



Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada

91st Session, 2023-2024

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FEIFEI FAN

Resolution Number: 59

Authored By: Senators Landazuri and Jojan on behalf of Advocacy Director Robinson

Sponsored By: 2023-2024 Student Government Assembly

Whereas, in December of 2022, Dr. Feifei Fan filed a lawsuit against NSHE and the University of Nevada Reno alleging that she had suffered years of sexual harassment, assault and abuse from Yanyao Jiang, a Professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department¹;

Whereas, Dr. Fan claims she was subjected to “sex trafficking under federal and state law, forced labor under federal law, trafficking into servitude under federal and state law, intentional infliction of emotional distress under state law, and defamation under state law”²;

Whereas, October 12, 2023 students protested at the groundbreaking for the Mathewson Gateway Project demanding accountability, transparency and justice for Dr. Feifei Fan and also demanding accountability from the EO/TIX office;

Whereas, on November 23, 2022, an article published by USA TODAY’s Kenny Jacoby includes UNR in “These 6 universities kept Title IX Sexual Misconduct data secret” and reveals that the university refused to release the requested Title IX information to USA TODAY since June of 2021³;

Whereas, President Sandoval failed to provide a deadline for when Title IX data and information will be released to students;

¹ <https://nevadasagebrush.com/2023/10/12/sagebrush-investigations-fan-filed-previous-lawsuit-against-jiang-moving-to-appeal/>

² <https://nevadasagebrush.com/2023/10/12/sagebrush-investigations-fan-filed-previous-lawsuit-against-jiang-moving-to-appeal/>

³ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2022/11/23/6-universities-title-ix-sexual-misconduct-data-secret/10761735002/>

Whereas, in the lawsuit, Dr. Fan alleges she faced discrimination due to her visa status as an F-1 student and her national origin;

Whereas, Professor Jiang allegedly exploited Dr. Fan and other foreign students by forcing them to perform labor such as yard work, childcare, and driving him to the airport;

Whereas, “Knowing these vulnerabilities, UNR never provided training to foreign graduate student employees in the [mechanical engineering] department on Title IX, Title VI, Title VII, and relevant policies to prevent abuse and unlawful exploitation by their advisors and supervisors,” and “UNR did not provide them with a clear reporting channel. As a consequence, foreign graduate student employees were not aware of their rights and how to report,” according to Fan’s court filings;

Whereas, Dr. Fan also alleges that UNR intentionally made no progress on her complaint and dragged out and allegedly compromised the investigation process;

Whereas, on October 18, 2023, during a Senate of the Associated Student’s Meeting, Director of the office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Coordinator Zeva Edmondson testified that the Title IX office had been understaffed and severely backlogged with cases from 2019 still being investigated;

Whereas, Director Edmondson also stated that she would be open to an outside third party investigation and is committed to reforming the office;

Whereas, the EO/TIX office receives federal funds and thus must comply with federal standards;

Whereas, the EO/TIX office is failing to comply with federal standards set forth by the U.S Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) stating that complaints must be responded to in a timely manner;

Whereas, Director Edmondson admitted her office “couldn’t respond to complaints timely or properly”⁴;

Whereas, failing to respond to complaints subjects complainants to a hostile work environment for extended periods of time, like in the case of Dr. Fan;

⁴ <https://nevada.app.box.com/file/1338447263900?s=rig7lzafyr2bn0grnvpvo10vmmbm27os> (29:30)

Whereas, Director Edmonson committed to respond to Title IX complaints within 72 hours⁵;

Whereas, Director Edmonson should commit to this promise by posting this timeframe on their Equal Opportunity & Title IX website;

Whereas, on October 18, 2023, during a Senate of the Associated Student's Meeting, Director Edmondson admitted to "a backlog with no end in sight"⁶ that goes back from 2019 to today;

Whereas, Terri Petraw's One Thousand Showers: A University Immersed in a Culture of Retaliation and an Avalanche of Lies reveals UNR's egregious history of mishandling cases involving Title IX violations since the early 2000s;

Whereas, the office of EO/TIX works with TNG Consulting⁷, a firm that has been accused of retaliating against whistleblowers within its organization and mishandling cases at UNR;

Whereas, the office of EO/TIX has proven it can not keep itself accountable;

Whereas, an external audit would keep the EO/TIX office accountable by ensuring that the office is in compliance with federal standards;

Whereas, President Sandoval has hired⁸ ⁹ and kept employees with a documented history of sexually assaulting women;

Whereas, a President and University that normalizes a culture of maintaining abusers in power, and shielding them from consequences, should not be deciding Title IX and civil rights case outcomes and sanctions;

Whereas, the students mobilizing the efforts behind the Stand With Fei Fei campaign have strongly expressed desire for the ability to choose an outside auditor;

Whereas, President Sandoval lauded student activism as indicative that UNR is a "bastion of democracy" during the 2023 State of the University address;

⁵ <https://nevada.app.box.com/file/1338447263900?s=rig7lzafyr2bn0grnvpvo10vmmbm27os> (29:30)

⁶ <https://nevada.app.box.com/file/1338447263900?s=rig7lzafyr2bn0grnvpvo10vmmbm27os> (1:30:20)

⁷ <https://www.chronicle.com/article/prominent-higher-ed-consultant-committed-financial-fraud-lawsuit-says>

⁸ <https://www.unr.edu/president/president-council/andrew-clinger>

⁹ <https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2019/09/23/women-who-accused-former-reno-manager-harassment-get-3-00-000/2424947001/>

Whereas, President Sandoval during the groundbreaking said “I’m proud of our students and this is what democracy looks like,” and pledged to work with students regarding the issue;

Be it resolved that, the Senate of the Associated Students urges the UNR administration to take the following actions:

1. Terminate Mechanical Engineering Professor Yanyao Jiang and all other University faculty or staff members who are investigated and found guilty of egregious or morally reprehensible wrongdoing related to sexual harassment, assault, and discrimination,
2. Terminate the partnership between the EO/TIX office and TNG Consulting,
3. Provide all international students Title IX training so they are aware of their rights under Title IX and distribute information about Title IX nondiscrimination policy information to students and faculty,
4. Reallocate funding from TNG/ATIXA to fund a different outside auditor of the office of EO/TIX by a firm in good legal standing without a history of underhanded business practices or allegations of such, chosen with consideration from the Stand With Feifei group and the student body;
5. Commit to respond to Title IX complaints within 72 hours.

Be it further resolved that, a copy of this resolution be sent to the following:

- Zeva Edmondson, Director of EO/TIX office
- President Brian Sandoval
- Executive Vice President and Provost, Jeff Thompson
- Vice President of Student Services, Shannon Ellis
- Faculty Senate Chair, Peter Reed
- Dean of the College of Engineering, Erick Jones
- GSA President Matthew Hawn
- ASUN President Boris Carpio-Guerra
- ASUN Vice President Hannah Alquiza

- ASUN Speaker Fayza Salah

Adopted in Senate on November 8, 2023

Attest:

Ally Chavez, Senate Secretary

Fayza Salah, Speaker of the Senate