

From: Joan Cashin
Sent: Wed, 16 Jun 2021 14:54:30 +0000 (UTC)
To: T9PublicHearing
Subject: Written Comment: Title IX Public Hearing (incompetent administrators)

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Dear Sir or Madam,

I just read about the public comment option for Title IX, so I am writing even though I realize the deadline was a few days ago. I hope nevertheless that someone in your office will read it.

I am writing about the rank incompetence of the Title IX office at my university, Ohio State, where I am a history professor.

In our annual reports, faculty are asked to describe what they have done to advance and support diversity. So in spring 2021, I mentioned three conversations I had with female students who were seeking advice and comfort because they had been mistreated; two had been raped, and one had been bullied by a male professor.

Female students often confide in female professors they trust and respect. This has happened to me throughout my career.

But my department chair did not bother to read or follow the Title IX instructions on the OSU website. He was required to gather all pertinent information, first. Instead, he simply gave my name to the Title IX office for possibly violating the *reporting requirement*, without bothering to ask me what happened.

For example, one rape victim had already transferred to another university; the other rape victim was assaulted years earlier while serving in the US military, before she came to OSU. Other parties had already reported the bullying victim to the administration, and that professor was disciplined. So I was not required to report *any* of these incidents. That is crystal-clear.

Then I began to receive email and telephone calls from various staff members at the university Title IX compliance office. They did not know what they were doing. They contradicted themselves in their messages to me, and they contradicted each other. There was no staff directory, and no information on staff duties or who was in charge. It would have been laughable except these people have so much power.

At first they asked me to provide the names of the students who had confided in me, although they could not agree on that point. So I contacted an attorney, who explained that the dept. chair's behavior was irresponsible, at best, and that this was well beyond the purview of the university Title IX office. Ohio State does not have jurisdiction over rape victims at other universities or who were assaulted in the US military; furthermore, the administration had already handled the bullying case.

This lawyer also said that if OSU opened an investigation against me under Title IX, it would take over my life for years in the future; that I would have to hire a lawyer to guide me through the process, which would be very expensive; and that the Title IX staff always assumes that the accused is guilty. He said it would be a horrendous experience, although I would of course be exonerated in the end.

The Title IX office backed off after I told them I had contacted an attorney, and that I was copying a dean on the email. So they did not open an investigation against me because three female students chose to confide in me about sexual assault and sexism.

This was one of the most painful, and frightening, experiences of my career. The Title IX office should be staffed with people who know what they are doing. It is a terrible disservice to the public, especially to women, to allow this kind of reckless, rank incompetence to go on. The Title IX process is supposed to *protect* women from mistreatment, not subject them to wrongdoing.

Sincerely yours,
Joan E. Cashin
Columbus, Ohio

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