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U.S.

Baylor Official Claims Retaliation Over Sexual-Assault Inquiries

Baylor's Title IX coordinator says university's senior leadership hindered her investigations



Patty Crawford, Baylor University's first full-time Title IX coordinator, in her office in Waco, Texas, in August 2015. *PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS*

By **BRAD REAGAN**

Updated Oct. 5, 2016 7:48 p.m. ET

The official designated to address Baylor University's sexual-assault scandal has filed complaints against the school, alleging that its senior leadership retaliated against her for being too aggressive in trying to confront the issue.

The action threatens to escalate a controversy that already resulted in the nation's largest Baptist university getting rid of its much-loved football coach, Art Briles, and its high-profile president, Kenneth Starr.

Patty Crawford, who became Baylor's Title IX coordinator in 2014, filed a civil-rights complaint with the Department of Education on Sept. 26, saying "she was retaliated against by the school's senior leadership for trying to do her job," said her lawyer, Rogge Dunn of Dallas. The next day, she filed a separate human-resources complaint with the Waco, Texas, university, he said.

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As part of her job, Ms. Crawford was in charge of implementing the school's response to sexual-assault allegations.

That position became more prominent in May, when a

Philadelphia law firm commissioned by Baylor issued scathing but unspecific findings saying that the school had turned a blind eye to sexual assault, and described what it called institutional failures to deal with such allegations.

Baylor is among a number of schools to face legal scrutiny and public outrage over the handling of sexual-assault cases, particularly those involving athletes. Two former Baylor football players have been convicted of rape in recent years, and a third is under indictment. The third player, Shawn Oakman, pleaded not guilty in August

After that report, Mr. Dunn said, Baylor officials tried to prevent Ms. Crawford from reporting violations, limited her department's funding and delayed cooperating with her investigations.

"Over the last six to nine months, she realized it was intentional," Mr. Dunn said.

On Monday, Ms. Crawford and Baylor officials engaged in an extensive and ultimately unsuccessful mediation in response to her complaints. When that failed, Baylor issued a press release at almost midnight on Monday, saying she had resigned.

"Our understanding is that Patty was disappointed in her role in implementing the recommendations" from the report, the school said.

In a statement, a Baylor spokeswoman said the school "was surprised by the action taken by Patty Crawford given her public comments in August about the strong support she felt from across the University. Her demands in advance of mediation for one million dollars and book and movie rights were troubling."

Mr. Dunn wouldn't comment on the school's allegation that she demanded a big settlement and movie rights and said he was prevented by Texas law from discussing what happened in the mediation. He said Baylor was trying to "throw dirt" at his client.

Baylor has separately pledged to implement the recommendations from the law firm's report, with the chairman of the school's board of regents saying its leadership was "horrified by the extent of these acts of sexual violence on our campus."

The school only released a summary of the law-firm's findings and has resisted calls from alumni and others to produce a more complete accounting of what was discovered.

Ms. Crawford was unavailable for comment. She was on a plane Wednesday morning but appeared earlier on 'CBS This Morning.'

"I think Baylor set me up to fail from the beginning," Ms. Crawford said on the show. "The harder I worked, the more resistance I got."

A total of eight women have now joined a Title IX lawsuit against Baylor, alleging that the school failed to adequately investigate alleged sexual assaults against them. The school has declined to comment and tried to get the lawsuits dismissed.

Ms. Crawford plans to speak out about what she saw at Baylor, Mr. Dunn said, adding that she doesn't believe the school's problems are exclusive to its football program.

"Football is one component of it but it is only a small component," he said.

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