

# Wayne State facing \$127,000 fine for faulty crime reporting

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**WAYNE STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

*(Photo: Wayne State University)*

The U.S. Department of Education has levied a \$127,500 fine against Wayne State University for faulty crime reporting in 2013 and 2014, according to a letter sent to the university in September and released publicly late last week. The fine is among the largest ever levied.

It's part of a change of philosophy in the department after Michigan's Betsy DeVos took over as education secretary.

"Protecting students has always been my top priority," DeVos, who is from Grand Rapids, said last year. "This new approach will enhance our efforts on our oversight responsibilities, including enforcement against bad actors, such as illegitimate debt relief organizations, schools defrauding students and institutions willfully ignoring their Clery Act responsibilities."

The department found Wayne State ([https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/WAYNE\\_STATE\\_FINE\\_ACTION\\_Redacted.pdf](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/WAYNE_STATE_FINE_ACTION_Redacted.pdf)) did not include required policy statements in the annual security reports, did not release complete reports in those two years and did not comply with drug and alcohol abuse prevention regulations. According to federal law, universities must provide written descriptions of prevention programs and descriptions of punishments for those violating laws.

Wayne State was correctly reporting crimes, spokesman Matt Lockwood said.

"Those reports were cited for incomplete policy statements, but there was no citation for covering up crime information. Corrections in both those reports were made to the satisfaction of the DOE at the time, and the process was improved going forward to ensure future reports met all DOE requirements."

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Universities and colleges are required under the federal Clery Act to make annual reports of crime statistics as well as to issue immediate warnings to their community when certain crimes are committed.

Wayne State isn't disputing the findings of fault, but is appealing the fine.

"Following an audit in 2015, Wayne State immediately took responsibility for not fully meeting specific Clery Act requirements in some reports in 2013-14," Lockwood told the Free Press. "The university made the necessary changes, submitted a revised report and has worked diligently to enhance subsequent reports."

Because it made the changes, the university was surprised by the fine, Lockwood said.

"In January of this year, we received a letter from the DOE stating that we had corrected the policy statement issue and the biennial review, and that they considered both matters closed. Thus, it came as a great surprise to us when the most recent fines were levied. We worked hard to rectify both issues and were told by the DOE that we had successfully remedied the issues."

In a letter dated Oct. 18, the university has asked the education department to waive the fine.

Wayne State is among nine institutions to have fines levied against it in recent weeks, said S. Daniel Carter, president of [Safety Advisors for Educational Campuses \(https://safecampuses.biz/\)](https://safecampuses.biz/), an organization that provides training and consultation on safety issues for higher education institutions, and a longtime national expert on campus crime issues.

"The Wayne State Clery Act fine amount is among the largest in the 28-year history of the Clery Act, but due to changes in enforcement standards, including indexing fines for inflation, is likely to be more representative of fines going forward," Carter said, adding that only seven schools have been fined and paid more, notably \$2.4 million imposed against Penn State, which was paid in 2016, and \$350,000 paid by Eastern Michigan in 2008.

Eastern Michigan's fine came after it covered up a murder in its dorms. Penn State's fine came after the revelations of football coach Jerry Sandusky's sexual assault on children and a coverup.

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