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Training for Lincoln Land Community College Title IX Personnel

September 24 and October 9, 2020

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Training for Lincoln Land Community College Title IX Personnel

Presented By: Susan E. Nicholas and Kevin P. Noll
September 24 and October 9, 2020

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Background on New Title IX Regulations



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Background

- September 22, 2017: U.S. Department of Education released a Dear Colleague Letter formally withdrawing two key Obama-era guidance documents:
 - 2011 Dear Colleague Letter on Sexual Violence
 - 2014 Q&A on Title IX and Sexual Violence

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Status

- Proposed Title IX Regulations released in November 2018
 - 60-day public comment period yielded over 120,000 comments
- Proposed Final Rules released on May 6, 2020 and published in Federal Register on May 19, 2020
- Effective date: August 14, 2020 

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Impact on Higher Education Institutions

- The new Regulations require:
 - Revisions to institutional policies and procedures
 - Staffing determinations
 - Training for all personnel involved in an institution's investigation and grievance process, including:
 - Title IX Coordinator
 - Investigators
 - Hearing Officer Panel
 - Appeal Officer
 - Informal Resolution Facilitators
 - Publishing of information and training materials on the institution's website

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Overview of Relevant Laws



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Relevant Laws

- The relevant requirements of the below laws have been incorporated into the College's proposed Sex-Based Misconduct Policy and Procedures:
 - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX")
 - Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII")
 - Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act ("PSVHEA")
 - Illinois Human Rights Act ("IHRA")
 - Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act ("Clery Act")
 - Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA")

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Relevant Laws

- **Title IX:** Prohibits sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment, in educational programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.
- **Title VII:** Prohibits discrimination, including discrimination based on sex, in employment.

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Relevant Laws

- **Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act:** Requires Illinois higher education institutions to adopt comprehensive policies concerning sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking.
- **Illinois Human Rights Act:**
 - Prohibits discrimination in Illinois, including in employment.
 - Also prohibits sexual harassment in elementary, secondary and higher education.



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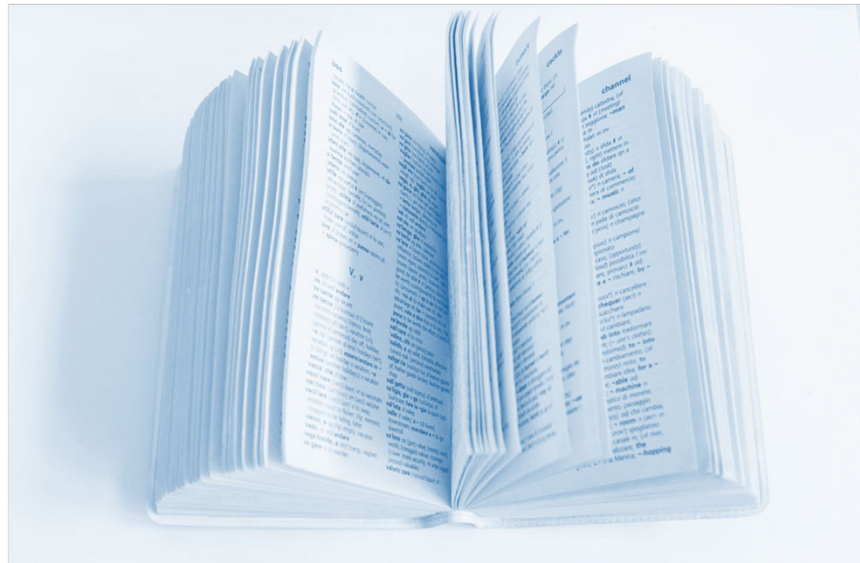
Relevant Laws

- **Clery Act:** Requires institutions to maintain and disclose crime statistics and security information.
- **Violence Against Women Act:** Expands the rights afforded to campus survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

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Key Definitions



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Title IX Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes:

1. Quid pro quo harassment by a college employee
2. Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access
3. Any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking (as defined in Clery Act/VAWA)

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Title IX Sexual Harassment: Quid Pro Quo

- When an employee of the college conditions aid, benefits, pay, a position or other opportunities for advancement on an individual's submission to unwelcome sexual conduct.

- Example: Professor Jones promises his student, Jane, that he will give her an A on her midterm if she engages in sexual conduct in his office after class.

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Title IX Sexual Harassment: "Hostile Environment"

- Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access

- Severe and pervasive and offensive
- Denial of equal educational access

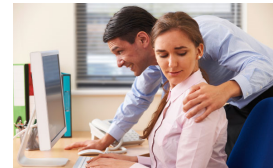
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Title IX Sexual Harassment:
"Hostile Environment"

- Compare with Title VII definition for workplace hostile environment claims:

- Unwelcome sexual advances and other conduct of a sexual nature having the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.



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Title IX Sexual Harassment:
"Hostile Environment"

- Compare with IHRA definition:

- Any conduct of a sexual nature exhibited by an education representative toward a student, when such conduct has the purpose of substantially interfering with the student's educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

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Title IX Sexual Harassment: Other Categories

• Title IX's definition of sexual harassment also includes:

- Sexual Assault
- Dating Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking

As defined under Clery Act/VAWA

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Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, & Stalking

Sexual Assault:

- An offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape as used in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program.

Dating Violence

- Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim.

Stalking

- Engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to –
 - Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or
 - Suffer substantial emotional distress.

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Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence

A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed:

- By a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim;
- By a person with whom the victim shares a child in common;
- By a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;
- By a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred; or
- By any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected.

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Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act: Sexual Violence

• Physical sexual acts attempted or perpetrated against a person's will or when a person is incapable of giving consent, including without limitation:

- Rape;
- Sexual assault;
- Sexual battery;
- Sexual abuse; and
- Sexual coercion.

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Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act: Sexual Violence and Consent

- The PSVHEA requires that institutions adopt a policy which includes a definition of consent consistent with the Act, 110 ILCS 155/10.
- **Consent:**
 - Must be freely given
 - May not be inferred from lack of verbal or physical resistance, from submission resulting from the use of threat or force, from a person's manner of dress, from a person's consent to past sexual activity, or from a person's consent to engage in sexual activity with another person
 - May be withdrawn at any time
 - Cannot be given by a person who is unable to understand the nature of the activity or give knowing consent due to circumstances (i.e. incapacitation due to alcohol or drugs, age, incapacitation due to mental disability)

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Key Definitions: Hypothetical

- You receive a report of a student being sexually assaulted by another student on campus.
- Do you need to evaluate the severity, pervasiveness, and offensiveness of the sexual assault?



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Key
Definitions:
Hypothetical

- You have been assigned to investigate a formal complaint alleging that a student was sexually harassed by his sociology instructor.
- What types of evidence/information would be relevant to determining whether the alleged harassment was severe, pervasive and objectively offensive?

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Jurisdiction



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Jurisdiction Under Title IX

- Institutions must respond when sexual harassment occurs **“in the institution’s education program or activity, against a person in the United States.”**

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Title IX Jurisdiction: Scope of College’s Education Program or Activity

- Includes:
 - Locations, events, or circumstances over which the institution exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurred; and
 - Any building owned or controlled by a student organization that is officially recognized by a postsecondary institution.

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**Title IX
Jurisdiction:
Scope of
College's
Education
Program or
Activity**

- Lincoln Land Community College examples for discussion:
 - Fitness Center?
 - Local hospital where students are participating in clinical rotations?
 - Faculty member's home?
 - Social media?



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**Jurisdiction:
"... in the
United States"**

- To fall under Title IX, the alleged misconduct must have occurred in the United States.
- If not, look to other applicable laws (e.g., PSVHEA)
- Example: sexual assault that occurs during study abroad program?

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Jurisdiction: Hypothetical

- Compare:
 - A student athlete allegedly sexually assaults another student athlete while off-campus at a sporting event with their team and coach
 - A student athlete allegedly sexually assaults another student athlete while at a friend's off-campus apartment
- Which type of alleged misconduct falls under Title IX?
- What are the College's response obligations with regard to each type of alleged misconduct?

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Sex-Based Misconduct Policy



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Policy 1.7

- Prohibits sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment and discrimination.

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Policy 1.7

- Applies to:
 - Students
 - Employees & independent contractors
 - Volunteers
 - Visitors
 - Board members

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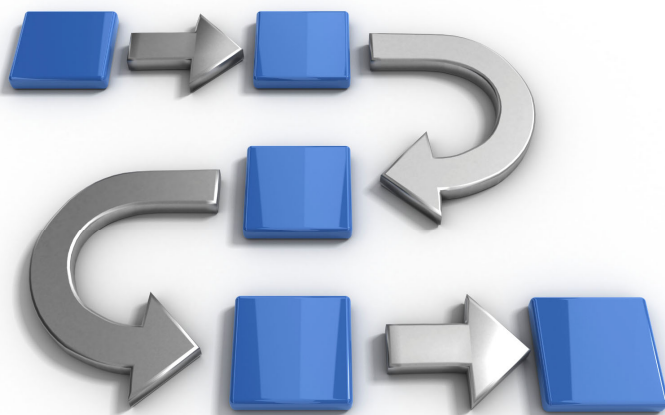
Policy 1.7

- Prohibits retaliation against any person reporting alleged discrimination or harassment or participating in an investigation.
- References that the College has adopted procedures to address concerns and complaints about harassment and discrimination.

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Procedure 1.7



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Purpose of Procedure 1.7

- Implement the College's Policy 1.7.
- Ensure a safe and healthy educational and employment environment.
- Meet relevant legal requirements.

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Jurisdiction

- Any complaint of conduct that would constitute a violation of Policy 1.7.
 - On College property; or
 - Participating in College-sponsored activities off campus.
- Broader than Title IX jurisdiction

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Role of Title IX Coordinator

- Coordinate College's compliance with Title IX and related laws.
- Oversee College's response to all reports of alleged sex-based misconduct.
- Analyze reports to determine appropriate method for processing and reviewing.
- Coordinate the provision of supportive measures and implementation of remedies.
- Ensure adherence to policies/procedures.
- Ensure appropriate training is provided to students, faculty and staff.

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Options for Assistance Following Incident of Sex-Based Misconduct

- Healthcare
- On and off campus resources
- Illinois Department of Human Rights sexual harassment and discrimination helpline

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Reporting Alleged Sex- Based Misconduct



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Reporting Generally

- Who can report?
 - Anyone – including students, employees and community members
 - Need not be the person who is alleged to be the victim of the misconduct
- To whom should reports be made?
 - Title IX Coordinator
 - Office of Student Services
 - Office of Human Resources
 - Online reporting

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Student Reporting

- Students should make reports to:
 - Title IX Coordinator
 - Office of Student Services
 - Online reporting option

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Student Reporting

- Confidential Reporting
 - Confidential Advisors are not required to report any information about an alleged incident to the Title IX Coordinator without the student's permission.

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Student Reporting

- Anonymous and/or Electronic Reporting
 - Students may report anonymously online.
 - Before the student enters information, the system will notify the student that entering personally identifiable information may serve as notice to the College for purposes of triggering an investigation.

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Employee Reporting

- Employees should report to:
 - Title IX Coordinator
 - Office of Human Resources

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Questions?



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College
Response to
Reports under
Policy 1.7



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“Deliberate Indifference Standard” Under Title IX

- College must respond to allegations of Title IX sexual harassment:
 - Promptly
 - In a manner that is not “clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances”

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College Response: Definitions

Complainant:

- Individual who is alleged to be the victim of alleged sex-based misconduct

Respondent:

- Individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of alleged sex-based misconduct

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Overview of College Response Process

1. The Resolution Coordinator must analyze report to determine the appropriate method for processing.
2. Meet/confer with the complainant.
3. Discuss and offer supportive measures.
4. Explain the process for filing a formal complaint.

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College Response Process

Step 1: Analyze the Report

- Does Policy 1.7 apply?
 - Conduct within the College's education program or activity?
 - Conduct constitute sexual harassment under Policy 1.7?

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Step 2: Contact the complainant

- “Complainant” is defined as the individual who is alleged to be the victim of alleged sexual harassment.
- Resolution Coordinator must meet/confer with the complainant to gain a basic understanding of the circumstances and nature of the report.

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Step 3: Discuss and offer supportive measures

- Individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party
- Designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, or deter sexual harassment

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College Response Process

Step 4: Discuss next steps

- The Resolution Coordinator must explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

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Grievance Process for Formal Complaints



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Grievance Process for Formal Complaints

Formal complaint:

- Document filed by a complainant or signed by Resolution Coordinator alleging a violation of Policy 1.7.
- At the time of filing a formal complaint, the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the College's education programs or activities, (either as a student or an employee).

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Formal Complaint Hypothetical

A student graduates in June. In mid-July, the former student contacts the Resolution Coordinator to report that she was sexually harassed by another student the previous February. The former student indicates that she would like to file a formal complaint.

- Can the former student file a formal complaint?
 - If not, what options does the College have?
- What if the student is working as a research assistant for the summer?

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Grievance Process: Notice of Allegations

- Must be sent **simultaneously** to both parties after the Resolution Coordinator's receipt of formal complaint.
- Informs the parties of:
 - The grievance process, including informal resolution options
 - The allegations
 - The presumption of non-responsibility on the part of the respondent
 - The parties' right to an advisor
 - The parties' right to inspect and review evidence
 - The Code of Conduct provisions prohibiting knowingly furnishing false information during the grievance process.

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Grievance Process: Emergency Removals and Administrative Leave

- Prior to initiating or completing the grievance process in response to a formal complaint, the College may remove a respondent from its education program or activity on an emergency basis.
 - Only permitted where the College has determined, based on an individualized safety and risk analysis, that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of an individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal.
- College must provide the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

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Grievance Process: Emergency Removals and Administrative Leave

- The College may place an employee on administrative leave during the pendency of the grievance process in response to a formal complaint.

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Informal Resolution



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Informal Resolution

- Fully discretionary: Requires **both** complainant and respondent's voluntary, written consent
- May occur at any time after the parties receive the initial notice of allegations and prior to a determination regarding responsibility being reached.
- May not be required as condition of:
 - Enrollment/continuing enrollment,
 - Employment or continuing employment,
 - Enjoyment of any right, or
 - Waiver of the right to a formal investigation/adjudication

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Informal Resolution

- Party may withdraw at any time prior to a resolution
 - Withdrawal triggers resumption of grievance process.
- May include:
 - Mediation
 - Restorative justice
- Not permitted in allegations of employee sexual misconduct toward a student

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Consolidation and Dismissal of Formal Complaints



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Consolidation of Formal Complaints

- Resolution Coordinator may consolidate formal complaints where the allegations of sex-based misconduct arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

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Dismissal of Formal Complaints

Mandatory dismissal:

- Resolution Coordinator or designated investigator determines that conduct alleged in the formal complaint does not meet
 - (a) Title IX's definition of sexual harassment and/or
 - (b) Title IX's jurisdictional requirements.
- *Dismissal does not preclude action altogether – just for purposes of Title IX.*

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Dismissal of Formal Complaints

Discretionary dismissal if:

- Complainant gives written notification of desire to withdraw formal complaint or certain allegations;
- Respondent is no longer enrolled in or employed by the College; or
- Specific circumstances prevent the College from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination.
- A party may appeal a decision to dismiss a formal complaint or allegations therein.

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Investigation of Formal Complaints



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Investigations: **Written Notice**

- Written notice required to both parties:
 - Allegations (upon receipt of a formal complaint)
 - Investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings
 - Mandatory or discretionary dismissal

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Investigators

- After the filing of the formal complaint, the Resolution Coordinator will assign two objective and appropriately trained investigators.

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Respondent's Statement

- Policy 1.7 requires the respondent to submit, within 5 business days of the filing of the formal complaint, a statement to the Resolution Coordinator in response to the allegations.

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Investigations: Evidence

- Equal opportunity for parties to provide:
 - Fact witnesses
 - Expert witnesses
 - Inculpatory evidence
 - Exculpatory evidence
- No gag orders

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Investigations: Advisors

- Both parties may select an advisor of their choosing
 - May, but need not be, an attorney
- Advisor's role is to provide support, guidance, advice
- May not speak on behalf of the party



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Investigation:
**Access to
Evidence**

- Both parties must have equal access to inspect and review all evidence that is directly related to the complaint allegations.
 - Be mindful of FERPA and student privacy considerations.
 - Consider whether redactions are necessary
 - Notify parties of parameters/limitations on re-disclosure of records and evidence.

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Investigation:
**Access to
Evidence**

- At the conclusion of the investigation and prior to the completion of the investigators' report, the investigators must send both parties a copy of all relevant evidence.
- The parties will have 5 business days to submit a written response to the evidence, which the investigators must consider prior to completion of their investigative report.

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Investigation: Preparation of Investigation Report

- After receiving/reviewing the parties written responses, the investigators must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes the relevant evidence, which the investigators will forward to the Resolution Coordinator.
- Upon receipt of the investigators' report, the Resolution Coordinator will schedule a hearing.



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Investigation: Preparation of Investigation Report

- Prior to the hearing, the Resolution Coordinator will:
 - Provide both parties with written notice of the hearing date, time, location, participants and purpose of the hearing; and
 - Send to each party (and advisors) the investigative report.
 - Allow parties 5 business days to submit a written response to the report.

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Live Hearings



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Live Hearings: Process

- Conducted by the Hearing Panel
 - Assigned by the Resolution Coordinator
 - Three-member panel
 - Panel will select a Chair
- A party may request a substitution if the participation of a member if the member poses a conflict of interest.

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Live Hearings: Process

- Policy 1.7 mandates a virtual hearing that will be recorded.
- Hearing can be virtual, but it must be in real-time and must take into account technology considerations.

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Live Hearings: Technology

- Technology considerations:
 - Parties must be able to hear and see each other.
 - Parties and the panel must be able to view evidence being presented.
 - Consider screen-sharing and/or sending documents electronically in advance.
 - Parties should have ability to communicate with their respective advisors in private.
 - Consider “breakout rooms.”

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Live Hearings: Advisors

- The College must appoint a party an advisor for the live hearing if the party does not have an advisor.

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Issues for Hearing

- Hearing Panel's role is to determine:
 - Whether facts presented establish that the alleged conduct occurred;
 - Whether that conduct constitutes Title IX sexual harassment;
 - If the answers to the above are "yes," which sanctions (if any) and remedies are appropriate.
- Majority vote by the panel

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Considering Evidence

- Relevant documents may include, but are not limited to:
 - The formal complaint
 - The initial written notice of the allegations
 - Written statement(s) and responses by the parties and/or witnesses
 - The investigation report
 - Police reports, photographs and/or video footage (if any)
 - Prior discipline records
 - Only relevant to issue of appropriate sanction

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Preponderance of the Evidence Standard

- “More likely than not”
- Whether the facts supporting the allegations have greater weight/strength than the facts presented in denial of the allegations
- If 50/50, no violation.

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Live Hearings: Cross- Examination

- Advisors are permitted to ask opposing party and witnesses all **relevant** questions and follow-up questions.
 - Relevance determined by Panel's Chair.

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Live Hearings: Rape Shield Protections

- Questions about sexual pre-disposition or prior sexual behavior are not permitted unless:
 - Offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct; or
 - Questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent.

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Post-Hearing Procedure



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Written Determination

- Prepared by the Panel Chair.
- Policy 1.7 requires the decision of the Hearing Panel to be made within 10 business days of the conclusion of the hearing.
- Issued to both parties simultaneously (and their advisors) as well as the Resolution Coordinator.

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Written Determination

Must include:

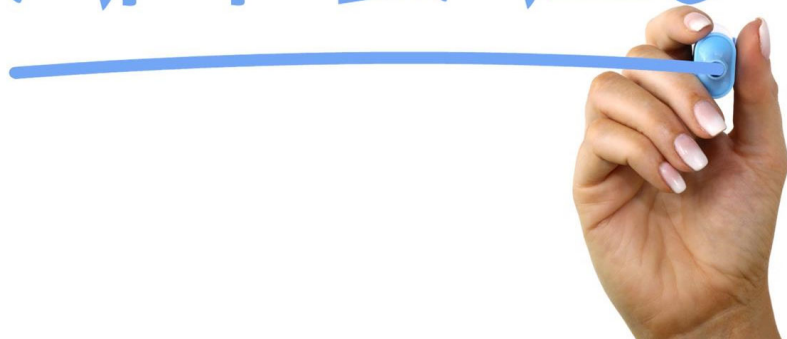
- Identification of allegations
- Description of procedural steps taken
- Findings of fact supporting determination
- Conclusions regarding application of conduct standards
- Statement & rationale for result of each allegation, including:
 - Determination of responsibility
 - Disciplinary sanctions being imposed
 - Whether any remedies will be provided to the complainant
- Procedures and permissible bases for complainant and respondent to appeal

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Appeals

APPEALS



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Appeals

- Both parties have right to appeal any determination regarding:
 - Responsibility
 - Dismissal of any formal complaint or allegations therein
- Party must submit written appeal request to Resolution Coordinator
 - Within 5 business days of receipt of written determination or dismissal
- Resolution Coordinator reviews the appeal request and forwards to a third-party appellate officer.

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Appeals: Grounds to Appeal

- a) Procedural irregularity occurred
- b) New evidence or information exists that could affect outcome
- c) Conflict of interest or bias which affected outcome, amongst:
 - Resolution Coordinator, Investigator, or Hearing Panel
- d) Sanction disproportionate to violation

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Appeals: Process

- Appellate Officer will afford both parties the opportunity to submit a statement
- Written decision issued to both parties simultaneously Describes outcome and rationale
- Includes statement that **decision is final**

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Conflicts of Interest & Bias



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Conflict of Interest & Bias

Conflict of interest:

- “A situation in which the concerns or aims of two different parties or people are incompatible.”
 - Not: “I know both parties.”

Bias:

- “Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.”

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How to Address Implicit Bias

- Check your implicit bias here: [Harvard Implicit Bias Test](#)
- More deliberate or conscious thinking
 - Sometimes called “Staring” (as opposed to “Blinking”)
 - This involves allowing yourself time to fully think through a scenario before coming to a decision/conclusion

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How to Address Bias: Create a Checklist

- Create a checklist beforehand
 - For ex: A pre-made checklist of allegations to be proven/disproven
- Decision-making checklists can encourage less biased decisions; they provide an objective framework to assess your thinking¹
- Can be effective in overcoming stereotypes²
- Helps reduce the attention given to biased characteristics that may influence decision-making³

1. Arkes. Hal R. Arkes & Victoria A. Shaffer, Should We Use Decision Aids or Gut Feelings? in G. GIGERENZER & C. ENGEL, EDS., HEURISTICS AND THE LAW (2004).
2. Isaac. Carol Isaac, Barbara Lee & Molly Carnes, Interventions That Reduce Bias in Clinical Decision Making: A Systematic Review, 84 Academic Medicine 1440 (2009).
3. Uhlmann. Eric Luis Uhlmann & Geoffrey L. Cohen, Constructed Criteria: Reducing Stereotype-Based Discrimination, 16 PSYCHOL. SCI. 474 (2005).
All materials compiled by the ABA Implicit Bias Toolkit, which can be found here: <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/resources/implicit-bias/>

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Questions?



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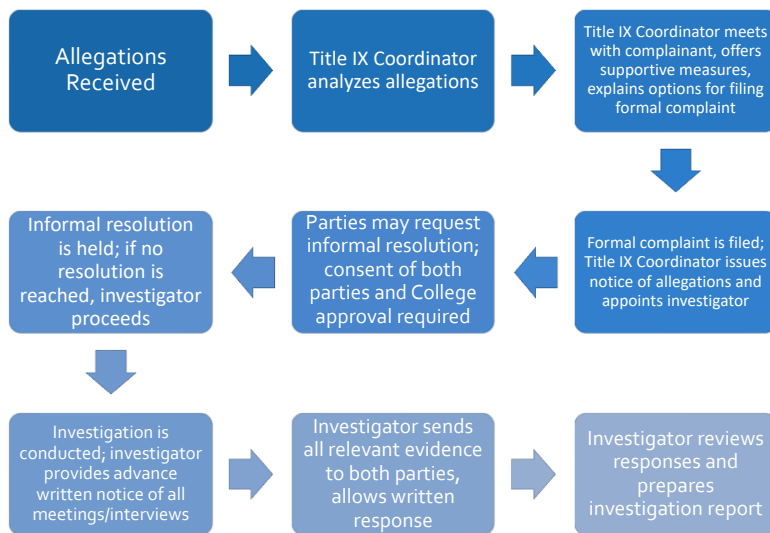
Final Review and Hypothetical



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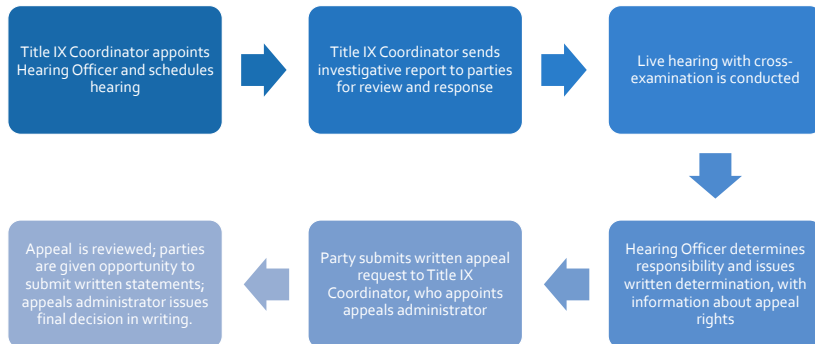
Final Review of Grievance Process (Pre-Hearing)



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Final Review of Grievance Process (Hearing + Appeals)



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Hypothetical

- Jen, a student, reports to her College advisor that a classmate, Steve, has been making inappropriate sexual jokes and innuendos.
 - She and Steve both attended the same virtual summer school course.
 - They were assigned to work on a project together, much of which was to be done on their own time, over Zoom, and required the exchange of personal contact information.
 - After the project was complete, Steve allegedly called Jen and asked her out. Jen said no.
 - Jen states that Steve began teasing her on social media and telling all of their mutual friends that Jen "is a prude."

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Hypothetical

- The teasing became increasingly more offensive, and he allegedly began making false statements that:
 - Jen is homosexual,
 - She is afraid to date because she is a hermaphrodite, and
 - That Jen sent him sexually explicit photos.
- Jen alleges that Steve's comments took place over the course of the summer, at various off-campus social distanced class gatherings where the instructor and other students were present.
- Most recently, Steve and Jen both attended the same party at a house owned by the College's Theater Club, of which Jen is a member.
- At the party, Steve (who is 21) was drinking. He tried to pressure Jen (who is 19) into drinking as well. Jen reports that Steve stated, "Some alcohol will allow you to drop your guard, and hopefully, allow me to drop your pants."

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Hypothetical

- Jen reports that she told Steve he was not funny, and to leave her alone.
 - One of Jen's friends allegedly witnessed Steve trying to pour some of his vodka into Jen's cup when she wasn't looking.
 - According to Jen's friend, when Steve was caught, he laughed and told her to "Stop cock-blocking me."
- Jen is distraught. Steve is enrolled in two of the same classes as Jen for the fall 2020 semester. Jen is considering dropping the classes so she will not have to interact with Steve.
- The College advisor documents her discussion with Jen. What should the College advisor do with these allegations? Discuss.



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Hypothetical

- Based on these facts, analyze the jurisdiction under Title IX.
- Reminder:
 - Steve's behavior began after the completion of their virtual project. He teased her via social media.
 - Steve's behavior continued at off-campus events where the instructor and other students were present.
 - Steve's most recent actions were at a house owned by a College-recognized student organization during the first weekend of school.
- Do Steve's actions constitute Title IX sexual harassment?
- Reminder: Three types of sexual harassment:
 - **Quid pro quo** harassment by a college employee
 - Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find **so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive** that it **denies a person equal educational access**
 - Any instance of **sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking**

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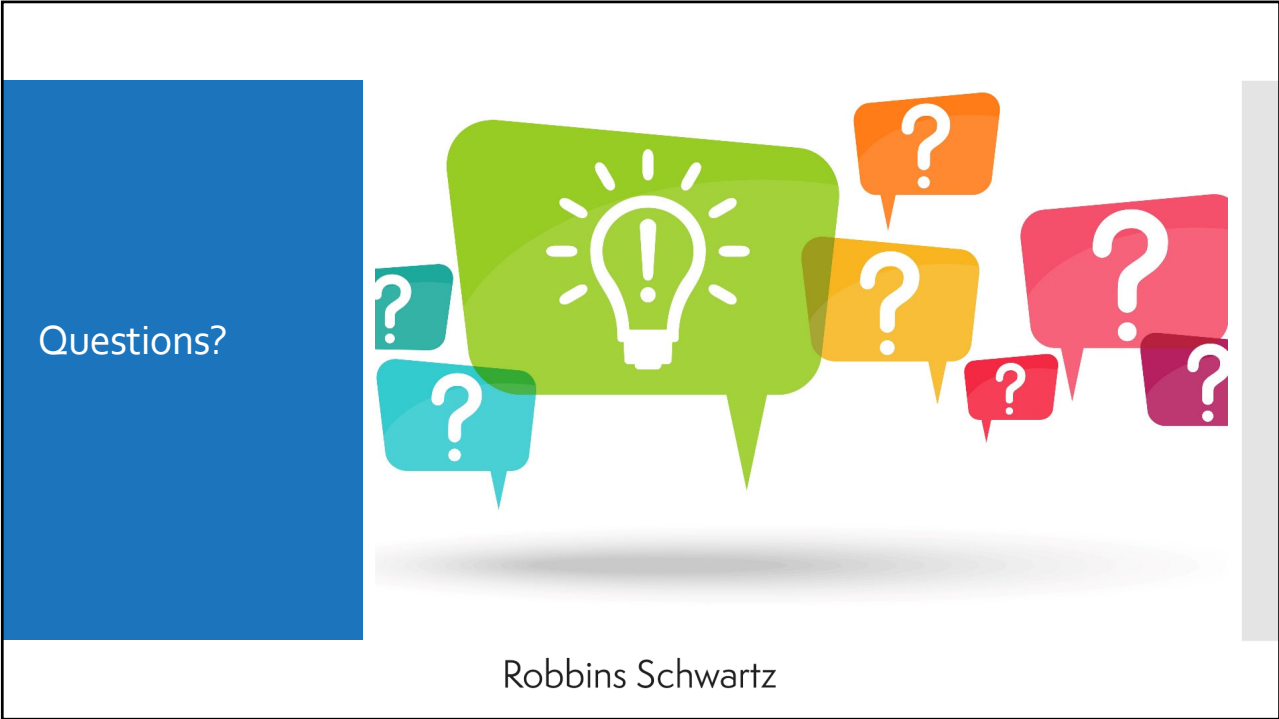
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Hypothetical

- Jen files a formal complaint. The parties proceed to a live hearing.
 - Can Steve's advisor ask Jen if she has ever had a sexual relationship with Steve?
- After a full grievance process, the College's appointed Hearing Officer (who is close friends with the College advisor to whom Jen made her initial report) finds that Steve is responsible for engaging in Title IX sexual harassment.
 - After receiving the Hearing Officer's determination, Steve feels that the Hearing Officer had a conflict of interest that affected the outcome of the grievance process. He submits an appeal request to the Title IX Coordinator.
- What steps does the Title IX Coordinator need to take with respect to the appeal?

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Kevin's practice focuses in the area of labor and employment law. Kevin routinely counsels employers in all aspects of employment law including employee discipline, labor relations, and federal and state employment discrimination matters under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Illinois Human Rights Act, Title VII and other federal and state anti-discrimination and wage laws. Kevin represents employers in a variety of venues including both federal and state court, as well as the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Kevin represented individuals with employment matters, civil rights claims, and consumer protection litigation.

AWARDS

Illinois "Rising Star," by Super Lawyers Magazine (2017-2020)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

"NLRB Takes New Look at Charter Schools," *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* (2019)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Updates from the DOL: New Developments for FMLA, FLSA, and IWPCA, IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference (January, 2020)

Is it ADA, FMLA, or Other Leave? Navigating the Murky Waters of Employee Leave Benefits, IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference (January, 2020)

Illinois Minimum Wage: Nutz and Bolts Overview, IGFOA Payroll Seminar (October 2019)



PRACTICE AREAS

Labor & Employment

EDUCATION

J.D., The John Marshall Law School

B.A., Indiana University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

ORGANIZATIONS

Chicago Bar Association

Illinois State Bar Association

Kane County Bar Association

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Susan E. Nicholas focuses her practice on serving employers, educational entities, municipalities and other public bodies in all aspects of labor and employment law and general student matters.

Susan is the former President and Treasurer of the Decatur Bar Association's Executive Board. She also served as a Macon County Teen Court Moderator.

Prior to joining Robbins Schwartz, Susan practiced in a variety of areas including family law, criminal defense, estate planning, and civil litigation. Susan is also a former Assistant State's Attorney in the Macon County State's Attorney Office.

AWARDS

Illinois "Emerging Lawyer" by *Emerging Lawyers Magazine* (2015)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Contributing author, "Employment Discrimination," *Illinois School Law*, IICLE (2010, 2012 and 2014)

RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Municipal Elected Officials, Illinois Municipal League Newly Elected Officials Workshop (June 2017)

Navigating the FLSA: Compliance and Avoiding Common Pitfalls, Illinois Association of School Board Administrators Workshop (October 2017)

Western Illinois Administrator's Roundtable (2016, 2017, 2018)



PRACTICE AREAS

Education Law
Employee Benefits
Labor & Employment
Litigation
Municipal Law
Student Discipline

EDUCATION

J.D., *magna cum laude*,
Southern Illinois
University School of Law

B.A., Illinois Wesleyan
University

ADMITTED TO PRACTICE

U.S. Court of Appeals for
the Seventh Circuit

U.S. District Court for the
Central District of Illinois

U.S. District Court for the
Northern District of Illinois

Supreme Court of Illinois

Supreme Court of
Missouri

ORGANIZATIONS

Illinois State Bar
Association

Decatur Bar Association