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Disgraced California college president accused of harassment to earn outrageous six-figure salary

By Daniel Farr

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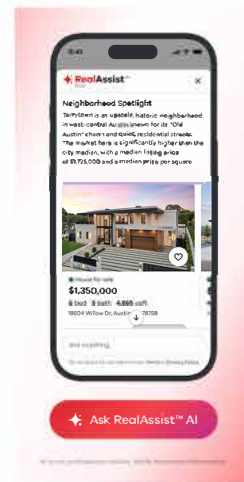
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A California university president accused of fostering a workplace where gender discrimination and harassment were allegedly "standard operating procedure" is walking away with a \$343,920 taxpayer-funded paycheck.

The move comes just months after the California State University system paid \$12 million to settle the explosive lawsuit that named him.

Despite being accused of creating a toxic work environment, outgoing Cal State San Bernardino President Tomas Morales was approved Wednesday for a one-year executive transition assignment by the California State University Board of Trustees.



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Cal State San Bernardino President Tomas Morales was approved Wednesday for a one-year executive transition assignment.

CSUSB



Entrance sign for California State University, San Bernardino
CSUSB

The decision immediately drew outrage from the attorney who represented the two former administrators behind the lawsuit.

"CSU has a significant problem when it comes to dealing with gender discrimination and harassment and retaliation, and we've seen nothing to date to show that it's taking this issue seriously," Andrew Friedman, a partner with Helmer Friedman LLP who represented the two administrators, Clare Weber and Anissa Rogers, told The Los Angeles Times.

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The lawsuit, filed in 2023, accused Morales of discriminating against women, directing "ranting" tirades at female employees, approving lower salaries for women than similarly situated male colleagues and fostering a workplace where harassment had become "standard operating procedure."

The complaint also named former Palm Desert campus dean Jake Zhu and the CSU Board of Trustees.

According to the lawsuit, Morales' alleged conduct was reported to then-interim Chancellor Jolene Koester, who "did absolutely nothing," and the university allegedly retaliated against Weber and Rogers after they raised concerns about Morales and Zhu.

Morales, Zhu and the Board of Trustees denied the allegations in court filings.



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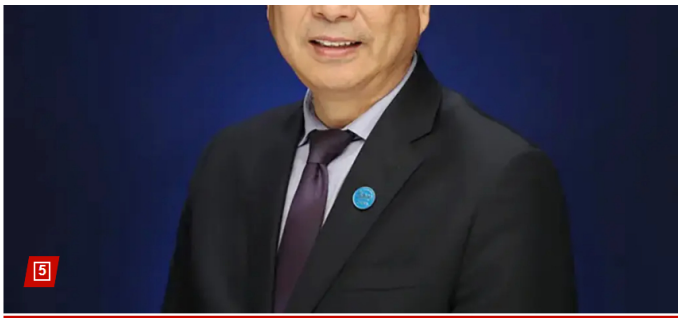
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Portrait of San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus dean Jake Zhu.
CSUSB



CSUSB President Tomas Morales speaking at a podium with the Seal of the City of San Bernardino.
MediaNews Group via Getty Images

The California State University system settled the lawsuit in March, while denying wrongdoing and saying it resolved the case “to avoid further costs of litigation.”

Rogers won a \$6 million jury award in October 2025, while Weber accepted a separate \$6 million settlement before trial.

During Wednesday’s Board of Trustees meeting, CSU Chancellor Mildred Garcia praised Morales for his “outstanding leadership at Cal State San Bernardino and systemwide” while announcing the transition assignment, The Times reported.

CSU spokeswoman Amy Bentley-Smith told The Times the lawsuit “did not result in any findings against him individually, and litigation outcomes do not determine an employee’s standing.”

The university said Morales remains in “good standing,” making him eligible for the executive transition program.

11 What do you think? [Post a comment.](#)

CSU has defended the six-figure payout, saying the program helps recruit top executives in a competitive market while preserving institutional knowledge after university leaders step down.

Morales announced last year that he would step down at the end of the 2025-26 academic year, before the case was settled.

Morales collected \$655,626 in salary and benefits in 2024, [according to Transparent California.](#)



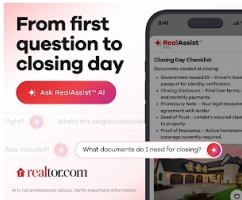
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Faculty leaders also blasted the taxpayer-funded sendoff.

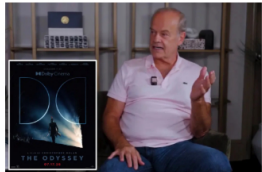
California Faculty Association San Bernardino chapter President Tiffany Jones called rewarding Morales a “stunning failure of accountability and a direct betrayal of students, faculty, and staff.”

“At a time when campuses face budget constraints, staffing shortages, and growing student needs, CSU resources must not be used to provide a financial cushion for failed leadership,” Jones said in a news



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