

# Yale Professor Promoted After Being Accused of Sexual Harassment: Lawsuit

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Yale University promoted an anesthesiology doctor and professor to lead diversity and inclusion efforts despite having receiving complaints that he'd harassed his female subordinates, according to a new federal lawsuit. In the lawsuit filed Thursday, six female doctors claimed that Dr. Manuel Lopes Fontes—division chief of cardiac anesthesiology at Yale New Haven Hospital and director of clinical research for Yale School of Medicine's anesthesiology department—forcibly kissed them, massaged their neck and shoulders at work, and made inappropriate comments. Fontes' behavior allegedly started right after he came to Yale in 2015 and continued through 2019. One anesthesiology fellow claimed Fontes berated her for resisting his advances, while an assistant professor alleged she was professionally retaliated against for complaining about him. Dr. Roberta Hines—chair of Yale's anesthesiology department—allegedly received complaints about Fontes' behavior and suggestive comments in 2018 and 2019, but shrugged them off as him "just being a boy." Shortly after, Hines announced that Fontes would be promoted to spearhead the anesthesiology department's diversity efforts. The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages for violating the gender equity law Title IX, along with damages from Fontes over assault, battery and invasion of privacy claims.

The university claimed it handled all the allegations appropriately. According to the lawsuit, Yale knew about sexual harassment allegations against Fontes from his previous employer, Duke University. Duke has not commented publicly on the matter. An attorney for Fontes said the lawsuit was a "vindictive backroom campaign of scandalous and vicious falsehood, rumor, and innuendo." "This will be remedied now that his accusers have decided to come out into the open," lawyer Robert Mitchell said in a statement. "Dr. Fontes will respond and the truth will shame them as well as those who have prejudged him without affording him even a hint of due process." Fontes reportedly no longer holds leadership roles at Yale, and is only listed as a professor of anesthesiology.