

Pregnant Student Case Study

FACTS: The instructor kept mentioning the pregnant student's pregnancy each time she walked into class. She started saying things like, "Wow, you are huge, you are really huge, are you having that baby today?"

There was also an off-campus opportunity for students in the class to work with grade school children. This ran for several weeks throughout the semester and replaced one writing assignment that was due for the class. When the pregnant student asked if she could get the contact information to participate in the off-campus opportunity, the instructor told her, she should just be a Mom and stay home with her new baby when he/she arrives.

There was also a question on academic accommodations and whether the instructor should have changed her policy on missing a test date (students could not make-up a test but had to outline all the chapters for the test they missed by the end of the term). This policy was posted in the syllabus. The student had her baby near the end of the term and she understood from the instructor that she could take a make-up test. A week before the final exam she was told that she could not take the test she missed and that had to turn in the chapter outlines by the end of the term.

She also missed other assignments during the 3 weeks she missed class. With a new born and her other class responsibilities (including exams) the student was not able write the outlines and do all of the make-up work by the end of the term. She received a D for the class.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Were the comments made to the student about being huge sexual harassment?
2. Was the failure to give the pregnant student the contact information for the off-campus activity considered discriminatory without the comment about staying home and "be a Mom"? Does the comment make it discriminatory?
3. Should the instructor have changed her policy on making-up exams, even though posted in the syllabus, for the pregnant student?
4. How does an instructor know what accommodations to provide to a pregnant student?