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**U.S. Education Department Reaches Agreement with the University of Virginia to Address
and Prevent Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the University of Virginia (UVA) announced today that UVA has entered into a resolution agreement to ensure that the University's handling of sexual violence and sexual harassment complies with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX).

"I am pleased to join President Teresa Sullivan in announcing the resolution we reached with the University of Virginia," said Catherine E. Lhamon, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. "President Sullivan's leadership in crafting an exemplary new policy to address sexual violence and sexual harassment and in confirming her continuing commitment to comprehensive work to assure a safe learning environment at UVA sets just the right tone for her students, for which I am deeply grateful."

"By signing the resolution agreement, we have reaffirmed our commitment to continue taking steps we believe to be an important part of effective responses to sexual harassment and assault — urgent and complex societal issues of national importance that are challenging institutions of higher education and beyond," UVA President Teresa A. Sullivan said. "We have already implemented many of the measures identified in the agreement."

OCR's investigation determined UVA had a mixed record of responding to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence. During the course of OCR's investigation, the University took important steps to ensure it is meeting its Title IX obligations, including consistently providing support to students who report sexual violence and revising University policies on eliminating, preventing and addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence. These and other steps taken by UVA reflect a commitment to support a safe learning environment. In addition, the University's current policy is the first university policy OCR has found to be fully compliant with Title IX since the release of OCR's April 2014 Frequently Asked Questions document.

For the portion of the investigation that OCR completed during academic years 2008-09 through 2011-12, and with respect to three specific concerns identified after the 2011-12 academic year, OCR found UVA to be in violation of Title IX for failing to promptly and equitably respond to

certain complaints of sexual violence, including in ~~at least two instances during the review in~~ which the University did not promptly investigate information in cases that involved ~~student organizations fraternities~~. OCR also found a hostile environment for the affected students and that the University failed to take sufficient steps to eliminate the hostile environment and prevent its recurrence ~~during academic years 2008-09 through 2011-12, and with respect to three specific concerns identified after the 2011-12 academic year~~ for the portion of the investigation that OCR completed.

OCR also found that prior to the adoption of its current policy, the policies used by UVA to investigate and respond to sexual violence did not fully comply with Title IX. Some aspects of the prior policy did not provide fair process either to complainants or to students accused of sexual violence, and the University corrected this during the course of OCR's review, which opened in June 2011. In addition, OCR found that the University did not adequately distribute its Title-IX-required notice to students and others that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex, and that the Title IX coordinator did not adequately coordinate the University's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX.

The University entered into a resolution agreement before OCR completed its investigation. The terms of the resolution agreement address OCR's findings as well as the remaining compliance concerns OCR had identified before concluding the investigation.

The University has agreed to:

- Continue to follow its revised Title IX policies.
- Ensure that UVA's agreements with student organizations - including fraternities and sororities - clearly state that sexual harassment, sexual violence and retaliation are prohibited and that the failure of an organization's student members to comply with the Title IX policy may result in the University severing all ties with the organization. The agreements will also state that UVA has the authority to investigate reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence against members of the student organization and to determine appropriate sanctions.
- Develop and implement a system for tracking and reviewing all reports, investigations, interim measures and resolutions of student and employee conduct that may constitute sexual harassment or sexual violence, to ensure that such reports are adequately, reliably, promptly, and impartially investigated and resolved.
- Provide training to ensure that all members of the UVA community – including students, faculty, administrators and other staff – are trained regularly on issues related to sexual harassment and sexual violence, the requirements of Title IX, and the University's policies and procedures when a student reports possible sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Improve outreach to and feedback from students, including conducting focus groups, conducting an annual climate assessment to determine students' attitudes and knowledge regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence, determine whether students know to whom and how to report such conduct, identify potential barriers to reporting, and solicit input on

how the university can encourage reporting of sexual harassment and sexual violence and better respond to such reports.

- Review all complaints heard by the University Sexual Misconduct Board during the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 academic years to determine whether each complaint was handled appropriately and take action to address any problems identified through that review, including providing appropriate remedies that may still be available to the complainants in these cases and remedies that may be necessary to address the climate of the larger University community.
- Submit to OCR for review and approval copies of all reports and complaints alleging sexual harassment and sexual violence, filed by students during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, as well as documentation of the university's response to these complaints.

A copy of the letter can be found [add link here].

A copy of the agreement can be found [add link here].

OCR's mission is to ensure equal access to education and promote educational excellence throughout the nation through the vigorous enforcement of civil rights. OCR is responsible for enforcing federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination by educational institutions on the basis of disability, race, color, national origin, sex, and age, as well as the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001.