

President's Sexual Assault Task Force-Linfield College
Spring, 2020

President Davis appointed a task force to review, analyze and make recommendations about the policies, processes and education related to Title IX regulations at Linfield College.

Membership of task force:

Susan Hopp, Vice President of Student Affairs, Title IX Coordinator

Patty Haddeland, Director of Health, Wellness and Counseling

Michael Backus, Evening Supervisor, McMinnville campus library

Allison Xavier, Executive Assistant to the President

Dennis Marks, Director of Campus Public Safety

AnnaMarie Motis, student (on leave, returning in Fall 2020)

Leonard Finkleman, Associate Professor of Philosophy

Yanna Weisberg, Associate Professor of Psychology

Background:

The complicated mix of Title IX regulations, student conduct processes and expressed concern among students, faculty and staff about understanding these issues prompted a review of the way Linfield College educates, trains and adjudicates these matters.

Prior to 2011, Linfield had a robust set of student conduct policies that covered all Title IX areas; the focus was on sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual assault. The college also had established peer education models that were innovative at the time. Title IX for athletics was handled with appropriate, but separate, investigations. Following the "Dear Colleague" letter of 2011, Linfield revised all policies and procedures to comply with the new recommendations. A Title IX Coordinator was appointed, with deputies representing constituent areas and further areas of conduct (domestic violence and stalking) were included. This model is common among small colleges as resources are limited, thus these responsibilities are distributed among -offices with expertise.

Title IX Team

Susan Hopp, Vice President of Student Affairs, Title IX Coordinator

Mary Ann Rodriguez, Vice President of Administration/CFO, deputy for staff

Jeff Mackay, Dean of Students, deputy for students

Jane Samuels, Assistant Director of Athletics and Senior Women's Administrator, deputy for athletics

Brenda Devore Marshall, Professor of Communication, deputy for faculty

Investigators

Lynn Johnson, Director of Human Resources

Adrian Hammond, Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities

Outside investigators are used when necessary

Advisors

5-10 volunteers, primarily staff, who participate in training and stand available for support for complainants and responders

Work of Task Force

The task force met five times and all members were provided resources before beginning to understand the intersection of legal requirements, due process, student conduct policies and education. Due to the closure of the campus, all meetings were held electronically. Materials were posted to Sharepoint:

<https://linfield.sharepoint.com/sites>Title%20IX%20Task%20Force/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Meeting 1: Scope of task, overview of Title IX, private vs public

Meeting 2: Student Conduct Policies, flow charts, communication

Meeting 3: Educational programs and resources, communication

Meeting 4: Brainstorming about education, resources

Meeting 5: Recommendations, ideas, communication strategies

The challenges of educating students on Title IX, their rights, responsibilities and options when needed, were understood by the members. Understanding the difference between the requirements of a public educational institution versus a private one is important because while all must follow Title IX law, there are some legal and procedural differences.

During the first two meetings, and after reviewing Linfield College's policies, procedures, confidentiality requirements, FERPA and HIPPA rules, the task force concluded the following:

- Linfield College is in compliance with all federal and state law
- The student conduct process, and its policies with respect to all aspects of Title IX, VAWA and Oregon law is in compliance and follows best practices for private institutions.
- The professional associations such as ATIXA (Association of Title IX Administrators), NASPA (National Association of Higher Education Professional Administrators), ASJA (Association of Judicial Administrators) and their respective state and regional associations provide regular trainings and guidance which Linfield utilizes annually.
- Oregon has an active Sexual Assault Prevention Task Force. Linfield uses their resources, participates in committees (for small campuses) and participates in trainings.
- Our system works when used by students, but the weakness (as in all campuses) is in the reluctance of survivors to come forward, report and decide the processes which are complex to understand when in a state of trauma, crisis or stress.
- Confidentiality is hard to understand and very difficult for survivors to manage when a campus is a close community and students know one another.
- The differences between the educational student conduct processes and the criminal justice system are significant, but can both work for students, once understood.
- Linfield College has a robust menu of education and training experiences for students; students receive information that is not retained and then it is hard for them to locate initial resources when needed.
- Our information is text-dense, complicated and, though correct, hard to digest.
- Include information on the McMinnville Police Department's "You've Got Options" program: <https://reportingoptions.org/explore-your-options/#component-3>

The task force spent the last three meetings discussing ideas about programs, training, support and resources that will effectively address the above. Much of the discussion was about effective communication, reaching students where they are, using more peer education and developing a physical resource center. The recommendations include:

Staff and Faculty training:

- More extensive training about Title IX and Linfield's policies; the annual training is brief. With the impending changes, more extensive training will occur.
- Need additional faculty to volunteer as advisors and complete required training.

- Discuss in appropriate employee groups, and come to agreement, about the best way to mandate training.
- Budget for outside experts to conduct training
- Examine reporting processes and determine if another step that clarifies the options available for students is needed; use our trained advisors that must complete the 40 hour a week state training.

Educational programs primarily for students:

Much of the discussion was focused on finding better methods of informing and educating our students and community. These options included getting messaging into platforms more easily or commonly accessed by students; having the presentations done by student peers (theater program, CATS team, and others); developing a better webpage so that the information isn't just "block text" and difficult to understand; ensuring that students are aware of the potential for confidential counselors and health providers in the Student Health and Wellness Office and the Chaplains for the college, and continuing or increasing training and teaching opportunities to ensure it reaches all students and on a regular basis.

- Platforms (student access)
 - Video
 - Social Media
 - Communication Points
 - Apps, Kiosk and other connection points
- Presentations
 - Theater program
 - CARES team
 - CATS team
 - Student Advocates
 - Training Period (Annual, During Classes, Scheduled)
 - Virtual Support Services Tour
 - Passport (could be supplemental to Training Period and Virtual Tour)
- App for phones
 - Could serve as basis for the Assault awareness portion of the Kiosk.
 - Incorporate website materials
 - Incorporate chat and other communication avenues
 - Maybe able to buy access to an established platform and customize to Linfield's needs
- Webpage
 - Side bar for two click compliance
 - More interactive design, possible flowchart informational model
 - Videos
 - Introducing key role individuals
 - Explaining process and options

- Explaining specific process details, such as differences between a university investigation and police investigation.

Develop a student advocacy program

- Train qualified student peers to assist survivors
- Explain the reporting system and the investigation processes
- Expand current Bystander Intervention training
- Maintain CATS requirement and “booster” CATS training
- Have students involved in communications development

Develop a Resource/Advocacy Center

- Develop a physical resource center for students -kiosk, etc.
- Establish Hot line
- Identify an office or clearly identify with signage an office designation
- Work with ASLC to use Student Information Center if no other plans have been made for this space

New Title IX Regulations

The Task Force is aware that new Title IX regulations were being finalized by the Department of Education, but as of the last meeting, the regulations had not been released. They are now published and the task force is willing to meet in order to understand the implications of the new laws. There may be a conflict with Oregon law and we will seek legal counsel to make sure these conflicts are navigated. Linfield must have revised policies and procedures in place by August 14, 2020.