



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

REGION IX  
CALIFORNIA

50 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA  
MAIL BOX 1200, ROOM 1545  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

March 30, 2023

Adam Kissel  
2308 Washington Street. E  
Charleston, West Virginia 25311

By email only to: [adamkissel@gmail.com](mailto:adamkissel@gmail.com)

Re: Stanford University  
OCR Case No. 09-23-2068

Dear Adam Kissel:

The U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR), has reached a resolution of the above-referenced complaint against Stanford University (University). The complaint alleged that the University discriminated against students on the basis of race when the Graduate Student Council hosted a movie screening on November 10, 2022, in which it reserved 100 tickets to be distributed beforehand via lottery among Black graduate students and excluded students of other races from participating in the advance reserved lottery distribution.

For the reasons explained below, OCR is dismissing the complaint.

OCR is responsible for enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d-2000d-7, and its implementing regulation, 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department, the University is subject to Title VI.

The Graduate Student Council is a branch of the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU). Consistent with the University's Non-Discrimination Policy, ASSU's Non-Discrimination Statement prohibits discrimination based on race. On November 10, 2022, the University's Graduate Student Council hosted a movie screening for which student organizers sent out an email stating that 100 tickets for the screening would be distributed beforehand via lottery among Black graduate students. The email also stated that these students would receive priority on bus transportation to and from the film. There were 350 additional tickets available for other graduate students. OCR determined that while events planned by student groups are typically approved by staff, the Graduate Student Council student leadership organized this event and the lottery system without obtaining staff approval. The University conducted an internal investigation into the matter and determined that the event was not consistent with the University's non-discrimination policy. The University communicated with the Graduate Student Council that the event violated the University's non-discrimination policy. The

*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

Graduate Student Council affirmed that they will not plan a similar event in the future. Based on these actions, OCR has determined that the allegation has been resolved. OCR will dismiss an allegation when it obtains credible information indicating that the allegation has been resolved, and there is no systemic allegation. For this reason, OCR is closing this complaint pursuant to OCR's *Case Processing Manual* (CPM) Section 110(d).<sup>1</sup>

This letter sets forth OCR's determination in an individual OCR case. This letter is not a formal statement of OCR policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such. OCR's formal policy statements are approved by a duly authorized OCR official and made available to the public.

Please be advised that the University must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against any individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a separate retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, OCR will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (415) 486-5404 or at [Anamaria.Loya@ed.gov](mailto:Anamaria.Loya@ed.gov).

Sincerely,



Anamaria Loya  
Chief Attorney

---

<sup>1</sup> The CPM (July 18, 2022) can be found at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocrcpm.pdf>.