



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

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December 20, 2021

Via email only: pres@u.washington.edu

Dr. Ana Mari Cauce
President
University of Washington

Re: University of Washington-Seattle
OCR Reference No. 10212130

Dear Dr. Cauce:

This letter is to inform you of the disposition of the above-referenced complaint filed against the University of Washington-Seattle with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The complainant alleged that the University discriminates against males on the basis of sex by providing the Women Board Directors Development Program for females only.

As explained below, prior to completion of OCR's investigation, the University expressed an interest in voluntarily resolving the complaint and signed the enclosed agreement to address the complaint allegation.

OCR investigated this case under the authority of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. The University is a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department. It is required to comply with this law.

OCR's investigation to date indicated that the University's website under a general description of the Program and under "Eligibility, Application and Fees" that the Program is designed for executive women looking to become more influential board members. OCR has a concern that the Program's promotional materials may result in the exclusion of male participants from the Program. Before concluding OCR's investigation, the University requested to resolve the complaint.

In accordance with Section 302 of OCR's *Case Processing Manual* (CPM), a complaint may be resolved at any time when, prior to OCR issuing a draft letter of findings under CPM Section 303(b), the recipient expresses an interest in resolving the complaint and OCR determines that it is

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appropriate to resolve the issues under investigation with an agreement. In this case, the University requested to resolve the complaint with an agreement. In light of the University's willingness to comprehensively address the concerns identified by OCR without further investigation, OCR has determined that entering into a voluntary resolution agreement is appropriate. Subsequent discussions with the University resulted in the University signing the enclosed agreement.

This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public.

This concludes OCR's investigation of the complaint. The complainant may have the right to file a private suit in court regardless of OCR's determination.

Please be advised that the University may not harass, coerce, intimidate, or discriminate against any individual because he or she has filed a complaint or participated in the complaint resolution process. If this happens, the individual may file a complaint alleging such treatment.

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

OCR will monitor the implementation of the agreement and will close the complaint when OCR determines that the terms of the agreement have been satisfied. Under the agreement, the University's first report to OCR is due by February 19, 2022.

Thank you for the cooperation that you and your staff extended to OCR staff in resolving this complaint. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tania Lopez, Senior Attorney, by telephone at (206) 607-1623, or by e-mail at tania.lopez@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

David Kaufmann
Supervisory Attorney

Enclosure: Voluntary Resolution Agreement

cc: University Complaint Investigation and Resolution Office