ATBU lecturer sued over alleged sexual harassment of postgraduate student

Date: 2024-11-19

Source: https://guardian.ng/news/atbu-lecturer-sued-over-alleged-sexual-harassment-of-postgraduate-student/

A lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, has been taken to court following accusations of sexual harassment made by a female postgraduate student.  
  
  
  
The student, who is married, alleged that the lecturer made unwelcome sexual advances, harassed her, and threatened her academic progress. Her husband, Alhaji Ja’afaru Buba, filed petitions against the lecturer through his lawyer, addressing the ATBU management, the department head, and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).  
  
Screenshots of WhatsApp messages shared with The Guardian allegedly show the lecturer inviting the student to his office, requesting a hug, and expressing affection. In one of the messages, he suggested meeting in a private location outside of working hours. The exchanges reportedly began earlier this year.  
  
According to the student’s husband, while the university has promised to investigate the allegations, the accused lecturer has taken legal action, filing a defamation suit at the Bauchi State High Court to clear his name.  
  
In the petition submitted by the student’s legal counsel, Mohammed Sani, it was stated: “Our client, a Master’s student in Chemical Engineering, was taught by the lecturer in courses such as CHE 635 (Polymer Processing) and CHE 656 (Fluidization). The lecturer allegedly exploited the student-lecturer relationship to harass our client sexually, repeatedly inviting her to his office and sending inappropriate messages, despite knowing she is married.”  
  
The petition further claimed that the lecturer threatened to fail the student in her examinations if she did not comply with his advances, warning her friends that she would not graduate.  
  
The counsel called on ATBU management to conduct a thorough investigation and take disciplinary action against the lecturer, Dr Usman Mohammed Aliyu, in line with university regulations to deter similar misconduct.  
  
When contacted, the university’s Public Relations Officer, Zailani Bappah, said he was unaware of the allegations but promised to confirm with the management. However, no response had been received after 24 hours. The accused lecturer said he would refrain from commenting further as the matter is now before the court.