

CSU, Nation's Largest University System, Mishandled Sexual Misconduct, Bullying Claims

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Gina Maisto Smith was quoted in *USA Today* regarding the Institutional Response Group's findings concerning sexual misconduct within the California State University system. The Institutional Response Group reviewed data and documents, visited all 23 campuses in the system, interviewed key stakeholders, and met with several groups representing a cross-section of the university community, including administrators, students, staff, and faculty. They also received dozens of emails from people who shared their experiences, and they conducted a systemwide survey that got nearly 18,000 responses. The report found that failures at California State University contributed to a widespread mishandling of sexual misconduct claims and an erosion of trust among students, faculty, and staff.

"Individuals that are overloaded with too much responsibility are focusing on the fires and, as a consequence, all the other things are just dissolving and leading to a lack of trust in the system," said Gina during a board of trustees meeting where she gave a verbal presentation of the report's broad conclusions ahead of its release. "The sole Title IX coordinator at one of the system's campuses also oversaw numerous other functions, including human resources, equal opportunities, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as receiving whistleblower complaints and those about discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. At most campuses, there are not enough people to do the work they are assigned. The impacts are plain, we cannot consistently demonstrate care and core compliance functions. Timeliness is impacted, overall effectiveness is impacted, perception of the process is impacted, the inability to engage in proactive and preventive work is impacted," she said.

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