

'Extraordinarily egregious': USC slammed for not stopping predatory doctor George Tyndall

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The University of Southern California systematically failed to protect students from a predatory university gynecologist and now must make sweeping changes to its procedures for handling sexual discrimination complaints, the U.S. Department of Education announced Thursday.

Former USC gynecologist George Tyndall had been able to sexually abuse female students since as far back as 1989 because the university repeatedly failed to respond appropriately to notices of possible misconduct, officials said as they announced the results of [their investigation](#).

"This total and complete failure to protect students is heartbreaking and inexcusable," U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said in a statement.



Dr. George Tyndall, 72, left, appears with his attorney Andrew Flier during an arraignment at Los Angeles Superior court on July 1, 2019, in Los Angeles. The former longtime gynecologist at the University of Southern California is charged with sexually assaulting 16 women at the student health center. (Photo: Richard Vogel, AP)

One of the largest sexual misconduct investigations

A new agreement between the department and USC now requires the university to overhaul its processes for following Title IX — the federal law that prohibits sexual discrimination in education. It also requires the university to conduct a formal review of current and former employees and to allow government oversight for three years.

The agreement caps the government's two-year investigation into Tyndall and the university — one of the largest sexual misconduct investigations ever undertaken by the Education Department's Office of Civil Rights, said Kenneth Marcus, assistant secretary for civil rights.

"The facts in this case are extraordinarily egregious," Marcus told reporters Thursday. "It's one of the most shocking cases we have ever seen."

The Los Angeles Times was the first to report in 2018 on allegations against Tyndall, and an investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department resulted in Tyndall's arrest last summer. He was charged with sexually assaulting multiple patients at the campus center.

Tyndall pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Separate from the government's Title IX investigation, a number of Tyndall's former patients brought lawsuits.

This week, a court gave final approval to [USC's \\$215 million class-action settlement with Tyndall's former patients](#) who accused him of abuse or assault. Each former patient is entitled to at least \$2,500 and some will get much more. In total, the university could make payments to [more than 18,000 women](#) who say they saw Tyndall at some point during their time in college, according to The New York Times.



This May 22, 2018 file photo shows the University of Southern California's Engemann Student Health Center in Los Angeles. A former campus gynecologist at the University of Southern California was arrested Wednesday, June 26, 2019, in connection with the sexual assaults of 16 patients, police said. Dr. George Tyndall has been the subject of a Los Angeles police investigation for more than a year after The Los Angeles Times reported patients' claims of sexual abuse or harassment by the gynecologist. (Photo: Richard Vogel, AP)

Marcus said the government's investigation into USC and Tyndall involved interviewing 93 or 94 people — more people than the department interviewed when it investigated Michigan State University for a sexual abuse case involving its former university doctor, Larry Nassar.

Nassar, who continued his career as a coach for USA Gymnastics, was sentenced to federal prison in 2018 for sexually abusing hundreds of gymnasts.

The Department of Education [fined Michigan State \\$4.5 million](#) last fall and also demanded major internal changes because of the university's failure to respond appropriately to sexual assault complaints against Nassar.

USC knew Tyndall had photographed patients' genitals

The Office of Civil Rights started its investigation into Title IX compliance at USC in May 2018. It found numerous violations, the department said, including the following:

- The university didn't maintain a record-keeping system to identify and monitor incidents of possible sex discrimination by its employees.
- The university failed to investigate complaints against Tyndall from five patients between 2000 and 2009, and it had notice of possible mistreatment by four more patients that it also failed to investigate.

- The university discovered 200 photographs of patients' genitals in Tyndall's office in 2016, yet failed to investigate whether photographing the patients and keeping the pictures constituted sex discrimination. USC also failed to take steps to locate the remaining photographs Tyndall admitted to taking.
- In 2016, the university failed to investigate complaints that Tyndall conducted pelvic examinations without gloves, and also failed to investigate complaints regarding Tyndall penetrating patients with his fingers during full-body skin checks.

As part of the resolution agreement, USC must now ensure its Title IX coordinator and Title IX office have the independent authority to respond to sex discrimination cases. The university also must track and monitor complaints, contact the former patients who complained about Tyndall and also reach out to current and former employees who interacted with him.

Marcus would not specify exactly how many victims the department believed had been abused. Nine gave notice to the university and became part of the investigation, he said.

"This was ongoing from 1989 to approximately 2016, so there are a large number of potentially affected individuals," he said.