

Faculty Welfare and Professional Responsibilities Committee

Title IX Subcommittee

Faculty Focus Group: Concerns

Western Kentucky University

Report to the FWPR Committee

Date: September 13, 2015

From: Dr. Gayle Mallinger, Title IX Subcommittee Member

Title IX applies to all colleges and universities receiving federal financial aid. Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex and sexual harassment; this includes acts of sexual violence. Title IX applies whether the incident took place on or off campus. University obligations include taking immediate action to eliminate the harassment, preventing recurrence, addressing its effects, and preventing retaliatory actions. In addition, there are standards for timely and equitable investigations. The accomplishment of the aforementioned requires wide publication of the policy among faculty, staff, and students.

The Title IX Subcommittee held a series of focus groups Spring Semester 2015; two groups involved students and two groups consisted of faculty. This report details the responses of these group members' understanding of Title IX. In mid-April, students across disciplines and faculty across colleges participated in four separate focus groups (2 groups of students and 2 groups of faculty). The following themes emerged from the responses: Lack of clarity with regard to faculty responsibilities and concerns regarding student confidentiality. Examples of responses follow:

Lack of Clarity:

“I have no idea what this is” (Student)

“Something to do with sports?” (Student)

“Sexual discrimination?” (Student)

“Does it affect why we don't have a male soccer team?” (Student)

“If you went to people on campus they wouldn't know about title 9.” (Student)

“If I was a student considering filing, I'd certainly want to know what I was getting myself into. Who could have access to the information, and when.” (Faculty)

“I think it needs to be clearer about where or who we need to contact.” (Faculty)

Confidentiality:

“Obligation part was blurry. Dr. Stephanie Gilmore (GUEST SPEAKER FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSITY) showed the facts. Title 9 requires for faculty to expose students. However they don’t want too.” (Student)

“The investigation of the EEO’s would refer to the correct department. It’s out of our hands essentially.” (Student)

“Even if a student or parent does not want to file a complaint or request that the school take any action, still has to move forward.” (Faculty)

“If I was a student considering filing, I’d certainly want to know what I was getting myself into. Who could have access to the information, and when.” (Faculty)