

THE SURVIVOR'S REPORT

The Truth about Title IX

For most people, reference to "Title IX" prompts thoughts of schools offering an equal number of men's and women's sports. Contrary to popular belief, Title IX doesn't stop there. In fact, Title IX's purpose is to prohibit sex discrimination in educational institutions generally, not just as relates to athletics.

As part of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title IX applies to any educational setting receiving federal funds. It establishes an expectation that complaints concerning sexual harassment and/or trauma be addressed promptly

and effectively, as both are deemed examples of sex discrimination and, thus, likely barriers to an individual's access to equal educational opportunity

To be in compliance with this legislation, JMU has the responsibility to report and follow-up on reports of sexual harassment and/or trauma made to a Title IX officer by ensuring the identified survivors have full knowledge of and access to all appropriate resources. This follow-up may or may not include further investigation of the incidents reported.

Understandably, students who experience

sexual harassment or trauma may be hesitant to disclose such personal information, thinking their experiences are private and not relevant to the university at large. It is at this point that it may be worth again considering the true purpose of Title IX - to ensure an educational environment free from sex discrimination. While choosing to disclose is no doubt a difficult decision for a survivor to make, one may view it as an opportunity to take back control, to do what one can to make the university community a safer and more equal environment while also exercising one's own rights to this environment.

Students looking for more information about the applicability of Title IX to experience of sexual trauma are encouraged to review *Know Your IX*, a campaign designed by student survivor-advocates to educate fellow survivors about their rights under Title IX.

Know Your IX: www.knowyourix.org

<https://www.facebook.com/knowyourIX>



Who to Contact to Make a Title IX Report:

Any report of sex discrimination or complaint regarding rights under Title IX can be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, located at 1017 Harrison Street, JMAC-2. Individual Title IX officers may also be contacted as listed below.

Cannie Campbell

Title IX Officer for Students
University Health Center
540.568.3532

Jennifer Phillips

Title IX Officer for Athletics
Godwin Hall, Rm 141
540.568.8036

James Robinson

Title IX Coordinator
1017 Harrison St.
540.568.6991

Myths about Title IX:

Myth: Title IX takes away survivors' rights.

Reality: Title IX is actually an attempt to affirm survivors' rights by directly addressing the impact of sex discrimination on access to education. A mandated report can feel like a loss of rights, however, when survivors aren't fully informed *before* they disclose whether or not their information can be kept confidential. Under Title IX, all JMU employees, including student employees, are mandated reporters. Only counselors, health care providers, and clergy are exempt from this mandate.

Myth: Title IX only applies to women.

Reality: All JMU students are protected under Title IX. Title IX is not specific to women's rights; it is, in fact, designed to foster equal opportunity for all individuals enrolled in federally funded education programs.

Counseling and Student Development Center

Sexual Trauma Empowerment Program

www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/services/sexual-assault-services



Question & Answer

Dear Answer Annie,

I am a sophomore here at JMU and an active athlete. After practice the other day, I over-heard one of my good friends talking about a situation where she felt she had been sexually harassed by one of her neighbors. I really feel like she should report the incident, but I know she is nervous the whole campus will find out. If I knew the steps involved in Title IX reporting, I feel like I could better help her and assure her that she would be safe throughout the process.

-Anonymous

Dear Anonymous,

While reporting procedures are designed to protect individual students' information, Title IX's purpose is to maintain a university environment free from sex discrimination. Because of this, your friend's story may be shared if it's deemed necessary for protecting the greater university community. If your friend wants to talk about her experience but absolutely does not want that information to go further, she should only disclose to clergy or clinicians at the University Health Center or the Counseling and Student Development Center, as all other university employees will be required to report her disclosure (this includes RAs and other student employees). If, however, your friend decides it's important her story be shared in order to help prevent other JMU students from experiencing harassment, she can contact the Title IX officer for students, Cannie Campbell. Whatever she decides, it's important to respect her decision and support her however you can.

Sincerely,

Answer Annie

Please be advised that this article is neither a crisis/emergency service nor a correspondence therapy service. If you need either immediate attention or ongoing therapy, call JMU Counseling & Student Development Center at (540) 568 6552