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Two former Cal State administrators get \$12 million in gender discrimination settlement

An attorney for the plaintiffs said the settlement 'speaks to the entrenched culture of harassment, discrimination and retaliation at CSU'

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Clare Weber, pictured left, is the former vice provost at California State University San Bernardino, and Anissa Rogers is the former associate dean of CSUSB's Palm Desert campus. Both sued the Cal State University system's board of trustees and top Cal State San Bernardino officials in March 2023 alleging pay disparity and discrimination against female employees. (Courtesy of Courtney Abrams)



By **JOE NELSON** | jnelson@scng.com | San Bernardino Sun

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California State University will pay \$12 million to settle claims by two former CSU San Bernardino administrators who alleged they were fired or pushed to resign after reporting gender inequities, discrimination and harassment.

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It ends a roughly three-year legal battle between CSUSB and former administrators Clare Weber, the university’s former vice provost, and Anissa Rogers, the former associate dean of the university’s Palm Desert campus. Weber alleged she was fired after raising concerns about pay inequities affecting female administrators at the San Bernardino campus, while Rogers alleged she was forced out after reporting gender harassment and retaliation at the Palm Desert campus.

“From the beginning, these cases were about accountability,” said David J. deRubertis, lead trial counsel for Weber and Rogers, in a May 12 statement. “Dr. Weber and Dr. Rogers took enormous professional and personal risks in challenging conduct they believed was unlawful. The result sends a strong message about the importance of protecting employees who speak up about harassment and against retaliation.”

The \$12 million will be divided between Weber and Rogers, but attorney Courtney Abrams, who also represents the two, said she could not disclose how much each will get because it falls under attorney-client privilege. However, a jury last year awarded Rogers \$6 million in damages for emotional distress following trial.

Weber was set to go to trial this year before both sides agreed to settle, ending all further legal proceedings, including possible appeals.

Attorneys for the pair claim the lawsuit underscored broader public scrutiny involving CSU’s handling of workplace harassment complaints across multiple campuses.

“They have always believed that this was something for the greater good, and it would be something that could help recognize the pain that many women continue to be exposed to in the Cal State system,” Abrams said in a telephone interview on Monday.

She said the kind of gender discrimination Weber and Rogers accused CSUSB of is allegedly still rife across the CSU system.

“I get calls weekly from women who believe they’re being harassed on the basis of their gender. I get calls weekly from current employees who are

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In a statement Monday, CSUSB spokesman Alan LaVorre said the university and its president, Tomás Morales, take all allegations of gender discrimination — and all forms of discrimination — seriously.

“The university recently resolved two matters through settlement and is committed to ensuring a campus environment where all individuals who work, learn, live and visit feel respected and supported,” LaVorre said.

Speaking of the settlement involving Weber and Rogers, he said that “while these resolutions allow all parties to move forward, they do not constitute an admission of liability or wrongdoing on the part of the university or President Tomás Morales.”

The university contends it remains committed to fairness, accountability and equal opportunity in hiring and promotion decisions, while continuing to invest in leadership development and programs supporting women and underrepresented groups across campus.

The CSU Chancellor’s Office released a statement that closely mirrored CSUSB’s comments.

The [CSU system](#), which is the nation’s largest four-year public university system, consisting of 22 campuses statewide, has more than 450,000 enrolled students annually and comprises one of the most diverse student bodies in the U.S.

In their [lawsuit filed in March 2023](#), Weber and Rogers alleged they faced retaliation, hostile working conditions and eventual termination or removal from their positions after speaking out about pay disparities and other disparate treatment of female employees.

Weber complained that female vice provosts across CSUSB were paid less than their male counterparts despite carrying major administrative portfolios, and that she was one of the lowest paid vice provosts in the CSU system. Rogers alleged that then-Palm Desert campus Dean Jake Zhu ignored her complaints about male administrators berating a female employee during a 2021 meeting, told her to “train the men,” then forced her to resign in 2022 for taking approved vacation time and attending a college event for

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Abrams said Weber agreed to retire from CSU per the terms of the settlement agreement, and that Rogers is now the [chair of the Master of Social Work program at Pacific Lutheran University](#) in Washington.

In a four-page news release Monday, May 18, the California Faculty Association chapter at CSUSB condemned university leadership in response to the settlement, accusing university President Morales, Provost Rafik Mohamed and former dean Zhu of fostering a culture of harassment, retaliation and inequity, and called the payout “both a moral and financial scandal.”

The union also linked the case to broader allegations of administrative failures and campus mismanagement.

“The recent settlement is not an isolated incident. It reflects a pattern of administrative failures and enablement under President Morales and Provost Mohamed that stretches back years and has repeatedly harmed students, faculty, and staff,” the news release stated.

The CFA praised Weber and Rogers for exposing systemic failures within the campus and CSU system, while calling for accountability for senior administrators, independent reviews of harassment and pay equity, stronger Title IX enforcement and protections for whistleblowers.

The release called \$12 million “a devastating price for institutional failure.”

“The greater cost — to the careers, well-being and dignity of the women who were harmed — cannot be measured in dollars. CSUSB and the CSU system owe their faculty, staff, and students far better.”

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