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## LOCAL NEWS

### CSU Chancellor Comments On Gender Discrimination Accusations



CSU Chancellor, Charles B. Reed, responded on Friday to concerns voiced by Senator Dean Florez over gender discrimination claims throughout the California State University System.

In a letter to Reed, which Florez sent on Wednesday, Florez voiced concerns that there could be a perceived "epidemic" of discrimination claims running rampant throughout the CSU System. Reed responded to that claim on Friday saying that it couldn't be "further from the truth."

Reed pointed to the fact that the CSU system, which has 23 campuses, with over 45,000 employees and 435,000 students, in over the last five years has had fewer than 100 employment discrimination cases filed. He said that while the recent Lindy Vivas verdict against Fresno State University is "disturbing" he said that it is still too early to determine what the verdict means and blamed the unpredictable state judicial system for Vivas's award in the case.

Vivas was awarded \$5.8 million in her discrimination lawsuit against the university. She had sued the school over her firing back in 2004, claiming that she was let go because of her "perceived" sexual orientation. Vivas also claimed that during her time at Fresno State, the Athletics Department was riddled with inequalities.

Officials at Fresno State say that Vivas was let go because she failed to bring Fresno State a Western Athletic Conference Championship and didn't schedule enough games against top 25 teams.

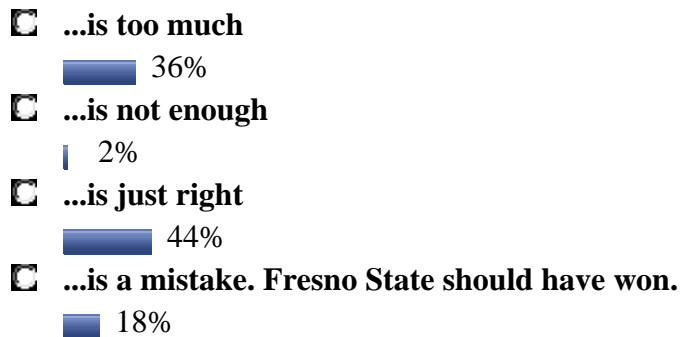
In his letter to Florez, Reed went on to say that the CSU system is committed to Title IX, and says that more Title IX progress has been made at the CSU systems than at any other "comparable" school in the country.

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Reed differs with Florez  
Chancellor stands up to state senator's letter.  
By George Hostetter / The Fresno Bee  
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The \$5.85 million jury award  
in the Lindy Vivas trial ...



### [Letter from CSU chancellor to state Sen. Florez](#)

Chancellor Charles B. Reed said the California State University is committed to equity for women's athletics and denied a state senator's suggestion the 23-campus system may be plagued by rampant discrimination.

State Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, had written Reed on Wednesday, two days after a Fresno jury awarded \$5.85 million to former Bulldogs volleyball coach Lindy Vivas in her discrimination lawsuit against Fresno State. Former associate athletic director Diane Milutinovich and former women's basketball coach Stacy Johnson-Klein have similar lawsuits pending against the university.

In his letter to Reed, Florez said he was concerned about the "recent epidemic" of discrimination against women at Fresno State and worried that discrimination "may be rampant" on other CSU campuses.

In a written reply to Florez dated Friday, Reed said "Nothing could be further from the truth."

Reed said CSU has more than 45,000 employees and 435,000 students: "Over the last five years, there have been fewer than 100 employment discrimination cases filed throughout the system."

Slightly more than half were settled before trial, and CSU prevailed in all but two cases decided by the courts, Reed said. The judgments in those two cases -- one involving a former male coach at the Stanislaus campus, the other a former female coach at the Sonoma campus -- totaled \$799,000, Reed said.

"This is an overall record which is quite reasonable," he said.

Reed called the Vivas verdict "very disturbing." He said CSU campuses always have room for improvement "and we will continue to look for ways that we can make the Fresno program better."

Reed said the Vivas verdict will be appealed.

"It is premature to decide what this verdict means, except that the California judicial system is entirely unpredictable, a reason why many employers have already chosen to leave this state," Reed said.

Florez will head a special four-person committee of state lawmakers charged with investigating whether there is a pattern of discriminatory behavior in the athletic programs of the state's public universities.

In a written reply to Reed on Friday, Florez said nearly 100 recent employment discrimination actions against CSU "is nothing to be proud of. ... Your response in this matter merely serves to demonstrate a layer of callousness towards these types of actions; a callousness that is apparently projected from the highest levels of leadership at the CSU."

Nor was Florez pleased with what he called Reed's "disparaging" comments about the state's judicial system: "This is a self-serving attitude that will not go very far with members of the legislature."

Reed explained the commitment of CSU and Fresno State to Title IX laws, which prohibit sex discrimination at institutions that receive federal funds. He said female participation in athletics and funds spent on women's sports have risen substantially within CSU in recent years.

Reed said a 2007 Women's Sports Foundation report gave Fresno State an "A" for the proportion of female athletes to student population.

The reporter can be reached at [ghostetter@fresnobee.com](mailto:ghostetter@fresnobee.com) or (559)441-6272.