

NEWSROOM

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TITLE IX NEXT STEPS

PRESIDENT KELLY SHARES THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO THE CNU COMMUNITY.

March 28, 2024

Read time: about 2 min

Dear Captains,

I am pleased to announce significant, immediate steps toward ensuring we continue to live, learn, and work on a campus where people feel safe and respected. These measures were among those recommended in the summary report of the Title IX Next Steps Committee that built upon the work of the Title IX Review Committee. These committees were convened in response to students, faculty, and staff who expressed feelings of dismay about the handling of Title IX and related issues. I am grateful to all who have contributed to this university-wide effort over many months to heal the hurt and improve our response.

We will continue to meet all of the legal obligations associated with Title IX and related laws. We will go beyond that baseline in order to best support all members of our community.

- To ensure no student believes they are unseen, unheard, or confused at any step in the Title IX process, a new position will be created for a confidential advocate. This position will be established in the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students. Employees can access similar resources through the Office of Human Resources.
- As soon as possible, we will search for a new Director of Institutional Compliance/Title IX Coordinator who will lead efforts to prevent discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct on campus, while also fostering a culture of inclusivity and respect. The Director will manage efforts to bring awareness to and ensure compliance of faculty, staff, and students with the institution's legal obligations under Title IX, The Clery Act,

and Civil Rights Act under federal and state law. The Director oversees and coordinates investigations, responses, and resolutions to complaints. The Director will report to the Chief of Staff to create an office that can work smoothly across university lines to protect, educate and inform. Interim Title IX Coordinator Katie Wellbrock has served tirelessly and with distinction. She will return to her permanent position as the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs.

- We will outsource investigations and decision making on reports of Title IX violations. This is an increasingly common approach and best practice in higher education and was recommended by the committee. During the interim period, the University has been using a highly respected company to handle decision making. We will now broaden that relationship to include investigations to ensure every case is in the hands of trained, objective experts who have no other CNU connections or responsibilities.
- We will continue making adjustments to the education and training offered to our faculty, staff, and students regarding topics associated with Title IX. During the interim period, there has been an effort to tailor training to focus on the aspects of Title IX relevant to various members of our community. We will share what we have learned with the new Director of Institutional Compliance/Title IX Coordinator so that we can refine our abilities to respond effectively and in the most supportive manner.

The Next Steps Committee made additional recommendations that have been adopted or are under review. Some require the expertise of our new leader or await anticipated changes to federal Title IX regulations. A period of adjustment and fine tuning is ahead. I will appoint a permanent committee to monitor our performance as an institution and to recommend further actions if needed.

The work of the Title IX Next Steps and Review committees has been incredibly helpful. I ask for the commitment of every member of our community in carrying out this ongoing and important process. It will better position us for the future while preserving the culture of caring, kindness, and respect we cherish.
