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2 Yale Faculty Accused of Sex Harassment

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NEW HAVEN, Conn., July 18—Four undergraduates and a faculty member have filed suit against Yale University, accusing the school of condoning sexual harassment of female students by professors and administrators.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court earlier this month, but not made public by the court, documents at least four instances in which two Yale faculty members, one of them a tenured professor, allegedly "pressured" female students to have sex and, in one instance, "coerced sexual intercourse," according to the plaintiffs' attorney. The suit seeks no monetary damages, only the establishment of a recognized disciplinary body to hear cases involving sexual harassment of students by professors.

"I would suspect that throughout the university, there are 75 such episodes per semester," said attorney Anne Simon, representing the plaintiffs, two 1977 graduates, two undergraduates, and an assistant professor.

Simon said her clients came to her after receiving no cooperation from university administrators. "Male-oriented instututions such as Yale are accustomed to thinking of such incidents as trivial, acceptable and personal. This lawsuit says that they are none of these," said Simon, a 1976 Yale Law School graduate.

Jose Cabranes, legal adviser for the university, labeled the suit a "very reckless and irresponsible" action. "It is false and unfounded, and Yale will oppose it vigorously," Cabranes said. He added that he believes the suit to be a "gimmick to gain publicity."

The lone faculty member to join in the suit claimed the actions of his male colleagues have prevented him from communicating with female students. "I've had to teach in an atmosphere poisoned by distrust," he said.

As of this date, no legal actions have been taken against any of the faculty members allegedly involved. "We're not interested in being vindictive or publicly naming the individuals," Simon said. "We just want to change the way Yale currently handles the situation—which is not to handle it at all."

U.S. District Court Judge Jon O. Newman of Hartford is expected to hear the case in late August.