


**From:** Discrimination Prevention Office dpo@conet.ucla.edu   
**Subject:** Confidential: To Be Opened by Addressee Only RE: Harout Gulesserian Workplace Accommodations  
**Date:** August 26, 2024 at 11:24 AM  
**To:** Harout Gulesserian hkg90@icloud.com

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Dear Harout Gulesserian,

I am writing on behalf of the Discrimination Prevention Office (“DPO”) in response to a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation at UCLA. The Discrimination Prevention Office investigates complaints against faculty members that are related to acts of perceived discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on race, ancestry, disability, national origin, religion, age, and other categories protected by law and University. You may use this link to complete our [complaint form](#). I have also attached word and pdf versions of the complaint form here for your convenience.

To file a complaint, please fill out the online complaint form, and it will be automatically submitted to our office.

When filling it out, please be as specific as possible by telling us why you feel you have experienced discrimination based on your race or some other protected category listed on the form. As a guide, it will help if you let us know **what** happened (there may be multiple incidents), **when** did the conduct take place (there may be multiple dates or conduct that occurred over a short or long period of time), **where** the incident(s) took place, **who** is the person or persons your complaint is against (typically, DPO investigates complaints against faculty), and if you are aware of any **witnesses** (or documents) in support of your complaint.

After we receive your complaint and have had an opportunity to review it, we will schedule an intake meeting with you to discuss the matter further. If we do not receive a response by **September 16, 2024**, we will close the matter. You can, however, re-file your complaint at another time, but we encourage you to file your complaint sooner than later so that it does not become stale.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at: 310-794-1232 or [dpo@equity.ucla.edu](mailto:dpo@equity.ucla.edu), or the DPO Case Manager Nicole Lewis at: 310-206-6719, or [nlewis@equity.ucla.edu](mailto:nlewis@equity.ucla.edu).

Kind regards,

**Discrimination Prevention Office**  
**Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**  
<https://equity.ucla.edu/civil-rights/>

*This message is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. It may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under law. If you are not the intended recipient, any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly unauthorized and prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please immediately notify the sender by replying to this e-mail message or by telephone. Thank you.*

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**From:** Harout Gulesserian <hkg90@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 26, 2024 8:11 AM  
**To:** Discrimination Prevention Office <dpo@conet.ucla.edu>  
**Cc:** Eli Hamblet <ehamblet@jafarilawgroup.com>; Saul Acherman <sacherman@jafarilawgroup.com>; Law Clerk 1 <lawclerk-1@jafarilawgroup.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Harout Gulesserian Workplace Accommodations

**Confidential: To Be Opened by Addressee Only**

Good morning,

My name is Harout Gulesserian and I'm currently facing whistleblower retaliation, among others, from multiple individuals within the department. My University ID:505876880. Please forward any correspondence to my lawyers who have been CC'd in this email.

Please review the forwarded emails below. After this initial complaint, I will be providing supporting evidence to address all the alleged allegations. This will include emails, Slack messages, text messages, and details of in-person encounters.

Kind regards,  
Harout Gulesserian

On Aug 23, 2024, at 11:25, Frohrip, Shelly <[sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu](mailto:sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu)> wrote:

Hi Harout,

Thank you for your email. I'm sorry to hear of your situation within your department. The Employee Disability Management Services office does not conduct investigations. I am referring you to the UCLA Discrimination Prevention Office: <https://adminvc.ucla.edu/equity/reporting/DPO>. This office is responsible for investigating reports of discrimination or harassment based on race, ancestry, national origin, disability, religion, age, and other categories protected by law and University policy brought against academic personnel. It is one of the units under the Civil Rights Office (CRO). To file a complaint, please complete the [DPO Complaint Form](#) via the electronic form.

I can meet with you in person at the Wilshire Center to continue discussion of your accommodation requests and next steps. I have received your return-to-work certification form indicating you can return to work as of 8/8/24 with the following restrictions: flexible work hours, stress free environment for 2 months. It is my

understanding you and your supervisor have agreed on a work schedule of 7:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. to accommodate you. With your request for a stress-free work environment, I would like to discuss this with you further to understand more and discuss possible accommodations that will help accommodate you in the workplace. Would Tuesday, 8/27 work for you to meet at Wilshire Center or if you would like to discuss this via Zoom I can provide additional availability.

Thank you,  
Shelly

Shelly Frohrip  
Employee Disability Management Services-Program Manager  
Email: [sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu](mailto:sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu)  
Phone: 424-259-5242  
10920 Wilshire Blvd., suite 620  
Los Angeles, CA 90024  
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**From:** Harout Gulesserian <[hkg90@icloud.com](mailto:hkg90@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 21, 2024 9:16 PM  
**To:** Frohrip, Shelly <[sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu](mailto:sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu)>  
**Cc:** Eli Hamblet <[ehamblet@jafarilawgroup.com](mailto:ehamblet@jafarilawgroup.com)>; Saul Acherman <[sacherman@jafarilawgroup.com](mailto:sacherman@jafarilawgroup.com)>; Law Clerk 1 <[lawclerk-1@jafarilawgroup.com](mailto:lawclerk-1@jafarilawgroup.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Harout Gulesserian Workplace Accommodations

Good evening,

Thank you for reaching out. I am sorry for my delayed response as things have been tough, and I'm not doing too well.

I am writing to seek your assistance with an ongoing situation in my department. I am currently facing retaliation for following policy, reporting policy violations, and addressing a hostile work environment related to my request for doctor-recommended reasonable accommodations. Despite informing Department HR of these issues, they have not responded to my concerns.

Upon returning from FMLA leave on August 6th, I was placed on administrative leave without prior notice. Additionally, I have experienced intimidation and hostility from the department, with more emphasis being placed on understanding my diagnosis rather than addressing my reasonable accommodations. My diagnosis has been shared and discussed within the department, which I believe is unnecessary and inappropriate when my concern is obtaining the

accommodations I need.

Here is a quick overview of some of the major events that have occurred to me without limitations:

- 9/11/23: I Made a novel discovery and created a protocol in the Novitch Lab at UCLA

### . 9/29/2023 Informed supervisor of my discovery

- 9/29 - present: Numerous attempts by lab members to make me waive my inventor/creator rights by misleading comments to share with others, attempts to steal my work, and threats some even in writing, also including misleading emails with respect to reporting potentially patentable IP to the university. This has created a hostile work environment for me and there seems to be at minimum attempts of misappropriation of university assets along with violations of various university policies.

1/12/2024 Harout Reported discovery to Vice Chancellor Amir Naiberg and UCLA CIPO at TDG in fear of misappropriation occurring in the lab.

~ 1/31/2024 I tended to about 3-4 visits with UCLA confidential counseling regarding the ongoing situation in the lab, and how my well being was declining due to the hostile work environment.

- Then on 2/6/24: I Received a message regarding the theft of IP I created in the Novitch lab from Ben's grad student. This message was delivered to me via the platform UCLA Slack.

- 2/23/24: Got yelled at by Ben for reporting a potentially patentable creation to UCLA TDG along with Ben cursing at me/grinding his teeth at me with fuming anger. During this meeting I also Reported the IP theft message to Ben, and asked for him to follow UCLA best practices/ policy with respect to IP protection and reporting to TDG as

required by policy.

- 2/23 - 4/24: Hostile work environment intensified with documented evidence.

4/19 Ben misleads Mark Lucas about my whereabouts even though I had reached out to Ben and told him I'm tending to healthcare related matters. Mark then claims that Ben mislead him while emailing Harout about his possible healthcare options.

- 4/24/24: Yelled at by Ben and Samantha Butler for reporting potential misappropriation concerns to the university. This event took place on the first floor of CHS around 4:15pm in front of public bystanders. "Why are you even here?" , "You will be fired", "you are a liar" Samantha told Harout opening her eyes wide causing Harout to have a panic attack (Samantha Butler is Bennett Novitch's wife who is also a PI in the same department as Ben but not Harout's supervisor.) Then Ben ended their hostility towards me with "go home". I reported this event to Department CAO Mark Lucas twice, and HR rep Helen once. No reports were made.

- 4/24/24: Harout informs Mark Lucas (Neurobiology Department CAO) about the need to be on FMLA after the incident with Ben and Samantha. Although Mark Lucas claimed to be the FMLA initiator Mark did not initiate Harout's request for FMLA leave for mental health. Furthermore, Mark Lucas provided Harout with a false email to HR to report the incident. Harout reported the hostile event that occurred on the first floor of CHS in public view to Mark twice (Mark is a departmental CAO in neurobiology). Mark disregards the reports and begins to retaliate against

## Harout.

- 4/30/24: I Harout had to file my own FMLA per the guidance of campus HR due to Mark providing incorrect information to Harout. Had campus HR not initiated FMLA I was likely going to be fired for not showing up to work because Mark had claimed my FMLA was unapproved and my absence was unexcused in writing multiple times, Mark was more concerned about my healthcare plans as he asked me what are my plans when I had told him clearly I needed to be on FMLA (all while Mark stated clearly he is the FMLA initiator yet did not initiate the FMLA).

- 5/7/24: Exactly 14 days after pleading to Mark Lucas to initiate FMLA on 4/24/24 for Harout, the Department of Neurobiology randomly opened a second FMLA ticket under my name and proceeded to use healthcare documentation uploading dates against me, alleging I hadn't uploaded healthcare documents. All while I had proof of uploading documents sent to various HR departments at the university including without limitations; LOA team, employee relations, campus HR etc. all with picture proof of every upload.

- 5/15/24: Mark Lucas made false statements about healthcare documentation not being uploaded. Then all of a sudden, my privilege of uploading healthcare documents was taken away. I made numerous complaints to HR rep Helen that I did not have access to upload documents anymore to which I had to start sending certified mail to ensure compliance with the university rules because Helen never addressed this issue.

6/2024 Then, Helen from Neurobiology HR starts to ask me Harout to prematurely fill out return to work documents 6 weeks in advance from FMLA even though the doctors recommendation was to return on 07/15/2024 to which was later extended to 08/06/2024. Furthermore Helen insisted that I fill out the designation document that was already filled out by Helen herself on numerous occasions.

- 8/6/24: I was supposed to return from FMLA, Mark Lucas extended my FMLA leave to August 13th. Then on 8/14/2024 the department HR told me randomly it's an administrative leave from 8/6-8/19 with no explanation as to why I'm being put on administrative leave.

- 8/19/24: I was to meet with Ben and HR rep Helen. HR rep Helen did not show up even though she had confirmed she would be present at the meeting. During this meeting Ben got angry again and told me to go Home, though he was a bit calmer afterwards. I returned to work but was restricted from working on what I invented/discovered in the lab.

I would greatly appreciate your advice on how to proceed. Additionally, I would like to request an in-person meeting with you to discuss these matters confidentially with all documentary evidence ready. My supervisor has insisted on attending any meetings with me, but I believe it is crucial to have this conversation privately with you and another HR supervisor from the Wilshire main office if possible, please. This meeting would be held without Bennett Novitch, without Mark Lucas without Samantha Butler and without Helen Nguyen so I can speak freely and be heard.

Thank you for your time and assistance. I look forward to your response.

Best regards  
Harout Gulesserian

On Aug 19, 2024, at 16:53, Frohrip, Shelly  
<[sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu](mailto:sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu)> wrote:

Hi Harout,

Thank you for your email. With your request for a stress-free work environment, I would like to discuss this with you further to understand more about the situations you have noted have occurred and discuss possible accommodations that will help accommodate you in the workplace. Would you have some time between 11:30-2:00 tomorrow for a call?

Thank you,  
Shelly

Shelly Frohrip  
Employee Disability Management Services-Program Manager  
Email: [sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu](mailto:sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu)  
Phone: 424-259-5242  
10020 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 620

10920 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 620  
Los Angeles, CA 90024  
<image001.png>

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**From:** Harout Gulesserian <[hkg90@icloud.com](mailto:hkg90@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 19, 2024 12:56 PM  
**To:** Frohrip, Shelly <[sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu](mailto:sfrohrip@irm.ucla.edu)>  
**Subject:** Harout Gulesserian Workplace Accommodations

Greetings to whom it may concern,

My name is Harout Gulesserian, UID 505876880 an SRA in Neurobiology Novitch lab. Please find below a response to a voicemail left on my phone.

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to formally request workplace accommodations that will support my ability to perform my job effectively and maintain my well-being. Based on recommendations from my healthcare provider, I believe the following accommodations are essential:

**1) Stress-Free Work Environment:** A stress-free work environment will enable me to focus more effectively on my tasks, maintain a high level of productivity, and contribute positively to the team. By minimizing stressors, such as avoiding situations where I am yelled at by my supervisor or any other UCLA employee, asked to break policy, or subjected to inappropriate comments or actions related to intellectual property (IP) theft, I will be able to manage my workload more efficiently, make clear and thoughtful decisions, and engage more fully in collaborative efforts. This adjustment will help me maintain consistent performance and ensure that I can continue to meet the expectations of my role without compromising my well-being.

1. **2) Flexible Working Hours:** My healthcare provider has also requested flexible working hours to help minimize interactions with individuals who have caused significant stress in the workplace to me. Adjusting my schedule to (7:00am-3:30pm) will likely minimize these interactions, which would allow me to focus on my assigned tasks effectively.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am confident that these accommodations will enable me to continue contributing effectively to the university. Please let me know the next steps in the process, and if any additional information is needed.



Kind regards,  
Harout Gulesserian



DPO Complaint  
Form 1...4.docx



DPO Complaint  
Form 1...24.pdf