

From: OCR
To: OCR Seattle
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Subject: FW: Title VI Complaint Against University of Washington
Date: Monday, November 20, 2023 2:00:15 AM

November 20, 2023

Dear OCR Seattle Office,

The email below is being forwarded to your office for review and appropriate handling.

Thank you,

OPEN Center Customer Service Team

Office for Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Education

From: (b)(6); (b)(7)(C)
Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 1:34 PM
To: OCR <OCR@ed.gov>
Subject: Title VI Complaint Against University of Washington

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You don't often get email from (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) [Learn why this is important](#)

November 19, 2023

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202
Email: OCR@ed.gov

Re: Title VI Complaint Against University of Washington, Seattle Campus, 1410 NE Campus Parkway, Seattle, WA 98195 (National Origin – Jewish)

Dear Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

In an October 9 letter to the university community University of Washington President Ana Mari Cauce wrote, "I want to reiterate that we must not allow our opinions, grief or anger about the conflict to spill over into abusive behavior or harassment of anyone — civility remains a core value of our academic community. Any instances of harassment, discrimination or violence based on someone's religion or nationality only hinders efforts to achieve peace in this region and beyond and will not be tolerated here."

Yet Jewish students at UW, (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) feel this behavior *has* been tolerated at UW, and that (b)(6) have been discriminated against. Multiple media reports as well as on-scene posts on Twitter/X have documented a protest on October 12, just days after President Cauce's

letter when the terrorist attack was still fresh in our minds, in which Jewish students were targeted. One student protester was seen saying Israel is “finished” — and another calling a pro-Israeli student a “f–king rapist,” for example.

(b)(7)(A)

According to one story, “They want our people dead. They want us killed,’ sobbed one student to an administrator who appears to be listening, while indicating that there is nothing he can do. ‘How are you allowing this? Why aren’t you putting a stop to this?’ she asked through uncontrollable tears. ‘Please end it. Please,’ she begged.”

Some students feel afraid to wear their Star of David necklaces or yarmulkes, and are upset with what some consider a lackluster statement about the war by the administration. “If I could speak directly to the president, I would just tell her that your both-sides-ism, your tiptoeing is personally making us hurt,” another Jewish student said. “If you think that speaking up right now is genuinely speaking on behalf of the people, you’re deeply, deeply misguided,” he said. “These attacks are fully from the root of annihilating the Jewish state.”

This was one of multiple rallies put on by Students United for Palestinian Equality & Return (SUPER) UW, a student group at the University of Washington. They are a recognized student group, complete with a campus office and SAO advisor. Their constitution confirms that they have a local bank account. The group criticizes UW for being “complicit in the crimes of the occupation.” The club members are upset that “zionist academics” are invited to speak on campus (b)(7)(A) and that the school offers students opportunities to study abroad in Israel. (b)(7)(A)

(b)(7)(A)

The rally was in front of the Suzzallo Library, considered by many to be the most recognizable building on campus, and was advertised with flyers that included a drawing of a paraglider similar to the ones that Hamas terrorists used to fly into southern Israel and massacre young people from around the world at a concert for peace. (b)(7)(A)

(b)(7)(A)

(b)(7)(A) A University of Washington alumnus was among the 1,300 killed by Hamas in the October 7, 2023, terror attacks in Israel.

Members of Congress are currently discussing additional protections from the Department of Education for Jewish college students amid the current wave of antisemitic incidents. (b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C) Jewish students in feeling threatened and discriminated against.

(b)(7)(A)

(b)(7)(A)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

915 2nd AVENUE, ROOM 3310
SEATTLE, WA 98174-1009

REGION X

ALASKA
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NEVADA
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OREGON
WASHINGTON

December 8, 2023

Via E-mail only to: pres@u.washington.edu

Dr. Ana Mari Cauce
President
University of Washington
301 Gerberding Hall, Box 351230
Seattle, Washington 98195

Re: University of Washington
OCR Reference No. 10242040

Dear Dr. Cauce:

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has received a complaint against the University of Washington (University). The Complainant alleges that the University discriminated against students on the basis of their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) by failing to respond to incidents of harassment during the Autumn 2023 Quarter.

OCR has the authority to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin, including shared ancestry, in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. The University receives federal financial assistance from this Department; therefore, it is required to comply with these laws.

OCR is opening for investigation the following issue:

whether the University failed to respond to alleged harassment of students based on their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) in a manner consistent with the requirements of Title VI.

The complaint may be resolved in a variety of ways, including a voluntary written agreement in which the University agrees to take remedial actions that OCR determines fully resolve the allegation consistent with applicable legal standards. Where

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

appropriate, the complaint may also be resolved through mediation facilitated by OCR. If a resolution of the complaint is not reached before OCR completes its investigation, OCR will make findings and a determination as to whether the University is in compliance with applicable legal standards and, in the event that non-compliance is found, OCR will propose that the University enter into a voluntary resolution agreement in which the University commits to take specific steps to comply with applicable laws and regulations. Additional information about OCR’s case processing procedures can be found at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaints-how.html>.

Opening an investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination with regard to its merit. During the investigation, OCR is a neutral fact-finder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence from the complainant, the University of Washington, and other sources, as appropriate. OCR will conduct its investigation in accordance with the provisions of Article III of OCR’s Case Processing Manual available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrcpm.html>.

As part of its investigation, OCR is requesting information from the University. OCR is authorized to obtain information pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 100.6(c). OCR is entitled to access information that may otherwise be protected as private or confidential as provided for by 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a)(3)(iii) and 99.35(a)(1). Please submit the following documents and information by **December 22, 2023**:

1. The name, job title, and contact information of the University’s point of contact for this matter.
2. A copy of the University’s policies and procedures relating to harassment on the basis of national origin, including shared ancestry.
3. A copy of all documents relating to reports or complaints of national origin discrimination, including harassment, that occurred during a campus Pro-Palestine protest on October 12, 2023, including but not limited to, e-mail, memoranda, investigative reports, witness statements, determinations, logs, forms, meeting minutes, notes, and other records, whether generated or received by the University.
4. A copy of all documents relating to reports or complaints of national origin discrimination, including harassment, for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years, including but not limited to, e-mail, memoranda, investigative reports, witness statements, determinations, logs, forms, meeting minutes, notes, and other records, whether generated or received by the University.

5. All other information the University believes will assist OCR in resolution of the issue OCR is opening for investigation, such as a narrative response to the issue opened for investigation.

To the extent that any responsive documents or information are published on the University's publicly accessible website, the response may consist of the exact web address where the relevant information is located. To the extent that other documents or information are available in electronic format, please provide them electronically.

Please be advised that the University must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against an individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, we will seek to protect personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released, to the extent provided by law.

If you have any questions about this matter, you may contact me by e-mail at rabya.khan@ed.gov, or by telephone at (202) 987-1126.

Sincerely,

(b)(6); (b)(7)(A); (b)(7)(C)

Rabya Khan
Attorney