

U.S. Department of Education Announces Resolution of Yale University Civil Rights Investigation

JUNE 15, 2012

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The U.S. Department of Education announced today that its Office for Civil Rights has entered into a resolution agreement with Yale University, in New Haven, Conn., to resolve a complaint alleging that Yale failed to eliminate sex discrimination in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited by Title IX.

"Sexual violence and harassment have no place in our nation's schools," said Russlynn Ali, assistant secretary for civil rights. "Every student must have a fair chance to a high quality education, but sexual harassment and violence far too often deny students their right to an equal education. I applaud the steps Yale has taken and has agreed to take to address immediate concerns and to put systems in place to help prevent future Title IX discrimination. We look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with Yale to better ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students."

In March 2011, the Office for Civil Rights received a complaint alleging that a sexually hostile environment existed on campus of the university, to which the university had not responded in a prompt and adequate manner. The complaint was filed, in part, as a result of a well-publicized incident in October 2010 when fraternity pledges chanted sexually aggressive comments outside the university's Women's Center located on Old Campus, where most freshman students live.

Based on the complaint allegations, OCR conducted an extensive investigation to assess whether the university had designated a Title IX coordinator, whether the university had

grievance procedures to promptly and equitably address complaints under Title IX, and whether the university had allowed a sexually hostile environment to be created on campus by not sufficiently responding to notice of sexual harassment.

The university worked closely with OCR throughout its investigation, voluntarily and proactively made changes to its procedures and practices related to Title IX compliance, and notified the university-wide community of these changes. The university has further agreed to continue this commitment by entering into a voluntary resolution agreement.

The agreement provides that the university will continue to improve and publicize university resources and programming aimed at responding to and preventing sexual harassment and violence. The university will also conduct periodic assessments of the campus climate to evaluate the success of its efforts to provide a safe learning and living environment for its students, free of sexual harassment and violence. Further, the university will continue to coordinate its compliance efforts via its university Title IX coordinator and deputy coordinators and will widely publicize information regarding its designated Title IX coordinators. The university will continue to implement its new grievance process designed to promptly and equitably address complaints of sexual misconduct under Title IX and notify the university community of the outcome of complaints, when appropriate. It will continue its efforts to educate all sectors of the university community on Title IX, including training for administrators, faculty, staff, student service-providers and various student populations.

A copy of the resolution letter will be posted later today at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/01112027-a.pdf> and the agreement at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/01112027-b.pdf>.

OCR's mission is to ensure equal access to education and promote educational excellence throughout the nation through the vigorous enforcement of civil rights. OCR is responsible for enforcing federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination by educational institutions on the basis of disability, race, color, national origin, sex, and age, as well as the *Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001*.

For more information about the Office for Civil Rights, see <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>. For details on how OCR handles civil rights cases, visit <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html>.