



NEVADA FACULTY ALLIANCE

840 S. Rancho Dr., Suite 4-571
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106

December 11, 2022

President Brian Sandoval
University of Nevada, Reno

Dear President Sandoval:

The State Board of the Nevada Faculty Alliance wishes to call your attention to longstanding problems in the management of the Title IX office at the University of Nevada, Reno. We call for immediate changes to make this office more responsive to the needs of the UNR community.

A number of students, faculty, and staff have shared concerns about how cases are handled within the UNR Title IX office, including the following:

- Lack of transparency: as documented in the [recent USA Today article](#), the University has failed to collect or release statistical information about Title IX cases, which means that the community does not have access to important metrics such as how cases are being addressed and how long they are taking to resolve, consequently undermining faith in the office.
- Involvement of UNR General Counsel in the process: although the Title IX office is expected to function as an independent unit, we have heard reports of general counsel's unannounced presence at hearings and/or participation in hearings where they should have been a silent observer. As noted [in this article](#), general counsel has interests that can work against fair resolution of cases.
- Abuses by leadership: the university community widely perceives the office as a place where "cases go to die." Hence, we have seen or heard reports of people in leadership positions over the years using this to their advantage, with some of these cases leading to legal issues, including settlement payments.
- Chronic understaffing: cases have regularly been taking well over a year, in some cases up to three years. This has been attributed in part to a longstanding issue of understaffing in this office.

The NFA is calling on the UNR administration to do the following:

- Immediately provide the UNR community with essential information on how the office is functioning. [This report from the University of Michigan](#) can be used as a model.
- Bring in an external law firm to conduct an audit of the Title IX office and produce a public report with recommendations for improvement.

- Establish public policies, in line with federal guidance, for which roles University general counsel can play in Title IX hearings and the functioning of the office.
- Make it a top priority to fully staff the office with a permanent director and a sufficient number of investigators to handle case loads in a timely manner.
- Provide guidance on types of cases that should be referred to campus units other than the Title IX office and ensure that those units have the resources to handle the cases.

Until these requests are met and the UNR community is confident in having a functioning Title IX office, we encourage all students, faculty, and staff to file complaints directly with [the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights](#), due in part to their expectation that cases be filed within 180 days of occurrence.

We are aware of similar problems on other NSHE campuses, but the UNR situation has come to a crisis point both internally and with negative external attention. The NFA state leadership and NFA-UNR chapter leadership would welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues further with the UNR administration, the new Executive Director of DEI, and Title IX office management. It is in all of our best interests for Title IX cases to be handled promptly and equitably.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Respectfully,

State Board, Nevada Faculty Alliance

(Kent Ervin, President; Roberta Kaufman, Vice President; Scott Huber, Secretary; Daniel Cook, Treasurer; Ted Chodock, NFA-CSN Chapter President; John Rice, NFA-GBC Acting Chapter President; Jim New, NFA-TMCC Chapter President; Leila Pazargadi, NFA-NSC Chapter President; Douglas Unger, NFA-UNLV Chapter President; Melissa Burnham, NFA-UNR Chapter President; Rachelle Bassen, NFA-WNC Acting Chapter President)

Cc: Jeffrey Thompson, Provost, UNR
 Eric Marchand, Chair, UNR Faculty Senate
 Dale Erquiaga, Acting Chancellor
 James Martines, NSHE General Counsel
 Byron Brooks, Chair-Elect, Board of Regents
 Joseph Arrascada, Vice-Chair-Elect, Board of Regents
 Laura Perkins, Chair, IDEA Committee, Board of Regents

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The [Nevada Faculty Alliance](#) is the independent statewide association of professional employees of the colleges and universities of the Nevada System of Higher Education. The NFA is affiliated with the [American Association of University Professors](#), which advocates for academic freedom, shared governance, and faculty rights, and the [American Federation of Teachers/AFL-CIO](#), which represents over 300,000 higher education professionals nationwide. The NFA works to empower our members to be fully engaged in our mission to help students succeed.