

UNM to pay former employee \$800K in harassment lawsuit



ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (KRQE) – The University of New Mexico will pay out \$800,000 after a woman says she was sexually harassed by a fellow female employee and then retaliated against. A lawsuit filed by the victim against the University of New Mexico hospital, the board of regents, the employee, and her supervisor says the harassment began almost as soon as she was hired in the finance department at UNM hospital.

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The lawsuit says she tried to shut down the unwanted attention and reported it to her supervisor on multiple occasions but the behavior continued for nearly two years. "As she continued to let this other employee know that she wasn't interested in this kind of attention... it turned into bullying," said Nick Mattison, the victim's lawyer.



It all come to a head in 2017 when the two women got into an argument, in the victim's office, which sparked an investigation. When she found out she'd be punished for the confrontation, the victim quit. That's when Mattison says the sexual harassment turned into retaliation. "What ended up happening was UNMH placed our client on what's called a do not hire list," said Mattison.

That made it impossible for his client to find work, "It ended up having major impacts on her life, eventually she ended up leaving New Mexico," said Mattison. A jury recently ruled in favor of the victim in that case demanding UNMH and the Board of Regents pay her \$800,000. Mattison says the one big takeaway from the case is that supervisors need to take reports of sexual harassment seriously.

In a statement, UNM told KRQE News 13, "While disagreeing with the allegations of the plaintiff at trial, the University of New Mexico respects the jury and the discharge of its civic responsibility." They went on to say they're evaluating their post-trial options.

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