



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS**

400 MARYLAND AVENUE, SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20202-1475

REGION XI
NORTH CAROLINA
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WASHINGTON, DC

March 17, 2025

James Pasch, Senior Director
National Litigation
Anti-Defamation League

Rachel Grinspan, Associate General Counsel
Anti-Defamation League

Denise Katz-Prober, Director of Legal Initiatives
Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

Jason Torchinsky, Partner
Holtzman Vogel Baran Torchinsky & Josefiak PLLC

Erielle Davidson, Associate
Holtzman Vogel Baran Torchinsky & Josefiak PLLC

Douglas S. Brooks, Partner
Libby Hoopes Brooks & Mulvey P.C.

Via e-mail only to: rgrinspan@adl.org

Re: University of Massachusetts Amherst (MA) - OCR Case Number 01-24-2243

Dear Rachel Grinspan:

On April 30, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), received the complaint you filed against the University of Massachusetts Amherst (the University). The complaint alleged that the University discriminated against your client (Student) on the basis of his national origin (Jewish ancestry) when it failed to respond appropriately to harassment of the Student during the 2023-2024 school year (Allegation #1). The complaint further alleged that the University discriminated against other students on the basis of their national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) when it failed to respond to incidents of harassment during the 2023-2024 school year (Allegation #2).

OCR enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et seq., and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination based on race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance. As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department of Education, the University must comply with these laws.

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

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OCR evaluated this complaint in accordance with OCR's [Case Processing Manual \(CPM\) \(February 19, 2025\)](#) and has decided to open Allegation # 1 for investigation. However, OCR is dismissing Allegation #2 for the reasons set forth below.

Allegation Being Dismissed

As to Allegation #2, Section 108(m) of OCR's CPM states that OCR may close or dismiss an allegation if it has recently investigated or is currently investigating the same or similar allegation(s) based on the same operative facts involving the same recipient in a compliance review, directed investigation, or OCR complaint. OCR is currently investigating whether the University failed to respond to alleged harassment of students based on national origin (shared Jewish ancestry) in a manner consistent with the requirements of Title VI in OCR Case Number 01-24-2169. Accordingly, OCR is dismissing Allegation #2 as of the date of this letter.

Allegation Being Opened for Investigation

OCR will investigate the following issue:

Whether the University failed to respond to alleged harassment of the Student on the basis of national origin (Jewish ancestry) in a manner consistent with the requirements of Title VI.

Please note that opening an investigation does not mean that OCR has made a final determination with regard to the merits. During the investigation, OCR is neutral; OCR will collect and analyze the evidence it needs in order to make a decision about the complaint. OCR will ensure that its investigation is legally sufficient in accordance with OCR's CPM. Additional information is available at [Complaint Processing Procedures](#). Please note that you may have the right to file a private suit in federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation.

If OCR determines during the course of the investigation that a complaint could be appropriate for mediation, OCR will contact the parties and offer this resolution option.

With respect to the allegation OCR is dismissing, this letter sets forth OCR's determination in an individual OCR case. 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.

Recipients 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, it will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information, that, if released, could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

OCR will communicate with you periodically during its investigation. When contacting the office about your case, please refer to the case number at the top of this letter.

Sincerely,

Lori Welker
Team Leader, Team IV
District of Columbia Office
Office for Civil Rights