

To: Professor Geoffrey Garrett, Dean Marshall Business School;
Professor Dan O’Leary, Chair USC Marshall Faculty Council;
Professor Sha Yang, Vice Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs;
Professor Murat Bayiz, Academic Director of the FT MBA Program

Re: Professor Greg Patton

Date: September 1, 2020

Dear Deans, USC Administration, the Marshall School of Business and Alumni;

We write to you with great concern about the apparent removal of Prof. Greg Patton from his teaching role in GSBA 542 Communication in the Marshall School of Business at USC and the false claims that continue to circulate about the events. We have the following observations:

- All of us have gained enormous benefit from the academic leadership of Prof. Patton. His caring, wisdom and inclusiveness were a hallmark of our educational experience and growth at USC and the foundation of our continued success in the years following.
- We represent more than a dozen nationalities and ethnicities and support the global inclusiveness Professor Patton brings to the classroom. Most of us are Chinese, some ethnically, some by nationality, and many others have spent extensive time in China. Most of us live in China. We unanimously recognize Prof Patton’s use of ‘nei ge’ as an accurate rendition of common Chinese use, and an entirely appropriate and quite effective illustration of the use of pauses. Prof Patton used this example and hundreds of others in our classes over the years, providing richness, relevance and real world impact.
- A few of us, but many of our parents, lived through mainland China’s Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976). This current incident, and Marshall’s response so far,

seem disturbingly similar to prevalent behavior in China at that time – spurious accusations against innocent people, which escalated into institutional insanity. In the United States on 9 June 1954, the counsel for the U.S. Army, Joseph Welch, said to Senator Joseph McCarthy, ‘have you no sense of decency?’ Welch’s question eloquently pointed attention toward McCarthy’s misrepresentations and helped bring an end to the madness. It took courage to end the harm in both cases and we seek that from USC and Marshall.

- We fully support social and economic equality and justice, an end to police brutality, and necessary criminal justice reform in the United States. It is in part because those goals are so vital that we deplore what seems to be Marshall’s response so far; such ignorant and false charges as those leveled against Prof. Patton demean the importance of those goals, subvert essential social change and are deeply counter-productive.
- We also find the motivation behind these charges highly questionable. After many years of the example’s use, and positive feedback, this year the example suddenly caused deep mental health consequences and mental exhaustion? It seems entirely appropriate that the person or persons who brought forth such abusive and dishonest charges should be reprimanded strongly by Marshall not only for the obvious Student Conduct and Integrity violation, but for demeaning the important cause they pretend to stand for.
- We are also deeply disappointed that the spurious charge has the additional feature of casting insult toward the Chinese language, the most spoken in the world, and characterized it and its usage as vile. We feel Marshall should be open to diversity in all areas – not only those areas convenient for the moment. We further suggest that any attempt to degrade this matter and suggest that a Chinese word different in sound, tone, accent, context and language itself is “exactly like” an offensive US term would be naive, a disgusting and intentional stretch and would further degrade important societal discussion.

We earnestly hope that our collective voices in this matter will help Marshall reach the ethically required decision in this matter: complete exoneration of Prof. Patton, and probably a reprimand to the ignorant-at-best instigators of such deplorable and false accusations. Below our list of names, you may see some of our individual comments about this matter.

Sincerely,

***Alumni of the University of Southern California &
The Marshall School of Business***

1. Acevedo, Mike (Marshall Class of 2014, Manila)
2. Allegrezza, Simone (Marshall Class of 2008, Vancouver)
3. Beukencamp, Chris (Marshall Class of 2008, Chicago)
4. Bassoe, Thomas (Marshall Class of 2010, Tianjin, PRC)
5. Branham, Rebecca (Marshall Class of 2013, Honolulu)
6. Cai, Weidong (Marshall Class of 2016, Los Angeles)
7. Cao, Doris (GEMBA Shanghai Office Director, 2012 - 2018)
8. Chan, C.J. (Marshall Class of 2016, Suzhou, PRC)
9. Chan, Daniel (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)
10. Chang, Richard (Marshall Class of 2008, Dallas, TX)
11. Chen, Douglas (Marshall Class of 2006, Vancouver)
12. Chen, Guofu (Marshall Class of 2007, Guangzhou, PRC)
13. Chen, Jeff (Marshall Class of 2011, Taipei)
14. Chen, Kevin (Marshall Class of 2015, Shanghai)
15. Chen, Jennifer (Marshall Class of 2016, Zhenjiang, PRC)
16. Chen, Matt (Marshall Class of 2008, Taipei)
17. Chi, Larry (Marshall Class of 2017, Hong Kong)
18. Chiu, Michael (Marshall Class of 2009, Taipei)
19. Chow, Eric (Marshall Class of 2015, Singapore)
20. Chow, Ken (Marshall Class of 2008, Hong Kong)
21. Chu, Bernie (Marshall Class of 2016, Los Angeles)
22. Cooper, Matthew (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)

23. Daffner, Martin (Marshall Class of 2012, Hong Kong)
24. Dicker, Art (Marshall Class of 2016, Shanghai)
25. Ding, Lillian (Marshall Class of 2018, Shanghai)
26. Dong, T.R. (Marshall Class of 2017, Shanghai)
27. Fu, Howard (Marshall Class of 2012, Tokyo)
28. Fu, Nora (Marshall Class of 2017, Shanghai)
29. Gao, Kelly (Marshall Class of 2018, Shanghai)
30. Gong, Rosemarie (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)
31. Han, Helen (Marshall Class of 2017, Shanghai)
32. Hipp, Charles (Marshall Class of 2016, Minneapolis-St Paul)
33. Hong, Henry (Marshall Class of 2007, Shanghai)
34. Hu, Ken (Marshall Class of 2013, Shanghai)
35. Huang, Bo (Marshall Class of 2015, Los Angeles)
36. Huang, Jackson (Marshall Class of 2009, Shanghai)
37. Huang, Paul (Marshall Class of 2008, Taipei)
38. Jin, Xin (Marshall Class of 2014, Shenzhen, PRC)
39. Kang, Kerry (Marshall Class of 2015, Shanghai)
40. Kent, Kris (Marshall Class of 2008, Los Angeles)
41. Kite, Paul (Marshall Class of 2013, Shanghai)
42. Kim, Ray (Marshall Class of 2009, Los Angeles)
43. Lee, Mandy (Marshall Class of 2010, Taipei)
44. Lee, Violet (Marshall Class of 2016, Seoul)
45. Li, Christine (Marshall Class of 2008, Shanghai)
46. Li, Frank (Marshall Class of 2012, Shanghai)
47. Li, Lisa (Marshall Class of 2015, Santa Barbara, CA)
48. Li, Tony (Marshall Class of 2012, Shanghai)
49. Lin, Leewei (Marshall Class of 2014, Taipei)
50. Lin, Paul (Marshall Class of 2008, Shanghai)
51. Lin, Philip (Marshall Class of 2018, Taipei)
52. Liu, Ronald (Marshall Class of 2006, Beijing)
53. Ma, Jolly (Marshall Class of 2011, Chengdu, PRC)
54. Ma, Kelvin (Marshall Class of 2018, Shanghai)

55. Mao, Huiping (Marshall Class of 2016, Changzhou, PRC)
56. Milici, Joshua (Marshall Class of 2006, Zurich)
57. Nakashima, Keigo (Marshall Class of 2008, Tokyo)
58. Nishio, Kaku (Marshall Class of 2011, Auckland, NZ)
59. Owens, Patrick (Marshall Class of 2015, Dubai)
60. Pan, Ruowei (Marshall Class of 2013, Shanghai)
61. Peng, Shuhui (Viterbi PhD 1994, Marshall 2006, Orange County)
62. Pilard, Cyril (Marshall Class of 2018, Shanghai)
63. Propp, David (Marshall Class of 2010, Shanghai)
64. Pu, William (Marshall Class of 2004, Shanghai)
65. Qi, Sandy (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)
66. Qian, Amy (Marshall Class of 2006, Singapore)
67. Ren, Charlie (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)
68. Schwartz, Brad (Marshall Class of 2008, Hong Kong)
69. Shen, Henry (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)
70. Sun, Joy (Marshall Class of 2006, Toronto)
71. Sun, T.J. (Marshall Class of 2006, Beijing)
72. Tian, Miranda (Marshall Class of 2013, Shanghai)
73. Tran, Tu (Rossier PhD 2004, Marshall 2008, Kuala Lumpur)
74. Tsai, Cherry (Marshall Class of 2016, Taipei)
75. Tsai, Edward, (Marshall Class of 2013, Taipei)
76. Tsai, Stella (Marshall Class of 2018, Taipei)
77. Van Fleet, John Darwin (LAS 1991, Marshall 2006)
78. Wakeling, Matthew (Marshall Class of 2016, Seoul)
79. Wang, David (Marshall Class of 2015, Shanghai)
80. Wang, Louie (Marshall Class of 2007, Suzhou, PRC)
81. Wang, Ricky (Marshall Class of 2012, Shanghai)
82. Wang, Yvonne (Marshall Class of 2007, Shanghai)
83. Wang, Zhiping (Marshall Class of 2009, Shanghai)
84. Wong, Derek (Marshall Class of 2013, Singapore)
85. Wong, Derek (Marshall Class of 2014, Hong Kong)
86. Wu, Alex (Marshall Class of 2015, Wuxi, PRC)

87. Wu, Christine (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)
88. Wu, Jerry (Marshall Class of 2012, Taipei)
89. Xiong, Angie (Marshall Class of 2016, Beijing)
90. Xu, Joan (Marshall Class of 2018, Shanghai)
91. Xuan, Joan (Marshall Class of 2011, Shanghai)
92. Yang, Justin (Marshall Class of 2016, Shanghai)
93. Yang, Mark (Marshall Class of 2008, Guangzhou, PRC)
94. Yang, Zheheng (Marshall Class of 2012, Shanghai)
95. Yao, Stanley (Marshall Class of 2014, Shanghai)
96. Yeh, Bing (Marshall Class of 2012, Taipei)
97. Zhang, Sean (Marshall Class of 2019, Shanghai)
98. Zhou, Chen (Marshall Class of 2006, Los Angeles)
99. Zhou, Jerry (Marshall Class of 2015, Shanghai)
100. Zhou, Lily (Marshall Class of 2012, Shanghai)
101. Zhou, Xuehong (Marshall Class of 2008, Shanghai)
102. Zhuang, Matthew (Marshall Class of 2006, Shanghai)

Some typical individual reactions from our global USC alumni community

- “For such a group of administrators to misconstrue this specific situation is purely ignorance on their individual part and on the MBA program, Marshall School, and USC as a whole.”
- “I am so disappointed with [Dean Garrett] and his decision.”
- “I think what’s going on in US is kind of ‘Culture Revolution’. We experienced in our history. It’s a Nightmare. Anything you say can be enlarged to be something ‘Political Guilty’ if you don’t extremely express in the way of ‘political right’. We must support Prof Greg. I truly hope USC don’t lose his rational judgment.”
- “‘那个那个那个’ - this has nothing to do with racism!”

- “Extremely disappointed in the USC Marshall leadership in the handling and communication of this situation.”
- “What he said in the video clip is absolutely appropriate to me, and, I believe, appropriate to anyone who can understand Chinese.”
- “This is so ridiculous culturally, and even politically.”
- “This morning, I am shocked to hear that Marshall school removed the GSBA-542 teaching and remainder responsibility of Professor Greg Patton because he applied Chinese dialect "neige-neige"(equal to "that") during the class. It is just most Chinese in nature to use this tone during the oral talking. Nothing matters to racism.”
- “Prof Patton was an instructor for my program through multiple sessions and I found him to be one of the most talented teachers and communicators that I have ever had the pleasure to learn from. He fostered an extremely inclusive learning environment and worked tirelessly both inside and outside the classroom to connect with each and every student in the class.”
- “I studied with Professor Greg Patton during 2004-2006, when he taught me "communication". I can't forget what he gave a wonderful teaching in the "communication", and his leadership and passion to people with diversified background impressed me deeply. I would say he is one of the better professors I ever met in my life who does not only give world 1st class fantastic teaching in the subject, but also get along well with everybody he met with full respect. He always tries his best to build-up value to his students and people surrounding him from his knowledge, experience, and skills ... Many of us had benefited from his teaching and leadership in our career and daily life afterwards.”
- “But his speech content has nothing to with racism!”
- “Too crazy!!!!”

- “He is great assets of USC and Marshall school and entire our community. To give such bad treatment to him is totally unbelievable and would hurt and destroy our community value and confidence to school.”
- “If you had been in China long enough and learn more about how people act in so-called culture revolution 50 years ago, you will know it could be just someone hold a grudge with Prof. Greg and took the chance to ruin him.”
- “Ridiculous stuff!”
- “I took communication class by Prof. Patton. He is respected very much by me and my classmates. We are impressed with his wisdom, kindness, and inclusiveness. We would never link him to any kind of racism.”
- “Why someone oppose to use “那个那个那个...” [*na ge na ge na ge*] and refer it as tough words or racism. Can anyone educate me?”
- “Greg should give this dean a lecture on communication, and especially on crisis communication management.”
- I went through Culture Revolution as a teenager. The fact of this becoming a concern to some and the handling by the Marshall management even if unwillingly, reminds me that crazy dark period in Chinese history.
- “You can easily find it in the video. Obviously Professor Greg is totally innocent and in fact he did the same when he taught us in the class, and I assume he did for other classes as well since it’s a part of his lesson and make people know the communication principle of using pause in your conversation. I don’t want to assume is there anything behind caused this unreasonable blaming, but Professor Greg did NOTHING wrong! Support him for sure and please COUNT ME IN.”
- “It’s so culturally, socially and politically naive to behave in this way...”

- “This is not a derogatory remark in any context. This is an example of words being used for effect as per the lesson. The word used is also tonal, where an English has no tones, further separating it from the expected phrase.”
- “While not a native speaker of Chinese I lived and worked in China for over 12 years and become proficient in mandarin Chinese over this time. That being said, am absolutely dumbfounded by the school’s decision to discipline Prof Patton for his use of an extremely common filler expression in Chinese within the context of the larger discussion around pausing or “filling” during a conversation to collect ones thoughts or provide added message impact.”
- “In rewatching the video Professor Patton even explains before he said 那个那个 exactly what it means... and states it is a foreign language. In fact it was an outstanding example of how language is used in communication and students should feel lucky to get a professor’s international insight about commutation in the fastest growing second largest economy in the world.... Chinese examples should be prized in a truly global education curriculum like Garrett pretends to adhere to...”
- “Horrible political correctness”