

**** A copy of Dr. Anissa Rogers' First Amended Complaint can be found [here](#).**

\$6 Million Gender Discrimination/Harassment Verdict Against CSU -California State University

Los Angeles – October 20, 2025 - In a precedent setting victory against California State University, Andrew H. Friedman and Courtney Abrams, in partnership with renowned lead trial attorney David M. deRubertis, obtained a \$6 Million jury verdict on behalf of a former California State University, San Bernardino Associate Dean Anissa Rogers in a lawsuit entitled *Clare Weber & Anissa Rogers v. Board of Trustees of the California State University (the State of California acting in its higher education capacity); Tomás Morales, an individual; and Jake Zhu, an individual* (Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 23STCV05549).

Dr. Rogers alleged in her lawsuit that, despite repeated reports by her and other employees (including both men and women) to multiple CSU officials that Defendant Jake Zhu (Dean of CSU, San Bernardino's Palm Desert campus) was harassing and discriminating against female employees on account of their gender, CSU took no action whatsoever to remedy the situation. Instead, CSU constructively fired Dr. Rogers from her Associate Dean position.

The jury's \$6 million award is entirely for noneconomic damages, including compensation for emotional distress and the personal toll suffered by Dr. Rogers on account of workplace gender discrimination, harassment and retaliation. Dr. Rogers' claims highlighted how the nation's largest public university system, employing more than 56,000 people across 23 campuses, failed to enforce its own anti-harassment policies despite repeated internal warnings and public scandals.

"This case exposed what women inside Cal State have been saying for years: the mistreatment of women within the Cal State system is not just a series of one-off incidents; the problem is systemic and structural," said Andrew H. Friedman of Helmer Friedman, LLP who represented Dr. Rogers. This verdict should serve as a loud message to CSU to clean up its act and take complaints of employment violations seriously," Friedman added. "Cal State can no longer ignore the systemic twin problems of gender-based mistreatment and retaliation that is endemic. The

jury saw the importance of holding this institution to account, and we're very appreciative of that."

Dr. Rogers' lead trial lawyer, David M. deRubertis of The deRubertis Law Firm APC, argued the gender-based mistreatment of Dr. Rogers was an inevitable result after CSU San Bernardino ignored a 2015 "climate survey" that suggested a culture of fear, intimidation, gender-based mistreatment and bullying at Cal State San Bernardino and recommended adoption of an anti-bullying policy and an audit of HR practices and policies. At trial, CSU San Bernardino President Tomas Morales admitted that neither recommendation was implemented.

Courtney Abrams of Courtney Abrams, PC, who also represented Dr. Rogers, announced Monday following a multiweek trial overseen by LA County Superior Court Judge Maurice Leiter, that the jury verdict "represents a resounding rejection of CSU's long-running denials of gender bias within its ranks. Dr. Rogers stood up not only for herself, but also the other women who have been subjected to gender-based double-standards within the Cal State system."

Together, Friedman, Abrams, and deRubertis also represent Clare Weber, the former Vice Provost of Academic Affairs of CSU San Bernardino whose claims of gender pay equity, harassment based on gender and retaliation are expected to go to trial next year.

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