Training for Campus Leadership: A Bottom-Line Take on the New Title IX Rules

Fall 2020
Disclaimer

This training video provides general legal advice about certain topics related to the U.S. Department of Education’s regulation and enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and specifically with respect to the Title IX regulatory changes released on May 6, 2020 and effective on August 14, 2020. This is a quickly-evolving area, and substantial changes to applicable law, rules, regulations, and enforcement policies in the near term seem likely. We assume no responsibility to update this training video notwithstanding changes in the law. Please note that this presentation does not address state or local laws, rules, or regulations which may be material in evaluating the subject matter of this training video. Finally, this presentation offers general guidance about its topic and does not offer specific legal advice about any particular circumstance, investigation, hearing, or matter.
Agenda

I. Background and Context

II. Overview of Changes

III. Five Key Decisions

IV. When to Call the Calvary
No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.
Title IX’s Purpose

- Prohibitions or Limitations on Participation Based on Sex
- Unequal Funding of Men’s and Women’s Athletics
- Pregnancy Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment
  - Sexual Assault
  - Stalking
  - Domestic/Dating Violence
  - Verbal/expressive
The 2011 and 2014 Guidance

Focused attention and resources on the problem of sexual harassment

Raised concerns that Respondents were being treated unfairly

It did not change the law.

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The Final Rule is More than Guidance

- The Title IX process is now legally mandated.
- A Final Rule is not easily made or unmade.

Final Rule released: May 6, 2020

Compliance deadline: August 14, 2020
Your Title IX Team Needs Your Support

- Time
- Back up
- Resources
- Moral support
- Messaging
More is staying the same than is changing.

Important side note: You retain control over whether to change or maintain significant elements of your current Title IX program.
Overarching Goals of Final Rule

1. Narrow the scope of incidents that fall within the law

2. Recalibrate the procedural balance between complainants and respondents
Study abroad programs
Off-campus harassment
Off-campus sexual assault
Severe harassment that is not pervasive
Pervasive harassment that is not severe
FIVE KEY QUESTIONS
OR
HEAVY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS THE CROWN

1  2  3  4  5
1 STANDARD OF SUCCESS

Prior Guidance

School must stop harassment, prevent its reoccurrence, and remedy its effects

New Rule

School must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent

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Should you continue to strive to stop, prevent, and remedy sexual harassment?

**YES**

- Maintains consistency
- Community expectations
- More protective of your students, faculty, and staff

**NO**

- Risk of overzealous enforcement
- Lack of resources
- Outside your mission
Prior Guidance

School was responsible for actual and constructive knowledge of most employees

New Rule

School is responsible for actual knowledge of small number of senior administrators
Should you continue to mandate that all employees report sexual harassment?

**YES**
- Maintains consistency
- May be required under other laws
- Helps to root out bad conduct

**NO**
- Limits confidential conversations
- You may be held to the higher standard that you set
- Requires continued training
Prior Guidance
Allowed, but not emphasized, and could not be utilized for sexual assault cases.

New Rule
Viewed favorably and may be used for all cases except employee-on-student incidents.
Should you prioritize standing up an informal resolution process?

**YES**
- Gaining in popularity
- Diversity of approaches for diversity of cases
- Alternative to burdensome formal process

**NO**
- Risk of power imbalance/pressure
- Very little guidance available
- No bandwidth to do it
Prior Guidance

Must use “preponderance of the evidence” standard

New Rule

May use “preponderance” or “clear and convincing”
Should you keep “preponderance” as evidentiary standard?

**YES**

- Maintains consistency
- Treats both parties equally

**NO**

- Less protective of the accused
- Less certainty when making finding of responsible

**UH-OH**

- Same standard must be used in all Title IX sexual harassment (TIXSH) cases.
“OTHER” SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Prior Guidance

• Regardless of location, conduct that had an impact on education

• All unwelcome conduct

New Rule

• Only conduct that occurs within education program or activity

• Only conduct that meets narrowed definition
POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO OTHER CASES

Option A
Maximize use of new TIX procedures
• Keep all sexual harassment (TIXSH and OSH) in the Title IX Office and handle them under the Final Rule’s Title IX procedures.

Option B
Push to HR & Student Conduct
• Send all OSH cases out of the Title IX office. Limit the Title IX office to handling TIXSH cases under the Final Rule’s Title IX procedures.

Option C
Use existing Title IX procedures
• Keep all sexual harassment (TIXSH and OSH) in the Title IX Office. Handle TIXSH cases under the new Final Rule and OSH cases under existing Title IX procedures.

Option D
Disregard cases to degree possible
• If no law requires investigation or resolution, then conduct is allowable
CREATING A NEW POLICY

• Changes are extensive, detailed, and nuanced

• Too cumbersome to create via revision

• Foundation must be put in place quickly
INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION OF TIXSH

- Parties entitled to attorneys throughout process
- Relevancy determinations must be made in real time
- Investigative reports and rulings are complex legal documents
EMPLOYEE AS RESPONDENT MATTERS

- Rule creates thorny problems
- Conflict between Title IX and Title VII
- Protections for tenured faculty applied to all parties
Your Parker Poe Title IX Team

For Title IX assistance, contact Team Lead Josh Whitlock at joshwhitlock@parkerpoe.com or 704-335-6622