FACT: There are over 265 federal regulations surrounding higher education, many of which change every year.

Higher education regulations span 36 different functional areas, including civil rights, privacy and information security, international, campus safety, environmental, and financial categories. Now, higher education institutions must also navigate compliance training for the Campus SaVE Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and Title’s IX’s sexual harassment and misconduct rules.

Overwhelmed? You’re not alone.

Tracking, reporting, and delivering information on higher education compliance is a complex, labor- and time-intensive process, often requiring the use of multiple, discrete systems across several different campuses. It’s also expensive: a study by Vanderbilt University concluded that the total annual cost of compliance in higher education is up to $27 billion, or up to 8% of total campus operating costs.

It’s no wonder some institutions simply hope they can meet requirements without investing in an expensive and time-consuming verification process.
But when it comes to keeping your institution in compliance, hope is never a viable strategy.

Noncompliance can result in hundreds of thousands of dollars, and in the most extreme cases millions, in fines and leave institutions susceptible to criminal prosecution, private lawsuits, and reputational damage.¹ For these institutions, not meeting federal regulations resulted in significant losses and reputational damage:

• One private school was fined $210,000 partially for neglecting to report crime on campus, putting them in violation of the Clery Act.²

• The President of a large public research university was sentenced to 40 years in prison for the mishandling of sexual abuse complaints.³

How Can Your Institution Begin Building a Culture of Compliance?

Institutions have an ethical responsibility to identify, report, and correct non-compliance issues, be it fraud, campus crime, or data errors. According to Paul Mayer, principal consultant at The Bonadio Group, compliance within higher education institutions needs to become “part of the fabric of routine operations,” with the culture of compliance “recognizable internally and externally throughout the institution.”⁴

Vanguard universities recognize that creating a true culture of compliance requires more than hope or good intentions. To that end, these institutions are relying on powerful learning management technology to not only track and report on compliance but to deliver the right compliance training to the right employee at the right time.

For any higher education institution, large or small, private or public, a learning management platform can

• reduce time and labor costs of compliance training, tracking, delivery, and reporting. Too often, institutions rely on disparate learning systems and vendors to manage compliance. This is not only expensive and time consuming—it also increases the likelihood of compliance failures. In contrast, a learning platform enables organizations to efficiently deliver, track, and report on all types of training. Instead of wasting time aggregating data from multiple systems, institutions can manage and report on regulatory training from a single source.

• increase visibility via a strong and transparent reporting framework. Just because compliance officers haven’t identified issues doesn’t mean that an institution is in line with regulations. After all, you can’t fix what you can’t see. A learning platform that provides ongoing transparency and powerful reporting capabilities—one that records visible completions, non-completions, and responsibilities in real time—is crucial to identifying small compliance errors before they balloon into big legal problems.
• **facilitate compliance collaboration across teams, departments, and campuses.**
A learning platform makes it easy for *all* employees to access key resources and share compliance best practices. Sharing responsibilities spurs progress, cuts response time, and provides crucial checks and balances along the way. “Compliance has to be about collaborations,” says attorney Claire Hall, owner of a prominent higher education consulting firm. “Once you know what the obligations are, achieving them is not as difficult.”

• **enable centralized oversight with decentralized implementation.** Keeping track of individual compliance requirements can be daunting for decentralized organizations. A unified learning platform can help by enabling the establishment of common standards, increasing visibility across every campus and department, and providing administrators with a fully transparent view of all compliance information in real time.

**Start with the Right Learning Technology**
Implementing a unified learning platform helps institutions fulfill the ethical duty to meet changing regulations—and avoid lawsuits, fines, potential shutdowns, and unwanted media attention related to non-compliance. Cornerstone’s Learning Suite, used by over 100 of the nation’s largest higher education institutions and reaching over half a million users, reduces the time and effort required to manage compliance, while simultaneously unifying learning, increasing visibility, and streamlining reporting to regulatory bodies and stakeholders.

To learn about how Cornerstone can help your institution, visit us at [csod.com/higher-education](http://csod.com/higher-education)

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