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Attorney General Responds to DOJ Findings on UNM's Handling of Campus Sexual Assault Allegations; Offers Assistance Through Previously Convened Working Group

The Attorney General expresses concern over DOJ findings, and publicly announces efforts being undertaken by his office to help address the problem of sexual violence on New Mexico college campuses

Albuquerque, NM - Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a statement in response to the release of DOJ findings on the University of New Mexico's handling of alleged sexual assaults on its campus. The findings indicate that although UNM has made positive steps toward better handling allegations of sexual assault, it is still out of compliance with Title IX and Title IV, two key laws that prohibit sex discrimination in educational institutions.

"The DOJ's findings are deeply troubling, and they highlight the complexity of these issues," said Attorney General Balderas. "We have to do a better job of protecting our students' civil rights and providing them with safe environments conducive to learning. This trend is unacceptable, and I am committed to working with all stakeholders to help address these issues."

In order to affirmatively help tackle issues of sexual violence and student safety, the Attorney General created a working group in the winter of 2015. In consultation with Secretary Damron of the Higher Education Department, his Policy & Public Affairs Division sent a letter to all public institutions of higher learning in New Mexico last December. The letter requested that each school submit copies of its policies and procedures related to handling sexual assault on campus for review. Many schools, including UNM, responded positively and expressed willingness to be involved in any effort to address these important issues through a collaborative process.

The initial letter and review of current policies and procedures at all public colleges and universities is a first step in a longer-term effort to identify best practices and work with all stakeholders to improve and standardize response to alleged sexual assault on campuses across the state.

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