



Campus Sexual Harassment

UC and CSU Have Improved Their Practices, but Further Actions Are Necessary

Background

Sexual harassment negatively affects the well-being of students and employees on university campuses. In 2024, the Governor approved Assembly Bill 2407, which requires our office to conduct four audits over a 10-year period—beginning with this audit—to assess the UC and CSU systems’ abilities to address and prevent sexual harassment. As part of each audit, state law requires us to evaluate the relevant efforts of the CSU Chancellor’s Office, the UC Office of the President, and two campuses from each system. For this audit, we selected UC Irvine, UC Riverside, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and Sacramento State. Our review focused on how the Title IX offices at these campuses addressed nearly 100 cases involving allegations that students or employees (respondents) had engaged in sexual harassment toward others (complainants).

Key Recommendations

To help ensure that campuses respond effectively to reports of sexual harassment, the UC Office of the President and the CSU Chancellor’s Office should do the following:

- Provide direction and guidance to ensure that campuses communicate effectively with complainants. For example, campuses should routinely consider using contact methods other than university email to reach nonresponsive complainants and should ask complainants about their contact preferences during intake meetings. Campuses should also confirm in writing how the complainant would like to proceed after key meetings.
- Clarify expectations around campuses’ use of educational conversations with respondents. The system offices should also provide training to help campus staff document and execute these conversations effectively.
- Require campus Title IX offices to review all draft hearing officer reports to ensure that they comply with policy and do not include any problematic language.
- The UC Office of the President should take steps to standardize campuses’ approaches to determining and justifying discipline for employees, and the CSU Chancellor’s Office should establish minimum sanctions for students found responsible for the most severe violations.

Key Findings

- We questioned the outcomes of two cases the campuses closed without taking any formal action. In both cases, complainants alleged unwanted sexual contact and requested action from the campuses, but the campuses did not follow through appropriately.
- In 12 cases, campuses relied only on university email to contact nonresponsive complainants, even though using other contact methods helped campuses reach complainants in different cases.
- Campuses did not consistently use nonpunitive educational conversations to address respondents’ alleged behavior, including when respondents had been the subject of multiple reports.
- In one case that involved the alternative resolution process, campus staff appeared to have pressured a complainant to use this process, despite the complainant’s preference for an investigation. The complainant ultimately signed a resolution agreement but wrote afterward that she felt little had been done to hold the respondent accountable.
- The campuses reached reasonable determinations in all 20 cases that involved investigations; however, we identified analytical gaps or dismissive or otherwise problematic language in five of the investigative or hearing reports for these cases.
- Four cases at the same CSU campus that involved sexual assault with penetration led to different disciplinary outcomes: two resulted in expulsions, and the other two resulted in suspensions of 15 months and one year. It was unclear from the case files why the campus’s sanctions in the latter two cases were as lenient as they were. These outcomes were inconsistent with other cases we reviewed.

Of 97 Cases We Reviewed, We Identified Six With Substantive Issues

Case Phases	Cases for Which We Questioned the Outcome	Cases for Which We Had Process-Related Concerns
CLOSED WITHOUT FORMAL ACTION	2 of 40 UC: 1 of 20 CSU: 1 of 20	13 of 40 UC: 8 of 20 CSU: 5 of 20
ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION	1 of 20 UC: 0 of 10 CSU: 1 of 10	0 of 20
INVESTIGATION	0 of 20	5 of 20 UC: 3 of 10 CSU: 2 of 10
DISCIPLINE	3 of 20 UC: 1 of 13 CSU: 2 of 7	1 of 20 UC: 1 of 13 CSU: 0 of 7
TOTALS:	6 of 97 (6%) UC: 2 of 51 (4%) CSU: 4 of 46 (9%)	19 of 97 (20%) UC: 12 of 51 (24%) CSU: 7 of 46 (15%)