



Donald Ogden Investigation Brief

June 15, 2022

In the spring of 2021, Grace College received a report that Donald Ogden, founder and former faculty member of the Grace College Department of Music and former alumni director, had engaged in sexual misconduct while employed by the College.¹ In response to the allegation, Grace engaged Elizabeth H. Canning, Campus and Workplace Solutions, to conduct an independent investigation to examine the reported allegations, examine whether the College knew about any allegations of misconduct, and evaluate whether the College took appropriate steps in response to such knowledge.

Initially, the investigator sought to speak with two alleged alumni victims named in the initial report, work with those who may have knowledge of other victims, and gather information to determine the appropriate investigation steps. As the matter progressed, the investigator determined it was likely that Mr. Ogden was inappropriate with additional students on multiple occasions and that it was prudent to reach a broader range of alumni. Because Mr. Ogden's primary contact with students was with those in the music program, the College sent 900 letters to music program and music group alumni. Through the investigative process, eleven (11)² individuals responding to the letter indicated that they experienced or witnessed sexual misconduct by Mr. Ogden, with most of the incidents occurring during choir or music group tours.

In total, more than one hundred forty (140) people responded by email or phone to the investigator's letter or direct outreach. The investigator interviewed 19 former students and 18 current and former employees. The investigator could not interview Mr. Ogden, who died in 2015.

The investigation substantiated claims of sexual harassment and sexual assault perpetrated by Mr. Ogden within the course and scope of his employment at Grace College. The reported incidents occurred between 1960 and 1990, with most incidents occurring in the 1980s. The investigation also revealed that some former employees had knowledge of the misconduct and failed to appropriately respond to the information at the time. Additionally, in 1993, Mr. Ogden was arrested in Kansas for sexually assaulting a minor while traveling as part of his work in Grace's alumni department, but this case was not prosecuted.

Grace's Commitment to Action

Grace College leaders believe Mr. Ogden's abuse was reprehensible. There is no place for sexual misconduct or abuse in any organization, especially a God-honoring institution of higher education. The College has made strides in recent years to implement leading prevention and reporting policies and procedures and will follow the investigator's guidance following this inquiry. Grace College is committed to self-reflection, improvement, and meaningful action (some of which is already underway or complete) regarding the following recommendations:

¹ Mr. Ogden was employed by the College from 1950-1993 and died in 2015.

² At least one hundred and forty (140) people responded to the letter or the investigator's direct outreach with a range of statements and emotions about Mr. Ogden, and much of the communication was in support of Mr. Ogden. Other response was indifferent, stating only that they had nothing to report. However, twelve of the alumni interviewed indicated they witnessed or experienced Mr. Ogden's sexual misconduct.

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- Provide training to the campus community that clearly communicates the definitions of prohibited behavior, expectations of behavior, application of policies to students and employees, the seriousness with which the College addresses misconduct, reporting procedures, encouragement to report misconduct, and prohibition of retaliation against those participating in reporting or investigating any allegations of misconduct.
- Provide training to the campus community that clearly explains conflicts of interest and bias in the reporting or investigative process.
- Provide specialized annual training for students and responsible employees who travel off campus, such as a performance group, athletic team, or student-employees (including Resident Assistants) that highlights expectations of professional and appropriate behavior.
- Provide specialized training and support to campus managers on how to develop, manage, and supervise their employees. This training should assist managers in knowing how to identify and report misconduct and any steps they must take when they receive notice of such misconduct.
- Provide training for all College faculty and staff, so that all employees understand Grace's expectations around their reporting obligations, including what matters can be addressed by employees. This training must instruct employees that certain reports must be reported to the appropriate office and that employees may not conduct their own inquiry or assessment.
- Provide training for the current senior leadership team on how to avoid abuses of power, strengthen a culture of caring compliance, and develop a responsible message to the community.
- Provide an accessible, online, and anonymous reporting option that includes options for on and off campus resources, including highlighting confidential resources.
- Revise the College's Title IX policy to provide students and employees with many reporting options among different levels of employees so that reporting individuals can easily access people with whom to share their concerns, including creating and properly training deputy Title IX coordinator positions in different departments, levels, and roles to make access to reporting and information easier.
- Disseminate relevant policies broadly so that community members are well-informed and knowledgeable about expectations of behavior, places to report, and resources at their disposal.
- Establish protocols for traveling with students, including prohibiting employees and students from sharing a bed and instructing members of the campus community to avoid any position that affects the privacy and dignity of anyone. These protocols should inform students of their rights and expectations when traveling alone with employees.
- Establish protocols for responding to concerns raised about employees and reports of criminal charges against employees, including requiring any employee matters to be addressed by human resource departments, not by administrators.
- Conduct a climate survey to understand the current climate at Grace around sexual misconduct and the community's knowledge about policy, reporting, retaliation, and resources.
- Create a strategic plan and implement a health check and assessment on overall systems, staffing, structure, and communications related to preventing and responding to sexual misconduct.

Reports regarding Don Ogden specifically can be sent to Elizabeth Canning at grace@ecanninglaw.com.

Reports regarding Grace College now or in the past can be sent to Carrie Yocum at yocumca@grace.edu.

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