



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Patrick K. Gambate  
President  
University of Alaska System  
P.O. Box 755000  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-5000

MAY 05 2016

(In reply, please refer to case number 10-14-600)

Dear President Gambate:

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education (Department) enforces Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age by educational institutions that receive Federal financial assistance. OCR is responsible for investigating individual complaints of discrimination and is also required to conduct periodic, proactive compliance reviews of certain practices that may not otherwise comply with the laws that OCR enforces.

Compliance reviews are designed to address systemic issues and ensure that violations are promptly identified and promptly eliminated. Compliance review sites are selected based on various sources of information, including statistical data and information from parents, advocacy groups, the media, and community organizations.

I write to advise you that OCR has selected the University of Alaska System (University) for a compliance review under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1061 et seq., and its implementing regulation, 34 C.F.R. Part 106, which prohibit discrimination based on sex in education for programs or activities operated by recipients of Federal financial assistance. The University receives funds from the Department and is therefore subject to Title IX.

This compliance review will examine the University's handling of complaints and reports of sexual harassment, including sexual violence, to determine if the University has responded promptly and effectively, with particular emphasis on complaints of sexual assault. It should be emphasized that at this time OCR has reached no conclusions as to whether a violation of any Federal law exists.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is committed to ensuring that all students are afforded equal educational opportunities. We believe the information and actions resulting from this compliance review will have a direct and positive impact on students at the University. We look forward to working with you on this review.

OCR's Seattle enforcement office will conduct this compliance review. Gayle Jackson, OCR's Director in Seattle, will contact officials at the University within a week of the date of this letter to make arrangements for the next steps in the compliance review process, including, but not limited to, access to data and personnel.

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Should you have any questions concerning this investigation, please do not hesitate to contact Gary D. Jackson at (206) 607-1600.

Thank you for all you have done -- and continue to do -- to improve our nation's universities.

Sincerely,



Catherine E. Lhamon  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

cc: Gary D. Jackson, Director  
Office for Civil Rights - Seattle