

**From:** Rupert, Kimberly  
**Sent:** Thu, 10 Jun 2021 16:56:56 +0000  
**To:** T9PublicHearing  
**Subject:** Written Comment: Title IX Public Hearing (Harassment; Religious Conviction/Exemption)

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Spring Arbor University decries harassment of any sort, including sexual harassment addressed to anyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Our university behavioral standards, which are based upon our religious principles, oppose physical sexual expression outside of marriage between a man and a woman. This proscription includes any form of sexual expression addressed to anyone. We would not therefore undervalue and be any less inclined to investigate a claim of such harassment brought forward by a person related to a SOGI complaint. We treat every harassment claim with the same level of diligence and care, ensuring both the complainant and respondent are safe, heard, and the claim investigated. We do, however, oppose establishment of a new “protected class” based on any assumption that SOGI harassment claims are automatically more credible than heterosexual claims.

As an evangelical Christian institution, we also would oppose any change which attempts to diminish our right to insist upon behavioral standards based on the Holy Bible and traditional Christian faith and practice. Proclamation of religious beliefs, and expression of those convictions through daily practices and behavioral standards, is not harassment, sexual or otherwise. This is so even when those beliefs, practices and standards are not held by all who may be affected by them, or by all who de facto agree to them by virtue of participation in a community that upholds those beliefs, practices and standards. Spring Arbor University has already been affirmed by the Department of Education in our religious exemption under Title IX, consistent with protections of freedom of religion, speech and assembly by statute and by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, and we continue to rely and act upon that exemption.

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