FACT SHEET ON ALEXANDER V. YALE (THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE)

There have been a lot of words thrown around about the "sexual harassment" case against Yale, both nationally and locally. It is time to give the plaintiff's side of the case.

Alexander v. Yale is a class action suit against the university charging that Yale condones sexual harassment of its women students and that this constitutes sex discrimination in violation of Title IX. It is a class action suit because the issue is larger than the individuals involved; sexual harassment of women students is widespread enough to warrant the setting up of a grievance procedure to deal with the problem. There have been many other women who have found that their sexuality was a decisive factor in whether or not they could work with a faculty member. In fact, as news of the investigation leaked out, the number of complaints reported snowballed. Some people have suggested that a woman who is smart enough to get into Yale should be smart enough to be able to avoid sleeping with her professors involuntarily. THAT IS NOT THE POINT. Such pressure does not belong in an educational setting.

WE ARE NOT SUING THE INDIVIDUAL PROFESSORS FOR DAMAGES. We are simply demanding that Yale set up a workable and effective grievance procedure. Setting up such a procedure would settle the suit.

What are the charges?

Plaintiff 1 alleges that she was forced to have sexual relations with her professor in order to continue studies necessary to her career goals.

Plaintiff 2 was forced to waste time, effort and money investigating the matter because of the lack of an adequate procedure.

Plaintiff 3 is suing because of a friend who was subject to sexual harassment. The friend's experience diminished Plaintiff 3's confidence in her male professors and this hindered her ability to take complete advantage of the educational opportunities of the university.

Plaintiff 4 is a faculty member who contends that the atmosphere of sexual harassment poisons faculty-student relationships and stands in the way of a proper learning environment. 25

What do we want?

We want a proper grievance procedure.. We have been asking the university since last April to set up a committee that would deal with complaints of sexual harassment. This committee would decide the validity of complaints and appropriate action to redress injuries.

Why is it necessary to go to court?

THE PLAINTIFFS NEVER WANTED TO TAKE THE CASE TO COURT. They did so only after exhausting all available options. The plaintiffs have never been interested in the public discussion of this case and the issues it raises turning on the personalities or individuals who may have been involved in specific incidents. They have conscientiously tried to limit publication of any names and specific details of the allegations. The high personal cost of the lawsuit, both to the plaintiffs and to the other individuals involved, only highlights the need for Yale to provide some other way to deal with this problem.

WE ARE NOT SINGLING OUT YALE UNIVERSITY AS AN EXCEPTIONAL HARASSER OF ITS FEMALE STUDENTS. We recognize that harassment probably occurs on all campuses, and is not confined to education; sex discrimination in the form of sexual harassment also occurs in employment situations. But we are directly affected by the sexual harassment that does occur at Yale and by the reluctance of the university to investigate the problem.

The university did not respond to our request for a grievance procedure. We had no other recourse but to file suit. Yale can end the suit very easily by granting us that grievance procedure.

For more information please call: 562-7560 or 777-2265
or write to: The Grievance Committee of the Yale Undergraduate Women's Caucus, 476 Yale Station; New Haven, Conn. 06520