

CASE STUDY: Legal Issues Related to Sexual Harrassment

Jackson and Cassidy both attend a large land-grant university in the Midwest. Jackson is a 19 year old, first semester sophomore majoring in Marketing. Cassidy is a 23 year old, second year graduate student in the MBA program and a graduate teaching assistant. Her teaching assignment is to facilitate a small recitation section for Marketing Strategies and its associate study group in the College of Business.

Jackson and Cassidy develop a romantic relationship after connecting through study group sessions and college sponsored activities. Over Thanksgiving break Jackson returns home and shares highlights of his semester with his friends and family. Jackson seeks the counsel of his parents after his high school buddies give him a hard-time about his relationship with Cassidy. Jackson's parents have their own concerns about the dynamic between Jackson and his GTA and encourage him to end the relationship with Cassidy.

Jackson decides to text Cassidy and let her know that he "can't do this" and doesn't want to "be together anymore." Cassidy calls and texts Jackson incessantly over break. When classes resume after the Thanksgiving break, she even tries to confront him after classes, but is unsuccessful. Jackson proceeds to try and avoid Cassidy as much as possible, but he is forced to interact with her when she returned an exam that he thought was graded unfairly after discovering his scores on the same test items were graded lower than his classmates. During the meeting to discuss his concerns about how his exam was graded, Cassidy indicates that she will fix the grade if Jackson agrees to renew their relationship. Seeing that Jackson is not responding to her advances, Cassidy begins to text and call him dozens of times throughout the day, begins stalking him after his other business classes after downloading his schedule from her faculty portal. She has even "popped by" his job multiple times to see if he was working. Jackson becomes increasingly uncomfortable with Cassidy's attempts to reconnect and begins skipping his recitation and study group. He eventually schedules a meeting with the Marketing Department Head and then the Dean of the Graduate School in an effort to be reassigned to another recitation section. After much prodding by the Department Head, Jackson finally discloses that he would like to switch sections because of the interactions with Cassidy and his desire not to have any contact with her.

Questions for discussion:

1-What are the reporting obligations of the department head after learning of the issue?

2-What are the reporting obligations of the graduate dean after learning of the issue?

3-How are the reporting obligations similar or different?

4-What resources are available on your campus for Jackson and Cassidy?