

The Behrend Beacon

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Staffer says U. of Miami Career Center was 'Porno U,' files harassment lawsuit

by Karla Schuster
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

For the second time in two months, the University of Miami is facing charges it mishandled sexual harassment complaints from female employees.

Mariselly Chiroldes, a recruiter at UM's Toppel Career Center, says for two years, the school ignored complaints that director Michael Gage spent his workdays surfing Internet porn sites on office computers and often touched employees inappropriately, according to a lawsuit filed last week in Miami-Dade Circuit Court.

The university only launched an investigation, Chiroldes says, after she filed a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission last July.

University officials would not comment on the allegations or the lawsuit, except to say that Gage, director of the career center, was fired late last year.

"The person in question (Gage) is no longer with the university," said UM spokeswoman Margot Winick. "He was terminated last year."

But Chiroldes contends UM should have acted sooner, noting that she and two other center employees filed internal grievances about Gage long before they lodged complaints with the EEOC, according to the suit.

"It was like working at Porno U," Chiroldes said in a prepared statement faxed by her attorney, Spencer Eig of Miami. "I was

traumatized by the Internet and real-life pornography that surrounded me working at UM."

Once, sometime in 2000, according to the suit, UM suspended Gage after he was found naked in his office but eventually allowed him to return to his supervisory post at the career center.

"She filed grievances, and the university didn't act," Eig said.

Chiroldes has been working at the career center, which helps students and alumni polish their job-hunting skills, since August 1999, including a five-month maternity leave.

The two other employees who filed internal grievances about Gage - and also lodged complaints with the EEOC - are filing a lawsuit against the university, according to their attorney, Jack Hickey of Miami.

The two other women quit the center because of the conditions there, Hickey said.

"They made complaints, and the university did not pursue any effective investigation," Hickey said.

Chiroldes' lawsuit is the second time in recent months the school has been accused of ignoring allegations of sexual harassment by university employees.

In December, a former assistant football equipment manager, 19-year-old Nicole Pytel of Weston, sued UM for sexual harassment and discrimination, saying the school fired her less than an hour after she filed a complaint with the federal EEOC charging that the male equipment managers sexually harassed her.

1960s black activists return to Stanford

by Kim Vo
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The struggle was clearer in the 1960s. Black representation was low, and equal treatment was rarely given, so it had to be demanded. But while the passing decades have been marked with progress, today's students must not become complacent, a group of Stanford University alumni said Wednesday.

The alumni, many who were members of the fledging Black Student Union, participated in a pivotal event on April 8, 1968. Four days after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, the university held a campus-wide meeting on race relations. About 70 black students rose, took the microphone from then Provost Richard Lyman and issued 10 demands to improve education for black students.

On Wednesday, the alumni revisited Stanford and spoke to students at lunchtime. They also joined past administrators and community activists on an evening panel at Cubberley Auditorium. It was part of a two-week celebration of King's life; this year's events highlighted the contributions "just plain folks" made to the civil rights movement.

"We knew we were participating in something important in the '60s," Keni Washington, co-chair of the BSU in 1968, told students Wednesday.

Among other things, the 1968 protest led to the formation of Stanford's first ethnic studies program, African and African-American Studies, and laid the foundation for the university's black-themed dorm and cultural pro-

grams.

But, today, specific objectives seem more elusive, and that is frustrating, said students who attended the noon luncheon. They asked for advice on how to be modern activists, especially when many students on campus don't feel a sense of urgency to demand change - one student called Stanford "kind of cushy" - and don't agree on the pressing

The lack of urgency made the former BSU leaders shake their heads. There is so much work left to do, they said, on- and off-campus.

Environmental policy and international relations will affect this generation, said the alumni, many now in their 50s with salt-and-pepper beards. Drug addiction and HIV will have a strong impact on

Warren Hayman, a former graduate student, said students must take advantage of their Stanford education and connections to agitate for change later.

needs.

Or, as sophomore Nadiya Figueroa put it, when there is "not a mike to take."

Figueroa, a double major in anthropology and history, said concerns range from the number of black faculty to how mostly minority staff workers are treated to how people of color are represented in the humanities curriculum.

This year's freshmen class has 166 black students, and blacks make up 9 percent of Stanford's undergraduate class. Black faculty grew from 27 to 47 in the 1990s, but make up only 3 percent of the faculty. Blacks are 12 percent of the national population.

the black community directly, said alumna Delores Mack, who is director of the counseling center at Claremont Colleges. Mack warned that one day there may be two African-American communities: one that is HIV-negative and one that tests positive.

Warren Hayman, a former graduate student and now assistant dean at Morgan State University in Baltimore, said students must take advantage of their Stanford education and connections to agitate for change later.

Hayman told the students that they were T.G.I.F.: talented, gifted, intelligent, and given the times they're growing up in, fortunate.

Things to know if you're feeling lost

Knight Ridder Newspapers

Things to remember if you're 20-something and feeling lost:

-Realize that you aren't the first person to not know what you want to do, or to make a mistake at a young age.

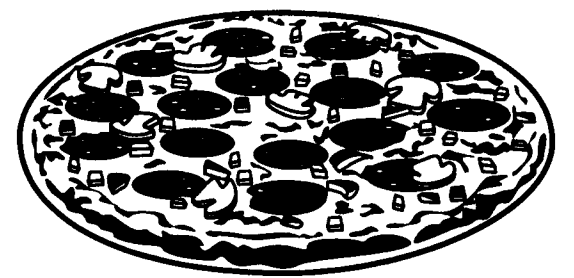
-Don't feel inferior if you can't get a job in the exact career you planned for in college, or if you get laid off because of the economy. Career ups and downs are part of the "real world."

-In today's uncertain economy, focus on what is good about the job you have, and be thankful for it. Even if a job just helps you pay the bills and do things you like, that's a plus.

-Don't try to use your career, your financial status or relationship status to define yourself. Think about who you really are, what makes you happy and what makes you special.

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