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Clery Act

Some California Colleges and Universities Are Not Accurately Reporting Campus Crime Statistics and Safety Policies as Federal Law Requires

Background

To help inform students and their families about campus safety, postsecondary educational institutions (institutions) that participate in federal student aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 are required by the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Clery Act) to prepare, publish and distribute annual security reports. These security reports must disclose certain campus crime statistics and campus security policies. The U.S. Department of Education can impose financial penalties per violation against noncompliant institutions. We selected six institutions and performed audit work related to crime statistics they reported and the completeness of their policies.

Key Recommendations

We made recommendations to various campuses we reviewed that include the following:

- Strengthen their written procedures for identifying and reporting Clery reportable crimes, including obtaining additional information about potentially reportable crimes when needed, and ensure staff follow them.
- Take corrective action to ensure that they include all crimes in their daily crime logs.
- Ensure that staff identify and correct any missing or inadequate policies.

Key Findings

- None of the four institutions that reported criminal offenses fully comply with the crime reporting requirements of the Clery Act and federal regulations.
 - » All four reported statistics were inaccurate in varying degrees, which could lead to an inaccurate understanding of campus safety. The errors involved institutions either overreporting or underreporting crimes or reporting crimes in the wrong categories.
 - » Two institutions did not have complete or update daily crime logs, which may be contributing to an incorrect understanding of campus safety. In fact, the most serious omission from the crime logs were instances of sexual assault.
- Five of the six institutions did not fully comply with laws and regulations to disclose important campus safety policies to current and prospective students and employees. All five had at least one missing or inadequate policy and more than half of one campus's policies in three key areas were missing or inadequate.

Types of Reporting Errors We Found

