



Washington State Auditor's Office

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Whistleblower Investigation Report University of Washington

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Washington State Auditor's Office

December 14, 2015

Ana Mari Cauce, President
University of Washington

Report on Whistleblower Investigation

Attached is the official report on Whistleblower Case No. 15-034 at the University of Washington.

The State Auditor's Office received an assertion of improper governmental activity at the College. This assertion was submitted to us under the provisions of Chapter 42.40 of the Revised Code of Washington, the Whistleblower Act. We have investigated the assertion independently and objectively through interviews and by reviewing relevant documents. This report contains the result of our investigation.

Questions about this report should be directed to Whistleblower Manager Jim Brownell at (360) 725-5352.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Troy X. Kelley".

TROY KELLEY
STATE AUDITOR
OLYMPIA, WA

cc: Richard Cordova, Executive Director of Audits
Governor Jay Inslee
Kate Reynolds, Executive Director, Executive Ethics Board
Jacque Hawkins-Jones, Investigator

WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION REPORT

Assertion and results

Our Office received a whistleblower complaint asserting a Washington Sea Grant Program (Program) employee at the University of Washington (University) failed to provide spill prevention education, for which the University receives funding.

We found no reasonable cause to believe an improper governmental action occurred.

Background

In 1991 the Legislature directed the Department of Ecology (Department) to use \$170,000 of its oil spill prevention budget to establish small spill prevention education. The Department and the University have entered into an interagency agreement, which allows the Program to fulfill the educational requirements and invoice the Department for these expenses. The Department and the Program collaboratively develop and conduct education targeted at small spills from commercial fishing vessels, ferries, cruise ships, ports and marinas.

About the Investigation

We examined the interagency agreement, work plans, invoices, monthly activity reports and conducted interviews.

In January 2015, the Program began a team-based approach to its oil spill education. Prior to that time, one employee was responsible for the education and outreach. We found oil spill education continued through the transitional period and the Program continues to provide outreach and education.

State Auditor's Office Concluding Remarks

We thank University officials and personnel for their assistance and cooperation during the investigation.

WHISTLEBLOWER INVESTIGATION CRITERIA

We came to our determination in this investigation by evaluating the facts against the criteria below:

RCW 79A.60.620 Small spill prevention education program.

(1) The Washington sea grant program, in consultation with the department of ecology, shall develop and conduct a voluntary spill prevention education program that targets small spills from commercial fishing vessels, ferries, cruise ships, ports, and marinas. Washington sea grant shall coordinate the spill prevention education program with recreational boater education performed by the state parks and recreation commission.

(2) The spill prevention education program shall illustrate ways to reduce oil contamination of bilge water, accidental spills of hydraulic fluid and other hazardous substances during routine maintenance, and reduce spillage during refueling. The program shall illustrate proper disposal of oil and hazardous substances and promote strategies to meet shoreside oil and hazardous substance handling, and disposal needs of the targeted groups. The program shall include a series of training workshops and the development of educational materials.