

The California State Auditor released the following report today:

California's Postsecondary Educational Institutions

More Guidance Is Needed to Increase Compliance With Federal Crime Reporting Requirements

BACKGROUND

Postsecondary educational institutions (institutions) that participate in student aid programs under Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, are required by the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act) to create an annual security report by October of each year. This security report must contain required crime statistics for the institution as well as certain security policy disclosures. When institutions do not comply with the Clery Act, they inhibit the ability of students and others to make informed decisions about campus safety. Further, the U.S. Department of Education can impose financial penalties of up to \$35,000 per violation against noncompliant institutions.

We visited six institutions to determine whether their annual security reports issued in 2014 contained all required security policies and accurate crime statistics for 2013. We also surveyed 79 of the 573 campuses that reported no Clery Act crimes for 2013 to determine whether their institutions' procedures for compiling and distributing the statistics were sufficient.

KEY FINDINGS

During our review of the six institutions' compliance with the Clery Act and analyses of the responses to our survey, we noted the following:

- None of the six institutions were in full compliance with the Clery Act requirements.
 - ✓ Five of the six inaccurately reported certain crime statistics. The majority of the errors involved institutions either misreporting or overreporting crimes.
 - ✓ At the time of our review, only one of the institutions had established written procedures that clearly describe the steps of the review process to ensure that crime statistics included in its annual report are accurate.
 - ✓ Five of the six institutions did not include all the required information in their 2014 annual security reports.
 - ✓ Two of the institutions did not keep complete daily crime logs as required and thus, the public may not have complete and timely information related to campus safety.
- Of the 79 campuses we surveyed, most indicated that they have sufficient processes in place to help ensure that they report accurate crime statistics, but it appears that some institutions need to strengthen their practices for notifying students and employees of the availability of their annual security reports.
- There is currently no state entity or other governing body to provide guidance to institutions throughout the State that could help ensure their compliance with the Clery Act requirements.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

We made various recommendations to several entities including the following:

- The institutions should correctly report all applicable crimes and disclose the required campus security policies by reviewing and adhering to applicable guidance related to the Clery Act, creating written procedures that clearly describe the review process for reporting, and ensuring that they include all crimes in their daily crime log.
- The University of California Office of the President should finalize and implement policies providing additional guidance and oversight to its institutions.
- Both the California State University Office of the Chancellor and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office should provide guidance to their respective institutions on how to accurately report and include all required disclosures in their annual security reports.
- The Legislature should require the California Department of Justice to provide guidance to California's public and private institutions and systemwide offices regarding compliance with the Clery Act and other federal requirements.