDinner and #LarryNassar trial light up World Wide Web

 By Leigh Andrews

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This week, social media netizens were appalled by allegations of groping at the recent President's Club fundraising dinner, while celebrating the outcome of the #LarryNassar trial, and Melinda Gates' female startup fund support.



Image © – Brochure for the Presidents Club Charity Dinner, as seen in the *Financial Times* video on Youtube. Screenshot from [AdAge](#).

ICYMI, here's a brief overview of these top inclusion, equality and diversity topics and why they matter.

WPP cuts ties with sexist charity dinner

Perhaps the fact that the black-tie, male-only dinner was opened with the words: "Welcome to the most un-PC event of the year," or the fact that the night's auction catalogue featured an image of Marilyn Monroe at her most alluring, and included 'a night at Soho's Windmill strip club and a course of plastic surgery with the invitation to: "Add spice to your wife,"' should have been a sign of things to come.

[Bloomberg reports](#) that the Presidents' Club, the 33-year strong UK charity at the centre of the groping allegations at the annual all-male fundraiser, is set to shut down in the wake of the furore over the claims that arose, with the world's biggest advertising group WPP ending its connection to the dinner, and the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital said to return donations received as a result.

This comes after an [investigative report by the Financial Times](#) exposed the fact that multiple hostesses at the event were harassed, groped and insulted. Yes, two of *FT*'s reporters worked undercover as hostesses on the night, with others in the dining room. The 130 hostesses were reportedly told to "wear skimpy outfits with matching underwear and high heels," and many of them were groped, sexually harassed and propositioned at an after-party.

Watch undercover report Madison Marriage's undercover investigation footage below:

According to [AdAge](#), WPP said it has traditionally sponsored a table at the dinner to support the event's fundraising for children's charities, and that the company and its attendees weren't aware of the alleged incidents at the event.

Bloomberg adds that UK junior minister Anne Milton told angry lawmakers:

“ There is an association between rich, wealthy people and this sort of behaviour. It is quite extraordinary to me that in the 21st-century allegations of this kind are still emerging. People need to know there is a line and where it is. This is also about attitude. ”

“ Every business deal, every dinner, every meeting, every hospitality booth, every AGM, literally every day in the office is a chance to ask “wait, is that sexist?” If that sounds patronising, it's a reflection of the dire state of things. ”
Even more so in the age of #MeToo and #TimesUp.
<https://t.co/AzZWf7LSI7>— Louise Ridley (@LouiseRidley) [January 25, 2018](#)

Next step: UK Prime Minister Theresa May is set to investigate gagging orders that prevent women reporting sexual harassment.

Olympic applause for sexual-abuse trial outcome

The #MeToo #TimesUp sentiment further resonated in the sporting world, with former USA Gymnastics national team osteopathic physician Larry Nassar brought to trial for having been named in at least 156 sexual abuse lawsuits, filed against him by female athletes. Nassar was handed a jail sentence of 40 to 175 years.



Time names sexual abuse 'Silence Breakers' as Person of the Year

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The Twittersverse was equally enthralled by victims' testimony as they were by Judge Rosemarie Aquilina's act of overstepping her bounds as a judge and adopting the role of victim advocate. [Vox reports](#) that Aquilina assured Nassar his sentence means he will die in prison as it will be served subsequent to a 60-year sentence in another case for possession of child pornography.

Reports Vox:

“ She told Nassar, 'It's my honour and privilege to sentence you,' and observed, at one point: 'Our Constitution does not allow for cruel and unusual punishment. If it did... I would allow some or many people to do to him what he did to others.' ”

“ Larry Nassar wrote a 6 page letter to Judge Rosemarie Aquilina, telling how hard it is for him to listen to testimonies of his victims. This is what Judge Rosemarie did with the letter. pic.twitter.com/qvvJynxa57— Soheil Khanzada (@SoheilKhanzada) [January 24, 2018](#) ”

“ Imagine what kind of sentence Brock Turner would have received had Judge Aquilina presided over his case? Perhaps his victim would have received justice. [#NassarSentencing](#)— Candice de Beer (@CandiceWiggett) [January 25, 2018](#) ”

Melinda Gates steps up to the gender equality plate

Melinda Gates has added her voice to the venture capital diversity drive by backing the Aspect Ventures venture capital startup fund that's run by women.

It's a strong move towards equality and inclusion in a sector still largely dominated by men.

According to [Fortune.com](#), Aspect Ventures cofounder Theresia Gouw reports:

“ If you have more diversity you have better financial performance... We've seen that teams that are more diverse in tech have outperformed. ”

Gates also shared the following tweet that provided positive insights into the African female future:

“ At tonight's [#MothInKenya](#) event, storytellers from all over Africa spoke about their work to lift up communities and advocate for gender equality. The stories were heartbreaking, hilarious, hopeful—and a reminder that our world is full of people working to brighten our future. pic.twitter.com/wOE588YfuX— Melinda Gates (@melindagates) [January 25, 2018](#) ”

The [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) has a long legacy of boosting African infrastructure, so it's nice to see Melinda doing more in this regard in her personal capacity. That's the true spirit of Ubuntu upliftment in action!



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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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